

MEN'S BODY DISSATISFACTION: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF
NEOLIBERAL AND REPRESENTATIONAL APPROACHES

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ABSTRACT

Body dissatisfaction is now normative among men. Whilst the impact of this is recognized clinically (e.g., via depression and eating disorders), it also has more intimate, seemingly-mundane impacts and is therefore never benign. Body dissatisfaction research and advocacy then seeks to undo body dissatisfaction, recognizing it as a consequence of an injustice. Studies 1 and 2 of this thesis consisted of the implementation and mixed-methods evaluation of an intervention to reduce men's body dissatisfaction. Results showed promise but also that the intervention was limited by its focus on individuals. This follows a general trend in body dissatisfaction research where people are pathologised as responsible for causing their own body dissatisfaction (e.g., gay men) and the role of culture is ignored or reduced to an epiphenomenon (i.e., mass media). Studies 3 and 4 attempted to redress this by comparing the 'appearance potency' not of gay and straight men themselves but of media that markets towards both groups (thereby also shifting the focus off the individual and onto culture). The results of these studies found a high level of appearance potency in both types of media, though media was not homogenous and had many positive aspects (e.g., LGBT political advocacy). This appearance potency was particularly prominent in the adverts reflecting how media content is dictated by their advertising revenue and their own profit imperative. This thesis concludes that neither individuals nor media per se drive body dissatisfaction. Instead it is the system that allows corporations to make profits when body dissatisfaction is engendered that does (i.e., capitalism). Advocacy must acknowledge this system; the intersectional harms it does including both misrecognition and maldistribution (e.g., through sweatshops; Fraser, 1995) if body dissatisfaction, among other forms of suffering, are to be undone.

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DEDICATION

If a dedication in this thesis can have any value than it will be to credit the 90s social services department and in particular my social worker: Mike Rosser. Completing this thesis or any other success has never been because of my “resillience”. Nor was it because of any other individual (Mike-the exception). Rather it’s because systems that catch people when they fall, like social services, caught me. We need to protect these systems.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION, APPROACH AND EPISTEMOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

Chapter outline

In this chapter I begin by providing some brief reflections on studying body dissatisfaction. I then introduce the problem of men's body dissatisfaction, highlighting its prevalence and myriad impacts on men's wellbeing. Next I outline my approach to body dissatisfaction by tracing the influence of two approaches (the mainstream, positivist and the poststructuralist) to body dissatisfaction. Finally, I outline the critical realist approach to body dissatisfaction, and this thesis' aims.

Excerpts from personal and research reflexive diary

"Ironically, I can't work on my thesis because of B[ody] D[issatisfaction]. My arms- they keep on distracting me. I'm wearing a short sleeved polo shirt that cover 2/3rds of my bicep. But the paleness of the bicep, its fetal-like stage at which it has the faintest signs of muscularity, embarrass me. I'm continually distracted and despairing over them. I squeeze them just to feel how un-muscular they are. How devoid of manhood, of adulthood, of validity they are and make me. They make a laughing stock out of me. Despite reading Gill (2008) and finding very useful I can't keep concentrating [on work]. I don't want to have muscle dysmorphia and in some ways I'm more confident with my body or deserve to be but then again I drop into the pit of body shame and wallow again. I genuinely want to rush home and do some bicep work. Eurgh" (29th September, 2014).

"I squeeze my stomach and sides when sat down about 30 times a day. I honestly think it is that frequent. Or if I don't squeeze them I slap them to see the wobble. Then, invariably, I shudder, and renew my commitment to eat better, exercise more and gain that fucking six pack. I shudder with disgust at my current state and know, with a conviction that defies all logic and past experience, that today will be the last day and tomorrow will be better, fitter, toned, me" (1st July 2013).

It's embarrassing to include these two diary extracts. I had to cut another. I don't want to draw attention to areas of my appearance that I believe to be so inadequate. Clearly body dissatisfaction is a topic that is relevant to me. But I admit this reluctantly. By disclosing it is relevant to me, there is a risk of implying it is not to others. I firmly believe that most people, in some way or another, to some degree or another, is suffering in some way.

And it's a well of suffering. You get stuck in it. One wrong reflection, one bad photo, one tiny comment. That's all it takes. A night, party, date ruined. And we avoid. Avoid going swimming. Avoid having sex. Avoid the camera. Avoid the wind, the rain, the heat. Avoid the party, outside. We get drunk to have sex, we turn the lights off, the covers go up, we suck it in. Body dissatisfaction affects us intimately, routinely, continually. We forget that it's a problem too. That we aren't genetically endowed to hate what was genetically endowed. (Or was partially endowed anyway, culture is in there).

I started out doing body dissatisfaction research by doing my MSc placement at the Centre for Appearance Research (UWE, Bristol). I was originally interested in women's body dissatisfaction. I knew from feminism already how objectified women were in the media. I was interested in liberation work around sexism, racism and homophobia. So I was excited when these two worlds seemed to collide, academia and liberation.

They didn't though. I was a man and they were rare and so it was assumed I had some unique knowledge about men that others didn't. I don't really. This was just another variant of academic sexism where women are devalued and men are applauded.

It's a sexy topic. Media coverage is ample and the field is very popular. "*We don't talk about men's body dissatisfaction enough do we? It's always women's*". Well no, actually. We do. There is a lot of research and media coverage and now, more and more, support regarding men's body dissatisfaction. For the most part this is good, but there is also a danger of erasing women's greater pain and suffering. It is still harder for women. Content analyses of mass media show this - that images of men are still less likely to conform to the corporate appearance ideal than images of women. And look at Hollywood's double standard of ageing - where are the female George Clooney's, Sean Connery's and Jack Nicholson's?

Men's body dissatisfaction research wasn't as political as I hoped. It was apolitical, as mainstream psychology is often so. The silo problem continues, we often don't have the time or resources to share knowledge and expertise. I am forever embarrassed that even though I worked in a centre that did research on those 'visibly different', so obviously relevant to body dissatisfaction research, I spent so little time understanding it. Now body dissatisfaction research gets better media coverage, funding and research credibility than that on visible differences.

In academia, there is a tendency to reinvent the wheel, and as the ‘publish or perish’ culture dictates, claim credit for it.

People love to talk about body dissatisfaction. And why shouldn’t they? Everyone has an appearance, everyone has experiencing in trying (and often failing) to resist the corporate appearance ideal. That expertise already exists. What surprised me, and highlighted the limits of the body dissatisfaction field so clearly, was that people already know more about body dissatisfaction, its impact, causes etc., than researchers. That it’s a widespread problem with little chance of resolution. That corporations make money from making people feel insecure (about their appearance and other things). They knew this, why didn’t we?

I was advised by my supervisor to write what is most important, what is most needed to be heard, what body dissatisfaction research hasn’t said before. How liberating! At the moment I am so aware, possibly obsessed, with the limits of the field I can point them out and try and show something else. Or of course, just tell people to read Susan Bordo.

BODY DISSATISFACTION: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

A note on terms used in the thesis

Throughout this thesis the corporate appearance ideal is made reference to. It is used to refer to the dominant, persistent and powerful regulation on men and women’s appearances. It refers to the totality of appearance aspects that people are supposed to modify or have (e.g., low body fat, for men: muscles, a full head of hair etc. and for women: large breasts, slim legs etc.). This is more commonly known as the ideal, the sociocultural ideal or the cultural appearance ideal in body dissatisfaction research (Cash & Pruzinsky, 1990; Diedrichs & Lee, 2011). Indeed, my own thinking on this shifted early on where I referred to this ideal as the cultural appearance ideal (Jankowski, Fawkner, Slater, & Tiggemann, 2014)¹. Nonetheless, it is throughout referred to as the corporate appearance ideal because prefixing it with sociocultural or cultural omits the corporate origins and promotion of it and focuses on people driving it. As argued more fully in Chapter 9, what drives the ideal is capitalism. Not people. Media content that reveres this

¹ This publication is based on the Study 3 of this thesis and is referenced throughout. An excerpt is provided in Appendix M.

ideal whether though images and/or messages is referred to as ‘appearance potent’.

Culture is used broadly throughout the thesis to refer to the total environment beyond the interpersonal or individual level. It is referred to as that which is omitted by psychology and body dissatisfaction research with a view that we need to attend to it much more. Critiques of the conception of culture i.e., that it is not only an external force but one that is intimately related to an individual’s subjectivity/psychology (Gill, 2008; Hays, 1994) are recognized but are not elaborated upon as they are beyond the scope of this research project, which after all came from psychology not sociology. Relatedly structure is referenced throughout the thesis to refer to the way in which the environment (again beyond interpersonal and individual levels) dictates individual’s lives. This differs somewhat to culture in that it refers to institutional, political and economic means in which people are discriminated upon whereas culture is perhaps more often seen to mean that which is discursive or representational.

In addition, body dissatisfaction is referred to as one consequence of an injustice, lookism, throughout the thesis. This is in order to make clear lookism’s intersections with other forms of injustices as outlined in Chapter 10. In addition, this is to highlight that it is only as a form of suffering that researchers (i.e., scholar-activists) should be interested in it. I do not ascribe to the increasing divvying up of body dissatisfaction into multiple component parts (such as body functionality, appearance investment etc.). As Gleeson and Frith (2006) show as a concept itself, body dissatisfaction can only ever be a vague proxy for human experiences. I therefore refer to body dissatisfaction broadly as encompassing any shame, dislike or concern someone has over their appearance including their future appearance. Body dissatisfaction advocacy is also used in this thesis to refer to research, work and activism that involves body dissatisfaction. This follows Michael Murray and Blake Poland (2006) who recommend researchers take up and align with activism as a part of their work as opposed to researching only in the confines of academia. It also acknowledges the contribution of non-academic (largely feminist) knowledge that has influenced this thesis including from blogs, social media and online videos.

The problem of men's body dissatisfaction

Researchers have over the last 30 years highlighted the problem of body dissatisfaction, particularly for women. This is usually defined as a concern or dissatisfaction with appearance which is argued to have a resulting detrimental impact on health (Bordo, 2003; Rumsey & Harcourt, 2012). This important research has been useful in attending to a pervasive form of suffering that can be easily dismissed in our biomedically dominant society.

Research has also documented the impact body dissatisfaction has on men. For example, research has found between 35% to 70% of men surveyed also report dissatisfaction (Frederick, Lever, & Peplau, 2007; Liossi, 2003). Such research may have underplayed the scale of body dissatisfaction in men in two ways. First because of a failure to assess body dissatisfaction beyond a desire for thinness in the 1990s and later beyond muscularity, height and body fat (Karazsia & Crowther, 2009; McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2004). The result is that many men's body dissatisfaction would not necessarily be captured by such measures.

Demonstrably, in a small study Halliwell and Dittmar (2006) found that idiographic measures, where participants are asked to report any dissatisfaction with any aspect of their appearance, were predictive of negative affect, emotional eating and body satisfaction. In contrast, nomothetic measures, where participants are asked to report dissatisfaction with a set list of predetermined appearance aspects, (e.g. height, weight) were only predictive of emotional eating. Thus body dissatisfaction measures that dictate the aspects of appearance participants might be dissatisfied with may ignore body dissatisfaction men have with other aspects.

The second way in which body dissatisfaction has been underreported in men is via a failure to combat men's own minimization of it. This regards the observation made by various qualitative researchers where men tend to express discomfort when asked about body dissatisfaction (Adams, Turner, & Bucks, 2005; Pope Jr., Phillips, & Olivardia, 2000; Watt & Ricciardelli, 2012). For example, participants in Gill and colleagues' focus groups chastised other men for being motivated by body dissatisfaction in their gym- and cosmetic surgery behaviour (Gill, Henwood, & McLean, 2005). Likewise, male participants in Hargreaves and Tiggemann's (2006a) study recognized it was 'uncool' to care about their appearance despite admitting that they and other boys really did. Indeed, Pope

and colleagues detail the considerable difficulty they experienced when trying to get men to open up about their relationships to food, appearance and exercise behaviours (Pope et al., 2000). This is despite the widespread evidence of heavy appearance regulation for men. The potential reasons for this minimization will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

Without an awareness of the norm that men may be motivated to deny body dissatisfaction, research assessing men's body dissatisfaction may be limited. Failure to acknowledge this norm in research could have led to an underrepresentation of men's body dissatisfaction, or a misunderstanding of the importance of appearance to men. If assessment of body dissatisfaction is idiographic and researchers dig through norms that dictate that men should not admit body dissatisfaction then body dissatisfaction can be more accurately assessed (Gleeson & Frith, 2006). One method of doing this could be via anonymous questionnaires, that use idiographic measures and minimize the focus on appearance content (which would also reduce the risk of attracting only participants who are invested in appearance; Rumsey & Harcourt, 2005). In one such study, 95% of participants (men from community groups across the UK) reported dissatisfaction with at least one aspect of their appearance (Jankowski, Diedrichs, & Halliwell, 2013).

Another study in which the underplaying of men's body dissatisfaction was avoided, was conducted by Tiggemann, Martins and Churchett (2008a). The researchers asked men to list the concerns other men had about their bodies, in an online survey. Participants reported that men's body dissatisfaction was frequent and concerned varied aspects of appearance. Overall, they reported, men wished to be thinner, taller, more muscular, have larger penises and more head hair, and less body hair. Not only does this study affirm the need to assess body dissatisfaction beyond body shape, weight and muscularity, but so too does it highlight the range of appearance aspects men may have concerns about. Several researchers have also now noted how body dissatisfaction extends beyond desiring a sufficient muscularity and body fat levels to other appearance aspects such as freckles, body hair, penis size, youthfulness, head hair amount, hair colour and texture, height, tan, posture etc. (Hatoum & Belle, 2004; Rusticus, 2010; Tiggemann et al., 2008a)

The scale of men's body dissatisfaction should not be underestimated. Research has also found that body dissatisfaction can develop at an early age among males, with boys aged eight and younger reporting being unhappy about the way they look (Grogan, 2008; Pallan, Hiam, Duda, & Adab, 2011) and that more men report dissatisfaction than have ever before (Gray & Ginsberg, 2007). The scale of the problem is so large that researchers have pronounced muscularity dissatisfaction normative for young adult men (Frederick et al., 2007; Tiggemann, Martins, & Kirkbride, 2007).

This is a global problem. Though rates of body dissatisfaction tend to be higher in Western or westernised, affluent countries, this dissatisfaction can be found in other non-westernized countries and even in countries presumed to be far removed from modern Western influence, such as Ghana and Samoa (Lipinski & Pope Jr., 2002; Yates, Edman, & Aruguete, 2004). Although it is important to attend to cultural differences and especially important not to assume all Western countries are dominant, it may be that such cultural differences may be being effaced precisely due to the power of the corporate appearance ideal (i.e., as a pervasive global export; Bordo, 2003). This point shall be further discussed later in Chapter 9.

No, not all men have body dissatisfaction

One of the most consistent findings in body dissatisfaction research is that fewer men report body dissatisfaction in comparison to women (e.g. Liossi, 2003). This finding translates across the use of different measures assessing different aspects of appearance, as well as when assessed in different cultures (Frederick et al., 2007; Rumsey & Harcourt, 2005; Yang, Gray, & Pope Jr., 2005). To the author's knowledge, no study has unanimously found that all male participants report body dissatisfaction. There is always at least one man who reports no body dissatisfaction. Indeed qualitative accounts of men appear to show this satisfaction is genuine (even when taking into account a reluctance to disclose body dissatisfaction). For instance, a participant in Watt and Ricciardelli's interviews (2012, p.121) explains that he is unconcerned with his appearance because he and his cultural heritage regard other factors such as intelligence as much more important ("*I would say yeah like a guy appear to be smart in Asian community. I think it's pretty important, yeah it's pretty important especially in Asia*"). Other

studies have found that at least for some men, it is the functionality, rather than the appearance, of the body that is important (Halliwell & Dittmar, 2003; Kaminski & Hayslip, 2006).

Some men do not have body dissatisfaction. Despite heavy and increasing promotion of the corporate appearance ideal, some men remain content with their appearance (Bordo, 1999a; Davis, 2002; Diedrichs, Lee, & Kelly, 2011; Gill et al., 2005). It is important to acknowledge this. It is also important to recognize that any dissatisfaction, regardless of whether it has a clinical impact on health, is never benign. Furthermore, it may be that the men who do not experience body dissatisfaction are those that have not experienced the heavy promotion of the corporate appearance ideal whether because of their age, their nationality, or otherwise. This might explain why older men in particular, who grew up when the corporate appearance ideal was not as ubiquitous as it is now, may report less body dissatisfaction (Bordo, 1999a; Halliwell & Dittmar, 2003). Regardless, the corporate appearance ideal has increasingly been exported across the globe (Bordo, 2003), and promoted through ever more covert and heavy means. The result is that the number of men unaffected is fewer and fewer (Gray & Ginsberg, 2007). It is those very many that are affected that are the focus of this thesis.

The impact of body dissatisfaction on men

“Standards of beauty describe in precise terms the relationship that an individual will have to her own body. They prescribe her motility, spontaneity, posture, gait, the uses to which she can put her body. They define precisely the dimensions of her physical freedom. And of course, the relationship between physical freedom and psychological development, intellectual possibility, and creative potential is an umbilical one” (Dworkin, 1974, pp. 113–114).

Despite the fact that Dworkin was talking about women, this quote also can show the impact of body dissatisfaction on men. The impact of body dissatisfaction has mostly been recognized through its development into a number of clinical physical and psychological health disorders (Rumsey & Harcourt, 2012; Thompson & Stice, 2001). For example, men’s body dissatisfaction has been widely linked to eating disorder pathology, including bulimia, anorexia, binge eating disorder and orthorexia (Bordo, 1999a; Cafri, Strauss, & Thompson, 2002; Pope Jr. et al., 2000). For instance, Pope and colleagues (2000) found that men who frequented the gym, and reported muscle dissatisfaction, often followed strict, limited eating

regimes that interfered with their work and social lives. This documentation of the clinical eating impact of body dissatisfaction is also evidenced by the existence of the British charity *Men Get Eating Disorders Too*.

The above clinical eating disorders may differ in important aspects to each other. Specifically, Hrabosky and colleagues (2009) found distinctive cognitive, behavioural and emotional differences between patients with bulimia nervosa, anorexia nervosa, and body dissatisfaction dysmorphia with regard to body dissatisfaction. These included the foci of appearance-related concerns and impact. The severity of such disorders should not be minimized nor their differences erased. However, disordered eating should also be considered a spectrum on which most, if not all, people fall (Bordo, 2003). Specifically, given that dieting can be defined as the restriction of certain types or amounts of food in order to change the body's shape or size, and that most people who diet have healthy bodies and are of normal weight (Bacon, 2010), it is hard to see how anyone's relationship with their food is not disordered and unrelated to the corporate appearance ideal's prescription of leanness, in particular.

A further well documented consequence of body dissatisfaction is the non-medical use of anabolic-androgenic steroids by men (Kanayama, Barry, Hudson, & Pope Jr., 2006; Pope Jr. et al., 2000). In sufficient doses, steroids cause fat free mass gain as well as the loss of body fat (Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, 2010; Kanayama, Barry, Hudson, & Pope Jr., 2006). As such, many men with body dissatisfaction resort to their use. A large meta-analysis of studies assessing steroid prevalence found that the lifetime prevalence of steroid use among men and boys was 6.6% (Sagoe, Molde, Andreassen, Torsheim, & Pallesen, 2014).

The prevalence of this steroid use appears to be increasing (Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, 2010; Hall, Grogan, & Gough, 2015b; Yesalis & Bahrke, 2002). In addition, steroids among men have been linked to health problems including elevated risk for cardiovascular disease and stroke, significant psychological disturbances such as depression, severe aggression, and cognitive impairment (Pope et al., 2000; Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, 2010). Disturbingly, in a large and representative sample of American males, Beaver, Vaughan, DeLissi and Wright (2008) found strong associations between violent behaviour and steroid use, even after controlling for previous steroid usage and

demographic characteristics. In addition, as the majority of non-medical steroid usage is administered intravenously, other health outcomes are also implicated including bacterial and fungal infections and the transmission of blood-borne viruses such as HIV (Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, 2010). Finally, steroids are problematic as they are illegal in most countries and therefore also unregulated.

The use of other performance-enhancing substances such as prohormones and ephedrine is also concerning, as they may have comparable psychological and physical health risks to AAS but are legally available, and are sometimes even promoted in gyms (Hall, Grogan, & Gough, 2015a; Hall et al., 2015b). Pope et al. (2000) also reported a growing number of North American men taking performance-enhancing substances. This is in line with other research that found more than 9% lifetime prevalence of ephedrine and prohormones usage among adolescent boys (Cafri, van den Berg, & Thompson, 2006).

Researchers should not however limit their analyses of the impact of body dissatisfaction to clinical eating disorders or steroid usage. As Bordo (2003) pointed out, this is important given the historical tradition of believing that only those who seek out help for body dissatisfaction to be the only ones affected by it. Specifically, this has led to resources and support for body dissatisfaction being primarily designed for white, middle class girls. As Bordo (2003) has noted this ignore the many African American girls, among others, who also are affected. Development of eating disorders, or the turn to anabolic steroids, are just some of the many impacts of body dissatisfaction. Less well recognized is body dissatisfaction's impact in ways that may not be deemed clinically significant such as the development of low self-esteem, anxiety and mild depression (T. E. Davison & McCabe, 2005; McCauly, Mintz & Glenn, 1988; Olivardia, Pope Jr., Borowiecki, & Cohane, 2004). In addition, as the corporate appearance ideal stipulates muscularity, full heads of hair, less wrinkles etc., men may not seek steroids or diet changes but respond in other ways. For example, through cosmetic surgery, through avoidance in school of drawing attention to oneself, through wearing only those clothes that are perceived to disguise the perceived defect in one's appearance, through social avoidance etc. (e.g., Frith & Gleeson, 2004; Bordo, 1999). These responses are inevitably a waste of time and energy and therefore should also be considered consequences of the ideal.

***DEPOLARIZING BOTH APPROACHES TO BODY DISSATISFACTION
RESEARCH***

In this next section, I shall trace two approaches to body dissatisfaction that have informed my approach to the research. Though these approaches might not be absolutely distinct, I depict them as separate for clarity and in the ways they have distinctly influenced me. Nonetheless, I follow Bordo (1999b), who has argued that we must resist caricaturing either side of any debate and acknowledge the shared validity that is held by both sides. Therefore, I begin by outlining some of the useful knowledge produced by mainstream body dissatisfaction research (i.e., research that is largely quantitative, positivist and focuses on biopsychosocial causes of body dissatisfaction). Following this, I critique some of the assumptions of this work. Next I outline the validity of a critical approach to body dissatisfaction (i.e., research that draws upon poststructuralism and postmodernism) before also critiquing some of the assumptions it has produced.

The mainstream approach to body dissatisfaction is positivist. It assumes body dissatisfaction is something that exists internally within an individual that is independent from changing contexts (Gleeson & Frith, 2006). Its methodology is largely quantitative. Specifically, it is also assumed that body dissatisfaction can be reasonably assessed, in a stable manner and accurately, by quantitative measures through survey design (Gleeson & Frith, 2006). Influenced by clinical psychology, the mainstream approach of body dissatisfaction demonstrates the impact of body dissatisfaction by showing its links to clinical health disorders such as eating disorders, clinical depression and muscle dysmorphia (Pope Jr., Gruber, Choi, Olivardia, & Phillips, 1997; Pope Jr. et al., 2000). The mainstream approach posits a variety of body dissatisfaction causes, mostly individual differences.

These include biological factors (e.g., hormonal changes, pubertal timing and weight) personality differences (e.g., perfectionism) and cognitive factors (e.g., investment in appearance and internalization of the corporate appearance ideal). Other factors that are purported to cause body dissatisfaction are pressures from other people (e.g., parents, peers and partners) and mass media. Mass media is often the singular acknowledgment of culture, and as described later in Chapter 8, is treated as an epiphenomenon, as if a by-product that has little influence over people (Gill, 2007a). Finally, the mainstream approach intervenes at the individual

level by aiming to change individual's faulty attitudes, beliefs and behaviours in small group interventions or on an individual basis. This has the aim of reducing body dissatisfaction (for further critiques of this level of intervention see: Diedrichs & Lee, 2010; Irving, 1999; Riley, 2014).

The critical approach to body dissatisfaction stands in contrast to the mainstream approach. It rejects positivism, arguing that body dissatisfaction or embodiment in general is fluid, highly nuanced and context dependant (Gleeson & Frith, 2006). It tends to reject quantitative measures, instead opting for qualitative interviewing, focus groups and secondary data analysis of pre-existing online discussions (e.g., Duncan, 2007; Gill et al., 2005; Hall et al., 2015a). It is less interested in specific and discrete individual factors that cause body dissatisfaction; instead, it aims to attend to role of culture which is considered to be more formative.

The critical approach to body dissatisfaction is influenced by postmodernism (Gergen, 1990; Kvale, 1992) and poststructuralism (Foucault, 1971, 1995) in three ways. It rejects one unified truth, arguing that such a claim has been used to support the dominance of white straight and middle class men over others for centuries (Gill, 1995). It attends to the discursive, highlighting the constructed nature of language and how it can be used to support existing power dynamics (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; S. Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 1995). Finally, it rejects a monolithic or oppressive conception of culture (Foucault, 1971, 1995), highlighting the many, varied and sometimes effective ways in which people resist the corporate appearance ideal. Collectively this critical approach does not design or implement any interventions with the aim of reducing body dissatisfaction, as these are generally considered to be ineffective.

It would be very easy to take a polarized stance against the mainstream approach of body dissatisfaction. Indeed, academia encourages this with the competition to publish, find grants and be seen as the authoritative voice in one's field (Parker & Spears, 1996). There is a pressure to reject others as mistaken, bigoted or unsophisticated in favour of one's own (or team's) work. However, it is important to acknowledge the mainstream approach of body dissatisfaction today for two reasons. Firstly, because the analysis of body dissatisfaction in this thesis, however critical, is not produced from a vacuum, it comes from this mainstream analysis. As a Marxist critique of academia asserts, ideas are not produced

individually and the sole credit of the first or main author of a specific paper but rather they are produced collaboratively (Parker & Spears, 1996). This also follows a long line of feminists who have rejected the tendency to dismiss others' work. They have not depicted their research as uniquely superior to others but rather as building upon those ideas of others (Bordo, 2003; Gill, 2007a). Bernard of Chartres' (12th century French philosopher) recognition, "*If I have seen further it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants*", holds true today. I will acknowledge the important gains produced by the mainstream approach of body dissatisfaction in this next section.

A review of the mainstream body dissatisfaction approach

As the mainstream body dissatisfaction approach has shown so clearly, people do pressure other people to conform to corporate appearance ideals. Variously, routinely, and frequently the experiences of friends, family members, partners, peers and others pressuring individual people into conforming to corporate appearance ideals has been captured in mainstream body dissatisfaction research (Jankowski, Diedrichs, & Halliwell, 2013; McCabe, Ricciardelli, & Finemore, 2001; Tylka, 2011; Tylka & Andorka, 2012). For the individual pressured, these experiences can be very real, distressing and have significant consequences for their wellbeing (such as increased body dissatisfaction, lowered self-esteem etc.).

Here this knowledge has been so useful in affirming the individual's experience of appearance pressures as real, valid, and needing of support. Capturing these experiences, having them recognized as something problematic rather than a mundanity of modern life, can be affirming for the individual who experiences these pressures (Pope Jr. et al., 2000). Such knowledge also demonstrates how the corporate appearance ideal operates as a form of power (Bordo, 2003). Specifically, this knowledge has shown how pressures to conform to the corporate appearance ideal operate not only as a top down force, but also laterally by other people. For example, the influence of peers in school whether through teasing, bullying or otherwise can have formative influences on children's body dissatisfaction (Nichter, 2000). This knowledge has shown that these pressures can 'get under the skin' of people so that they become enforced by an individual's loved ones. Furthermore, this knowledge has shown that appearance pressures can be constitutive not just constituted; they can produce behaviours as

well as repress them. For example, Bordo (2003) notes how appearance pressures can lead women to seek out cosmetic surgery, fashion trends or make up.

This knowledge has also been useful in showing the extent and seeming banality of appearance pressures; a departure from the traditional conspiratorial dictator/victim model of injustice. Again, Bordo (2003) acknowledged that appearance pressures, particularly directed at women, may come through teachers, mothers, fathers, siblings and indeed individual woman themselves. Finally, a multi-pronged approach to body dissatisfaction has usefully specified that advocacy should occur at the individual, social and cultural level. This approach has resulted in many efforts to change body dissatisfaction at the individual or community level. For example, a widespread campaign beginning in 2011 was the Fat Talk Free week and Fat Talk Free Work Place. This encouraged people to mind their talk and to reject narrow appearance ideals in favour of celebrating diversity (Butterfly Foundation, 2013).

Another clear contribution that the mainstream body dissatisfaction approach has produced is the recognition of the material body. i.e. that people who experience body dissatisfaction have bodies. This might seem like a very obvious and uncontroversial point but it wasn't always so. When Bordo (2003) advocated a material basis to embodiment at conferences in the 1980s she was seen by many feminist and postmodern cultural theorists as having committed an unforgivable faux pas. But of course people have biological realities; and as the mainstream approach has shown, variations in individual biology such as hormonal, genetic and other factors may predispose, exacerbate or otherwise influence an individual's body dissatisfaction and other aspects of their wellbeing (Bordo, 2003; Cash, 2002; Rumsey & Harcourt, 2012).

Such recognition is useful because it provides legitimacy to people's embodied, partly biological, experiences; a legitimacy that may escape those in academia that claim everything is discursive, structural or socially constructed. Such a totalizing stance is rightly perceived as nonsensical to those of us that have breathing, hormonal, biological bodies (Bordo, 2003). Furthermore, such recognition has been profoundly useful in providing concrete support through intervention at the biological level to those experiencing the worst of body dissatisfaction. For example, pharmaceutical drugs that have staved off an

individual's hair loss (Harvey, 2013) or in-treatment clinics for people with eating disorders (Vocks et al., 2010). This is a support that those who focus only on the culture's role in body dissatisfaction are not able to provide, at least in the short term. For many it has been a concrete support, a lifeline, amidst great suffering, and cannot be undervalued.

Third, the gravity of body dissatisfaction has been demonstrated particularly well. The mainstream approach has been particularly good at marshalling the evidence to show the myriad psychological and physical costs incurred by people because of the corporate appearance ideal (Grogan, 2008; Pope Jr. et al., 2000). Governments have begun to regard body dissatisfaction as a public health problem and practitioners have been trained to provide individual, tailored, support to those with body dissatisfaction (Diedrichs & Lee, 2010; Yager & O'Dea, 2010). In many ways body dissatisfaction today is recognised as a problem in need of support. This is an important achievement ,by the field and by second-wave feminists who brought attention to the regulation of women via their appearances (e.g., Lazarus & Wunderlich, 1979; Orbach, 1978; Wolf, 1991). The alternative of course was to regard body dissatisfaction as a mundane inevitability of existence.

This useful knowledge should not be without critique however. First, although people can and do pressure others to conform to the corporate appearance ideal, they are only ever intermediaries of these pressures (Bordo, 2003). The recent medicalization of hair is an example of how the corporately produced ideal is produced by corporations for the profit imperative, not by people (Harvey, 2013; Jankowski, 2014b). As argued extensively in Chapter 3, these pressures do not originate from people. In addition, the multipronged approach of body dissatisfaction advocacy implies that change at the individual level is equal to change at the cultural level (vastly obscuring the power differential between culture and individual). Indeed it has also resulted in advocacy only at the individual level anyway (Diedrichs & Lee, 2010; Irving, 1999; Piran & Teall, 2012). Ultimately, widespread, significant change can be achieved when advocacy moves from the people whose influence on others is minimal onto the influence of corporations and capitalism whose influence is much, much greater.

