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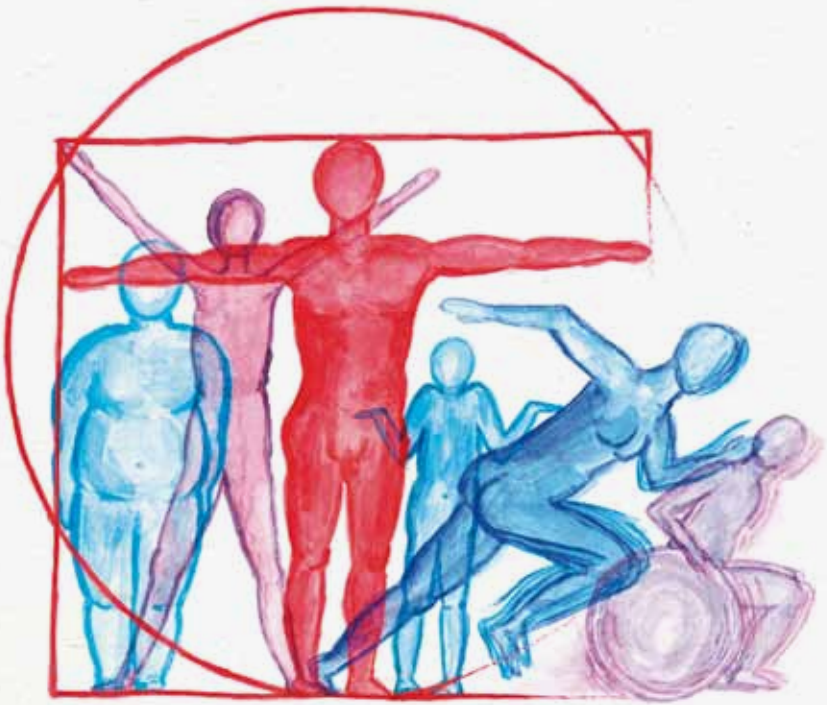

ABNORMALL BODIES

Gender, dis/ability and health in sport, physical education and beyond

ABNORMALL BODIES

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AbNormAll Bodies
Gender, dis/ability and health in sport, physical education and beyond

(Ab)Normale Lichamen
Gender, dis/ability en gezondheid in de sport, het bewegingsonderwijs en daarbuiten (met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

Proefschrift

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Body Norms

Some bodies matter
some do not
privileged, scorned
or rather forgotten
Subject, Object
*Ab*ject
Ab-Norm-Al(l) bodies
I'm in there
out there
somewhere...
Where are *you?*

– Noortje van Amsterdam

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1.
INTRODUCTION

> *"You are pretty chubby" a girl says to me while we are playing with her Barbies. The words hit me hard. I try to look at my playmate but it's difficult to see her through the fog of my tearful eyes. I drop Barbie on the floor. Even though I don't completely understand what it means to be 'chubby', I do feel the implicit condemnation and disapproval that is directed at me, or better yet, at my 7 year old body. I do not even like playing with Barbies or other typically 'girlie' things. All my own dolls and Barbies have their hair cut off and their limbs disjointed. However, I am not very popular at school and try very hard to find friends and be accepted by my peers. I am smart enough to know that playing with Barbies is part of the deal when you want to make friends with other girls. The hope of a new friendship, of finally being accepted, evaporates after my classmate mentioned my supposed chubbiness. I swallow hard to get rid of the lump in my throat and try not to cry. All I have heard is "You are fat. Why would anyone want to be friends with you?".*

Reflecting on my childhood memories, this instance represents the first time I became (painfully) aware of the systematic distinction that is made between normative and non-normative bodies. I realized at the tender age of 7 that how your body fits into one or the other category is crucial for your standing and acceptance in the social spheres you inhabit. Before this incident, I had plenty experience with being excluded, but not on the basis of my embodiment. I had never thought about the negative associations that are connected to fat bodies, yet I immediately understood the implication that they were somehow 'bad' or 'abnormal'. Even though I have seldom been considered fat, being excluded and categorized as abnormal has been central to my experiences in early life. I was a tomboy, a bookworm and very

sensitive. The exclusionary practices I endured as a kid who didn't fit in have shaped my life and still affect my daily actions.

Today I consider myself privileged in many ways; I am a white, middle class, able-bodied, heterosexual, slender, and cis-gendered[1] woman. This means that my body is considered 'normal' or unremarkable in many western contexts. I am not subjected to the systemic exclusion, marginalization and abjection that for example racial/ethnic minorities, disabled, and fat people worldwide are exposed to and I certainly do not think my experiences are comparable to theirs. Nevertheless, my early childhood experiences have taught me a thing or two about embodiment and social hierarchies. Through my experiences I have become critically aware of the dynamics of exclusion and marginalization and how these are often based on appearances and the practice of looking at bodies (Foucault, 1979a; Garland-Thomson, 2009; Puwar, 2004). These processes that systematically disadvantage certain groups of people and privilege others fascinate me. Against this background, it is perhaps not surprising that my research focuses on how body norms are constructed, reproduced, negotiated and challenged.

Body normativity in context

As Kannen writes "[…] our bodies are never *not* involved in what we do, where we are, and how we interact with others" (2013 p. 184, my emphasis). The title of this dissertation and the poem at the beginning underline my argument running through this thesis that *all people* are subjected to body norms that circulate in society at a specific time and place, regardless of the context in which a person functions or the social demographics that characterize a person. Body normativity lies at the heart of many exclusionary practices and (re)produces inequality across different contexts (e.g. Bartky, 1990; Crenshaw, 1989; Garland-Thomson, 2005; Weedon, 1997). It legitimizes the presence and experiences of certain bodies/people and excludes or marginalizes others. In this dissertation I explore how these processes work in different contexts in the Netherlands.

Physical education and sport

The majority of the research in this dissertation focuses on the construction of body norms in physical education (PE) and sport. These are important sites because the body is central in both PE and sport. It is *through* the body that people learn to play a sport and participate in physical activities. The embodiment of participating in sport and PE receives explicit attention in these sites. Also, people learn *about* the body in PE and sport. Thus, the body is both object and subject matter in physical education and sport, and these sites can be characterized as thoroughly embodied domains (Webb et al., 2004). Furthermore, physical education and sport function as very important sites of knowledge production with regard to what is constructed as 'normal' and 'abnormal' or 'deviant' embodiment (e.g. Azzarito, 2009; Elling & Knoppers, 2005; Kirk, 2002; Markula & Pringle, 2006). Hence, physical education and sport are often taken as research contexts from which to study how people reproduce and resist body norms and how they are constituted as subjects (e.g. Azzarito & Katzew, 2010; Cliff & Wright, 2010; Corrigan et al., 2010; Douglas & Halas, 2013; Fitzgerald & Kirk, 2009; Goodwin, 2009; McDermott, 2012; Thorpe, 2008; van Sterkenburg et al., 2012).

Scholars from various western countries have argued that dominant constructions about gender, race, dis/ability and sexuality are (re)produced in and through sport and physical education (Azzarito & Solmon, 2005; Buysse & Borcherding, 2010; Fitzgerald, 2005; Sykes, 2009). The results of their research indicate that women, disabled people, people of color and those classified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ) are marginalized and/or excluded in and through sport and PE practices in many ways. Yet people in western societies are increasingly encouraged to participate in sport because of the perceived benefits to their health and their social and emotional development. Research suggests that youth who participate in sport do better in school, exhibit less criminal behavior and are not as often overweight or obese as their peers who do not engage in sport (e.g. Breedveld et al., 2012; Crosnoe & Miller, 2004; Elling, 2010). This positive approach to sport tends to overshadow the possible negative aspects of sport participation, such as violence, drug use, homophobia, racism, injuries etcetera (e.g. Barkoukisa et al.,

2013; Messner & Sabo, 1994; van Sterkenburg et al., 2012). The less favorable practices and ideologies that find expression in and through sport participation tend to be overlooked. Government campaigns tend to focus primarily on increasing the sport participation of the population. Youth are specifically targeted in these campaigns because of the belief that participating in sport or physical activities will produce healthy citizens who will continue to be physically active throughout their life if they regularly engage in sport or physical activities when they are young (e.g. Halse, 2009; McDermott, 2012; Wright & Halse, 2013).

However, even young people who do not participate in sport cannot escape the vast impact of discourses that circulate in and through sport because youth are required to participate in PE, both in primary and secondary school. In addition, most youth and adults in western countries regularly engage with sport media and popular media, which tend to reproduce dominant ideas about normative embodiment (e.g. Buysse & Borcherding, 2010; Evans et al., 2008b; Millington & Wilson, 2010; van Sterkenburg & Knoppers, 2004). The 'knowledge' that is (re)produced about bodies in and through sport and PE has an impact far beyond the confines of the gym or the soccer field. It contributes to the construction of a general body hierarchy that determines how people are judged in daily life (DePauw, 1997; Weedon, 1997; Wright, 2000). Examining how these constructions take shape in institutions such as school (PE) and sport is necessary in order to challenge and subvert some of the oppressive norms related to the body.

Gender, dis/ability and health

The construction of normative and non-normative bodies through sport and PE practices and representations has been topic of research in different western countries. However, this research most often focuses either on how body norms are constructed in and through sport and PE based on normative ideas about health (e.g. Burrows & Wright, 2007; Cliff & Wright, 2010; Johns, 2005; McDermott, 2012; Rail, 2009) *or* normative ideas related to social markers such as gender, race, dis/ability and/or sexuality (e.g. Azzarito, 2010a; Azzarito & Solmon, 2006b; Fitzgerald, 2005; Larsson et al., 2009). For example,

Fitzgerald (2005) explores the experiences of young disabled pupils in mainstream PE. Het results indicate that disabled students constantly measured themselves and others against normative notions about embodiment such as high motor competence. However, Fitzgerald does not explicitly deconstruct how the marginalization of disabled students is co-produced by normative ideas about health. McDermott (2012) on the other hand, offers an excellent analysis of how 'healthy' children are produced in Canadian physical education through a fitness-based initiative focused on reducing childhood obesity. Yet, she does not explore how ideas about health are entwined with normative idea(l)s about gender, dis/ability, race or sexuality.

Thus, most current research fails to problematize how normative ideas about health on the one hand, and gender, dis/ability, race and sexuality on the other inform each other and are mutually constitutive of dominant body norms that circulate in existing sport and PE contexts. The research in this dissertation attempts to fill this gap by focusing on the complex interrelation of discourses about health and the body in the discursive constructions of body norms that youth, physical educators, and other adults in the Netherlands use. It uses an intersectional approach to understand how difference is (re)produced in and through physical education (cf. Flintoff et al., 2008). Gender and dis/ability are taken as central tenets in this research because sport competitions are formally structured around these principles into abled and adapted sports, and men's and women's sports. However, I also touch on race/ethnicity, sexuality and social class. In addition, the current research specifically focuses on the experiences, ideas and behaviors of physical educators and both able-bodied and disabled youth. Since the voices of disabled people are rarely heard in (sport) research, exploring the experiences of disabled youth with regard to sport and physical education could provide insight into the ways exclusionary practices take shape in these contexts and how these practices might be challenged.

Sport and PE in the Netherlands

The scholarly debate about the normative aspects of sport and physical education in relation to health and embodiment has been dominated by

research from predominantly Anglophone countries such as the US, Canada, the UK, Australia, and New Zealand (e.g. Cliff & Wright, 2010; Harwood, 2012; McDermott, 2012; Lee F. Monaghan, 2008; Sykes & McPhail, 2008; Wright & Halse, 2013). Research from a different country such as the Netherlands could provide insights about contextual factors that matter in the processes of marginalization and exclusion based on dominant body norms that get disseminated in and through sport and PE. For example, the formal relationship between PE and sport within the Dutch context is different from that in other countries. Unlike the situation in the US and the UK where sport is organized through the school system, sport and physical education in the Netherlands have historically developed as two separate domains. Physical education was institutionalized in Dutch schools primarily to contribute to the cultivation of virtuous and fit citizens (Stokvis, 2009; van Hilvoorde, 2011). Traditionally, didactic principles such as 'fun', 'play' and 'inclusivity' have been privileged in Dutch pedagogic viewpoints about physical education. Sport on the other hand, has historically been dominated by principles such as 'competition', 'achievement' and 'selection' and is organized through independent and voluntary sport clubs. Thus, there has always been a tension between these domains in the Netherlands and sport and physical education have remained largely separate realms in terms of how they are organized. Furthermore, although the earliest aim of physical education included the cultivation of 'fit citizens' (Stokvis, 2009) health is not a formal subject area in the Dutch PE curriculum. This contrasts with the situation in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand where physical education has been restructured to incorporate health and is now called 'health physical education' (HPE) (Cliff & Wright, 2010; Gard & Kirk, 2007; Harwood, 2012; McDermott, 2012; Wright et al., 2012).

Informally, however, contemporary Dutch sport, PE and health are inextricably entwined, as is evident in the current aims of physical education as defined by the national government. According to the latest available definition (Rijksoverheid, 2009) the formal objectives of PE in secondary school are to introduce students to a variety of sports, to prepare them for life-long participation in (organized) sport, and to make students aware of

the benefits of physical activities for their health and wellbeing. Practically, this means that PE lessons often consist of playing a sport such as volleyball, soccer or gymnastics in which the rules and techniques of the game are learned and practiced. Thus, PE and sport inform each other at the level of daily physical education practices. Health also appears to be an element of concern within Dutch PE, but it remains unclear how this is taken up in daily physical education practices. Additionally, although some scholars have explored the (re)production of body normativity in and through Dutch sport (e.g. Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008; Elling & Smits, 2012; Steenbergen et al., 2001; van Sterkenburg & Knoppers, 2004; van Sterkenburg et al., 2012), little attention is paid in scholarly research to the ways in which body norms are constructed in and through Dutch PE. It therefore remains unclear which norms dominate in Dutch PE and what could be the impact of these norms on the participation of youth in sport and PE and on youth's general feelings about their bodies. The current research attempts to shed light on these issues by focusing on the (re)production of and resistance to body norms in and through Dutch sport and PE.

Body norms beyond sport and PE

Moreover, body normativity also functions beyond sport and physical education: everyone is affected by value judgments that are made based on how one's own and others' bodies compare to dominant body norms (Garland-Thomson, 2002, 2009; Wright & Harwood, 2009). *Which* specific body norms dominate can vary per context, as do the disciplinary practices associated with (non) normative embodiment. The context of the university, for example, differs a great deal from the contexts of sport and PE, because the mind is considered to be key and the body is often dismissed as unimportant (unless it is the object of study but even then the body as a site of *subjective experiences* receives relatively little attention). This dissertation therefore not only investigates how body norms are constructed in sport and PE, where the body is placed at the center of attention. In order to unpack the multiple ways in which body norms are constructed and experienced in different contexts, I also explore how body normativity plays out in a context where the body is not

the center of attention and where bodies are mostly regarded as mere vehicles for thought: a university department.

Several scholars interested in academia as an organizational context have characterized university departments as sites where certain bodies and bodily characteristics are made invisible and where the ideal of a *disembodied* academic is produced (Fotaki, 2013; Raddon, 2002; Riad, 2007; Tyler & Cohen, 2010). Yet, as Fotaki (2013) shows, academic institutions can be characterized as sites where dominant (gendered) body normativity is strongly (re)produced and enforced, often in implicit ways. The university department therefore offers an interesting context at the other end of the embodied-disembodied continuum to explore the construction of body normativity.

Research questions

The overall theme guiding this dissertation concerns the ways in which body norms are constructed, reproduced, negotiated and resisted in different contexts. The central research questions are: 1) How do Dutch youth and adults discursively construct (their) bodies and health; 2) How are these constructions informed by discourses about gender and dis/ability; and 3) How do discourses about gender, dis/ability and health intersect to produce specific subjectivities and a hierarchy of bodies?

In the majority of this dissertation I focus on sport and physical education as sites where body norms are constructed, negotiated and challenged. In the empirical chapters I tease out the constructions and experiences of three different groups: physical educators (chapter 2), able-bodied youth (chapter 3) and disabled youth (chapter 5). In chapter 4 I widen my scope to explore how body norms are constructed in similar ways beyond physical education and sport and what can be learned about the intersection of different embodied social markers (e.g. gender, dis/ability, race/ethnicity, sexuality and age) in relation to exclusionary practices. In chapter 6 I pose similar questions about normative embodiment to the ones I investigate in the other chapters, but instead of focusing on sport and PE, I explore my own embodied experiences as lactating young mother within the context of my university department.

To unpack these issues surrounding normative embodiment I draw on several theoretical perspectives and methodologies, ranging from the work of Foucault and feminist poststructuralism to intersectional feminism and Creative Analytic Process (CAP) Ethnographies. In the following paragraphs I present an overview of the main theoretical perspectives and concepts that I use in this dissertation to analyze the ways in which body norms are constructed, reproduced, negotiated and resisted.

Foucault and Foucauldian research

In this dissertation I use Foucault's conceptualization of power and discourses and their expression in and through the body. One of the major themes running through Foucault's work is the connection between power, knowledge, the body and the self in modern society (e.g. 1970; 1972a; 1972b; 1979a; 1979b; 1987). This makes many of his ideas very applicable to research into the construction of body norms. Although Foucault's work is mainly philosophical in nature, providing historical analyses of the ways in which people in western societies have been constituted as subjects and objects of power/knowledge, his ideas have been taken up by many social scholars interested in the workings of subtle, micro-level power on bodies and/or subjectivities in today's societies (e.g. Azzarito, 2009; Domangue & Solmon, 2008; Fotaki, 2013; Markula & Pringle, 2006; McCuaig, 2007; McDermott, 2012; Riad, 2007; Rose, 2011; Thorpe, 2008; Webb et al., 2004; Wright & Harwood, 2009). These Foucauldian studies illustrate how Foucault's conceptualizations of power, knowledge and the body can be applied to empirical social research into normativity.

Power, knowledge and the body

Two of the main premises in Foucault's work are that knowledge and power are mutually constitutive and that bodies are inscribed with power. Foucault (1972b; 1979a; 1979b; 1987) rejects the idea of the sovereign holder of power. He argues that power is not a property or possession of a person, an institution or a group of people, but can better be conceptualized as a relationship or a network of connections and strategies. In 'Discipline and Punish' Foucault

(1979a) explores the question how power is exercised and with what effects. He argues that power is exercised continuously through subtle and invisible everyday forms of disciplinary practices that produce bodies and selves (or 'subjectivities' as Foucault calls them) through dominant knowledge constructions. This knowledge, Foucault argues, is how people come to know and act on themselves and others. People thus become subjects through power/knowledge.

A variety of studies inspired by Foucault's ideas show how knowledge about appropriate (heteronormative) masculinity and femininity is (re)produced through sport and physical education (e.g. Azzarito et al., 2006; Drummond, 2003; Larsson et al., 2009; Markula & Pringle, 2006; Paechter, 2003). Larsson et al. (2009), for instance, illustrates that Swedish PE teachers never commented when girls performed well in activities associated with masculinity. Furthermore, their data show how these physical educators did not mention poor performances of boys in activities associated with masculinity, while poor performances of girls on similar activities were overemphasized. According to Larsson et al. (2009) this exemplifies how knowledge about heteronormative masculinity and femininity is reproduced through PE practices. The reproduction of the 'knowledge' that men are physically superior to women, shapes how boys and girls become involved in sports (or not) and how they come to know themselves as different 'types' of athletes. As a result, girls are usually more inclined to practice sports that are traditionally constructed as feminine, while boys are attracted to sports constructed as masculine because aggression, competition and rough play feature prominently in them (Azzarito & Katzew, 2010; Wright, 1996). Gendered meanings thus become inscribed in the bodies of students through sport and PE practices.

Similarly, several studies illustrate how sport and sport media (re)produce the knowledge that the disabled body is inferior to the abled body (e.g. Corrigan et al., 2010; DePauw, 1997; M. Hardin & B. Hardin, 2004; Wickman, 2007). Buysse and Borcherding (2010) for example, show how disabled athletes are ignored or symbolically hidden in photographic coverage of the Olympic Games. Their analysis of photographic media coverage also shows

how female athletes are mostly portrayed in passive poses that are deemed gender appropriate. Thus, the "[…] reproduction of gender and disability stereotypes serves to reinforce male and able-bodied hegemony in sport while marginalizing millions of others" (Buysse & Borcherding, 2010 p. 139). The material consequences of these gendered and ableist constructions are evident in the differentiation between competitions for able-bodied people and disabled people, and those for men and women. Similar ableist and masculinist body norms are also (re)produced in the academic context, where (the experiences of) women and the disabled are often discounted and marginalized (e.g. Benschop & Brouns, 2003; Fotaki, 2013; Horton & Tucker, 2010). Discourses that produce knowledge about 'normal' and 'abnormal' bodies govern the range of possibilities people have within a certain context and help produce different individuals. In the next paragraph I explain how this works.

Foucault (1970) argues that the human sciences, for example psychiatry, medicine, biology and economics, constitute an important source of power, since they produce particular ways of knowing through which people come to recognize themselves. The labels 'overweight' and 'obese' are examples of scientific classifications that produce people as subjects and objects of scientific knowledge. Over the past decades people's bodies have increasingly become objects of a clinical gaze by health professionals who measure them, calculate their Body Mass Index and subsequently categorize them as being 'underweight', 'normal', 'overweight' or 'obese' (e.g. Evans et al., 2008a; Rail, 2012; Rail et al., 2010; Wright & Harwood, 2009). Both 'patients' and health professionals come to understand themselves (their subjectivity) through these labels as 'healthy' or 'unhealthy' and they will act on their bodies accordingly. Those who are categorized as abnormal and unhealthy – the underweight, overweight and obese – will for example be advised to engage in weight loss training, opt for weight loss surgery or, in the case of underweight, be sent to a psychiatrist for a possible diagnosis and treatment of anorexia. In all cases these disciplinary technologies are enacted to reposition bodies as normal in relation to the scientific knowledge that categorized them as otherwise. They aim to make deviant bodies/people fit the norms constructed through

the biomedical scientific enterprise. This, according to Foucault, is how bodies are produced by knowledge/power.

Discourses and disciplinary technologies

A Foucauldian perspective stipulates that the knowledge that circulates in society enacts power and vice versa. Knowledge and power govern the behavior of people and the possible ways in which they can think about themselves and others. In order to understand how knowledge circulates through language, Foucault (1972a) coins the term 'discourse'. He conceptualizes discourse as a set of linguistic statements with a specific meaning that generate what can be spoken, seen, thought and practiced. Foucault writes that "it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together" (1979b p. 100) and therefore he often refers to them together as knowledge/power. Discourses, according to Foucault (1972a; 1972b; 1979a), do not simply reflect social realities through language. They can better be understood as practices that shape social realities. In addition, discourses function as systems of control; an action by one person directs or limits the possible field of action of others through these systems of knowledge/power. For instance, the discourse about overweight and obesity produces the knowledge that being fat is bad, shameful and disgusting (e.g. Leahy, 2009). A person who has been called 'fatty' may consequently feel dissuaded to engage in sport or fitness activities because the body takes central stage in these contexts and it is made it visible for others to scrutinize, for example in communal changing rooms, in mirrors in fitness studios and/or on the playing field. Similarly, the discourse about breastfeeding that currently dominates most western societies, constructs breast milk as essential to the health of an infant (Burns et al., 2012). Advice about breast feeding and its preferred duration directs many working mothers to combine professional paid work with breastfeeding, in spite of the difficulties and sacrifices this involves (Gatrell, 2013).

Moreover, as Foucault (1972a; 1972b; 1979a) argues, knowledge/power relations find expression in language and other social practices through discourses. The term discursive constructions is often used to denote the emergence of local knowledge/power relations in linguistic practices. The term

discursive practices emerged to indicate that discourses shape both linguistic and non-linguistic practices. The terms discursive constructions and discursive practices are often used interchangeably, however.

Notably, discourses are not stable and there are many, often contradictory, discourses that circulate at any given time. In other words, discourses are dynamic and context dependent: they can shift, disappear and (re) emerge at specific historical and geographical junctions. Yet the discourses that dominate at a specific time and place produce common sense knowledge, that which is thought to be 'true'. Foucault (1979a) therefore names dominant discourses 'regimes of truth'.

The theoretical view regarding power/knowledge, language and the body assumes that bodies are not purely biological, pre-existing the cultural. The discursive constructions about the body deserve attention because the social meanings attached to the body are often overlooked. For example, biomedical notions about disability (also called 'the medical model of disability') dominate popular perceptions about disability in most western societies. These solely focus on the body as a physical, biomechanical reality. From this viewpoint, it seems justified to distinguish between bodies that function without problems (the able-bodied) and those that are considered deficit (the disabled). Framing disability in terms of ill health and dysfunction is commonplace in many western societies and successfully devalues the disabled body (Garland-Thomson, 2002; Miceli, 2010). As several scholars argue (e.g. DePauw, 1997; Edwards & Imrie, 2003; Tremain, 2008), the values attached to the disabled body are socially constructed and do not indicate neutral representations of a biomedical 'reality'. These construction do, however, shape how the disabled body can be experienced and understood. This illustrates that the body is not simply natural but inextricably entwined with its social context and can therefore be considered a site of political struggle (Foucault, 1970, 1972a, 1979a, 1979b).

This political struggle is evident in the hierarchy of bodies and the technologies of discipline that govern bodies and shape their possibilities to think and act in certain ways. Foucault (1979a) argues that all bodies are object of and subjected to disciplinary practices. Categorization, surveillance and

normalization are examples of these technologies of discipline. As Markula and Pringle (2006) write "the employment of disciplinary technologies helps constitute *different* individuals" (p. 41, emphasis in original). As I argued before, categorization is often based on scientific discourses about the body and divides people in different groups, such as 'man' or 'woman', 'healthy' or 'unhealthy', and 'able-bodied' or 'disabled'. Through the disciplinary technique called normalization, categories are subsequently labeled as either 'normal' or 'abnormal'. People whose bodies are constructed as 'abnormal' often feel compelled to change their bodies to become 'normal' because they fear being excluded from participating equally in their social context based on their deviation from the norm. Surveillance plays an important role in this, since the constant monitoring of the body informs people when bodies are in need of normalization because they deviate from the norm[2]. Together, these techniques of power provide a paradigm of normativity that discipline bodies to fit with constructed body norms.

In contrast to the conceptualization of power as a sovereign possession, Foucault (1979a) shows that external others are not a necessary precondition for discipline to occur. It is not only others who discipline, people themselves play a major role in the (re)production of dominant discourses through self-disciplinary practices. According to Foucault (1979a) people often internalize discourses and become 'docile bodies' who engage in self-discipline to adhere to the appropriate normativity constructed within their context. However, reproduction of dominant power/knowledge structures is only part of the picture.

Resistance to dominant knowledge/power

The previous paragraphs show how Foucault conceptualizes oppression through micro level, subtle and often invisible forms of power embedded in discourses. Yet the focus on power as solely deterministic and oppressive does not do justice to Foucault's ideas. He argues convincingly that power is never total. In his later work Foucault (1979b; 1987) focuses more on freedom, which he argues is a "necessary pre-condition for a relation of power" (Markula & Pringle, 2006 p. 35). He states that within power relations "there

is necessarily the possibility of resistance, for if there were no possibility of resistance – of violent resistance, of escape, of ruse, of strategies that reverse the situation – there would be no relations of power" (Foucault, 1987 p. 12). So although Foucault views power as omnipresent, saturating the very fabric of all social life, he also argues that within networks of power there are many "points of resistance" (p. 95) through which people can challenge and subvert dominant power/knowledge structures.

Chase (2008) offers an example of how sport can be a site of both reproduction of and resistance to dominant body norms. She analyzes a community of fat or large people who engage in long distance running: the Clydesdale runners. The results indicate that the Clydesdale runners Chase interviewed resisted the normative standards in long distance running that marginalizes fat bodies/people. Their resistance consisted of actively participating in running competitions where their bodies were considered improperly disciplined and unacceptable, and advocating for separate weight divisions in these competitions. Simultaneously, the Clydesdale runners reproduced dominant ideals of embodiment by focusing on the body as a site of control through their strive for weight loss. As Chase's study illustrates, resistance to dominant body norms mostly goes hand in hand with reproduction of those norms. I return to the conceptualization of resistance when I discuss feminist poststructuralism.

Critique of the work of Foucault

Although Foucault's conceptualization of power/knowledge and the body has proven very useful in social science research, his work also has shortcomings One major issue is that Foucault does not address the skewed nature of domination/oppression with regard to gender. Throughout his historical analysis of the prison (Foucault, 1979a) and the mental asylum (Foucault, 1967), Foucault remains silent about the systemic pattern of gender-based domination. Many feminist scholars have voiced critique of Foucault's work based on this issue (e.g. Bartky, 1990; Fraser, 1989). For instance, Bartky (1990 p. 95) argues that Foucault's theory fails to recognize that women's bodies are rendered more docile than the bodies of

men because of the gendered nature of disciplinary practices such as those related to weight management and general styles of movement. By focusing on power as ever present, relational, and independent of individual status, Foucault fails to address the question of hierarchies of oppression.

Another major critique of the work of Foucault concerns his conceptualization of resistance. Although he clearly states that resistance is always possible, he does not elucidate *how* resistance comes into being. Furthermore, he focuses mainly on the individual as agent of resistance to modern forms of domination. With his theorization of 'technologies of the self' as an individual process of self-actualization, Foucault (1987) implies that the possibility of opposing structural oppression falls onto the individual (Best & Kellner, 1991). Hereby he ignores the possibility for collective action in modern societies. Feminist poststructuralism offers insights that address these pitfalls. In the next section, I therefore elaborate on feminist poststructuralism and focus on what it has to offer for this research into normative embodiment.

Feminist poststructuralism

Feminist poststructuralism draws heavily on Foucault's ideas about power/knowledge, resistance, the body and self and extends these to include an analysis of structural forms of oppression. In line with Foucault's concept of power, feminist poststructuralists argue that although power relations permeate society, they are often invisible because they are taken-for-granted. According to Weedon "they exist in the institutions and social practices of our society and cannot be explained by the intentions, good or bad, of individual women or men" (1997 p. 3). Feminist poststructuralism began as a political project to change oppressing patriarchal structures that marginalize women. Currently, however, feminist poststructuralism is not limited to improving living conditions for women. It is also taken up by feminist scholars to advocate for all kinds of groups that have suffered oppression such as disabled people, people of color, working class people and people who identify as LGBTQ.

The personal is political

A feminist poststructuralist project is by definition a political one. Feminist

poststructuralists take the subjective (subjectivities and experience) as a starting point of their research in order to understand how oppressive patriarchal power structures can be changed. Hence the well-known feminist adage 'the personal is political'. As Weedon (1997) explains "Starting from the politics of the personal […] feminism generates new theoretical perspectives from which the dominant can be criticized and new possibilities envisaged" (p. 6). In other words, this theoretical perspective does not only provide a framework to examine and criticize the production of body hierarchies through knowledge/power structures that dominate at a specific historical and temporal junction. Feminist poststructuralism also theorizes resistance to these structures by taking into consideration fluid, multiple and dynamic subjectivities that can challenge dominant power structures.

Butler (1990; 1993) adds important ideas about how power disciplines the body to this theorization on power and the formation of subjectivities. In her theory on gendered subjectivity, Butler (1990; 1993) argues that an innate sex that is pre-social does not exist and that gender is performative. She writes that gendered subjectivity comes into being through 'performative acts' that constitute a repetition of norms that are historically dominant. Through everyday practices, such as the way they walk, talk, the clothes they wear, and the sports they practice, people rehearse what is considered masculine and feminine. Hereby they consolidate both their own subjectivity as man or women and the hegemony of heteronormative standards. Research by Tyler and Cohen (2010) offers a good example of how this works. They show that women in academic positions often act

> […] in a way that is congruent with organizational norms governing gender relations that situate women within a constrained, contained space, and [this compels] the performance of gender in accordance with perceived norms and imperatives of organizational life (p. 185)

Women in this study felt a lack of entitlement to space in the university context. They often functioned in small office spaces, carefully managed representations of their family life, made very little noise and sat neatly. Tyler

and Cohen conclude that these results show how gender is materialized in academia through gender performativity. Performativity thus represents the way in which power disciplines bodies into being. Butler (1993), however, also theorizes resistance when she argues that the materialization of dominant norms in compliant subjectivities is never finished or total. People always have the opportunity to resist norms that have dominated historically by performing alternative and subversive subjectivities.

Resistance(s) and fluid subjectivities

Several scholars who use a feminist poststructuralist framework (Azzarito & Harrison, 2008; Azzarito & Solmon, 2006a, 2006b; Azzarito et al., 2006; Wickman, 2007; Wright, 2000) illustrate how resistance to dominant discourses can be analyzed within the context of physical education and sport. They show how people actively engage in the negotiation of power relations that set up barriers for participation in physical education and sport. For example, Wickman (2007) shows how wheelchair racers position themselves in multiple ways by rejecting the label 'disabled athlete', claiming the label 'wheelchair athlete' instead and/or positioning themselves as 'normal'. Thus, they both reproduce and resist ableist dominant discourse that defines them as "second rate performers" (p. 163). Azzarito and Harrison (2008) showed how many high school girls they interviewed resisted the dominant construction of black natural superiority in sport. The authors illustrated how these girls rejected the black genetic edge discourse in favor of liberal discourses of sameness. In contrast, the boys in this study overwhelmingly reproduced the dominant discourse that positions black people as naturally superior in sport. According to Azzarito and Harrison (2008 p. 361), the "girls' position of resistance in this study might reflect their view of themselves as outsiders to sport, as different from boys, and therefore as gendered beings". This study illustrates how resistance often emerges from marginal subject positions.

An analysis of points of resistance to dominant discourses about gender, health and dis/ability and the subject positions from which these resistances emerge is important because these can provide insight into the ways in which oppressive power/knowledge structures can be challenged and subverted.

Throughout this dissertation I therefore unpack the points of resistance to dominant power structures in the discursive constructions about the body and health that youth, physical educators and other adults use. In addition, I illustrate the dynamic and multiplicitous character of subjectivities that are highlighted when people position themselves in relation to body norms that construct their bodies as abnormal and/or abject[3].

The plurality of experience

Feminist poststructuralism thus not only aims to deconstruct the dominant norms that are embedded in patriarchal culture and constitute the basis of various forms of inequality. It also attempts to show how various conflicting discourses and multiple dynamic subjectivities are intricately entwined and mutually constitutive (Azzarito & Katzew, 2010; Domangue & Solmon, 2008; Weedon, 1997; Wright, 2004). However, a major criticism of feminist poststructuralism has been that it is created by and for white, western women from middle class backgrounds (e.g. Crenshaw, 1989; hooks, 1981). Earlier versions of feminist poststructuralism can therefore be accused of treating 'woman' as a universal category and therefore ignoring the plurality of women's experiences. In a reaction to the omission of the voices of women from black, non-western and/or working class backgrounds, several new feminist theories and concepts emerged that circumscribe current feminist poststructuralism, such as feminist postcolonialism (e.g. Mohanty, 1991; Spivak, 1988), queer theory (e.g. Butler 1990; 1993) and the concept of intersectionality (e.g. Crenshaw, 1989, 1994; McCall, 2005). In this dissertation I use insights from the latter to understand how discourses about gender, disability and health intersect to produce specific subjectivities and a hierarchy of bodies.

An intersectional feminist approach critically interrogates how various identity categories and discourses are interconnected and together produce a complex system of oppression. Scholars who advocate for intersectional analyses (e.g. Crenshaw, 1994; Flintoff et al., 2008; McCall, 2005) argue that systems of oppression such as ableism, racism, sexism and homophobia should not be examined separately. According to these scholars, researchers should focus on how different (discourses about) social markers – or 'axes

of signification' as they are called in intersectional feminism – are entwined and mutually reinforce each other. My research adds to the existing literature on body normativity by exploring how discourses about gender, dis/ability and health intersect and produce a hierarchy of bodies in PE and beyond. By drawing on feminist poststructuralist theories and insights from intersectional feminism, I attempt to reveal some of the complexity of conflicting discourses and fluid subjectivities in relation to body norms and how these involve systematic forms of oppression, marginalization and exclusion.

Critique of feminist poststructuralism

A critique of feminist poststructuralist research that remains prevalent today is that it pays too much attention to language and textuality. According to some critics (e.g. Evans et al., 2009; Penney & Evans, 2008) this results in a disembodied view. Feminist poststructuralists are said to ignore the materiality of the body in favor of a view of bodies as mere discourse/text. However, I think feminist poststructuralism has been misunderstood on this issue. I agree with Larsson's (2012 p. 7) statement that from a poststructuralist perspective "There is no contradiction between 'the socially constructed body' and the 'material body'; it is about how bodies matter, not what the material body 'is' in an objectified sense". Many feminist poststructuralist conceptualizations of discourse, such as the one I use in this research, are not limited to language and text, but also refer to practices and behaviors. These practices and behaviors are by definition embodied and can therefore offer a way to connect the materiality of the body with language and power/knowledge.