Secondly, the material body is a reality and it may influence the extent, severity and form of body dissatisfaction. Nonetheless, it is not the cause of body dissatisfaction. Again, as argued in Chapter 9, body dissatisfaction is produced by

the corporate appearance ideal not an individual's particular genetic makeup or hormonal mix. There is a common metaphor to explain differences between men and women as biologically originated and determined (Bordo, 2003). The metaphor argues men's and women's brains are hardwired to be different. To unpick the deterministic potential of a material body, Bordo extended the metaphor to ask: "*who is the electrician here?*" (Bordo, 1999a, p. 170). She argued that whatever differences may exist at birth or in utero between male and female brains, these are vastly exaggerated over time by culture, opportunity and status differences. Thus minimal biological differences are trained by culture and external, non-biological, forces to be different. Bordo's argument does not deny that at the end (or time of assessment) differences may be found on average biologically e.g., between men and women. Nor does her argument deny the existence of minor differences at birth between men and women. Bordo argued however, that it is the culture that creates these differences and at their origin, these differences never deserve the status they are afforded (or indeed the opportunities that are withheld from the individual as a consequence of such differences). Finally, these differences can be undone by cultural change (Bordo, 1999a, p. 80):

"We don't have to choose between physiology and fantasy. In fact, we do so at peril of radically misunderstanding the kind of physiology we have - one that is tremendously suggestible to the cultural "superstructure" of ideas, associations, images".

Extending this argument to body dissatisfaction, it may well be that there are biological factors that appear significant at the time when an individual is recognized as having a clinically recognized variant of body dissatisfaction (i.e., at assessment). But such biological factors will be minimal at birth or in origin, and only become prominent over time through training by the corporate appearance ideal. Therefore what are regarded as evidence for a biological origin to body dissatisfaction are actually some of the many symptoms caused by the corporate appearance ideal. To demonstrate, Bordo (1999a, p. 83) discussed penis size satisfaction:

"Does size matter? Absolutely, yes. But the matter of size is as 'mental' as it is 'material'. Never just a question of nerve endings, always a collaboration with the imagination, and therefore with culture"

Here, Bordo emphasizes that penis size, which can invoke a form of body dissatisfaction, will be experienced materially. The physical size of the penis may

feel small in the hand or another person's vagina etc. but the way an individual feels, whether this is small or not, is culturally constructed. What comes to feel as a material sensation indicating the penis is too small will be determined by a culture that equates a large penis size with virility, masculinity etc. (Bordo, 1999a).

To ignore the biological influences and variation in those with clinically recognized body dissatisfaction and those without is short sighted. They exist, the evidence attests to this (Bordo, 2003). Focusing on them, and changing these though, as argued in Chapter 5, ignores the bigger picture. Any biological differences that are not themselves culturally mediated (which, after all, has a lifetime of opportunity to occur whether through the modification of genes in utero or from birth onwards) are still not what unites those who have body dissatisfaction. It may be that once the corporate appearance ideal is removed, these biological variations may continue to exist. But without first removing the corporate appearance ideal they will never be seen.

Third, although the gravity of body dissatisfaction has been recognized in some ways, it has also been obscured in others. Specifically, body dissatisfaction is all too often regarded as a clinical disorder present in some (not many and definitely never all) unfortunate people (Bordo, 2003). This is problematic for three reasons. First, because this belief belies the absolute normativity of body dissatisfaction. Today, globally, it is rare to find someone who does not want to change at least one aspect of their appearance or is not scared of their own potential to become fat or old (Bordo, 2003; Jung, Forbes, & Chan, 2010; Swami et al., 2010; Yang et al., 2005). This is body dissatisfaction, however it is framed.

Second, although the severest variants of body dissatisfaction may be recognized as clinical disorders, other variants of body dissatisfaction are ignored. An individual who does not meet the specifications for an eating disorder but refuses to romantically approach most people or avoids wearing anything but baggy t-shirts may be dismissed as not having to deal with body dissatisfaction. Finally, although the physical and psychological costs from the ideal may be recognized, social and cultural costs are less recognized (Gleeson & Frith, 2006; Irving, 1999; Levine & Piran, 2004). People's relationships, platonic and non, are deeply affected when one has body dissatisfaction, as is society more generally (Bordo, 2003; Cash, 2002; Rumsey & Harcourt, 2012). It is argued then that to regard body dissatisfaction as a public health problem omits the financial, spiritual,

social and other costs that are not specific to an individual's wellbeing. Similarly, as homophobia should not be defined as purely a physical health problem for LGBTI people but rather a form of injustice that has broader consequences, so too should the effects of the corporate appearance ideal.

A review of the critical body dissatisfaction approach

Just as the mainstream approach to body dissatisfaction must not be uncritically accepted or uniformly dismissed, so too must the critical analysis of body dissatisfaction. Therefore, once again I shall set out some of the knowledge that a critical analysis of body dissatisfaction has so usefully produced, and then move onto add some critique of these assumptions.

The critical approach has usefully highlighted the danger of claiming one unified truth (Gill, 1995). In particular, how Western philosophy was produced from white, heterosexual male experience and other contributions, particularly from women, were erased, excluded or minimized. For example, knowledge and embodiment was constructed along gendered lines to support the subordination of women in society; so that men were seen as rational and of the mind and women emotional and of the body (Bordo, 2003). Such a system of unified truth has been usefully critiqued as supporting domination and the subordination of many in society. A further example is the belief that 'weight equals bad' which has permeated Western society so much so that it is now no longer even questioned and highly resistant to any challenges, academic or otherwise (Bacon & Aphramor, 2011; J. E. Oliver, 2006).

This does not mean though that believing in no one, unified, truth necessarily means having a commitment to justice. As Flax (1992, p. 33) wrote: "*just because false knowledge can be used to justify or support domination, it does not follow that true knowledge will diminish it or that the possessor of 'less false' knowledge will be free from the complicity of others*". Instead, research and advocacy must be explicitly linked to goals of emancipation. Bordo (2003, p. 30) applauded feminism for doing just this; emancipatory potential for destabilizing truths. Specifically, she applauded feminism for it's:

"consciousness raising in a culture that makes [women] unconscious and relies on this unconsciousness. Thus feminism [or body dissatisfaction activism] does not empower (or require) individuals to 'rise above' their

culture or to become martyrs to feminist ideals...its goal is edification and understanding".

With regards to body dissatisfaction, Tischner (2012) also exemplifies this approach. Tischner wrote that her aim as a body dissatisfaction researcher is to throw as much doubt as possible on the claim that fat is bad rather than to seek to counter it with some immutable evidence that fat equals good. This doubt and critique, she wrote, generates new ways of thinking, of being and resistance. Similarly, fat respect advocate Linda Bacon wrote in her book, *Health At Every Size*, that her aim is to throw as much light and doubt on such a claim as possible, “*not to establish but to destabilise*” (Bacon, 2010).

Critical research has highlighted the constructed nature of language and how it can be used to support existing power dynamics (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; S. Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 1995). For example, Gill cites research on gender equality talk in employment, how it is masked in practical considerations allowing the speakers to reproduce gender inequities whilst maintaining a façade of progressiveness (Gill, 1995). Such criticisms are useful and show miniature, everyday ways in which power can be enforced. As mentioned earlier, this might be through people pressuring other people on an occasion to conform to the corporate appearance ideal. One way in which researchers can try and mitigate the own ways in which they might contribute and enforce power inequalities is through continual reflection and revision. This will be discussed later.

As useful as this criticism is, it's important to remember that power operates beyond the discursive, social, and performative realms (Bordo, 2003; Klein, 2002). Changing language only is not sufficient to change the world. Power works on multiple levels, at structural levels, the economic, political and institutional. These must be tackled too. For example, racism is not only enacted socially through racist slurs, street harassment etc. It is tied with poverty and enacted through mass incarceration of people of colour, the intentional hiring and placement of white people into positions of power (e.g., political) and through other institutional policies that marginalize people of colour etc. (Crenshaw, 1991; hooks, 1992). None of these can be undone by changing language alone.

The critical analysis of body dissatisfaction has also highlighted the many, varied and sometimes effective ways in which people resist the corporate appearance ideal. People are not cultural dopes or passive consumers of culture;

they interpret, reject, interact and absorb it. For example, Elliott and Elliott (2005) found that their male participants were highly sceptical of advertisements featuring corporately beautiful men. Further, they were cynical about advertisements in general, aware their sole purpose was to sell. Gill and colleagues (2005) found that a diverse group of men showed a great deal of creativity and expressiveness through their appearance; including via clothing, tattoos and piercings; they were not slaves to the corporate appearance ideal. As Nussbaum (2000, p. 14) pointed out:

“People are not stamped out like coins by the power machine of social convention. They are constrained by social norms, but norms are plural and people are devious. Even in societies that nourish problematic roles for men and women, real men and women can also find spaces in which to subvert those conventions, resourcefully creating possibilities of love and joy”.

Nonetheless, although resistance does exist and culture is not a top down force, this does not negate the power, hold and impact of the corporate appearance ideal. Gill argued that a focus on resistance in feminism and critical research has led to a state “*where even victims are denied being victims*” (Gill, 1995, p. 183). This resistance is not enough to subvert the dominant power structures. For example, the men in Gill and colleagues (2005) study still disparaged other men who were perceived to work out excessively, use cosmetic surgery and wear fake tan. They were regarded as vain rather than recognized as men who were all dealing with the corporate appearance ideal. The men too felt that they should invest in their appearance and fitness, though further digging by the interviewers revealed this actually meant to stay youthful, fit, to conform to the corporate appearance ideal.

Feminists have countered the frequent criticism that they do not account for women's agency by arguing that the aim of feminism is not to celebrate the individual woman, but to emancipate all women (Bordo, 2003; Gill, 2007a). Thus a focus, critique and combatting of what oppresses all women, resistant or not, is needed. Similarly, a body dissatisfaction researcher's goal is to undo widespread body dissatisfaction, not to document those few who appear not to have it.

Critical research has highlighted how culture and mass media are not homogenous forces; and that they do not interact in a top down manner with people. For example, Foucault (1971, 1995) showed how power need not be repressive but constitutive and not one group over another but various agents

colluding in parts. Further, it can be enacted through self-governance and self-discipline. Specifically, this is where the individual monitors themselves and power need no longer be externally exerted. Similarly, Bordo (2003) wrote that injustice was not invented in some giant headquarters, that its origins were more subtle and diverse.

This is a useful reconceptualization of power and culture. However, it does not mean that culture can never be oppressive or that it should no longer be scrutinized. As Bordo (2003, p. 29) wrote, this “*valuable reconceptualization of power...should not be interpreted as entailing the view that all players are equal, or that positions of dominance and subordination are not sustained within networks of power*”. Specifically, this criticism has transformed an unease with traditional cultural analyses to no analysis whatsoever of the culture (Gill, 2008). Many feminist and justice advocates have been silenced by creating “*a growing climate of 'epistemological correctness'*” (Gill, 1995, p. 173). Specifically this is where any criticism of culture is mocked and denigrated as patronising, unsophisticated or outmoded. This is particularly evident with the use of certain disciplinary terms that must be employed by researchers such as “*discursive, performative etc.*” lest they be dismissed. The result is the omission of coherent, analysis of the impact of body dissatisfaction on people.

Some have argued that this focus on resistance and retreat from cultural scrutiny by some critical researchers upholds capitalism. For example, Parker and Spears discuss the tendency of corporations evading scrutiny and accountability, by continually reinventing themselves, paying to have removed any unflattering history that might come up from a Google search, and bedazzling consumers with state of the art public relations and the most progressive mission statements. This is enabled by critical psychology with its focus on reinvention and rejection of any coherent form of truth. He noted: “*The uncannily close concordance between the requirements of contemporary capitalism and some of the nostrums of critical psychology legitimizes, reproduces and strengthens the actual practices of capitalist production and consumption*” (Parker & Spears, 1996, p. 78). How can corporations be scrutinized if there is no such thing as truth and all experiences and accounts are equal? Who is to say the corporations’ denial of any wrongdoing and promise of reinvention regardless, is any less valid than the experience of the many disadvantaged by the corporations?

Critical research has also highlighted how culture does not affect all equally(Bordo, 2003; Crenshaw, 1991; Gill, 1995; hooks, 1992). People are not equal participants in culture and many must contend with distinct and even multiple injustices (Crenshaw, 1991). For example, analyses of mass media have shown how heavily the corporate appearance ideal is promoted but have failed to acknowledge that women of colour will experience its power differently to white women given the ideal is white with western features and that women of colour *in general* are not represented positively across mass media (hooks, 1992). Gill noted specifically that a “*stress on difference [is] so valuable within as well as outside feminism for highlighting the exclusion of Black, lesbian and working-class women*” (Gill, 1995, p. 168). Here, intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991), the idea that injustices (such as racism and sexism) are intertwined and cannot be targeted separately, as a practice and theory can be useful in justice work (see also Chapter 10). Specifically, by recognizing that there are differences of power within groups and that injustices intersect so that all must be fought in their entirety.

Attention must be paid to differences of power including between the researcher and the research (S. Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 1996). After all, white male supremacy still holds fast in academia. However, this should not mean that we do not include those with less power in our research. We must engage with others, mitigating our power differences, raising up marginalized voices, reflecting on our own complicity in systems of domination (S. Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 1995, 1996). To ignore those with power differences in research is worse and follows centuries of social science research that has done the same. As concluded in *Representing The Other*, the problem is the process of othering not the other (S. Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 1996).

Related to the above, although these important differences must be recognized, such differences do not negate the power of the corporate appearance ideal. Indeed, as Bordo (2003) argued that although differences in body dissatisfaction prevalence across groups may exist (e.g., between white and Black girls, as was so often claimed), that nonetheless a more and more powerful culture may be effacing these differences. Intersectionality demonstrates the importance of making sure these differences are acknowledged and the tensions that they bring mitigated by those who have more privilege over those with less.

This should complement a collective identity that can be mobilized behind, in which we are all acknowledged as having to contend with the corporate appearance ideal.

AIMS AND APPROACH: CRITICAL REALISM

There is a middle way between these two approaches. Critical realism provides it (Bhaskar, 2008, 2014) Critical realism lies through the two opposing paths of the critical (or constructionist) approach and the positivist (realist) approach. It holds that a real world does exist and that epistemology or knowledge can give, however messily and imperfectly, a good approximation of it. It argues for pluralism in picking methods; and that theories be adhered to on the basis of their ability to explain something rather than the assumptions they make per se (Joseph, 2014). Critical realism is critical in three respects. First, in challenging taken for granted assumptions and knowledge. Second, in committing to further justice goals. Finally, in being reflexive (Little, 2013). I shall expand upon each of these commitments in turn.

Aim: To not individualize

“Taught from their infancy that beauty is woman’s sceptre, the mind shapes itself to the body, and, roaming round in its gilt cage, only seeks to adorn its prison” (Wollstonecraft, 1792).

In the above quote, Mary Wollstonecraft discusses the impact of the socialisation of women to see their appearance as their greatest attribute to others. This quote also usefully captures the impact of appearance regulation for men. Firstly, by highlighting how appearance regulation creates triviality, promising success, love or other benefits that are so rarely realised. Second, the quote captures how appearance pressures become self-regulating. They get inside us so that the individual affected neither knows their presence or their origin. Instead the individual sees appearance regulation as theirs and the pursuit of the corporate appearance ideal for their own benefit. The ‘corporate’ of the corporate appearance ideal becomes unidentifiable.

First then, a goal of this thesis is to draw our collective (and I include mine as well) focus to culture that I believe is omitted in body dissatisfaction research. It is to throw as much doubt as possible on the claim that the individual is

responsible for body dissatisfaction, highlighting, marshalling and documenting the evidence that shows the power of the corporate appearance ideal.

In this thesis I try to steer clear of continuing psychology's shoring up of neoliberalism and individualism. Specifically, I do not aim to further knowledge about body dissatisfaction and its facets; believing current delineation of the facets of body dissatisfaction to be already overly excessive and yet, as Gleeson and Frith (2006) illustrated, steadfastly unrepresentative of the messy, fluid lived experience of body dissatisfaction. This thesis is not particularly concerned with how people's identities, lives, relationships and worlds are mediated through their body dissatisfaction because such knowledge would continue the focus (in psychology and beyond) on the individual to the detriment to the culture. In relation to body dissatisfaction, a further focus on the individual could also stigmatize; implying that participants are vain, narcissistic or superficial for being concerned with their appearance. Instead my thesis, particularly in its latter stages, is concerned with highlighting the process in which corporations promote the corporate appearance ideal for profits. To highlight this process, one impact, body dissatisfaction and its consequent relationship to other health outcomes, are delineated.

In line with this aim, the methodology selected also attempted to avoid individualizing men's body dissatisfaction. In the qualitative analysis of *Body Project M* (Study 1), I avoided exploring my participant's individual nuances in their body dissatisfaction. This follows Singleton, another body dissatisfaction researcher, who wrote in her thesis (Singleton, 2012, p. 256):

"I have specifically avoided theorising about the intrapsychic orientation of any of the individual board participants, since the project is not concerned with locating explanations at the level of individual motivations and behaviours. In this way although I have examined the lived embodied experiences of men, I have described these experiences in ways which focus less on their individual behaviours".

Likewise, Study 3 formed an analyses of culture, men's media, rather than individual accounts of the culture formed. Further details on both of these methodologies are presented in Chapters 6 and 7.

Aim: To further justice

Secondly and relatedly, this thesis has a commitment to justice. It is distinctly political and pragmatic. Gill and others advocate that researchers should commit

their work to emancipatory goals. She argued we must “*make social transformation an explicit concern of our work*” (Gill, 1995, p. 178). Here, then, I follow Gill (1995) in anchoring my work’s primary goal as wanting justice rather than in wanting to find out truth or to develop theory (*per se*).

Psychology is complicit with injustices, though it is often unaware of this (B. Cohen, 2013; Parker, 2009; Parker & Spears, 1996). Riecher (1996) specifically points out that research council funding is dependent on the researcher conducting what is seen as socially relevant and publishing in impact for high quality journals as decided by a central research committee. The result is that research has to maintain and serve the interests of government, of industry and mainstream psychology. To do otherwise can not only impair the researcher’s own career but also their department’s reputation too. Thus there is an inactivism that characterizes psychology:

"Pockets of critical work are apparent throughout psychology....the reason why I wish to stress this freedom is not out of some empiricist belief in the predominance of autonomy over restraint but rather because of the role it plays. [Specifically]... the position we have to produce knowledge does not extend to giving that knowledge effect. In fact our right to research is bought at the cost of accepting a divorce between ideas of practice. The consequences of this before far more practical maintaining hegemony than any attempt to muzzle us" (Reicher, 1996, p. 231)

Not only did this relentless focus on the individual do little to improve society’s health, but it also served, as some argued, to depoliticise people against these structures. Specifically as Martin Luther King Jr. noted in (1963):

"There is a word in modern psychology which is now probably more familiar than any other word in psychology. It is the word: maladjusted...[But] there are some things in our social system that I'm proud to be maladjusted to...I never intend to adjust myself to the viciousness of lynch mobs; I never intend to become adjusted to the evils of segregation and discrimination; I never intend to become adjusted to the tragic inequalities of the economic system which will take necessity from the masses to give luxury to the classes....The salvation of our world lies in the hands of the maladjusted".

Critical health psychologists became deeply dissatisfied with health psychology and the healthcare system in the 1980s (M. Murray, 2012). Here, many were dissatisfied with mainstream health psychology’s relentless focus on the individual, their attitudes, beliefs and behaviours. Such a focus left no acknowledgment, let alone remedy, of the determination of culture on individual’s wellbeing. Structures such as poverty, racism and mass incarceration, determined an individual’s and indeed society’s health, more than individual factors ever would. Yet those working

to improve wellbeing were doing very little about such factors. Psychology's tendency to individualize (and thus hide) the very structures that are impairing an individual's wellbeing has also been noted by others (Bordo, 2003; B. Cohen, 2013). With the great benefit of hindsight, some examples of this depoliticisation are widely recognized today as such. For example, most social scientists accept that the diagnosis of hysteria was a way to repress white women's dissatisfaction with the stifling conditions imposed upon them by Victorian patriarchy (Bordo, 2003). However, hindsight is not afforded to all such depoliticisation and many still believe that health, body size and body acceptance are determined by the individual only (Bordo, 2003; Gill, 2007a; Tischner, 2012).

This depoliticisation by psychology occurred by turning people's rational, sound and justified responses to structural injustices into individual pathologies. Further, it sought to mask such responses through individual treatment. The extreme examples of these treatments are now discredited today (e.g., electric convulsion therapy, chemical castrations etc.) though others are less open to critique, such as cognitive-behavioural therapy which seeks to change individual's 'faulty' thoughts or beliefs (who decides which are faulty and which are rational responses to structural injustices?) and pharmacological drugs. Martin Luther King Jr.'s role as a civil rights leader was to raise consciousness and mobilise African Americans against white supremacist, segregated America. This came into direct conflict with psychology, not only through its sedation of rational 'maladjustment' but also because psychology served to justify African American's subjugation by seeking to show they had lower IQs and were genetically inferior to white Americans (Yee, Fairchild, Weizmann, & Wyatt, 1993).

This blaming the victim trend continues today albeit in more insidious and hidden forms (M. Murray, 2012). Specifically, using the guise of equality and with the ample help of neoliberalism, governments and those ostentatiously interested in wellbeing use postfeminist and individualizing language to blame the effects of poverty, racism and other injustices on people. People are held responsible for all of their life outcomes and wellbeing. Such goals would be in direct conflict with government and institutions. For example, in 1969, George Albee, the President of the APA argued that "*the terrible suffering that exists in our society among the disenfranchised, the have-nots, can only be remedied by direct confrontation with the system*" (M. Murray, 2012, pp. 29–30).

Instead, action is needed. As Marx wrote: "*The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it*" (Marx, 1845 as cited in Parker & Spears, 1996). Thus, it is important for psychology to commit to activism and to furthering justice. A commitment to activism and applications also characterises this critical realist approach. For example, Potter and Wetherell (1987, p. 174) address the importance of producing applications in social science research:

"We feel that researchers should pay considerably more attention to the practical use of their work over and above the amassing of research findings and the furtherance of careers...the image of a benign body of practitioners waiting to read the journals of pure scientists and put research findings into practice is heart-warming but unrealistic".

Here they also critique the presumption that practitioners and policy makers will read an author's tacked on recommendations at the bottom of their discussion section and implement them into policy. Such a presumption is unrealistic, they point out, and instead researchers must do more, reach out further, if their research is to have any real impact in the world.

Psychology can have a place in justice work. This can occur in three ways. First, psychology can be useful as a means to document one form of harm structures can have on people: that of psychological and mental distress (Parker & Spears, 1996). Secondly, it can be useful in showing how structures become internalized so that their influence is no longer recognized as external and the individual self-policies and self-governs (Bordo, 2003; Foucault, 1971). Third, it can be useful in exploring the psychological mechanisms needed for people to become conscious and mobilized against structures of injustices, in other words, by providing a theory of change or revolution (Parker & Spears, 1996).

I follow Bordo (2003) then, who refers to our current situation as a battleground of appearance tyranny, between powerful corporations and, for the most part, helpless people. I believe what is most pressing and most useful is to highlight the role of corporations in this tyranny. A consequence of this thesis therefore might be the extension of knowledge regarding body dissatisfaction etc., but this is not its primary aim. The goal, however ambitious, is to contribute to justice.

Aim: To be reflexive and transparent

Finally, reflexivity is also important in this thesis. This is so that arguments and research are continually presented in an open and transparent manner in which any inconsistencies and biases can be made explicit and subject to appraisal (International Centre for Critical Realism, n.d.). For multiple reasons, including to try and mitigate power inequalities, to expose one's own attempts at creating a unified truth, reflexivity and transparency of research is essential (Finlay & Gough, 2008). Feminist informed reflexivity advocates that the researcher's values are explicated and that the researcher, is held accountable for their work. In doing reflexivity, researchers must be careful to avoid wallowing or muting potential future criticism by superficially addressing it (Finlay & Gough, 2008; Gill, 1995).

Some have argued that theory should be made explicit in research (Berg, 2004; Walker, 2013). Although there are arguments against the use of theory in research (such as limiting a researcher's thinking about the data) if the researcher is reflective about the theory (and exposes their own stance as researcher) than the reader will decide about the theory's relevance (Finlay & Gough, 2008; Walker, 2013). It is important that researchers know the theory and why they are using that theory. The alternative is 'name dropping' of listing theorists in research to boost the company in which the author is kept, with superficial understanding of the actual theory and its relevance to the research (Trowler, 2012). In this next section I shall outline the theoretical influences from both sides of the polarized body dissatisfaction analysis.

THEORETICAL INFLUENCES

This thesis uses a Marxist framework (B. Cohen, 2013; Fraser, 1995; Marx & Engels, 1998; Parker, 2009) informed by feminism, and intersectionality (Bordo, 2003; Crenshaw, 1991; Gill, 1995, 2007a). Parker and Spears (1996; pg. 2) detail this understanding of Marxism and how it can underpin social science research in their book *Psychology and Society: Radical Theory and Practice*:

"We see Marxism as a theoretical research program and political movement devoted to comprehending the historical development and dynamics of society through an attention to underlying structures of economic exploitation, and to revolutionising social relations through the praxis of the oppressed and their allies. While the central category is that of class the architecture of capitalist society in the over industrialized world...."

Are also locked into place by structures of patriarchal and racist domination”.

The authors regard capitalism as an injustice itself, but also as underpinning other injustices. In this way they acknowledges intersectionality by integrating the parallel injustices of sexism and racism in their analysis of injustices (Crenshaw, 1991). These injustices include sexism, racism and other intersecting forces (Parker & Spears, 1996). This thesis is also influenced by critical health psychologists who take an emancipatory approach to their view on health issues, including body dissatisfaction (B. Cohen, 2013; Levine & Piran, 2004; M. Murray, 2012; Rice, 2014).

METHODOLOGY: HOW CAN WE GATHER KNOWLEDGE/UNDERSTAND REALITY?

It is important to be explicit about one's view of the world (ontology), and one's view of what can be known about it (epistemology) in order to choose an appropriate methodology. Not only for this reason, but as others have pointed out, because this will also influence the theories and political applications that can be made from the research (Fleetwood, 2005).

Qualitative research was said to be borne out of specific crises of confidence with quantitative social science research. Specifically, those in the social sciences were concerned with three key issues. First, that research failed to allow people to speak for themselves (Toffler, 1981). Second, that research decontextualizes individual behaviours from society. Finally and relatedly, that research trivialised complex human experiences to numbers by using ever more specific and differentiated quantitative scales. As Toffler (1984, p. 141) summarized this last point:

“Obsessive emphasis on quantified detail without context, on progressively finer and finer measurement of smaller and smaller problems, leaves us knowing more and more about less and less”.

Although these crises concerns are legitimate, it could be argued that much of present qualitative research in social sciences do not solve them. I shall address each crisis in order. First, it is not clear how much qualitative researchers allow participants to speak when participant's voices may be presented only in highly edited, short quotes in inaccessible and fee-paying journals. Although there is an increasing trend of community and participatory research that focuses on elevating participant's voices and empowering them to mobilize (e.g., Fine, 2012; 2014),

which does admirably address this crisis, it remains only a small part of qualitative research.

Second, some qualitative research still strips individual behaviours away from society through their framing of the individual as agentic and collusion with neoliberalism that individual's choices are not constrained (Bordo, 2003; Gill, 2007a). For example, Gill and Bordo both discussed examples of qualitative research that uncritically presents women's decision to wear a G-string and to take up cosmetic surgery as mere expressions of the woman's individual preference for clothing and appearance. Such a neoliberal and postfeminist approach erases the society that dictates women should be (hetero)sexually available at all times and conform to corporate appearance ideals.

Finally and related to the above, it is not clear if qualitative research does present human behaviour in all its complexity. Specifically, researchers have been criticized for shoehorning their particular form of research specialism over and above their participant's experiences (M. Murray & Poland, 2006; Stephens, 2013). Criticisms have been particularly strong in cases where participants have concerns more pressing than any issue the researcher specializes in. An example was provided by Bordo (2003), who criticized social science embodiment researchers for ignoring the materiality of the body and focusing on only the discursive constructions of appearance. But, she reminded us, there is a material body and this does have a hold on people. Elliott (2007, as cited in Madill & Gough, 2008) criticized the undue attachment of researchers to highly specific procedural or analytical steps in order to brand their research different (and by implication superior) to other forms of qualitative methods. In addition, qualitative researchers often use highly inaccessible language and theory that is oblique not only to those outside of academia but those untrained in the nuances of that specific research style (Bordo, 2003). The result is that the human experience that may have been so faithfully recorded is transformed into the inaccessible.

The point here is not to assert that qualitative research cannot be a meaningful and rich endeavour in social science research. Nor that it does not improve upon and compliment quantitative research in myriad ways. The point is that having a commitment exclusively to qualitative research (or to one form of

qualitative method per se) is not tantamount to resolving these crises or, more importantly, furthering justice.

These issues relate to the silo problem of social science research, including qualitative research (Crabb, 2013; Madill & Gough, 2008). This is where researchers rarely cross over fields or even corridors to collaborate and share knowledge. This occurs even when researchers are doing the same topic, on the same population and at similar times. The wheel is continually reinvented and opportunities are often missed where researcher's projects have considerable overlap (and can share best practice/collaborate; Crabb, 2013). Some argue further that precisely this silo issue continues psychology's complicity with the status quo. Specifically Parker and Spears (1996, p. 4) argued:

"Divide and rule is maintained in psychology by conceptual splits, dualisms and through the specification of discrete and competing domains. The very distinctions between the expressive and the practical order (Harre), the natural and the social (Bhaskar), and epistemology and ontology arguably serve to preserve the Kantian notion of 'two worlds' driving a wedge between the unity of theory and practice".

Here Parker and Spears argued that the divided nature of psychology allows efforts and resources to go towards shoring up research differences, to further justifying why a certain research stance is the right one instead of justice. They further elaborate:

"The question is how we change the world and how we change the psychology that reproduces it as it is now.... We want to prevent the different forms of psychology from coexisting with one another and to force into the open the contradictions within psychology" (Parker & Spears, 1996, p. 14)

The point of social science research, as I see it, is to further justice. This is an overriding goal that should be at the forefront of social science's work. Given the divisions within methodology in psychology and beyond, and that an exclusive commitment to one form of qualitative research does not necessarily mean justice will be pursued or quantitative crises resolved, this thesis takes a pluralistic approach to methodology. As Madill and Gough (2008) pointed out, the researcher's silo is also influenced by the belief that a paradigm is an exclusive worldview that cannot be bridged between researchers. In contrast, a paradigm defined as researchers having shared beliefs that conform to a particular set of values (i.e., utilitarianism; Madill & Gough, 2008) is adopted in this thesis. This allows for the selection of varied methods and cross-collaboration, with the value

being specifically the pursuit of furthering justice. This utilitarian approach can also allow for researchers to come together to discuss and unite their efforts, eventually it is hoped in the pursuit of justice: As Guba and Lincoln wrote:

"A resolution of paradigm differences can occur only when a new paradigm emerges that is more informed and sophisticated than any existing one. That is most likely to occur if and when proponents of these several points of view come together to discuss their differences, not to argue the sanctity of their views. Continuing dialogue among paradigm proponents of all stripes will afford the best avenue for moving toward a responsive and congenial relationship" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 116).

Such an approach also carries the significant advantage of one method informing, elaborating upon and improving another (Greene, 2007). This is a strength of mixed methods research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). For example, a quantitative evaluation of a service or intervention can be expanded upon by qualitative research. However, no particular methodological leaning drove the selection of methods in this thesis, rather each method was selected on the basis of what was appropriate for the specific research question.

CHAPTER SUMMARY/ THESIS OVERVIEW

As stated previously, the aims of this thesis are to avoid the continual individualization of body dissatisfaction, to further justice (in however small a way), and to be reflexive about my approach and positioning in the research. Each aim is interlinked and builds upon the other. To individualize a cultural problem is to further mask an injustice, to undo an injustice one must identify its origins. To fail to be reflexive and transparent allows for none of the scrutiny that is applied to other's work. These aims follow a tradition of work by mostly feminist and critical realist researchers. It is concerned with men's body dissatisfaction, one form of injustice.

The current chapter (Chapter 1) has outlined the critical realist approach to the topic of men's body dissatisfaction taken, as well as its origins from the mainstream and critical approaches to body dissatisfaction. It has clarified the goal of the thesis is to highlight the culpability of culture by focusing on one specific form of injury caused to people; namely male body dissatisfaction. The next chapter is concerned with work that has sought to undo body dissatisfaction. Specifically, Chapter 2 reviews existing interventions to reduce men's body dissatisfaction. One particularly promising intervention, *The Body Project*, it is

noted, has amassed widespread evidence of its usefulness among women and girls and more recently, gay men. Therefore the first two studies of this thesis comprised the implementation of an adapted form of this intervention for men (named: *Body Project M*). The next chapter, Chapter 3, provides the quantitative evaluation, at pre-, post- and 3-month follow up of *Body Project M*, with a sample of 73 university men from two UK universities (Study 1). Chapter 4 provides a thematic analysis of the discussions that occurred during the intervention (Study 2).

Chapter 5 contextualize the two evaluations by offering a context in which body dissatisfaction is individualized and outlining the need to focus on the role of culture in body dissatisfaction. Chapter 6 and 7 provides the method and results of two detailed content analyses of gay and straight men's UK media, as proxies for culture (Studies 3 and 4). Chapter 8 provides a fuller discussion of these two studies, noting that media does not itself drive body dissatisfaction. Chapter 9 details how specifically capitalism is a system that promotes the corporate appearance ideal which in turn drives body dissatisfaction and how its presence evades body dissatisfaction researcher's gaze. Finally, Chapter 10 offers a summative discussion of the thesis

CHAPTER 2:

MEN'S BODY DISSATISFACTION INTERVENTIONS

INTRODUCTION

The problem of men's body dissatisfaction

Men's body dissatisfaction is now so prevalent it is normative (Tantleff-Dunn, Barnes, & Jessica, 2011; Tiggemann et al., 2008a). A survey assessing body fat dissatisfaction, muscularity or dissatisfaction with other specific aspects of appearance (e.g., height) will find at least 35% of male respondents reporting dissatisfaction (e.g., Mellor, Fuller-Tyszkiewicz, McCabe, & Ricciardelli, 2010; Liossi, 2003). Broader assessments of body dissatisfaction that do not just focus on one single aspect of appearance but assess any dissatisfaction whether regarding the face, skin, head hair amount, all or neither, have found up to 95% of men report dissatisfaction (Jankowski & Diedrichs, 2011a). As mentioned already, body dissatisfaction is never benign, it is always a problem. This is not only because of the well-established evidence showing body dissatisfaction can lead to clinical health disorders such as depression (Olivardia, Pope, Borowiecki, & Cohane, 2004) eating disorders (Pope, Phillips, & Olivardia, 2000) and muscle dysmorphia (Kanayama, Barry, Hudson, & Pope, 2006) among others, but also because of its more insidious and less recognized impact on wellbeing and day to day life. Such impacts can be seen through men avoiding social situations where the body is undressed (e.g., swimming), or avoiding sexual intimacy with partners, or keeping a low profile in school so as not to draw further attention to their appearances etc. (Frith & Gleeson, 2004; Bordo, 1999; Pope Jr. et al., 2000; see also Chapter 5). It is important men with body dissatisfaction receive support for this.

Support to reduce men's body dissatisfaction

Support has come in the form of psychological interventions or programmes designed to reduce body dissatisfaction. Reviews of these interventions, suggest some can be effective though few are designed for or include men. For example, Yager and O'Dea (2008) reviewed 27 such interventions, one of which included men (Rabak-Wagener, Eickhoff-Shemek, & Kelly-Vance, 1998). In this study, 44 women and 16 men, from a US university enrolled in health studies courses, took

part in four weekly 90-minute sessions of psychoeducational and media literacy content. There were no improvements in body dissatisfaction among men who received the intervention relative to controls, with Rabak and colleagues suggesting that this was likely due to the intervention being designed specifically for women. Other reviews of these interventions have made similar conclusions. For example, Jarry and Ip (2005) conducted a meta-analysis of 19 studies that evaluated stand-alone cognitive-behaviour therapy interventions designed to improve body dissatisfaction among non-clinical and clinical samples. All of the interventions significantly improved women's body dissatisfaction with medium-large effect sizes sustained at between seven weeks to 12 months follow-up. However, it was unclear if these interventions were effective among men due to small male sample sizes. Specifically, only four studies included men, with a total of 22 men recruited across the studies which prohibited moderator analyses by gender (Cash & Hrabosky, 2003; Strachan & Cash, 2002; Veale et al., 1996; E. M. Ramirez & Rosen, 2001)². With such small sample sizes it is understandable that no moderator analysis on sex was conducted by the authors.

Some reviews have explored whether interventions are effective among males (boys and men) specifically. For example, Stice and Shaw (2004) reviewed 38 eating disorder and body dissatisfaction interventions. Eighteen of these interventions were with or included males. Three interventions improved male participant's body dissatisfaction immediately after the intervention (post) but not later (follow up; O'Dea & Abraham, 2000; Richman, 1993, 1998). Indeed, the authors found among those interventions that improved body dissatisfaction among males and women, the effect size representing the improvements dropped from medium sized (mean $r = .15$) to small (mean $r = .05$; Cohen, 1988) when males were included. One later review was conducted by Yager, Diedrichs, Ricciardelli, and Halliwell (2013). The authors conducted a rigorous meta-analysis of 16 school based body dissatisfaction interventions, seven of which included or were with boys. The authors found that 5 of the programmes were effective at improving body dissatisfaction/body dissatisfaction at post-test with two carrying

² Two interventions reviewed are unpublished and inaccessible dissertations so it is unclear whether these included men in their study or not (Lavalle, 1998; Pecok, 1990). Both authors have been contacted as of 27th September 2013 for clarification though no response has been received.

through these benefits to 3 and 6 month follow up respectively (*Dove BodyThink*, Richardson, Paxton, & Thomson, 2009; *MediaSmart*, Wilksch & Wade, 2009).

Since these reviews single studies have been published exploring interventions' effectiveness at improving men's body dissatisfaction. In one intervention designed specifically for adult men, Henderson (2012) evaluated the delivery of a single 90-minute intervention designed for and delivered to adult men. In an unpublished dissertation, Henderson found post-intervention improvements relative to a control group in media scepticism, ideal-body internalization, muscularity dissatisfaction, self-objectification, depression, anxiety and stress in a sample of 121 US male students aged 17-27 years. However, due to a lack of follow-up data it is unclear whether these improvements lasted beyond the immediate effects of the intervention. Other single interventions on men have also been affected by similar problems including a lack of follow up (Shepherd, 2012; Yager & O'Dea, 2010) too few male participants to conduct gender-separate evaluations (e.g., n= 6; McVey et al., 2010) or failing to assess the intervention efficacy at all (Feldman, Torino, & Swift, 2011).

To date then the evidence for the effectiveness of intervention in reducing men's body dissatisfaction is limited. Early assessments of this evidence did not analyse whether improvements from the intervention were effective in men perhaps because of small numbers of men participating or because the intervention were designed originally for women. Indeed of those that did analyse whether men specifically as a group improved in the intervention few have demonstrated sustained improvements beyond the immediacy of the intervention. Of exception are two interventions outlined by Yager et al. (2013). Specifically, Richardson et al. (2009) took 150 Australian school boys ($M=12.75$, $SD = 0.47$ years) through a psychoeducational and media literacy based intervention consisting of four 50-minute sessions. They found that the boys reported significantly improved body dissatisfaction immediately after taking part in the *Dove BodyThink* intervention as well as at three months follow up. Wilksch and Wade (2009) took 267 Australian school boys ($M=13.62$, $SD = 0.37$ years) through the intervention, *Media Smart*, an 8-session 50 minute intervention involving media literacy activities. They found that boys reported significantly improved body dissatisfaction and restrained eating immediately after taking part

in the intervention. The improvement in body dissatisfaction and weight- and shape- concern was also seen at six month follow up (Fairburn & Cooper, 1993).

The *Media Smart* intervention focussed on media literacy, the *Dove Body Think* intervention included content on self-esteem, body acceptance, peer sociocultural skills as well as some media literacy content (Yager et al., 2013). The review authors concluded that *Media Smart* was the most promising intervention “as it was the only program to report significant improvements in body dissatisfaction at post-test that were sustained at 6-month follow up” (pg. 278). It should be noted, however, that the *Dove Body Think* intervention did only assess improvements in body dissatisfaction at 3 month post intervention meaning it is unclear whether improvements would have been sustained at 6 months. In addition, the improvement in body dissatisfaction that boys reported in the *Dove Body Think* intervention resulted in an effect size ($d = .48$) that was actually larger than those of *Media Smart* ($d = .21 - .25$). Regardless, these studies provide early evidence that psychological interventions can be effective at reducing men’s body dissatisfaction.

As mentioned, interventions to reduce body dissatisfaction have been developed and designed primarily for women (Levine & Smolak, 2006; Stice, Becker, & Yokum, 2013). This is understandable given women face greater appearance pressures, and have reported normative body dissatisfaction for much longer, than men (Buote, Wilson, Strahan, Gazzola, & Papps, 2011; Rumsey, 2008). Reviews of this evidence have produced principles that help make an intervention effective. For example, in terms of design these reviews demonstrate that single-session, didactic interventions are less likely to be effective than multi-session and interactive interventions (S. Blake, 2008; Levine & Smolak, 2006; Stice et al., 2013). In addition, interventions that adopt a community participatory research model, where participants are treated more as collaborators than participants, are more likely to be effective (S. Blake, 2008; Levine & Smolak, 2006; Neumark-Sztainer et al., 2006; Stice et al., 2013). Specifically, fostering group cohesion, tailoring interventions to participant’s lives and increasing participant ownership of the intervention are predicted to increase intervention efficacy.

In terms of content, reviews of this evidence have shown that when interventions only include psychoeducational content these are less likely to be

effective (Stice, Shaw, & Marti, 2007; Yager & O'Dea, 2008, 2010). For example, only two of the effective interventions in the Yager et al. (2013) review included information relating to body dissatisfaction or eating disorders (i.e., psychoeducational). Prevention experts have argued that such content is ineffective as older participants are literate in these issues already and scare tactics to warn participants off disordered eating or taking steroids may inadvertently end up glamorizing these behaviours. Otherwise interventions premised on cognitive behavioural therapy (Jarry & Ip, 2005), media literacy interventions (Yager et al., 2013; Yager & O'Dea, 2008), and cognitive dissonance all have shown promise in reducing body dissatisfaction (Stice, Shaw, et al., 2007; Yager & O'Dea, 2008). Indeed, researchers have argued for dismantling studies to assess what specific intervention content reduces body dissatisfaction (Neumark-Sztainer et al., 2006; Yager et al., 2013). One dismantling study was conducted by Wade, George, and Atkinson (2009). The researchers conducted a dismantling study analysing the effects of specific intervention components on women's body dissatisfaction. Specifically, they compared interventions using cognitive dissonance, mindfulness, and distraction techniques against two control conditions: a rumination condition (a condition that attempted to replicate the usual response of experiencing body dissatisfaction) and a wait-list control. The authors found that all of the interventions were effective at reducing women's state body dissatisfaction, concluding that further research was needed to explain why each was effective.

One intervention that conforms to these recommendations of effective intervention design and content is *The Body Project* (Stice & Presnell, 2007). Over time *The Body Project* has had various iterations. It began as *The Body Project*, later became *Reflections*, when it was disseminated using sororities in the US, and then became *Succeed* when it moved to the UK. Since then it has also been developed for gay men as *PRIDE: Body dissatisfaction Program®*. *The Body Project* combines cognitive dissonance activities with some media literacy content, and also is delivered in peer settings with some of its content being chosen by participants themselves. In this sense it begins to align with the collaborative principle mentioned previously. Based upon Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Festinger, 1957) the intervention is premised upon the idea that arguing against appearance ideals will induce dissonance or discomfort. This dissonance is hoped

to lead to a reduction in the internalization of appearance ideals and subsequently body dissatisfaction and its impact. The intervention uses written, verbal and behavioural exercises, as well as its public setting in order to foster as much dissonance (critique of the ideal) as possible.

The Body Project (Stice & Presnell, 2007) has a number of strengths. First is that it is highly disseminable. It became disseminable in 2005 when Carolyn Becker and her students ran a version of the intervention, *Reflections*, with 24 women. When Becker and colleagues asked the participants what they thought of the intervention they said “*make it bigger. Let our sorority run it*” (Becker, 2010). At this stage Becker had no grant money and no resources to run the intervention herself. Therefore Becker and Stice (2011) decided to adapt the intervention so it could be delivered by peers (members of sororities themselves). They made the script as accessible as possible and minimized the resources it required (a room, the script etc.).

Secondly, the intervention design is flexible enough to allow for adaptations. For example, studies have shown its delivery length and who it is delivered by can be changed without compromising its effectiveness (Halliwell & Diedrichs, 2013; Stice et al., 2013). This is important as Levine and Smolak (2006) point out, the rigorous implementation of a script or theory in prevention can lead to researchers ignoring other more meaningful outcomes and processes salient to participant’s lives. For example, Levine and Smolak (2006) have noted how many eating disorder prevention programmes deriving from biomedical models of health fail to take into account the deeply gendered nature of body dissatisfaction and eating disorders. Theoretically, at least, participants can discuss and critique this during *The Body Project*.

Thirdly, *The Body Project* is unique among interventions for the size of its evidence base. Specifically, to date at least six independent research teams have confirmed its effectiveness among women (ORI Body Acceptance Project, 2015). Indeed in Stice and colleagues’ (Stice, Shaw, et al., 2007) meta-analysis, the author found that interventions based on cognitive dissonance “*are the most effective targeted interventions to date for girls aged 14 and above*”. This has spanned different samples as well including among clinical samples of US women with eating disorders (Stice, Marti, Spoor, Presnell, & Shaw, 2008; Stice, Presnell, Gau, & Shaw, 2007), among US female athletic students (Becker, McDaniel, Bull,

Powell, & McIntyre, 2012), among universal samples of US women and girls (Matusek, Wendt, & Wiseman, 2004; Stice et al., 2008; Stice, Presnell, et al., 2007), among Australian female students (Cruwys, Haslam, Fox, & McMahon, 2015) and more recently in UK university women and adolescent girls (Halliwell & Diedrichs, 2013; Halliwell, Jarman, McNamara, Risdon, & Jankowski, 2015).

These effects have been shown to be sustained at long term follow up including after 6-8 months (Becker, Hill, Greif, Han, & Stewart, 2013; Stice et al., 2008), 1 year (Stice et al., 2008; Stice, Rohde, Butryn, Shaw, & Marti, 2015), 2 years (Stice et al., 2008, 2015) and even 3 years (Stice et al., 2008, 2015). For example, in the latest published trial Eric Stice and colleagues (2015) found that 203 US university women (M age = 21.6, SD = 5.6) who were randomized into the intervention reported significantly less body dissatisfaction, thin ideal internalization, eating disorder onset and negative affect compared to controls immediately after and 1-, 2- and 3- years after the intervention (n = 205). On average the effect size was d = 0.32 which is clinically meaningful.

The intervention has also shown promise among men. In its first adaptation, Feldman et al. (2011) and colleagues conducted an extended form of *The Body Project* with gay and bisexual men living with HIV. The authors rationalized that HIV was intimately related to body dissatisfaction and disordered eating and therefore this group were in particular need of support. The intervention itself was adapted superficially, changing the thin ideal to the muscular/lean ideal along with some cultural references and pronoun changes. In addition, other sessions surrounding the intervention were created that focused on nutrition, media literacy, HIV treatment adherence, and food security issues. Unfortunately no evaluation of the intervention has been reported³. A. L. Ramirez, Perez, and Taylor (2012) also adapted *The Body Project* into a 2-hour, 2-session intervention to be used on heterosexual couples. The intervention content was adapted to critique both the mesomorphic and thin appearance ideals and also included content relating to partner's impact on body dissatisfaction and food distress. One hundred and thirteen couples (M = 19.14 years SD = 1.32) took part in the intervention alone with the facilitator. Although the authors found significant reductions in body

³ The first author was contacted in June 2015 to request evaluation information but no reply has been received as of yet.

dissatisfaction, thin ideal internalization, disordered eating and negative affect over time compared to a control group, the authors did not assess these changes among men specifically. This was because it was recognized that the measures used in the study tapped into weight and shape concerns which have been criticized for obscuring men's drive to lose body fat at the same time as gaining muscle. More recently, Brown and Keel (2015) conducted a pilot controlled trial to evaluate a version of *The Body Project* specifically designed for US gay male undergraduate students (*PRIDE: Body dissatisfaction Program®*). In *PRIDE: Body dissatisfaction Program®*, participants critiqued the mesomorphic appearance ideal for men, used different pronouns, and focused on LGBT specific appearance pressures. Forty-seven gay men took part in the intervention condition and 40 in the control condition. Participants reported reductions in appearance-ideal internalization, body dissatisfaction, self-objectification, romantic partner-objectification, dietary restraint, and bulimic symptoms immediately after the intervention compared to a control group. With the exception of ideal internalization, these improvements were maintained at 1-month follow up. In addition, participants rated the intervention as highly acceptable ($M=6.18$ on a 1-7 scale) and attrition was low (86%). This study provides the first preliminary evidence to suggest that cognitive dissonance based body dissatisfaction interventions may also be effective in improving body dissatisfaction among gay men.

AN ADAPTED INTERVENTION, BODY PROJECT M, TO REDUCE MEN'S BODY DISSATISFACTION: STUDIES 1 AND 2

To sum then *The Body Project* is currently the intervention for reducing body dissatisfaction that has the most robust evidence supporting its effectiveness. Although the great majority of this evidence is with women, with whom it has been tested, there is preliminary evidence it can also be useful for men (Brown & Keel, 2015). Though more research is needed to confirm this and it is not yet clear whether the intervention can be used successfully with men regardless of their sexuality. Given the intervention's potential for dissemination, its flexibility and its content and design mean it is a promising intervention to be used with men. The current study aimed to assess how acceptable and effective an adapted version of *The Body Project* (i.e., *Body Project M*) intervention was with young men, a group

particularly at risk of body dissatisfaction. Specifically, it was hypothesised that relative to a control group, men who received *Body Project M* would report reductions in body dissatisfaction and related outcomes (these are detailed below).

METHOD

Materials

Intervention overview.

The manualised cognitive dissonance body dissatisfaction intervention, *Body Project M*, consisted of two 90-minute sessions. See Table 1 for an outline of the intervention content. The intervention manual was an adaptation of *The Succeed Body dissatisfaction Programme* (Becker & Stice, 2011), the UK version of the cognitive dissonance body dissatisfaction program: *The Body Project*. The manual was adapted by the first author after approval from the original program authors, Carolyn Becker and Eric Stice. The second and last author provided consultation during the adaptation process, each of whom have extensive experience in delivering, and training facilitators in the delivery of, *The Succeed Body dissatisfaction Programme* to undergraduate women in the UK. Tiffany Brown, who had recently piloted *PRIDE: Body dissatisfaction Program®* with US gay men also provided comment on the adapted manual, as did Zali Yager, an expert in education and body dissatisfaction interventions among undergraduate students.

To see the full script see Appendix E.

Table 1. *Summary of Body Project M content*

Session	Content
1	<p>Introduction to the program and icebreaker exercise.</p> <p>Defining the appearance ideal, and exploring its origins and costs.</p> <p>Identifying appearance pressures and those who benefit from promoting the appearance ideal.</p> <p>Setting homework exercises (mirror exercise, writing a letter critiquing the appearance ideal, and a body dissatisfaction behavioural challenge).</p>
2	<p>Review of homework exercises.</p> <p>Role-plays to practice resisting pressures to pursue the appearance ideal.</p> <p>Challenging body talk (e.g., “I need big arms”)</p> <p>Resisting future appearance pressures through quick comeback statements.</p>

Adaptations to Body Project M.

Adaptations to the original intervention manual included reducing the length of the intervention and adapting the content to be more relevant to men. Specifically, due to university timetabling constraints, the intervention was reduced from two 2-hour sessions to two 90-minute sessions by omitting some activities entirely (e.g., *voluntary commitment, verbal challenges*) and shortening others (e.g., *ice breaker, costs of the appearance ideal, and role plays*). It was also believed that a shorter intervention would reduce participant attrition, this follows Halliwell and Diedrichs (2013).

The intervention was adapted to be suitable for a male sample. First, critique centred upon the entire 'male corporate appearance ideal' as defined by participants in the first session, instead of the 'thin-ideal' (i.e., the dominant standard for female beauty challenged in *The Body Project* and *The Succeed Body dissatisfaction Programme*). Specifically, the script referred to the corporate appearance ideal and later encouraged a name that did not imply the ideal only consisted of one or two particular appearance aspect (e.g., muscularity or thinness) but rather that appearance in its entirety (e.g., full head of hair, youthfulness etc. in addition to muscularity and leanness). In addition, in the *Behavioural Challenge Exercise* participants were given gender neutral or male-oriented examples of behaviours they could change: '*avoiding the heavy weights section at the gym because more muscular guys are present*', '*feeling unable to go outside without gel in your hair*' etc.

As per other adaptations for men of *The Body Project* (e.g., Brown & Keel, 2015), the script's pronouns were also adapted for men. Culturally male scenarios were also used. More prompts were incorporated owing to men's perceived reluctance to discuss the intervention's content. Specifically, the worksheet designed for the Costs Exercises listed different categories each cost could come under so as to prompt participants (e.g., "*psychological, physical, academic*" etc.). Finally, the *Verbal Challenge* exercise was dropped as it was felt men may not immediately admit to criticising their and other's appearances and that having to say a public challenge in the beginning of the intervention in front of others could be too embarrassing.

Unlike the sororities and schools where *The Body Project* has traditionally been disseminated, participants who took part in this intervention were not necessarily part of a pre-formed group. Although many were enrolled on the same undergraduate psychology degree, they were not necessarily friends and many had only known each for approximately one month before taking part in the intervention. Therefore phrases such as “*What can we do as a community for body activism?*” were removed from the manual. Some phrases in the script were felt to be somewhat patronising or inappropriate. Phrases such as “*Does everyone understand what we are asking you to do between sessions?*” were changed to “*Is everyone okay about what we are doing next?*” etc. The *PRIDE: Body dissatisfaction Program®* script included a *Quick Comeback Exercise*. This involved participants being asked to provide comebacks to facilitator statements that endorsed the corporate appearance ideal in a rapid fire round. This exercise was incorporated into the intervention. In addition, the *Voluntary Commitment Exercise*, where people have to say a reason why they think it would be a good idea to participate, was not included in the intervention. It was felt this was difficult for the participant to say without having had some experience of the intervention first hand and because making this mandatory went against the ethical guidelines of the study (i.e., was coercive). Instead the facilitator just asked that participants kept an open mind during the intervention.

Pilot

Key activities from *Body Project M* were piloted with three men (separate from the sample who took part in the main trial) who the first author worked with in a single 90-minute session. The participants were told that the aim of their session was to assess the acceptability and relevance of the intervention materials, and they were asked to give constructive and honest feedback. Generally, the activities were considered acceptable to these men, though there was some general concern about whether or not men experience body dissatisfaction. At participants’ request, the language of some phrases of the manual were simplified or changed. Finally, participants from the pilot encouraged the facilitator to be more confident in delivering the intervention.

Participants

The final sample consisted of 73 men, aged 18-45years ($M = 21.02$, $SD = 5.21$; see Figure 1 for a detailed breakdown of participant flow throughout the study). The majority of men identified as heterosexual $n = 68$ (93.2%). Few identified as sexual minorities (e.g., gay, bisexual; $n = 5$, 6.9%). Most participants were also British $n = 70$ (95.9%) and white $n = 61$ (83.6%). Few were racialized (i.e., reported their ethnicity as other than white including Chinese, Indian, Nigerian, Mixed race etc.; $n = 12$, 16.4%).

Procedure for intervention group

Forty-five participants took part in the intervention condition across twelve groups. Each group had between two and seven men in them. Thirty-seven of the participants were enrolled in a module in a Southern England university in which their learning objective was to experience a health psychology intervention. Participants were offered the opportunity to participate in this intervention as well as the alternative of equivalent and independent work. Participants were made aware that choosing not to take part had no implications for course marks. The remaining eight participants in the intervention were recruited via posters (see Appendix A), emails and shout outs advertising the study in a Northern England university. Effectively, the sample was universal in that participants took part not because they were particularly at risk of body dissatisfaction, but rather in order to gain pool credits or as a learning outcome.

The invitations included either a link to the participant information sheet (posters) or the sheet itself (via emails) to take part in the study as well as consent forms and a questionnaire to complete. Once completed, participants were given the venue and time details to attend the intervention session in the following two weeks. Participants were greeted upon arrival at the class and asked to take a seat in the room with the chairs being arranged in a semi-circle format.

Participants were asked if they were comfortable being recorded and if so the recorder was switched on. After a brief outline to the intervention, the facilitator introduced themselves and the intervention began. After the second session ended participants were handed out paper versions of the questionnaire and asked to complete them. Participants were then thanked for their time, debriefed and left the session. Finally, participants received the final questionnaire via email

to complete three months after the second session online via *Qualtrics*. Ethics approval for this research was granted by ethics committees at Leeds Beckett University and the University of the West of England (see Appendix B).

Procedure for control group

Fifty-three participants completed questionnaires in the control condition at the same time and in the same sequence as the intervention participants. As with the intervention group, questionnaires at pre- and post- were paper based with the final questionnaire emailed out to participants and on *Qualtrics*. Participants were recruited via lecture shout outs, emails and social networking posts at both universities. Thirty of these participants were from the University of the West of England enrolled in a joint psychology and criminology undergraduate degree course. The remaining twenty three were from Leeds Beckett University. Participants were granted pool credits for participating.

Measures

Measures selected for evaluation were based on a number of considerations. First, whether the measures had been used previously in other intervention evaluations (e.g., Halliwell & Diedrichs, 2013; Henderson, 2012), on other adult male samples (Tylka & Andorka, 2012) and cohered with the Tripartite Influence model, the most prominent *Sociocultural Theory* in body dissatisfaction research (Fallon, 1990; Tylka & Andorka, 2012) in order to allow for cross-comparisons and to increase relevancy with similar research of the data. Second, how well established the validity of the measure was. Third, how accessible and time-consuming each measure took to complete. Finally, how comprehensively measures assessed indicators of body dissatisfaction relevant to men (in the author's experience) as well body dissatisfaction's impact. Specifically, measures that assessed body fat and muscularity dissatisfaction were both included given these are both common aspects of body dissatisfaction for men and are frequently assessed in body dissatisfaction research (Rusticus, 2010; Tiggemann, Martins, & Churchett, 2008b) in addition to a measure that assessed body dissatisfaction (via low scores) without specifying a particular appearance aspect (Avalos, Tylka, & Wood-Barcalow, 2005). With regards to the impact of body dissatisfaction

measures behaviours linked to men's body dissatisfaction were included (i.e., disordered eating and supplement use) in addition to self-esteem.

Self-esteem. The Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (M. Rosenberg, 1965) was used to assess self-esteem. This measure asks participants to rate their agreement (0 = Strongly disagree, 3 = Strongly agree) with 10 statements (e.g., "*I feel that I have a number of good qualities*"). Validity and reliability of this measure is well established (Department of Sociology, University of Maryland, n.d.; M. Rosenberg, 1965). After appropriate reversal of four items, higher scores indicate more self-esteem (range: 0-30). In the current study internal consistency was good ($\alpha = .90$) as was test-retest reliability from pre to post ($r=.81, p = .00$) and post to follow up ($r=.86, p = .00$).

Body fat dissatisfaction. The Body Fat Dissatisfaction Subscale of the validated Male Body Attitudes Scale-Revised (MBAS-R; (Ryan, Morrison, Roddy, & McCutcheon, 2011). The MBAS-R is a three-sub scale, 15-item, measure that assesses men's body fat, height- and muscularity- dissatisfaction. In the current study only the body fat dissatisfaction subscale was used (5 items; e.g., "*I feel excessively fat*"). Responses are rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*rarely*) to 5 (*always*). Validity and reliability have been demonstrated on other samples including adult men (Ryan et al., 2011). Scores are averaged so that higher scores indicate greater levels of dissatisfaction (range: 1-5). In the current study, internal consistency for the body fat dissatisfaction subscale was good ($\alpha = .89$) as was test-retest reliability from pre to post ($r=.92, p = .00$) and post to follow up ($r=.86, p = .00$).

Body Appreciation. The Body Appreciation Scale (BAS; Avalos et al., 2005) is a validated 13-item measure that was used to assess an individual's appreciation and respect for their body and appearance. This measure was selected, as it does not ask about specific aspects of appearance, meaning participants' dissatisfaction that is not specific to muscularity and body fat can be captured. Example items include "*I respect my body*" and "*On the whole, I am satisfied with my body*" and responses are rated on a 5-point scale from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*). Items were averaged and higher scores indicated greater body appreciation. The validity and reliability of this measure has been established among men (Tylka, 2013; Tylka & Kroon Van Diest, 2013). In the current study,

internal consistency was good ($\alpha = .88$), as was test-retest reliability from pre to post ($r = .81, p = .00$) and post to follow up ($r = .86, p = .00$).

Muscularity Dissatisfaction. The muscularity dissatisfaction subscale of the Drive for Muscularity Scale (DMS; McCreary & Sasse, 2000) was used (7 items; e.g., “*I think that I would look better if I gained 10 pounds in bulk*”). After appropriate reversal of some items, higher scores indicated greater muscularity dissatisfaction (range: 1-6). Validity and reliability of the DMS has been established among university-aged men (McCreary, 2007; Tylka, 2011; Tylka, Bergeron, & Schwartz, 2005). In the current study, the internal consistency of the Drive for Muscularity hs subscale was acceptable ($\alpha = .93$), as was test-retest reliability from pre to post ($r = .87, p = .00$) and post to follow up ($r = .87, p = .00$).

Muscularity Behaviours. The Engagement in Muscularity Enhancing Behaviours subscale of the DMS was also included (8 items; e.g., “*I lift weights to build up muscle*”). As mentioned, validity and reliability of the full DMS has been established among university-aged men (McCreary, 2007; Tylka, 2011; Tylka et al., 2005). After appropriate reversal of some items, higher scores indicated more engagement of muscularity enhancing behaviours (range: 1-6). In the current study, the internal consistency was good ($\alpha = .89$), as was test-retest reliability from pre to post ($r = .81, p = .00$) and post to follow up ($r = .78, p = .00$).

Eating Pathology. Twelve items from the Eating Disorders Examination-Questionnaire (Fairburn & Beglin, 1994) were administered to assess eating pathology. The 12 items relate to weight and shape dissatisfaction and bulimic behaviours: (e.g., “*Over the past 28 days, how many times have you made yourself sick (vomit) as a means of controlling your shape or weight?*”). Higher scores indicate greater eating pathology (range: 0-72). Validity and reliability of these 12 items specifically has been reported previously among women (Becker, Diedrichs, Jankowski, & Werchan, 2013) and the full scale has demonstrated validity among undergraduate men (Lavender, De Young, & Anderson, 2010). In the current study internal consistency was good ($\alpha = .83$), as was test-retest reliability from pre to post ($r = .90, p = .00$) and post to follow up ($r = .79, p = .00$).

Appearance Comparisons. The Physical Appearance Comparison Scale (PACS; Thompson, Heinberg, & Tantleff, 1991) is a 5-item measure (e.g., “*At parties or other social events, I compare how I am dressed to how other people are dressed*”) that was used to assess participants’ tendency to compare their

physical appearance to others. After reverse scoring of one item, scores are averaged with higher scores indicating a greater tendency to compare (range: 1-5). Validity and reliability of this measure has also been established among university-aged men (Tylka & Andorka, 2012; Tylka et al., 2005). In the current study internal consistency was good ($\alpha = .72$), as was test-retest reliability from pre to post ($r = .78, p = .00$) and post to follow up ($r = .84, p = .00$).