The criticism of feminist poststructuralists pertaining to their disregard of the material body possibly stems from the emphasis on language and textuality in some of its foundational texts (e.g. Butler, 1990; Cixous, 1976; Weedon, 1997). Yet many important feminist accounts also explicitly analyze material aspects of the body in relation to power/knowledge structures (e.g. Bartky, 1990; Bordo, 2003; Butler, 1993; Young, 1980). The purpose of much feminist poststructuralist research has been to destabilize the notion that differences between men and women are natural or biological facts, an idea that has been put forth by dominant biomedical constructions of the body (e.g.

Butler, 1990; Weedon, 1997). Feminist poststructuralists aim to collapse the binaries – e.g. mind/body, active/passive, public/private – that are connected to gender differences and thereby disrupt dominant power structures that legitimate these differences (Shildrick, 1997). Hence, feminist poststructuralists aim to show how the materiality of the body – e.g. visceral feelings, emotions, physical characteristics – cannot be understood *outside of* the power/knowledge networks surrounding the body. According to feminist poststructuralism the materiality of the body is inherently tied with the social context within which the body is experienced and performed. Thus feminist poststructuralists claim that the body cannot be known independently, irrespective of its construction in language (Butler, 1993; Weedon, 1997). As Butler (1993) posits, the body does not precede signification; "signifier and signified are constituted in a single movement" (Larsson, 2012 p. 11). Feminist poststructuralist theorization on the body thus offers a critique of the hegemony of biomedical discourse, which claims to know the body as a separate, confined, material entity. By focusing on the politics of embodiment, feminist poststructuralist accounts such as this dissertation aim to problematize the truth claims biomedical scientific discourse makes and uncover how these naturalize inequity.

I do acknowledge, however, that the resistance to biomedical representations and productions of bodies has led feminist scholars to engage more with power structures and politics than with the associated materiality of the body. Feminist poststructuralism in my opinion does not *preclude* attention to material circumstances (cf. Larsson, 2012), but I do understand why some scholars (e.g. Flintoff et al., 2008) argue for integrating embodied experiences more than current feminist poststructuralist practices tend to do. Disability scholars have also argued that the focus on the social constructedness of disability (as epitomized in the social model of disability) has meant that the corporeal, fleshy body is discounted and the physical experiences and emotions tied to felt limitations denied (e.g. Edwards & Imrie, 2003; Miceli, 2010; Shakespeare & Watson, 2002). Combining a feminist poststructuralist framework with concepts or methodologies that specifically focus on the materiality of the body could help to fill this lacuna. As I explain in later on in this chapter, Creative Analytic Process (CAP) ethnographies provide an

excellent way to theorize and convey the material aspects of embodiment in their social and political context.

Methodology

In order to explore the body norms that youth, physical educators and other adults constructed and performed in different contexts, I used a variety of qualitative methods. First of all, I conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with youth and physical educators from different secondary schools and I observed several physical education classes. These qualitative methods are quite common in feminist poststructuralist research, since they allow for a thorough exploration of the content and workings of discourses that are part of the repertoire of youth and physical educators (Patton, 1990; Wodak & Meyer, 2009; Wright, 2004). I did not see the interviews as means for eliciting 'the truth' about the experiences of my participants. In line with feminist poststructuralist epistemology, I considered the interviews to be particular contexts where my participants performed and constructed (their) bodies, health and other aspects of their identities.

In total, I visited six secondary schools in two large Dutch cities, and four secondary schools located in smaller cities in the metropolitan area of the Netherlands. The student population of three of these schools could be characterized as multi-ethnic. Students from the other seven schools were mainly from white middle class backgrounds. The physical educators that I interviewed were all white and middle class. Their background adequately represents the Dutch physical education teacher population, which can be characterized as very homogeneous with regards to race/ethnicity and social class[4].

In addition to the individual interviews and observations, I conducted several focus group discussions with able-bodied and disabled secondary school youth to unpack how the discursive constructions they use emerged through peer interactions. Again, the focus was not on uncovering truths, but on the interactions and co-constructions of youth within the context of the focus group discussion. Peek and Fothergill (2009) argue that focus group discussions allow youth to talk more extensively about their experiences and build on each other's ideas. However, a drawback of both focus group

discussions and individual interviews seems to be that these do not incite participants to talk about their own and others' bodies in concrete ways. Thus I created a participatory photography methodology called 'auto-driven photo elicitation group interviews' to encourage participants to talk about how they see, think about and act on bodies. This method, that I discuss more elaborately in chapter 3, was intended to prompt youth to talk about the body in relation to photographic material they selected themselves and brought to the interview. As with other participatory photographic methods, it allowed youth to creatively express their own ideas and understandings of the body (Azzarito, 2010b; Clark-Ibáñes, 2004). Furthermore, the auto driven photo elicitation interviews enhanced the reflexivity of the participants on the topic of body norms, because youth were able to compare their own, often taken-for-granted ideas and experiences to those of their peers and rethink their implications through the discussion that ensued in the group interview setting.

Lastly, I used CAP Ethnographies as a method of inquiry. According to Richardson & St.Pierre this label includes "[…] wherever the author has moved outside conventional social scientific writing" (p. 962). One of the main premises of CAP ethnographies is that they foreground empathic understanding as way of knowing. Advocates of CAP ethnography argue that empathy that results from engaging with unconventional social science practices constitutes an important way of knowing that eludes people if they limit themselves to reading and writing conventional social science prose (Ellis, 2004; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Richardson & St.Pierre, 2005). In line with the feminist poststructuralist idea that knowledge is always partial, local and historical, social scientists have used CAP ethnographies to implicate themselves within their research as subjects – taking position against those who claim to be objective research authorities. These researchers who position themselves as subjective co-constructers of multiple social realities have explored new ways of writing and representing their research, such as autoethnographic stories, drama, poetry, performance theatre and visual arts (Richardson & St.Pierre, 2005). Ellis & Bochner (2000 p. 748) write: "Stories […] bring us into worlds of experience that are unknown to us, show us the concrete daily details of people whose lives have been underrepresented or not represented

at all, help us reduce their marginalization, show us how partial and situated our understanding of the world is". Their focus on the (inter)subjective in all its complexity makes CAP ethnographies very well suited to a feminist political project such as this dissertation.

I use CAP ethnographies at several places in this dissertation to allow for an empathic understanding of the material at hand in addition to the cognitive understanding academic research usually generates. Chapter 6, for instance, consists of an autoethnographic story about my experiences with body normativity at my university department. This story is based on notes and journal entries that I wrote during the time I was expressing breast milk at work and retrospectively. As this chapter illustrates, writing from my personal experiences offers the opportunity to convey not only the knowledge/power complexity related to body norms and health ideals. It also allows me to explicitly focus on the materiality of my embodiment. Hereby, I show how emotions and sensory experiences are intricately tied up with normative body and health practices. By turning the academic Gaze onto myself, this chapter unpacks how I am similarly affected by body norms and health ideals as the participants in my research. This CAP ethnography thus illustrates how my experiences are every bit as political as the experiences of my participants.

The poem at the beginning of this dissertation and the one in chapter 6 could also be categorized as CAP ethnographies. They represent poetic reflections of both the theoretical concepts that I use in this dissertation regarding body normativity and my understandings of the effects of dominant body norms on the lived experiences of people. The painting on the front cover is a final example of a CAP ethnography that I have integrated in this dissertation. It represents my attempt to capture the results of this research in an artistic and visual way. I elaborate on the ideas behind this painting in the last chapter of this dissertation.

By combining more conventional social science writings with poetry, a painting, and an autoethnographic story within this dissertation, I seek to tap into different ways of knowing about how body norms are constructed and practiced and hope spark reflexivity and empathic understanding on the

part of readers regarding these processes. Critical awareness and empathic understanding of the general public could help address the exclusion and marginalization of specific embodied subjectivities based on dominant physical normativity and contribute to a society where bodies of all sizes, shapes, colors and abilities can be celebrated.

Contributions of this dissertation

In summary, the research in this dissertation contributes to a situated understanding of the construction of body and health norms in the Dutch context. It also adds to the theorization of the concepts of discipline and resistance by unpacking the multiplicity of disciplinary technologies related to the body and by illuminating how resistance can come into being. Furthermore, this research contributes to existing scholarly work by showcasing several innovative methodological tools that qualitative researchers can use for exploring body norms with different groups of participants. It shows how creative and visual methodologies such as auto-driven photo elicitation group interviews and CAP ethnographies can bring about new ways of knowing and communicating about bodies. Lastly, this research offers practical tools to imagine possible ways in which oppressive power structures can be challenged in sport, PE and beyond.

Outline of this dissertation

The chapters that follow have all been published in international peer reviewed journals[5]. Each chapter can be therefore be read as an independent piece. Together, the papers show a diversity in ideas about discursive constructions of body norms and intersections of discourses surrounding health and the body. The empirical chapters furthermore reveal the plurality of positions I have taken as a scholar within this research. I draw from both feminist poststructuralist approaches that focus on discourses, multiple fluid subjectivities and intersecting subject positions, and from more unconventional traditions that focus on the exploration and creative representation of subjective experiences in all their complexity.

The empirical chapters focus on different groups of participants, each

of which represents a specific position with regards to the power/knowledge (re)production of normative embodiment. Chapter 2 focusses on physical educators as the people who occupy a privileged position, both because of their embodiment as white able-bodied people and because their status as teachers places them in a relatively powerful position in relation to their students. In this chapter I explore how PE teachers discursively construct body differences related to gender, dis/ability and health and I analyze patterns of similarity and difference pertaining to these discursive constructions. I use Foucault's (1970; 1979a) concepts of categorization and normalization as techniques of disciplinary power to understand how the use of certain discursive constructions by physical educators relating to body differences may shape classroom practices in PE and produce 'deviant' as well as 'normal' bodies.

Chapter 3 focuses on able-bodied secondary school youth. These students occupy a position of relative privilege in relation to dominant body norms based on the general construction of their able-bodiedness as unproblematic. Yet in relation to their teachers and government campaigns that have the resources to construct their bodies as ab/normal, youth occupy a relatively marginal position. In chapter 3 I explore which body norms are constructed by these able-bodied Dutch youth in relation to sport and PE and how these norms may be enforced by self- and peer surveillance as well as by the interaction of youth with body imagery in the media. This chapter illustrates how several subjectivities can come into being at the intersection of various axes of signification.

In chapter 4 I explore through a literature review how body size interacts with other axes of signification such as gender, race, social class, sexuality and age. This chapter unpacks how health and appearance norms are mutually constitutive of normative embodiment. In addition, this chapter investigates how processes of exclusion and marginalization based on body size categorizations are similar to other institutionalized forms of oppression such as racism, ableism and gender discrimination.

Chapter 5 focusses on disabled students in mainstream secondary school. These students represent a marginalized group. Not only are they few in numbers compared to their able-bodied peers, dominant constructions

about normative embodiment render their bodies problematic and subject to (self)disciplinary practices. In this chapter I explore how Dutch disabled students discursively construct and position themselves in relation to dominant discourses that mark their bodies as abnormal and deviant. Hereby, I aim to uncover in what ways these youth reproduce dominant notions about physicality and sport and how they challenge or resist these.

In chapter 6 I turn the academic gaze onto myself. In this chapter I use my own experiences with expressing breast milk to explore how body norms are constructed within my university department and how I positioned myself in relation to these norms. Hereby I aim to show the consequences of health ideals and body norms on exclusionary practices as well as felt personal experiences.

In the last chapter I discuss the implications of my findings. I summarize the theoretical and methodological contributions of my research and I reflect on its' social relevance by addressing ways in which systemic forms of oppression could be resisted and subverted.

Notes

1. The term cis-gender is used to indicate 'gender normals': people whose bodies match with the gender they were assigned at birth and their current gender identity (e.g. Schilt & Westbrook, 2009).
2. Foucault's conceptualization of surveillance is multiple. In his earlier work (Foucault, 1979a) he uses the term to indicate how techniques of power discipline bodies/people at the individual, micro level. In his later work (Foucault, 1979b) he theorized on how surveillance is a form of biopower that governs bodies/people at the macro level of the population. The concept biopower refers to the attempts of modern governments to control life and death, illness and health of the population as a whole.
3. The concept 'abject' was coined by Kristeva (1982) and denotes that which is radically excluded and threatens to break down culturally established meanings. According to Kristeva the abject refers to '[…] what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect border, positions, rules' (p. 4).
4. Personal communication, C. van Doodewaard, Royal Dutch Association for Physical Educators (KVLO).

5. Some of these papers are co-authored pieces. Appendix 1, 2 and 3 clarify per paper how my contribution compares to the contribution of my co-authors.

2.
"IT'S JUST THE WAY IT IS…" OR NOT? HOW PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS CATEGORIZE AND NORMALIZE DIFFERENCES.

Abstract:
This paper explores how Dutch physical education (PE) teachers discursively construct body differences between students related to gender, (dis)ability and health. Our results show how disciplinary technologies of categorization and normalization are embedded in two distinct discourses that our participants used: the discourse of naturalness for explaining and managing differences in gender and ability and the discourse of transformation for explaining and managing differences in health. Both these discourses produced body norms in PE as male, abled and slender. However, how the teachers managed deviance and normalcy varies per discourse. 'Fat' bodies that were produced as deviant through the discourse of transformation were disciplined in explicit ways. The use of the discourse of naturalness resulted in justification and naturalization of perceived differences in gender and (dis) ability and practices such as differentiated teaching.

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In physical education (PE) the body is simultaneously object and subject matter. Since the focus of study is on the human body, PE provides a unique context for studying discourses that impact upon embodied subjectivities (e.g. Webb et al., 2004; Wright, 1996).

A considerable body of Foucauldian inspired research has examined how students and teachers in PE discursively construct difference related to gender (e.g. Larsson et al., 2009; Martino & Beckett, 2004; Wright, 1996), race (e.g. Azzarito, 2009; Azzarito & Harrison, 2008), social class (e.g. Azzarito & Solmon, 2005) or health (e.g. Evans & Davies, 2004a; Gard & Wright, 2001; Leahy & Harrison, 2004; Webb et al., 2008). Together, these studies show how the use of discourses related to the body in the physical education context results in marginalization and inhibited subjectivities of certain groups of students or teachers. Wright (1996) for example, found that teachers and students in physical education inscribed bodies with gendered meanings by defining "…masculinity as that which is strong, independent, tough and physically skilled and femininity as fragile, nurturant, dependent and physically less able than male" (p.6). According to Wright, this construction of complementarity contributes to marginalization of girls in relation to physical activities since it inscribes the female body as lacking those qualities associated with the active male body. Thus difference can be created in PE by teachers and students through their discursive constructions of gender.

Another way in which difference is produced in PE is through discursive constructions about health. Leahy (2009), for example focused on the morality that is implicated in discourses about health that are used in Australian health physical education (HPE). She argued that bodies are regulated and produced in HPE not just by the reliance on 'expert knowledge' about health by teachers and students, but also by the mobilization of strong feelings such as disgust, shame, guilt and pride. She illustrated how affect and bodily responses are elicited through the fear of obesity in pedagogical practices in HPE.

> The way in which disgust is mobilized here in the [HPE] classroom provides some insight as to how this disgusting, abject unhealthy other is brought to life in classrooms. (p. 180)

Through their practices these teachers not only differentiated between 'healthy' and 'unhealthy' bodies, but also produced moral judgment based on this categorization.

Although such critical research gives rich insight into the workings of discursive constructions about health and gender in physical education, an analysis is lacking of how discursive constructions pertaining to body differences such as gender, health and (dis)ability may converge and diverge. And what do the convergence and divergence of discursive constructions about gender, (dis)ability and health mean for how the body is understood, disciplined and taught in physical education both as an object of study and a subject of learning? The current study tries to fill this gap by focusing on the ways in which secondary school physical educators in the Netherlands talk about their students' bodies in relation to physical activity. We explore how PE teachers discursively construct body differences related to gender, (dis)ability and health and analyze patterns of similarity and difference pertaining to these discursive constructions. We use Foucault's (1970; 1979a) concepts of categorization and normalization as techniques of disciplinary power to understand how the use of certain discursive constructions by physical educators relating to body differences may shape classroom practices in PE and produce 'deviant' as well as 'normal' bodies.

Theoretical framework

This paper draws on the work of Foucault (1970; 1972a; 1972b; 1979a; 1988) in order to analyze the discursive constructions relating to body differences that secondary school PE teachers use. Foucault (1972a) understood discourse as sets of linguistic statements with a specific meaning that generate what can be spoken, seen and thought. He pointed out that discourses do not just refer to ways of thinking and producing meaning through language, but also to practices that are the effect of the particular knowledge that is produced within a discourse. The focus of this paper is on discursive constructions, which we understand as expressions of language by which knowledge (i.e. ideas and meanings), experiences and behavior related to a certain phenomenon are produced.

Although this paper focuses on discursive constructions that PE teachers use, we acknowledge that such a focus could lead to what is considered a disembodied view. We agree that bodies are constructed by material circumstances and practices as well as through discourses. The question here however, is not *whether* or *to what extent* the body is constructed by material or social and cultural circumstances, but *how* the body is socially constructed. We focus on discursive constructions that PE teachers use because these shape how bodies can be conceptualized. This social construction of the body deserves attention because it is often overlooked in the physical education context, which has been historically dominated by discourses of biological determinacy (Kirk, 2002). Additionally, discursive practices "categorize and associate value with certain kinds of bodies rather than others" (Wright, 2000 p. 2). In this study we do not focus on flesh and blood bodies (with their limitations), but on the power-infused processes related to the conceptualization of body differences.

Foucault (1972b; 1979a) contended that knowledge and power are joined together in discourse. Discourses function as systems of control, where the action of one person is meant to direct or limit the possible field of action for some individuals or groups of people. Foucault called this subtle form of power that relies on self-surveillance and self-control 'disciplinary power'. Through disciplinary power, discourses constitute and regulate the body. McCuaig (2007) offered an example of how disciplinary power can constitute the bodies of students in HPE. Reflecting on her experiences as a HPE teacher through a critical lens, she reconsiders how she used health initiatives in her teaching (i.e. keeping diaries of food intake and exercise behavior) as forms of disciplinary power. Since these initiatives privileged the constitution of a specific 'healthy' subject, they contributed to the moral regulation of the bodies of her students. This example illustrates the relational and capillary nature of power (Foucault, 1979a); disciplinary power does not only work top down (teachers disciplining students) but it can also work bottom up (students disciplining teachers) and laterally (teachers or students disciplining each other). Since this paper explores discursive constructions of students' bodies used by physical educators, it focuses mainly on top-down forms of discipline.

Moreover, discipline always occurs within a wider network of power relations. This network often has an institutional basis. The school system is an example of such an institutional basis. Here, physical educators amongst others, institutionalize aspects of circulating discourses by using them to provide their students with discursive resources for giving meanings to bodies, bodily experiences and physical activity (Azzarito et al., 2006; Sykes & McPhail, 2008). According to Webb et al. (2004) PE offers a unique site for studying the workings of power in the school context:

> In terms of understanding how power functions in schooling, physical education offers an important venue for study given the centrality of the visual and active body [...] Although power is embodied in all subject areas, the effects are magnified in physical education where the content of study is both about and through the human body. (p. 209)

This illustration of power in an educational context stresses the importance of researching the way body differences are discursively constructed in PE by physical educators.

Techniques of power such as categorization and normalization form the foundation for the construction of difference. Specifically, the "employment of disciplinary technologies helps constitute *different* individuals" (Markula & Pringle, 2006 p. 41). Techniques of power work in subtle micro-level ways and constitute subjectivities of individuals, while simultaneously objectifying them. Foucault (1970) argued that the human sciences help to construct universal categorizations of people. Consequently, individuals come to recognize themselves as object and subject of scientific knowledge. Classification thus means that individuals understand themselves and others in terms this scientific knowledge as for example 'man' or 'woman', 'healthy' or 'unhealthy', 'abled' or 'disabled'. This disciplinary technology divides subjects into different categories and subsequently controls them by defining their abilities and subjectivity as limited to those of the category to which they are assigned.

Categorization however, is rarely value free. Through normalization – another technique of power, also called 'normalizing judgment' – certain

categories become defined as 'normal' or 'good'. Consequently (but often implicitly) people who do not fall into this category become known as 'abnormal' or 'deviant'. Fitzgerald's (2005) research on the experiences of disabled students in PE illustrates how hierarchical values are embedded in such processes of categorization and produce a paradigm of normativity. She found that masculinity and high motor competence are valued as normal and good. Consequently, the disabled become defined as abnormal and deviant within this context. The experiences of disabled students reflected this power effect; they measured themselves and felt measured by others against a normative abled ideal. As a result they often felt left out and inferior. Similarly, Webb et al. (2008) explored how physical educators and head of PE departments in Australia and Sweden used discourses about health and embodiment. They found that their participants predominantly drew on discourses related to 'the fit healthy body', which refers to a slim body, and 'the at risk healthy body'. Webb et al. showed how surveillance, normalization and regulation shaped subjectivities of both teachers and students, and produced 'healthy' and 'skillful' bodies in the context of physical education. This finding suggests that when 'healthy' and 'skillful' bodies are defined as the norm, the Other bodies, the 'unhealthy' and 'not so skillful' ones, become seen and acted upon as deviant.

An analysis of processes of categorization and normalization that are embedded in the discursive constructions about body differences that physical educators use, may shed light on the knowledge about the body that is produced in physical education, the value that is attached to discursively constructed categories and the power effects this has within the PE context. In this paper we first explore practices of categorization and normalization that are embedded in the discursive construction that Dutch physical education teachers use with regard to body differences related to gender, (dis) ability and health. Secondly, we explore how these discursive constructions converge and how they differ.

Physical education in the Netherlands

Our focus on gender, (dis)ability and health as significant categories of body

differences lies in the historical and current context of PE in the Netherlands. As was common worldwide, all Dutch secondary PE was segregated with regard to gender and (dis)ability until the late 1960s (Essen, 2003). This segregation of girls and boys and the abled and the disabled parallels how organized sport is still formally and informally structured globally (see for example Messner, 2009). However, the situation in PE has slowly changed. As in many European countries, most of the Dutch PE classes today are co-educational. In addition, not only is PE compulsory, current educational policy requires schools to include and integrate students with physical impairments in regular PE as much as possible (de Klerk, 2007). This means that Dutch physical educators may be confronted on a daily basis with what they see as important differences in gender and (dis)ability. Not only do they have to make sense of these differences, they have to manage them too.

Another factor that possibly impacts the discursive constructions about the body used by secondary school physical educators is the uprise of the new public health discourse. This discourse constructs risk management and lifestyle choices as important factors that determine health and suggests that too many children are overweight or obese. An increase in the number of PE hours is often put forward as a possible solution to this 'problem' (Anonymous, 2009; NOC*NSF, 2010). Yet in contrast to other countries, such as Australia, Britain and New Zealand (Evans & Davies, 2004a; Wright, 2009), teaching 'health' has not explicitly and formally become part of the Dutch physical education curriculum. Considering the pervasiveness of the new public health discourse in the Netherlands, the way physical educators construct health and the way this ties into their constructions of gender and (dis)ability, may however be crucial to how they understand, discipline and teach the body.

Methodology

Congruent with our theoretical underpinnings, this paper employs a discourse analysis that draws on Foucault's work. As Graham (2005) argued, this type of research "aspires to dissect, disrupt and render the familiar strange" (p. 4) by interrogating statements that work to (re)secure dominant relations

of power. We are concerned with how discourses work to produce meaning as well as particular objects and subjects in the physical education context. Hence, we conducted semi-structured interviews with nine secondary school PE teachers in the Netherlands. This qualitative approach allows for in-depth exploration of the content and workings of discourses that are part of the repertoire of physical educators (Patton, 1990; Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

The length of the interviews varied from an hour to an hour and a half. The interviews were topical, open-ended and largely conversational. We prepared a list of topics to allow room for the interviewees to shape the direction of the interview according to what they believed to be important issues. We asked our participants about their daily routines in PE, their objectives for PE, their definitions of health, and how they perceived and managed body differences between their students relating to gender, ability and health.

The PE teachers were interviewed by the primary researcher, who is experienced in qualitative methodology. We used purposive sampling and the snowball method (Patton, 1990) to select physical educators from a variety of backgrounds (differing in age, gender, years of experience in teaching PE, and school type). The majority of Dutch PE teachers can be described as white and middle class[1]. It is not surprising then that even though we made an attempt to create a diverse sample, the resulting group consisted of white middle class teachers. Six of the participants were male and three female. They ranged in age from 22 to 56 years. At the time of the interviews the participants were employed at one of 7 different secondary schools and this is where the interviews were conducted. As Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) indicate, six interviews are usually enough to identify basic themes. Similarly, we were able to identify the basic themes after six interviews and theoretical saturation was reached after nine.

All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. Interview transcripts were read several times and analyzed continually for emerging themes. First, the researchers engaged in close readings of the interview transcripts and coded the data in the margins. Secondly we identified dominant themes related to the focus and research questions of this study. These were discussed in a session with all four researchers. Subsequently, we looked for

evidence and counterevidence that confirmed or challenged the formulation of the theme and refined the themes. Qualitative research software WeftQDA was used to organize the data. In this article, we refer to our participants by pseudonyms.

Results and discussion

We analyzed the data with regard to categorization and normalization practices related to differences in gender, ableness and health. These results are not meant to represent an exhaustive account of all discursive constructions related to gender, (dis)ability and health that PE teachers use. We use the data to show a tension in the knowledge that discursive constructions produce about the essence of body differences. The two discourses 'the body as a given' and 'the body as a project' thus reflect how the discursive constructions of gender, ability and health that our participants used converge and how they diverge.

The body as a given: a discourse of naturalness

The narratives of our participants about the body show that they considered some differences in performance levels and attitude of students to be attributable to naturally occurring bodily variations. These physical educators drew on what we call a 'discourse of naturalness'. Their constructions of the body as a site for gender difference offer a clear illustration of this discourse of naturalness. The ideas of PE teachers on ableness and health also drew (in part) on this discourse of naturalness. Depending on the context the teachers linked the differences in performance levels and attitude of students to the assumed unchangeable nature of bodies. In the discourse of naturalness, these teachers considered the body to be a natural given with which they have to work.

Gender

Perceived gender differences in the performance of students in physical activities, dominated the accounts of our participants about their teaching practices. Their discursive constructions often reproduced dominant

ideas on gender that assume that boys are more active and generally better at physical activities than girls because of their biological make-up. When asked about noticeable differences between his students, Peter for instance said 'In general, boys are often better; they are faster, stronger, jump higher'. Thomas drew on biomedical knowledge and the gender segregation in the Olympic Games to explain his ideas about gender differences:

> I don't see boys and girls as different people, but I do see them as different bodies. Women just have a different metabolism and different muscle growth and well, you need to take that into account. So I do use different standards for boys and girls. Look at the Olympic games for example […] If you look at the world record for running the 100 meters, that number differs for men and women and that is just a matter of their bodies being built differently.

Thomas' narrative shows how he uses scientific and popular knowledge as a source for categorizing boys and girls as 'different bodies'. His statement that differences need to be taken into account in PE, hints at the implications of the use of categorization as a technique of power on daily classroom practices. In the following excerpt Ben explained that he uses 'differentiated teaching' as a practice to manage body differences between students:

> *How do you deal with issues arising from physical differences between boys and girls?*
> Well, then you will be bound to differentiated teaching. That means you divide the class into several groups based on their skill level. Because there are of course also very athletic girls and not very skillful boys, so you can't say 'girls here and boys there'. It's not that black and white.

Gloria took the construction of gender differences in physical activities a step further. Her categorization of boys and girls rests not only on what she perceives as differences in skill levels between boys and girls, but also on differences in attitude. She explained:

> The skill level [of boys and girls] differs. That's the case with physical skills but also with the energy, the effort and the attitude. Boys are just more active. Girls are much more passive […] But that is just a given.

Gloria's last comment exemplifies the taken-for-granted nature of her assumptions about gender differences. To Gloria, differences between boys and girls in physical education were evident, natural and unchangeable. Similarly, Larsson, Fagrell and Redelius (2009) found that Swedish PE teachers regarded perceived dominance of boys in skill level to be normal or natural and something to be managed rather than challenged. The idea that boys are stronger, more active and better at physical activities than girls illustrates processes of normalization that attach a value to the categories 'boys' and 'girls'.

However, some teachers constructed the skill level of boys and girls as being dependent on the domain in which they are performing. Girls were said to be better at gymnastics and dance (activities related to femininity), as Ben explained:

> I think girls are as good at physical activities as boys. There are certain activities that require flexibility, gymnastics for example, where girls have an easier time. That's because some boys this age gain enormously in length very quickly […] and they have trouble with […] knowing where their limbs are. Girls are a bit more compact. So then it is easier to perform certain movements.

In contrast, boys are said to be better at team game sports like soccer, basketball and volleyball. But, as Thomas explained, there seem to be exceptions:

> A boy who is going through puberty grows very quickly. His legs will become very very long. If he then has to play soccer, you can be sure he'll have problems.

Although this statement seems like an example of resistance against dominant notions on gender, it is congruent with the discourse of the body as a

given. The lesser performance level of boys when compared to the performance of girls was constructed as natural, depending on the biological make-up and 'natural' development of the body. As these two examples illustrate, some participants attributed the poor performances of boys to their physical development in puberty, which was perceived as a 'naturally' occurring process over time. None of the accounts show evidence of poor performances of girls being attributed to similar natural developmental processes.

In summary, our participants used their experiences and drew on knowledge from human sciences to discursively construct boys and girls as 'naturally' different. Boys were described as strong, active, physically capable, and naturally endowed with the capacities to perform well in sports (especially masculine ones like soccer and basketball). Boys' bodies were thus constructed by these physical educators as the norm in the PE context. Girls bodies' were placed in a category that was seen as the polar opposite (or as complementary, see Wright 1996). They were described as passive and failing to meet up to the standards (set by the boys) except when our participants talked about activities that they considered feminine, such as dancing and gymnastics. These teachers' use of the discourse of naturalness to create these categories exemplifies how our participants normalized boys and girls performances in PE. This was reflected in their use of practices that incorporated differentiated teaching.

Health and disability

When physical educators talked about differences between students in ability and health, they also drew on the discourse of the body as a given. As the following examples illustrate, many teachers defined health as the lack of diseases and impairments; specifically a 'healthy' body was seen as one that functions well without any problems. The narratives of Peter and Gloria illustrate how they drew on scientific biomedical knowledge to categorize bodies as 'healthy' and 'unhealthy'. Accordingly, they see the health as something that is measurable:

> *What do you teach students about health?*
> Peter: Usually I ask them if they've eaten before class and I tell them something about food and energy and also about unhealthy food and how that can make your arteries clog. Once we were running with heart rate monitors on, so then I taught them about the heart and exercise. I do the same with BMI and fat percentages. I try to explain all things that have to do with health. It's actually more a topic for biology class, but in PE I can explain it in relation to a practical situation.
>
> *How would you define health?*
> Gloria: Well… that everything functions properly; your heart, your lungs. Students tend to find PE tiring. You could measure their heart rate and see it's extremely high. (Gloria)

Kim voiced the difficulty of defining 'health' that emerged in many of the interviews. In her attempt to answer the question "what is health?" she pointed to feelings and bodily experiences:

> What is health anyway? That's difficult. That you feel fit, not that you run up a flight of stairs and are out of breath when you reach the top. That's pretty much unhealthy I would say […] It's actually very difficult to answer that question, 'what is health?'

Similarly, John defined health in terms of what it is not:

> [Health is] that you don't feel limited by your body. That you can do the things you want to do.

In general, the discursive constructions of these teachers show that they linked health to a 'properly' functioning physiological body, associating it with heart, lungs, muscles, cholesterol, etc. Some also associated health with feeling good and not feeling limited. Here, again, the body is considered a natural given. The physical 'equipment' a person is 'born' with (whether it be a related to diseases, impairments or gender), is presumed to determine for a large part what he or she can and cannot do. This was also evident when teachers talked about students with impairments and disabilities. For

example, Gloria was very clear about her expectations of students with a disability.

> They [students with disabilities] just do what they can […]. But someone who only has one hand can't really jump over a box or hang from something now can they? I keep these kinds of impairments in mind though.

These physical educators contended that the level of performance is dependent on what they see as naturally given physical attributes of a person. In doing so, they place responsibility for this performance outside the individual. Although most of these teachers defined health as the lack of impairments and diseases, they explicitly resisted categorizing sick or disabled students as unhealthy or incapable. There seemed to be a taboo on any kind of explicit negative labeling of (chronically) ill or disabled students because they were considered not to be responsible for their failing bodies. However, the following fragment from the interview with John illustrates how his definition of health ('that you don't feel limited by your body') implicitly produced the disabled body as unhealthy and deviant:

> Within the possibilities you [a person with an impairment] do as best you can. It will never be top sport but that isn't the point. You'll have to live with your impairment and you'll have to learn to live with the fact that you'll feel limited very often. […]
> *And do you think these students can be healthy?*
> Yes, of course. Yes.
> *I was just thinking about your definition [of health; see above]. Isn't that incompatible?*
> No it isn't. Because when a boy or a girl with a physical impairment has an accurate self-image, he won't think that he'll run the hundred meters in nine seconds.

This implicit negative connotation assigned to the disabled body, exemplifies the workings of normalization and points to the abled norm in physical education (Fitzgerald, 2005).

Our participants' use of knowledge that is produced within the discourse of naturalness strengthened dominant categories of gender and ability that were once used to formally structure Dutch PE (Essen, 2003). This discourse constructed the body as a biologically determined 'given' and justified categorization and normalization. Normalization took place within categories as well; when our participants categorized students as 'girl', 'boy', 'abled' or 'disabled' they constructed seemingly homogeneous groups with 'fixed' characteristics. This produced particular practices such as 'differentiated teaching', that is based on the perceived skill level related to differences between students in gender, ability and health that PE teachers constructed. This finding is similar to findings of Larsson et al. (2009) that Swedish PE teachers perceived gender differences as natural and managed these differences by using differentiated teaching rather than by challenging gender stereotypes. These teachers expected each student to work within his or her possibilities and assumed these possibilities vary. Similarly, the tasks PE teachers in the current study presented to students depended on how they perceived body differences between students. Discursive constructions shaped how and when these teachers held students accountable for their performance.

The body as a project: a discourse of transformation

In addition to the discourse of naturalness that these physical educators used when talking about the body as gendered and abled, they also discursively constructed the body as a project that individuals can and should work on to accomplish an ideal physical look and feel. We call this a 'discourse of transformation'. Here, teachers constructed the body as an open, dynamic, and malleable entity that can and should be changed and molded to fit normative standards of a 'good' body. The ideas of these PE teachers about body size and health illustrate this construction of the body as a project. Our participants used this discourse of transformation to assign responsibility for the level of physical performance to the individual. This stands in sharp contrast to the knowledge and practices that were produced in the discourse of naturalness. Moral judgment of the body was thus embedded in the discourse of transformation through disciplinary power practices of normalization.

Health and body size

As we mentioned before, lack of disease was an important element in our participants' categorization of healthy bodies when they used the discourse of naturalness. However, lack of 'fat' was the most important norm around which they structured their definitions of health. The idea of 'not being overweight' clearly dominated the different constructions our participants used to make sense of the concept health. Body size and shape were key characteristics by which our participants categorized 'healthy' and 'unhealthy' bodies; they often conflated an 'unhealthy' body with a 'fat' body. Most seemed to have internalized the dominant new public health discourse that emphasizes the health dangers of overweight and obesity and focuses on lifestyle choices (see also Evans, 2003; Wright & Harwood, 2009) and reproduced it by constructing the body as a project. Our participants often used bio-medical 'expert' knowledge from the new public health discourse as a source for categorizing bodies as 'healthy' and 'unhealthy'. Peter, for example, replied to the question "What is health?" by saying "… that you don't get any diseases because you're fat". Emma talked about the necessity for students to balance energy intake through eating habits and energy output through exercise behavior to prevent becoming 'fat'. John's narrative illustrates the centrality of the idea that being 'fat' is unhealthy for our participants' constructions of health:

> *You mentioned that students are getting unhealthy. How do you notice this?*
> I've been saying for at least ten years that I seriously worry about kids who are getting way too heavy […] Overweight and obesity are increasing tremendously. I believe it's a time bomb for our health care.

Like John, most of our participants conflated an 'unhealthy' body with a 'fat' body.

In addition, many participants considered 'fat' students to perform at lower skill levels compared to students who are not 'fat'. According to Chris 'fat' students are not only unhealthy, but their performance in PE is often below standard.

> *How do you determine if students are good in sports or not?*
> Uh… you can tell by their body size… if you see that a student is fat, you get the feeling that he or she is probably not very good [in PE].

Thus, our participants divided the bodies of students into categories of 'healthy' and 'unhealthy'. Through normalization, the discursive constructions of health used by these physical educators became laden with value: they produced fat bodies as 'unhealthy', 'bad', 'abnormal', and 'deviant'. Simultaneously, non-fat bodies were produced as 'healthy', 'good', and 'normal'. Furthermore, through their dividing practices related to health these teachers – often unintentionally – reproduced and reinforced slenderness ideals (Tinning & Glasby, 2002).