Internalization of corporate appearance ideals. The Mesomorphic Ideal Subscale of the Sociocultural Attitudes Toward Appearance Questionnaire-Male (Thompson, Heinberg, Altabe, & Tantleff-Dunn, 1999) was administered to assess the extent to which participants internalize current corporate appearance ideals for men. It consists of 11-items, (e.g., “*Music videos that show men who are in good physical shape make me wish I were in better physical shape*” and “*I believe that clothes look better on men who are in good physical shape*”). However, as recommended by Tylka (personal communication, 21ST November, 2013) and done previously (Tylka & Andorka, 2012) four of the items were deleted as they overlapped conceptually with the PACS (Thompson et al., 1991; e.g., item 10: “*I often find myself comparing my physique to that of athletes pictured in magazines*”). After appropriate reversal of two items, scores are averaged with higher scores indicating greater internalization (range: 1-5). Note for 24 participants (recruited at the University of West of England) a printing error meant that item 6 was not included. Nonetheless, because both the full and the 6-item version of the scale was strongly correlated ($r = -.90$)⁴ the two subscales were collapsed in the analysis as per the recommendation of a researcher who had used this scale previously (Tylka, personal communication 19th November, 2013). In the current study, internal consistency was good ($\alpha = .82-.87$). In addition, the scale had adequate test-retest reliability from pre to post ($r = .81, p = .00$) and post to follow up ($r = .78, p = .00$).

Perceived Sociocultural Pressures. The Perceived Sociocultural Pressures to be Mesomorphic Scale (Stice, Ziemba, Margolis, & Flick, 1996; Tylka, 2011) was used to assess the degree to which participants feel pressured to lose body fat or gain muscle from friends, family members, peers and media.

⁴ This was calculated among the control group only so as to avoid changes in scores among participants due to having taken part in the intervention.

Participants answer how often they feel pressured on a response scale from 1 (never) to 5 (always). Scores are averaged with higher scores indicating greater perceived pressures (range: 1-5). In the current study internal consistency was good ($\alpha = .82$). Test-retest reliability did not meet adequate criterion ($r = .70$) from pre to post ($r = .60, p = .00$) or post to follow up ($r = .56, p = .00$) and therefore this measure was removed from the analysis.

Participant Intervention Feedback

Two open-ended questions were included at the start of the post-intervention questionnaires for intervention participants to obtain their feedback on taking part in the intervention. These included “*Was the intervention useful? Please explain why/why not?*” and “*Is there anything about the intervention you think could be improved?*”. To see an example questionnaire see Appendix C.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has outlined the need for an intervention that reduces men's body dissatisfaction. A review of the current interventions have been provided outlining why *The Body Project* was selected for adaptation (i.e., into *Body Project M*) and implementation among men in this research project. *The Body Project* adaptations have been outlined along with the method of its evaluation. Chapter 3 now presents the results of the quantitative evaluation component of this study.

CHAPTER 3:

STUDY 1: INTERVENTION QUANTITATIVE RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Purpose of analyses

Following on from Chapter 2, the purpose of the analyses was to advance the evidence-base for body dissatisfaction interventions among men by conducting a controlled pilot evaluation of an adapted version of *The Body Project* (i.e., *Body Project M*) among a sample of British undergraduate men, recruited irrespective of their sexuality. Specifically, this study sought to assess the efficaciousness of the intervention at immediate post-intervention and at three month follow-up. Based on previous research documenting the efficacy of *Body Project* interventions among women (Stice, 2008) and gay men (Brown & Keel, 2015), it was hypothesised that relative to a control group, men who received *Body Project M* would report reductions in body dissatisfaction, internalisation of corporate appearance ideals, eating pathology, appearance-based comparisons, and perceived sociocultural appearance pressures, and improvements in self-esteem.

Data screening

Excluded data and attrition

In total, 225 responses were registered on *Qualtrics* (77 responses were on paper questionnaires). Of these 225 responses 40 were outright excluded. This was because when participants opened the online questionnaire to view the information screen and consider participating, *Qualtrics* registered this as a response even though some participants did not go on to participate. In addition, response sets were excluded from analysis if they had more than 50% of missing data, as recommended by Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson and Tatham (2006).

Fifty eight completed response sets were further excluded from data analysis, thirteen because participants who had answered them were not eligible to be included in the study (e.g., because they were women; see Figure 1). The remaining 45 were ‘lost’ responses. Specifically, in order to ensure anonymity of the questionnaires participants were asked to construct a unique ID variable based

on their mother's maiden surname and the last two digits of their birth year. Although the instructions for each questionnaire were the same for each participant, many participants put different IDs on different questionnaires. Specifically, the remaining forty five responses either had not answered all three questionnaires or had answered all three questionnaires but had used different participant IDs between questionnaires so that it was impossible to match their responses across different timepoints. Although extensive analysis of available information from the questionnaires was conducted (e.g., to see if group numbers, demographics and handwriting would match) only two sets of these responses could be matched with certainty (see Appendix D).

Attrition of the remaining responses is noted in Figure 1. Of note is the attrition of 24 participants who attended session 1 of the intervention but not session 2 (35%). As detailed in Figure 1, twelve of these participants gave explicit reasons for not attending the 2nd session. The remaining twelve did not, but due to the success of the first sessions it is believed that their absences was unrelated to the nature of the intervention and is more likely due to a similar reason given by the other twelve (such as not wishing to get up at 9am when the 2nd session was scheduled). The final sample refers to men who completed questionnaires at all time-points, and, if in the intervention condition, those who had completed both intervention sessions.

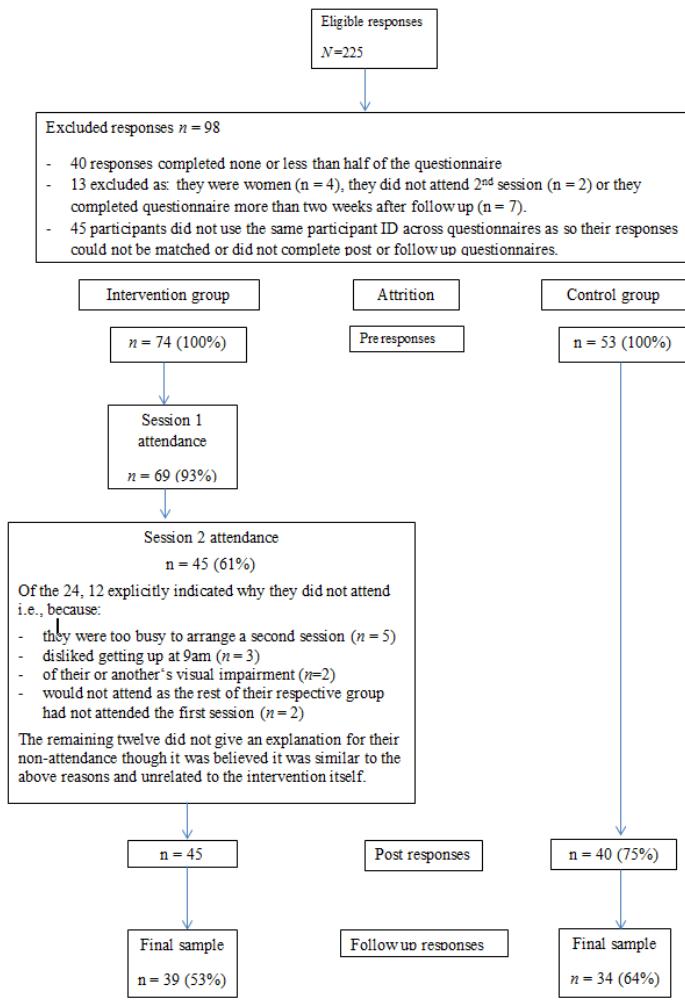


Figure 1: Flowchart showing participant movement throughout study

Missing values

Missing data is a common problem with questionnaires (Hair et al., 2006). It is important to assess the extent and pattern of it, as systematically missing data affects the generalizability of results and can reduce the power of an analysis (Field, 2009; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). There were 13 missing item responses across the dataset (.06%). Seven of these responses had been omitted incorrectly when entering the data from the paper questionnaires. These were corrected and the other responses were also checked to make sure data entry was accurate. The six remaining responses on the items were left either blank by the participant on the paper questionnaires or were missed when participants responded on Qualtrics. These were each coded as 999 in SPSS as there was no possibility of this being the same value as another participant's actual response. Different participants omitted their response across different measure items (with the

exception of two participant' responses on the item: *DMS9*) indicating no pattern to the missing data. In addition, the Little MCAR test was non-significant ($\chi^2 = 5188.66$ (5284), $p = .82$). Therefore data was missing completely at random.

As per Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) almost any solution to missing data will yield similar results if there are few missing data points, the pattern is random and the dataset is large. Subsequently as each of the variable totals that had missing item responses derived from the mean of the individual items within that variable, the missing value were kept as 999 and this item was excluded from the mean total. It was felt this was more appropriate than using other missing value methods (e.g., multiple imputation or listwise deletion) as the former involves estimating or predicting what a participant's response would be rather than treating the data as it is (e.g., multiple imputation; Field, 2009). In contrast the latter method reduces the sample size. The total variables for each participant with missing data were also manually checked to ensure that the value of 999 was not included in the total or average calculations.

Outliers

Following Field (2009), the data among continuous variables were converted into z-scores to determine potential univariate outliers. Three z scores were beyond the expected range of $+/- 3.29$ indicating three responses would have undue influence on the dataset. Close inspection of the original data points revealed no data points that were beyond the response scale constraints or any data entry errors, indicating these were valid, albeit unusual, responses. Both Log10 and Square root transformations were performed on all outcome variables in the dataset. Both sets of transformations resulted in no reduction in outliers on one of the outcome variables. In addition, new outliers were produced on another variable (see Appendix D). As such these outliers were 'cleaned' to reflect a less excessive value so that the data could still be retained in the analysis but that the statistics were not skewed. These were 'cleaned' using Field's (2009) recommended formula of finding the next highest score and changing this to one less than it. This is superior to Field's alternative recommended transformations (using 2 or 3 subtractions or additions of the standard deviations to the mean) as these would change the order of participant's responses so participants who formerly had the highest or lowest scores no longer would. For example, one participant had the

lowest score of Body appreciation in the dataset compared to the other participants (1.25 vs Intervention group's $M = 3.57$, $SD = .713.35$). The next higher score was 1.92, so this score was changed to 1.91 (as this score was lower; the other data points cleaned can be found in Appendix D).

Mahalanobis distances (MD) were also computed and screened to identify any potential multivariate outliers. In the dataset, three response sets had a Mahalanobis D^2 with a probability less than or equal to 0.001 indicating these were multivariate outliers (SPSSID20: $D^2 = 59.06$, $p < .001$; SPSSID11: $D^2 = 52.75$, $p < .001$; SPSSID33: $D^2 = 52.69$, $p < .001$). These cases were deleted so that focal analyses were not unduly biased by their influence.

Normality

Some of the variables within the dataset were not normally distributed. As mentioned above, both Log10 and Square root transformations were performed on all outcome variables. This resulted in no noticeable overall improvements to normality. Fortunately, the central limit theorem states that the distribution of the sample will be adequately normal, if the sample size is large enough (Feller, 1971). A sample size >30 has been purported to be the cut off value, indicating appropriately normal distribution for this dataset (Field, 2009; StatTrek, 2015). In addition, the distributions of the data were not skewed (i.e., unsymmetrical) significantly (≤ 1.0) which also indicated, according to Miles and Shevlin (2001) that non-normality was not a problem in the dataset. Finally, MANOVAs are reasonably robust to deviations from normality in any case when the group sizes are roughly equal and the overall sample size is large (Field, 2009).

PRELIMINARY ANALYSES

Demographic and outcome baseline equivalence of conditions

Independent sample t-tests revealed that participants in the control condition did not differ to those in the experimental condition on Self Esteem ($t(77) = .63$, $p = .531$); Body fat dissatisfaction ($t(77) = .55$, $p = .584$); Body appreciation ($t(77) = -1.29$, $p = .200$); Muscularity dissatisfaction ($t(77) = -.75$, $p = .457$); Muscularity behaviours ($t(77) = -.30$, $p = .767$); Eating pathology ($t(77) = -.31$, $p = .755$); Appearance comparisons ($t(77) = .96$, $p = .342$); Internalization ($t(77) = -.82$, $p = .414$); Pressures ($t(77) = -.49$, $p = .623$) and Age ($t(77) = .47$, $p = .642$) at pre

testing. Chi-square analyses also revealed the number of participants who were racialized did not differ at pre-testing between conditions ($\chi^2(1) = .92, p = .339$). This was also the case for participants who identified as sexual minorities ($\chi^2(1) = .001, p = .975$).

FOCAL ANALYSES

Analytic strategy: Mixed design MANOVAs

Field (2009, pg. 587) advises there needs to be a “*good theoretical or empirical basis*” for testing multiple dependant variables in a multivariate analyses of variances (MANOVA). As Muscularity behaviours and Eating pathology are regarded as outcomes relating to body dissatisfaction, according to the Tripartite Influence model, and that they are both behaviours, they were placed in a separate MANOVA (Thompson, Covert, & Stormer, 1999; Tylka, 2011). As Internalization and Appearance comparisons are suggested to influence the relationships between body dissatisfaction and behaviours according to the model they were also added to a separate MANOVA. Finally, the remaining variables: Self-Esteem, Muscularity dissatisfaction, Body fat dissatisfaction and Body appreciation are not behaviours and facets of body dissatisfaction (Rumsey & Harcourt, 2012). Subsequently, these were placed in one MANOVA together.

Three mixed-design MANOVAs with time as a within-subject factor (Pre, Post and Follow up) and participant group as a between-subject factor (experimental, control) was conducted with the above dependant variables grouped into each MANOVA respectively. For these analyses Pillai’s test is considered the most robust to violations of assumptions and hence this statistic was used (Field, 2009). For each MANOVA, subsequent univariate analyses were interpreted to see which of the outcomes variables in that MANOVA drove the interactions. Finally, twelve follow up simple contrasts were conducted for each group on each of the dependant variables that had a significant interaction effect. Bonferroni corrections were applied to these contrasts in order to reduce the risk of a type 1 error as recommended by Pallant (2010). Specifically contrasts were interpreted using the alpha value ($p = .05$) divided by the number of total contrasts (12) which resulted in $p = .00417$. Cohen’s d effect sizes (small effect $d = .20$; medium effect $d = .50$, large effect $d = .80$) were also calculated to provide a

within-condition measure of change from pre-test to post-test ($d = [\text{post-test intervention } M - \text{pre-test intervention } M]/\text{pre-test intervention } SD$) and pre-test to follow-up ($d = [\text{follow-up intervention } M - \text{pre-test intervention } M]/\text{pre-test intervention } SD$). Descriptive statistics and scale ranges for each variable at each time group for both groups are presented in Table 2

Table 2. Means and standard deviations for each outcome variables across time for each condition

Condition	Outcome	Scale range	Pre M (SD)	Post M (SD)	Follow-up M (SD)
Intervention	Self esteem	0.00-30.00	19.05 (6.15)	20.34 (5.14)	20.66 (5.40)
	Body fat dissatisfaction	1.00-5.00	2.45 (1.14)	1.93 (.78) ^a	2.11 (1.01)
	Body appreciation	1.00-5.00	3.45 (.63)	3.84 (.55) ^a	3.87 (.62) ^b
	Musc. dissat.	1.00-6.00	3.49 (1.22)	2.75 (.95) ^a	3.05 (1.19) ^b
	Musc. behaviours	1.00-6.00	2.20 (1.12)	1.76 (.85) ^a	1.91 (1.04) ^b
	Eating pathology	0.00-72.00	11.74 (10.99)	8.63 (7.70)	9.63 (11.00)
	Appearance comparisons	1.00-5.00	2.96 (.67)	2.61 (.56) ^a	2.69 (.67)
	Internalization	1.00-5.00	3.38 (.91)	2.86 (.69) ^a	3.25 (.77)
Control	Self esteem	0.00-30.00	18.88 (5.90)	19.76 (6.55)	18.53 (5.84)
	Body fat dissatisfaction	1.00-5.00	2.30 (1.08)	2.33 (1.07)	2.37 (1.00)
	Body appreciation	1.00-5.00	3.62 (.57)	3.67 (.66)	3.60 (.59)
	Musc. dissat.	1.00-6.00	3.65 (1.31)	3.57 (1.44)	3.64 (1.30)
	Musc. behaviours	1.00-6.00	2.15 (1.04)	2.14 (1.17)	2.28 (1.14)
	Eating pathology	0.00-72.00	12.80 (11.22)	12.03 (10.79)	10.51 (10.28)
	Appearance comparisons	1.00-5.00	2.69 (.83)	2.77 (.89)	2.82 (.83)
	Internalization	1.00-5.00	3.47 (.74)	3.41 (.87)	3.51 (.75)

Note. a = significant improvement between pre and post, $p < .004$; b = significant improvement between pre and follow-up, $p < .004$.

MANOVA 1: Body dissatisfaction constructs and self esteem

For the first MANOVA, Box's M test was significant indicating sphericity of the data had been violated ($M = 136.52$, $F(78, 14150.07)$ $p = .009$). However, some have argued this test is too sensitive (Ruthie, 2007; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) and advise it is only an issue if sample sizes are very unequal and if $p < .001$.

Subsequently, it was decided to proceed with the analysis. Mauchly's Test of Sphericity indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated for Body fat dissatisfaction ($\chi^2(2) = 8.15$, $p = .017$). This was not the case for Self Esteem, Body Appreciation or Muscularity dissatisfaction ($p > .278$). As such for the interpretation of Body fat dissatisfaction the more conservative Greenhouse-Geisser p value was interpreted as recommended by Pallant (2010).

There was not a significant between-subjects multivariate main effect across the two groups ($V = .06$, $F(4,64) = .95$, $p = .440$, *partial n*² = .06) although there was a significant multivariate effect for time ($V = .26$, $F(8,60) = 2.66$, $p = .014$, *partial n*² = .26). These multivariate main effects were qualified by a significant multivariate interaction effect between time and condition ($V = .234$, $F(8,60) = 2.30$, $p = .032$, *partial n*² = .23). Specifically, changes in body dissatisfaction facets and self-esteem over time differed between groups.

Self esteem

Subsequent univariate analyses for self-esteem indicated that there was not a significant main effect of time or group ($F(2) = 2.67$, $p = .073$ *partial n*² = .04; $F(1) = 55$, $p = .462$ *partial n*² = .01) nor a significant time by condition interaction ($F(2) = 2.40$, $p = .095$ *partial n*² = .26). This suggested the differences between groups on these outcome variables over time were not driven by changes in self-esteem.

Body fat dissatisfaction

Subsequent univariate analyses for body fat dissatisfaction indicated that there was a significant main effect of time ($F(2) = 3.79$, $p = .025$ *partial n*² = .06) but not group ($F(1) = .67$, $p = .418$ *partial n*² = .01). There was also a significant time by condition interaction ($F(2) = 5.52$, $p = .007$ *partial n*² = .08). The follow up contrasts revealed intervention participants reported significant improvements in Body fat dissatisfaction from pre to post ($M^{diff} = -.52$, $d = -.46$ 95% CI: -.44 -.47; $F(1,34) = 12.14$, $p = .001$, *partial n*² = .26) though not from pre to follow up ($M^{diff} = -.34$, $d = -.30$ 95% CI: -.29 - .31; $F(1,34) = 4.11$, $p = .050$, *partial n*² = .11). Control

participants reported no significant changes over time ($M^{diff} < .09$, $d < .07$; $Fs < .20$, $p > .665$, $partial\ n2 < .02$).

Body appreciation

Subsequent univariate analyses for body appreciation indicated that there was a significant main effect of time ($F(2) = 7.12$, $p = .001$ $partial\ n^2 = .10$) but not group ($F(1) = 54$, $p = .466$ $partial\ n^2 = .01$). There was also a significant time by condition interaction ($F(2) = 6.28$, $p = .002$ $partial\ n^2 = .09$). Follow up pairwise comparisons (with $p = .0125$) showed that intervention participants reported significant improvements in body appreciation from pre to post ($M^{diff} = .39$, $d = .21$ 95% CI: .16 - .26; $F(1,34) = 12.92$, $p = .001$, $partial\ n^2 = .28$) and from pre- to follow up ($M^{diff} = .42$, $d = .67$ 95% CI: .66 - .67; $F(1,34) = 13.91$, $p = .001$, $partial\ n^2 = .29$). Control participants reported no significant changes over time ($M^{diff} < .06$, $d < .10$; $F < .50$, $p > .50$, $partial\ n^2 < .10$).

Muscularity dissatisfaction

Subsequent univariate analyses for Muscularity dissatisfaction indicated that there was a significant main effect of time ($F(2) = 2.96$, $p = .000$, $partial\ n^2 = .12$) but not for group $F(1) = 3.58$, $p = .063$ $partial\ n^2 = .05$). There was also a significant time by condition interaction ($F(2) = 6.15$, $p = .003$ $n^2 = .08$). Follow up contrasts revealed intervention participants reported significant improvements in Muscularity dissatisfaction from pre to post ($M^{diff} = -.74$, $d = -.61$, 95% CI: -.62 – .59; $F(1,34) = 21.72$, $p < .001$, $partial\ n2 = .39$) and from pre to follow up ($M^{diff} = -.44$, $d = -.61$, 95% CI: -.37 - .35; $F(1,34) = 10.90$, $p = .002$, $partial\ n2 = .24$). In contrast control participants reported no significant changes over time ($M^{diff} < .09$, $d < .07$; $Fs < .39$, $p > .541$, $partial\ n2 < .02$).

MANOVA 2: Body dissatisfaction behaviours (Muscularity behaviours and eating pathology)

For the second MANOVA, once again Box's M test was significant ($M = 45.206$, $F(21,17007.06)$ $p = .006$) though as above this was considered not to be an issue as it was still above $p < .001$. Mauchly's Test of Sphericity indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated for Muscularity behaviours, $\chi^2(2) = 7.63$, $p = .022$. This was not the case for Eating pathology ($p > .05$). As such for the interpretation of Muscularity behaviours the more conservative Greenhouse-Geisser p value was interpreted.

There was not a significant between-subjects multivariate main effect across the two groups ($V = .02$, $F(2,67) = .54$, $p = .587$, $\text{partial } n^2 = .02$) although there was a significant multivariate effect for time ($V = .21$, $F(4,65) = 4.42$, $p = .003$, $\text{partial } n^2 = .21$). These multivariate main effects were qualified by a significant multivariate interaction effect between time and condition ($V = .18$, $F(4,65) = 3.52$, $p = .012$, $\text{partial } n^2 = .18$). Specifically, changes in Muscularity behaviours and Eating pathology over time differed between groups.

Muscularity behaviours

Subsequent univariate analyses for Muscularity behaviours indicated that there was a significant main effect of time ($F(2) = 4.51$, $p = .013$ $\text{partial } n^2 = .06$) but not group ($F(1) = .95$, $p = .334$, $\text{partial } n^2 = .01$) There was also a significant time by condition interaction ($F(2) = 5.26$, $p = .008$, $\text{partial } n^2 = .09$). Follow up pairwise comparisons showed that intervention participants reported significant improvements in Muscularity behaviours from pre to post ($M^{diff} = -.44$, $d = -.39$, 95% CI: $-.40 - .38$; $F(1,34) = 29.13$, $p < .001$, $\text{partial } n^2 = .46$) and from pre to follow up ($M^{diff} = -.29$, $d = -.26$, 95% CI: $-.27 - .25$; $F(1,34) = 10.40$, $p = .003$, $\text{partial } n^2 = .23$). In contrast, control participants reported no significant changes over time ($M^{diff} < .14$, $d < .14$; $F_{s} < .85$, $p > .36$, $\text{partial } n^2 < .24$).

Eating pathology

Subsequent univariate analyses for Eating pathology indicated that there was a significant main effect of time ($F(2) = 4.12$, $p = .018$ $\text{partial } n^2 = .06$) but not group ($F(1) = 61$, $p = .440$, $\text{partial } n^2 = .01$) nor a significant time by condition interaction ($F(2) = 1.41$, $p = .249$, $\text{partial } n^2 = .02$).

MANOVA 3: Influences on body dissatisfaction (appearance comparisons and internalisation)

For the third and final MANOVA, Box's M test was once more significant ($M = 37.28$, $F(21,17007.06)$ $p = .039$). As above this was considered not to be an issue as it was still above $p < .001$. Mauchly's Test of Sphericity indicated that the assumption of sphericity had not been violated for either Appearance comparisons or Internalizations ($p > .05$).

There was not a significant between-subjects multivariate effect across the two groups ($V = .06$, $F(2,67) = 2.24$, $p = .114$, $\text{partial } n^2 = .06$) and a significant multivariate effect for time ($V = .25$, $F(4,65) = 5.39$, $p = .001$, $\text{partial } n^2 = .25$).

These multivariate main effects were qualified by a significant multivariate interaction effect between time and condition ($V = .18$, $F(4,65) = 3.60$, $p = .010$, $\text{partial } n^2 = .18$). Specifically, changes in appearance comparisons and internalization over time differed between conditions.

Appearance comparisons

Subsequent univariate analyses for Appearance comparisons indicated that there was not a significant main effect of time nor group ($F(2) = 1.96$, $p = .145$, $\text{partial } n^2 = .03$; $F(1) = .00$, $p = .986$ $\text{partial } n^2 = .00$). There was a significant time by condition interaction, however ($F(2) = 6.33$, $p = .003$, $\text{partial } n^2 = .09$). Follow up pairwise comparisons showed that intervention participants reported significant improvements in appearance comparisons from pre to post ($M^{\text{diff}} = -.35$, $d = -.52$, 95% CI: $-.53$ $-.52$; $F(1,34) = 12.07$, $p = .001$, $\text{partial } n^2 = .26$) but not from pre- to follow up ($M^{\text{diff}} = -.27$, $d = -.40$, 95% CI: $-.41$ $-.40$; $F(1,34) = 4.68$, $p = .038$, $\text{partial } n^2 = .12$). In contrast, control participants reported no significant changes over time ($M^{\text{diff}} < .14$, $d < .17$; $F_s < 2.51$, $p > .123$, $\text{partial } n^2 < .08$).

Internalization of the mesomorphic appearance ideal

Subsequent univariate analyses for Internalizations indicated that there was a significant main effect of time ($F(2) = 11.64$, $p = .000$ $\text{partial } n^2 = .15$) but not group ($F(1) = 3.05$, $p = .085$, $\text{partial } n^2 = .04$). There was, however, a significant time by condition interaction ($F(2) = 6.39$, $p = .002$, $\text{partial } n^2 = .09$). Follow up pairwise comparisons showed that intervention participants reported significant improvements in Internalizations from pre to post ($M^{\text{diff}} = -.52$, $d = -.57$, 95% CI: $-.58$ $-.56$; $F(1,34) = 21.19$, $p < .001$, $\text{partial } n^2 = .38$) but not from pre- to follow up ($M^{\text{diff}} = -.13$, $d = -.14$, 95% CI: $-.15$ $-.13$; $F(1,34) = 1.84$, $p = .183$, $\text{partial } n^2 = .05$). In contrast, control participants reported no significant changes over time. In contrast, control participants reported no significant changes over time ($M^{\text{diff}} < .05$, $d < .06$; $F_s < .56$, $p > .46$, $\text{partial } n^2 < .02$).

INTERVENTION EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Overall, participants responded to the intervention favourably. In response to the first open-ended question on the questionnaire, “*Was the intervention useful? Please explain why/why not*”, all but two (4%) of the participants reported that the intervention was useful. This was primarily because participants thought the intervention gave men permission to share their frustration over appearance

pressures. This was something that participants reported they could not normally do in everyday life. As one participant wrote:

"The intervention was useful because it gave me a chance to reflect, and discuss issues that I may not usually discuss with my friends. I think that the issue with men in general is that they do not discuss issues/problems well". Other participants praised the intervention for helping them to recognize their own body dissatisfaction and indicating ways to reduce it. As another wrote:

"Yes, the intervention was very helpful. It helped reassure me that the 'perfect' male body dissatisfaction portrayed in the media is highly unrealistic. I think that it is important that students receive a body dissatisfaction intervention as it can help build confidence, and reduce negative feelings towards your own body dissatisfaction".

Other reasons given by participants for finding the intervention useful included; it raised awareness about an important issue; it was informal and there was an easy-going atmosphere in the groups; and it was informative. The two participants who did not think the intervention was useful were critical because they said the intervention assumed that they had body dissatisfaction when they did not. Although one of these men wrote "*it would have been useful for individuals who are conscious of their body*".

Of the 37 participants who responded to the item "*Is there anything about the intervention you think could be improved?*". Twenty-two men stated that nothing needed to be improved. Those who thought the intervention should be improved said the intervention should be less biased and not have such a strong agenda. As one participant clarified:

"I think the intervention could have had less of an agenda, or at least it felt like there was a very strong, anti-gym agenda during the process. It needed to be a more free exchange of thoughts and ideas, rather than set questions that only allowed for a narrow spectrum of answers".

Others felt that the discussions should be less structured, the groups should be larger (in some groups there were only 2 participants), and that the topic should be explained clearly before the intervention started. A fuller evaluation of the actual audio recorded discussions in the sessions is provided in Chapter 4.

RESULTS SUMMARY

Immediately after the intervention, intervention participants reported significant improvements in Body appreciation, Body fat dissatisfaction, Muscularity dissatisfaction, Muscularity behaviours, Appearance comparisons and

Internalization but not Self-esteem or Eating pathology. Improvements in Body appreciation, Muscularity dissatisfaction and Muscularity behaviours were maintained to 3-month follow up. Control group participants reported no changes on these outcomes over time. A summary of these changes and descriptives between groups and time can be found in Table 2. In addition, responses to the open-ended section of the questionnaires were very positive about the intervention.

DISCUSSION

Men's body dissatisfaction is a problem and is in need of support (Bordo, 1999a; Tiggemann et al., 2008a). The cognitive-dissonance based *Body Project M* intervention has amassed broad evidence for its effectiveness in reducing women's body dissatisfaction, and has recently shown promise with men (Becker & Stice, 2011; Brown & Keel, 2015; Stice et al., 2015; Stice, Shaw, et al., 2007). Therefore the aim of this study was to see the potential efficacy of *Body Project M* to reduce body dissatisfaction with men. The results of this study revealed that at immediate post testing, participants who took part in *Body Project M* reported significant improvements in body appreciation, body fat dissatisfaction, Muscularity dissatisfaction, Muscularity behaviours, appearance comparisons and internalization compared to control participants. For *Body Project M* participants, improvements in body appreciation, Muscularity dissatisfaction and Muscularity behaviours were maintained at 3 months follow up.

This intervention resulted in improvements in six out of eight outcomes immediately, three of which were maintained to 3 month follow up. Not only then was the intervention acceptable to participants, but it also appeared to be useful. Effect sizes among outcomes that improved ranged from small (.27) to medium (.68). Although there is little available information on expected effect sizes for *Body Project M* on men, these effect sizes are comparable to other studies on women (Becker, Bull, Schaumberg, Cauble, & Franco, 2008; Halliwell & Diedrichs, 2013). These effect sizes are positive given that this intervention was notably shorter than most other cognitive dissonance interventions that have been evaluated. These effects are promising given the sample approximated a universal sample, in that participants were not recruited on the basis of having body dissatisfaction.

These improvements in outcomes are also backed up by participant's overwhelmingly positive responses to the intervention evaluation questions. Together these results of this study are promising and show this intervention has much potential in reducing men's body dissatisfaction. This should not be taken lightly. Men's body dissatisfaction is a widespread, significant and pernicious issue and interventions are currently limited. *Body Project M* holds promise in being one

effective intervention that appears to help men immediately and perhaps in the long term too.