Thomas was the only teacher who was reflexive about the social construction of norms about body size and health. At one point in the interview, he explicitly resisted normalizing judgment by critically assessing the idea that being 'fat' is unhealthy:

> Who am I to say 'that's wrong' or 'that is not an ideal body'? People are different […] Standards of health are socially created and enforced.

Yet as the following section shows, Thomas did not reject the discourse of transformation entirely. He used this discourse when talking about the responsibilities of students regarding their bodies and their health. The next paragraph illustrates disciplinary effects of categorization and normalization by showing how our participants drew on notions of responsibility and awareness to push students to transform their bodies according to socially established body norms.

Responsibility and awareness

The major difference between the construction of health in terms of body size and the one drawing on the discourse of naturalness lies in the assignment of responsibility. The idea that the body is a project that students can

and should work on emerged frequently from the interviews. Within their discursive constructions of health defined by lack of disease or impairment, our participants did not assign responsibility to the individual; they blamed 'nature' for variations in bodies. Thus differences between boys and girls and abled and disabled students in their performance on physical activities were normalized and justified. However, in their discursive constructions of good health as a lack of 'fat' or overweight, our participants did assign responsibility for the body to the individual student and his or her behavior. Congruent with knowledge produced in the new public health discourse, they pointed to the moral responsibility of 'fat' students to normalize their bodies (see also Evans & Davies, 2004a). Thomas' narrative shows how his practices related to health involve a push for self-monitoring and self-discipline.

> Something we do [in PE] with health is that in third grade [of secondary school], students have an assignment on health. It consists of a case where a friend who is overweight has to lose weight. […] And then the student has to write a plan on how the friend should do this. We do this to make students aware of the fact that when they have a problem with their weight they can think of a way to do something about it themselves.

This illustrates the capillary nature of power since it is not just the teachers who discipline students to become 'normal'. Students are also pushed to judge and discipline each other by making them 'aware' and 'responsible' through this assignment. The emphasis on awareness and responsibility were also evident in the comments Chris and Johns made about their students:

> Kids who are on the fat side and who are not very physically capable often become the class comedian. They engage in a lot of self-mockery 'yeah, because I'm fat!' And then I think 'well *do* something about it' (Chris, his emphasis).
>
> We try to teach students to take responsibility for their own health, for their own body […]. That requires an active involvement in your own life. That you don't take it for granted and wake up when you're 18 and think 'Hey, what happened?' You were there. So awareness is what we try to teach them in a playful way. (John)

These narratives illustrate how physical educators attempt to mobilize self-monitoring and self-discipline through this use of the discourse of transformation. This mobilization illustrates the subtlety of micro level disciplinary power (Foucault, 1979a) as it is implicated in the discourse of transformation.

Our data also show other examples of explicit monitoring and disciplining practices of these physical educators. Similar to findings of Burrows and Wright (2007), who demonstrated how educators engage in constant monitoring of behavior of students that they presume to be related to health, some of our participants scrutinized behaviors that they considered to be of influence on the body size of students such as eating and engaging in physical activity. Emma and Ben, for example, attempted to change what they perceived as unhealthy behavior of students by addressing the issue in a conversational manner:

> There was this girl who was so fat that she was really limited in her movements, also in sports. I brought it up very carefully and told her that she didn't exercise enough. (Emma)

> Sometimes children are overweight, you can see that very clearly. You don't approach these students immediately during the first class, but after a while I go to them and ask 'Do you do any exercising?' and 'What do you eat at home?' (Ben)

This illustrates how categorization (that determines what is considered an 'unhealthy' body) and normalization (that determines that an 'unhealthy' body is bad and should be changed) produce power effects that impact upon students' bodies and shapes how teachers interact with students.

The implication of personal responsibility embedded in the discourse of transformation adds a moral dimension to normalization processes. Through their use of discursive constructions related to health and body

size, our participants produced 'fat' bodies as deviant and undesirable. This moral dimension repeatedly emerged from the data. For example, Kim, Emma and Peter described students who they categorized as 'fat' as 'scruffy', 'lazy' and 'unhygienic', pointing to unwashed clothes, greasy hair and bad skin to communicate disgust and repulsion. These findings echo the findings of other critical research on the effect of the new public health discourse. Such research shows that discursive constructions of being 'fat' are not just about being unhealthy; they are also (more implicitly) about being deviant: ugly, lazy, disorderly and repulsive (Puhl, 2007; Rich & Evans, 2005; Saguy & Riley, 2005). In other words, in the new public health discourse 'fat' people are constructed as failed citizen (Burrows & Wright, 2007; Halse, 2009) who have chosen a 'unhealthy' lifestyle. This adds extra weight to processes of categorization and normalization through which physical educators may (unwittingly) mobilize shame and blame to discipline the bodies of their students (Leahy, 2009).

Concluding remarks

This research focused on the ways in which practices of categorization and normalization are embedded in the discursive constructions about body differences related to gender, ability and health that physical educators use. Our results show how categorization and normalization are embedded in two distinct discourses that our participants used to make sense of body differences of their students; the discourse of naturalness and the discourse of transformation. The discursive constructions of gender, (dis)ability and health that our participants used converged in these two discourses: both discourses produce knowledge about the nature or essence of body differences. Furthermore, these discourses produced body norms in the PE context in a similar way and shaped how our participants said they looked at and interacted with students. Congruent with findings in previous research (e.g. Azzarito et al., 2006; Larsson et al., 2009; Wright, 1996) our data suggest that these Dutch PE teachers implicitly constructed a norm that is male, abled and slender. Deviance was simultaneously produced in the interviews through processes of categorization and normalization as all that does not fit this norm. Possibly this disempowers certain groups such as female, disabled,

and fat students who are considered to act or be different (i.e. less capable) in PE (Fitzgerald, 2005; Martino & Beckett, 2004; Sykes & McPhail, 2008).

It is not surprising that we found normalizing tendencies in the discursive constructions that our participants used, since our Foucauldian framework directed our attention toward ever present disciplinary practices and power processes related to the body. However, our results show an interesting divergence in the disciplinary practices that were produced as a result of the use of the two discourses we identified. Our participants said they accepted deviance that was produced through their use of the discourse of naturalness. They viewed girls and disabled students as less capable or 'lacking' in PE and concluded 'that's just the way it is'. This justified and naturalized dividing practices based on these perceived differences between students. Although this practice (re)produced stereotypes, it did enable these teachers to engage in differentiated teaching that assumed embodied heterogeneity. In contrast, their narratives show that our participants did not accept deviant bodies that were produced through their use of the discourse of transformation. Similar to findings of Leahy (2009) and Webb et al. (2008) our results indicate that practices of explicit discipline (including some shaming and blaming) ensued from the use of this discourse. In the interviews, our participants indicated that they sometimes pushed students to change their morally wanting, 'fat' bodies. This result suggests that categorization and normalization are not uniform disciplinary technologies that target the body. How each of them works out in PE practices seems to depend on how the essence of the body is discursively constructed at a specific time. As we have shown, the two discourses exist simultaneously in the PE context. In the interviews, our participants actively negotiated their use of the two discourses. The discursive practice they engaged in at a specific moment seemed to depend on the context and involved elements of choice. We do not know how these physical educators translate their use of the two discourses into daily PE practices, since we haven't observed their classes.

In conclusion, we have tried to show that the discourses these PE teachers used to understand differences imply power processes that constitute students and pedagogical practices in PE. Since PE is a compulsory subject in

Dutch secondary schools, bodies of all students become targets of power. The body norms that are constructed within this context seem stereotypical so that our analysis may seem to set teachers up as 'cultural dupes' who took on dominant discourses, who did not reflect on the contradictions between the two discourses or engage in resistance. Resistance, however, is only possible when subjects are aware of contradictions in the available discourses and when they occupy a subject position that allows them to construct new and subversive meanings (Cliff & Wright, 2010 p. 225-226). Yet, the availability of alternative discourses that these physical educators can draw on may have been limited by the subject positions they occupy within a web of power relations.

For example, discourses that attribute body differences to nature, especially those pertaining to gender and ability, dominate teacher education in PE and also the sport context in which most Dutch physical educators are highly involved (Jacobs et al., 2012). These discourses are possibly crucial to the (gendered) identification of PE teachers as athletes (Brown, 2005; Rich, 2004). Furthermore, PE has a marginal status in the Netherlands. It is often constructed as a non-academic subject and therefore the number of hours it is taught has declined (de Heer, 2000; Stegeman, 2004). The dominant discourse about health that produces knowledge about the body being a malleable entity, offers an opportunity for physical educators to increase the status of PE by stressing its contribution to the health and well-being of youth (Kougioumtzis et al., 2011). As we pointed out in the beginning of this paper, the topic of health is not formally part of the Dutch PE curriculum. Thus, PE teachers are not trained to discuss 'health' or to critically reflect on dominant social constructions related to it. It is therefore not surprising that the illustrated techniques of power are sustained by PE teachers; they may choose to draw on dominant discourses about the body to negotiate the status of their profession and to maintain their positive identification with sport.

The (moral) value that becomes attached to students' bodies through categorization and normalization may impact negatively on students' subjectivities and produce feelings and practices of exclusion in PE however (Fitzgerald, 2005; Sykes & McPhail, 2008; Wright, 1996). If PE teachers are to unsettle or

disrupt practices of categorization and normalization that produce normalcy and deviance, they need to have more discourses available to them and to become aware of and reflexive about the body norms they (re)produce in their discursive constructions about gender, health and (dis)ability.

In summary, we identified how discursive constructions about gender, health and (dis)ability that physical educators used converged in two discourses that produced body norms and knowledge about the essence of the body: the discourse of naturalness and the discourse of transformation. We argued that these discursive constructions diverged in the disciplinary practices that they produced. Additionally, we indicated some of the possible constraining effects of discursive practices of PE teachers on certain groups of students whose bodies do not conform to norms set within the PE context. However, as Foucault (1988) points out, discourses and related disciplinary technologies are not only repressive; they can also be productive. Little is known about the kind of disciplinary practices that can disrupt dominant categorizations and normalizations and that will stimulate learning without negatively impacting on students' subjectivities. This offers an interesting venue for further research on the workings of disciplinary power in a (physical) educational context.

Notes

1. Personal communication, C. van Doodewaard, Royal Dutch Association for Physical Educators (KVLO).

3.
A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS: CONSTRUCTING (NON-) ATHLETIC BODIES.

Abstract:
In this article we explore body norms Dutch youth create in their discursive constructions of athletic and (non-)athletic bodies and how these norms are enforced by the Panopticon (Foucault, 1979) and the Synopticon (Mathiesen, 1997). Our methodology consisted of auto-driven photo elicitation group interviews with 42 secondary school students. The results indicate the complexity of the discursive constructions that youth use. We created seven visual metaphors to illustrate the various narratives that emerged from the data: the Male Soccer Player; the Field Hockey Girl; the Female Boxer; the Male Dancer; the Fatty; the Sumo Wrestler; and the Computer Nerd. These visual metaphors show these teenagers conflated dominant discourses about health and appearance and how their discursive constructions of athleticism intersected with notions about gender, sexuality, social class and race. Furthermore, our data illustrate how our participants reproduced and resisted dominant discourses that are produced by visual media.

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In the past decade, several scholars have argued that how young people see themselves and others in sport is inextricably connected to the ways they interpret media imagery of the body (e.g. Azzarito, 2009; Azzarito & Harrison, 2008; Thorpe, 2008). However, media are not the only source by which imagery and knowledge about the body are produced and communicated. Knowledge about the body in relation to sport and physical activity is also communicated, reproduced and challenged through interaction with others in everyday life.

The overlapping discourses about appearance and about health communicate knowledge about the physically (in)active or (non-)athletic body. A dominant discourse about appearance suggests sport and physical activity are tools that produce a desirable body. This desirable body is gendered. The desirable body for girls and women in a Western context has been constructed as slender, white, firm, non-aggressive and passive (Bordo, 2003; Markula, 1995). The desirable male body has been constructed as lean, muscular, tall, strong, aggressive and competitive (Drummond, 2003; Gorely et al., 2003).

In contrast and yet similarly, popular discourses about health construct sport and physical activities as means to manage body size and body weight. In an attempt to battle what they perceive as the 'obesity epidemic', medical professionals, governments, schools, television producers etcetera convey messages about health in which they try to make people – and youth specifically – aware of the importance of being physically active and the dangers of being and eating 'fat' (e.g. Evans, 2003; Gard & Wright, 2001; Wright, 2009).

Discourses about health and appearance may intersect since they both generate knowledge about which bodies are considered normal and desirable and which are not. These discourses furthermore construct sport and physical activity as important tools to achieve that normality and desirability. Consequently, the increasing emphasis on the appearance of the body in contemporary Western societies has intensified practices of inclusion and exclusion in physical activity settings based on visible physical differences. Azzarito (2009) and Fitzgerald (2005) contend that those whose bodies do not conform to dominant norms of physical appearance, such as the disabled, the fat or racial minorities, are often marginalized in or excluded from physical activity settings. Attention to these issues of marginalization

and exclusion, requires an understanding of how the physical appearance of the bodies they see around them informs youths' discursive constructions of athletic and non-athletic bodies, that is, of athleticism.

The Panopticon and the Synopticon

According to Foucault (1979a) looking at others is central to understanding the disciplinary power of discourses on the body. He uses the metaphor of a prison (the Pantopticon) to explain this. In the Panopticon, guards observe prisoners who are isolated in separate cells from a central watch tower; the few see the many. Because prisoners can never be certain whether they are being watched, the fear of being observed is ever present. This fear, Foucault argues, pushes people to internalize the disciplinary regime to which they are subjected and use self-surveillance and self-discipline to adhere to norms produced by prevailing discourses. This symbolizes how via the Panopticon, power disciplines the body in relation to power/knowledge production around that body (Foucault, 1972b; 1979a). In this paper, we use the concept of the Panopticon to explore how the discursive constructions of athleticism that youth use are informed by the way they look at bodies around them, and how this generates discipline and surveillance in the area of sport and physical activities.

In a critique of Foucault's theory, Mathiesen (1997) argues that especially in high-modern 'viewer society' it is not just the few who see the many (Panopticon) but also the many who see the few (Synopticon). Internet, television, advertisements and other popular visual media paint a (gendered) picture of the ideal, desirable body that leaves little room for variation and has come to represent happiness and success (Bordo, 2003; Wright, 2004). This dominant construction of the body is controlled by a few (the producers of popular visual media such as television, films, video games, etc. who provide material images of embodied discourses) and seen by many (everyone who engages with popular visual media). In this study we use the concept of the Synopticon to explain how certain body images become dominant and desirable through the discursive constructions that youth use while others are marginalized. According to Mathiesen (1997) the Synopticon disciplines

the consciousness. The Synopticon may therefore seriously impact the ways young people construct and experience their own and others' bodies because it obstructs the process of critical reflection on dominant discourses that is crucial in challenging this often oppressing dominant imagery.

Dominant imagery and dominant discourses can be challenged however. According to Foucault (1987) reproduction of dominant discourses and resistance to these discourses go hand in hand. He argues that there are 'points of resistance' that can produce subtle shifts in power relations. These points of resistance are transitory and distributed in an irregular fashion over power relations (Foucault, 1978 as cited in Markula & Pringle, 2006 p. 88). We attempt to show the complex and convoluted ways in which Dutch youth discursively construct (non-)athletic bodies by using body imagery. This research project therefore includes an analysis of both points of resistance to and reproduction of dominant discourses.

Images of the physically (in)active Body

Several critical feminist scholars have emphasized the importance of body imagery in discursive practices related to physical activity (e.g. Azzarito, 2009; Azzarito & Sterling, 2010; B. Hardin & M. Hardin, 2004; Markula, 1995). Azzarito (2009), for example, used a selection of body images drawn from sport and fitness magazines to explore young people's construction of the ideal body in physical education. Her findings show that the construction of the ideal feminine body "[…] was represented by a significantly narrow choice of pictures displaying ideals of sexualized slenderness and fashion, the white feminine fit body" (p. 35). In contrast, the construction of the ideal masculine body promoted a wider choice of physical activities and differences in muscularity, shape and athleticism for boys. This study only partly explains youths' concepts of the body in relation to physical activity since its focus on the construction of an ideal body leaves untouched constructions of non-ideal, undesirable bodies and how these function in physical activity settings. Furthermore, Azzarito did not explore how discourses about health may play a role in the construction of athleticism as well.

The dominant discourse about health can however be considered a very

powerful pedagogy that teaches youth values, attitudes and beliefs about the relation between bodily appearance and physical activities (e.g. Evans et al., 2008b; Rail, 2009; Wright, 2009). Evans et al. (2008b), for instance, argue that in recent years popular media have not only sought to 'entertain' people by imagery that is pleasurable, media have also attempted to 'educate' and promote lifestyle changes, by promoting market behaviors from which commercial companies profit or by pursuing altruistic motives such as promoting better health. Their research shows how popular pedagogical narratives of body shape, exercise and food delivered by popular media appeal to the hopes and dreams of young people to achieve happiness and success. Through their engagement with and interpretation of visual imagery related to 'health', youth attempt to embody ideals of what it means to be a 'good', 'attractive', 'healthy' and 'sporty' body, sometimes with the detrimental effect of developing an eating disorder (Evans et al., 2008b).

Rail (2009) found that Canadian youth who participated in her study seemed more concerned about 'looking good' and 'not being fat', than about 'being healthy' (p. 148). Burrows (2008) noticed a similar preoccupation with appearance in conceptions about health of New Zealand school children. The youth in her study said they 'looked' at a person (their size and shape, their eating and exercising behavior) to determine whether or not she or he was healthy. This suggests that young people believe health can be 'read off' the body. However, neither Rail nor Burrows explored in detail how discourses about appearance are incorporated in the discursive constructions of athleticism that youth use.

Since media often celebrate body images that are unrealistic and young people's capacities to distinguish real from unreal are hampered by the Synopticon (Azzarito, 2010b), their increasing immersion in visual culture requires youth to negotiate cultural messages about the body. An exploration of this negotiation requires methodologies that might generate new ways of understanding how young people perceive and construct their own and others' bodies in relation to sport and physical activities. The current study uses a participatory visual methodology to explore which body norms are constructed by Dutch youth in their discursive constructions of

(non-)athletic bodies and how these norms may be enforced by panoptic and synoptic power.

Methodology

We used a participatory photographic methodology since this gives youth the opportunity to creatively express their own meanings and understandings of the body and enhance their reflexivity when combined with interviews (Azzarito, 2010b; Clark-Ibáñes, 2004). Most research that uses a participatory photographic methodology to explore how youth construct physicality focuses on the spatiality or geography of their embodiment (e.g. Azzarito & Sterling, 2010; Colls & Hörschelmann, 2009). Our research combines the inductive aspect of a participatory methodology with a focus on the interpretation of and meaning making around body imagery as it is often used in Photo Elicitation interviews. We asked research participants to bring their own photos that were later used as visual stimuli in a group interview. Clark-Ibáñez (2004) calls this the 'auto-driven photo elicitation interview'. She asserts that the use of a combination of photographic material with interviews in research with children and young people works well, because it engages them and provides them with a tangible visible probe. We chose to combine participatory photography with group interviews, because the focus of this study was to explore not just dominant discourses youth used to construct the (non-)athletic body but also the way these dominant ideas and images were challenged and resisted. In the group setting, young people were often confronted with ideas that differed from their own. We facilitated discussion to explore the negotiation of and points of resistance to dominant notions of athleticism.

A total of 42 secondary school students, 23 girls and 19 boys, aged 16-18 from two secondary schools in the Netherlands participated in this research project as part of their social science class. We asked these students to bring a photo of a person they believed looked like they would be good at sports, physical activities and physical education (an 'athletic' looking person) and a photo of a person they believed looked like they would not be very good at sports, physical activities and physical education (a 'non-athletic' looking person). We suggested they could use a digital camera or cell phone, find a photo on the internet, or devise another creative way of selecting or producing a photo.

Subsequently we divided them into focus groups of four to five students. The students were asked to reflect on the photos they had brought. The primary researchers asked questions such as "Tell me about this photo. What do we see here?" and "Why did you choose to bring this photo?" After listening to the initial reflection of the student who brought the photo, other members of the group were invited to respond to the reflections and the photo.

The interviews lasted approximately one hour, were tape recorded and transcribed. To guarantee anonymity, we gave each student a pseudonym. We analyzed the interviews through a process of systematic organization and coding (Patton, 1990) and searched for dominant as well as marginal themes. First, after careful reading and re-reading, the interviews were coded in the margins of the transcripts. Second, the codes were organized in different categories, each representing a visual metaphor. Finally, the categories were grouped in two main findings. The content of the participants' photos was not analyzed since our purpose in using a participatory photography methodology was to engage students in the research process and enhance their reflexivity on the subject (Clark-Ibáñes, 2004).

Results

Overall the data indicate that the constructions of athleticism used by these youth intersected with notions about gender, sexuality, race, social class, age and health. The constructions were fluid and influenced by interactions in the group interviews. Our participants constantly negotiated and challenged their own and others' discursive constructions. In the following section, we describe two main findings: "gendered and sexualized images of physically active bodies" and "images of 'unhealthy' and 'non-athletic' bodies". Congruent with our visual methodology we created seven visual metaphors that reflect our data and paint a picture of the bodies constructed by our participants. We use the visual metaphors as a heuristic device to help unpack some of the complexities involved in the use of various discourses about the

body. As such, the metaphors guide our argument through the complex and convoluted discursive constructions that our participants used.

Gendered and sexualized images of physically active bodies

The Male Soccer Player and the Field Hockey Girl

The participants often reproduced dominant gendered discourses on sport and the body when they commented on the photos. They drew on physical, behavioral or personal characteristics to discursively construct both male and female athletic bodies. They associated physical characteristics such as muscles (e.g. "a six-pack"); upright posture; slenderness; a tanned complexion; and nice (sporty) clothes with athleticism. Furthermore, they assumed athletic looking people to be self-confident; energetic; extraverted; competitive; strong; youthful; happy and healthy. The comments made by Tahlia and Rachel about a photo of three runners (two men and one woman) reflect the complexity of their constructions of athletic bodies:

> Interviewer: What can you tell me about the picture?
> Tahlia: Well, they look healthy and muscular. The face of the man on the left looks a bit old, but if you can still run at that age I think you are athletic. And the others look really healthy and happy. They have good posture. And those clothes too!
> Rachel: I think his complexion also plays a role. When I think of someone who's athletic I picture a person with a bit of a tan for some reason. For me that fits the description of being healthy.

Tahlia and Rachel used multiple traits (muscularity, age, posture, clothes, and skin complexion) to discursively construct the athletic body. Furthermore, they conflate athleticism with good health that, similar to findings of Evans et al. (2008b), they associate with happiness. The following interview excerpts show how various participants construct an athletic look as something positive:

> Valery: I thought this one looks athletic.
> Interviewer: Can you explain why?
> Valery: It's a healthy guy with an athletic posture. I think his posture and his body are the main things that look athletic, active […] He's standing straight.
> Heather: He's smiling, he looks happy.
> Isabel: And he's not fat.
> Gillian: He feels comfortable in his body, you can tell. That's why I think he participates in sport. Or not, that's also a possibility…
> Nathan: I think he plays soccer twice a week.

> Britt: You can see he's active. He's very muscular. In this picture you can see a lot of muscles, so apparently he is very active in sport.
> Fiona: I think he definitely has a beautiful body.
> Britt: He is really triangular [broad shoulders and a small waist].

These quotations reflect the positive associations these youth assign to an athletic look for men or boys. Similar to findings of Gorely et al. (2003), the reflections of Britt and Fiona exemplify that they consider visible muscularity as a desirable masculine trait.

The desirable male athletic body our participants described can be symbolized by the Male Soccer Player. Soccer was often mentioned by our participants as a masculine sport. Soccer is considered *the* national sport in the Netherlands and perceived as important to Dutch national identity (Lechner, 2007). It has the largest percentage of male participants of any sport in the country and receives the most TV coverage of all sports. The effect of the Synopticon is evident in the way these respondents associated the male athletic body with soccer. Karen, Will, and Leila, for example, comment on pictures of athletic looking men as follows:

> Karen: He just looks like he does sports, soccer or something like that. Yes, I think he looks athletic. He's just in good shape.

> Leila: [Commenting on a picture of David Beckham without a shirt] I think those tattoos make him look even more athletic.
> Will: They [tattoos red] make you look more pugnacious; show you're prepared to give it all.

Leila: Dangerous.
Will: That you would even sacrifice your own body; that you'd be willing to go that far.
Leila: You're taking the words out of my mouth.

Whereas the desirable male athletic body is symbolized by the visibly muscular, competitive and aggressive Male Soccer Player, the desirable female athletic body looks different according to our participants. The desirable female athletic body is not supposed to be visibly muscular and aggressive. Alice and Mary construct an ideal female athletic body as firm but not muscular.

Alicia: A six-pack is not really feminine.
Mary: But when a guy has it, it's nice.
Interviewer: Would you want to look like that [muscular, with a six-pack]?
Mary: No. No, it's ok to have a firm body. But there is a difference between firm and muscular, and I don't think being muscular is nice for a girl.

Karen, Rachel and Aiden construct the ideal female athletic body as a slender, well-dressed and confident one:

Karen: I think she looks athletic. Her clothes and the way she walks, self-confident. And she's slender.
Rachel: She really has a determined way of walking.
Aiden: She looks like a typical hockey girl.

Although field hockey in the Netherlands is practiced by similar percentages of predominantly white, upper-class men and women, our participants mentioned female field hockey players quite often as exemplifying a desirable female appearance. These field hockey girls were not only described as slender and confident but also as rich and belonging to the upper class. The reactions of some of the boys in our study to body images that were interpreted as 'field hockey girls' (grinning, "whoo"-ing, raising of eyebrows) suggests that these girls were constructed as heterosexually attractive. Thus, we use the

metaphor of the Field Hockey Girl to symbolize the desirable female athletic body. Her appearance conforms to dominant standards of girlish heterosexual femininity (Boland, 2008). The Hockey Girl can be considered the Dutch version of the Future/Alpha Girl as described by Azzarito (2010a). She is powerful, sporty, fit, highly educated, and successful and thus partly contradicts discourses of the traditional feminine docile body. The Hockey Girl represents the preferred reading of Dutch National identity through her upper-class background and her blond hair, which symbolizes her extreme whiteness (Knoppen in Boland, 2008). Although her whiteness was not explicitly discussed in the group interviews, the visual material related to female athletic bodies did show an abundance of white bodies with long (often blond) hair. Thus, the Hockey Girl as the desirable feminine athletic body emerges at the intersection of gender, sexuality, social class and race. The visual metaphor of the Hockey Girl as reflecting desirable femininity in the Dutch context possibly exemplifies the Synopticon. Its desirability may be due to the upsurge of professional female field hockey players as "hot chicks" in popular media in the Netherlands[1]. After the success of the Dutch national women's field hockey team in the Olympic Games and World Championships over the past decade, media coverage of hockey games and participation of girls in field hockey have increased (Boland, 2008). The past years female elite hockey players have appeared regularly in television soaps, talk shows, entertainment programs and advertisements and as a result some have become national icons[2].

The narratives of Ally, Britt, Fiona and Ian illustrate assumptions of gender complementarity and heteronormativity in the discursive constructions of athletic bodies.

Ally: I think a girl should be kind and soft and a guy big and strong. That's probably the stereotype.
Britt: Girls should do stuff like dancing, gymnastic or ballet.
Fiona: I think it's human instinct that the man should protect the woman. I don't know, it's just in there somewhere. A strong muscular guy is more attractive than a shy chicken who cannot push anyone out of the way.

> Ian: I think it would be really unpleasant for a guy to be non-athletic. It's certainly the ideal of women to have a strong, tough man. If you fail at every exercise in gym class… that would be a turn off for girls I think. It's less important for a girl to be athletic because that's not what guys look for in a girl.

The participants used masculinity and femininity as bipolar concepts to explain the different appearance norms for women and men. They assumed men and women complement each other in behavior and appearance. This assumption illustrates how they take the heterosexual norm for granted and construct femininity in opposition to masculinity (Butler, 1990).

Ally's explicit reference to her idea being a stereotype shows a possible opening to challenge these gendered and sexualized constructions of the body and could be considered a point of resistance. However, our participants rarely questioned or resisted the dominant gendered and sexualized discourses on the body and physical activity while discursively constructing desirable athletic bodies. Butlers' theory (1990) on gender as performance can provide a possible explanation for this lack of resistance. She asserts that to avoid 'gender trouble', most people intentionally or unintentionally perform what they think it is to be male or female on a daily basis. Similarly, Paechter (2003) argues that since youth are often insecure about the appropriate performance of masculinity or femininity they often identify with and perform stereotypical hypermasculine and hyperfeminine roles and behaviors (p. 48). To our participants, the Male Soccer Player and the Field Hockey Girl seem to symbolize the norms for a desirable masculine and feminine appearance and performance. By identifying with these constructions of masculinity and femininity, these teenagers may avoid 'gender trouble'. Yet these constructions were not total. In the next section we demonstrate how there were points of resistance to dominant gendered and sexualized discourses in the narratives of some of the girls in our study when they talked about gender inappropriate bodies.

The Male Dancer and the Female Boxer

The disciplining effect of dominant imagery of the body becomes evident when our participants talked about bodies that transgress the dominant norms. Women with a muscular appearance or broad shoulders, for example, are considered athletic, but they are not considered to be heterosexually desirable by our participants. Additionally, they constructed fighting, physical contact and aggression as inappropriate for women. The athletic albeit undesirable body for women can be symbolized by the image of the Female Boxer. Her visible muscularity points to a lack of performed heterofemininity. The following excerpt shows how Darren, Will and Thomas hint at the possible consequences of practicing what they consider an inappropriate sport for women, while Leila resists their ideas on gender appropriate sports producing gender appropriate bodies.

> Darren: I once read that girls who played soccer stopped because their calves were getting too muscular. And those girls didn't want that, so they stopped playing soccer. That shows that muscles are more masculine.
> Will: I think that's why girls are more into dancing.
> Thomas: Or ballet.
> Leila: But dancing also makes your calves very muscular, you know.
> Will: Soccer makes your leg muscles bulge. Ballet will make your muscles longer, and I think that's more beautiful for girls.
> Darren: I think soccer is really a guys' sport. And rugby.
> Will: Rugby for example… I rather not see women wrestling, fighting and things like that. And boxing, I think that's really a guys' sport too.

This excerpt illustrates the possible disciplining power of the Panopticon, that is, of the biomedical and appearance discourses. According to Darren, girls internalize the feeling that they are being looked at with disapproval. He believes this encourages girls to discipline their bodies to the dominant heteronormative appearance. Leila, however, resists this idea by pointing out

that a traditionally feminine physical activity (dance) can also produce so-called masculine traits such as visible muscularity. Similarly, in the narrative below, some of the girls argue that they resist the negative evaluation of women playing sports that were defined as masculine (such as basketball, boxing or soccer).

> Leila: [About a classmate] Most people don't like her, but I respect her because she likes to play basketball and she just goes and does it. A lot of girls hold back because they think "I would like to play basketball but it's a guys' sport". But she just grabs a ball and will play basketball, regardless of what others think.
>
> Omar: Soccer is known as a guy thing.
> Penny: I don't know… I disagree. Maybe in the old days, but it's changing now. Do you still consider basketball a guys' sport for example?
> Omar: Yes, when I think of basketball I think of the NBA and men like Kobe Bryant.
> Penny: It's funny that we have such different views on that. I have played basketball myself and I have a completely different view, because I know a lot of female basketball players.
> Omar: Yeah, I don't know any.
> Penny: Basketball is another one of those sports where there is a lot of physical contact, but I don't think that necessarily makes it a guys' sport.
> Omar: I still think basketball is a guys' sport.

These narratives show Leila's and Penny's acceptance of girls and women who transgress the boundaries of traditional gender appropriateness in sports. Yet in other narratives the same girls drew on dominant discourses.

According to Paechter (2003) adolescents have a special investment in performing gender appropriate behavior through sports and physical activities because they are still struggling to work out what it means to be male or female. Not only do they try to perform what they see as desirable masculine

and feminine behavior, they also position themselves as oppositional to anything that is perceived as belonging to the other gender or to a non-heterosexual orientation (Paechter, 2003 p. 48). In explaining their ideas on athleticism and the body, our participants often constructed heteronormative images:

> Stella: I think very athletic men are more popular than very athletic women.
> Robert: Yeah, very athletic looking women are not very attractive
> Nathalie: You're talking about, like, body builders. But those hockey women for example, they *do* have high status.
> Stella: I think it relates to the idea that muscular men are attractive while muscularity for women is not done. Men feel they have to be more muscular than a girl. I don't think a female body builder attracts many guys.
>
> Paul: I would be surprised if a woman had very broad shoulders. I don't think that's beautiful or anything.
> Interviewer: And if a man has that?
> Paul: It's not like I am attracted to men or anything, but that would be more normal, better.

This last comment by Paul illustrates the emphasis some of the boys placed on their heterosexuality. When they were asked about the desirability or attractiveness of a man in a photo, several boys stated that they did not know or could not tell because they were not attracted to men. Girls on the other hand did not seem to have a problem evaluating the appearance of other females but did this through a heteronormative lens as we showed earlier.

The heteronormativity of their constructions of athleticism also emerged when our participants talked about what they considered feminine sports.

> Gillian: Gymnastics always has a bit of a negative connotation when men practice it.
> Nathan: Yeah, gay.
> Gillian: A teenaged guy would not admit to being a gymnast, unless he's really really good. And dancing I think is also a women's sport.

Leila: I have a boyfriend who dances and we get a lot of comments about that. They call him a faggot and things like that. Well, I know what he's really like and he's *not* gay.

We therefore depict the undesirable male sporting body using the visual metaphor of The Male Dancer.

The following discussion between Thomas, Jeff, Will and Darren shows how their ideas about gender appropriateness in sport prevent them from engaging in certain physical activities. The panoptic power dynamic leads them to discipline their practices in physical activities and place judgments on what they perceive as gender inappropriate activities:

Will: We once had to dance in physical education.
Jeff: All the boys said they were going to call in sick.
Will: With boys, it's your pride. You won't let yourself…
Jeff: It's not masculine.
Will: I refuse to dance.
Leila: But at a school dance it's not a problem. It's just when the steps are rehearsed that you don't want to anymore.
Darren: It's like with a little boy. You can give him a pink Barbie cup for drinking, but when he turns 5 or 6 he doesn't want the cup anymore. He then wants a blue cup, because it's more masculine. He believes it [the pink cup] is a girl's thing. That's what Will means. Your pride and your masculinity are at stake with dancing.

The comments of Aiden and Max about a photo of a teenager whom they perceive as non-athletic, show that they associate gender inappropriate sports with inappropriate, undesirable bodies for men:

Aiden: I think this is a boy who is worried more about his appearance than about sports.
Max: I agree. Maybe he plays badminton or something.
Interviewer: Why do you think that?
Max: He's quite skinny.

Aiden: A matchstick, too thin.
Max: No, I wouldn't think this guy is athletic.
Aiden: He's not fat, but he's not athletic either.

Some participants constructed a causal relationship between physical activity practices and the type of body they produce. They assume dance and badminton will make a person slender, soft and smooth, whereas soccer, basketball and martial arts will make someone muscular, strong and hard. Furthermore, in their discursive constructions of athleticism our participants normatively evaluate bodies/others. People who practice gender inappropriate sports – here symbolized by the Female Boxer and the Male Dancer – are marginalized because they are perceived to question desirable masculinity.

Images of 'unhealthy' and 'non-athletic' bodies

The Fatty

Our participants discursively constructed the non-athletic body consistently as a fat body. It started with some students refusing our suggestion of taking photographs of people they thought looked non-athletic. When asked about their reservations in the group interview Alicia, Mary and Leila communicated their unease as follows:

Alicia: It's rude to tell someone "Hi, can I take your picture, because I think you look non-athletic" meaning fat.
Mary: And when you look non-athletic, or when you're fat and someone wants to take your picture, you'll know that it's about your fatness […] It's an insult.

Leila: In all honesty, when you told us to find a photo of someone who looks non-athletic, I thought I had to find a fat person.

Like Leila, many students instantly equated a non-athletic appearance with fat, leading them to assume that we wanted to discuss photos of fat people. However, in the introduction of the assignment, we were very careful not to mention anything about 'fatness' or health.

For most of our participants however, fatness was the most important sign of a non-athletic body. Similar to Burrows (2008) and Rail (2009) we found that in their discursive constructions of the non-athletic body many of the teenagers participating in our study reproduced dominant notions from a neo-liberal health discourse that focuses on overweight and obesity. According to Nathan, Gillian, and Valery fat people are non-athletic because fatness makes it difficult to practice sports or physical activities.