Clearly in this study there was a fading effect, where improvements in body fat dissatisfaction, internalization and appearance comparisons were not maintained at 3 month follow up. In addition of those improvements maintained to 3 months follow up, all of them began to level off or even slightly regress at 3 month assessment. Thus it is possible that these improvements may not have lasted past 3 months and that 6 months or a year after the intervention no significant improvements in participant's body dissatisfaction or related wellbeing occurred. This speaks to the potential limitation of the intervention, that it was relatively short compared to other interventions (e.g., 5 sessions) and possibly occurred at an age (adulthood) where it may be too late to intervene compared to school-based interventions (Yager et al., 2013).

As there were no improvements in eating pathology and self-esteem, and as improvements in body fat dissatisfaction, internalisation and appearance comparisons were not maintained at follow-up, there is room to improve the efficacy of this intervention. It may be that the intervention was too brief to confer significant effects on these outcomes, or, that the content could be refined in order to produce greater cognitive dissonance. Notably, cognitive dissonance-based body dissatisfaction interventions have been specifically designed to reduce internalisation of corporate appearance ideals, in order to reduce body dissatisfaction and eating pathology. It may be that other factors (e.g., conformity to hegemonic masculinity; Blashill, 2011; Gill et al., 2005) also need to be targeted to confer body dissatisfaction and eating pathology improvements among men.

Participants in the intervention reported no improvements in self-esteem or eating pathology. Although there are no cut off points to determine high or low self-esteem, it is recommended that norms from similar populations to a study's sample are consulted in order to determine comparability of scores (Department of Sociology, University of Maryland, n.d.). Among participants in the intervention condition, self-esteem was relatively high at baseline ($M = 19.05$, $SD = 6.15$) with the scale ranging from 0.00-30.00. This score on self-esteem is comparable to others such as Bergeron and Tylka's (2007) US undergraduate (age $M = 19.11$, $SD = 1.90$) sample of men who scored on average, $M = 22.3$ ($SD = 4.9$). It is possible that self-esteem did not improve in the intervention due to ceiling effects.

Once again there are no cut offs for scores on the eating pathology measure used in this study that indicate high or low disordered eating. Nor to the best of the author's knowledge are there published norms among men. According to the scale used, however, in general, eating pathology among the participants was low at baseline ($M = 11.74$, $SD = 10.99$ range = 0.00 - 42.00) as the maximum score was 72.00. Thus the lack of improvement in eating pathology may be due to floor effects where the range of the scale used failed to differentiate participants with high- and medium- low scores to those with lower scores. Alternatively, self-esteem and eating pathology may not have improved in the intervention condition because these were more peripheral to the other outcomes in relation to the intervention's content (i.e., body dissatisfaction). Like most measure of eating pathology, the one used in this evaluation was designed originally for women and therefore may not be as relevant to men with body dissatisfaction given the ideal for men is muscular and that many men make efforts to gain muscle in addition to losing weight (Pope Jr. et al., 2000; Tylka, 2011). As this was a pilot study, it is evident that further research is needed to explore the efficacy of this intervention on men's body dissatisfaction and eating pathology.

Finally, it is possible that the intervention is ineffective in improving these outcomes. Regardless, this should not indicate that eating pathology was not an issue among men as clearly some men did report disordered eating in particular regular binge eating (as indicated by responses on specific items of the measure). Disordered eating is an issue among men and this study affirms the important work of others in men's eating disorder prevention.

This study was limited by its failure to include a randomized control group. This was an opportunity sample who took part in the intervention and it was impractical to randomize participants before the study completed. Nonetheless, the lack of significant change in any outcome variable over time among the control group indicated that spill over effects from the intervention were not a problem. As was the lack of randomization also not a problem. These results are, however, in need of replication and future studies aiming to do this may wish to consider using an RCT design.

A further limitation that should be acknowledged in the study is the nature of the evaluation. Being self-report, participant's responses on the questionnaire were open to social desirability bias or experimenter expectancy (van de Mortel,

2008). In particular, participants may have wished to please the intervention facilitator by reporting improvements that may not have been real in their body dissatisfaction and related outcomes immediately and 3 months after the intervention. This is by no means a limitation unique to this study. For example, Gleeson and Frith (2006) argue that women may report they wish to be thinner to researchers simply because they feel this is the most desirable response to give. Gill and Elias (2014) further discuss the pressure for women to deny having any body dissatisfaction and 'embrace' their appearances by corporations. These include *Weight Watchers*, *Dove* and *Special K* who achieve this using their respective body confidence marketing campaigns that place responsibility on the individual woman and ignore the corporate appearance ideal. The authors refer to these pressures as *Love Your Body Discourses*. This evaluation was anonymous and participants were asked to answer the questionnaires as honestly as possible which may have mitigated this limitation.

Relating to the above, a further limitation is the intervention's potential individualizing nature. Specifically, the role of the researcher, and power inequalities endorsed by the researcher, (implicitly or otherwise) can influence research (Gleeson & Frith, 2006; Irving, 1999). Gleeson and Frith (2006) noted, for instance, the research setting and design itself may endorse and contribute to power inequalities. Specifically, they argue that when participants are asked in a room or online to personally answer questions relating to appearance, weight, diet and exercise researchers are implying that these factors are within the individual's control and should be changed by the individual if they care for their health/ wish to be a 'good citizen' (Petersen, 1996; Robertson, 2007). This runs contrary to evidence that the sociocultural environment is a powerful influence on health (Lake & Townshend, 2006) as well as the strong evidence that socio-economic status is strongly related to health inequalities (Adler & Ostrove, 1999). With regard to body dissatisfaction specifically, a vast body of evidence has documented the ubiquity, restrictiveness and reverence of appearance ideals in the sociocultural environment (Jankowski, Fawkner, et al., 2014; Kilbourne, 2010; Labre, 2005; Rohlinger, 2002). In this sense apportioning blame on the individual not only misleads about the real influences on body dissatisfaction but also contributes to growing stigmatization of individuals who fail to keep their bodies and body dissatisfaction 'in check' (Puhl & Heuer, 2010).

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The results of this study indicate that the *Body Project M* intervention was useful for participants in both the short term and, at least with regards to Muscularity - attitudes and -behaviours and Body appreciation, 3 months later. The intervention on men is promising particularly as support for men with body dissatisfaction is limited. Nonetheless, the intervention may run the risk of treating body dissatisfaction as an individual pathology rather than a cultural problem and further its self-report evaluation may be compromised by social desirability bias or a wider pressure to conform to body acceptance discourses. Finally, it is unclear why some outcomes improved whereas others did not. The next chapter then will provide an overview of alternative form of evaluation (referred to as Study 2), namely a thematic analysis of the audio recorded discussions during the intervention, in order to further shed light on the intervention.

CHAPTER 4:

STUDY 2: QUALITATIVE EVALUATION OF INTERVENTION

METHOD

The aim of this chapter is to provide a fuller and more detailed evaluation of the intervention. Thematic analysis complements this research project by elaborating on the quantitative evaluation of the intervention. This is particularly important given the high risk of participants answering the questionnaires in order to please myself or the research team by indicating their body dissatisfaction has improved because of the intervention (this concern has also been noted in the evaluation of other wellbeing interventions; Nolte, Elsworth, & Osborne, 2013). Despite the anonymous nature of the questionnaire and the fact that participants were asked to answer as honestly as possible, this risk remains. As some participants indicate:

Lucas: "But what's the point of doing [the questionnaire] again?"

Researcher: "The point is of an intervention to check your body dissatisfaction beforehand and your body dissatisfaction after".

Kevin: "Well we sort of know how we're meant to answer now don't we?"

As *Kevin*⁵ reported, participants knew their responses to the questionnaires were designed to show the usefulness of the intervention. Although there is no definitive way to avoid this bias, having an alternative evaluation in itself reduces the risk of social desirability bias (Nancarrow, Brace, & Wright, 2001; Nederhof, 1985). In addition the intervention discussions often involved participants addressing each other rather than myself (as opposed to the questionnaires). This may have meant participants felt less obligated to please myself, the researcher, when bolstered by others in the group (Nancarrow et al., 2001). A further benefit of a qualitative analysis of the intervention sessions is that it helps to contextualize participants' experiences of the intervention and its usefulness.

Participants

Participants were those who took part in both sessions of the intervention. As described in Chapters 2 and 3, 45 participants took part across 12 groups with

⁵ Pseudonyms are used throughout. Unfortunately demographic data of the participants such as age, ethnicity and sexual orientation was only captured using the anonymous questionnaires. Therefore this information could not be linked to participants' voices on the audio files. However, overall demographics of the intervention group are presented in Chapter 2.

group sizes ranging from 2-9. For more information about participants and procedure please refer to these chapters.

Transcription

Each of the 12 group's two intervention sessions were audio recorded. Sessions ranged from 41 minutes to 98 minutes. The audio files recorded the discussions that took place in the intervention. The discussions centred on engendering a critique of the corporate appearance ideal and largely followed the prepared script (see Appendix E and Chapter 2). The intervention was primarily discussion based, with two activities (*Costs of the Ideal* and *Top 10 Activism List*) being worksheet based and some activities occurring in participants' own time at home. In addition, the Role Play exercise required participants to speak over each other. These parts of the intervention were not transcribed (excerpt from one transcription file is included in Appendix F).

Half of the audio files were transcribed by myself, and the remaining half by a professional transcription service. Transcription is always only a representation of an interview or focus group, the researcher influences what is recorded, whether intentionally so or not (Braun & Clarke, 2013). As such, the style of transcription was verbatim rather than orthographic. Specifically, little attention was paid to phonetic elements of the audio such as pauses, intonation or other nuanced meaning in language. Instead only the words participants used were transcribed, except if something was particularly emphasized, in which case it was underlined. Pauses were transcribed using [...] and laughter: [laughing]. Anything inaudible (after checking multiple times) was transcribed as [inaudible]. This is an acceptable form of transcription to adequately produce a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013) and fits the approach to the analysis outlined below.

Once transcribed, the files were read through whilst listening back to the tapes. Any errors were corrected. Close attention was also paid to the files outsourced for transcription. First, these files were read to check that they covered the same topics, activities and discussion length as the original file. Second, the files were read whilst listening to the audio files. Occasionally, a number of minor transcription errors were noted including ordering mistakes, omissions and mishearing (for example see Appendix G). These were corrected.

THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis refers to a method of qualitative analysis that captures patterns across qualitative datasets. It is important to acknowledge there are many different forms of thematic analysis (e.g., realist and constructionist thematic analysis) as well as to locate the author's particular approach (A. Blake & Gibson, 2015; Braun & Clarke, 2013). An outline of which follows.

Thematic analysis was performed deductively (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013). As mentioned previously, the aim of this project is to challenge the individualization of body dissatisfaction. This focus related to the research question: *How do men come to collectively critique the corporate appearance ideal?* This means that the analysis was theory driven, where particular discussions addressing the researcher's approach were focussed upon. Furthermore, the analysis was not of the entire dataset. Instead, attention was focused on the ways in which the critique of the ideal was meaningful for the participants. Therefore analysing the entirety of participants' discussion was seen as detracting from this aim as it would move the focus back onto them and not on the corporate appearance ideal. Finally, in line with this approach, a constructionist approach was taken to the analysis. As defined by Braun and Clarke such an approach:

"does not seek to focus on motivation or individual psychologies, but instead seeks to theorize the sociocultural contexts, and structural conditions, that enable the individual accounts that are provided" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 85).

Process of thematic analysis

I followed Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2013) guidelines on how to thematically analyse. First, I became familiar with the data having run the intervention sessions myself, having reflected during and after the sessions (see Appendix H), having transcribed the majority of data myself and finally having reflected whilst transcribing. I was highly interested and motivated in the intervention and how men come to critique the ideal, and so this first step came very naturally to me.

Second, I noted initial codes in my reflexive diary during the familiarization process (see Appendix H). Initially codes were key ideas or particularly meaningful phrases that the participants made. Examples of such codes included: *Fat*, *Gyms* and *Appearance behaviours*. Codes were latent or “*researcher derived*” in that the analysis went beyond the literal meaning of participants’ words to interpret them through the outlook described above (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 207). In contrast, semantic codes or data-derived codes adhere to the explicit meaning of participants’ words and derive from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). More specifically, in this analysis participants’ own descriptions were not uncritically accepted but instead were critically respected (Gill, 2007a). This is where participants’ agency and expertise in their own experiences is acknowledged whilst their accounts are contextualised as being influenced by broader structural factors. These structural factors influence everyone, including the researcher.

After familiarization with the data, I then uploaded the transcribed files into N-Vivo and systematically coded the files, line by line. Here codes were defined as any words, phrases, paragraphs, or conversations that seemed unique to other parts of the data and relevant to the analysis (see Table 3 and Appendix I). These codes were a little more specific to the data such as *People as refuge* and *School pressures*. This process generated an enormous amount of codes. As I coded I would continually recategorize the codes into clusters to try and make the line by line coding more manageable. After this lengthy process, I reviewed the codes, collapsing, splitting and re-ordering into different clusters of codes. At this stage my supervisor’s own feedback on two transcripts and their codes were discussed and incorporated into my own coding as appropriate.

Table 3. Data extracts and initial codes

Data extract	Code
<i>"If you are receding you should just shave it all off. Rather than having a comb over, I reckon"</i>	Hair loss Acceptability of comb over
<i>"I think the worst pressures I find are the ones where you got to buy some boxers or whatever and the bloke looks ten times better than you".</i>	Appearance pressures Underwear models/advertising Corporate appearance ideal

After this stage, I generated themes from the codes. A theme was considered to be a meaningful collection of codes across the dataset that cohered around a central concept and complemented the theoretical outlook described above (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013). In line with Braun and Clarke, some codes were made into subthemes of a main theme, others were dropped if they did not fit my research aim and others were collapsed or expanded upon. These were continually refined over a period of three to four weeks. Codes were grouped and regrouped using visual mapping (see Figure 1 and Appendix J). Themes were also printed out from NVivo with all codes hierarchically linked and then physically cut and paste manually. Themes were identified if they cohered with the dataset, were distinct from each other and represented the data sufficiently.

The penultimate stage of thematic analysis involved defining and refining the themes. This occurred through trying to describe the themes to other people, through supervisory meetings, internal department presentations and supervisory feedback on results. Feedback from these meetings was used in order to define and clarify the themes. Here it became apparent that some themes overlapped substantially or were not internally coherent. For example, it was unclear how the original themes *Hench guys cause appearance pressures* and *Women are superficial* related to the overall research aim of how participants resist the ideal. Therefore these themes were collapsed into the overarching theme: *The individualization of the corporate appearance ideal*. Finally, these themes were

compared to the initial transcriptions and reflections to check they remained sufficiently close to the data.

Once they cohered, quotes were chosen to illustrate the themes.

These are presented below.

Methodological rigour

Inter-rater reliability was not assessed for this analysis. This follows the recommendations of Braun and Clarke themselves (A. Blake & Gibson, 2015; Braun &

Clarke, 2006, 2013). This was because it is believed that inter-rater reliability, if achieved, would mislead readers in believing that the analysis was externally valid or objective rather than influenced by one or more researcher. Specifically, inter-rater reliability has been criticized as training one researcher to replicate another's particular bias or outlook. Nonetheless, as mentioned themes were refined and cross-checked against data continually. In addition, one transcript was analysed by both supervisors who offered their own codes that were incorporated into analysis. Both supervisors also discussed emerging themes which led to further theme development and refinement.

As outlined in my approach (Chapter 1), I reject the positivist approach in the social sciences including the idea that validity of data can be perfectly achieved. Instead, as with a critical realist perspective (Bhaskar, 2008, 2008; Gill, 1995), I strove for rigour/ integrity in the research process. To achieve this I was continually reflexive about my own influence and positioning during data design, capture and analysis through detailed reflections. Far from lessening the analysis, some argue that this influence can complement the analysis though its transparency is critical (Finlay & Gough, 2008). Therefore I shall attempt to outline my theoretical influence on the data below.

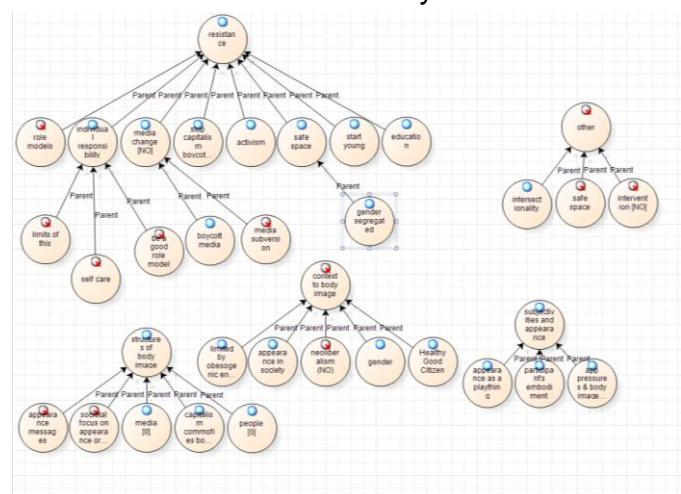


Figure 1: Early stage map of themes identified in Study 3.

Theoretical influences on analysis

The analysis drew upon critiques of neoliberalism in which the agency and choices of individual are highlighted to the detriment of the acknowledgement of structural injustices (such as lookism, sexism and racism; Gill, 1995, 2007). Bordo (2003) also influenced the analysis by highlighting the ways in which the corporate appearance ideal becomes self-governing and self-policing among people. Finally, I am influenced by Marxism, by highlighting how capitalism harms the majority via alienation, exploitation etc. (B. Cohen, 2013; Fraser, 2014; Parker, 2009; Parker & Spears, 1996). I also attempt to take an intersectional approach where these structures intersect, indelibly, subtly and consistently with other existing forms of injustice (Bordo, 2003; Crenshaw, 1991; Gill, 2009; hooks, 1992). This is further elaborated on in Chapters 1 and 10.

RESULTS

The nature of the intervention data

Before describing the results from this analysis, it is important that the nature of the data is clarified. Participants took part in an intervention, not a focus group. The intervention's primary purpose was to reduce body dissatisfaction and related suffering among participants rather than explore or account for participants' body dissatisfaction or other experiences. In order to do this the intervention aimed to foster a critique of the corporate appearance ideal using guided discussions, written tasks, and other exercises. In other words, participants were encouraged to reflect critically on dominant appearance ideals and pressures. It is participants' responses to the intervention itself that are analysed in this chapter.

THEMES

Four core themes generated from these discussions are presented in Figure 2 which also shows directions of overlap between the themes. These themes included 1) '*Yes its unobtainable, inescapable and relentless but no we're not affected: The paradox of the ideal*'; 2) *But affect us it does: The impact of the ideal*; 3) '*What's the point? The all-powerful ideal*'; 4) *The individualization of body dissatisfaction*. Each theme is outlined below, with a selection of anonymized quotes from participants.

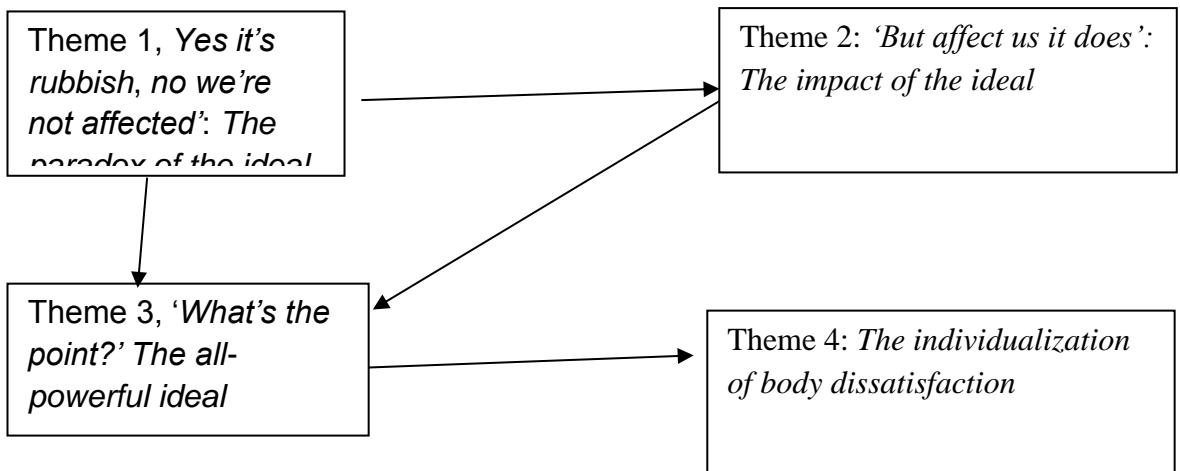


Figure 2: Visual representation of analytic themes from Study 3

Theme 1, *Yes it's rubbish, no we're not affected: The paradox of the ideal*, comprises two parts. First, participants expressed a consistent, critical and ready critique of the ideal. Relating to Themes 3 and 4, the ideal was regarded as so powerful to be inescapable and to have an intimate, everyday impact on most people. However, paradoxically there was a widespread denial of the ideal having any bearing on participants' own lives. This denial forms the second half of Theme 1.

Theme 2, *'But affect us it does': The impact of the ideal*, presents how participants were affected by the ideal; despite the extant minimization in Theme 1. Specifically, the myriad impacts of the ideal were reported by participants who referenced anxiety about varied aspects of their appearance. The participants referred to intimate, daily impacts including social withdrawal, concerns about exposing their bodies to others, including romantic partners, and poor self-esteem (this theme built upon Theme 1 by showing the impact of the ideal that was identified and also related to Theme 3 by attesting to the ideal's power).

Theme 3, *'What's the point?' The all-powerful ideal*, highlights how critical participants already were of the ideal and its promotion (overlapping with Theme 1 were participants could readily identify it). Participants demonstrated a critical awareness of the ideal's ubiquity; knowing that it

was used to sell products. Similarly, participants were cynical of the anti-ideal moves by corporations like *Dove* and *Debenhams* who they believed were still marketing the ideal, in a slightly different form, for profits. The situation was soon referred to as overwhelming for participants and, in order to deal with this, participants would refute, endorse or individualize the ideal.

Theme 4, *The individualization of the corporate appearance ideal*, outlines how participants individualized the ideal. This arose from a reported sense of resignation and being overwhelmed at the ideal's power, as outlined in Theme 3. In particular two figures were created by participants as responsible for the ideal: 'Hench Guys' and 'Superficial Women'. Participants drew upon neoliberal discourses that positioned responsibility at the individual's feet while wider structures were neglected (relating to Theme 3).

Theme 1: 'Yes its rubbish, no we're not affected': The apparent paradox of the ideal

This theme is made up of two parts. The first is participants' identification of the ideal, its form, unattainability and the many costs associated with pursuing it. The second half of this theme concerns the extant minimization of the ideal, where, somewhat paradoxically, participants would deny that it had any bearing on their own lives.

The corporate appearance ideal was identified as a man who:

- Was 6ft tall,
- Was mesomorphic
- Was young (in his mid-twenties)
- Was able bodied and did not have glasses.
- Had a full head of hair,
- Had straight & white teeth,
- Had a square jaw,
- Had blemish-free, tanned and white skin,
- Had no body hair (or minimal on chest, legs, groin and lower arms but not upper arms, back or elsewhere),
- Had large hands and feet,

- Had short, straight and Caucasian hair (that was not ginger and not receding).
- Had a large, straight penis

Across the different groups, this ideal was remarkably consistent, with only very minor variations, such as having sharp cheekbones, tattoos and trimmed facial hair. Some aspects of the ideal were rarely verbalized, needing prompting, but were nonetheless, a critical component of the ideal (e.g., being able bodied, white). For example, it was only when prompted about ethnicity by myself, or by participants of colour, that the ideal's whiteness would be specified. Demonstrably in one group, one participant who was of South Asian descent commented:

Researcher: "Can you describe [the corporate appearance ideal] for the purposes of the tape?"

Laurence: "I don't want to sound offensive, but white".

Whiteness was central to the ideal. As demonstrated not only by participants' readiness to respond 'white' when asked about ethnicity, but also in that all of the celebrity embodiments of the ideal including, Brad Pitt, George Clooney and Gerald Butler were white and Western (who also conformed to the ideal in all other ways, including by being able bodied). That *Laurence* felt he had to couch this with a disclosure ("*I don't want to sound offensive*") indicated this racialized aspect of the corporate appearance ideal was transgressive despite its absolute centrality. *Laurence*'s reservation indicated that some aspects of the ideal are readily identified whilst others are not and thus are harder to challenge. This may relate to the white dominance of the group and indeed of body image researchers to whom the racialized aspect of the ideal is neglected (see also Chapter 10 for a discussion of the intersection between the corporate appearance ideal and racism).

Participants noted that exceptions to the ideal had to be compensated for. For instance, some scars or blemishes on the face were referred to as okay but only "*as long as it's not overpowering*" (*Gordon*). Minimal body hair on the chest was acceptable as it "*sort of adds to the masculinity*" (*Bisha*) but this could not be too long or elsewhere on the body such as the upper arms or the back. Similarly, some greying hair was acceptable "*if you are George Clooney*" (*Peter*) though the participant was "*not sure [if] balding would necessarily pass*". As *Gordon* expanded: "*if he*

has a shaven head, he has to look like Vin Diesel...if you're going to go for [the bald look] you've got to look good...massive". As in films, participants elucidated "you don't see a bald skinny guy being the superhero do you?" (Lance) as "everything else has to be decent" (Ted). In particular bald men need "muscles to counteract" (Gagan) their baldness. Finally, ageing was acceptable but only if the celebrities managed to still look young as Tim stated: "it's like the older you get [if] you still look young you're respected more than if you're just young".

Many participants treated their appearance playfully and used it as a way to express their identity. For example, some participants styled their hair in creative ways. *Bishal*, for instance, described how he "*hated it when [he] d[id]n't have a shape up*". Although this was a positive to emerge out of the discussions and reflected some ways in which participants resisted the narrow corporate ideals, it also had its limits. As *John* demonstrates with the pressure to get tattooing:

John: "There's one thing that's coming in at the moment that I've noticed is tattoos, sleeves...I'm put under pressure to get...a sleeve but then you have to be in the perfect shape to get one. It has to look right".

Jaye: "I think sleeves only look good on big arms".

In theory, tattooing could be a way of reclaiming the body from the corporate appearance ideal, of representing something personal to participants which is not dictated by culture. However, tattoos may also be co-opted as something only those who conform to the corporate appearance ideal can have (e.g., someone with a sufficiently muscular arm). Although some forms of appearance modification can be expressive, positive or even just benign (which participants' certainly engaged in) these must also be considered with respect to the wider corporate ideal. This is dominant, pervasive and relentless; particularly through the ideal's ability to have slightly different variations of the same narrow form. Participants own expressiveness with their appearance did not invalidate the dominance of corporate appearance ideals; it was not an exception that disproved the rule. To the contrary, as in the case of *John* above, sometimes seeming forms of appearance expressivity were actually ultimately another way of conforming to the corporate appearance ideals.

The ideal, in its entirety, was perceived by participants as something "*unobtainable*" (*Reynold*), "*impossible*" (*Nathan*) and "*unachievable*" (*Bill*). Participants knew that ageing was inevitable, that they were likely to lose hair, to

wrinkle or put on weight at some point in their lives, for instance. Some participants were all also aware that they were outside the realms of the ideal already, whether by being a person of colour, short, balding, fat, disabled or otherwise. Height, facial symmetry and six packs were seen as something only a few could realistically achieve and the use of airbrushing also cemented the impossibility of attaining the ideal. As Gordon explains:

Researcher: "So how achievable is this ideal then?"

Gordon: "Not really. Like unless you can airbrush yourself with a knife or something [laughs]."

The ideal was also unrealistic because it was seen as constantly changing so as to be unreachable, according to participants. As Gordon further notes:

"You can focus on [achieving the corporate ideal] and even if you do obtain every single pigeon hole on [the flipchart] they'll be something new in 5 years that would change it and mix it up and that would be brought in by the media like..."

Participants identified a long list of costs that arose with trying to pursue the ideal. This included psychological (e.g., low self-esteem, depression), physical (e.g., side effects associated with steroids), financial and general life costs (detracting from relationships with others and from academic/work life). In addition to individual costs, there were also societal costs identified by participants. These included a loss of diversity in appearances, superficial relationships (platonic and non-) and a poor legacy left for future generations.

The benefits that participants were told came with the ideal were recognized as not guaranteed and also unrealistic. Participants acknowledged that optimal health would not necessarily come with conforming to the ideal, nor would success or happiness. These made the ideal a waste of time, uninteresting, and ultimately, meaningless. As Rob states:

"Just because you have been able to look that way doesn't mean you have actually had a good life. It doesn't mean that you have lived like a happy life. You probably spent half the time at the gym. Probably you know physically, physically in pain from what you are doing and that's not a happy life. That's not an ideal life. So ideal body doesn't really equal ideal life".

The second half of this theme is the minimization of the ideal. Specifically, despite this general awareness of the ideal and readiness to critique it, participants' own vulnerability to it was minimized. This was somewhat paradoxical in the sense that

the ideal was so readily identifiable and powerful yet was also described as having no influence on participants or their friends. Specifically, participants would deny having any body dissatisfaction when asked outright; responding that men were not too fussed about their appearance or that they themselves were generally comfortable. As *Dustin* and *Robert* demonstrate:

Dustin: “*To be honest it seems that none of us really care too much about our appearances.*

Robert: “*Yeah*”

Dustin: “*It's like, what there isn't much that's stops us and that I'd say*”

The minimization of body dissatisfaction was extant. It sometimes translated into a reluctance to participate in the discussions at first, to write the homework letter or most evidently in participants complimenting their own appearance (i.e., the mirror exercise). Participants would attribute this minimization to a fear of being seen as vain, feminine or indeed because they did not realise the corporate appearance ideal affected them. As *Rob* states:

“We don't want to believe that we're actually pressuring ourselves to just become [the ideal. It's become] a part of our thinking and what we do. We don't think of it as being pressured we just think of it as the right thing to do because we have been brought up in a society where we have been told its the right thing. So we are not aware of it being a pressure. It's just a way of what we do”.

Furthermore, this minimization was furthered by a suggestion that the only costs to pursuing the corporate appearance ideal were those that resulted in clinical disorders (such as eating disorders or depression particularly for women). Other costs such as low self-esteem, anxiety or even just the sheer time and energy that wanting to change your appearance entails were not considered by participants as evidence that the corporate appearance ideal affected them. As *Bill* demonstrates:

“I think it's fair to say that we feel like [affected by the corporate ideal] but it's not something we feel we have to do. So it's not a problem. It's you know you have your ideal thing that you could aim for but it's not something that you are under pressure to do at the moment. With some people's anorexia [they] feel they are under pressure and that's why they do it”.

To summarise Theme 1, participants described the corporate appearance ideal consistently. They were well aware of its potency and were already critical of it. Somewhat paradoxically, a widespread minimization occurred where participants were quick to dismiss any inclination that they or other men were affected by it.

Theme 2: ‘But affect us it does’: The impact of the ideal

Despite the extant minimization (in Theme 1), almost all participants would later or inadvertently indicate that they did indeed suffer the consequences of the ideal and did have body dissatisfaction. For example, Lee said at the start of his session: “*I honestly can’t think of [any appearance pressure] that annoys me. I was going to think of trying to say something but I can’t even*”. Not until later in the intervention did he mention that he was concerned about gaining weight: “*I can more or less eat what I want but if I was I think the worse, my worst thing would be [to be] overweight, that’s what I worry about most*”.

Almost all participants referred to body dissatisfaction; whether it was something about their appearance they disliked, hated or wanted to change. For example, gaining muscle and losing body fat was seen as universally important by participants. This was something that participants perceived to be desired by all young men. Therefore to admit it, as if it was particular to that participant individually, and not a universal concern, seemed odd. Body dissatisfaction were not exclusively tied to muscles or body fat. Participants worried about departing from all aspects of the corporate ideal. Those who already deviated or perceived themselves to deviate from the ideal spoke of this with frustration; how they hated their receding hairline, their lack of height, their blemished skin, skinny frame, small feet, baby-looking face, or protruding stomachs etc. As Jake shows:

“Because all my life I have always been made fun of [my height]. I have always been one of the oldest in my year. Especially during primary you get a bad assumption that ‘oh if someone is older they are therefore taller’. People never believed me of my age because of my height so...And that’s not something that I can control. That’s just something that I am going to be, this height and I highly doubt I am ever going to be growing anymore taller. So hearing girls say ‘I could never go out with a guy that’s shorter than me’ when I am either the same height as most girls or sometimes a little bit smaller it kind of pisses me off”.

“I would say like the kind of hair thing for me... I’m getting a receding hairline which is why I’ve actually not cut my hair for like 3 months or something because I’m just trying to get it to grow over the receding hairline....it does get to me...it’s just the fact that you’re losing your hair or going to lose your hair is just a demeaning thing” (Greg).

"What I don't like is I got a proper baby face. And that's the sort of thing I don't like. Like I can't grow fuck all facial hair. And if I do grow it comes up as some sort of half-hearted Beppe D'Marco [former British TV character]" (Brad).

Others indicated anxiety about departing from the ideal in the future by getting fat, ageing or losing their hair: "*I suppose like a lot of us will probably end up going er like bald or some point...Yeah I don't think anyone really wants to [laughs]...to lose their hair*" (Raymond). Participants were well aware of ageing's inevitable effect on the body and the impossibility of stopping it. Participants would see this departure as disadvantaging them in the future; being concerned about a loss of respect, status and opportunity. They were also aware already of the discrimination and stigma that those who were fat, old, disabled or who departed otherwise from the ideal faced. Therefore they would be reluctant to join these ranks. This was particularly acute with weight gain, with participants describing with horror how they would feel if they ever got fat. For some participants this fate, so bleak in its outlook, was a significant worry and participants would refer back to their healthy eating and exercise plans, and even future cosmetic surgery, with hopes of staving off this change. Alternatively, participants might report they were in fact worried about their appearance through their behaviours such as refusing to wear certain T-shirts that they felt did not flatter them. Or avoiding swimming and other activities (e.g., getting changed in the gym) that would involve displaying their bodies:

"We were going to this erm hot tub party like last week and erm and I was like 'right I'm going to like I'm going to get in super good shape for this hot tub party'. Because obviously it's like tops off and that and then erm it came up really quickly like this weekend and I was like: 'oh crap [I've got no time]' [laughs]" (Gabriel).

Many felt compelled to gel their hair every day with some doing it "every single day for the past 2 years" (Jake). As Robin notes:

Researcher: "What if your straighteners broke?"

Robin: "I would cry...I would order a new pair and not go out until they arrive....Mine have actually broken and I didn't go out until my new ones came first class post (laughs)".

Researcher: "I don't usually wear sleeveless t-shirts like out and about because I feel subconscious without the arms and stuff".

Body dissatisfaction would manifest itself in participant lives through a variety of ways. Some participants, for instance, would discuss their current strict food plans

(without using the word ‘diet’ which was perceived as an exclusively feminine practice). These diets were often high protein and low fat that participants hoped would achieve substantial muscle gains. Other participants took supplements including protein shakes, creatine or other ‘muscle gaining’ substances:

Mark: “Saying that I spend loads on protein [laughs]”.

Wayne: “Oh yeah of course I spend too much money on protein”.

Mark: “Yeah I spend about £50”.

Wayne: “Yeah I’ve got protein, creatine in there [the kitchen]. I’ve got...what else have I got? I’ve got green tea capsules recently because they’re supposed to get rid of body fat but in a natural way”.

Many were avoiding or wish they could avoid alcohol, fast food and sweets so as to lose body fat. Others might skip meals as *John* explains: “*I’ve had the experience of you know avoiding lunch and dinner and skipping meals*”. Others might ‘self-medicate’ their body dissatisfaction or other concerns by eating comforting/ takeaway food (but then immediately feeling guilty afterwards for having strayed off their food plans). Most participants did not eat intuitively. This became frustrating as *Tim* says:

“You want to have some flexibility [in what you eat]. Like ‘oh I want to go eat a chocolate bar’ or ‘I’m going to eat a takeaway’ do you know what I mean like it’s not fun being like ‘oh I’ve got to eat this’”.

Food practices were not the only realm in which the ideal dictated participants’ behaviour. The impact would occur from day to day, in subtle, pernicious and significant ways. Participants, for example, would avoid certain social situations:

Researcher: “Is there anything that either you don’t do that you should do or would like to do but your appearance stops you from doing it?”

Gordon: “Swim. I used to be on a swimming team and now I don’t dare go into the pool anymore”.

Kevin: “Yeah. Swimming with me like a lot of the time I’ve been stopped by like my spots like it’s just like put me off like wanting to yeah”.

Nathan: “Usually it’s after [eating] a big Dominos [pizza or something when] I would have just like keep my top on and get into bed”.

Others would avoid wearing clothes that were considered unflattering or would dress to disguise certain aspects of their appearance. For instance *Peter* described buying T-shirts that “*you don’t wear it for a while you buy it and then you just never wear it*”. Similarly *Mark* said: “*I bought a T-shirt I bought it on the day and my friend said ‘oh it doesn’t suit you’ and I haven’t really worn it properly yet*”

One participant refused to be in pictures as he disliked his lazy eye.

Another participant who was bald would avoid going out in public without a hat.

Another hated his smile:

"Yeah because I hate pictures because I know it is that it is seeing that perfect smile on TV. I think...I look at my smile and think 'no'. I never smile in pictures so I just never take them" (Lance)

This impact was also seen when participants described trying a behaviour that they would normally avoid because of body dissatisfaction. For example, Ned describes wearing a T-shirt on a night out that he considered unflattering:

Ned: "Er mine was to when going out with my mates to wear a T-shirt that I like. But it wasn't the best really [laughs] for me for making me feel confident really so like...I noticed that that I was like a lot less confident to be honest it was".

Researcher: "Oh I wasn't [aware?] you felt that. Oh no".

Ned: "Erm I coped okay like I didn't crack or react there was an opportunity to leave where I could have changed but I kept with it by the end of night I had forgotten about it....But maybe the first couple of hours it was it was quite a big deal I didn't think it would be but [it was]".

This impact would in turn affect participants' relationships with others, particularly romantic or sexual relationships. Participants would feel unable to approach potential partners in nightclubs or bars for instance, if they did not feel they conformed to the ideal. Others in relationships might avoid sex in order to not reveal their bodies to their partner:

"If I've like eaten a really big meal or like I've eaten a load of crap that day or like not been to the gym that day erm I would like [not have sex] and like my girlfriend would be like 'why there's no [reason] it's not even a big deal' like and I'd go like 'oh it's just me, I feel shit about [my stomach size]. It's nothing to do with you". (Gabriel)

"Erm I think the biggest thing that stuck out to me was that [pursuing the corporate appearance ideal] can affect your relationships with other people and stop from them getting to any deep level because it's always superficial and that's why, what I'd most like to avoid and why it doesn't make sense to me" (Jaye)

Due to this pervasive minimization, revealing being affected by the ideal and more significantly hearing that other participants were too, was relieving for participants. For example, Dustin had to disclaim that he was very embarrassed when admitting wearing a T-shirts that showed off his muscles:

"I put [on the worksheet] when I go to the gym tomorrow I will wear whatever's more comfortable. Normally I wear something that will like show

off my muscles or something like that. I am so embarrassed I am saying this [laughs]. I have to be honest but it's so embarrassing".

To disclose that appearance pressures affected participants was to break an unwritten rule (as in Theme 1). Participants would therefore admit to being embarrassed or ashamed not only of their appearances but also for having the shame in the first place, for being impacted, for being vulnerable. Being affected was described as "*ridiculous*" (Lee) as there was "*no real reason*" (Brad) and participants would chastise themselves to "*I said to myself what the fucks the matter with you sort yourself out*" (Brad). Andrew, who went to a pub without his cap (for the behavioural challenge) indicated this reluctance here: "*I did [the exercise] for you Glen.... just for you. I did that just [to show] a bit more commitment for you*".

To summarise Theme 2, despite earlier minimization participants reported that the ideal did affect them whether through dictating their behaviour, through having body dissatisfaction or through worrying about departing from the ideal. These effects, related to deviating from the ideal, were keenly and intimately felt and spoke to the ideal's potency in participants' everyday lives.

Theme 3: What's the point? The all-powerful ideal

Participants had to resist the corporate appearance ideals in their everyday life, as most have to. Critiquing the ideal then for many (e.g., in writing the letter or during the role play) came naturally. As Dean explains about how he found writing the letter task: "*Errr yeah I just I kind of felt like it was my own opinion anyway. So it wasn't really too difficult to write it*".

Participants presented themselves as savvy and literate about the promotion of the ideal. Participants were well aware of airbrushing, lighting tricks, flattering camera angles, dehydration and other techniques that made the corporate appearance ideal unrealistic and often inhuman. The media was often characterized by participants as appearance potent, a strong, unremitting and pervasive transmitter of the corporate appearance ideal. As well as something that was impossible to switch off from, that had grown in influence over the last 30 years and that targeted children and teenagers unfairly. As Lance demonstrates;

"One thing that annoys me is the media's portrayal of the perfect man. For example, in every single advert that you see with a male figure in it is always this muscular bound [man which] is so far flung from the actual real man".

Adverts limited to traditional forms of media were at least somewhat regulated; product placement would be restricted etc. But adverts on newer forms of media such as social media were unregulated and therefore intrusive. As *Curtis* explains:

"I, I just hate like all the ads that come up on the internet and YouTube and stuff. That just like stuff that I've never look at like things like all the protein things and stuff. It's like 'I don't care'.

Participants were also well aware that individual people themselves were not superficial. For example, participants explained that their male and female peers were more worried about their own looks than other people's appearances. That their family, friends and future or current romantic partners would not continually, ruthlessly compare them to the corporate appearance ideal:

"Because all we are doing is managing to convince ourselves that the media portrayal that portrayal is what we actually think of each other and it's... it's not. Its like I know if the girls saw me I would think 'oh my god she is expecting me to look like that' when actually she is thinking the complete opposite she is probably thinking the same thing but I am thinking I expect her to look like Angelina Jolie or Katy Perry or whatever and I am not.

That's just media's influence on us" (Tristam).

Participants would also acknowledge that people would become intermediate promoters of the ideal via their own exposure to mass media:

Raymond: "Even if you switch off the TV you are going to see an advert on your way to work"

Greg: "Even in just conversation just conversation because people then just talk about it what they have seen on TV or what they have read".

Participants would be empathetic about the costs of the ideal on other people.

Knowing the pain other people suffered, the difficulty other people had in resisting these pressures and people's value regardless and in spite of how they compared to the ideal. As *Rob* demonstrates:

"To be fair that is how it works in the world people are just randomly going on with their day and then they just start crying and you're like 'ohhh I'm concerned, I think I'm ugly'.

Instead of focusing the blame on people, participants were critical of corporations, and more broadly capitalism, for promoting this ideal. As *Kevin* explained: *"There is still like a market for...convincing guys to look like the ideal"*. In particular, participants cited the relentlessness and intrusiveness of the images and

discourses used by magazines, fitness and fashion corporations promoting the corporate appearance ideal in order to sell. The ideal would be used to sell everything and anything from men's underwear, watches, protein shakes, "slimming pills....muscle growth, steroids" (Jake), "hair products" (Rob) "gym memberships" (Dean) and "magazines" (Tim). Participants were understandably already annoyed. As *Curtis* noted: "*I'm sure that all the worst people profit from this stupid thing [the ideal]...you feel a bit like: 'Why? Why should they gain from that?*".

Further, participants knew that promoters of the ideal would stay silent about the costs of trying to pursue it. Gym memberships, hair loss creams and other products would also be criticized for not only being expensive, likely ineffective but also requiring purchase over a lifetime rather than one off: "*All the supplements are expensive you have to if you stop using them. You have to keep it up*" (Ned).

The promotion of the ideal to men was seen as more and more pervasive. Corporations were branching out into the previously untapped men's market to promote the ideal. Participants would discuss parts of supermarkets or entire shops newly dedicated to muscle supplements that would not have existed five years ago: "*you can get, you see [supplements] like [now] at Sainsburys at the local*" (Dean). The promotion of the ideal was unending and all powerful. For example, participants discussed shops strategically placing protein shakes and magazines with the corporate ideal on so that "*they were the last thing you see before you leave*" (Bill). Others knew that they were destined for failure in trying to achieve the corporate appearance ideal but even so the corporation would never be held to blame. Only the participant would. As Ted describes:

"If you get it wrong it's never the company's fault. If you don't get a six pack it's seems to be you've done something wrong. You [didn't follow] the guidelines, you didn't train hard, you didn't do that last set. Yeah it's always because you've failed".

Although participants were not uncritical consumers or cultural dopes of the ideal, this literacy did not extend to immunity. Few people were thought to be able to resist the corporate appearance ideal "*even if they were nowhere near [achieving] it*" (Raymond). Others felt they had been "*force fed advertising throughout the years*"

(John), that they were “*children of the technological damnation*” (Brad) and therefore were not able to “*flip a switch*” (Lee) that could stop them “*buying into [the ideal]*” (Robin).

This would be particularly acute in participants’ discussions of what to do about the ideal. Specifically, many participants would advocate a boycott of media, or more rarely, campaigns to change media (e.g., to less frequently and potently promote the corporate appearance ideal). Participants felt that campaigns challenging media appearance potency would likely fail. Implicit in participants’ descriptions was the notion that there was little people could do to affect media change; more was needed. Similarly this was also the case for boycotting of media:

Laurence: “I’m struggling a bit [to come up with ways to change the ideal]”.

Andrew: “Yeah. Like what [can I write]? Like ‘stop watching TV’ [sarcastically]?”

Researcher: “[laughs] Yeah. ‘Live in a hut’”.

Laurence: “Yeah stop watching films”.

Indeed participants would speak with weariness, knowing their critique was making little difference: “*But you just can’t help [buying into it] anymore after you’ve been seeing it about for the one hundred thousandth time*” (Ted) and “*I find it like annoying because you know that [airbrushing has] happened but it still looks good*” (Nathan). Well aware of the globalization of corporations and the ineffectiveness of consumers challenging them, a strong tone of hopelessness would come out of the discussions. As one participant described: “*It’s unrealistic...to tell the corporations to stop doing it*” (Bisha). In addition, seeming body positive moves were unmasked as tokenistic efforts in which corporations were still, unashamedly, pursuing profits rather than real, lasting, change. Specifically, it was felt that the ideal would have slightly different attributes every now and again so as to be continually unachievable as well as to tap into new markets:

Dean: “But even these curvier women [in the Dove ads] are in some form of shape. You know they’ve sort of trained to have those curves. You can’t just eat, and eat and eat. And then get that sort of full look you still, you it’s just like a different [beauty work/body sculpting] method isn’t it? It’s creating a different look and then this is then the new way that they’ve done it”.

Lance: “Slightly different diet, slightly different training”.

Dean: "Yeah. So it's still sort of the same....no, in fact it's exactly the same [appearance pressures] but it's just a different look".

Dove and Debenhams' moves towards promoting appearance diversity were held up in particular as co-optive and tokenistic:

Tim: "It really feels like things like that are just PR stunts...because like one, one place, one store, one town. And it feels like they're feeding off the s-, the reverse of the normal image to attract people to buy stuff and it's not really what they're intend[ing] like"

Rob: "It's just a marketing campaign that's all it is..... 'We've got these mannequins now come to us they're a healthy ratio. Look oh we're ethical, we've got ethics now".

Participants were cynical of Dove and Debenhams. They were knowing consumers who saw that profits were the main drive behind these moves. The promotion of the ideal and the possibility of real change seemed hopeless. It was felt then that there was little that a two-session intervention could do to make real, lasting, change. As Peter summed up:

"To be fair though we're, we're sat here and like chatting we've all got, we've all got these ideals [i.e., rejection of corporate appearance ideals] but there will come a point in the near future where we will reinforce this [indicates appearance ideal] ourselves. Like whether when we are out drinking or we are [inaudible] even though we know it's not, it's not right but there will be a point we will back it up. Even we're not like above it".

Paulo: "Maybe that's just because that's part of who we are now because...all through our life we've registered subliminal messages, we've been told [to]".

Peter: "That's, that's what I mean. It's gone too far like".

Understandably, participants did not like to think they were powerless. Nor that they had been duped by culture or that there was no hope. Some participants therefore reported distress taking part in the study. As Gordon shows:

Gordon: "I think the first questionnaire we did made me feel like utter shite...I have to say that...I was like [when answering it]: 'Oh my god' [laughs]... I was reading about it and it kept going 'I feel horrible about myself...I dislike myself' and I was like 'okay. I've always answered four questions truthfully and then there were several more, similar and I was just sort of like...'".

Kevin: "You're reminding yourself what's actually going on in your head".

Gordon: "Yeah exactly. Sometimes blissful ignorance is nice".

In summary of Theme 3, participants were for the most part aware of the ideal, its costs and how removed it was from reality. However, its ubiquity and perceived immutability became overwhelming. This meant participants would report distress from the study or for other participants holding such beliefs became untenable.

Subsequently, participants' deflated resignation had to be transformed into something else. Specifically, this resignation curtailed participants' analysis and critique of the ideal so that the ideal would be individualized. This forms the basis of Theme 4.

Theme 4: The individualization of the corporate appearance ideal

Participants would hold people as responsible for the corporate appearance ideal. A neoliberal discourse would take hold for many participants; so that changing appearance was seen as within an individual's control and reach and that an individual simply needed to "*eat right and put the work in*" (*Rob*). When people did not conform to the ideal it must have been because they were lazy and were therefore to blame for having body dissatisfaction. As *Sam* described: "[*The corporate appearance ideal*] is definitely possible through hard work but probably lots of people like try to take a shortcut". Here then participants seemed to forget the existence of the corporate appearance ideal and that some aspects of appearance aren't within anyone's control (hair loss, facial symmetry). Indeed even when the ideal was criticized as unobtainable, people would still be responsible for resisting it:

"So the problems more with the people's attitudes to it than what they are doing out there because it's up to the individuals to choose how they respond to [the ideal] would they believe it or go along with it really" (*Cole*). Other people were seen as responsible for promoting the corporate appearance ideal. Specifically, people that were "*superficial*" (*Ted*) and "*stuck up*" (*Brad*) caused participants and others to conform to corporate appearance ideals and therefore must be avoided. As *Jaye* summed up:

"Erm [to resist the corporate appearance ideal you should] remove yourself from groups of people who are very superficial which I've done recently. When I left that bar and I changed all my friends and left all those people behind. I think I'm realising how important it is to leave them because they're not going to have very important lives"

These people were commonly peers, friends and family members including parents and girlfriends. Participants would often report that their girlfriends were unhappy with the way they looked: "*anyone who has a girlfriend, or has had one, you know that somewhere they are conscious about their appearance*" (*Nathan*). Although participants would dismiss their own concerns with appearance, treating

these as mundane, their partner's concerns were treated with empathy. Here participants saw intimately how body dissatisfaction affected a person in myriad ways, perniciously, and in a way that comfort would rarely alleviate it. To participants their girlfriends should feel fine as to them they looked great. However, saying this and other means of comfort participants offered seemed to make little difference:

Bill: "Do you know like I don't think you could get through to a girl like no matter what you said, girls are just like [inaudible] like impossible

Robin: "You can't win"

Bill: "[Be]cause anything you say they will, they will have a go at you.

Robin: Like my girlfriend will be like [unhappy and I will be like] 'shut up like'

Cole: "Like I was like: 'You ask me the same question 50 times a day like it's the same answer: of course [you look okay]'

Johnathan: "I find the best solution is to choose a different phrase each time.

Richard "Whatever you say you've got to answer in a split second else [inaudible]".

Johnathan: "The worst answer is "um"...Never say that.

Cole: "They say 'do I look alright?' you say 'yeah' they say [puts on high pitch whiney voice] 'you didn't even look at me!'

Richard: You look the same as you [normally] do"

Understandably participants were frustrated. Their partner's concerns were construed as irrational, constant and immune to comfort. However this frustration often turned into dismissiveness; women's concerns would be regarded then as some essential characteristic of being a women rather than a reaction to the female corporate appearance ideal that woman faced. Thus despite the lived experience and many pronouncements that people were not the originators of the corporate appearance ideals, participants would still pathologise people as somehow responsible. This legitimate anger at the tyranny of the ideal was displaced onto people.

School was a particularly evocative time for participants who described a particularly strong pressure to conform and focus on corporate appearance ideals from peers:

"Next to my high school there was like a leisure centre gym. Everyone would go over there. It only seemed to be a small amount of people [who started going] but they would, you know, they would try and get other people to go as well" (Peter).

“Yeah that’s what used to annoy me. Like lads at school just going around and talking about how much they can bench” (Bishal).

Two particular figures emerged as chiefly responsible for these pressures. The first was the Hench Guy (also variously described as “Gym Monkeys” (Ryan), “Roid Ragers” (Peter), “Meat Heads” (Andrew) and “Protein Shakers” (Laurence). Hench Guys were described as gym obsessed, materialistic and impractically muscular. They were seen as comically being invested in the corporate appearance ideal. In particular their behaviours such as fake tanning, removing all body hair, having tribal tattoos, straightening their hair, wearing vest tops or V-necked jumpers to deliberately show off their chest and arm muscles were considered extreme, vain and embarrassing. As Brad, who described himself as a former “Roid Rager” discussed:

“I know those type of people that are ‘Protein Shakers’ and just love the gym. And there is nothing you can really say to them because they have got this whole lad mentality that it’s going to get them girls and [they have to] look buff all the time. And I don’t know maybe not [starting] fights but just that looking [the] part and stuff it intimidates [others]. It’s difficult to get someone out of that”.

Hench Guys were described as “being overly confident” (Jake), “lack[ing] intelligence” (Matt) and very often taking and selling steroids. Occasionally Hench Guys would suffer the consequences of steroid abuse such as having a “moon face [where] somebody has got a big sort of round face” (Matt), “testicular shrinkage” (Ted) and “bald[ness]” (Matt). These consequences were Hench Guys’ own fault rather than some of the many costs that came with trying to conform to the corporate appearance ideal. Although some participants acknowledged the reductionist views about women Hench Guys had, as contributors to lad culture, the strongest criticism was reserved for the pressures Hench Guys exerted onto participants themselves via pushing steroids, muscle gains or generally dictating how participants should live. The ‘do you lift bro’ memes were seen by participants as effective satire of Hench Guys (see also **Image 1**; VanManner, 2012). In the

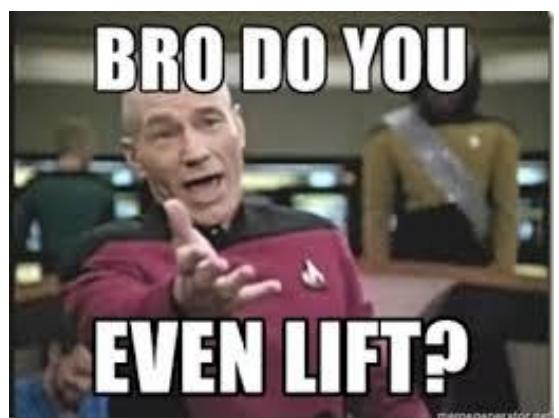


Image 1: “Do you lift bro?” meme relating to Theme 4 of Study 2

role-play exercise, the most common role participants played was that of the ‘steroid obsessed’ guy also indicating the popularity of this figure.

Some participants regarded the Hench Guys sympathetically; attributing their perceived obsession, superficiality and other flaws to the fault of the corporate appearance ideal rather than them as a person. Nonetheless, participants still felt Hench Guys were a problem to be around and that once the Hench Guy was ‘got at’ it was very difficult to persuade them of the ideal’s costs.

The second figure to emerge as responsible for the corporate appearance ideal was the ‘Superficial Woman’. A minority of participants, some of whom were particularly dominant in the intervention sessions, characterised women as vacuous, superficial and judgemental towards men. In particular, participants referenced women pressuring men to conform to the corporate appearance ideal. For example, *Mark* argued that “*I think woman are actually worse than men for [being superficial]*” whilst *Wayne* claimed: “*It's the...women [who] introduced [appearance pressures] though I think*”.

Although women were seen as being inherently invested in the corporate appearance ideals, the costs associated with this investment were dismissed by some participants as “*whining*” (*Greg*) or as self-created as “*all women create their own problems*” (*Wayne*). Conversely, participants minimized their own and other men’s roles in pressuring women to conform to corporate ideals as being “*just what lads do isn't it?*” (*Brad*) and “*how guys [were]*” (*Jake*). Occasionally this would spill over into misogyny in which women were referred to as having “*nothing between the ears [and] slid[ing] through life on their back[s]*” (*Brad*).

Not all of the participants cite the ‘Superficial Woman’ figure as causing body dissatisfaction. Some discussed pro-feminist attitudes and many showed empathy for woman who suffered with body dissatisfaction. Others acknowledged that the pressure to conform to the corporate beauty could be stronger for women. For example, *Lance* said: “*I think it's definitely still worse for women because media [is always] sexualising girls [and that]*”. Nonetheless, the availability of this figure in the groups was rarely challenged by other participants.

Such was the availability of this figure that women’s influence was actually seen as stronger than culture. Specifically some participants blamed women

above the media: “*Oh erm well obviously I just hate, hate the pressure [to look perfect]. It’s not mostly from the media it’s actually just from women*” (Dean).

Similarly, *Mark*, decried the ubiquity of hairless men in the media but instead of addressing his concerns to media industry leaders addressed them to women:

“I mean come on, like the chances of, like say for instance, if I had the body for it, I’d never be able to get a modelling [job] because [editors would] like Photoshop every single bit of hair off me. Which is, it’s such a pain for guys like: ‘Guys don’t look like that, women, they look hairier’”.

Relating to the above, culture would actually be disavowed in favour of the influence of people as *John* demonstrates:

Researcher: “Is there anything you wanted to say in this session, in the last session, that you didn’t?”

John: “No, just that sort of you can’t blame the corporations that put up the adverts. It’s more about educating people then putting the blame on how people make money”.

The solutions to undoing body dissatisfaction participants gave were largely about people changing their attitudes, beliefs or behaviours. For instance participants recommended that it would help if people “*stopped comparing themselves to others*” (*Cole*), became “*positive role models*” (*Rob*), “*talk[ed] more about appearance in this sort of way*” (*Tim*) or “*focus[ed] more on the personality [rather] than appearance*” (*Dustin*). Even other changes that seemed to be about changing the culture were actually about people changing their behaviour. For instance, participants recommended creating “*a social norm for people not to use steroids*” (*Ted*) and to have “*a campaign [that] question[ed] the legitimacy of] people who criticise[d] appearances*” (*Greg*) rather than a campaign against corporations that profit from body dissatisfaction.

Participants would sometimes critique not the promotion of the ideal but those people whose reactions to it were seen as excessive or vain. For example, when participants engaged in the intervention *Quick Fire Task*, they would often critique the corporate appearance ideal not because of the costs it incurred but through cosmetic surgery that might be used to achieve the ideal. Cosmetic surgery was seen as excessive, farcical and frivolous and the ideal was to be resisted because it led to cosmetic surgery. This was instead of the ideal being critiqued and cosmetic surgery being regarded as a potential cost that came with

pursuing the ideal because it was unhealthy, expensive or impairing for the individual otherwise.

Participants were led to the individualization of the corporate appearance ideal by the intervention and myself. For example, participants' readiness to adopt the "*steroid obsessed guy*" (*Brad*) role in the role plays was an example of a role that I, not they, suggested. Furthermore during the intervention I referred to some men as "*obsessive*" and blamed people for making me feel fat rather than culture. In one group, I implied a participants' actor friend should turn down a film role if the agents asked him to put on muscle, implying it was his responsibility to not conform to the corporate appearance ideal rather than the film industry's not to pressure him. Finally, one of the questions participants are asked in the intervention was "*Can you think of any ways that we put pressure on ourselves to try and attain the corporate appearance ideal?*" (*Sam*).

To summarise Theme 4 then, participants held people as responsible for causing the ideal and thus also as responsible for resisting it. In particular two figures, the 'Superficial Woman' and Hench Guy, became embodied targets of participants' very reasonable anger. This occurred at the expense of seeing anything larger as responsible for the ideal's promotion.

DISCUSSION

Theme 1 explored how men minimized the impact of the ideal. Despite consistently and readily identifying the ideal and acknowledging its heavy promotion (see also Theme 3) somewhat paradoxically participants were quick to dismiss any suggestion that it impacted them. This relates to the tendency to imagine oneself immune from cultural or corporate influence and to situate responsibility for wellbeing at the individual (see Gill, 2008; see also Chapter 9 for a discussion of neoliberalism). This has been particularly documented as the third person effect in body dissatisfaction research i.e., the trend for participants to describe the media as having great influence on others but none on themselves whatsoever (P. W. Davison, 1983; Diedrichs et al., 2011).

The minimization of the impact of the ideal for men in particular is pervasive within Western society as it has been documented in Australia (Diedrichs, Kelly & Lee, 2010), New Zealand (McCabe et al., 2011), the UK (Grogan & Richards, 2002; Gill et al., 2005), Canada (Bottamini & Ste-Marie, 2006) and the US (Olivardia, Pope, Mangweth & Hudson, 1995). In addition, it does not appear to be limited to adult men. Specifically, Taylor (2011) noted in her ethnographic research that her US male participants aged 11-14 years could not be seen to be emotionally affected by other's appearance teasing whereas Ricciardelli, McCabe and Ridge (2006) noted a similar reluctance in their Australian high-school male participants aged between 15 and 17 years.

One explanation for this minimization is provided by a participant in Adams, Turner and Buck's (2005, p. 275) focus group study: “[Men] don't want to be seen to be weak by admitting that they don't feel very happy with themselves’ Similarly, other researchers have found men and boys refer to having body dissatisfaction as being unmasculine, weak and ‘uncool’ (Adams et al., 2005; Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2006b) or more frequently, vain (Gill et al., 2005). Admitting body dissatisfaction is difficult for men then perhaps because it contravene standards of hegemonic masculinity.

Men face a gendered barrier in disclosing body dissatisfaction. This is not purely a myth. This should not mean, however, that men do not want to talk about body dissatisfaction problems or indeed other issues (Oliffe & Mroz, 2005). As

mentioned in Chapter 4, participants' strongest praise for the intervention was its group setting and the space it created to talk. It is critical for interventionists to persevere with men, to dig and to not accept at face value that men do not have body dissatisfaction. Overall this strength of the intervention legitimized it as a form of support for men with body dissatisfaction, even when accounting for its limitations (e.g., its individualizing nature). Therefore spaces in which men can disclose problems including their body dissatisfaction could be usefully created by researchers who advocate against men's body dissatisfaction.

Indeed, the intervention's very value may have been because it allowed men to disclose these concerns. Specifically cognitive dissonance may not necessarily be the mechanism through which the intervention was effective. Instead, participants strongly praised the intervention for allowing them to hear other men critique the ideal and providing a space in which men could discuss these issues. One study actually explored this with *The Body Project* (Cruwys et al., 2015). The authors assessed how normal and common participants' perceived disordered eating was among other women. They found that the intervention reduced these perceptions and it was this reduction that predicted the intervention's effectiveness, rather than cognitive dissonance per se. The benefit of groups spaces has long been evidenced by feminists through consciousness raising groups (Bordo, 2003) and health promoters e.g., through promoting men's health in football stadium settings (White & Witty, 2009). Bordo (2003, p. 30) offers insight as to why this might be beneficial:

"In our present culture of mystification- a culture which continually pulls us away from systematic understanding and includes us toward constructions that emphasize individual freedom, choice, power, ability – simply becoming more conscious is a tremendous achievement. (As Marx insisted, changes in consciousness are changes in life, and in a culture that counts on our remaining unconscious they are political as well)".

Theme 2 highlighted the impact of the ideal on participants. In various, pernicious ways, participants suffered because of the ideal despite their extant minimization (as occurred in Theme 1). The impact ranged from disordered eating, to social anxiety and avoidance of revealing their bodies. This was pervasive with almost all participants revealing some body dissatisfaction which follows other research that

has documented the myriad and highly prevalent impact of the ideal on men (e.g., Adams et al., 2005; Bordo, 1999; Tiggemann, Martins, & Churhett, 2008).