> Nathan: I searched the internet and I used a lot of different search terms. Then I typed McDonalds [laughter] and I found a photo of two women who were huge and feeding each other hamburgers. But I didn't think that was appropriate, so I continued and then I found this photo. I think it's funny because this boy is practicing sports – he's in a gym – but he does not look athletic at all. He's quite chubby.
> Gillian: He's simply obese.
> Valery: It looks like he's having difficulties.
> Isabel: Yeah, like it takes a lot of effort for him to lift his leg.
> Gillian: That's also because, when you think about being athletic, you think being athletic is being slender. But it's also true that when you're that heavy, you're less mobile. And you need mobility in sport.
> Interviewer: And do you immediately think he's unhealthy too?
> All: Yes.

Since these dominant images about the non-athletic body centered on fatness, we use the visual metaphor of the Fatty to symbolize the non-athletic body. Our participants used words like pale; lazy; sluggish; unkempt; uninterested; unhappy; unhealthy; cheap; stupid; and having bad posture, to construct the non-athletic body. Thus, the Fatty represents moral failure as well as failure to comply with dominant norms of appearance. Chelsea and Jasmin for example, said:

> Chelsea: In this picture there is a non-athletic boy who I think looks kind of lazy. His expression is sluggish and he's also a bit chubby.

> Interviewer: A sluggish expression?
> Chelsea: Yes, he just looks lazy, not really athletic. His clothes are also worn out. He doesn't look like he is very active, more like he sits down all day playing video games.

> Jasmin: I think it's really disgusting.
> Interviewer: What is it exactly that you find disgusting?
> Jasmin: Well, all that fat. I really cannot understand how you can let yourself get this fat and not think 'Gee, let me go out for a run every day and do some sit-ups'. That you can look like that and still continue eating is beyond me.

This expression of disgust for fat bodies, points to the intersection of discursive constructions of the non-athletic body and notions of sexuality. Fat bodies are considered undesirable and deviant. Also, Jasmin's words illustrate the panoptic power effects of the neo-liberal health discourse. She thinks people should monitor their body size and exert self-discipline when they transgress the norm of a slender appearance. Consequently she reproduces the notion of individual and moral responsibility as it is incorporated in this discourse (e.g. Rail, 2009; Wright, 2009). By observing and judging the bodies around them, Jasmin and the other students become part of the power dynamic (that also includes media, schools etc) that produces the dominant standards for appearance and enforces them through disciplinary actions. This illustrates how people are simultaneously object and subject of power.

The Synopticon does not only provide youth with knowledge about what a desirable, successful body looks like (Azzarito, 2009) but also with knowledge about its counterpart, the undesirable, unsuccessful body. Our participants not only measured themselves against the ideal image of what a successful body looks like, they also measured themselves and others against the unsuccessful body, the Fatty. They often associated the non-athletic Fatty with fast-food and McDonalds. Some of them mentioned television shows and movies where they learned about the health risks of becoming fat (cf. Evans et al., 2008b). The narrative that follows shows how notions about social

class intersect with discursive constructions of the non-athletic, fat body.

Fiona: This is a girl who I think does nothing but smoke and send text messages all day.
Ian: McDonaldsing.
Britt: McDonaldsing and mobile phoning. I think that if she would get up and run five meters she'd flop down in her chair all flushed.
Fiona: And you'd be able to see that through all that make-up.
Interviewer: Why do you associate her with McDonalds?
Ian: Her face looks fat.
Britt: I think she also has fat arms and a fat stomach.
Ian: She looks cheap.
Isabel: Yeah.
Ian: And then you'll soon end up in McDonalds.
Fiona: It's an aura. It's difficult to describe why it's not athletic, but it still is.
Interviewer: Is it related to social class you think?
Ian: Yeah, I think so. If you don't have much money it's more likely that you'll go to a fast-food place or eat unhealthy. The lower social classes go to the snack bar more often than people from a higher class.
Ally: Definitely.

The previous interview excerpts show that even though a lot of the discussions about non-athletic bodies revolved around fatness, the discursive constructions of these bodies are not reducible to fatness but are more complex. Discourses about health intersect with notions about social class and sexuality.

The Sumo Wrestler and the Computer Nerd

Together, our participants tried to make sense of images of (non-)athletic bodies. The discussion between Kirsten, Damian, Sophie and Anna shows how – in their struggle to explain the relationship between fatness and athleticism – they quickly switch from resistance to dominant ideas around fatness to reproduction of those same ideas.

Kirsten: I don't know if fat people are always non-athletic. There are some chubby girls in my team too. But it's often the case that chubby people aren't very athletic.
Damian: I don't know. I guess you can be a little bit fat and athletic, but if you get really fat…
Kirsten: Not always. At my club there's this boy and he's really fat and he wants to lose weight. But he's definitely athletic. He comes to training every time and likes it a lot. So I don't think that you're necessarily non-athletic when you're fat. It's often associated with it of course, which makes sense…
Damian: People who are fat also get hot faster.
Kirsten: Yeah, and they get tired quicker too.
Sophie: They're unfit.
Kirsten: I think their body would hurt sooner, knees and such.
Anna: Yeah, the joints

According to some participants, like Kirsten, being fat does not necessarily mean that someone is non-athletic. In an attempt to explain this idea that challenges dominant notions about athleticism, the participants often mentioned the Sumo Wrestler. As the following narrative shows, these youth had difficulties aligning the Sumo Wrestler with their ideas about health and physical activity.

Paul: Sumo wrestlers could very well be athletic but I think they're kind of weird.
Penny: I think sumo wrestlers are an exception. I do believe they are athletic because they are very physically active, but I also think they eat enormous amounts.
Paul: I doubt whether they're healthy.

Thus, the Sumo Wrestler is considered an anomaly: fat and athletic. The participants constructed the Sumo Wrestler as an exception to the rule, which points to their reproduction of dominant discourses about the body. Yet, the recurring talk about the Sumo Wrestler can also be considered a point of

resistance to the dominant idea that all fat people are non-athletic. However, the potential of this resistance to produce a shift in knowledge/power that constructs the fat body as strong and skillful seemed to be limited by their construction of the Sumo Wrestler as an anomaly.

Another way in which our participants challenged the dominant idea that non-athletic equals fat, was by pointing out that not all non-athletic people are fat. After mentioning that she thought she was supposed to bring a photo of a fat person for this research project Leila continues her narrative by explaining how she – upon reflection – chose to select a picture that was different. She resisted the idea that non-athleticism is all about fatness by focusing on posture, complexion and clothes in her discursive construction of the non-athletic body.

> Leila: I don't think this guy looks athletic. He's pale and his clothes are all wrong. And he's standing there like a sack of potatoes, slumped.
> Darren: He's a typical computer nerd.

The image of the Computer Nerd emerged more often in the discussions about non-athletic bodies. The Computer Nerd is characterized as clumsy, pale, thin, and a bad dresser.

> Steve: I think this one looks non-athletic. He just sits behind the computer. He's skinny and very pale. He mostly sits inside doing stuff with computers and he does not have many social contacts. He looks clumsy too. I don't think people like that are athletic. It's also his clothes. His pants are way too short and look weird.

Thus, the Sumo Wrestler (athletic and fat) and the Computer Nerd (non-athletic and not fat) are visual metaphors that represent points of resistance in the discursive constructions of these youth to the dominant neo-liberal health discourse that centers on fatness.

Discussion

The results from this study show that body imagery is a powerful pedagogy that informs the discursive constructions of the body used by these youth (c.f. Evans et al., 2008b; Rail, 2009; Wright, 2009). Through interaction with each other and with visual media such as internet and television, our participants constructed a diverse set of body images in relation to sport and physical activities. This process illustrates the workings of the Synopticon, and explains how some body images, such as the Male Soccer Player and the Female Field Hockey Player, become dominant while others, such as the Fatty, are marginalized. This is intricately connected to the workings of the Panopticon. Specifically, the visible nature of the body (seeing and being seen) was crucial to how our participants disciplined their own and others' bodies to fit the norms for a desirable body that were (re)produced by both the discourse of health and that of appearance. Our results illustrate the conflation of these two discourses. Our participants discursively constructed athletic bodies as healthy, happy and desirable, while they constructed non-athletic bodies as unhealthy, unhappy and undesirable. Future research on the physically (in)active body, should take this conflation into account and focus attention on the implicit messages about appearance that are part of the dominant discourse about health.

Furthermore, the narratives of our participants show how their reproduction of dominant discourses about health and appearance intersect with notions about gender, sexuality, social class and race and how these are partly based on their interaction with visual media. This reflects Mathiesen's (1997) idea that the Synopticon makes it difficult for youth to distinguish real from unreal. Yet, as Foucault (1987) conceptualized, reproduction of dominant discourses and points of resistance to these discourses occurred simultaneously. Sometimes, our participants reflected critically on and challenged dominant discourses, while at other times, they unquestioningly reproduced dominant ideas and images. Points of resistance seemed to originate from their everyday experiences and their encounters with real flesh and blood bodies/others. Leila's resistance to ideas about gender and sexual inappropriateness emerged from her experience with a boy who dances but who "is

not gay". Similarly, Penny resisted the construction of basketball as a masculine sport by referring to her own past involvement in the sport and that of the many girls and women she knows. Kirsten's narrative on the relation between fatness and sport showed shifts in her subject position in the interview. On the one hand she challenged the dominant health discourse by referring to "chubby" girls on her team and a boy in her sport club who she considers to be both athletic and fat. Yet she also acknowledged the authoritative voice of the biomedical health discourse by constructing the fat body as "often" non-athletic because it "makes sense".

The points of resistance that occurred in relation to the gendered and sexualized appearance of physically active bodies exemplify how subtle shifts in power relations can take place. The emergence of the visual metaphor of the Field Hockey Girl shows a new desirable femininity that constructs women as strong, confident and successful in a competitive sport, quite contrary to traditional ideas about desirable passive femininity. The points of resistance to the dominant discourse about health, however, did not seem to create much space for alternative ideas and meanings to take shape. Our participants framed their experiences with real life others that embodied contradictions as exceptions. This consolidated existing power relations based on the dominant discourse about health, rather than that it produced shifts in these power relations. The dominant discourse about health seemed to hold more 'truth value' for our participants than their own everyday experiences with others/bodies. This may be due to the lack of critique of dominant discourses about health in the Netherlands, which makes resistance to the authoritative voice of biomedical professionals who (re)produce this discourse more difficult. In contrast, the discourse about gendered and sexualized norms for appearance is currently a topic of public critique, especially the representation of women's bodies in popular media (e.g. Strien, 2010).

Moreover, our participants did not unquestioningly accept the norms that are produced by visual media. The reproduction of dominant discourses mainly occurred when our participants talked in general terms about bodies of others. They seem to apply the norms less strictly when it comes to people they know or interactions they have experienced with real flesh and blood

others/bodies. Also, these youth corrected each other and adjusted their opinions in and through the group discussions. This finding suggests that the principle of panoptic power may not be totally adequate in explaining the discourses that these youth drew upon. Foucault's theory of panoptic power effects does not take peer interaction into account since prisoners were conceptualized as living in isolation in separate cells. Research that explores the panoptic and synoptic power effects should, however, also take the daily interactions and experiences of the participants into account and pay attention to virtual as well as real life bodies.

In conclusion, we argue that youths' construction of athleticism, their interaction with each other and with media imagery are part of processes that discipline the body. This results in a hierarchy of body images that may create marginalization and exclusion in (access to) physical activities. Previous research has paid attention to marginalization of girls (van Daalen, 2005), racial minorities (Azzarito, 2009) and those framed as fat (Wright, 2009) in physical activity settings, but not to those whose bodies do not conform to other dominant norms mentioned by youth in this study. As our use of the auto-driven photo elicitation method has shown, a discussion of body imagery can help youth develop their reflexivity and be critical of the exclusionary nature of popular imagery. The power of imagery should not be underestimated, for a picture is worth a thousand words.

Notes:

1. See for example a discussion (including pictures) on a Dutch 'hot babes' forum about ladies from the Dutch National hockey team http://forum.mokkels.nl/5-nederlandse-mokkels/1055-nederlandse-hockeydames.html
2. See for example the webpage of Fatima Moreira de Melo http://www.fatimamoreira-demelo.com/home/ and

4
BIG FAT INEQUALITIES, THIN PRIVILEGE. AN INTERSECTIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON 'BODY SIZE'.

Abstract:
This article aims to claim 'body size' as an increasingly important axis of signification. It draws on research from various disciplines to present an exploratory overview of the different ways in which body size categorizations – being (considered) fat or slender – intersect with other axis, such as gender, race, sexuality, social class and age. The article suggests an intersectional perspective on body size adds to our understanding of the layeredness and complexity of power differentials, normativities and identity formations that co-produce inequalities. Furthermore it attempts to show how processes of exclusion and marginalization based on body size categorizations are similar to racist, ableist and misogynist logics and practices. Hereby, I intend to demonstrate the vast (negative) impact of body size categorizations, specifically but not exclusively on the lives of those who occupy the marked position in relation to this axis: the 'fat'. It argues that an intersectional perspective helps us to see body size discrimination more clearly and can help disrupt dominant discourses about the body in order to create a truly 'healthy' environment in which bodies of all sizes, shapes, colours, and abilities can be celebrated.

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Introduction

This paper explores the (im)possibilities of 'body size'[1] as an important but neglected axis of signification in intersectional theory and practice. When Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) first coined the term 'intersectionality' her aim was to show how gender and race, as important social constructions by which people are categorized and differentiated, should not be studied as separate mechanisms of power but as intersecting ones which co-produce exclusion and marginalization. Although Crenshaw wasn't the first scholar to recognize the importance of the interplay and simultaneity of different axes of signification[2], her explicit naming of 'intersectionality' provided a shared framework for feminist scholars to discuss, negotiate and theorize the practices and theory of an intersectional approach (Lykke, 2011).

Since the concept intersectionality was first coined, many feminist scholars have taken an interest in this approach. Yet, there has been much debate and many differences of opinion on what intersectionality can and should (not) entail in theory and practice (see for example Davis, 2008; McCall, 2005). Davis (2008) points out that it is exactly the vagueness and ambiguity of intersectionality that make it a successful theory because it is multivocal and attracts both generalist and specialist scholars. Lykke (2011 p. 208) argues that intersectionality can fruitfully be thought of "as a discursive site where different feminist positions are in critical dialogue or productive conflict with each other". In this paper I draw on Lykke's understanding of intersectionality as a

> […] thinking technology which encompasses a multiplicity of ways in which the concept is used to analyze how power differentials, normativities and identity formations in terms of categorizations such as gender, ethnicity, race, class sexuality, age/generation, nationality etc. co-produce in/exclusion, mis/recognition, dis/possession, majoritizing/minoritizing etc. (p.208)

The reason I use this conceptualization of intersectionality is because it broadens the horizons of thinking in intersectional terms beyond mere identity politics and focuses on the effects of categorizations on both marked (disadvantaged) and the unmarked (privileged) positions. It also illustrates how feminist scholars have added to the classical triad of gender, race and class many different axes they believe are relevant to study marked and unmarked positions and discursive constructions around these as well as processes of in/exclusion and forms of discrimination and prejudice that result from them.

Axes of signification that are nowadays frequently studied in addition and in relation to gender, race and social class are sexuality, religion, national identity, dis/ability and age (e.g. Buitelaar, 2006; Duits & Zoonen, 2006; Hearn, 2011; Kosnick, 2011; Wekker, 2006; Zarkov, 2011). These axes reflect a distinction between groups and characteristics that are historically privileged – such as white abled heterosexual men – and those that have a history of systematic social disadvantage. However, as Hearn (2011) argues, there are many more axes that can and should be considered besides or beyond these more established ones. Which (neglected) axes are relevant depends on the context and topic of study. In this paper I argue that body size can be considered one such neglected axis of signification.

The reason for analyzing body size as a possible axis of signification originates from my current research project, which explores the discursive constructions about the body that are used in the context of sport and physical education in the Netherlands. The results of my research indicate how popular discourses in the Netherlands construct body size as one of the most important criteria on which bodies are judged (Van Amsterdam et al., 2012a, 2012b). The urgency with which body size is discussed in public and private spheres and the inherent power processes that seem attached to constructing a hierarchy of bodies based on body size, underlie the question whether body size can and should be considered an axis of signification. By exploring the similarities and differences of body size compared to other axes of signification that are more established in feminist scholarship, this paper puts forth the claim that body size is an increasingly important axis on which difference is made. Although the idea that body size intersects in interesting ways with gender, race, social class etcetera is not new (e.g. Evans et al., 2008b; Guthman, 2009; LeBesco, 2004; Lee F. Monaghan, 2008), an exploratory

overview is lacking in current literature of the different ways in which this happens and how processes of exclusion and marginalization similar to racism, ableism and gender discrimination can be identified. By tracing the intersections of body size with other axes of signification such as gender, social class, race/ethnicity, sexuality, dis/ability and age, I aim to show the vast impact of body size categorizations, specifically but not exclusively on the lives of those who occupy the marked position in relation to this axis: the 'fat'[3].

'Fat' versus 'slender'

When considering a social category as an axis of signification, it is important to think about the range of positions that are available within each category[4]. Popular discourse in the Netherlands puts forth two positions which are available in relation to body size: 'fat' and 'slender'. One could argue, as Kirkland (2008) does, that there are gradations in this category. This might be interesting from a theoretical viewpoint and allow us to deconstruct the binary nature of other categories as well. Yet this view is incommensurable with current popular beliefs about body size. I argue that prevalent dominant discourses that are used most often in the Netherlands construct every body that is not considered 'slender' automatically as 'fat'.

The positions of 'fat' and 'slender' are (in most Western countries) mainly constructed through two dominant discourses. First, there is the dominant discourse about beauty, which focuses mostly on the unmarked position: the 'slender' body. This body is constructed as heterosexually attractive and successful, and popular media overwhelmingly show slender people as the norm. Feminist writers have long since critiqued this beauty discourse as emanating from Western hegemonic patriarchal culture and pointed to the detrimental effects this construction of white heterosexual femininity can have on the body image and eating habits of girls and women (e.g. Bordo, 1995; Susie Orbach, 1978; Wolf, 1991). This critique has not been without effect. Even though the ideal of a slender body has not changed much, the public debate seems to have opened up to critical discussions on the dominant discourse about beauty in relation to body size[5].

In contrast, there seems to be little space in the Netherlands for critical

discussion about the social constructedness of meanings that are attached to body size when these meanings are informed by the dominant neoliberal health discourse (van Amsterdam et al., 2012b). This discourse focuses on the marked position: the 'fat' body. Within the neoliberal health discourse the fat body is constructed as an unhealthy, failed body[6] (Guthman & DuPuis, 2006; Halse, 2009; Rich & Evans, 2005). The 'truth' claims that are made in relation to body size based on the neoliberal health discourse rest heavily on bio-medical 'knowledge'. According to Gard & Wright (2001), this obscures the social constructedness of body size categorizations. Several critical obesity scholars such as Wright & Harwood (2009) and Rich, Davies & Allwood (2008a) argue that medical authoritative voices are used to claim that one's body size is determined by the (dis)balance of energy intake through eating and energy output through physical activity. Eating and exercise behavior are presented in this discourse as lifestyle choices, thus making body size a matter of individual responsibility. Those who are marked as fat are subsequently constructed as people who have failed to take the responsibility to shape their bodies to the norm of slenderness. Fat people are not only considered to be a risk for themselves (in terms of higher chances at diabetes and heart conditions), they are also constructed as a risk for society by increasing costs of medical care (e.g. Evans & Davies, 2004b).

Thus, dominant discourses on beauty and health co-construct a body hierarchy which positions slender people as the norm (the unmarked position) and fat people as deviant or dissonant (the marked position) (Solovay & Rothblum, 2009). In the next part of this paper I describe and illustrate some of the intersections of body size with other axes of signification and show their impact on power differentials, normativities and identity formations. In the last part of this paper I explore similarities and differences between body size and other categories of social signification such as gender, race and dis/ability in how these co-produce in/exclusion, marginalization and prejudice. This all is meant as a preliminary exploration to establish body size as an important axis of signification and show the complexity of social configurations. It is by no means exhaustive account of all the possible ways in which body size might intersect with other axes of signification.

Intersections

In order to show that body size can be considered an axis of signification, it is important to establish the ways in which body size categorizations and their intersections with other axes of signification shape *power differentials*, *normativities* and *identity formations* and co-produce *inequalities* (Lykke, 2011). In the following paragraphs I will draw on literature from various disciplines and data and observations from my own projects to show some of the ways in which body size issues figure into this complex layering of 'othering'.

Body size, gender, sexuality and age

There are a few ways in which power differentials, normativities and identity formation are shaped by body size categorization in intersection with gender categorizations. First of all, there is the question whether the aforementioned beauty and health discourses have similar or equal effects on men and women and whether these discourses are gendered. In public debate as well as in academia, the emphasis over the last decades has been on the effects of the beauty discourse on women and girls. Orbach (1978) was one of the first feminists to argue that the fear of fatness is intricately connected to patriarchy and therefore deeply gendered. Many feminist studies have since illustrated that in Western patriarchal societies, body size has a greater impact upon women's bodies because women have been subjected to more social pressure and scrutiny regarding their appearance than men (e.g. Bordo, 1995; Wolf, 1991).

Recently feminist scholars such as Gard & Wright (2001) have begun challenging medical models of obesity that are integrated in the neoliberal health discourse by pointing attention to the social construction of fatness. This has added a new dimension to the discussion around body size in relation to gender, since this discourse constructs both men and women as at risk of being or becoming overweight or obese. I agree with Bell & McNaughton (2007) who argue that male concerns regarding body size and the intersection of body size with masculinity should not be dismissed. Yet I do believe that body size matters *differently* for men and women in the identity positions available to them as well as the normativities regarding body

size and the power differentials that result from these.

Bergman (2009) who is transgender and looks androgynous, for example, shows that whether people think s/he fat or not depends on how they interpret his/her gender. As a man, he is just a big dude; as a woman, she is revoltingly fat. That the slenderness norm is applied in a much stricter fashion to girls' and women's bodies was also illustrated by the youth who participated in one of my studies (van Amsterdam et al., 2012b). These youth often stated that it is undesirable for men and boys to be thin, while thinness was definitely the norm for girls and women (ibid). The participants constructed strength as a masculine trait related to body size and therefore did not consider men who look like "matchsticks" to be heterosexually attractive. Similarly, Monaghan (2005; 2007) has shown how fat men can find ways to construct a positive fat identity, in spite of the negative labeling of fatness in both beauty and health discourses. Some men in Monaghan's research drew on gendered representations of male bodies as big and powerful, others used the metaphor of the homosexually attractive cuddly bear, while again others argued that gaining extra weight with increasing age was part of a natural progression through life. These constructions of positive fat identity tend not to be available to women, since they are incongruent with (heterosexual white) femininity. This illustrates how normativities and identity formations emerge at the intersection of body size, gender, sexuality and age.

Another theme that surfaces when exploring the intersection of body size and gender with respect to the production of inequalities comes from the debate about childhood obesity. Here issues of responsibility and autonomy are highlighted. Framed by neoliberal models of governance, the health discourse often focuses on obese children and recasts responsibility as an individual or family matter, rather than a collective or social responsibility (Zivkovic et al., 2010 p. 378). LeBesco (2004) describes how these discursive constructions have led to legal cases in the US where obese children were taken from the custody of their parents (often single mothers) with the latter subsequently facing criminal prosecution for childhood neglect. This illustrates how power differentials related to body size come into play at an institutional level. Additionally, Zivkovic et al. (2010 p. 383) show how, in media

representations on childhood obesity in Australia, the word 'parents' often serves as a euphemism for mothers. Within this discursive field, mothers are held morally and legally responsible for the body size of their children, because it is considered their gendered responsibility to provide food and care for their family.

These discussions on body size, parenthood, and responsibility that are intricate parts of the dominant health discourse also pervade the Netherlands. Youth and physical educators I interviewed said they viewed a child's body size as mainly the responsibility of the parents (Van Amsterdam et al., 2012a, 2012b). Some physical educators indicated that they would initiate a parent teacher meeting to discuss body size management in case they identified a child as (too) fat. Furthermore, youth often referred to their mothers' cooking when asked about health and body size issues. Similarly, Leahy (2009) stresses the impact of body size categorizations in the context of the Australian educational system. She describes the institutionalization of lunchbox checks, food diaries and weight measurements as governmental strategies that discipline children's thoughts, actions and bodies in accordance with body size normativities formulated by the neoliberal health discourse. This illustrates how children are denied autonomy within this discourse and shows the importance of age as an axis of signification that intersects with body size and gender. It also indicates the impact body size categorizations can have on an institutional level, producing power differentials, normativities and inequalities in schools and courtrooms.

Body size, social class, race/ethnicity, and sexuality

Social class, race/ethnicity and sexuality are other axes of signification that can shape power differentials, normativities and identity formations and co-produce inequalities in intersection with body size. In addition to previously mentioned arguments about the implication of parenthood and responsibility in discourses about fatness, Evans, Davies & Rich (2008a), for example, show how issues of social class and race/ethnicity are often obscured or glossed over in dominant discourses about obesity that emphasize individual responsibility. They argue that policy texts concerning obesity often promote and privilege

> […] a particular set of values which […] comprise an Anglo-centric, white, middle class, 'traditional' (two parent) family centered citizen; active but compliant and willing despite the restrictions of their environment to pursue weight loss behaviours defined as ideal. By default, the hidden curriculum of obesity discourse reinforces the subordination of particular categories of people […] (Evans et al., 2008a p. 119-120)

Evans at al. argue that the obesity discourse thus serves to regulate the deviant populations: non-whites, ethnic minorities and working class people.

As an example of how normativities and power differentials regarding class and body size are communicated and co-constructed, Rich (2011) shows how reality TV shows such as *Honey, We're Killing the Kids* and *Jamie's Ministry of Food* hosted by the famous Jamie Oliver, pathologize the working classes. Rich examines how the use of the neoliberal health discourse and the evocation of affect (disgust, anger and disdain) for fat people and parents giving their children 'unhealthy' food in these TV shows position working class people as an abject social category. She argues that the discourses used in these TV shows "not only position individuals as blameworthy, but moralize and decontextualize health inequalities by glossing over the social and structural contexts that come to bear upon this" (Rich, 2011 p. 16).

The intersections of body size and class also emerged in one of my studies (van Amsterdam et al., 2012b) when youth constructed an image of the fat working class Other in opposition to the slender, heterosexually attractive, white middle class norm. The working class fatso was cast as an abhorrent (and therefore asexual) being who is personally responsible for his/her deviant body size. These youth clearly drew from the neoliberal health discourse when they stated that eating too much McDonalds and exercising too little were the lifestyle choices that cause deviant, fat bodies. This finding resonates with the argument made by Evans et al. (2008a) that the emphasis on personal responsibility in obesity discourse masks health disparities between populations from different social classes and ethnic backgrounds. Evans et al. add to this argument that obesity discourse also silences body

orientations of those who for several reasons might have different norms concerning body size.

One such difference in orientation toward body size emerges when we explore beauty and health discourses from a racial/ethnic or non-Western perspective. Several scholars have pointed out the positive value that is attached to fatness in non-Western (mainly African and Afro-Carribean) cultures because of the association of a large body size with health, wealth and fertility (e.g. Popenoe, 2004; Sobo, 1997). Some scholars have argued that with the dispersion of non-Western ethnic groups to Western countries through slavery and migration, non-Western/black normativities regarding body size have come to the West. Hughes (1997) for example describes how for older black (African American) women in the US larger body size is preferred over slenderness. She argues that the preparation and consumption of soul food are ways for black women to escape the painful realities of oppression in American society. The celebration of big bodies is an integral part of this and can also be read as resistance to dominant patriarchal structures in America. Rubin et al (2003) contend that it is not the body size aesthetics of black and Latino women in the US which are different from white middle class ideals, but the body *ethics*. Similar to Hughes' (1997) analysis, Rubin et al. (2003) argue that black and Latino women resist dominant white ideologies by focusing on styling, alternative ideas about health and fatness, and religious and spiritual concepts in relation to the body[7]. It is therefore is not unimaginable that subversive identities might be formed at the intersection of body size, race/ethnicity and gender.

From an agency perspective, racial/ethnic minorities may thus be less inclined to adhere to the white middle class slenderness norm set by the dominant health and beauty discourses in Western countries. When looking at intersections of body size and race/ethnicity from a structural perspective however, the power differentials that produce subordination and marginalization become visible. Some scholars (e.g. Campos et al., 2005; LeBesco, 2004) for instance argue that the neoliberal health discourse can mark racial/ethnic minorities – who are often reported to have higher rates of obesity – as Other and deviant because it constructs fatness as a medical problem

and body size as an individual and moral responsibility. This trend is noticeable in the Netherlands as well. Moroccan, Turkish, Surinamese and Antillean people are reported to have higher obesity rates (Dagevos & Dagevos, 2008a). Just like the poor and working class people, these ethnic/racial minorities are constructed as 'at risk' and through dominant constructions around body size interventions into their lives are justified and naturalized.

Another interesting space where body size categorizations (co-)produce inequalities is where they intersect with race/ethnicity, gender and sexuality. Big black women for example have historically been portrayed to be either asexual or hypersexual. Reference is often made to the mythical figure of the Mammy as a faithful, obedient domestic servant, whose blackness and fatness are exaggerated to exclude her from the ideal of white female beauty (Shaw, 2005). According to Shaw, the Mammy is constructed as asexual; because of her body size and race/ethnicity she poses no sexual threat to white women. In contrast, black women are also often constructed as hypersexual. The historical image of the "Hottentot Venus" with her large buttocks is often invoked to recast big black women as hypersexual beings (Fuller, 2011). Wekker points to crucial role of imagery from the colonial heritage in the Netherlands which constructs "black women's sexuality as overactive, deviant, excessive, closer to nature, not in control and animal-like" (Wekker, 2006 p. 226). Wekker also illustrates the hypersexualization of black men in popular discourse in the Netherlands (Wekker, 2010). She interprets the words of a well-known Dutch TV personality who states he wouldn't want his daughter to bring home a "big Negro" as referring to the sexual anxiety of white men and women related to the image of the black man who possesses an enormous penis. Yet, I would argue that the word "big" could in addition refer to body size issues. Constructing black bodies as big or fat in popular media effectively recasts them as Other[8]. It adds another visible dimension of deviance to the already non-conforming, dissonant black body.

Similarities and differences

Racism, able-ism and size-ism

This paragraph will focus on the parallels between racism, able-ism and

size-ism to show some similarities in the way categorizations based on body size and those based on race and dis/ability produce inequalities. Similar to current constructions about body size, differences in disability, race and gender were historically framed as 'biological', which justified and naturalized systematic inequalities produced by these categorizations. Only after much activist and scholarly effort, the social constructedness of these categorizations is now (partly) recognized. At an institutional level, this has resulted in the critical academic disciplines of ethnic/race studies, disability studies and women's studies. Fat people, however, do not have the same history of systematic social disadvantage as racial minorities, the disabled and women. In Western countries the meaning of fat changed from being beautiful and representing wealth to being bad, ugly and unhealthy. Yet the inequalities which have resulted from the increased use of the neoliberal health discourse over the past decades, have spurred fat activism as a social justice project and resulted in the institutionalization of the academic discipline of critical fat studies in the UK and the US (Rothblum & Solovay, 2009). Fat studies scholars, however, regularly point out the marginal position of their discipline which is caused by the dominance of the neoliberal health discourse in current public and academic debates (Solovay & Rothblum, 2009), indicating that the struggle for fat acceptance has only just begun.

Campos et al. (2005) point out other similarities between racism and size-ism or fatism. They argue that mass media attention to obesity in the US has created a moral panic similar to the moral panic about race/ethnicity that has had several resurgences. They posit that many of the health risks which are mentioned in relation to obesity are fabricated or at best exaggerated, because of financial interests of the pharmaceutical industry and political motives to find a scapegoat in times of growing social insecurity. According to Campos et al., the obesity discourse projects social anxieties onto a stigmatized group, in this case fat people. They argue that the moral panic around obesity reflects deep-seated anxieties about immigration and racial integration. Their statement that "talk of an 'obesity epidemic' is serving to reinforce moral boundaries against minorities and the poor" (Campos et al., 2005 p. 58) shows not only the parallels between racism and size-ism but also the

intersections between body size, race and class. Similarly, LeBesco contends that anti-black and anti-fat attitudes share various characteristics, for example in the belief that "[…] both blacks and fat people deserve their fate, and that their social and economic status is a result of circumstances that they could control" (LeBesco, 2004 p. 59).

Another parallel between racism and size-ism relates to the way in which black and fat people are recognized as different or abnormal in everyday life: by their visible physical characteristics. Puwar (2004) argues that black people and women visibly stand out in spaces such as the British Parliament where white male bodies are the somatic norm. This phenomenon, whereby people who are not the norm become extra visible, often triggers unease and feelings of being swamped. According to Puwar this can lead to an amplification of numbers:

> […] a sprinkling of two or three black and Asian bodies rapidly becomes exaggerated to four or seven. And, interestingly, a single body can be seen to be taking up more physical space than it actually occupies. (Puwar, 2004 p. 48-49)

A similar amplification of numbers can be identified in the obesity discourse. News coverage on the prevalence of obesity very often mentions the growing numbers of fat people, while according to critical obesity scholars evidence of a so-called 'obesity epidemic' is at best inconsistent and contradictory (e.g. Campos, 2004; Wright & Harwood, 2009). Media and government policy also often mention the need to fight presuming growing numbers of obese people and use the phrasing "the war on obesity". The tone of voice used in these media messages communicates feelings of anxiety and terror similar to those Puwar (2004) describes in her analysis of the reaction of whites to the presence of black bodies in British Parliament. The war analogy in obesity discourse resonates with Puwar's statement that "A small presence can represent a territorial threat, with associated metaphors of war, battle and invasion" (Puwar, 2004 p. 144). As a consequence of this anxiety, Puwar argues, dissonant bodies come under super-surveillance. This super-surveillance can be recognized in practices related to fat bodies as well, for

example in the aforementioned lunchbox checks and weight management of school children (Leahy, 2009).

The argument about the visibility of physical characteristics as a main means to distinguish between marked and unmarked positions also applies to social categorizations based dis/ability[9]. Fat people are considered to be corporeally deviant, just like the disabled (LeBesco, 2004 p. 74). Brandon and Pritchard (2011 p. 83) argue that the social construction of disability and the social construction of fatness have in common that they both produce an industry where social status is accredited to experts in the field and financial benefits befall those who pursue products and services related to managing these 'abnormal' bodies. In the case of body size, one can think of the numerous fitness and weight loss products and dieticians earning their living through people trying to secure the ideal of a normative body size. Brandon and Pritchard argue that there is a similar disability industry which produces products and specialists – e.g. physical therapists, 'corrective' surgery, prosthetics (including cochlear implants), and psychotherapy – that assist people categorized as disabled to cope with the material and ideological circumstances of abled society, which is usually not very friendly to the needs of the disabled.

Controversy abounds, however, about whether fatness should be considered a disability. On the one hand, fatness is constructed as a disease while, on the other hand, it is predominantly considered a condition over which people have at least some personal control (LeBesco, 2004 p. 75). Ideas about the relation between the origin of body size variations and personal control highlight the importance of responsibility and blame in dominant discourses about fatness and relates to the justification and naturalization of practices of inequality.

Why body size is different

The aforementioned dominant ideas about the 'nature' of variations in body size distinguish it from other axes of signification. In relation to race/ethnicity, gender, dis/ability and sexual orientation, it is often thought that one has no personal control over one's position in relation to these axes. Biological

essentialist ideas underlie 'common' knowledge that – with a few exceptions – an individual cannot become white if black, woman if man, heterosexual if homosexual, or able-bodied if disabled (Herndon, 2002; Kirkland, 2008). Thus a marked position is not considered something that one can overcome or shed, except maybe in the case of social class and gender (although this would require a lot of time, effort and resources).

An important idea in the neoliberal health discourse, however, is that fatness is the result of lifestyle choices and thus falls under the responsibility of individuals (e.g. Halse, 2009; Herndon, 2002). Guthman & DuPuis (2006) argue that neoliberal politics are paradoxical and produce fat people because they stress the need for economic growth (for which consumption of both food and diet products is required) and combine this with an emphasis on responsibility, discipline and self-control. Although excessive consumption keeps the economy 'healthy', those who control their bodies into compliance with the slenderness norm are considered virtuous citizens (Guthman & DuPuis, 2006; Halse, 2009). This focus on control and responsibility in relation to body size categorizations, magnifies the stigmatization and discrimination of fat subjects compared to other marked positions. As LeBesco points out, the difference between discrimination based on racial categorizations and discrimination based on body size categorizations is evident in that "[…] there's little in the way of public norms to keep people from expressing anti-fat sentiment in public." (LeBesco, 2004 p. 59). This resonates with findings from my own research (Van Amsterdam et al., 2012a, 2012b). Physical education teachers and students alike seemed uninhibited in communicating their anti-fat attitudes to me, often in very blunt terms. The stigmatization of fat people seems to be justified by the idea that they have themselves to blame for their deviant fat bodies.