Participants concerns could have been mistaken as women's. Women have long suffered in their relationships with their hair, food and revealing their bodies (Bordo, 2003; Rumsey & Harcourt, 2012; Wolf, 1991). That men in this study had these issues too, shows the power of the ideal and pervasiveness of body dissatisfaction. It should be borne in mind though, that unlike women, men may still be able to find value beyond their appearance (Bordo, 2003; Davis, 2002) and certainly are able to find more representations of themselves that do not conform to corporate appearance ideals in mass media (Buote et al., 2011; Jankowski, Fawkner, et al., 2014). The greater pervasiveness of the corporate appearance ideal for women should not be erased, particularly when a feminist backlash is so strong (Bordo, 2003; Gill, 2008). Nonetheless, as Bordo (2003) has noted, the promotion of the corporate appearance ideal effaces differences; increasingly it does not discriminate in who it targets and profits from. So today, men are now having to contend with what women have had to for so long. This is also mirrored in other research finding men's dissatisfaction increasingly mirror women's (e.g., Bordo, 1999a; Frith & Gleeson, 2004; Gough, Seymour-Smith, & Matthews, 2015).

Body dissatisfaction impacted men on a day to day basis, in intimate and subtle ways. A particular way in which the impact of the ideal is demonstrated is through the high prevalence of protein shakes and other substances taken for muscle gain (e.g., creatine, ephedrine). As other research has documented (Hall et al., 2015a, 2015b) the use of these is fast becoming normative in men's lives, particularly with whole sections and shops dedicated to their sale. Nonetheless, participants were somewhat cynical about these product's efficacy, often believing them to be overpriced. Furthermore the health problems (such as acne and heart problems with steroids) were well known, attached as they were by participants to Hench Guys (in Theme 4). This also highlights the attendant role of corporations, through the selling of products such as protein shakes etc., in driving these participants' body dissatisfaction.

Furthering the minimization of the ideal (Theme 1), participants would characterize its impacts as mundane and not necessarily a problem. Subsequently

this could easily have been mistaken as trivial by researchers. Each instance, for example, of men avoiding social situations so as not to reveal their bodies were described by participants as sensible, as obvious, as inevitable. As something everyone does. Researchers could collude in this minimization too as these impacts would not be classified as full blown clinical disorders. Nonetheless, these impacts ultimately form a part of the same suffering with the exception of their recognition being more pernicious.

Participants knew how arbitrary and unfair a standard the corporate appearance ideal was (Theme 3). Its entirety was unobtainable, few aspects were within an individual's control (e.g., hair loss, height) and although some exceptions to the ideal were permitted these must be strictly compensated for. This relates to masculine capital in which men are allowed to depart from certain domains of hegemonic standards of masculinity if they are perceived to have sufficient capital in other domains (De Visser, Smith, & McDonnell, 2009; Gough, 2013). For example, David Beckham's flirtation with the sarong was acceptable even impressive to participants in DeVisser and colleagues' focus group study because of his sporting prowess. But just as exceptions do not disprove the power of the corporate appearance ideal nor do they disprove the power of hegemonic masculinity. So despite having the sporting prowess David Beckham has, professional rugby player Ian Robert's homosexuality was, according to the participants, an unacceptable breach of hegemonic masculinity. He had gone too far.

Participants were highly media literate, often sceptical of advertising and corporations already. They were also aware of the co-option of body dissatisfaction advocacy by corporations such as *Dove* and *Debenhams*. Many were angry already, reflecting the pervasiveness of body dissatisfaction and how everybody is in some form or another contending with corporate appearance ideals (beyond any intervention). Literacy was not immunity and a strong tone of resignation characterized the discussions.

Some participants expressed great empathy for people experiencing appearance pressures, particularly their girlfriends. Many knew that people themselves were not superficial and were as likely to be effected by the corporate

appearance ideal as they were. All valued their friends and family members as supportive. Others too espoused values aligned with the Health At Every Size (HAES) movement without ever even having heard of HAES. For example, some participants hoped for all to be treated with respect regardless of weight. Here then on some level participants knew that people were not responsible for the corporate appearance ideal.

Nonetheless, there was a widespread individualization of the corporate appearance ideal (Theme 4). Participants frequently drew upon neoliberalism to describe their own body dissatisfaction. This reflects a choice discourse: '*Doing it for myself*'. How cosmetic surgery/ make up/ beauty practices are often couched in a 'I'm doing it for me, not any man' post-feminist discourse (Bordo, 2003; Gill, 2007). This divorces acknowledgement that these decisions are unconsciously or consciously influenced by broader factors (e.g., the corporate appearance ideal). In addition, despite knowing people did not themselves benefit from the promotion of the ideal, that indeed many suffered when trying to promote it, participants slipped back into individualizing it. People were depicted as promoting it and as responsible for combatting it. Notably, this was embodied by two figures: Hench Guys and Superficial Women.

Arguably though participants were simply following the researcher's and intervention's suit, by individualizing these problems (Theme 4). This intervention does not move beyond the individual. Although it does encourage participants to petition against media or corporations, this is still placing responsibility on the individual to act. The individual focus is furthered too because this sample was not a pre-existing group unlike other samples that have gone through the intervention (e.g., Becker, Plasencia, Kilpela, Briggs, & Stewart, 2014). Specifically when the intervention was implemented in US sororities the intervention was also able to change the sorority culture (as well as the individual focus). Similarly, *PRIDE: Body dissatisfaction Program®* (Brown and Keel, 2015), the version of *The Body Project* for gay men, attempts to use gay men's shared identity and affiliation with gay culture to change the gay community's focus on appearance ideals. Participants in this sample arguably had no such community base being only

students of the same university with some only knowing each other for a month or so before taking part in the intervention.

Participants were asked individualizing questions such as “*what can we do as people to resist the corporate appearance ideal?*” and were asked as individual people to account for their body dissatisfaction. Further by talking to people about their individual body dissatisfaction problems it inadvertently blames the individual person by placing responsibility onto them. This is a significant limitation of the intervention.

The intervention assumes that body dissatisfaction can be overcome at the individual level. But must we do more? It may be naïve for the researcher to believe they have the power to help participants (A. Blake & Gibson, 2015). This intervention implicitly assumed that the corporate appearance ideal the participant faced could be overcome through a short term intervention. This contradicts the evidence showing how powerful and pervasive it is. Participants knew this too, as much as they praised the space given to talk, they were also sceptical that the intervention could ever be a silver bullet.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has presented the qualitative method, results and discussion of the intervention. This chapter builds on Chapter 3 by expanding on the evaluation of the intervention, in particular it suggests that although the intervention may have been promising in raising consciousness about the ideal it was also limited and contradicted by encouraging an individualizing perspective. This also concurs with the failure to improve some body dissatisfaction related outcomes at follow up (as revealed in Chapter 3) to be present at 3 month follow up. Chapter 5 argues why this individualizing focus is limiting.

CHAPTER 5:

THE MEDIA'S EFFECT ON MEN'S BODY DISSATISFACTION

INTRODUCTION

Chapters 1 - 4 highlighted the problem of body dissatisfaction for men. Interventions to improve men's body dissatisfaction were reviewed and one promising intervention was adapted and evaluated for men. The evaluations (Chapters 3 and 4) showed the intervention, although promising, was limited in its scope to make meaningful, long-term improvements in men's body dissatisfaction. This next chapter follows on from these chapters by reviewing research on the causes of body dissatisfaction in order to understand why the intervention was limited.

Body dissatisfaction research focuses on the individual

Like the majority of health psychology, the biomedical model and more occasionally the biopsychosocial model represents the dominant paradigm in which body dissatisfaction issues are explained in research (Cash & Smolak, 2011a; Mielewczik & Willig, 2007). This can be seen through the dominance of clinical and psychological-based treatments and interventions for body dissatisfaction and eating disorders (Bordo, 2003; Irving, 1999; Levine & Smolak, 2006). One of the key assumptions of these models is body dissatisfaction and eating disorders are clinical abnormalities (Bordo, 2003). That certain people's relationships with food and/or their appearance can be diagnosed as abnormal by the appropriate professional and corrected with the right treatment. If some people are able to cope in a particular '*cultural soil*', goes the argument, whilst others do not, then there must be factors specific to people that cause these disorders (and that are also open to correction; Bordo, 2003). The focus on body dissatisfaction must be on these individual factors and not on a cultural soil, it is concluded (Bordo, 2003).

Instead if body dissatisfaction and disordered eating are treated as continuums on which most, if not all, people fall (which is as Bordo (2003) notes, not the same as diagnosing particular expressions of suffering into the 'catch all' DSM-V category Other Specified Feeding or Eating Disorder, OSFED; American Psychiatric Association, 2013) than to look at individual factors relating to these

disorders misses the bigger picture (Bordo, 2003; Gleeson & Frith, 2006). Namely that what unites people is experiencing food and body related distress. This is larger than any individual iteration in a person's genes, hormones, personalities or family environment. It is culture (Bordo, 2003). The river metaphor is appropriate here: body dissatisfaction researchers can continue pulling people out of the river downstream (treating individual body dissatisfaction problems) or they can go upstream and find out who is pushing people in in the first place (i.e., causing body dissatisfaction problems to start with; Scott-Samuels, 2014). What is important about the disordered eating and body dissatisfaction spectrum is not the specific iterations in which people present their suffering, but their shared uniformity: the epidemic of body dissatisfaction, where if you ask the right questions most people will say they want to correct some aspect of their own appearance- even if only a little bit; where most people fear their own body weight whether because it is too high, too low, or more usually because it has the potential to be either. It becomes clear then that in this cultural soil, regardless of clinical diagnoses of what is and is not in need of intervention, very few people are coping. A remarkable consistency exists with seven billion different appearances: a widespread dissatisfaction.

Only one approach in psychology considers non individual factors to body dissatisfaction: this is the sociocultural perspective. Within this approach the focus on the social, or of how people place appearance pressures on others, is heavy. For example, the Tripartite Influence Model of body dissatisfaction and eating disorders (Thompson, Heinberg, et al., 1999) locates appearance pressures from family and friends as two of three causes of body dissatisfaction, with the other being media (Cash & Smolak, 2011a; Menzel, Small, Thompson, Sarwer, & Cash, 2011). More recently, the model has been extended to include appearance pressures from romantic partners (Tylka, 2011) as well as gay community involvement (Tylka & Andorka, 2012). In total then the model holds four different groups of people and one single cultural entity (media) as causes of body dissatisfaction. Regardless of the author's intentions, readers may be left with the implication that people are four times as strong a source of appearance pressures as media is. If not, why is the media not split into its component parts such as

television, magazines, social media etc. and family members, partners and friends grouped into one single entity: people?

More broadly, the focus on how family environment or peers contribute to the development of body dissatisfaction and eating disorders occupies a sizeable proportion of research on body dissatisfaction (see: Cash & Smolak, 2011; Galioto, Karazsia, & Crowther, 2012). This extends to body dissatisfaction practice as many interventions and campaigns focus on how people can undo the appearance pressures they place on themselves and on other people (Irving, 1999). For example, in the *Body Project* interventions participants are asked how they and other people can stop placing appearance pressures on themselves (Becker & Stice, 2011).

A further example of this focus on the individual arose from work done in 1994 by Nichter and Vuckovic. This work entailed an ethnography of girls' embodiment and discourses around their bodies in a school and was first published as a chapter in *Fat Talk* (Nichter & Vuckovic, 1994). Body dissatisfaction researchers, including myself, quickly latched onto this concept and rushed to document how prevalent fat talk was and how it was related to body dissatisfaction (Jankowski, Diedrichs, & Halliwell, 2013; Stice, Maxfield, & Wells, 2003). Soon a detailed exploration of how appearance pressures 'got inside' girls and their friendship groups so that their embodiment was self-disciplined and self-governed (Nichter, 2000; Nichter & Vuckovic, 1994) quickly turned into a narrow hypothesis that body dissatisfaction problems were caused by fat talk and that to end fat talk would be to end body dissatisfaction problems. The analysis stopped there. Body dissatisfaction researchers, including myself, turned a critique of the toxic culture into a critique of people. Why people were engaging in fat talk in the first place was not considered. Instead the *Fat Talk Free* campaign and *Fat Talk Free* work zones were born (Butterfly Foundation, 2013; Gill & Elias, 2014; Succeed, 2013). Researcher's good intentions to reduce body dissatisfaction served in some cases only to silence people's suffering. No longer able to fat talk, the person was just supposed to stay quiet and get over their body dissatisfaction themselves, in whatever way they could. As Gill and Elias (2014, p. 185) observe: "*women's difficult relationships to their own embodied selves are both dislocated from their*

structural determinants in patriarchal capitalism and shorn of their psychosocial complexity".

A focus on culture's role in body dissatisfaction is needed

Focusing on people as the cause of body dissatisfaction pathologises people (Kane, 2010). This is particularly true because each group of people outlined in The Tripartite Influence model (Thompson, Covert, et al., 1999) are likely to be related to the individual for reasons other than appearance e.g., through love (romantic, familial or platonic) or shared experiences originating from injustices (e.g., gay community involvement) or for the myriad reasons that people interact beyond each other's appearance. In general, people themselves do not inherently endorse corporate appearance ideals. They do not love their child, their family member or friend because of their conformity to corporate appearance ideals. Indeed it is much more likely to be the opposite; people love each other not *because of* but *regardless of, in spite of* their conformity to corporate appearance ideals.

In addition, the corporate appearance ideal is never adaptive for people. Body and food related distress or the other myriad associated costs do not help people, they hinder them. Indeed, even if there was some advantage to conforming to the corporate appearance ideal, as unachievable as it is, any benefits would be far outweighed by the costs (e.g., constant maintenance, fear of ageing, strict diets etc.).

The focus on the social, on the family environment, or peer influence, is to the detriment of our analysis in the field of body dissatisfaction. For instance, when considering a daughter's anorexia, instead of seeing what the family, including her, is battling against (of the pro-ana websites, of the covert *Slimfast* product placement on TV), we're too busy deciding how one caused their daughter's anorexia. Other crude understandings of family or ethnic group, which uphold the assumption that people are more powerful than culture, has led to a double whammy of stigmatization for some (Bordo, 2003). For example, African American women with anorexia report shame in developing a condition that body dissatisfaction researchers proclaim them resistant from (Bordo, 2003). But as Bordo writes "*no one lives in a bubble of self-generated 'dysfunction' or permanent*

immunity" (Bordo, 2003, p. xx). All people, even body dissatisfaction researchers, exist within a culture.

Even when people do place pressures on others to modify their appearances, independent of corporate appearance ideals, this pressure is hardly as disembodying, unachievable or as strong as that of the corporate appearance ideals. For example, the UK *Goth* subculture arguably has a pressure for people to wear black clothing and dark make up (Fox, 2005). Regardless of whether this appearance pressure is helpful or unhelpful, compared to the corporate appearance ideals it is very weak. A person can leave the *Goth* subculture and escape the pressure. It is arguably impossible for a person to completely avoid exposure to mass advertising that features the corporate appearance ideal as no one can avoid buses, pop up internet adverts or even urinals. Ultimately a person's actions or a group of people's (e.g., *Goths*) actions are far smaller and have far less impact than a culture. What is an airbrushed international billboard advertising campaign for a skin bleaching cream compared to the actions of one mother over her two children? Even if body dissatisfaction researchers managed to get people to change their behaviour, to no longer fat talk for instance, the impact of this will still be minimal compared to the impact of capitalism. Body dissatisfaction researcher's efforts then are better focused on the causes and originators of these appearance pressures given their much greater impact.

It is not to say that in certain situations people have never pressured each other and themselves to embody corporate appearance ideals. But it is to emphasize that people can only ever be intermediaries of the corporate appearance ideals. This is because people themselves are responding to a corporate appearance ideal that they have been taught is important, paramount even, to attain. So on the occasions when mothers do influence their children's body dissatisfaction (which is vastly over emphasized in the research relative to father's influence) it is because they want their children to have all the health, wealth, success and promises that are said to be ordained when they conform to corporate appearance ideals. The pressures do not originate among people.

It is therefore important to look beyond the individual to the culture. As mentioned above, body dissatisfaction research's arguably singular focus on

culture has been through the identification of appearance pressures from the media in the sociocultural model. A review of the research arising from this identification now follows.

HOW DOES THE MEDIA AFFECT BODY DISSATISFACTION?

This section outlines the current understanding of the media by describing central theories explaining the effects of media consumption on body dissatisfaction. A critical evaluation summarizing the existing research base in support of these theories follows.

From TV, to print media, to radio and social media, media is a significant part of modern daily life. A recent UK survey, for example, found that of 1,717 UK children (aged 5 – 15 years) surveyed nationally by the British regulatory body OFCOM, 91% had access to the internet at home, 49% owned a mobile phone and 43% had an active online social media profile (Ofcom, 2013). By the age of 16, media usage becomes even higher so that it is almost ubiquitous across UK respondents (Ofcom, 2011). Media is of course not limited to the UK as with increasing globalization, media, and in particular Western mass media, has a significant presence in many non-Western countries such as Taiwan, Chile, South Africa etc. (Eijaz & Eigaz Ahmad, 2011; Klein, 2002; Yang et al., 2005). Indeed even if national or local media of a country is not particularly developed, mass globalized media, such as popular magazines, advertising etc. has a base in most developing nations (Swarmi, Frederick, Aavik, Alcalay, & Juri, 2010; Yang et al., 2005). For example, *Men's Health* magazine, created and published by US corporation *Rodale Inc*, has editions in 46 countries including South Korea, South Africa and Kazakhstan (*Men's Health*, n.d.). Overall, the World Bank estimates that 89% of the global population has access to a mobile phone and 36% to the internet (The World Bank, 2012a, 2012b).

It is hard then not to take note of the media's focus on appearance. Whether it is through fashion's, cosmetic's or fitness's advertising, or the reverence of ideal- and relegation of 'non-ideal'- appearances across media, appearances are subject to acute media attention (Bordo, 2003; Kilbourne, 2010). The awareness of this media focus is largely owed to second wave feminism; where media representations of beauty, gender and health were extensively

critiqued beginning in the 1970s (Greer, 1970; Lazarus & Wunderlich, 1979; Orbach, 1978). In addition to this awareness of problematic media representations and focus, researchers in body dissatisfaction are consumers of media themselves and thus subsequently, there is a sizeable body of research over the last two decades that has theorized, explored and critiqued the media's role in influencing body dissatisfaction.

Description of theories explaining effect of media consumption

In this section, I will give a brief overview of four central theories that are proposed to explain the relationship between media consumption and body dissatisfaction.

The first is *Sociocultural Theory* (Fallon, 1990) which argues that people experience body dissatisfaction and associated health consequences (e.g., eating disorders) because of pressure, from the media and other people, to achieve unachievable corporate appearance ideals. People internalize these appearance ideals as meaningful and desirable and experience body dissatisfaction when they fail to meet them. Similar to this theory is a modification of Festinger's (1954) *Social Comparison Theory* which has been used to offer a more mechanistic explanation as to how the mass media leads to body dissatisfaction (Thompson, Coovett, et al., 1999; Tiggemann, Polivy, & Hargreaves, 2009). The modified theory proposes that media containing pervasive appearance ideals cause people to make upwards social comparisons between their own appearance and appearance ideals. As these appearances are normally impossible to attain, people negatively evaluate their own appearance, leading to an increase in body dissatisfaction.

Objectification Theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) extends both of these theories by specifying that it is pervasive sociocultural pressures in the form of objectification⁶ that leads people to view and monitor their own bodies from an outsider's perspective (self-objectify) and to be, subsequently, body dissatisfied (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Tiggemann, 2013). Finally, *Media Priming Effect*

¹ Sociocultural objectification can be defined as the reduction of a person to a body for the use of others (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) including where bodies are dismembered in images resulting in dehumanization of that individual (Rohlinger, 2002), as well as where individuals are heavily sexualised so that their value is only in their (sexual) purpose to others (APA, 2007).

Theory (Price & Tewksbury, 1997) has also been applied to the media-body dissatisfaction relationship (Aubrey & Taylor, 2009). Specifically, Aubrey and Taylor (2009) have argued that media content about beauty, sex, and attractiveness (e.g., sexualised images of men, adverts for cosmetic surgery) may cause the activation of cognitive schemas. These include the activation of sexual attraction and dating schemas. These newly activated schemas contain information about the appearance standard that men need to conform to in order to be romantically and sexually successful with women (or other men). Other schemas may also be activated by this content including a schema about general attractiveness (where the importance of appearance in society is broadly highlighted) or a materialism schema (where happiness and success are conflated with conforming to appearance ideals).

Together these theories focus on sociocultural sources as causes of men's body dissatisfaction via specific mediating individual differences (e.g., the extent an individual self-objectifies). Whereas *Sociocultural Theory* (Fallon, 1990) and *Self Comparisons Theory* (Festinger, 1957) pinpoints images of appearance ideal men and women in the media as triggering body dissatisfaction, *Objectification Theory* (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) and Aubrey's and Taylor's (2009) application of *Media Priming Effect Theory* more broadly suggest media content relating to objectification, sex and appearance are all relevant.

Review of experimental media exposure studies

Over the last two decades there have been many studies that have explored the effect of appearance potent media content on men as proposed by the above theories. In this next section I shall review them. The majority of this research has been experimental where groups of men have been acutely exposed to images of mesomorphic men and changes in their self-reported body dissatisfaction have been assessed. Before reviewing these specific studies assessing men's body dissatisfaction, it should be noted that there have been very few experimental assessments of media effects on other body dissatisfaction factors (e.g., satisfaction with bodily functionality) or indeed factors related to, but distinct from, body dissatisfaction encompassing wellbeing (e.g., self-esteem). This is highlighted by Hausenblas and colleagues' (2013) in their meta-analysis

who found participant's ratings of depression, anger and positive affect worsened when exposed to these images of mesomorphic men. However, they were unable to determine if these effects occurred for men, women or both. This was because the authors could not segregate these three meta-analyses (i.e., on depression, anger and positive affect) by participant's gender due to lack of experiments including men. Specifically, in each of the meta-analyses there were only 3 or 4 studies that included male participants. As Ferguson (2013) has noted, this is far too few studies for a meta-analysis. Indeed even if each of these sets of studies including men were summarized, Hausenblas and colleagues found that at least one of these meta-analyses was likely to be affected by publication bias. This refers to the tendency in research for significant findings to be published in comparison to non-significant findings (Goldacre, 2012; Pawson, 2006) and is discussed in more detail below. With regards to the experimental evidence in psychology of media consumption on wellbeing (that is not body dissatisfaction), currently there is too little (available) evidence to make any conclusions.

As mentioned earlier, the majority of research on media consumption consists of experimental studies assessing men's self-reported body dissatisfaction. The first reviews of research examining this relationship were published in 2008. In March of that year, Barlett, Vowels and Saucier (2008, p. 296) published a meta-analysis of 10 studies examining the effect of acute exposure to media images of the "*muscular male*" and found that men's body dissatisfaction significantly worsened after exposure ($d = 0.22$). Six months later, a review of 15 studies by Blond (2008) was published. Blond reviewed studies exposing participants to "*facially attractive men with lean and ideally muscular v-shaped upper bodies*" (p. 245) and also found that body dissatisfaction significantly increased ($d = 0.42$).

Five years later, two meta-analyses were published (Ferguson, 2013; Hausenblas et al., 2013). The third was unlike the first two reviews, in that the authors only reviewed between-subject design studies (that included a control group and pre- and post- assessment of body dissatisfaction). This was, the authors noted, because other designs made it "*impossible to differentiate between spontaneous changes in the outcomes over time as opposed to the effects of*

exposure" (Hausenblas et al., 2013, p. 170). Thus, in their review of between-subject studies which exposed men to images of "*the ideal physique*", the authors found no change in men's body dissatisfaction ($d = .03$; Hausenblas et al., 2013, p. 168). In the most comprehensive review to date, the fourth meta-analysis, Ferguson (2013, p. 27) included 19 studies exposing men to the "*muscular ideal*" and also found no change in men's body dissatisfaction in experimental conditions ($r = 0.07 / d = 0.14$)⁷.

Methodological limitations of experimental research

So why do two meta-analyses suggest a relationship and two do not? Ferguson (2013, p. 24) points out a number of reasons to explain the discrepancies between his and Hausenblas et al.'s (2013) findings and the first reviews conducted (Barlett et al., 2008; Blond, 2008). These factors relate to an increased risk of a Type I error (i.e., where an effect is concluded where none exists) and the inflation of effect sizes. Firstly, Ferguson (2013, p. 24) noted that reviews and meta-analyses "*capitaliz[e] on considerable power [so that]...results are almost invariably statistically significant*". He argues that the sheer number of studies included is itself an issue and inflates the chance of finding a significant effect overall.

Secondly, Ferguson (2013) notes, many of the experiments do not attempt to reduce demand characteristics. Demand characteristics are particularly problematic in these studies as many of the measures to assess body dissatisfaction use simple Likert response scales allowing for participants to easily remember their responses previous to exposure (e.g., the Male Body Attitudes Scale; Tylka, Bergeron, & Schwartz, 2005; The Physical Appearance State and Trait Anxiety Scale Body-focused negative affect Scale; Reed, Thompson, Brannick, & Sacco, 1991). Further, the purpose of the study is likely to be easily apparent to participants given the media is widely believed to be a cause of body dissatisfaction (e.g., Diedrichs, Lee, & Kelly, 2011; Jankowski & Diedrichs, 2011), and few studies attempt to mask their purpose (e.g., by using distractor tasks or a cover story; Ferguson, 2013). In addition, the materials used in the exposure studies could be argued to be more stereotypical of the media rather than

⁷ The author reports r instead of Cohen's d as this is "easier to communicate and robust" (p. 24). The statistic r is approximately $2d$.

representative of it; as an image of an appearance ideal man rarely features on a plain background without text, or product or any other context as used in experimental studies. Finally, participants are often students of psychology themselves (for more discussion of this sample bias in psychology see: Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010). Thus, participants may deliberately or even subconsciously rate their body dissatisfaction lower than their pre-exposure rating in order to satisfy the expectations of the researcher, or indeed society more generally, (i.e., the expectations that images of mesomorphic men in the media engender body dissatisfaction). This skews the chance of experimental exposure studies finding significant changes in men's reported body dissatisfaction.

The third reason given is publication bias. Both Barlett et al. (2008) and Blond (2008) only include published studies in their review. Meaning unpublished data, that may have non-significant findings, was not included. Barlett et al. (2008) acknowledge this limitation and used Rosenthal's (1979) failsafe N formula to assert that the number of unpublished studies needed to reduce their effect size to non-significance (i.e., N_{fs}) was so great that publication bias was not an issue. However, this formula has been shown to underestimate the effect of publication bias (Hsu, 2002; M. S. Rosenberg, 2005) and is therefore considered an ineffective solution to this issue (Ferguson, personal communication, 21st August 2013).

The fourth reason given is confound variables. In particular, Ferguson (2013) highlights the fact that many studies use mesomorphic images of men in their experimental condition and non-person controls (e.g., watch adverts) as opposed to images of men who are not mesomorphic in their control condition. Thus, whether it is the presence of another person that influences men's body dissatisfaction rather than the degree to which that person is mesomorphic remains unclear.

What to make of this evidence then? Ferguson (2013) recommends that instead of interpreting significance values, it is the effect size of research itself that should be interpreted. Given the various ways in which effect sizes are inflated that he outlines, Ferguson advocates a conservative cut off value of $r = .20$ (i.e., $d = 40$) where only effects sizes larger than this should be considered meaningful.

Using this recommendation, of the four reviews, only Blond's (2008) finding would suggest a relationship between acute exposure of mesomorphic men and increased body dissatisfaction as self-reported by men ($d = 0.42$). This conflicts with Ferguson who found a much smaller effect size ($d = 0.14$). Although Ferguson's review is the larger of the two, Blond included studies that Ferguson did not. Specifically, seven of the studies reviewed by Blond are not included in Ferguson review despite these studies appearing to meet the author's selection criteria. These include Baird and Greave (2006), Hausenblas et al., (2003), Humphreys and Paxton (2004), Leit, Pope, and Gray (2002), Lorenzen et al. (2004) and Petersen (2005). Such conflicting findings do not allow for firm conclusions to be made and instead perhaps speak to the conceptual limitations of experimental exposure studies. These are now outlined.

Conceptual limitations of experimental media exposure studies

Beyond the methodological limitations of these studies, there are also conceptual limitations too. Specifically, various elements of real world media have not been adequately replicated in experimental exposure studies. In this next section I review these elements.

The first is that experimental exposure studies include a proxy of media that is overly simplistic. The materials used that are supposed to represent media are often a series of similar images of mesomorphic men (or in the case of Blond's (2008) review, images of facially attractive and mesomorphic men) presented on plain backgrounds. Representations of men with bodies that differ from the mesomorphic ideal have different effects on men's body dissatisfaction to images of men that do not (Barlett et al., 2008; Buote et al., 2011; Diedrichs & Lee, 2010; Diedrichs et al., 2011). For instance, Arbour and Martin Ginis (2006) found that images of hypomuscular men did not cause significant increases in men's body dissatisfaction, whereas images of mesomorphic men did (Arbour & Martin Ginis, 2006). Other research has found that men who viewed images of male models who are averagely sized (as opposed to mesomorphic) experienced significantly lower body dissatisfaction immediately after viewing the images relative to men who viewed images of male models who are mesomorphic (Diedrichs & Lee, 2010). Buote and colleagues (2011) found male participants who viewed a series

of images that featured both mesomorphic men as well as images of an averagely sized or older men reported no change in their body dissatisfaction from pre to post test. In contrast, men who viewed a series of images featuring only mesomorphic men reported an increase in their body dissatisfaction. The authors interpreted this as evidence that images of average men have a protective effect on men's body dissatisfaction. This is supported by Diedrichs and colleagues' (2011) focus group study, where men noted that the diversity of male appearances represented in the media had a protective effect on their body dissatisfaction. Indeed content analyses of mass media confirm that men who are not mesomorphic are featured ,albeit they are usually the minority (Dallesasse & Kluck, 2013; Jankowski, Fawkner, et al., 2014). In Western male media then, appearance ideal men may be represented prominently but they do not feature singularly. This diversity of male appearance images (that appear in a single media format and even a single media image) has not been replicated in media exposure studies (with the exception of Buote et al., 2011) further highlighting the failure of these studies to adequately replicate the relationship between the media and body dissatisfaction.

Nonetheless, it is not only by their mesomorphy that images of men in media differ. Representations of men may or may not conform to corporate appearance ideals through other aspects of their appearances (i.e., whether they are young or not, have a full head of hair or do not etc.). It is likely that the images of men used in these experimental studies happened to conform to the corporate appearance ideal beyond their mesomorphy simply because most images of men in the types of media used do (i.e., men's magazines; Buote et al., 2011; Jankowski et al., 2014). However, the majority of these studies do not specify whether this was the case or not and nor do they match their non-appearance ideal control images to these features. So for instance, were the images of men in the control conditions non-mesomorphic only or did they differ to the corporate appearance ideal in other ways? More generally, it is unclear then what effects images of men that are appearance-ideal beyond their mesomorphy have on men. Furthermore, do images of older, mesomorphic, men have the same effect on consumers in comparison to images of younger, non-mesomorphic men?

In addition, images of appearance ideal men are also often sexualized in media (Jankowski, Fawkner, et al., 2014; Rohlinger, 2002) and the effect of this sexualisation on men's body dissatisfaction is also largely unestablished (Ferguson, 2013). Similarly, the effect of images of women on men's body dissatisfactions is not established either. Specifically, although there are two studies that have demonstrated men's body dissatisfaction increased when exposed to images of appearance ideal women (Aubrey & Taylor, 2009; Lavine, Sweeney, & Wagner, 1999), the studies also face the same methodological limitations outlined above. These aside, a recent extensive review into the research on the effects of images of appearance ideal women on men concluded that the findings were "*suggestive but nascent*" (P. J. Wright, 2012, p. 194).