The idea that body size is a direct consequence of lifestyle choices and therefore an individual responsibility makes for another difference in the effect of social categorizations based on body size and those based on other axes of signification. Many scholars have argued that people occupying the unmarked positions not only reap social benefits but are usually unaware of (the effects of) their privileged position (e.g. Essed, 2004; Essed & Trienekens,

2008; McKinney, 2005). McKinney (2005) for example, shows how whiteness is so self-evident to young whites in the US that this unmarked position becomes invisible and escapes attention. Slenderness as an unmarked position does not work the same way. It is considered 'normal' which might explain the lack of research that focuses on how normal/slender people are implicated in and affected by body size categorizations. Yet I argue that because of the idea that *everyone* is at risk of becoming fat, slenderness as the unmarked position is not effortless. It requires constant self-surveillance and self-discipline to be maintained. Also, as Herndon (2002) argues, there is no standard cultural definition of fatness. The word 'fat' derives its power from the fact that it can reference any body and therefore exposes all people to the danger of discrimination[10] (Herndon, 2002 p. 132). I argue that the ambiguity inherent in cultural constructions of both fat and slender causes the boundaries between the marked and the unmarked position to become blurred in people's self-identification. Many people – even those others would consider slender – often question whether they are fat or not. Dominant discourses about body size, therefore, can have pervasive negative effects on both marked and unmarked subjects. Not only are fat people stigmatized by the pervasive use of these discourses, dominant body size constructions can also (co)produce eating, exercise and body image disorders in both fat *and* slender people (Evans et al., 2008a).

Concluding remarks

In this paper I have argued that the pervasiveness of the use of discourses related to body size in popular media, schools, government policy and daily life in general shows that body size has become a relevant axis of signification in many Western countries such as the Netherlands, the US, Canada, Australia and the UK. I have illustrated some of the oppressive practices and ideologies related to body size and the intersections with other axes of signification that are often involved in this. Moreover, I would emphasize the importance of a critical analysis of body size as a means of social differentiation because dominant discourses about body size often obscure their discriminatory effects related to power differentials, normativities and identity

formations by focusing on individual responsibility and medical 'truths' (see also Rothblum & Solovay, 2009). I agree with Halse (2009) who stresses the danger of dominant body size discourses when she states that in contrast to the *United Nations' Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1963)* that banned discrimination by race, class or gender, the neoliberal health discourse "represents a conceptual continuation of the eugenics movement of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that defined and differentiated between individuals and groups according to their physical characteristics, race, phrenology and/or genetic lineage" (Halse, 2009 p. 56).

An intersectional perspective helps us to see this discrimination more clearly and warrants critical attention to the subject. Furthermore, it adds to our understanding of the complexity of power differentials, normativities and identity formations. Future research that aims to explore inequalities of any kind should pay attention to how body size categorizations are caught up in the complexity of in- and exclusionary practices, also when body size is not the main topic under investigation. Additionally, an intersectional perspective teaches us to look critically at both marked and unmarked positions and possible alternatives in between. Future research should thus include a focus on slenderness as the unmarked but not unproblematic position. As Kirkland (2008) argues, deconstructing the popular binary of fat/slender and theorizing instead about body size in terms of gradations might also offer interesting insights into de construction of other axes of signification. Most importantly, recognizing body size as an axis of signification which (co-)produces inequalities can help disrupt dominant discourses about the body and hopefully create a truly 'healthy' environment in which bodies of all sizes, shapes, colors and abilities can be celebrated.

Notes

1. I use the concept 'body size' to refer to the social construction of difference along lines of 'fatness' and 'slenderness'. Other terms that are often used to point out processes that differentiate 'the fat' from the 'the slender' are 'body weight' and 'body shape'.
2. The idea that it is important to take the interplay of different axes of signification

into account was already around in nineteenth century black feminism and the slavery movement (see Hearn, 2011 p. 89)

3. In this paper I use the term 'fat' instead of 'overweight' or 'obese' for two reasons. First, the term 'fat' highlights the social constructedness of differentiation based on body size, while the terms 'overweight' and 'obesity' are generally related to thinking of body size issues in terms of medical 'truths'. Second, the term 'fat' is used by activists and scholars who aim to claim and affirm positive fat identity (Brandon & Pritchard, 2011). In reference to medicalized notions of fatness, I sometimes use the terms 'obesity' or 'obesity discourse'. These include a focus on both people who are considered overweight and those who are considered obese.
4. For as discussion on possible other dimensions on which axes of signification can be compared, see Verloo (2006)
5. Think for example about the ban of size zero models from catwalk shows in Italy in 2006 and the media discussions on the slenderness norm for girls and women that followed *www.dailymail.co.uk/.../Italian-fashion-designers-ban-size-zero-models-catwalks.html*
6. In the neoliberal health discourse the terms 'overweight' and 'obesity' are coined to signify fat bodies. Within the neoliberal health discourse Body Mass Index (BMI) measurements are used to establish when one falls into the category of overweight or obese (a BMI of 25 kg/m2 or over is perceived as abnormal). In the neoliberal health discourse medical models are used to recast the fat body as unhealthy. However, this construction of overweight and obese bodies does not necessarily parallel how fat bodies are socially constructed in everyday life. In fact, one of my research projects (van Amsterdam et al., 2012b) shows that the construction of categories of fat and slender in everyday life by youth is ambiguous and unclear. Although the terms 'overweight', 'obese' and 'fat' are often used interchangeably, the socially constructed category of 'fat' seems to be used in a much broader fashion and can refer to any body that does not visibly conform to the norm of a 'slender' body. This resonates with the Herdon's (2002) argument that fat as a signifier (often used as an insult) does not refer to any specific embodiment. For an extensive discussion on the use and effects of BMI measurements see Halse (2009).
7. Notice how again the focus on women's bodies and the absence of men's bodies in this academic debate about body size and aesthetics, which points to gender as an important axis of signification in relation to body size and race/ethnicity.
8. Examples of this construction of the big black other can be found in the movies 'The Blind Side' (2009) and 'Precious' (2009). These movies also illustrate the intersection of class with body size and race.
9. See Herndon (2002) for an elaborate discussion on the medicalization of both fatness and disability.
10. Herndon (2002) writes about women as the prime victims of discrimination based on body size catergorizations. Although I agree with the idea that in general women are subjected to more and fiercer discrimination based on body size categorizations, I think it is fruitful to consider these forms of discrimination across the gender spectrum to gain insight into how gender and body size categorizations intersect. For an interesting example, see Bergman (2009)

5.
"IT'S ACTUALLY VERY NORMAL THAT I'M DIFFERENT". HOW PHYSICALLY DISABLED YOUTH DISCURSIVELY CONSTRUCT AND POSITION THEIR BODY/SELF.

Abstract:
In this paper we explore how physically disabled youth who participate in mainstream education discursively construct and position themselves in relation to dominant discourses about sport and physicality that mark their bodies as 'abnormal' and 'deviant'. We employ a feminist poststructuralist perspective to analyze the narratives about sport, physical education (PE), the body, and self of four physically disabled Dutch youngsters. Our results indicate that although dominant societal discourse about sport and physicality construct disabled bodies as deviant, vulnerable and lacking and the disabled as 'abnormal', these youth constructed the self as 'normal'. However, they did so in different ways. One of the interviewees used the alternative discourse 'everyone is different, everyone is normal' to position her disabled self as different and normal simultaneously. Hereby she resisted dominant notions about the abled body embedded in discourses about sport and physicality. This act of resistance enabled her to accept her disability as part of her self. Others normalized their disabled bodies by attempting to pass as able-bodied. They tried to minimize and/or hide their disability and in this manner reproduced ableist discourses about sport and physicality. Our interviewees also engaged in various performative acts of resistance. They challenged these dominant discourses by strategically using the possibilities a different/

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disabled self provided them. Overall the data indicate the important role visible signifiers of disability played in the exclusionary practices that these disabled youth encountered and the subject positions they could claim. Since alternative constructions and positionings regarding the abled/normal body suggest ways in which the dominance of ableism may be disrupted, we conclude with an emphasis on the need for future research that explores such alternatives.

Tuesday morning 10 am, a class of 13 year olds enters the gym. Amongst them is one physically disabled child. Everyone sits on the floor against a wall. A man stands in front and introduces himself as Preston, a child physical therapist. He explains that the next hour he will be teaching a "handicapped experience class". He asks, "How does it sound when you say someone is handicapped?" One student replies "Not very nice". Another student says, "It sounds like someone is a real outsider". The discussion continues and Preston explains to the class that there is a difference between an impairment, a disability and a handicap. "An impairment has to do with your organs [sic]. At the level of the organs something has not developed properly or something has grown wrong. It could be your heart that hasn't developed properly or it could be your muscles that don't grow well. It could also mean that your brain is damaged". Preston continues to explain: "a disability refers to an ability or skill that someone can't manage very well". A handicap "has to do with society". According to Preston the word handicap refers to barriers in the social environment that restrict someone from participating, such as the abundance of stairs that limit the participation of people in wheelchairs. He states that disability is a better word to use than handicap, because it communicates that "there are still a lot of things a person can *do".*

Next, Preston asks the students whether they "have something" that makes their bodies different (like short sightedness, coordination problems, asthma, or anything else) or if they know people who do. Some students raise their hands and share their experiences. The aim of this handicapped experience class, Preston explains, is to experience what it is like to participate in physical activities when you "have something" that makes you "different". Preston tells the students that he brought several attributes to mimic different disabilities, such as spasms, muscle diseases, asthma, ADHD and obesity. Preston asks the students to equip themselves with sponges under their feet; splints on their legs; adjusted binoculars; ankle and wrist weights; heavy backpacks; or big gloves. With these 'disabled bodies' the students go on to perform a variety of physical activities such as throwing a ball, walking a balance beam and jumping off a horse. Finally, Preston leads a discussion where the students share their experiences of the past hour. In closing Preston emphasizes the need for understanding and inclusion of people with disabilities: "Basically everyone has something. Everyone is different and in the end we are also

all a bit normal. Everyone is therefore just a variation of normal. So if we look at it like this and show some understanding for people with different motor skills, then we should be able to get along with each other a bit better."

These field notes written during an observation, sketch the context of this paper that focuses on physically disabled youth[1] who attend mainstream secondary school in the Netherlands. Government policy in the Netherlands reflects a global tendency in its goal to include disabled children in mainstream education as much as possible (de Klerk, 2007; Fitzgerald, 2012). The situation described above, where one disabled child participates in a class filled with able-bodied peers, is a realistic and common result of this policy. Several critical disability scholars who argue for inclusive education (e.g. Allen, 2010; Grenier, 2007; Ware, 2001) distinguish between mainstreaming and inclusion of disabled students. According to Fitzgerald (2012) mainstreaming means disabled students are placed into the existing school system alongside able-bodied peers and receive some adjustments and extra support. Thus, the school system itself remains unchanged. Inclusion on the other hand, involves broad curriculum reform and recontextualization and requires the removal of exclusionary practices so that all children can participate (p. 445). In the Netherlands, disabled youth are primarily subjected to mainstreaming but under the heading of 'inclusive education'.

As Goodwin (2009) and Fitzgerald & Kirk (2009) show, the mainstreaming of disabled youth into mainstream sport and school enhances the visibility and participation of physically disabled students. However, mainstreaming also highlights the marginal position these students frequently occupy in their educational environment because they are few in number and often have difficulty participating in physical activities offered in schools (such as physical education and sport played during recess) that are constructed as normal and important for youth in general. The field notes exemplify a small-scale attempt at creating awareness around disability in mainstream education. The objective of the handicap experience class is for able-bodied students to experience what it is like to be disabled and become aware of (their own role in) exclusionary practices to which disabled people are subjected.[2]

The field notes furthermore provide information about the discourses related to physicality that circulate in Dutch mainstream education. For example, they contain elements of discourses about disability, sport, health, and normalcy/difference. The description illustrates how dominant societal discourses related to physicality, such as the biomedical view of disability and the dominant discourse about sport, produce the abled body as the norm and construct the disabled body as 'abnormal' or 'deviant' by default (Garland-Thomson, 2002; 2004; Wickman, 2007). The example also shows how professionals in the field of disability can reproduce *and* challenge dominant notions about the body as they attempt to introduce alternative notions of normality.

The handicapped experience class primarily raises the question what it is like to participate in mainstream (physical) education as a disabled individual. In this paper, we explore this issue further by asking how disabled students in this ableist context discursively construct and position themselves in relation to dominant discourses that mark their bodies as abnormal and deviant. In what ways do these youth reproduce dominant notions about physicality and sport? And how do they challenge or resist these? Our research aims to explore these issues by analyzing the narratives about sport, physical education (PE), the body, and self of four physically disabled Dutch youngsters.

Ableism in sport and school

Ableism is an important theoretical concept in disability research. It refers to the attitudes and views of able-bodied people toward disabled people and is based on the (often implicit) assumption that the world should be tailored to those without disabilities (Duncan, 2001; Wendell, 1996). Many critical disability scholars interrogate dominant ableist discourses that assume able-bodiedness as a taken for granted norm (e.g. Corrigan et al., 2010; Garland-Thomson, 2002, 2005; Grue, 2011; Wendell, 1996; Zola, 1993). Often this research is theoretical in nature. Garland-Thomson (2002 p. 7), for example, argues that dominant ableist discourses refer to the hidden norm of the white, able-bodied male from which the disabled are imagined to depart.

These discourses thus function as a way of disciplining bodily differences. The exclusionary effect of dominant ableist discourses is mentioned by many scholars (e.g. Edwards & Imrie, 2003; Oliver, 1990; Shakespeare & Watson, 2002). With the increasing emphasis placed in current Western societies on being physically active, sport and physical education have become central discursive fields that shape popular perceptions of 'normal' and 'abnormal' bodies. The meanings and value of bodies that are constructed within these fields form an importance source of knowledge on which in- and exclusionary practices in general are based. As DePauw (1997) argues:

> In a society where individuals are judged by their appearance and valued for their youth, virility, activity, and physical beauty, individuals with disabilities are often shunned by society and treated as inferiors. (p. 423)

Several scholars have suggested that ableist notions about embodiment can filter from the sports context into society in general through (popular) imagery (e.g. Buysse & Borcherding, 2010; B. Hardin & M. Hardin, 2004). Hardin and Hardin (2004) argue that the lack of images of disabled bodies in PE textbooks indicates the dominance of ableism in the mainstream school context and could explain exclusionary practices based in dis/ability. Research by McMaugh (2011), Pitt and Curtin (2004) and Curtin and Clarke (2005) confirms that exclusion based on dis/ability is embedded in mainstream education. They found that children with a physical disability who participated in mainstream classes were often bullied by peers, undervalued by teachers and excluded from physical activities. Similarly, Fitzgerald (2005) focused on exclusionary practices in mainstream PE. She found that PE practices included disabled students measuring themselves and others against idealized notions of normality. One of these notions, according to Fitzgerald, assumes a high level of motor competence. As a result, disabled students were not only excluded from playing 'rough' sports like rugby, but also their performance in other sports like boccia was not recognized as valuable. Fitzgerald's research shows how the educational context is shaped by both adults and children who reproduce ableist discourses and practices that oppress physically

disabled youth. Thus, the ideal of inclusive education when operationalized through mainstreaming often falls short in practice. As ableist assumptions mostly remain unchallenged in mainstream school settings, inclusivity may have become merely a fashionable phrase without much content (Fitzgerald, 2012; Grenier, 2007). This raises the question how disabled youth manage the oppressing power structures in mainstream (so-called inclusive) education that are based on ableist normative notions of physicality.

Doubt and McCall (2003) interviewed physically disabled students about their experiences in mainstream secondary school in Canada. They found that negative peer reactions and the inaccessibility of activities such as PE and athletics limited the inclusion of these teenagers. Doubt and McCall also described disabled students' strategies to facilitate inclusion, such as finding a specific niche in PE and making fun of their own disability to put others at ease. This research shows that students are not just victims of ableist discourses that mark them as abnormal and facilitate their exclusion from participating in (physical) activities with peers. As Doubt and McCall (2003) and McMaugh (2011) argue, disabled students also resist these oppressive structures, produce alternative discourses and perform strategies to manage and/or minimize their marginalization.

In this paper we employ a feminist poststructuralist perspective to critically explore how Dutch physically disabled students engage in these processes. Hereby we aim to unravel how dominant knowledge/power structures shape the discursive constructions about the body/self that these youth use. Additionally, we search for possibilities to disrupt the dominance of ableist discourses about sport and physicality by paying attention to the complexity and dynamics of identity positions that these youth occupy in relation to these discourses.

Feminist poststructuralism

A feminist poststructuralist perspective challenges the dominant assumption that the body is a biologically essential and unitary category and instead considers the body to be socially constructed. While poststructuralism acknowledges the material component of individual bodies, it contends

that the biophysical is inextricably linked to sociopolitical dynamics. Critical attention to discourses that produce marginalized bodies is therefore warranted (Grue, 2011). Feminist poststructural scholars thus frame the body as a site of conflicting social, political and economic forces (Weedon, 1997; Wright, 2004). The body is seen as dynamic and fluid, constantly influenced by and of influence on discourses (Azzarito & Solmon, 2005). Feminist poststructuralism provides a good framework from which to examine disability since it shows that "[...] disability – similar to race and gender – is a system of representation that marks bodies as subordinate, rather than an essential property of bodies that supposedly have something wrong with them" (Garland-Thomson, 2005 p. 1557-1558). Feminist poststructuralists such as Weedon (1997) and Wright (2004) argue that discourses are systems of language, thought and practice that produce historically and culturally specific meanings about which bodies are considered normal and which – by default – are considered abnormal or pathological. Moreover, dominant discourses about physicality and sport produce abled bodies as normal and disabled ones as abnormal (Garland-Thomson, 2005).

A poststructuralist perspective assumes that meanings produced by discourses are not fixed and stable but fluid and constantly changing because they are inextricably connected to power relations. Yet at a specific time and place certain discourses are privileged over others, whereby the meanings they produce come to be considered 'absolute truths'. As these absolute truths become institutionalized, they discipline bodies through everyday practices (Foucault, 1979a). Surveillance, categorization and normalization are disciplinary practices and as such they function as systems of control over individuals' bodies. Disabled bodies are often subjected to disciplinary practices because of their marginal position in relation to the norm. McMaugh (2011 p. 859) describes practices of surveillance in mainstream education. She found that able-bodied students managed perceived differences by constantly monitoring disabled peers. Similarly Cadwallader (2007), in her exploration of normalization practices that disabled people are subject to such as 'corrective' surgery, shows how bodies can be physically shaped by discourses.

Thus, discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing

meaning. They also shape the materiality of the body, the embodied experiences of individuals, and their sense of self. Discourses can oppress marginalized groups such as women, racial minorities and the disabled through the production of specific knowledge/power. This does not mean that individuals are social dupes. Feminist poststructuralists argue that there is also room to challenge these oppressing structures. Azzarito & Solomon (2005) posit that "Agency is […] produced by people's negotiation of power relations embedded and produced by discourses." (p. 224). Similarly McMaugh (2011) contends that young disabled people are not simply victims of dominant discourses about sport and physicality. They are active agents who can resist, negotiate and challenge dominant abled discourses in their everyday lives. This agency requires scholarly attention because its dynamics can illuminate possible ways ableist discourses can be disrupted. Insight is therefore needed in how disabled youth exercise agency within these constraining power structures and how they position their body/self in relation to ableist discourses.

Similar to their conceptions of the body, feminist poststructuralists conceptualize the self as fragmented, multiple, contradictory and fluid. The self (also referred to as subjectivity, identity and subject position) is thus not seen as fixed and stable but as a process that entails a continuous negotiation of various sets of socially established meanings and practices. Following Butler (1990), Rail et al. (2010) argue that "identity involves a notion of performativity, a re-experiencing of meanings […]" related to dis/ability, gender, sexuality, race etcetera (p. 264). This performative element may be crucial to how disabled youth position themselves at a certain time and place along the range of subject positions made available to them by circulating discourses about sport and physicality.

Methodology

Our focus was on youth with physical disabilities between the ages of 12 and 18. An exhaustive search via online forums, rehabilitation centers and schools resulted in finding four youngsters who agreed to participate in the study: Anna, a 13 year old girl with Erb's palsy, a nerve injury that effects the movement of the shoulder, arm, and hand; Katy, a 12 year old girl with

cerebral palsy who experiences spasms; and Dexter and Nadia, a fourteen year old boy and girl with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis. Dexter and Nadia were not visibly disabled, but did experience motor impairments due to severe pain and fatigue and were therefore categorized as physically disabled by their school supervisor. This small group reflects a variance of disabilities that speaks to the heterogeneity of the disability experience. Yet in their mainstream educational setting the youth were all reduced to the single category of 'disabled'. The authors, in contrast, can be categorized as able-bodied[3]. The fact that we neither share the disabled experience nor are part of the disability community might have contributed to our difficulties in finding participants for this project. In the Results section we elaborate on the possible reasons for the lack of (interest in) participation of many youngsters who were contacted.

After gaining consent for participation from the school, the children and their parents, the primary researcher organized the interviews. Katy, Dexter and Nadia took part in a group interview led by the primary researcher. The primary researcher conducted an individual interview with Anna. We used this variation in methodology to allow for both the in-depth insights on sensitive topics that are usually gained more effectively in individual interviews, and the peer interaction in the focus group setting that spurs youth to talk more extensively about their experiences and build on each other's ideas (Peek & Fothergill, 2009).

In the interviews the primary researcher asked the youth to talk about their ideas and experiences with regard to physical education, sport, their bodies and their identity/self. The participants were additionally asked to bring a picture of someone whose body they considered to be athletic and a picture of someone whose body they considered non-athletic. This method was used to enhance the participants' reflexivity about bodies, physicality and sport (Azzarito, 2010b; van Amsterdam et al., 2012b).

Our poststructuralist perspective kept the interviews focused on meaning making and on the contextualization of our participants' narratives within the discursive field of sport and physicality. The interviews were audio taped. All the recordings were transcribed verbatim. The analysis

of the transcripts was twofold. First, the data were thematically analyzed. Qualitative data analysis software Nud*ist Vivo was used to help organize the data into codes and themes. Second, a critical discourse analysis was used, informed by our feminist poststructuralist approach (Azzarito & Solmon, 2006a; Rail et al., 2010; Wendell, 1996; Wickman, 2007; Wright, 2004). This analysis allowed us to identify discursive constructions that our participants used in their narratives regarding sport and physicality. It also allowed us to interrogate how our participants positioned themselves in relation to dominant abled discourses about sport and physicality. We paid attention both to how our participants reproduced dominant ideologies in their narratives and how they used their agency to resist and challenge these. We have thus tried to explore some of the commonalities and differences in experiences of the disabled youth that participated in this study, but we acknowledge that the data presented in this paper are by no means exhaustive or generalizable.

Results and discussion

Constructing and positioning the self as normal

The primary theme that emerged from the interviews and observations revolved around the desire of disabled youth to be (seen and treated as) normal. For them this normalcy was not effortless or taken-for-granted but required work. Although dominant societal discourses about sport and physicality construct the disabled body as deviant, vulnerable and lacking and the disabled as abnormal, youth in this study offered insights into the different ways in which they *did* construct the self as normal. In this section we will describe the various discursive constructions and performative strategies they employed to accomplish a normal self.

"It's actually very normal that I'm different" – an alternative discourse. In the interview Anna showed awareness of the dominant discourse about physicality and how this shaped others' reactions to her. She talked for example about the stares she gets on the street when she wears an arm brace, which can be considered surveillance of her disabled body/self. Yet Anna herself used an alternative discourse to challenge dominant notions about disability. She

mentioned that her visible disability often triggered negative reactions from people around her, but that she had gotten used to being seen as different. She stated that she had had trouble with this when she was younger, but eventually accepted her disability as part of her self.

> At first I was really bothered by it and I felt very upset. But later on I just started to accept it. Now, I'm just like, it's actually very normal that I'm different.

The construction of her self as normal seems essential to Anna's acceptance of her disability. The alternative discourse Anna used produces the knowledge that everyone is different and therefore being different is normal. This discourse allowed Anna to construct herself as different and normal simultaneously.

The alternative discourse of 'everyone is different, everyone is normal' resonates with the words of Preston in the case described in the introduction. It is often offered in Disability Studies research as a solution to exclusionary practices based on disability. Shakespeare and Watson (2002) for example, argue that impairment is the universal fate of all humans and therefore there "is no qualitative difference between disabled people and non-disabled people, because we are all impaired" (p. 27). Shakespeare and Watson point out that there is no such thing as a body that works perfectly, consistently or eternally. However, Hughes (2009) considers alternative discourses that evoke the universality of impairment to be problematic because they normalize disability instead of celebrating bodily differences. The alternative discourse that Anna used is slightly different from the discourse that critical disability scholars such as Shakespeare and Watson suggest, because it explicitly emphasizes (abled) normalcy as desirable. Possibly this is reinforced by the Dutch context in which normalcy is celebrated and 'being different' is often approached with apprehension and/or (mild) disdain[4].

Moreover, the use of this alternative discourse enabled Anna to actively engage with oppressing dominant structures and construct a disabled self as normal and different simultaneously. Her narrative was filled with instances where she said that people soon got used to her disability and to being seen

and treated as different. The following interview excerpt seems exemplary of Anna's experiences of becoming normal within the ableist school setting that excluded her from participating in PE:

> Interviewer: What is it like to have to do something different from the other students in PE?
> Anna: Well, it took some getting used to, but after a while it became normal.
> Interviewer: What exactly did you have to get used to?
> Anna: It is strange when you can't participate in the group, when you have to do something else all by yourself.
> Interviewer: And how did that make you feel?
> Anna: Not too bad, because I'm used to doing something different from the others. And later on they understood as well.

Thus, in Anna's experience, her disability makes a difference in social interactions at first, but it is only a matter of time before being different becomes normal to herself and others. Ironically, the alternative discourse Anna used to gain more acceptance of her difference, also led her to accept the structural exclusionary practices based on ableist discourses about sport and physicality. A poststructural perspective suggests that these ableist discourses that underpin inclusionary PE produce her as a subject unable to participate in certain physical activities.

By using the 'everyone is different, everyone is normal' discourse Anna expressed her agency within the constraining power structures of her educational setting as she tried to redefine ableist norms. She also alluded to the fact that disabled people are often invisible in the sport context and advocated more visibility of disabled people in sport and PE to diminish their marginalization.

> There is a fellow student in school who uses a wheelchair and he also participates in PE. But that's not something you see very often. It's similar to the Olympic Games. Not everyone knows this, but there are also Paralympic Games for disabled people only these rarely get aired on TV. That's one of the problems.

In Anna's experience, the more people see disabled bodies and interact with them, the more people become accustomed to them and consequently they become normal. Anna viewed this normalizing of disabled bodies as desirable.

Anna's initiative to immediately tell all her classmates about her disability at the beginning of the new school year is another example of her attempts at normalizing her disabled body. The use of a feminist poststructuralist framework suggests that this should not be read as politicizing her disabled self, but as a performative technique used by Anna to become normal as soon as possible. Her shifting subject position in relation to disability sports reflects the tension between being different and being normal that the alternative discourse she uses generates. Although she would rather watch the Paralympics than the Olympics, she denied this is related to the possibilities such broadcasts give for identification. Instead, she steered the conversation towards her participation in abled sports (ice skating), which she said she enjoys because she can participate like everyone else, without extra help.

"I just want to be as normal as possible" – passing as able-bodied. Nadia and Dexter used a strategy different from Anna's to construct their self as normal. The (mostly) invisible nature of their disability offered them the opportunity to keep their disability a secret and pass as normal. Goffman (1978) described passing as a common strategy used by those who are stigmatized to circumvent stigma by minimizing, hiding and/or disguising differences. Similar to others with invisible disabilities (see for example Lingsom, 2008; Valeras, 2010) Nadia felt that hiding her disability was the best way to avoid negative differentiating practices that are produced by the dominant ableist discourse about physicality. Not wanting to be seen as different was central in Nadia's construction of her self as normal:

> Nadia: My biggest thing is that I do not want to be an exception. I just don't tell anyone. When people ask about it, I just tell them something else […] if I'm in a wheelchair for example and people ask why, I just tell them I have a sports injury […] They don't need to know.

> Interviewer: Why? What are you afraid of?
> Nadia: That they'll think I'm different. And I don't want that. I am still the same.

This quote exemplifies Nadia's fear of being seen and treated differently because of her disability and reflects exclusionary practices that are produced by the dominant ableist discourse about physicality. Dexter and Katy seemed to share this fear. Dexter argued that "I don't think anybody wants to be seen as different". The desire to be seen as normal/abled was also illustrated by Nadia's participation in ballroom dance, which she did against the advice of her doctors. Her gendered and abled subjectivity seemed to intersect when she prided herself with dancing on high heels for two hours straight in competitions like the other dancers in spite of the pain and fatigue she experienced.

Katy and Nadia explicitly resisted identifying as disabled, which they saw as abnormal, in favor of constructing the self as normal. Because of the visible nature of her disability Katy's performative strategy focused on constructing her self as "as normal as possible". Katy's description of her impairment illustrates this.

> I have spasms. That has nothing to do with pain, I just walk differently. You can see it too. At school everything goes ok. I just get tired quickly and that's why I have a wheelchair. I use it if I go shopping for instance […] I can do almost everything. The only thing that's difficult for me is the stuff that requires balance. I can walk up the stairs without using my hands but not down. That's when I get afraid of falling over forwards, so I just don't do that. I always hold on to the railing. I also can't walk on a balance beam. Those sorts of small things I cannot do.

In this narrative Katy tried to minimize the limitations she has to deal with by reassuring everyone present at the group interview that her schoolwork is not suffering; by stating that she can do "almost everything" and by emphasizing that her difficulties "only" concern her balance and there are just small things she cannot do. A poststructuralist lens suggests that this is a

performative act by which Katy positions herself as close as possible to the abled norm defined by dominant ableist discourse. Katy's narrative suggests she constructed the abled/normal body as one that moves smoothly and without technical support from a wheelchair, walks up and down the stairs without problems, and has good balance.

In the following excerpt, Katy described her dislike of participating in disability sports and her desire to be normal:

> Katy: [Disability sports] is just not for me. […]
> Nadia: Yeah, you see the worst disabilities, really extreme.
> Katy: I really thought, what am I doing here? There were many kids with Down syndrome participating. I just don't like being in the middle of all that.
> Interviewer: Why not?
> Katy: I just don't like it, I just want to be as normal as possible.
> Nadia: You just want to be yourself, the same as everyone else.

Similar to the negative attitude of wheelchair athletes towards other (more severely) disabled athletes that Wickman (2007) describes, Nadia and Katy constructed a hierarchy of disabilities by distancing themselves from those with "extreme" disabilities. This exemplifies how Katy and Nadia engaged in disciplinary processes of categorization and normalization that reproduce dominant ableist discourses. Furthermore, their rejection of disability sports can be read as another attempt to discursively construct their self as normal. Yet Nadia's positioning in relation to discourses about dis/ability is not straightforward but complex. Nadia brought a picture of male wheelchair basketball players to the interview. She interpreted their bodies as athletic. This suggests she used multiple positionings in relation to (disability) sports dis/abled (gendered) identity and supports the poststructuralist notion of fluid selves.

Nadia's last addition to Katy's viewpoint suggests she did not want disability to be part of her social identity. In fact, the statement "you just want to be yourself" implies that her disabled body somehow makes it more difficult for Nadia to be seen for who she really is. This alludes to the idea that

disability often functions as a master category by which others define a person with a disability (Mulderij, 2000). Nadia's strategy of resistance to this construction of difference resonates with Michalko's (2009 p. 69) argument that a common strategy to remove the excess of disability is to privilege personhood over disability: "This view holds that disability is not who we are, but something we have".

In contrast to Anna, who pointed out the social nature of disability, Nadia's narrative showed how she simultaneously reproduced and resisted the dominant discourse about disability by constructing it as an individual problem. She explained why she does not want others to see and treat her as different.

> My friends do know. But I said to everyone who I told about my disability: I don't want to be seen as different. Otherwise I will get very angry. I'm not different, I'm like everyone else. I just have a disability, well, that's my problem and not yours.

Here, Nadia constructed a different, disabled self as something negative. The subtext of her construction is that difference is synonymous with deviance, which she tries to normalize. Nadia's resistance to identify as disabled in this narrative can be read as resistance to dominant notions that to be disabled is to be a problem. Congruent with Michalko's (2009) observation, Nadia stressed that she *has* a disability. Thus she suggests she *has* a problem, rather than *being* a problem. Possibly Nadia was trying to avoid surveillance of others by constructing her disability as personal characteristic. However, her ideas reinforce ableist notions that disability is an individual problem rather than a social category that functions as a basis for exclusionary practices.

Resisting differential treatment and feeling the difference

Structural exclusionary practices that ensued from ableist discourses about sport and physicality obviously affected the youth in this study. They gave examples of moments where they were subjected to surveillance, normalization, and other disciplinary practices based on being categorized as disabled. Anna described how, when she applied to mainstream secondary school, the teachers expected her to be placed in the lowest level when they learned of

her disability. Nadia, Dexter and Katy talked about the negative responses they received from others when they used a wheelchair. In the previous section we described how our participants discursively resisted these ableist discourses and related practices. This section deals with the performed resistance of our participants in their everyday life. Nadia and Dexter, for example, explained their strategy of dealing with people who stare or laugh at them as follows:

> Nadia: People look at you when you are in a wheelchair. I always just look back. Then they start staring and I just shout "Hi" [cheerful voice].
> Dexter: Laughing very cheerfully. I do that too. I have a scoot mobile and very often people laugh at me.
> Katy: Really?
> Dexter: Yes and most times I just laugh along "HAHAHA". And then they think "what's he doing?" and they stop laughing. I kind of enjoy doing that.

Here Nadia and Dexter seemed to resist not only the Gaze of others upon their disabled bodies, but also the association of normalcy with happiness and disability with suffering that is produced by the dominant discourse about physicality (Cadwallader, 2007).

These youth had mixed feelings regarding this resistance, however. On the one hand Dexter said he enjoys baffling people who make fun of him by laughing along. But when he was asked if he deliberately tried to challenge people who ridicule him to change their ableist ideas Dexter denied and reformulated his resistance as a way of coping. He stated that he really did not like being treated this way but "crying doesn't help either". This resonates with the findings of Doubt and McCall (2003) who found that in order to enable their inclusion amongst peers, disabled students in mainstream school laughed along when they were ridiculed by able-bodied peers.

The development of strategies for coping with negative feelings due to an ableist environment seemed important to the youth we interviewed. Similar to the views of disabled youth in mainstream education that Goodwin

(2009) reports, Dexter and Nadia described feeling extremely sad about not being able to participate in PE. Seeing peers participate in sports and PE class made them feel like an outsider. Therefore, both Nadia and Dexter said they avoided watching sports and PE classes.

Another strategy of resistance emerged when we as researchers tried to find participants for the study. In spite of the many ways in which we tried to contact disabled youth, few seemed interested in participating in this research, even when their supervisors or teachers stressed its importance. Declining to participate in this project may be a form of resistance to differential treatment. One youth literally stated "just let me be, I'm not that special". Others expressed similar sentiments. We now realize that contacting disabled youth for the purpose of academic research constructs them as different. Youth that we contacted may have objected to and resisted this construction by refusing to participate. Couser (2005), who argues for an ethnographic investigation of disabled people as a (sub)culture, identified the same problem. He stated that "[…] although disability communities are ripe for ethnographic investigation, disabled people, long subjected both to marginalization and objectifying examination, may resent and resist such attention." (p. 123). Possibly the disabled youth we contacted not only resisted us (able-bodied researchers) marking them as different by searching them out as research participants, they also may have felt objectified by it.

Playing with the possibilities of being (in)visibly different

Whereas there were clearly moments of resistance to being seen and treated as different, the participants also described moments when they strategically used their difference to their advantage. Katy, Nadia and Dexter explained how they also played with the possibilities their disabilities provided them, for example when they visited amusement parks.

> Katy: Sometimes having a disability is fun too. For example when you visit an amusement park.
> Nadia: Yes!
> Katy: You can skip the line. In these instances I always walk extra ugly [sic] on purpose so that people see [my disability].

Nadia: I always choose to go in a wheelchair. Then you can use the wheelchair entrance.
Dexter: Me too.

Katy's mention of walking "extra ugly" denotes the taken-for-granted negative self-evaluation of her limp. The statement that she did this "on purpose" can be read as performative. Whereas Katy, Dexter and Nadia usually wanted to be seen as normal as possible, in this particular context they purposefully emphasize their difference to be able to get into an attraction without having to wait in line. Nadia said she once used her disability as an excuse to go to the bathroom with a girlfriend instead of alone, which she called "girl code". This exemplifies the performativity and intersection of her disabled and gendered self. Teachers normally object to this, but Nadia and the friend were able to get their way because the friend stressed that Nadia needed help undoing the button on her jeans (a lie according to Nadia: "I was wearing a skirt!"). Dexter mentioned that he sometimes used his disability as an excuse for being late for class. He also occasionally prevented classmates from being fined for tardiness by telling the teachers that the classmate in question was helping him manage the elevator. These moments exemplify the agency of these disabled youth and show how they negotiate dominant oppressing power structures.

In contrast to Dexter, and contrary to her disabled performance, Nadia chose to walk the school stairs even though these were difficult for her to manage and resulted in pain and fatigue. Her refusal to use the elevator illustrates the power of surveillance Nadia feels subjected to. It also exemplifies the performativity of her (dis/abled) self:

Nadia: I don't use the elevator.
Dexter: Why not? Nobody can see you, you know.
Nadia: Not true, it's a glass elevator!

Nadia's comment about her visibility in the elevator shows how she – again – tried to avoid the Gaze. Nadia's refusal to use the elevator sometimes resulted in her being late for class. A painful consequence of her success in

constructing and performing a normal, visibly non-disabled self was that teachers did not take her disability into consideration when assessing her tardiness. Nadia said they often fined her for being late. Then she had to go up and down the stairs again to report her tardiness at the administration office downstairs and get back to class.

Having an invisible disability thus provided Nadia as well as Dexter with both opportunities and disadvantages to position and perform their self in interaction with others. In the following excerpt Nadia described the tension that arises from being invisibly disabled:

With me and Dexter, [the disability] doesn't show from the outside. With Katy you can see it. That's also very unpleasant. But if you *can't* see it that's problematic too because people will very quickly say "stop exaggerating" […] Then again, it's also nice that you can't see it because you won't… It's not that I see Katy as an exception, but there will always be people who do.

Both Nadia and Dexter expressed their grief and anger at being called a fraud by doctors, family and others in the course leading up to their diagnoses. Similar to the findings of Lingsom (2008) and Valeras (2010) who investigated the experiences of people with invisible disabilities, the invisible character of Dexter and Nadia's disability had advantages and disadvantages. One the one hand it provided them with the possibility to circumvent discrimination and pass as normal. On the other hand their success in performing normalcy proved problematic because it (sometimes) highlighted the disciplinary practices a disabled person is subjected to in ableist contexts.

Concluding remarks

This research illustrates the overwhelming power of ableism and how it works through discourses of sport and physicality to disable those that do not fit the narrowly defined norm of appearance and physical prowess. This was exemplified by the multiple and complex ways in which youth in our study constructed and positioned themselves as normal and the way they accepted disabling aspects of their environment as natural. As Cadwallader

(2007) argues, all people are produced in relation to normalcy. She contends that "The "aspiration" to normalcy […] is not optional. It is a key part of the way that we become subjects" (p. 389). This may be given extra weight in the Netherlands where dominant social values construct normalcy as desirable. In contrast, standing out (or being outstanding) is seen as something that should not be celebrated publicly (de Rooi, 2007). In addition, youth arguably have an even greater investment than adults in positioning themselves as normal because, as McMaugh (2011) argues, peer acceptance plays an important part in youths' construction of a positive identity. Our results support the idea that discourses in education whose purpose is to foster inclusiveness may instead reinforce stigmatization and marginalization of disabled youth, since the ableist underpinnings of educational practices tend not to be interrogated critically (Evans, 2004; Fitzgerald, 2012; Ware, 2001). As our study shows, students with disabilities were often measured against ableist notions of normality and thus cast as different. In their efforts to be accepted as normal and facilitate belonging and acceptance these students mostly reproduced and reinforced the ableist normal/different binary.

Participating in sports and performing a desirable (athletic) appearance are two important behaviors that can facilitate belonging of youth amongst peers (Anderson, 2009; Fitzgerald, 2005; Frost, 2003). These are also ways in which youth can cultivate their bodies and express their identity (Azzarito & Solmon, 2006a). Although our participants were not invested in constructing an (elite) athletic identity, they were nevertheless constrained in their feelings of belonging and in their constructions of a positive disabled identity by dominant ableist discourses about sport and physicality. This was especially the case when their disability was visible. As Garland-Thomson (2005 p. 1579) argues "Although variations and limitations in functioning are often the core experience of disability, appearance tends to be the most socially excluding aspect of disability". Physical conformity seems to be particularly challenging to disabled students in mainstream education (Doubt & McCall, 2003). This could in part explain the abundance of normalization practices our participants used and indicates the importance of research that examines the role of discourses about sport and physicality beyond the sport context.

The reproduction of dominant ableist discourses has been emphasized in previous research with disabled athletes and youth (e.g. Anderson, 2009; Fitzgerald, 2005; Pitt & Curtin, 2004; Wickman, 2007). The current study, however, illustrated the performative and discursive resistance to these discourses as well. Anna, for example, used the alternative discourse 'everyone is different, everyone is normal' to construct and position herself as normal and different simultaneously and accepted her physical disability as a 'normal' part of who she is. An exploration of such alternative constructions and positionings should therefore play a central role in research that focuses on disability. Although these positionings are not necessarily unproblematic, they do embody possibilities to disrupt the dominance of ableism (Shakespeare & Watson, 2002).

The objective of much disability research and the handicapped experience class described in the beginning of this paper suggests it is enough to *know* the experiences of physically disabled people. We argue that more than knowing or experiencing is needed to change practices that include and exclude based on dis/ability. The emphasis placed on physical competence and appearance in current Western societies requires an understanding of how these discourses exert power (Azzarito, 2010b; DePauw, 1997; Garland-Thomson, 2005). Researchers need to explore how inclusionary and exclusionary practices are maintained by discourses that construct a narrowly defined abled norm. Such research should not only focus on disabled bodies/people but also critically question what the abled norm exactly entails. What is considered a normal/abled body and in which context? What are the boundaries that mark such a body? What subject positions are made available by this norm and how do abled as well as disabled people position themselves in relation to this norm? Although feminist poststructuralist scholars have addressed some of these issues from a theoretical viewpoint (e.g. Garland-Thomson, 2002, 2005; Roher, 2005; Samuels, 2002), empirical research is needed that critically investigates the abled body and ableist ideologies from the perspective of both disabled and abled people. This paper offers a modest attempt to begin to fill this gap. Our results indicate that our participants considered a normal/abled body as one that is able to walk up

and down stairs without difficulties; participate in PE, sport and play without extra help or adjustments; and not display indicators of abnormality such as a limp or supportive technology such as a wheelchair or scoot mobile.

As our research furthermore illustrates, the category 'disabled' is not homogeneous. There are many different disabilities and – even among the four youth we interviewed – there were many different experiences and ideas regarding dis/ability, sport and the embodied self and multiple ways in which youth positioned themselves in relation to dominant ableist discourses about sport and physicality. For example, the in/visible nature of their disability was crucial in how our participants could construct and position themselves as normal and/or different (see also Lingsom, 2008; Valeras, 2010). In addition, ableist discourses about sport and physicality not only affect those with disabilities. Their scope includes those seen as abled. Future empirical research should not only focus on disabilities and acknowledge the multiple and layered experiences of those marked as disabled, but also explicitly deconstruct the narrowly defined norm of ability, how constructions of dis/ability may intersect with other social categories, and search for alternative constructions and subjectivities that challenge dominant ableist ideas. Research on those that do not fit the current norm can include a wider selection of people, such as those marked as elderly or overweight/obese. Subsequent findings may create the critical mass needed to disrupt discourses related to dis/ability that marginalize those marked as 'different'. Ultimately the results of such studies should be used to re-imagine inclusive and empowering structures and practices.

Notes

1. Semantics are an important theme in disability studies and topic of much debate (see for example Zola, 1993). Different terms such as 'disabled', 'person with a disability', 'handicapped', 'impaired' and 'crip' all reflect different political and theoretical positions in relation to how disability is understood and how people with disabilities should be treated in everyday life (Roher, 2005). We use the term 'disabled youth' or 'disabled person' in order to convey the idea that the person in question is actively disabled by society, as opposed to simply having a medical or biological 'problem'.

2. Although Preston's initiative is well meant and he should be credited for trying to address unexamined assumptions about being disabled, the approach is also problematic. First of all, this one-hour class cannot sufficiently help able bodied students to form a thorough understanding the disadvantages and discrimination disabled students experience in PE and beyond. Secondly, it seems impossible to replicate a disabled experience with simple attributes such as the ones Preston uses, if at all. Thirdly, Preston reproduces dominant ableist discourses of disability by framing disability in medical terminology and using words such as "damaged", "not working properly", and "grown wrong". As Erevelles (2005) argues radical transformation is required in both curriculum theory and practice for mainstream education to become inclusive.
3. We contend that categorizations based on dis/ability are socially constructed and constitute a binary that represents and reproduces skewed relations of power between people who are assigned to either side of the binary. We acknowledge our current privileged position in relation to those categorized as disabled. Our position as abled researchers undoubtedly shaped the research process and its outcomes. As with any type of research, the results reflect only part of the lived reality of our participants. For an extensive discussion on how to do emancipatory disability research see (Mercer, 2002).
4. This is reflected for example in the popular Dutch saying 'Doe maar normaal dan doe je al gek genoeg' (Just act normal, that's crazy enough). The emphasis on normalcy and the rejection of public celebrations of difference in the Netherlands is also described by Rooi (2007) in his popular publication on unwritten social rules of conduct and customs in the Netherlands.

6.
OTHERING THE 'LEAKY BODY'. AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC STORY ABOUT EXPRESSING BREAST MILK IN THE WORKPLACE.

Abstract

In this paper I present an autoethnographic story about my experiences of expressing breast milk at a Dutch university department. My story illustrates how interrelated and conflicting discourses about gender, motherhood, breastfeeding, embodiment and professionalism raised issues about (in)visibility, embodied control, spatiality and discipline of my body and shaped my experience as a newly maternal employee. This paper thus aims to include bodies and embodied experiences in organization studies and highlights the need to consider spatiality as an important topic of research. I address these issues in my writing and use insights from feminist poststructuralism to show how the experiences I describe are part of a larger cultural framework of power structures that produce the 'leaky' maternal body as the Other, subject to (self-)discipline and marginalization. I hope my story inspires reflexivity and empathic understanding of the complex reality of experiences related to expressing breast milk in the workplace.

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Prologue

The value of breastfeeding for the physical and emotional health of an infant and its mother is strongly emphasized in both scholarly and governmental texts (e.g. Eidelman, Gartner, and Morton 2005; WHO 2001; Murphy 1999; Schmied and Lupton 2001). The World Health Organization (2001) urges women to breastfeed their babies exclusively until they are at least 6 months of age, advice that is disseminated globally by health professionals and government policy. Simultaneously, women are urged to (continue to) engage in paid labour in order to keep the economy 'healthy'.

In the Netherlands, for example, women have a right to 16 weeks of maternity leave, with a minimum of 4 weeks before the due date. Most Dutch women thus have to return to work when their baby is 3 months old. This leaves many newly maternal employees with the challenge of combining their work with breastfeeding, which is part of the larger issue women face in coping with the demands of both their work and their private life (e.g. Smithson and Stokoe 2005; Warren 2004; McDowell 2004; Riad 2007). Lactating mothers often handle this challenge by expressing breast milk at work and taking it home to their babies. Breast milk expression performed in an organizational context offers an important topic of research because this practice illustrates how interrelated and often conflicting discourses surrounding gender, motherhood, breastfeeding, embodiment and professionalism shape experiences of employees within their organizational context.

This paper aims to uncover some of the complexities related to expressing breast milk in an organizational context by focusing on my own experiences of expressing at the Dutch university department where I work. As such it represents an attempt to include the body and embodied experiences in organizational studies. Informed by feminist poststructuralist theory (Weedon 1997; Butler 1990) this paper conceptualizes discourses as both the signs and the practices through which subjects are formed and which compel people to think, feel and act in certain ways. In line with the work of Foucault (1972a; 1979), I show the subtle ways in which power is exercised through discourses. Specifically, this paper illustrates the power structures and multiple, fluid subjectivities that shaped my experiences and produced

my (lactating) maternal body as the Other in the workplace. The themes that emerge from my narrative below include spatiality, embodied control, in/visibility, and disciplining of the maternal body in an organizational context.

Autoethnography

I have chosen to write this paper in the form of an autoethnographic story. Autoethnography is concerned with exploring personal experiences and their relation to culture (Ellis and Bochner 2000; Ellis 2004). As Ellis (2004, p. 30) explains, "The goal is to practice an artful, poetic, and empathic social science in which readers can keep in their minds and feel in their bodies the complexities of concrete moments of lived experience". In autoethnographic stories researchers reflexively analyze their thoughts, feelings and experiences as socially constructed processes and try to create an empathic understanding of those groups or stories that are underrepresented and/or marginalized. The personal style of writing should enable readers and writers alike to make sense of their experiences and enter into dialogue through empathic understanding, more so than with conventional academic prose (Ellis 2004; Richardson and St.Pierre 2005). Thus, writing is used as a method through which one can analyze and understand personal experience as part of a larger social and political system. The feminist adage 'the personal is political' fits well with this method.

The idea that I would write a paper about my experiences expressing breast milk did not materialize until I was about three months into my struggle trying to combine work with breastfeeding. This paper is based on my notes and journal entries about expressing breast milk at work. Most of these notes were written retrospectively, although I also wrote some journal entries as the events unfolded. In the story I have constructed from this 'data', I intentionally blur the boundaries between personal narrative and academic theory to indicate how the separation between work and private life is untenable and how collapsing binaries such as personal/private and theory/narrative can produce new ways of being and understanding. I attempt to show that the struggle I faced as a lactating working mother in constantly having to switch between expressing and my scholarly activities is embedded in an

extensive network of power relations (Foucault 1972b;1979). These are connected to practices and interactions revolving around expressing breast milk in an organizational context and through which women in general are disadvantaged and marginalized (Puwar 2004; Shildrick 1997; Gatrell 2013). I hope this paper resonates with the reader and inspires them to reflect on their own positioning and embodied experiences within their organizational context.

Caution!
Leaky body[1]
spreading fluid
spreading itself
all over the building
I spread myself thin
over time and space
and others' demands
I spread liquid gold
all over my fingers, into a bowl
until bruises appear
marking my disciplined body[2]
I spread a body that is not supposed to be
in here...
The place of thoughts, ideas and theories
leaves no room for me right now
My unruly body manifests itself
asks for attention, time, and space
It is painfully here
a matter out of place[3]

I spread a body that is not supposed to be... in here

I'm in someone else's office. Apparently they are not coming in today. From behind the desk I see lots of books, binders and stacks of papers. Nothing in this office hints at the identity of the person working here. There are no pictures, no personal paraphernalia. Just the computer, the papers and the dust

lit by artificial light. I'm cold, which is not very surprising considering the fact that half my chest is uncovered. I know I should not be focusing on my physical state, nor on the rhythmic moaning sound that is produced by the machine that is attached to my left breast. So I look around the room some more. Outside I hear the noises of a normal working day in my university department. Footsteps are pacing up and down the hall, probably someone getting a printout or hurrying to a class filled with students. Every time I hear footsteps approach, I feel my jaw clench and my chest tighten. I feel uncomfortable because, after all, I am half naked. At work. In someone else's office. Gatrell's (2007b) study shows that dressing smartly is important for women who combine breastfeeding and professionally paid work. Her interview data suggest that 'dressing up' is necessary for a breastfeeding woman to legitimize her presence in a male dominated work context. And here I am, literally and figuratively dressed 'down'. I feel like I am cheating at the game of playing the 'successful academic', who is constructed in dominant discourse as devoting all her time and energy to the university (Raddon 2002). And I am afraid of being caught with my shirt down.

As another set of footsteps pass by, I exhale slowly. I reassure myself that no one will come into this office unannounced and see me in this awkward position, chest uncovered and breast pump attached. I look down at the bottle that collects my milk and see that I have only pumped 20 cc. I need at least 180 cc and I am already sore from the pull of the breast pump. Why is this not working? I ask myself, not for the first time. I am doing everything right aren't I? I have my tea, pictures of my baby and I am even sniffing some of her underwear. This last bit was recommended by the lactation expert I consulted because I have problems getting milk expressed. "Liquid gold" is how she referred to my milk. Burns et al. (2012) and Hausman (2003) show that the term liquid gold is also used by midwives in Australia and the US to communicate the perceived superiority of breast milk compared to formula. According to my very own breastfeeding expert, the smell of my newborn will help me produce some of this precious liquid.

By establishing these provisions, I feel like I have taken care of all the factors of influence on my milk production. All except for one: you should be

relaxed. But I am definitely NOT relaxed. I try to fake it, but my body seems to know the difference. Although I have grown to like breastfeeding 'live', I absolutely HATE this breast pump and my body seems to simply refuse to produce milk for this plastic thing that stands in such sharp contrast to my lovely, soft, and beautiful baby girl. And it takes so much time out of my working day too, time and energy.

As I return to my desk, I stare at the computer screen. I blink my eyes a few times to stop the letters from dancing through my vision. I try to get back into what I was doing but shifting the focus is difficult. Producing milk and producing ideas or text seem light years apart. And the constant switching between my rational academic work and my embodied expressing practices makes me dizzy sometimes. I do it all for my baby, I tell myself. But is this really true? Why do I pump if the experience is so terrible? Why do any of us working mothers do it? Which discourses make us repeat this pattern?

I spread 'liquid gold' all over my fingers, into a bowl

For the sake of practice, I try expressing at home. I am determined to make this work, to control my unwilling body with my mind. Warren and Brewis (2004, p. 232) contend that embodied control is often a concern for western women because of the prevailing constructions of female materiality as uncontrollable. Based on interviews with pregnant women, Warren and Brewis suggest that pregnancy and other instances of female materiality such as lactation and menstruation, remind women that the control they have of their bodies is inevitably partial. Yet as Warren and Brewis argue, women often struggle with their ungovernable bodies in an attempt to conform to the normative ideals of bodily control and rational autonomy. I recognize this as I fight – aggressively almost – against my own body and its refusal to obey my wishes, to produce milk when and where I want it to do so.

Different 'expert' voices reverberate through my mind, memories of past conversations with health professionals and family members: "breast milk is the absolute best for your baby, that is why we call it liquid gold", "you are advised to breastfeed your baby exclusively for at least six months. This is crucial for both your baby's health and your own", and "the only reason

why we women have breasts is to feed our children, that's what you should use them for". These voices echo the dominant public health discourse that emphasizes the moral superiority of breastfeeding (e.g. Schmied and Lupton 2001; Burns et al. 2012; Wall 2001). They also indicate that dominant constructions about breastfeeding are used as a bio-political tool to produce both mother and infant as healthy citizens (Meyer and Oliveira 2003). As Murphy (1999, p. 187-188) argues, dominant discourse constructs the "good mother" as one who breastfeeds, by which she shows that she "prioritizes her child's needs, even (or perhaps especially) where this entails personal inconvenience or distress".

After another draining pumping session where the only liquids involved were my tears of frustration, I come to the conclusion that my body quite literally revolts against the breast pump by refusing to produce milk for plastic. But somehow I still feel compelled to try pumping again and again. Is it in spite or perhaps because of the inconvenience and distress involved?

After I dry my tears and take a deep breath, I decide to consult my good friend the Internet for answers. There must be a better way to 'get the milk flowing'. I click on links until my arm hurts. I read webpages until my eyes burn. Finally, I stumble over a comment from someone who claims that there is no need for a specially designed breast pump. She argues that expressing with your hands is easier, cheaper and more practical. Intrigued I click on the link to a You Tube video that is attached. My jaw drops when I watch the video and see a woman who sprays what seems like oceans of milk from both her breasts simultaneously by pushing and pulling at her nipples with her hands. She seems to defy everything I ever heard about expressing breast milk. I had no idea it was possible to do the whole expressing process by hand. Somehow it does not look particularly appealing, but I am desperate. And why not? The machine is also not a particularly attractive device.

The next day at work, I try this new method. I follow my usual routine: I wash my hands in the bathroom and make myself a cup of tea. Then I go to the front office to ask for a room. The concierge escorts me to an available place. This time, I am put in the library across from my office. The space is big and has huge windows. It has a comfortable feel to it, especially when

the sun is shining like it is today. I sit at the big round table with my back to the window. The sun warms me and I feel a pleasant glow flowing through my body. I unbutton my shirt, and unlatch my nursing bra on the left side. I carefully place a cloth diaper under my breast to protect my clothes from possible leakage stains. This practice illustrates how I try to avoid the surveillance that many lactating mothers are subjected to because their bodies are constructed as uncontrollable and deviant (Gatrell 2007a; Wall 2001). I inhale deeply and breathe out while I begin pushing and pulling my breast like I saw the woman do in the video. However, I do one breast at a time because it is a bit of a juggling act and I have no idea how to catch the milk in a bowl if I pump with two hands simultaneously.

The milk flows; I hear squirts hit the edge of the plastic. I don't know how much milk I am producing since the green bowl doesn't have measurements on the side as the translucent plastic pumping bottles do. I continue on for about 25 minutes until what seems like a reasonable amount of milk is collected on the bottom of the bowl. When I pour it into a plastic bottle for storage I realize that something amazing just happened: I actually managed to produce a complete meal for my baby. This is a first. And even though my breasts feel quite tender from all the pushing and pulling, I am exhilarated. I am genius, my body is beautiful and I feel great about myself.

I almost skip on my way to the toilet where I put my bag on the floor while I wash my hands and the green bowl. I feel so excited I am not even worried about facing Ben, the canteen manager. He has become part and parcel of my breastfeeding experience, since he has to provide me access to the fridge in which I have to put my milk. This fridge is part of the public canteen of our department, the place where all my colleagues get their sandwiches and milk for lunch. Due to strict hygiene regulations, no one besides Ben is allowed to place anything in the fridge. They make an exception for breastfeeding mothers, but Ben comes with the deal. And he is not the silent type.

As I walk up the stairs to the canteen, I hum a happy tune. I feel invincible, bursting with energy and pride for my brilliance in establishing this breakthrough. At the canteen I open my big overloaded bag to grab the bottle. As I put my hand in to feel around for the bottle, I am startled by the

sensation of wet suede lining. Alarmed, I open my bag wide and see that it is completely drenched. My mood plummets quickly. Has the bottle leaked? I frantically start unpacking everything in my bag until I find the bottle. There is only 40 cc left of the 180 cc that I had. Nearly in tears, I think about rescuing the milk that is flowing around freely in my bag.

"We're not making a mess here, are we?" Ben comments half joking. The man does not sense my despair and continues "What have you done now, Noor?"

The lump in my throat prevents me from replying. I try to clean up some of my milk – some of me – from the floor, from the kitchen sink and from my bag with Ben and another cafeteria employee watching. I feel exposed, ashamed, inside out. The (spilled) breast milk clearly sets me apart from the male embodied norms that govern this organizational space and makes my dissonant body highly visible in the negative sense.

Later on I realize how these experiences resonate with Puwar's (2004) study on women who work in British Parliament. Puwar argues that these women can be considered 'space invaders' in their work environment that is dominated by men and hegemonic masculinity. I felt similarly alienated and out of place. While I was on my knees holding a cleaning rag full of my milk, I felt eyes burning a hole in my back. I did not have to look up to know that Ben and the other cafeteria employee were watching, along with some colleagues who were buying their lunch. This made me feel subjected to "moral authority and public scrutiny" of my lactating body (cf. Wall 2001, p. 604). I felt stupid for forgetting the extra little ring that my new bottle requires to prevent it from leaking. And most of all I felt sad for having to flush down the drain all that precious liquid gold and the effort it took me to produce it.

The place of thoughts, ideas and theory leaves no room for me

"Do you have a room for me?" I ask at the front office while holding my cup of hot tea. The front office employees know that I need a room to express but I never use those exact words because I do not want other people standing there – students, colleagues, visitors – to listen in. I feel highly visible whenever I focus attention on my maternal body, which is taboo in the context of

professional paid work (Gatrell 2007a). I certainly don't want anyone to start picturing what I will be doing the coming half hour. So I engage in 'maternal body work'. Gatrell (2013, 623) defines this as "[...] the contrasting types of body work required of 'good' mothers [...] and 'good' employees". Gatrell thus distinguishes between the work that professionally employed women often engage in to conform to health norms related to nurturing their maternal bodies and those of their infants, and the work necessary for them to conform to organizational norms regarding bodily comportment. My experiences showcase these different types of work in which I feel compelled to engage. In addition to my attempts to express during working hours, I make arduous efforts to hide everything associated with my leaky maternal body – milk stains on my clothes, my expressing paraphernalia, my bottles filled with breast milk, etcetera.

Asking for a room and finding one is a time consuming part of the routine of expressing and can also be considered maternal body work. Dutch law states that every lactating working mother has the right to express milk in a clean private room with a lock, but my department does not have a designated room for this purpose. A few weeks before my maternity leave started I asked one of the managers about the practicalities involved in expressing breast milk at our department. The manager told me not to worry. "There will always be at least one vacant office. You can just go to the front office and ask for one," he said. I was unconvinced about the convenience of this approach then, and my apprehension has proven to be correct. Every time I need to express, I have to ask for a room and then the concierge Rick, who is literally and figuratively my key figure, will search for one with me and unlock the door with his master key. At the end of every session, I have to go back to the front office again to tell them I am done, so that Rick can lock the office that I was in. In addition, I have to wash my hands and the equipment before and after each session, so two visits to the bathroom are required. To me, this impractical routine surrounding breast expression illustrates how masculine norms and privilege resound in the organization of space at my university department. Puwar (2004) and Tyler and Cohen (2010) argue that gender norms often materialize through the organization of work spaces. My

difficulties in claiming a space for my unruly maternal body demonstrate the importance of spatiality in the materialization of gendered power relations. It is certainly not easy to exist as the Other in an organizational space, I think while I wait for the concierge who has been summoned by one of our secretaries to come to the front office.

To my surprise, I see that Rick is not here today. His substitute walks with me to the office of one of our full professors. He opens the door. An icy chill greets us.

"I can't do it here," I tell him, knowing that I won't produce a drop of milk in this temperature "It's way too cold".

He frowns slightly when he looks at me. "Okay," he says and closes the door again. We head up the stairs to the first floor. He tries a few rooms, but they are all occupied. We head up another set of stairs and find an empty little storage room. The substitute concierge moves some boxes.

"Will this do?" he asks.

"Ehm, I'm not sure," I reply, while looking at the hole in the door right below the handle. "I actually need a room where I can lock the door," I say hesitantly. We've been out for about 15 minutes now and I really want to get started. This is taking way too long. With Rick, the search for a room is usually a bit quicker.

"Can't you put a chair in front of the door?" the concierge asks. I shake my head. There is only one chair in the room and I am not about to express standing up. "Or how about the big bathroom on the ground floor?" the concierge suggests, "You can lock that one, and it has heating too".

"But I need electricity for my pump," I lie. The idea of expressing in the big public toilet that is used by both my male and female colleagues is just too much to bear. We walk back down to the first floor and finally discover an empty office.

"This seems to be empty," the substitute concierge says. I hear a certain determination in his voice. It's as if he is saying "Okay missy, this is it. You can stop making a fuss. I don't want to hear any more of your arguments. Period".

"Okay," I say, still hesitant and feeling like a little girl who has just been

scolded. “So you are sure the person who works here will not come in today?” The problem is that anyone with a key can enter the office even if I lock it from the inside. So if the person whose office this is does turn up, I will be completely exposed.

“I have no idea,” the substitute concierge says while he walks off. I take a deep breath to calm myself. I am really annoyed and tense. It’s been 25 minutes since I left my office to go on this expedition to find a suitable place to express. I take a sip of my tea, which is cold now and tastes bitter. Better get to it, I think, trying to motivate myself. So I lock the door and sit down. Then I notice that the windows don’t have any blinds and I can see the street from where I am sitting. While I unpack my stuff I try to come to grips with the devilish dilemma this room poses: Do I sit with my back to the door just in case someone happens to show up? Or do I sit with my back to the window to prevent people on the street from seeing me express my bare breasts?

Until bruises appear

It’s 9.30 a.m. I’m sitting uncomfortably on the windowsill in a classroom. I’m here and not among the students because I am one of the teaching assistants for this course and I have to be able to contribute to the lecture from the sidelines. I try to listen to the lecture but I cannot focus because I feel a warm and painful throbbing. When I’m sure no one is watching me I touch my breasts with the back of my hand to feel how tense they are. I always attempt to do this unobtrusively, crossing my arm over my chest and touching the opposite breast with the back of my hand. I do not use the palm of my hand because that would attract too much attention. There seems to be something inappropriate about touching your own breasts with your hands in public. I ponder the double meaning of breasts as both sexual and nurturing and the way breastfeeding seems to complicate the strict distinction that is made in dominant discourse between sexuality and motherhood. As Murphy (1999) demonstrates in her study on breastfeeding, breasts are associated with sexuality in most western countries. This “leaves breastfeeding women open to the charge that they are brazen women” who disrespect the boundaries of decency (p. 202). Young (1992) argues that patriarchal cultures

render women’s breasts problematic precisely because they cut across the border between motherhood and sexuality. She writes “To be understood as sexual, the feeding function of the breasts must be suppressed, and when the breasts are nursing they are desexualized” (p. 159). I recognize this in the ways I try to conform to dominant notions of decency and appropriateness by consciously managing how and when I touch my breasts. I seem to be endlessly engaging in practices of self-surveillance. These can be considered part of the maternal body work I do (cf. Gatrell 2013). They include that I avoid mentioning my expressing practices. The other day, I even caught myself trying to hide some of my notes for this paper when a colleague entered my office space.

I touch my left breast again with the back of my right hand, a routine movement that I unconsciously repeat many times a day. My breasts feel rock hard. I imagine the white, almost translucent skin on my breasts, lined with large blue veins so characteristic of breastfeeding boobs. They are big, I know, so different from the tiny breasts that usually characterize my body shape. My brother once compared my body shape to an asparagus. And he was right; normally I am long and thin and flat. In principle I am against reinforcing dominant gendered beauty ideals that have been criticized by many feminist scholars such as Wolf (1991) and Bordo (2003). Yet it feels strangely satisfying to suddenly have breasts big enough to conform to dominant heterosexual standards of beauty.

Even with the back of my hand, I can feel the lumps that have formed right beneath the surface of my left breast, a clear sign of engorgement[4]. I also feel a slight prickle in my nipples, which means some milk is starting to flow. I let out a sigh; my Let Down Reflex has terrible timing. For those who are not familiar with breastfeeding jargon, the ironically named Let Down Reflex is where the milk actively flows out of your breasts, quite like turning on the shower but then with milk. I need to express some milk soon to relieve myself from the pain that my full breasts are causing and to prevent the embarrassment of leaking through my nursing pads and wetting my shirt with breast milk. My bodily experiences remind me of the normative ideal of embodied control that is often an issue for women who are pregnant or

breastfeeding (cf. Schmied and Lupton 2001; Warren and Brewis 2004). I feel like shouting "Rational autonomy my arse. I am leaking and in pain!" But then I realize how the goal of expressing has shifted from my baby's need for food to my needs for being pain and stain free. I feel otherworldly because I have to hide what is most prominently manifesting itself. This resonates with Brewis' and Sinclair's (2000) ideas about the embodiment of women in modern organizations. They write that "the modern organization is premised on a refusal of what historically has been seen to be female – in short, the body" (p. 193). The disembodied context of the university certainly does not allow any room for the body, let alone a 'leaky' one like mine.

"Today we will not have a break and continue until 11," the professor announces to the students. My stomach clenches and I feel blood rushing to my cheeks. I was hoping to express a little bit in the 10 o'clock break, but this will not happen now. Will my pads hold? Will I have enough time after 11? When the lecture is over, I have about 15 minutes to get to my tutorial. The idea of hurrying back and forth between expressing milk and teaching makes me antsy. Sometimes I am accused of 'having it all', but this case illustrates that the famous saying did not account for time. I have two kids, I have a partner, I have work, but I never have time [5].

The only way I can think of expressing enough milk and getting to the tutorial on time is if I follow the suggestion that the concierge made about three weeks ago and do it in the toilet. To say that this is not a particularly attractive option to me would be an understatement, but I don't see any other possibility. Gatrell (2007b) mentions how some women in her study used lavatory stalls to express milk at work because of a lack of other private spaces available, so I am not the only one considering this option. However, Gatrell's study does not address what actually happens in these spaces. Therefore I have no idea what I might be getting myself into.

My thoughts tumble over each other as I argue with myself about the appropriateness of the toilet as a place to express.

'Am I crazy? That is so unhygienic. A public toilet! Yuk!' One of my voices cries out.

Another voice responds: 'But imagine the time I will be saving. If I do it

there I can skip two trips to the concierge and two trips to the toilet. I can lock the door myself and there's a tap in there, so I can wash my hands and green plastic bowl before and after without any extra hassle! And then maybe I will make it to my tutorial on time…'

I decide to ignore my critical voice and go for it. 'It's the only real option now, and there is no time to waste,' I reassure myself after I have taken the decision. So I dash into my office to collect my 'expressing gear' and then run into the toilet.

First I put down the lid. I do this with my elbow to avoid getting nasty toilet bacteria on my hands. The dirtiness of the toilet stands in such sharp contrast to the purity I associate with my baby that it is mindboggling. I am reminded again of Douglas' (1966) theory on purity and pollution and Puwar's (2004) ideas about bodies 'out of place'. Can my leaky maternal body be seen to pollute the academic context and threaten the moral order of male superiority in this space, simply by being there? Could that be the reason why I am now reduced to the one space in this organization that epitomizes pollution and dirt?

I try to ignore the feeling of being grossed out and try not to look around too much for signs of previous visitors to this particular toilet. Obviously, my attempt fails and I spot at least three hairs and… is that a pubic hair? OK STOP LOOKING AND STOP THINKING!

I wash my hands thoroughly. Then, I sit down on the toilet lid and unpack my stuff. I pull my shirt down over my right breast, unlatch my nursing bra on the right side, put the soaked nursing pad on the windowsill and put a cloth diaper under my bare breast. I spray oxytocin into my nose and I inhale deeply, like an addict sniffing cocaine. I wait about one second for the chemical that is supposed to get my milk flow going to kick in. Then I begin expressing with my right hand, while I hold the green cup under and partly over my uncovered breast with my left hand. Soon the milk starts flowing and I feel the lukewarm liquid run over my fingers. I know they will become sticky. Because I am in a hurry, I press into my breast and pull my nipple as hard as I can. I enjoy the sound that the squirts of milk make on the side of the green bowl. The competitive perfectionist in me is pleased with the

quantity I am producing. Still, I urge my body to work faster, produce more as I push harder on my breast. I don't even feel the bruises anymore that have become a semi-permanent mark of my motherhood and the sacrifices I am making for my newborn. Hager (2011, p. 36) argues that in the cultural imaginary motherhood is characterized by suffering and sacrifice. My experiences seem to be reproducing exactly those ideas. Am I a 'docile body' (Foucault 1979), I wonder, victim of constraining discourses that shape and produce my body in accordance with dominant social norms? Hager (2011) and Murphy (1999) suggest that 'good' mothers are constructed as those who sacrifice their my time and comfort, and endure suffering for the benefit of their children. Could I be actively trying to position myself as a 'good' mother?

As these thoughts enter my mind, I realize I don't have any time to reflect on this at the moment. There are students waiting for me. So I pour the milk from the green bowl into a plastic bottle and put the cap on. After my earlier incident I have become very careful not to spill a drop of this liquid gold stuff, but my hurry makes me reckless so I spill a little bit on my shirt. SHIT! With my fingers still wet and sticky, I try to get the milk stain off. Do I have enough time to run back to my office and fetch the spare shirt I keep in a drawer so that I won't be exposed as an 'uncontrollable body' – a construction which is commonly used to indicate breastfeeding employees (Gatrell 2007b)? I consider what will be more conspicuous to my students: the fact that I am wearing different shirt than 15 minutes ago during the lecture or the fact that my shirt has a small stain on it? When I take a breath, I realize how natural this self-surveillance has become as a practice to legitimate my presence in the academic context. Several scholars argue that masculine embodied norms in organizations are exacerbated in relation to the maternal body (e.g. Fotaki 2013; Puwar 2004; Raddon 2002; Riad 2007). My experiences seem to reflect this argument.

I look in the mirror and as I pull my shirt up a bit to cover my bra that is still showing, I notice my flushed cheeks, tiny pupils and eyes opened widely like a deer caught in headlights. Ok, so I am officially stressed. I decide not to change, as this will only cost me more time. Next, I try to exit the toilet without anyone seeing me and act as 'normal' as I can, avoiding eye contact with

my colleagues while half walking, half running up the stairs to the canteen to put my milk in the fridge. When I enter the room of my tutorial I am happy to see my students working independently in groups. They hardly seem to notice my arrival. So I exhale and try to relax a bit. I still feel my nipples burning and my heart pounding in my chest.

Matter out of place

I am in the train on my way home. My bag is on my lap. I notice an enormous amount of tiny little white stains spread across the surface of the brown leather. Milk, I know. My milk actually, my body in a sense. I feel inside out again. I ignore this feeling that I don't really understand and focus again on the tiny little dried drops of milk on my bag. I think about how difficult it is to catch my milk in the green bowl when I pump by hand. Some of the squirts of milk flow out of my nipples to the sides, some to the front. For some, the natural path is up and some seem to only go downward. In practice, this means I regularly have to adjust the bowl or my own posture while pumping. I am often hunched over the green plastic bowl in order to catch as much milk as possible and make as little mess as possible. It's not comfortable and probably not healthy either. The first week of expressing by hand I experienced signs of repetitive strain injury (RSI). I joked to my partner "I have a 'pump arm' instead of a 'mouse arm'". He laughed.

I ponder over the mess that expressing by hand involves, which resonates with the experiences of breast milk expression that the women in of Morse and Bottorff 's (1988) study reported. They emphasized the difficulty and messiness of the expressing process. In my experience, the electric pump was a lot less messy than expressing by hand. It also felt different. And with 'different' I am not only referring to the different way in which the pump stimulated my breasts to produce milk. I mean that it feels different emotionally. Eager to talk about my experiences and make sense of them, I call a friend. She has also expressed breast milk at work for her baby, so I am hoping she can relate. Also, I complained to her a few weeks ago about my difficulty with producing enough milk with the pump and I want to give her an update. She picks up after only two rings:

"Hi Noortje! How are you? How's the pumping going?"

"Good," I reply. "I think I have had a breakthrough of sorts. I am now expressing manually.'

"Ow nice, so you decided to buy a hand pump."

"No, I mean I actually do it with my bare hands."

Her silence is deafening.

I continue jokingly: "It's a bit like milking a cow, but then I milk myself" [6]

"And you get the milk out that way?" She sounds puzzled. "I didn't know that was possible…"

"I know, me neither," I admit, and add enthusiastically "But it works a lot better for me this way. While I got about 80 cc with the pump – on a good day – I now produce 180 cc."

She still sounds unsure "Wow… I guess if that works for you, that's great."

The uneasiness in my friend's reaction mirrors some of the uneasiness I feel expressing milk this way at work. Actually touching my breasts in the workplace while following the advice of sniffing my baby's underwear and thinking in a loving way about my baby feels intimate, like a sexual act. This is really different from doing 'it' with an electric pump. Placing a machine in the middle of this process professionalizes breastfeeding, I realize. My thoughts take flight as an important insight forms. The expensive plastic breast pump – often presented as the only option for working mothers who are breastfeeding – seems to establish a distance between the unruly (maternal) body and the organizational context in which it functions. Because the dominant discourse suggest that the leaky maternal body is inappropriate and out of place (e.g. Shildrick 1997; Puwar 2004; Riad 2007), a plastic device that bears no resemblance to a baby is needed to make this process a bit less messy, less sexual, and more professional hence more acceptable. The breast pump could also symbolize control over the leaky maternal body, which many mothers desperately seek in order to comply to the idea(l) of rational autonomy or 'mind over matter' as Schmied and Lupton (2001) and Warren and Brewis (2004) suggest.

Expressing 'by hand' feels more personal to me and more in tune with the messiness and chaos of my lived reality as a lactating mother. And at the same time I feel a sense of shame for doing it this way. Maybe it is because expressing with my hands means that I am doing it, while with the method I used earlier it was the pump doing it and I was merely present while the machine was doing 'the dirty work'? There is something inherently asexual and unnatural about a plastic breast pump, that highlights the boundary between motherhood and sexuality as discussed by Young (1992) and Murphy (1999). In contrast to pumping with the machine, expressing by hand makes me feel like an indecent, brazen woman (cf. Murphy 1999, p. 202). The pump seems to force practices associated with breastfeeding to the culture and mind realm of the nature/culture and body/mind dichotomies. This seems to provide a better fit with the masculine organizational context and the dominant belief in western societies that our bodies are contained, autonomous and governable (Schmied and Lupton 2001; Warren and Brewis 2004). The plastic bowl on the other hand, does not have this effect. Its many possible functions make it an acceptable accessory in the workplace.

This last realization hits me when I return to my office one day after expressing. As I walk back into my room, I feel relieved. This day's pumping session is over, I think while I brace myself for the struggle of trying to get back into the academic work modus. "That looks like you've had a nice lunch," my roommate comments. I look at her, puzzled. Then I realize she's talking about the green plastic bowl I use to catch my breast milk in. I have apparently forgotten to put it in my bag as I usually do. I am still holding it (whoops, minor error on the maternal body work front).

"Er… no," I tell my roommate "this is actually for expressing".

"Oh…" An uncomfortable silence follows. "Sorry, that's embarrassing," she says referring to her own mistake "it just looked like you had brought a nice lunch from home… couscous salad or something".

Marking my disciplined body

It is interesting how a split occurs between my body and my self when I express. During the expression, I treat my body as a separate entity. I press her, squeeze her, until bruises appear. I push her for yet another 10 cc. 'Come on,' I think quietly, 'just a little bit more'. I feel like a long distance runner,

pushing to extend the physical boundaries, to endure just that little bit more, to accomplish just that tiny bit extra. When I am done I feel tired and sore, but also content about what I consider to be a somewhat super human accomplishment – at least, when I have managed to produce enough milk.

I celebrate these little victories of my mind over my body by buying myself something nice, usually chocolate. I recognize that this is a highly gendered performance that may have crept into my repertoire through commercial advertisements that connect success, enjoyment and happiness for women with eating chocolate. My feminist self finds this problematic and annoying but at the same time I cannot deny that my behaviour and feelings are shaped by this dominant construction. Buying and eating chocolate makes me feel better. The visceral enjoyment I experience when consuming a chocolate bar, cookie or muffin seems to function as a peace offering to my body. It's an apology for the discomfort I just inflicted on her. It effectively lifts the disembodiment I experience and re-assembles my body and fragmented self into a more balanced state. It is in the moment of consuming chocolate that my body merges again with my self and it feels good. However, when I fail to produce (enough) milk I remain stuck for a while in the disembodied, unbalanced state. I blame my body for the poor result and distance myself from her, unable to accept that she cannot be governed by my rational will (cf. Warren and Brewis 2004). And, as always, I have to face Ben, armed with only 40 cc, frustrated, angry and with nipples that feel like they've just been sandpapered. "How did it go?" he asks.

Caution! Leaky body

At the canteen, I bump into a colleague who has a baby just a day older than mine. She's expressing milk too, and when we run into each other by chance we usually chat briefly about our babies and/or breastfeeding. We always plan to go for coffee and have a proper conversation about our experiences with motherhood, but we never seem to find the time to do so. Today we both head to the fridge to store our milk. "I think Noor is going to win," Ben comments. Apparently, he is comparing our production or estimating the time we will continue struggling to express because dominant health discourse

compels us to breastfeed our babies in order for them to become healthy citizens. We silently put our milk side by side in the refrigerator. Both my colleague and I use an extra cooler bag to cover our transparent bottles so that the actual milk – you know, the stuff that is deemed so precious and valuable by the experts (see for example Burns et al. 2012) – is not visible. Breast milk is constructed as valuable and extremely 'pure' food in the context of the home. Yet this same liquid is often deemed a waste product which must be concealed in other contexts such as the communal fridge of our department (Gatrell 2007b, p. 400). So the milk is another thing we actively have to hide to prevent discomfort or embarrassment of our coworkers. Yes, we lactating mothers aim to please. Call us in the middle of the night, during work, during supper and we will drop everything, uncover our chest and provide you with a top notch catering service. On the menu for today is (drumroll…) liquid gold!!!

I am being sarcastic here because I am confronted again with the patriarchy that governs our society and the masculinist culture of my department. And it pisses me off. For me, the interactions I have with the canteen manager over my milk and my expressing practices symbolize patriarchal values and the male Gaze upon my body that position me as the abject Other. Kristeva (1982, p. 4) conceptualizes the abject as "what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules". Many scholars (e.g. Fotaki 2013; Puwar 2004; Gatrell 2013; Raddon 2002) build on Kristeva's conceptualization and argue that the maternal body is a primary example of how the abject Other is constructed and how it is often expelled for disrupting dominant notions about embodiment and hierarchy. This resonates with my experiences of being marginalized and disciplined for disturbing hegemonic masculine norms about space and embodiment.

Ben's comment about winning made the breast expression of my colleague and me into a race between two already exhausted new mothers. This dovetails with Raddon's (2002) findings that masculine characteristics such as competition are greatly valued in academia. Ben's introduction of competition might fit well with the academic context, but it seems totally out of place to me in the context of breastfeeding. I don't feel this competition with

other lactating women. So far I have only experienced bonding over a similar 'fate'. I resent the insinuation that I should be in competition with others over my milk production and I dread facing Ben twice a day knowing that he will start a chat about my milk or my expressing practices.

My unruly body manifests itself

"It seems to be decreasing," Ben comments when I head to the fridge to pick up my milk at the end of a long workday. I'm confused, what is he talking about?

"What do you mean?" I ask him, not sure that I actually want to know the answer to this question.

"Well, you seem to be producing less milk than you used to. When I lift your bottle, it feels lighter than before".

I freeze. I feel my cheeks flush. Goose bumps scatter across my arms in reaction to this super surveillance of my expressing practices, followed by embarrassment and anger that rush up and down my spine. I hear my blood pounding in my ears. My body awaits instruction. Fight or flight? Fight or flight? Fight or flight? As always I end up choosing the last option. "No, not at all," I whisper and I walk off as quickly as I can, my bottle of liquid gold safely stored in my bag. I resist the urge to scream, just to alleviate my anger. Instead I call my partner.

"He actually touches my milk," I tell him, close to tears

"What are you talking about?"

I repeat my conversation with Ben

"Maybe he was just moving some of his yoghurts or something"

"It's inappropriate," I shout "It's MY milk! It's so intimate. It's ME. It's like he touched ME! And he's evaluating my milk too. It's like he's always watching, it feels perverse!"

My partner listens calmly while I rant. It is therapeutic in a way, to be able to tell my story in the uncensored version, although I sometimes get frustrated by the fact that my partner is always so reasonable. His arguments force me to see this interaction from Ben's side. Granted, Ben is a friendly man who likes to make small talk and he probably means no harm. He is just

a product of our social environment as we all are, my milder self reasons. He is unaware of the harm that can be caused by reproducing patriarchal values and ideas. Another part of me is still infuriated by the way I am treated, by the way my working environment makes me into the abject Other over and over again (cf. Gatrell 2013; Fotaki 2013; Raddon 2002; Riad 2007). And I feel torn. I really want to address this issue and at the same time I fear speaking up because it will make my unruly, non-normative body extra visible, subject to even more disciplinary practices than it is already enduring.

I spread myself thin over time, space and others' demands

Over the next few weeks I feel a shift occurring in myself as my feelings change toward Ben and others that are part of my expressing experience. Maybe this is because I contemplate stopping with expressing at work. Or maybe it is because I have decided to write this autoethnographic story and feel empowered by writing about my experiences. While I walk to the front office to fetch Rick, I feel a tingle of excitement and nervous anticipation. What will today bring in terms of expressing experiences?

In the elevator on our way to a room for me to express Rick, who almost never comments on my expressing practices, asks "So when are you done?".

"I don't know," I tell him. "I'm afraid that when I stop expressing, I will have to give up breastfeeding altogether and I am not ready for that yet".

"You'll have to stop sometime," he replies.

The decision that follows about a week later seems to give me more space to think about and reflect on my experiences. Somehow, it enables me to see nuances in the complex social interactions between Ben and me and those others who seemed insensitive to what I was going through. A lot of questions come up. To what extent do the reactions of my co-workers to my expressing at work reflect a cultural uneasiness with this practice? Is Ben simply reacting to *my* uneasiness with the whole business of expressing and getting the milk cooled in his fridge? If so, why did my other male gatekeeper Rick react so differently? How are my own actions and feelings informed by the patriarchal values and ideas that I criticize? And how am I implicated in reproducing exactly those values and ideas that I try to resist?

Have dominant discourses about motherhood, embodiment and the organization been so successful that I have turned their associated technologies of dominance on myself, similar to the women in Fotaki's (2013) study who engaged in self-discipline in their attempts to conform to the masculine values that dominate academia? Or can my actions (and especially my attempts to control my leaky body) be seen as a form of resistance against being seen as a woman defined by her biology as Brewis and Sinclair (2000) suggest is possible? Maybe my upbringing was crucial in the subject positions I have taken because I was taught that all bodily fluids (urine, faeces, vomit, blood, etcetera) are shameful and should be hidden from view? How could the organizational context in which I function change the ideological structures that make expressing at work such struggle for newly maternal employees?

After five months of expressing at work I am finally ready to stop. I feel proud of myself; I have successfully performed the 'good mother' role while simultaneously working and thus being a 'good citizen' and a 'good professional'. This is difficult to accomplish and requires a lot of maternal body work (Gatrell 2013). Now I have reached the point where I feel I have satisfied the needs and wants of others, and it is time to address my own again. I tread a little lighter and it feels like I can breathe again, although I still avoid the canteen.

One morning, I run into Ben in the hallway. "You've stopped expressing, haven't you?" he asks.

"Yes. I'm all done," I reply.

"I do miss you, you know"

And in spite of everything that happened, this makes me feel a little better.

Epilogue

My personal narrative shows how my university department met the requirements of Dutch law perfectly; they provided me with a space to express, a fridge to cool my milk, and time to perform these practices. However, the practicalities related to expressing rendered my maternal body 'out of place' (Puwar 2004) and abject (Kristeva 1982). This corresponds with the findings of Gatrell (2010, p. 97) who concludes that "Research consistently identifies

contradictions between equal opportunities policies aimed at protecting pregnant and newly maternal employees and the manner in which such women are treated in practice". As my story shows, the meanings and experiences related to expressing breast milk are largely shaped by the prevailing norm of the male body in the context of the organization which renders the leaky maternal body taboo and Other (Puwar 2004; Gatrell 2007a;b; Young 1992). This seems to be specifically true in academia, which, as many scholars argue, is characterized by a hegemonic masculinity that results in marginalization and devaluation of women in this organizational context (Fotaki 2013; Raddon 2002; Riad 2007; Brewis 2005; Tyler and Cohen 2010).

My story furthermore indicates that it is at the junction of discourses about motherhood, sexuality, breastfeeding and (academic) professionalism that my subjectivities as a lactating mother and academic employee emerged. Similar to the findings of Fotaki (2013) who argues that women academics both collude with and oppose their own marginalization, my narrative shows how I simultaneously reproduce and resist technologies of dominance. For example, why did I feel that I could not just leave the classroom during a lecture to express milk? Why was I so invested in hiding my expressing practices? Why could I not just laugh off the comments made by Ben about expressing and my milk? And why did I not see my milk as food, as Ben probably does? Part of the answer could be that I have internalized the dominant discourses described above and engaged in endless self-discipline and self-surveillance to conform to the implicit masculine norms of my social environment, related to spatiality, embodied control and bodily appearance. These norms rendered my unruly lactating body both highly visible and invisible in the organizational space I inhabited. The grasp of these dominant power structures on my body was palpable. I saw the bruises on my breasts and felt the shame bearing down on my leaky abject body.

Yet, the very leakiness that made my body so suspect and subject to many disciplinary practices can also be the key to resisting and subverting dominant patriarchal power structures. Here I follow Shildrick (1997) who argues that leakiness opens possibilities for a postmodern feminist ethic: "The fragmentation most usually associated with postmodernism and feared

for its destructive potential is to be celebrated for its shattering of masculinist certainties, and for the refusal to exclude the complication of fluid boundaries" (p. 216). My story shows how my leaky body disrupted many of the neatly constructed boundaries upon which patriarchal western society is built, such as mind/body, self/Other, public/private, inside/outside, reproduction/organization, motherhood/sexuality, and theory/narrative. The conceptualization of my body as abject (Kristeva 1982) fits very well with my embodied experiences of eliding boundaries such as those between self and other, and clean and dirty. My body clearly disrupted the order, rules and spatial arrangements of my organizational context.

So I caution people to look out for this leaky body I have described. Not because it is a bad body and should be hidden from view or disciplined, but because it has the potential to radically subvert dominant patriarchal notions about embodiment and complicate what are often considered to be 'normal' or 'natural' daily practices. This could be empowering for women regardless of their professional or personal status. However, for this to be possible the leaky body needs to be visible. As my narrative shows, this is complicated since the heightened visibility of the lactating maternal body in the organizational context is laden with negative value and triggers disciplinary practices that can be very uncomfortable for lactating mothers (cf. Puwar 2004; Gatrell 2007a). My story resonates with previous research that shows how women often try to make themselves invisible in reaction to this discipline (e.g. Tyler and Cohen 2010; Rose 2011; Riad 2007; Gatrell 2013). Yet if the leaky maternal body is made visible, it offers opportunities to radically subvert the hegemonic masculine norms and boundaries that many find constraining. With this paper I hope to contribute to this visibility of the leaky maternal body and show the added value of taking embodied experiences and spatiality into consideration in organization studies.

The embodied experiences I described reveal how dominant power structures can be both oppressive and productive. The fluidity and multiplicity of my subjectivities are exemplified in the narrative I have presented and point out how freedom is expressed within oppressing structures by technologies of the self (Foucault 1987). As Crane et al (2008, p. 13) argue, these

technologies are "an ongoing set of reflexive practices that work and rework the self in relation to disciplinary power". My autoethnographic writing can be seen as a reflexive practice that has made me aware of the effects of disciplinary power and thus able to resist them. My resistance lies mostly in writing this piece and discussing my experiences with family, friends and coworkers. With this paper I try to give voice to a story that seems marginalized and "shrouded in secrecy" as Ellis and Bochner (1996, p. 25) put it. I chose an unconventional method, autoethnography, to get across the personal, emotional and embodied experiences of expressing breast milk in an organizational context (academia) in the hope that it resonates with the reader and opens possibilities for change through empathic understanding.

Notes

1. Within socio-cultural feminist theory the maternal body is often theorized as 'leaky', metaphorically as well as literally (e.g. Gatrell 2013; Shildrick 1997). The literal leakage can be seen in the way the maternal body changes shape and produces bodily fluid such as breast milk, blood, amniotic fluid, vomit and tears. Metaphorically the maternal body can be considered 'leaky' because it blurs the boundaries between self and Other, nature and culture and is thus seen as uncontrollable and disruptive of the patriarchal order.
2. In reference to Foucault's (1979) theory on technologies of discipline. According to Foucault 'disciplined bodies' are those bodies who are subjected to regimes of power/knowledge (discourses) that (re)produce them in relation to those regimes through techniques of dominance such as normalization and (self-)surveillance.
3. A reference to Douglas' (1966) notion of pollution as 'matter out of place'. She argues that moral values and social rules are defined and upheld by constructions about dirt and pollution. Similarly, Puwar (2004) argues that female (maternal) bodies are often constructed as 'out of place' in organizational spaces because they do not conform to white male embodied standards that have historically dominated these spaces and occupy positions of privilege and authority.
4. Breast engorgement is the painful overfilling of the breasts with milk. Engorged breasts are so full of milk that it feels like they will explode.
5. For further discussion about constructions of work-life 'balance' and the gendered

nature of the struggle people face while managing both the demands of their work and their private life, see Smithson and Stokoe (2005), McDowell (2004), and Warren (2004).

6. This corresponds with the findings of Morse and Bottoroff (1988). They show how many mothers they interviewed felt that "expressing was sticky, messy, painful, ugly and mechanical" and that this led to "feelings of self-disgust about the animal-like methods of removing the milk, akin to milking the cow" (p. 168).

7. DISCUSSION

For this PhD research project, I have focused on how Dutch youth, physical educators and other adults discursively construct (their) bodies and health (research question 1). I have looked at how the discursive constructions that these people use are informed by discourses about gender and dis/ability (research question 2) and how these discourses intersect to produce specific subjectivities and a hierarchy of bodies (research question 3). Within this network of power relations, the participants in the various studies emphasized discourses about health and appearance and they produced a normative body that appeared to be white, male, abled-bodied, heterosexual, middle class and slender. The non-normative Other bodies that the participants constructed – a constellation of female, non-white, disabled, fat, homosexual and lower class bodies – functioned as important cues that they used to position themselves in normative ways. I discuss these and other answers to my research questions in detail throughout this chapter. Using a discussion of the image I created for the front cover of this dissertation First, I unpack some of the complexity of the body norms, health ideals and subject positions that my research participants constructed and took up through a discussion of the image I created for the front cover of this dissertation.

Picturing the results

The painting on the front cover is meant to depict the results of the research that comprises this dissertation. The painting is a play on Leonardo da Vinci's 'Vitruvian Man'. The central figure in this image can be considered to represent the dominant western construction of the ideal normative body as reproduced by many participants in this research project. The Vitruvian Man functions as "an archetypical imagination of normality" in western cultures (Eichberg, 2011, p. 5). I replicated and altered this image in an attempt to represent the results of this research in a creative and visible way. I reproduced the normative body at the center of the painting to capture how the

able-bodied, muscular, white male body epitomizes the very top of the body hierarchy that was constructed by youth and adults in my research.

The square and the circle symbolize the discourses that circulate in and through sport and physical education and produce constraining body norms. In addition, I depicted a variety of bodies and the way they relate to these norms and the power networks that these norms form part of. The fat body, for example, is placed quite far from the normative ideal. The data from the preceding chapters show how it occupies a marginal position and is very much constricted by the boundaries of dominant body norms. The thin figure next to the normative male body symbolizes the ideal female body size but also signals the dangers (such as anorexia) that dominant body norms can produce (Evans et al., 2008a; Rich, 2010). Both the woman runner and the disabled person, who is stereotypically depicted in a wheelchair, are moving out of the structural confines of dominant body normativity. They symbolize the possibilities for change within oppressing gendered and ableist power structures through resistance and fluid (radical) subjectivities. The figure with raised hands represents a youth trying to find his/her way through the socially constructed body norms and the plethora of bodies and body imagery with which s/he comes into contact through interaction with the media and with real-life others. This young figure symbolizes one of the central struggles that I have described in this dissertation: How do people negotiate and relate to dominant body norms and the resulting body hierarchy? I used water colors and let the figures overlap with each other to communicate the feminist poststructuralist premise that embodied subjectivities are always fluid, dynamic and multiple.

However, this image is also meant to be polysemous. Polysemy is an important characteristic of artistic representations. It means that these representations can be interpreted in various ways and be given many different meanings depending on the context in which they are read and the background of the reader. The front cover is meant to stimulate an intuitive and empathic way of relating to the issues at hand in addition to the cognitive ways in which people commonly tend to approach scientific output. Even though I have outlined some of the underlying ideas I want to communicate

with this image, the front cover is also supposed to raise questions and stimulate people to think about what they see as normal and abnormal bodies and enter into dialogue with others about their views. As with the other pieces that make up this dissertation, I hope the front cover incites the reader to critically reflect on the effects and workings of body norms.

Disciplinary technologies and the reproduction of the norm

This dissertation demonstrates how disciplinary practices in sport and physical education contribute to the construction of physical normativity. It shows how physical educators, able-bodied and disabled youth draw on dominant discourses that circulate in sport and physical education to construct a norms that is white, male, slender, able-bodied, heterosexual and middle class. Hereby, this research critically assesses the ways in which sport and physical education function as spaces where disciplinary power is exercised over the bodies of youth. I argue that sport and physical activities can therefore be considered 'biopedagogies' (Harwood, 2009; Wright, 2009; Wright & Halse, 2013). Biopedagogy is a concept that captures the disciplinary practices that teach children "how they should come to know themselves and act on themselves and others in order to know and be(come) healthy bio-citizens" (Wright & Halse, 2013 p. 2). However, research on these biopedagogies mostly originates in countries such as the US, the UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand where health is prioritized within the physical education curriculum and where sport is organized through schools. As such, that research does not answer the question how disciplinary practices are implicated in physical education contexts such as the Netherlands where health is not officially integrated into the physical education curriculum and where sport is mainly organized by independent and voluntary sport clubs. Wright et al. (2012 p. 674) argue that "the ways in which these [health messages] are interpreted and enacted is not uniform across countries, nor within countries, it rather depends on the context". This dissertation provides a culturally sensitive analysis of the construction of body norms and explores contexts which are different from the ones dominating current research on body normativity[1].

Throughout this dissertation, I unpack the disciplinary effects of body

norms in the Dutch setting. I focus on how disciplinary practices related to embodiment are employed from different marginal and privileged subject position. The different groups that I have researched illustrate the capillary nature of power. The outcomes indicate how discipline operates among peers, in skewed power relations and how it acts upon the self. Both the narratives of Dutch youth and physical educators show how global discourses about health and the individualization of risk have become embedded in pedagogical practices in the Netherlands despite the absence of formal integration of health in physical education, and sport in the school system. This research furthermore illustrates that dominant discourses about normative embodiment constrain the possibilities of young people in sport and PE (cf. Azzarito, 2009; Azzarito et al., 2006; Fitzgerald, 2005; Paechter, 2006; Sykes, 2009; Sykes & McPhail, 2008; Tinning & Glasby, 2002; Zanker & Gard, 2008). In addition, the research in this dissertation indicates how normative ideas about embodiment work beyond the context of sport and physical education in a context where the body often escapes attention. I suggest that the fierceness with which disciplinary practices with regards to body norms come into play in Dutch settings can be attributed to a national understanding that being normal is desirable above all else (cf. de Rooi, 2007).

Modes of disciplinary power

Taken together, the various research outcomes in this dissertation indicate that the nature of disciplinary power seems to shift along two axes. The first axis 'visible-invisible' suggests that disciplinary practices vary according to the visibility of an embodied marker that is deemed salient in the construction of normative embodiment. The second axis 'changeable-fixed' suggests that disciplinary practices depend on whether people perceive the embodied marker under scrutiny to be changeable or not. I construct these axes to elucidate the complexity and multiplicity of disciplinary practices and to add to existing theorizations about disciplinary power. It is not, however, my intention to encourage binary or dichotomous thinking through the use of these axes. I conceptualize each of these axes as a continuum on which people can position themselves in various and dynamic ways.

Visible – invisible

The outcomes of this research show the importance of visibility in the ways people construct body norms. In chapter 5, I illustrate how the disciplinary practices to which disabled youth are subjected vary according to the visibility of their disability. Mostly, these disabled youth tried to hide their disabilities when possible. Disciplinary practices were then typically *self*-disciplinary and focused on normalization and self-surveillance. On occasions where the disability was visible, these disabled youth were subjected to more explicit discipline from others (peers, teachers, doctors, etc). The findings in chapter 6 support the idea that disciplinary practices ensuing from invisible bodily deviance consist of self-discipline, self-surveillance and attempts to normalize one's body. My story about expressing breast milk, shows how I employ various self-disciplinary practices in order to hide my deviant body and (re) position myself as normal and a healthy bio-citizen. In contrast, when my deviant body was made visible, for instance through the breast milk I had to store, I was disciplined by others. These differences in disciplinary practices are similar to the ones that the disabled youth who participated in this research encountered and employed in their school setting.

Physical appearances were not only crucial for how the able-bodied and disabled youth that participated understood their own and others' bodies, they also seemed to be crucial for how the adults in this research (including myself) constructed and experienced the body and health. All chapters reveal the conflation of discourses about health with discourses about appearance. The narratives of the PE teachers and youth that I have interviewed show how health aims, such as those focused on battling overweight and obesity, are often naturalized as 'objective' and morally just and as such they are integrated in pedagogical practices (see chapter 2 and 3). However, as I argue in chapter 4, these health imperatives are by no means value free. They are integrally entwined with dominant notions about gender, dis/ability, race, sexuality, age and social class. I posit that the neoliberal health discourse that centralizes body size represents a reiteration of the norms produced through the much debated beauty discourse, albeit justified and naturalized through biomedical truth claims.

Garland-Thomson (2002 p. 8) states that "appearance and health norms often have similar disciplinary goals". My research, along with that of other scholars (e.g. Burrows, 2008; Harwood, 2012; Rail, 2009), shows that youth often understand being healthy as looking good, by which they mean slender and able-bodied. This suggests that they interpret health messages as being primarily about appearance. Visible characteristics such as body size that are associated with being healthy seemed to be privileged over invisible ones such as feelings and sensations. These visible characteristics impelled strong (self) disciplinary practices by youth and physical educators. In contrast to the disciplinary practices directed at bodies that visibly deviate from dominant health norms – those that do not *look* healthy – very little attention seemed to be paid by the participants in this research to the invisible characteristics of health. In the narratives of the participants about health and the body, mentions of *feeling* healthy or unhealthy seemed negligible compared to those referring to *looking* healthy. A consequence of the urgency with which messages about overweight and obesity are currently communicated is, therefore, that the already narrowly defined norms for physical appearance and prowess become a venue through which youth and adults increasingly understand their own and others' bodies as abnormal or deviant and in need of discipline. This corresponds with the findings of Rich (2010; 2011). She shows that youth's understanding of their bodies is shaped negatively by the neoliberal health discourse. As Rich argues, this could potentially have devastating consequences in terms of health practices and embodied subjectivities of youth.

Changeable – fixed

The outcomes of this research furthermore illustrate that practices related to characteristics that are considered to be unchangeable, such as gender, dis/ability, are typically reproduced implicitly through sport and physical education practices. The Dutch law on equal treatment (Algemene Wet Gelijke Behandeling, § 1, Art. 1; 1b) stipulates that discrimination of women, disabled people and racial minorities is unacceptable. However, this does not mean that ableism, racism and sexism are not present in Dutch society.

These forms of oppression often seem to find expression in very subtle ways such as through small gestures, volatile comments and taken-for-granted representations. As chapter 2 shows, these types of implicit or subtle forms of discipline are reflected in the narratives of the Dutch physical educators that I interviewed. These participants reproduced the dominant body hierarchy in favor of able-bodied slender men. Yet they simultaneously resisted explicitly referencing disabled people and women as inferior or unhealthy because gender and dis/ability were imagined as unchangeable and natural bodily characteristics. Consequently, different normalizing practices emerged depending on how physical education teachers constructed the nature of the body. When physical educators considered the body to be 'abnormal' due to its unchangeable biophysical nature, normalizing entailed reproducing and consolidating the norms through language use and the practice of differentiated teaching. In contrast, when these physical educators constructed the body as 'abnormal' due to lifestyle choices, they tried to discipline 'fat' students whose bodies did not conform to the norms in more explicit ways.

In general, disciplinary practices related to characteristics that are considered changeable such as body size seemed harsher, more overt and laden with moral value than those constructed as unchangeable. As I argue in chapter 2, 3 and 4, the authority of biomedical 'truths' combined with neoliberal ideas about individual responsibility appear to make people feel socially uninhibited to express feelings of disgust for fat people whose bodies are seen as morally wanting (cf. Leahy, 2009). The belief that people are responsible for and can change their body size to adhere to normative idea(l)s about health often results in very explicit forms of fat oppression, that are naturalized and justified through authoritative biomedical regimes of truth. Examples of disciplinary practices related to body size included both self-discipline and discipline from others. Dutch physical educators for instance, indicated that they tried to stimulate students to lose weight. The narratives of the youth that participated furthermore showed how they monitored their own and others' body size and voiced feelings of disgust for fat bodies, which they considered to be out of control and deviant.

The axis changeable – fixed highlights the importance of bodily control

in the understanding of the body and the construction of a body hierarchy. Several disability scholars (e.g. Garland-Thomson, 2005; Miceli, 2010; Shakespeare & Watson, 2002) have argued that the rhetoric of liberal individualism suggests that the body can be controlled by the limitless will of the mind and that an individual is responsible for doing so. Bodies are seen as deviant when they are considered to be out of control. Dominant perceptions of disabled, fat and female bodies share this constructed characteristic of being unruly and out of control (e.g. LeBesco, 2004; Michalko, 2009; Shildrick, 1997; S. Warren & Brewis, 2004). Even though disabled and female bodies are generally perceived as fixed, they are still constructed as in need of control. Constructions of bodily control thus function along the axis changeable – fixed and illustrate the dynamics and multiplicity of possible positionings along this axis.

The struggles regarding my leaky lactating body that I describe in chapter 6 exemplify the normative taken-for-granted assumption that people are in control of their bodies, or that they should be. My experiences with expressing breast milk possibly parallels some of the struggles disabled people face when their body refuses to be controlled by their mind. However, my experiences with expressing breast milk also highlight the complexity of the relationship between normative embodiment and health and emphasize the importance of context. On the one hand, my lactating body represented the epitome of a healthy body. It produced milk as it was supposed to and neoliberal health discourse constructed my breastfeeding practices as vitally important for the health of my baby (Burns et al., 2012). At the same time, my female body was considered unruly and deviant in the context of my working environment. The issue of bodily control thus complicates the constructed distinction between fixed and changeable bodily characteristics and between healthy bodies as normative and unhealthy bodies as non-normative.

What keeps these dominant power structures in place?

Although the previous section focuses on disciplinary practices that can take shape in and through sport and physical education, I do not consider them to be the sole causes of various forms of oppression. Like the academic context,

they represent sites through which oppressive structures are reproduced and as such, sport and PE contribute to processes of exclusion and marginalization in society in general. Sport and physical education can be seen as part of an 'assemblage' that sheds light on the "multiplicity of sources, practices and technologies that come together in an integrated whole to govern populations" (Wright & Halse, 2013 p. 4) and furthers understanding of "the social contexts through which people come to learn about their bodies" (Rich, 2010 p. 6).

The concept of 'assemblage' is drawn from the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and is meant to provide insight into the "messiness that characterizes contemporary attempts to govern" (Leahy, 2009 p. 174). The concept is increasingly used in critical research on sport, physical education and health to theorize disciplinary practices as unstable, decentralized, and multiple complex systems (e.g. Manley et al., 2012; Markula, 2013; Rich, 2010, 2011; Wright & Halse, 2013). Whereas sport, physical education and health initiatives were once considered discrete and stable spaces, the concept assemblage allows for an analysis of how practices, ideologies, objects and behaviors from these various spaces work in concert to produce a hierarchy of bodies and a myriad of associated disciplinary practices.

Government campaigns and written media

An example of the way in which various sources and practices teach people about body norms can be found in current written media practices in the Netherlands that emphasize the moral virtues of normative embodiment. These practices construct participation in sport and physical education as ways to counter overweight and obesity (Anonymous, 2010), to improve cognitive abilities (Brandt, 2011) and to stimulate integration of ethnic minorities (ANP, 2006). Government organizations such as NISB (Netherlands Institute for Sport and Physical Activity) that promote sport participation and physical activity form another part of the assemblage that produces and upholds dominant body norms through campaigns that focus on health as a moral and individual responsibility. Dominant ideas about body size are linked to physical education, both by the written media and governmental institutions because they construct physical activity as a practice that can offer

the solution to the perceived problem of an increase in overweight and obesity amongst the Dutch population (e.g. Anonymous, 2010). For example, an increase in the number of physical education hours in the schools is often suggested by policy makers in the Netherlands as a way to combat overweight and obesity of youth (Anonymous, 2009; NOC*NSF, 2010).

Status of physical education within the Dutch curriculum

As I argue in chapter 2, the reproduction the neoliberal health discourse by Dutch physical education teachers might be conceived as an effort to counter the marginal position of physical education within the school system in the Netherlands. By discursively constructing fatness as a problem for which sport and physical education offer a solution, physical educators could possibly be trying to boost the social status of their profession. The marginal position of PE within the school curriculum thus also constitutes part of the assemblage that (re)produces the dominant body hierarchy. The reproduction of normative ideas about health by Dutch physical educators also means that the already narrowly defined body norms and the ensuing social inequalities are reproduced and justified through physical education practices.

Media imagery

Another explanation for the dominance of the body norms that participants in the various studies described, lies in the hegemony of media imagery. Current western society can be characterized as saturated by highly constructed visual images from multiple media sources (Giroux, 1999; Kellner & Share, 2007). For example, body imagery is overwhelmingly present in magazines, in movies, on television, in video games and in the plethora of online sources such as social media. As such, popular visual media technologies constitute an important pedagogy that informs youth and citizens in general about normative embodiment (Azzarito, 2009; Evans et al., 2008b; Rich, 2011; van Sterkenburg et al., 2012) and can be seen as part of the assemblage that governs their bodies (Leahy, 2009; Wright & Halse, 2013). This is illustrated in chapter 3, where I describe how youth often referred to television and internet as sources for their ideas about body norms. Importantly, the data

suggest that the interaction of youth with the media mainly facilitated reproduction of dominant ideologies instead of serving as a source of alternative discourses. The dominance of multimedia technologies in current western societies thus contributed in essential ways to how current oppressive power structures that value certain bodies and marginalize others were upheld by the participants in this research.

Biomedical knowledge

Another important source within the assemblage that can explain the hegemony of dominant body norms is biomedical science and its claims of authority. As several scholars (Foucault, 1972a; Lupton, 2012; Wright, 2009) argue, current western societies are characterized by an overwhelming belief in biomedical 'truths'. This belief in biomedical knowledge reverberates through different sources within the assemblage. For example, biological determinacy has historically dominated sport and physical education (e.g. Corrigan et al., 2010; Kirk, 2002). Accordingly, most current physical education teacher training programs in the Netherlands include a wide variety of courses that focus on biomedical knowledge, such as biomechanics, anatomy, and physiology (HBO-raad, 2012). The biological aspects of embodiment are also emphasized in the sport context. The way in which the biological body remains the foundational principle of separate sport competition for men and women and for the able-bodied and the disabled are an illustration of this. It is therefore not surprising that the outcomes of my research indicate that the privilege that is awarded in sport and PE to people with specific bodily characteristics – usually white, able-bodied, muscular, heterosexual men – is often naturalized and accepted as common sense knowledge by youth and physical educators (cf. Azzarito & Harrison, 2008; Fitzgerald & Kirk, 2009; Paechter, 2006; van Sterkenburg & Knoppers, 2004; Wright, 2000). As chapter 6 illustrates, a similar gendered, racialized and abled body hierarchy was (re)produced in the context of my university department (cf. Benschop & Brouns, 2003; Fotaki, 2013; Raddon, 2002; Tyler & Cohen, 2010).

The assemblage

The collected outcomes of this research show how the assemblage of dominant body norms – consisting of media representations and physical education, sport, government, academic, and health practices – tends to obscure the social constructedness of the body and the ways these constructions constitute social inequality. Rather, these discursive practices and representations reinforce the notion that the body is primarily a biophysical entity. Consequently, the experiences of teachers, students and academics with normative bodies are affirmed and normalized and the experiences of those with non-normative bodies are devalued (e.g. Azzarito & Harrison, 2008; Douglas & Halas, 2013; Fitzpatrick, 2013; Fotaki, 2013; Sykes, 2011; Tyler & Cohen, 2010). The emphasis on biomedical taken-for-granted knowledge about embodiment thus precludes awareness of the possibility of systemic social change and impedes actions directed to alter oppressing power structures.

Resistance(s) and opportunities for change

Yet, no matter how pervasive dominant power structures and related disciplinary technologies can be, they are never total. There are always ways in which people can and do resist and subvert dominant notions about the body. Sport, PE and academia thus also function as sites through which dominant power structures can be resisted and subverted. In this paragraph I will summarize how resistance to dominant body norms emerged in my research and how these moments of resistance represent possible avenues for subverting the current oppressive power structures related to normative embodiment.

My focus on both power structures and dynamic, fluid and creative subjectivities allows me to show part of the complex realities in which those participating in my research not only (re)produced dominant discourses about health and the body, but also resisted, challenged and subverted these oppressing power structures and created alternative meanings and embodiments. In chapter 3, for example, I show how youth from time to time constructed alternative ideas about normative embodiment. For instance, they constructed a self-confident, strong and capable feminine athletic body as ideal and desirable. This result partly contradicts the traditional norm of the

weak and dependent 'docile' feminine body (Azzarito, 2010a) and as such represents an example of how discourses can change through the use of alternative discourses and resistance to dominant notions of embodiment. Similarly, in chapter 3 I reveal how youth resisted dominant notions about body size, gender and health. The interviews indicate that some youth used their own observations and experiences with real life others/bodies to construct alternative ideas about health and embodiment. One girl indicated that she did not believe that fat people are by definition unhealthy and non-athletic because she knew several fat peers who were very active in sports. Another girl resisted the construction of basketball as a masculine sport because she indicated she knew many women and girls who practice basketball whom she did not consider to be masculine. As I argue in chapter 3, these findings suggest that scholars who wish to unpack resistance need to integrate peer interactions in their conceptualization of power and subjectivities.

Foucault's (1979a) concept of the Panopticon precludes attention to peer interaction because it focuses solely on the relationship of individuals (inmates) to ideological power structures (the imagined prison guards). The Panopticon makes clear that the feeling of constantly being measured against socially constructed normative standards, makes people defer to the ideological power structures at play in a certain context. Yet what happens in and through the interaction between peers (the inmates in Foucault's conceptualization of the Panopticon) remains unexamined, while my data suggest alternative meanings often emerge in and through peer interactions. Incorporating peer interaction into theorization on the complexity and fluidity of power relations and subjectivities could possibly offer new insights into ways in which resistance comes into being.

As the painting on the front cover conveys, resistance often occurs from the margins. People who occupy a marginal position in relation to dominant body normativity are more likely to be aware of oppressive structures than people in privileged positions and thus more capable to challenge these since negative experiences of exclusion and marginalization that emerge from non-normative embodiment tend to affect people profoundly. These experiences facilitate awareness, whereas experiences of privilege associated with

normative embodiment often go unnoticed. As Narayan writes "Those who actually *live* the oppressions of class, race, or gender have faced the issues that such oppressions generate in a variety of different situations. The insights and emotional responses engendered by these situations are a legacy with which they confront any new issue or situation" (2004 p. 220).

My research demonstrates how resistance often emerges from the margins. For example, I show how able-bodied girls and disabled students were more likely to resist dominant body norms than able-bodied boys and physical educators. In chapter 5, I describe how disabled students resisted ableist power structures that produce the disabled body as abnormal. They did this, for example, by positioning disability as a normal variation in human biology and by defining wheelchair basketball players as having athletic bodies. However, this chapter also illustrates the complexity and fluidity of subject positions that disabled students took up in relation to abled body norms. Their narratives show how they variously positioned themselves as abled or disabled depending on the context. For instance, some of these disabled youth indicated that they purposefully performed a disabled self by exaggerating a limp or choosing to go into a wheelchair when they could benefit from being seen as disabled. However, they primarily positioned themselves as normal. The participants did this either by hiding and minimizing their disabilities or by stating that being different is normal, and therefore a disability does not exclude one from the category of normality.

The fluidity and dynamics of my own subjectivities are illustrated in chapter 6. In this chapter, I show how I struggled with the male embodied norms that pervade the academic context that encompasses my professional life (Fotaki, 2013; Raddon, 2002) and with the health norms that pushed me to pursue breastfeeding beyond my pregnancy leave (Burns et al., 2012; Murphy, 1999; Wall, 2001; WHO, 2001). These norms rendered my leaky lactating body as Other and subject to several disciplinary practices in the context of my workplace. On the one hand, I reproduced these practices by trying to control my leaky body through self-surveillance and self-discipline. I attempted to produce my baby as a healthy citizen and myself as a particular version of the virtuous bio-citizen: the good mother. At the same time, I desperately

wanted to claim an acceptable academic subject position and in my attempts to establish this, I reproduced dominant body norms. This meant I constantly shifted between normative academic and motherly subjectivities. On the other hand, I resisted dominant body norms by making visible in my writing how my own body and my bodily practices disrupted the constructed boundaries between mind/body, self/other, inside/outside, public/private etcetera. Writing the story about my experience with expressing breast milk at work necessitated me to critically reflect on dominant normativity. I argue that this critical reflexivity was a necessary precondition for me to resist oppressive power structures.

Through the use of personal narrative and a literary style of writing in chapter 6, I attempt to convey the visceral and emotional aspects related to dominant body normativity concerning health and gender that are part of the overarching assemblage. The conventional academic prose of the other chapters did not allow much room for these forms of affect. The argument that I make in chapter 6 concerning the need for critical reflexivity and empathic understanding of (the effects of) dominant body norms, also applies to the oppressive structures relating to embodiment that people encounter in sport and physical education contexts. One of the main contributions I wish to make with this dissertation is to show that critical reflexivity and emphatic understanding offer important venues to resist and challenge oppressive power structures. I argue that these can be used to establish a more inclusive environment where many different bodies can be celebrated.

Critical reflexivity as a pedagogical practice

As Foucault (1987) argues, critical awareness is a necessary requirement that makes resistance possible. People can only resist oppressive dominant structures if they are critically aware of the existence of these structures. Hence, I think practicing critical reflexivity could provide people with opportunities to challenge dominant structures and facilitate change. The last line of the poem 'Where are *you*?' conveys my appeal for fostering critical reflexivity as a pedagogical practice. By posing this question, I ask readers to critically reflect on the ways in which they are affected by body norms related to

gender, race, dis/ability, sexuality and body size. The question is also meant to prompt readers to think about how they reproduce these constraining norms in their daily practices both implicitly and explicitly. I would like people to ask themselves questions such as: Which bodies do I consider normal and which abnormal? On what do I base the value judgment of my own body and those of others? How does this judgment shape the way I behave towards people? How do my practices constitute exclusion of certain bodies/people? And: Is it possible to think and behave otherwise? These questions are not only important for scholars to consider. Professionals in the field of sport, such as trainers, coaches and physical educators, could also engage in critical reflexivity on the topic of body norms. Their position in the network of power relations enables them to facilitate change and to make sure future pedagogical practices are less uncomfortable and hurtful for people who do not feel represented by dominant ideals about physical appearance and prowess.

Similarly, youth could also be encouraged to reflect on dominant constructions and representations of body norms. My research practice offers input for thinking about how to engage youth in critical reflexive practices. Sharing pictures and talking about them during the auto-driven photo elicitation group interviews functioned as an opportunity for youth to begin challenging taken-for-granted assumptions about embodiment. Some participants became aware that their own experiences and ideas were not necessarily shared by others. Those youth often left the group discussions with a more critical attitude towards their own and others' ideas about bodies and health. Similar to other scholars (e.g. Azzarito & Katzew, 2010; Dowling et al., 2012; Drummond, 2003; McCuaig, 2007), I argue that the development of critical reflexive practices offers good opportunities to disrupt dominant normativity and as such should be incorporated within the school setting. For example, a number of hours in physical education and/or other courses such as social science, philosophy and biology, could be dedicated to discussing the meanings that are conveyed about the body through daily talk, media imagery and other texts and to sharing stories about experiences of inclusion and exclusion. The purpose of these discussions should be to create

awareness of how the body is socially constructed and to deconstruct dominant institutionalized notions of embodiment.

However, a cautionary note is necessary here. My emphasis on critical reflexivity could be misconstrued to imply that inequality is an individual problem that can be fixed by individual reflexivity. This seemingly individualizes the problem in the same way as neoliberal health discourse individualizes health and body size as personal responsibilities. My narrative in chapter 6 shows that someone can be very much aware and critical of dominant oppressive power structures and be constrained by these structures nonetheless. To unsettle power relations vested in dominant discourses about the body and health, people need to struggle collectively against these manifestations of power. A critical mass is needed to change inequity based on normative embodiment.

In order to establish this critical mass, many people need to become aware of the dominant power structures that pervade society. People could be urged to think about who benefits from the status quo regarding body normativity. In whose favor do these dominant power/knowledge constructions work? And who is in the position to control and disseminate ideas and representations that consolidate the status quo? The development of critical media literacy may help to establish critical reflexivity among large numbers of people. It could help answer some of the questions pertaining to dominant power structures that have become more and more complex in current society because of the overwhelming prevalence of multimedia messages. As Kellner and Share (2007 p. 4) write:

> Individuals are often not aware that they are being educated and positioned by media culture, as its pedagogy is frequently invisible and is absorbed unconsciously. This situation calls for critical approaches that make us aware of how media construct meaning, influence and educate audiences, and impose their messages and values.

Importantly, critical media literacy focuses on unpacking the production of media imagery in its political context. By examining "the production and

institutions that motivate and structure the media industries as corporate profit seeking businesses" (Kellner & Share, 2007 p. 12) critical media literacy deconstructs the myth of media as neutral disseminators of information. Critical media literacy could be incorporated in schools to offer students and teachers the opportunity to analyze and challenge the politics of representation related to gender, dis/ability, race, social class, sexuality, body size etcetera. As Kellner and Share argue, critical media literacy could furthermore help youth from marginalized as well as privileged positions to create their own representations and thus offer them the opportunity to voice their concerns and collectively struggle against oppression. Current media technologies such as the Internet provide valuable spaces for expressing and sharing alternative representations and identities, and can thus serve as empowering for marginalized groups[2]. Moreover, a critical analysis of the oppressing structures, which are reproduced by the media under the influence of the entertainment, fitness, food, health and other industries, is a precondition for this type of radical identity work which emphasizes the agency of young people and their potential to subvert and challenge dominant ideologies of normative embodiment.

Empathic understanding

As the poem in the beginning of this dissertation indicates, all people (including myself) are somehow implicated in the construction and (re)production of body norms. A critical mass is needed, however, to subvert dominant notions about embodiment for the sake of more inclusivity. If the general public would become critically aware of how body norms are constructed, change could be established in favor of equality. One of the ways to facilitate this is by making the results of critical academic research available and appealing to a wide audience. Creative representation that are evocative provide a fruitful possibility for this (Denzin, 2002; Ellis, 2004; Ellis & Bochner, 2000). For example, chapter 6 illustrates how stories can provide a way of relating to the workings of body normativity that differs from the knowledge created through conventional academic prose. Through CAP ethnographies audiences can *feel* the implications of described social circumstances instead

of just *knowing* them (Ellis, 2004; Richardson & St.Pierre, 2005). The situated knowledges that CAP ethnographies produce illustrate different viewpoints and different experiences and can create empathic understanding for these differences. Thus CAP ethnographies can "reach beyond academia and teach all of us about social injustice and methods for alleviating it" (Richardson & St.Pierre, 2005 p. 965).

Dowling et al. (2012) offer a good example of how storytelling can be combined with conventional theoretical analysis in physical education to advance change through critical reflexivity and empathic understanding. Their integration of theory, stories and practical guidelines aims to help academics, professionals and youth alike to engage both emotionally and cognitively with issues of inequity in PE, youth sport and health. I believe the combination of empathic understanding and critical reflexivity harbors enormous potential to challenge dominant oppressive structures related to the body. Integrating CAP ethnographies in feminist poststructuralist work could furthermore provide a way to fill the void that is often left by feminist poststructuralist projects concerning what could be considered the more material aspects of the body. As I show in chapter 6, creative writing practices offer a good opportunity to describe and analyze visceral feelings and emotions in relation to power/knowledge structures. Therefore, I would strongly encourage future researchers to use creative methodologies in order to appeal to a broad audience and create critical awareness and empathic understanding within and beyond academic circles.

Future research

In addition to my argument for using new methodological tools to engage in and represent academic research, I also have ideas about the topics on which future research should focus. In the process of writing this dissertation I became increasingly aware that race/ethnicity is undertheorized in my research. The concepts of race and ethnicity are conflated in the Dutch context, and the notion that racism saturates daily life is often vehemently denied (e.g. Essed, 2004; Essed & Trienekens, 2008; van Sterkenburg et al., 2010). Being part of the white majority and having lived in the Netherlands

most of my life, the social construction of my race/ethnicity had never been an issue for me. It was an unmarked aspect of my identity. In contrast, being a woman sensitized me to inequalities based on gender, sexuality and body size. The marked nature of my gender made these inequalities visible and personally relevant for me. Consequently, I could critically reflect on them from my (marginal) position. But this was not the case for inequalities based on race/ethnicity. I was aware of the atrocities of racism and tried to avoid reproducing racial and ethnic stereotypes wherever possible. Yet similar to the students in Essed and Trienekens' (2008) study I associated race/ethnicity exclusively with non-white Others. It took several courses, reading and reflecting for me to realize the social constructedness of *my own* race/ethnicity and to feel the implications of this revelation with regards to the privilege I have enjoyed all my life and the marginalization of non-white people.

The unmarkedness of whiteness as a social construct is reflected in Dutch PE practices. The under-representation of physical education teachers from ethnic minority groups and the lack of debate about the racial/ethnic background of these educators are exemplary of the implicit norm of whiteness that dominates Dutch physical education. Since non-whites are often constructed as physically superior in sport to whites (e.g. Azzarito & Solmon, 2006b; van Sterkenburg et al., 2012), it is surprising that racial/ethnic minorities are so underrepresented in the Dutch physical education teacher population – a profession that attracts people who like sports and physical activities and have been successful in sports throughout their life.

Some efforts have been made to deconstruct race/ethnicity from a critical viewpoint in Dutch scholarly literature on sport media (e.g. van Sterkenburg & Knoppers, 2004; van Sterkenburg et al., 2010, 2012). Yet race/ethnicity has rarely been a topic of investigation in critical research on Dutch physical education (with the exception of van Doodewaard, 2009). This means very little is known about the workings of race/ethnicity within the context of Dutch PE. In contrast, some research from other western countries does focus on unpacking constructions of race/ethnicity in and through PE (e.g. Azzarito, 2009; Azzarito & Katzew, 2010; Azzarito & Solmon, 2005; Douglas & Halas, 2013; Fitzpatrick, 2013). Douglas and Halas (2013), for example, argue that it is imperative to understand that

> […] an unmarked culture of whiteness is (re)produced through pedagogical practices and materials, and social relations; the norms, values practices and emphases of physical education programs, as well as through the continued reference to those visibly identified as 'non-white'[…] as the only members of racial groups. (p. 456-457)

How whiteness is constructed, experienced and reproduced in the context of Dutch sport and PE remains largely unknown. Future research should therefore aim to further deconstruct Dutch constructions of whiteness and problematize this privileged and unmarked position to understand how it functions with regards to body normativity.

Additionally, future research should focus on how notions about race/ethnicity intersect with notions about social class and health and how these inform the construction of body norms in sites such as sport and PE. A serious limitation of the data presented in this dissertation is that the bulk of the participants were white and middle class. The findings therefore say little about the subject positions that are taken up in relation to body normativity by people with a working class and/or a racialized minority background. While there is research that points out that obesity rates are higher for ethnic minorities and in working class milieus (Dagevos & Dagevos, 2008b; Devaux & Sassi, 2013; Schnabel, 2009; Wright et al., 2012), there is little qualitative research available that critically analyses the experiences and meanings Dutch youth and adults from working class and non-white backgrounds attach to their bodies and being healthy.

Another marginalized group that deserves more attention constitutes the visibly and invisibly disabled. The need to include disabled people in research on the discursive construction of the body and health continues. This dissertation has only offered a very modest attempt to tap into the knowledge that can be gleaned from the way they negotiate and perform their (marginal) subjectivities. Alternative subjectivities can offer important insight into the ways in which dominant ideologies can be subverted. In order to successfully deconstruct dis/ability the discursive constructions that the unmarked (able-bodied people) use should also be interrogated. Future

research that aims for an inclusive school, sport and academic environment could therefore benefit from deconstructing both unmarked and privileged positions, and focus attention on how alternative subjectivities – in relation to dis/ability, body size, gender, race/ethnicity and sexuality – come into being. We need to be inspired by marginal voices in order to effect change.

Notes:

1. Most research on body normativity in physical education and sport is conducted in primarily English speaking countries such as the UK, the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (e.g. Fitzgerald, 2012; McDermott, 2012; Rail, 2012; Rich, 2010; Sykes, 2011; Wright et al., 2012).
2. Online platforms that are based on Do It Yourself (DIY) principles such as 'It Gets Fatter' (http://itgetsfatter.tumblr.com/) are a good example of the ways in which people aim to create and share subversive representations of embodiment. DIY magazines (also called 'zines') or niche magazines are other examples of the way youth can engage in producing alternative counterhegemonic media (Poletti, 2005; Thorpe, 2008).

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SAMENVATTING IN HET NEDERLANDS (SUMMARY IN DUTCH)

(Ab)Normale Lichamen: gender, dis/ability en gezondheid in de sport, het bewegingsonderwijs en daarbuiten

Zoals de titel weergeeft, vormen normen over het lichaam het speerpunt van deze dissertatie. In de verschillende hoofdstukken verken ik hoe lichaamsnormen geconstrueerd worden in diverse sociale contexten in Nederland. Ik vertrek vanuit de aanname dat iedereen, ongeacht de context waarin iemand zich bevindt, onder invloed staat van normen over het lichaam en dat lichaamsnormen de basis vormen voor een grote verscheidenheid aan in- en uitsluitingsprocessen. Eerder onderzoek laat zien dat lichaamsnormen bijdragen aan de marginalisering en de sociale ongelijkheid van (groepen) mensen die vanuit de huidige normen gezien worden als abnormaal of afwijkend zoals vrouwen, etnische minderheden, homoseksuelen en mensen met een lichamelijke beperking. Tegelijkertijd zorgen dezelfde normen ook voor privileges van (groepen) mensen die voldoen aan de normen die in de huidige context dominant zijn. Een kritische verkenning van deze normen en hoe zij geconstrueerd worden is noodzakelijk om marginalisering en ongelijkheid zichtbaar te maken en er weerstand tegen te kunnen bieden.

Dit onderzoek betreft een verkenning van de manieren waarop lichaamsnormen worden geconstrueerd, hoe erover wordt onderhandeld en hoe ze kunnen worden uitgedaagd. De onderzoeksvragen die centraal staan in deze dissertatie luiden: 1) Hoe construeren Nederlanderse jongeren en volwassenen lichamen en gezondheid; 2) Op welke manier zijn deze constructies gebaseerd op discoursen over gender en dis/ability; en 3) Welke hiërarchieën van lichamen en welke subject posities ontstaan er op het snijvlak van discoursen over gender, dis/ability en gezondheid? Bij het beantwoorden van deze onderzoeksvragen maak ik gebruik van diverse theoretische en methodologische concepten. Ik bouw onder andere voort op het werk Foucault, het

feministisch poststructuralisme, het intersectioneel feminisme en Creative Analytic Process Etnografieën.

Het bewegingsonderwijs en sport vormen de belangrijkste terreinen waarin ik de constructie van normen over het lichaam onderzoek. Hoofdstuk twee betreft het eerste empirische hoofdstuk, waarin ik exploreer hoe docenten bewegingsonderwijs in het voortgezet onderwijs in Nederland betekenis geven aan het lichaam in het algemeen en aan de lichamen van hun leerlingen in het bijzonder. In dit hoofdstuk laat ik zien hoe dominante discoursen over gender, dis/ability en gezondheid met elkaar verweven zijn en uitmonden in een paradox. Als het gaat over gender en dis/ability blijkt dat de docenten bewegingsonderwijs het lichaam zien als een biologische entiteit die moeilijk te veranderen is. Tegelijkertijd laat het interviewmateriaal ook zien dat de deelnemende docenten het lichaam construeren als iets dat maakbaar is en kan veranderen. Dit komt met name naar voren als ze praten over overgewicht en over leerlingen die zij te dik vinden. De lichaamsnormen die door de geïnterviewde docenten geconstrueerd worden weerspiegelen sociale hiërarchieën die in Nederland dominant zijn. Hierin dient het slanke, mannelijke lichaam zonder lichamelijke beperkingen als norm en tevens als ideaal. Tot slot beargumenteer ik in dit hoofdstuk wat het effect zou kunnen zijn van deze constructies in de praktijk van het bewegingsonderwijs.

In hoofdstuk drie richt ik mij op de leerlingen uit het voortgezet onderwijs die geen lichamelijke beperking hebben. De vraag ik in dit hoofdstuk probeer te beantwoorden is hoe deze leerlingen lichaamsnormen construeren met betrekking tot sport en welke rol (visuele) media hierbij spelen. In focusgroep discussies verken ik dit thema samen met de leerlingen op basis van door de leerlingen zelf geselecteerd fotomateriaal (*auto driven photo ellicitation*). Uit de data blijkt dat middelbare scholieren duidelijke hiërarchieën construeren in relatie tot het (on)sportieve lichaam. Deze hiërarchieën worden in belangrijke mate geconstrueerd op basis van gender, etniciteit, huidskleur, seksuele voorkeur, sociale klasse, leeftijd, lichaamsomvang en dis/ability. Ik geef de complexiteit van deze constructies weer door gebruik te maken

van zeven metaforen. Deze laten zien dat jongeren sportiviteit koppelen aan gezondheid, welke zij inschatten op basis van uiterlijkheden. Dit hoofdstuk laat enerzijds zien hoe de leerlingen dominante discoursen over lichaamsnormen reproduceren en anderzijds geeft het inzicht in de manieren waarop jongeren weerstand bieden aan deze dominante discoursen.

Hoofdstuk vier richt zich op een verkenning van het kenmerk ‘lichaamsomvang’. Op basis van een literatuurstudie laat ik zien hoe de categorieën ‘dik’ en ‘slank’ sociaal geconstrueerd worden en hoe ze tevens gerelateerd zijn aan dominante discoursen over gender, etniciteit/ras, seksuele voorkeur, sociale klasse en leeftijd. Ik beargumenteer dat lichaamsomvang een steeds belangrijker plaats inneemt in de lichaamsnormen die in de huidige maatschappij dominant zijn. Ik stel dat de categorieën ‘dik’ en ‘slank’ een belangrijke bron vormen voor de reproductie van ongelijkheden. Dit argument onderbouw ik door discriminatie op basis van lichaamsomvang te vergelijken met discriminatie op basis van ras, dis/ability en gender. Ik gebruik een intersectioneel perspectief om te onderzoeken hoe deze discriminatie plaatsvindt, om dominante betekenissen met betrekking tot het lichaam kritisch te bevragen en om tevens te laten zien hoe ruimte gecreëerd kan worden voor alternatieve, meer inclusieve betekenissen.

In hoofdstuk vijf bespreek ik hoe middelbare scholieren met een fysieke beperking hun lichaam construeren in relatie tot sport en bewegen. Op basis van dominante discoursen over sport en lichamelijkheid worden mensen met een beperking vaak bestempeld als afwijkend of abnormaal. De vraag die ik in dit hoofdstuk probeer te beantwoorden betreft: hoe verhouden leerlingen met een fysieke beperking in het reguliere middelbare onderwijs zich tot (normatieve) discoursen over het lichaam? Uit de interviewdata blijkt dat de geïnterviewde leerlingen zichzelf in tegenstelling tot dominante discoursen voornamelijk definiëren als ‘normaal’. Ze doen dit op twee manieren. Sommigen proberen hun beperking te verbergen of te minimaliseren om op die manier zoveel mogelijk gezien te worden als een ‘normaal’ persoon zonder beperkingen. Zij bevestigen hiermee het dominante idee dat een fysiek

beperkt lichaam afwijkend is. Soms gebruiken ze echter een alternatief discours, namelijk 'iedereen is anders, dus iedereen is normaal'. Door zich te beroepen op het idee dat fysieke beperkingen een natuurlijke variatie vormen van menselijke lichamen, bieden zij weerstand aan het dominante discours dat een negatief stempel drukt op de lichamen van mensen met een fysieke beperking. Daarnaast laat dit hoofdstuk zien dat de zichtbaarheid van de fysieke beperkingen een zeer belangrijke rol speelt in de praktijken van uitsluiting waar deze jongeren mee te maken krijgen. De mate van zichtbaarheid van de fysieke beperking blijkt bovendien bepalend voor de subjectposities die deze middelbare scholieren kunnen innemen.

In het laatste empirische hoofdstuk laat ik zien hoe lichaamsnormen tot uitdrukking kunnen komen in een context waar het lichaam *niet* in het centrum van de aandacht staat: een universitair departement. In tegenstelling tot de sport en het bewegingsonderwijs, waar het lichaam expliciet aandacht krijgt en uitermate zichtbaar is, is dit op universiteiten veel minder het geval omdat er hier doorgaans meer de nadruk ligt op gedachten en theorievorming. In dit hoofdstuk geef ik een beschrijving van mijn eigen ervaringen met kolven op een universitair departement. Ik gebruik een literaire schrijfstijl en poëzie in combinatie met inzichten uit het feministisch poststructuralisme om de emotionele en praktische effecten van lichaamsnormen over te brengen aan de lezer. De manieren waarop lichaamsnormen ook in een universitaire context tot uitdrukking komen kunnen zowel inzicht verschaffen in de verspreiding van dominante normen over het lichaam, als ook in de subtiele vormen van marginalisering en uitsluiting die hier het gevolg van zijn. Dit autoetnografische verhaal biedt aanknopingspunten voor verder onderzoek naar hoe lichaamsnormen met betrekking tot gender en gezondheid ook in de universitaire context van belang zijn. Dit hoofdstuk laat zien dat het mannelijke lichaam de impliciete norm vormt op de universiteit en dat dit verstrekkende gevolgen kan hebben voor onder meer de manier waarop de ruimte is ingedeeld en de mogelijkheden die vrouwen hebben binnen deze mannelijke werksfeer.

Hoofdstuk zeven betreft een terugblik op de voorgaande hoofdstukken. Hierin geef ik antwoord op de onderzoeksvragen en analyseer ik de overeenkomsten uit de verschillende hoofdstukken. Op basis van het schilderij dat afgebeeld staat op de voorkant van dit proefschrift bespreek ik de hiërarchie van lichamen zoals die geconstrueerd werd door de deelnemers aan mijn onderzoek. De slanke, blanke, heteroseksuele man uit de middenklasse zonder lichamelijke beperkingen staat aan de top van deze hiërarchie. Ik bespreek niet alleen hoe lichaamsnormen beperkend zijn voor mensen wiens lichaam niet voldoet aan deze normen maar ik laat ook zien op welke manier er weerstand geboden kan worden aan dominante lichaamsnormen. Ik beargumenteer dat de disciplinering die voortkomt uit de dominante constructie van lichaamsnormen gebaseerd is op diverse bronnen die samen een *assemblage* vormen. Daarnaast laat ik zien hoe het karakter van deze disciplinering verschuift over twee assen: 1) de mate van zichtbaarheid van lichaamskenmerken die afwijken van de norm en 2) de mate waarin de aard van deze kenmerken wordt gezien als veranderbaar. Verder benadruk ik dat de weerstand die deelnemers aan mijn onderzoek boden tegen de dominante lichaamsnormen met name tot stand kwam via interactie met leeftijdsgenoten en vanuit marginale subjectposities. Mensen lijken vooral weerstand te kunnen bieden tegen dominante discoursen wanneer zij zich kunnen inleven in anderen en wanneer zij in staat zijn om kritisch te reflecteren op dominante discoursen over het lichaam. Als aanbeveling geef ik de lezer mee dat er meer aandacht voor deze competenties zou moeten komen om sociale ongelijkheid tegen te gaan. Ik beargumenteer dat creatieve manieren van onderzoek doen en presenteren (zoals met verhalen, poëzie, foto's en beeldmateriaal) hier een belangrijke rol in zouden kunnen spelen, evenals het opnemen van een vak over kritisch omgaan met mediaberichtgeving (*critical media literacy*) in het middelbare school curriculum. Dit alles zou kunnen bijdragen aan de acceptatie en waardering van een grote verscheidenheid aan lichamen op scholen, in de sport en daarbuiten.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Noortje van Amsterdam was born in Bergen op Zoom, the Netherlands, on June 22, 1980. She graduated from the Regionale Scholengemeenschap ’t Rijks in 1998. From 1999-2005 she studied both Cultural Anthropology and Social Psychology at the University of Amsterdam (UvA). After obtaining her degrees, she worked as a researcher for the lectorate ‘Excellence and Wellbeing’ at Codarts Hogeschool voor de Kunsten in Rotterdam. Her research focus was on health issues dance students face during their education, such as those related to food, injuries and pain. She was also employed as a junior teacher at the department of Sociology and Anthropology of the UvA where she taught several courses. In September 2008 she started her PhD at Utrecht University under supervision of Prof. dr. Annelies Knoppers, Dr. Inge Claringbould and Prof. dr. Marian Jongmans. From August to December 2012 she spent time at the Simone de Beauvoir Institute of Concordia University in Montreal (Canada) where she was affiliated as a Research Associate.

APPENDIX 1
CO-AUTEURSVERKLARING HOOFDSTUK 2

Universiteit Utrecht

In overeenstemming met het Promovendireglement kunnen gepubliceerde artikelen opgenomen worden in het proefschrift. Indien dergelijke delen van het proefschrift in samenwerking zijn ontwikkeld, moeten deze delen vergezeld gaan van een verklaring van elk van de auteurs aandeel in het werk van de student.

Artikel en proefschrift

Deze co-auteursverklaring heeft betrekking op het volgende artikel:
"It's just the way it is…" or not? How physical education teachers categorize and normalize differences.

Gepubliceerd in het volgende tijdschrift of andersoortige publicatie:
Gender and Education

Het artikel maakt deel uit van het proefschrift met de volgende titel:
AbNormAll Bodies. Gender, dis/ability and health in sport, physical education and beyond

Proefschrift ingediend ter verdediging van de graad door:
Noortje van Amsterdam

Universiteit Utrecht

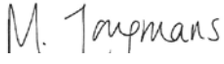
Omvang bijdrage
Noortje van Amsterdam

Heeft op de volgende schaal bijgedragen aan het bovenstaande artikel met de omvang:
A. Heeft bijgedragen aan de samenwerking (0-33%).
B. Heeft aanzienlijk bijgedragen (34-66%)
C. Heeft overwegend zelfstandig de werkzaamheden verricht (67-100%)

C

Mogelijke aanvullende opmerkingen over bijdrage:

Handtekeningen co-auteurs

Naam	**Functie**	**Handtekening**
Annelies Knoppers	1e promotor	
Inge Claringbould	Co-promotor	
Marian Jongmans	2e promotor	

APPENDIX 2
CO-AUTEURSVERKLARING HOOFDSTUK 3

Universiteit Utrecht

In overeenstemming met het Promovendireglement kunnen gepubliceerde artikelen opgenomen worden in het proefschrift. Indien dergelijke delen van het proefschrift in samenwerking zijn ontwikkeld, moeten deze delen vergezeld gaan van een verklaring van elk van de auteurs aandeel in het werk van de student.

Artikel en proefschrift

Deze co-auteursverklaring heeft betrekking op het volgende artikel:
A picture is worth a thousand words: Constructing (non-) athletic bodies

Gepubliceerd in het volgende tijdschrift of andersoortige publicatie:
Journal of Youth Studies

Het artikel maakt deel uit van het proefschrift met de volgende titel:
AbNormAll Bodies. Gender, dis/ability and health in sport, physical education and beyond

Proefschrift ingediend ter verdeiging van de graad door:
Noortje van Amsterdam

Universiteit Utrecht

Omvang bijdrage
Noortje van Amsterdam

Heeft op de volgende schaal bijgedragen aan het bovenstaande artikel met de omvang:
A. Heeft bijgedragen aan de samenwerking (0-33%).
B. Heeft aanzienlijk bijgedragen (34-66%)
C. Heeft overwegend zelfstandig de werkzaamheden verricht (67-100%)

C

Mogelijke aanvullende opmerkingen over bijdrage:

Handtekeningen co-auteurs

Naam	**Functie**	**Handtekening**
Annelies Knoppers	1e promotor	
Inge Claringbould	Co-promotor	
Marian Jongmans	2e promotor	

APPENDIX 3
CO-AUTEURSVERKLARING HOOFDSTUK 5

Universiteit Utrecht

In overeenstemming met het Promovendireglement kunnen gepubliceerde artikelen opgenomen worden in het proefschrift. Indien dergelijke delen van het proefschrift in samenwerking zijn ontwikkeld, moeten deze delen vergezeld gaan van een verklaring van elk van de auteurs aandeel in het werk van de student.

Artikel en proefschrift

Deze co-auteursverklaring heeft betrekking op het volgende artikel:
"It's actually very normal that I'm different". How physically disabled youth discursively construct and position their body/self

Gepubliceerd in het volgende tijdschrift of andersoortige publicatie:
Sport, Education and Society

Het artikel maakt deel uit van het proefschrift met de volgende titel:
AbNormAll Bodies. Gender, dis/ability and health in sport, physical education and beyond

Proefschrift ingediend ter verdeiging van de graad door:
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C

Mogelijke aanvullende opmerkingen over bijdrage:

Handtekeningen co-auteurs

Naam	**Functie**	**Handtekening**
Annelies Knoppers	1e promotor	
Marian Jongmans	2e promotor	

In western societies people are increasingly encouraged to participate in sport and physical activities because of the perceived benefits to their health and wellbeing. This is also the case in the Netherlands, where youth in particular are pushed towards an active lifestyle in order to counteract rising numbers in overweight and obesity in the Dutch population. Sport and physical education are often seen as key sites through which an active lifestyle can be established. Sport and physical education also form important sites through which people learn about (their) bodies and health. In other words, these are sites where norms about the body circulate, where dominant norms are (re)produced, and where they can be challenged. Yet these norms are mostly implicit. We know little about the body norms that Dutch people construct in sport and physical education and how these norms affect people's experiences in sport, physical education and beyond these contexts. **AbNormAll Bodies** explores which body norms Dutch youth and adults discursively construct in different sites, how these constructions are informed by discourses about gender and dis/ability, and how these constructions produce multiple subjectivities and a hierarchy of bodies. By drawing on several theoretical perspectives and methodologies – ranging from the work of Foucault and feminist poststructuralist theories to intersectional feminism and Creative Analytic Process (CAP) Ethnographies – this dissertation offers unique insights into the complex ways in which Dutch people experience, construct, negotiate and challenge body norms and health norms and how this is tied into existing power relations.

The observations, interviews, focus group discussions and other qualitative material show how explicit and implicit norms about the body and health that circulate in society at large tend to (re)produce inequalities related to gender, dis/ability and body size. The marginalization and exclusion of non-normative Others such as women, disabled and fat people appears to be exacerbated in contexts where the body is highly visible such as in sport and physical education. Yet the disciplinary effects of dominant body norms are not limited to these contexts. As the last empirical chapter illustrates, body norms also circulate in contexts where the body is not central such as a university department. Overall, the research presented in **AbNormAll Bodies** reveals how the subtle and not so subtle forms of discipline that people with non-normative bodies are subjected to can make these people feel unwelcome or uncomfortable in sport and physical education environments. It thus shows how the societal demand placed on all youth and adults to engage in sport and physical activities in order to improve their health sits uncomfortably with the forms of discipline that ensue from dominant body and health norms.

Noortje van Amsterdam studied Cultural Anthropology and Social Psychology at the University of Amsterdam (1999-2004). She conducted her PhD research at Utrecht University from 2008 to 2014.