As the *Objectification* and *Media Priming* theories suggest (Aubrey & Taylor, 2009; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Price & Tewksbury, 1997), media content that doesn't feature images of men and women may still affect individual's body dissatisfaction. To date, however, there are very few studies that have assessed the appearance potency of content other than images such as appearance-focussed adverts (e.g., adverts for appearance products or services; Baird & Grieve, 2006; Halliwell, Dittmar, & Orsborn, 2007). Specifically, these two studies found no change in men's reported body dissatisfaction after exposure to appearance adverts. For example, Baird and Greave found that US university men ($M = 19.62$, $SD = 2.33$) reported no change in their body dissatisfaction when they viewed adverts for cologne and fashion though men who viewed the same adverts, but with male models, did. Such findings may be because of the conceptual and methodological issues associated with this design, rather than because appearance adverts have no effect on men's body dissatisfaction. Indeed it could be a mistake to consider such adverts as benign in terms of body dissatisfaction given their ubiquity across mass media, they would not exist if they had no impact on consumers. Likewise, the effect of appearance articles and other media content (such as magazine front covers) also remain unexplored. Further research is warranted.

As mentioned, theorists have suggested that media content other than images (e.g., appearance messages) may cause men to be body dissatisfied

(Aubrey & Taylor, 2009). Despite messages about appearance abounding in media (e.g., 'how to get a six pack fast') it is only the images and not the text that have been explored in experimental studies on men's body dissatisfaction. Tiggemann et al., (2009) have demonstrated the relevance of such text on women. Specifically, the authors found that participants who read a message promoting a thin fantasy experienced no change in their body dissatisfaction after viewing images of thin women. In contrast, women who read a message promoting comparisons between themselves to the woman in the images experienced an increase in their body dissatisfaction. No research has experimentally explored the effects of messages on appearance ideal media exposure with men.

The second conceptual limitation of this research, is an over-homogenization of media. Not only are the images of men in a magazine not homogenous, nor is the content. For instance, men's magazines include articles about sex, relationships, appearance, physical health, entertainment and other topics (Jankowski, Fawkner, et al., 2014; Taylor, 2005). Looking at articles about sex specifically, in the May 2011 issue of *FHM* an article featured was: "*The sex season is open: Nature says: 'Start mating!'*" this content encouraged readers to have casual sex with as many, appearance ideal, women as possible; a typical article in lad's magazines (Jankowski, Fawkner, et al., 2014; Taylor, 2005). In the same issue, however, there was also an article outlining asexuality entitled: "*I Don't Want Sex – End Of!*". This article was unusual for the magazine because it acknowledged sexualities other than heterosexuality and did not promote the idea that the more casual sex had, the better (Taylor, 2005). These contrasting articles are one example of the heterogeneity of content present in this single magazine issue.

Other content analyses of media have found differing amounts of 'appearance potent' content (Frederick, Fessler, & Haselton, 2005; N. Martins, Williams, Ratan, & Harrison, 2011). For example, Martins et al. (2011) found that most of the male characters featured in popular videogames were not appearance ideal in that they did not have V-shape torsos nor did they possess an above average level of muscularity or leanness. Frederick and colleagues (2005) found that there were more images of muscular men in men's magazines then in

women's magazines, and more in men's bodybuilding magazines than men's general magazines. These studies demonstrate that the appearance potency of media differs across formats, types and indeed within single media formats.

Summary of above evidence

It is important to note, these conceptual limitations outlined above are of the experimental research design itself, not of the premise that the media is problematic. Therefore a review of other research designs such as research that has explored longitudinal and cumulative effects of media consumption follows. This research is particularly important to explore as media rarely consists of the acute exposure in experimental studies that participants experience. Instead, media is more often than not consumed daily, frequently, and with regards to magazines and TV shows, often in their entirety rather than piecemeal (Ofcom, 2011, 2013).

Review of longitudinal and cross-sectional research on media effects and body dissatisfaction

Although acute exposure may not have been definitively established as causing men to experience body dissatisfaction, the media may have incremental effects on an individual over repeated exposures (as would occur in the real world). Correlational and longitudinal studies have sought to test this hypothesis. Barlett et al. (2008) reviewed 15 correlational studies that assessed the relationship between reported pressures from the mass media⁸ to alter appearance and men's body dissatisfaction. The authors reported a significant positive relationship between participant's body dissatisfaction and pressure/exposure ($d = 0.19$) though in light of Ferguson's (2013, p. 24) critique this effect size should be considered "*trivial [and not of] practical significance*". Indeed, Ferguson (2013) himself synthesized 24 correlational studies and found no relationship ($r = .07$). Further the author found no relationship between other body dissatisfaction related

⁸ The studies reviewed by Barlett et al. (2008) likely assessed participant's reported pressure from either the mass media generically or from TV shows and/or magazines and/or advertising rather than social media specifically. This is because these studies were carried out prior to being published in September 2005 and research into social media and body dissatisfaction remains under explored still today in relation to more traditional forms of media (for exceptions see: Fardouly, Diedrichs, Vartanian, & Halliwell, 2015; Tiggemann & Slater, 2014).

outcomes in men including bulimia nervosa symptoms ($r = .04$), anorexia nervosa symptoms ($r = .09$) and non-specific disordered eating symptoms ($r = .03$).

With the notable exception of Buote and colleagues (2011), whose findings are discussed below, no research has explored the effects of cumulative images of men on men's body dissatisfaction. Research has explored men's reported self-exposure to mass media and its relationship to body dissatisfaction over time, however. Hausenblas et al. (2013) found no relationship between exposure and body dissatisfaction among three such studies ($r = .04$). Specifically these were studies that assessed men's body dissatisfaction immediately and after 15 minutes (Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2003), two hours (Hausenblas, Janelle, Ellis Gardner, & Focht, 2004), and 2 years (Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2003) after being exposed to media content. No sustained changes in body dissatisfaction were found in any of the studies. Similarly, Ferguson (2013) reviewed eight studies also finding no association over time.

Although attempts have been made to explore the longitudinal and cumulative effects of media consumption on men's body dissatisfaction, this literature is inconclusive and has found little evidence of effects. This partially relates to the conceptual and methodological limitations outlined by Ferguson (2013), that these research designs also make (e.g., ignoring the heterogeneity of media, publication bias). These limitations may extend to more general limitations with positivist and quantitative methods used in these studies.

Qualitative research on media effects and body dissatisfaction

In this next section, I shall review an alternative paradigm design of research methods that bypasses these conceptual and methodological limitations: qualitative research on media consumption and men's body dissatisfaction. In an early qualitative study on men's body dissatisfaction, Ricciardelli and colleagues investigated sociocultural influences, including media consumption, on young Australian boy's body dissatisfaction (Ricciardelli, McCabe, & Banfield, 2000). They found that many of the boys rated sociocultural influences as unimportant. Those that were influenced reported both negative and positive types of influence. Ricciardelli and her colleagues inferred that the boys may have made upward comparisons to appearance ideal images of men as well as believing such images

to be exercise motivating. Other research has also found similar findings. Specifically, Fawkner and McMurray (2002) found that all of their male participants reported self-comparison with media images though not all reported experiencing body dissatisfaction. It appeared that some men coped adaptively when exposed e.g. by identifying with alternative ideals or by accepting themselves.

Elliott and Elliott (2005) conducted focus groups and interviews with British male students. They showed participants examples of media adverts featuring images of mesomorphic and sexualised men and asked participants what they thought about them. The authors reported the men legitimized the use of sexuality as a marketing ploy; regarded it to be 'fair-play' as it is so common consumers should know better than to be 'duped' by it (p.12). They further found the men expressed invincibility to advertisements and suggested consumption, body dissatisfaction and vanity were distinctly traits that women and gay men had. In addition, some participants believed they were above being susceptible to advertising, the men sometimes expressed admiration for the mesomorphic bodies in the adverts but expressed satisfaction with their appearance and rejected the idea that they had body dissatisfaction. They did, however, acknowledge and deride those who did experience body dissatisfaction including American men and gay men as unnatural and vain. Finally, Diedrichs and colleagues (2011) also conducted a focus group study, but this time with female and male Australian students. They found that participants felt that the media could not be blamed completely for people's body dissatisfaction, stating it was consumers' responsibility to evade such harmful influences. Relatedly participants also engaged in victim blaming stating that those who were influenced by the media in this way were 'suckers' or 'uneducated' (p. 262).

These studies demonstrate men report a range of responses when consuming media, some of them positive. Here it is important to contextualise these participant's accounts. Specifically, as Gill (2007) advocates individual accounts should be critically respected; participant's agency and ability to describe their own experiences should be acknowledged by researchers whilst their accounts are linked to wider culture that all people contend with, even if they are not immediately apparent.

So for instance, many of the men in the above studies regard a media reverence of corporate appearance ideals as being beneficial in motivating them to exercise or to uptake other health-inducing behaviours. However, conforming to corporate appearance ideals is frequently and very deliberately conflated with being optimally physically healthy in mass media. For example, *Men's Health* magazine positions itself as about health but because of its large proportion of appearance potent content is more about conforming to corporate appearance ideals (Jankowski, Fawkner, et al., 2014; Labre, 2005). Defenders of *Men's Health* or other corporate appearance ideal replete media, claim that this media is actually health motivating (B. Smith, 2011). This should be treated with caution though, as when an individual is optimally healthy (physically, psychologically and emotionally) they are unlikely to conform to corporate appearance ideals (Bacon, 2010). After all, many aspects of the corporate appearance ideal are completely independent of physical functionality and health (e.g., having a full head of hair, height etc.). Furthermore, because of the precarious nature and difficulty in fully attaining the corporate appearance ideal (e.g., because everybody ages), it is inherently likely to be more psychologically harmful than beneficial (Pope Jr. et al., 2000). Thus, if anything rather than corporate appearance ideal images of men being accepted as health motivating they should be regarded as health dangerous, given the attendant and myriad costs that come with trying to conform to it. The purposeful conflation of the two by media and corporations means this distinction is difficult to identify, let alone accept for many men.

Another important context to acknowledge in the accounts above is men's downplaying of media effects. As demonstrated above, many of the men regarded only others as affected by the media and subsequently they were seen as naïve or stupid. This can be related, at least in part, to hegemonic ideals of masculinity where men must be considered immune to outside pressures and inherently strong. The third person effect of research is also relevant (P. W. Davison, 1983), where media is only regarded as affecting others and never the individual. Therefore this downplaying by the men of media effects should be seen more to do with norms around disclosure, external influence and masculinity than with a

dismissal of the media as unimportant. It bears repeating that the media would not exist or dominate sociocultural life if it had no impact.

General summary of experimental, longitudinal, cross-sectional and qualitative research on media effects and body dissatisfaction

In this section I have critically reflected upon the research in body dissatisfaction that has explored the relationship between media and men's body dissatisfaction. Experimental, cross-sectional and longitudinal studies are useful in demonstrating that media can affect at least some individual men's body dissatisfaction. Proof of concept has been shown, at least for some men. Nonetheless this research is also limited by various methodological and conceptual problems. Similarly, although qualitative research has usefully highlighted the diversity of potential responses men may have in their accounts regarding the media, it is also limited by its focus on individual's accounts of the media rather than the media itself. All of these study designs are asking individual people to explain how the media affects their body dissatisfaction: a difficult task for anyone to answer. People do not have access to aggregate data to assess their systematic exposure to media or its consequent results. Further media effects may be subtle, depicted as normative or hidden; their effect may not be obvious. This limitation is particularly evident in Diedrichs and colleagues' (2011) focus groups where most of the men reported that the media did not affect them.

What is particularly problematic about these studies is that they can lead researchers to regard the media as benign or as Gill writes "*a mere epiphenomenon*" (Gill, 2008, p. 434). As mentioned above, the focus on people as causes of body dissatisfaction rather than culture is heavy in body dissatisfaction research. When culture is acknowledged, it is depicted as a single entity, weaker in its influence to multiple social sources of appearance pressures, and usually defined only as media. Ultimately, this research is still focusing on the individual rather than the culture or media. It is important that this research does not lead researchers to deem the media as being unimportant or unproblematic with regards to men's body dissatisfaction. Indeed research that actually assesses media (rather than individual people) provides compelling evidence that significant

proportions of the media do reify corporate appearance ideals i.e., is appearance potent. A review of this research follows.

Content analyses of media appearance potency

The appearance potency of media content has increased in recent years (Leit, Pope Jr., & Gray, 2001; Pope Jr., Olivardia, Gruber, & Borowiecki, 1999). Specifically images of men have become progressively more mesomorphic in Western media over the last three decades. For example, Law and Labre (2002) comprehensively blind-coded images of shirtless men from three popular US men's magazines (*GQ*, *Sports Illustrated* and *Rolling Stone*) that had been issued over a thirty-year period. They found that the images of men became progressively more muscular and leaner from 1967 to 1997 and the V-type body shape also became more prevalent over this period. Specifically, the authors found that 66% of images of men in magazines published in the 80s and 90s had low body fat compared to 41% in magazines published in the 60s and 70s. In addition, 9% of images of men in the earlier period were very muscular compared to 32% in the latter. Furthermore, the percentage of those images categorized as 'very muscular' increased, while those categorized as 'not muscular' decreased. A further example is provided by Pope and colleagues (1999), who assessed the waist, chest, and bicep measurements of popular male action figures (e.g., GI Joe) created between 1964 and 1998. They found that the action dolls became more mesomorphic over time and indeed the latest edition was so mesomorphic it was beyond the realms of achievement for a real man. This narrowing of the male appearance ideal in the media has also been found in media that is not targeted at men, as progressive muscularity and leanness has been found in male images in women's magazines such as *Playgirl* centrefolds (Leit, Pope & Gray, 2001) and general lifestyle magazines (Pope, Olivardia, Borowiecki III & Cohane, 2001). More recent evidence of a narrowing of the corporate appearance ideal comes from Rootstein's creation of the super lean male mannequin which has visible ribs and a waist size 11 inches smaller than the average UK male (though conforms to the corporate ideal in all other respects by being able bodied; white, tall etc. Herdman, 2010)⁹.

⁹ The super lean mannequin does not fully represent a departure from the corporate appearance ideal. The mannequin is still depicted with a full head of hair, an able body, muscularity, no body

Not only is the corporate appearance ideal narrow, so too is it pervasive. Content analysis of characters featured in TV programmes reveals a substantial proportion of men are mesomorphic. Specifically, Labre (2005) found that 96% of images of men in popular US men's fitness magazines had low levels of body fat and 94% were either somewhat or highly muscular. Buote and colleagues found that 32% of the representations of men were “*fit*” or “*very muscular*” on a popular US website (*celebritypro.com*), as were 39% in popular US magazines and 38% on popular US TV shows (Buote et al., 2011, p. 324). Although in their content analyses Buote et al. (2011) did find the most frequent body type was average (defined only as “*average weight*”; pg. 324) with between 47% - 75% of images of men being coded as this, this may be because the muscularity and body fat amounts were not visible if the celebrity was clothed. Indeed, it is not clear whether images coded as average would actually depart from the corporate appearance ideals should their bodies be displayed i.e., if the bodies were fat or underweight. What is clear, however, is that bodies that are muscular or could be muscular are the idealized body type; further exemplified by the recent use of airbrushing abdominal muscles onto actor's bodies in the films *300* (R. Murray, 2007) and *Crazy Stupid Love* (Lewinski, 2011). With the latter film actor Ryan Gosling revealing that whilst filming he “*just [wore] a motion capture suit, and suddenly [he] ha[d] abs*” (Lewinski, 2011, para. 11).

Body types that unambiguously do not conform to appearance ideals are depicted more rarely. Specifically, Buote et al., (2011) found that only 2-11% of men featured had heavy body types in their content analyses of US popular media. Similarly, Fouts and Vaughan (2002) found only 13% of men featured were above average weight in their analysis and Labre (2005) found only 4% had medium or higher body fat. Finally, Buote and colleagues found only 2-15% of men featured were thin across their analyses. Finally, men who do not conform to the corporate appearance ideal beyond their body type are also rarely featured. Buote et al. (2011) found that only 2% of men featured in popular US TV shows were facially unattractive and only 10% appeared older than 51 years.

hair and symmetrical, proportional facial features. A discussion of the variability of the corporate appearance ideal is included in Chapter 9.

Not only is this ideal prevalent, it is also very difficult for men to attain as it is well differentiated from the average male appearance (Pope et al., 2000). Representations of the male appearance ideal (e.g. in the mass media) are often meticulously airbrushed so that the images have no blemishes, no wrinkles and often no body fat (Pope Jr. et al., 2000). Furthermore, Pope Jr. et al. (2001) found that some images of men had such low levels of body fat and high proportions of muscularity that this was only physically achievable through steroid drug use; making discrepancies between the ideal portrayed and the actual capability of the average man to achieve this ideal vast (Pope Jr. et al., 2000).

As theorized above (Aubrey & Taylor, 2009; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), representations of men may be appearance potent (i.e., contribute to men's body dissatisfaction) beyond their conformity to the corporate appearance ideal. Other characteristics such as their sexualisation may also be relevant. For instance, in Rohlinger's (2002) content analysis of images of men featured in US popular magazines issued in 1987 and 1997, the author found that 37% of the images were sexualized. Similarly, Pope Jr., Olivardia, Borowiecki and Cohane (2001) found that 28% of images of men, on average, were undressed in images of popular US women's magazines and Hatton and Trautner (2011) found that 17% of front cover images of men of US magazine *Rolling Stone* were sexualized. Studies have also begun to evidence the effects that sexualised images may have on men such as body dissatisfaction and fostering superficial misogynistic attitudes towards women (Aubrey & Taylor, 2009; P. J. Wright, 2012). Likewise the ubiquity of sexualized representations of women in mainstream media has long been documented as has their effect on viewers (Buote et al., 2011; Fouts & Vaughan, 2002; Kilbourne, 2010).

The messages in media may also be appearance potent. Magazine adverts revering the corporate appearance ideal either by promoting appearance change (e.g., weight loss and muscle building supplements, cosmetic surgery) or by using an appearance ideal person to sell their product (e.g., fashion, men's jewellery) are commonly featured in men's US magazine (51%; Labre, 2005). This is also true for articles about appearance change (32%; Jankowski, Fawkner, et al., 2014; Labre, 2005) and sex (on average at least 2 articles featured in popular US 'lads'

magazines; Taylor, 2005). Furthermore, others have explored the number of weight/body shape related negative comments made by male characters to others and to themselves on popular US TV sitcoms (e.g., *The Drew Carey Show*; Fouts & Vaughan, 2002). Although the authors did not report the prevalence of these comments they did find that a negative comment a male character made about his own body weight/shape was likely to be endorsed by audience laughter or reaction.

In summary, content analyses of media have demonstrated that at least two forms of Western media (US and UK) revere the cultural male appearance ideal strongly; not only through the significant proportion of representations of appearance ideal men featured but also through messages (e.g., adverts, articles, storylines etc.). This provides a useful reminder that the media is problematic and should not be dismissed as unrelated to men's body dissatisfaction.

THE PATHOLOGISATION OF GAY MEN IN BODY DISSATISFACTION RESEARCH

As discussed earlier, one particular consequence of the emphasis on the individual in body dissatisfaction research is the pathologisation of people. In this next section I shall discuss the tendency of body dissatisfaction researchers to pathologise gay men. This arose from gay men's consistent presentation of greater body dissatisfaction and related health consequences in comparison to straight men (Morrison, Morrison, & Sager, 2004; Smith, Hawkeswood, Bodell, & Joiner, 2011; Jankowski et al., 2013; Marino-Carper, Negy, & Tantleff-Dunn, 2010; Tiggemann, Martins, & Kirkbride, 2007) . Specifically, a popular explanation proposed for these differences is that the gay male subculture is more 'appearance potent' than the straight male subculture. That is, even though both gay and straight male cultures endorse the prevailing corporate appearance ideal (i.e., the young, white, mesomorphic male with facial symmetry, a full head of hair and minimal body hair; Saucier & Caron, 2008; Tiggemann et al., 2007), gay male culture is said to place a greater importance on appearance and objectifies and reveres the male appearance ideal to a greater extent than does straight male culture (Silberstein, Mishkind, Striegel-Moore, Timko, & Rodin, 1989).

This explanation is problematic for two reasons. First because studies based on this explanation purport to explore gay male culture but actually focuses on gay men individually. For example, my own research that aimed to account for differences between gay and straight men on body dissatisfaction did not look at culture but rather at the rates to which gay men and straight men discussed their appearances (Jankowski, Diedrichs, & Halliwell, 2013). It was concluded that gay men's greater propensity to engage in appearance conversations was likely responsible for their greater body dissatisfaction.

Secondly, this is problematic because gay male culture is depicted as a homogenous identity responsible for gay men's body dissatisfaction without any context as to why gay male culture exists in the first place (arguably as a result of homophobia) or consideration of where these pressures from the gay male culture originally arose from (e.g., co-option by corporations of LGBTI advocacy). For example, Tylka and colleagues (Tylka & Andorka, 2012; Tylka, 2011) extended the Tripartite Influence model of men's body dissatisfaction by adding gay community involvement itself as a cause of men's body dissatisfaction to the model (Tylka & Andorka, 2012). This was in contrast to the other four sources in the model (e.g., media, family, friends and peers) which all were specified as "*partner/ friend/ family/ media pressures to be muscular and lean*" (Tylka & Andorka, 2012, p. 60). Indeed in what is very likely to be the original write up of this study (Andorka, 2007, p. 19) the author candidly noted that "*it would appear that there are some benefits to being involved in certain aspects of the gay community*". Unfortunately this acknowledgment was not preserved in the published version of the study leaving the gay community itself as "*set[ting] the stage for dissatisfaction with both muscularity and body fat for gay men*" (Tylka & Andorka, 2012, p. 64).

These researchers are not alone, as mentioned, my own work has depicted the gay community itself, as a homogenous 'appearance potent' entity (Jankowski, Diedrichs, & Halliwell, 2013). Subsequently researchers like myself have uncritically specified not the bars, LGBT groups or any other facet of the gay community but rather the entire community itself as a cause of gay men's body dissatisfaction, gay men (who after all make up the community) are implicated as the causes.

Kane (2010) argues that these explanations, along with a combination of flawed sampling, assumptions on part of the researcher and biased analyses, have led researchers in body dissatisfaction to depict gay men as being appearance obsessed, vain and superficial. There is merit to Kane's argument. For example, Michael Andorka's research project is titled: "*Being attractive is all that matters: Objectification theory and gay men*" which implies gay men are only interested in being attractive (Andorka, 2007). This is not a participant quote and is an assertion Andorka continues to make throughout his research project (e.g., pg. 8: "*Since college men in general could have body dissatisfaction, gay men could have significantly more body dissatisfaction due to their focus on physical features*"). This has led Kane to conclude that researchers like myself stereotype gay men by making "*generalizations that gay men are socialized by the gay subculture to be fixated on their appearance*" (pg. 311) further adding that these are "*evaluations that reduce [them] to being universally fixated on their appearance*" (Kane, 2010, p. 315).

Returning to differences in body dissatisfaction between gay and straight men, it is important to look at a cultural agent such as media in order to explain these differences rather than previous self-report research that may have pathologised gay men (Kane, 2009, 2010). This is particularly important as there is evidence that gay men may simply be more able to disclose body dissatisfaction in relation to straight men as body dissatisfaction researchers have noted (e.g., Adams, Turner, & Bucks, 2005; Gill, Henwood, & McLean, 2005). For example, participants in Adams and others' (2005) study recognized that for gay men, though not straight men, admitting body dissatisfaction was acceptable. Similarly, Gill and colleagues (2005) noted in their focus groups with boys and men that gay men were more likely to admit to being vain than heterosexual men though all men were also sensitive to accusations of narcissism. Therefore content analytic methodology may be able to overcome the particular methodological hurdle that plague self-report methods comparing gay and straight men (e.g., Jankowski et al., 2013) where it is not clear whether any differences between gay and straight men are more "*announced than pronounced*" (Kane, 2010, p. 315). A review of this available evidence therefore follows.

Differences in appearance potency between gay and straight men's media

To date, there exist only five studies that have explicitly compared differences in appearance potency between gay and straight male subcultures (Bartoş, Phua, & Avery, 2009; Epel, Spanakos, Kasl-Godley, & Brownell, 1996; Kaufman & Chin Phua, 2003; Kenrick, Keefe, Bryan, Barr, & Brown, 1995; Lanzieri & Cook, 2013). These media formats represent one element of or proxy for gay male and straight male subcultures. Specifically, although some have questioned whether discrete subcultures actually exist (Duncan, 2010; Kane, 2009), gay men's and straight men's media attempt to capitalize on distinct subcultures by creating content for, and marketing to, gay and straight men separately. This occurs even if, in reality, either group of men resist participation, or do not participate exclusively, in such subcultures (e.g., when gay men read straight men's magazines).

Four of the above five studies that examined differences between gay and straight men's subcultures analysed dating adverts. Two of these examined the stated age preferences of US dating adverts posted by gay and straight men (Kaufman & Chin Phua, 2003; Kenrick et al., 1995). Whereas Kaufman and Chin Phua (2003) found that gay men were more likely than straight men to request an older partner, Kenrick et al. (1995) found that the two groups specified similar age preferences. The third study, conducted by Epel et al. (1996), found that US dating adverts posted by gay men mentioned aspects of appearance of both the user and the desired partner significantly more often than adverts posted by straight men. Finally, in contrast, Bartoş, Phua, and Avery (2009) found that Romanian men-seeking-women dating adverts stipulated the desired weights, heights and youth of their potential partner more often than men-seeking-men dating adverts.

The fifth study, conducted by Lanzieri and Cook (2013), is the first to compare gay and straight male targeted media. This study assessed the degree of body fat and muscularity of male images in 16 widely read US gay and straight men's magazines (e.g., *Maxim*, *Men's Health*, *The Advocate*, *Instinct* etc.). The magazines were selected on the basis of how widely read they were and a number of issues were selected from each title on the basis of how often the title published per year (e.g., 6 times per year). In total 28 issues of gay men's magazines resulted in 3,212 images of men coded and 39 issues of straight men's magazines

resulted in 3,606 images of men coded. The researchers found that images of men in the gay men's magazines had lower levels of body fat compared to straight men's magazines, but did not differ in levels of muscularity. Given body fat and muscularity are both important components of the cultural male appearance ideal (Tiggemann et al., 2007), these results offer partial support to the proposition that gay men's subculture (at least as displayed in these magazines) is more appearance potent than its straight counterpart.

The assessment of appearance potency in the Lanzieri and Cook's (2013) study was limited to the body fat and muscularity of the images of men in these magazines. As outlined above then, there exist other components of the male appearance ideal, such as having a full or shaved (though not balding-¹⁰) head of hair, youthfulness, and little body-hair that were not covered by the researchers. This is supported in qualitative research where men consistently list these appearance aspects as what the ideal man should have (Fawkner & McMurray, 2002; Tiggemann et al., 2007). In addition, there are other types of appearance potency beyond ideal images of men (discussed further on). With the exception of Lanzieri and Cook, the four studies outlined above are not only conflicting but are still not assessing the appearance potency of mass media per se rather they are assessing men's appearance attitudes and preferences which happen to be placed in mass media via dating adverts.

It can be seen that the existing empirical evidence for greater appearance potency in the gay male subculture (presented above) is conflicting and limited and has not acknowledged other appearance potent elements of the media (e.g., appearance ideal images of women). Thus it seems premature to explain gay men's higher body dissatisfaction as a result of a more appearance potent subculture when this has not been definitively established and a fuller appraisal of the appearance potency of gay and straight men's media is warranted.

¹⁰ British company Skalp highlights how a full head of hair – even if shaved – is closer to the corporate appearance ideal than a balding head. The company tattoos ink follicles onto men's scalps in order to "create a full, convincing, youthful and attractive hairline" (Skalp™, 2014).

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter I have argued that the focus in body dissatisfaction research is predominately on the individual which is problematic as it pathologises and places the responsibility of change onto individual people who have little scope or control on appearance ideals. Indeed the one acknowledgment of culture in body dissatisfaction research is media effects, however, the research on media effects and body dissatisfaction has largely explored individual's media-related attitudes, behaviours and accounts rather than analysing media itself. As a consequence of this continual individualization, it is argued that this research is methodologically and conceptually limited in its attempts to replicate or assess media effects. In contrast, research that does move its focus away from the individual and onto culture such as media content analyses have found that media's reverence of narrow appearance ideals is ubiquitous and heavy and that media is relevant in body dissatisfaction.

A particular group that has been pathologised partially due to an individualized focus of body dissatisfaction are gay men who have been stereotyped as vain and appearance obsessed in order to explain their higher levels of body dissatisfaction in relation to straight men (Kane, 2010). As mentioned, a cultural focus is needed in order to explore why gay and straight men report differing levels of body dissatisfaction particularly as the existing research that has done this is conflicting and limited by its narrow conceptualization of what media elements may be appearance potent. The following study then aimed to assess whether UK media targeted at gay men differs in appearance potency from media targeted at straight men. Specifically, it was tentatively hypothesized that in comparison to straight male media, gay male media will feature more images of men who are appearance ideal, are nude and are sexualised, fewer images of women who are appearance ideal, are nude and are sexualised, more appearance advertisements and more appearance-focused articles. Chapter 6 presents the method and findings of this study.

CHAPTER 6:

STUDY 3: METHOD AND RESULTS OF MAGAZINES CONTENT ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 5 the pathologisation of gay men as appearance obsessed was argued to be a consequence of body dissatisfaction research's focus on the individual rather than the culture. In order to avoid such pathologisation, it is important to look at the appearance potency of the culture (such as media) to explain gay men's higher reported levels of body dissatisfaction in relation to straight men. There are few existing comparisons of the appearance potency of gay and straight men's media, and those that do exist are conflicting and limited by a narrow definition of appearance potent content. Therefore a more comprehensive analysis of UK gay and straight men's media is warranted. This formed the basis of Study 2 and the method and results of this study therefore follow.

METHOD

Source selection

UK magazines targeted at gay and straight men were selected for analysis. At the time of analysis (2012) the two highest circulated men's magazines in the UK (targeted primarily at straight men) were the UK editions of *Men's Health* and *For Him Magazine* (*FHM*; Ponsford, 2012). The two highest circulated gay men's magazines were *Attitude* and *Gay Times* (Gardiner, 2012; Tassie, 2011). All four of these magazines publish between 11 and 13 issues a year and have content that focuses on lifestyle, entertainment and health issues of straight men and gay men, respectively. Most of the readers of these magazines are aged between 18 and 45 years, and are male professionals (Bauer Media, 2011; Gardiner, 2012; Tassie, 2011; Todd, 2011). As of February 2012, Press Gazette, the UK's journalism reviewer, estimated the total annual circulation of *Men's Health* as 221,176 and *FHM* as 140,176 issues (Ponsford, 2012). Press Gazette does not record the circulations of *Attitude* and *Gay Times*, though according to each

magazine's respective media packs for 2011, *Attitude*'s annual circulation was 75,000 and *Gay Times'* was 68,143 issues (Tassie, 2011; Todd, 2011).

One issue from each of the four magazines from each of the four seasons (spring, summer, autumn and winter) of 2012 and 2011 were obtained for coding. Attempts were made to obtain the same monthly issues of each of the four magazines (from 2012 and 2011) but this was not possible for every issue. A full list of the issues is available in Table 4.

Table 4. *List of magazines issues coded in Study 3.*

Period	<i>Men's Health</i>	<i>FHM</i>	<i>Attitude</i>	<i>Gay Times</i>
Spring 2012	May 2012	May 2012	May 2012	May 2012
Summer 2012	July 2012	July 2012	July 2012	July 2012
Autumn 2012	November 2012	September 2012	October 2012	November 2012
Winter 2012	Jan 2012	Jan 2012	Feb 2012	Jan 2012
Spring 2011	May 2011	May 2011	May 2011	May 2011
Summer 2011	July 2011	July 2011	July 2011	July 2011
Autumn 2011	September 2011	September 2011	September 2011	September 2011
Winter 2011	Feb 2011	Feb 2011	Feb 2011	Feb 2011

Coding development

A literature review was first carried out to find studies that had previously coded images of men and women in popular media in order to develop the codes. A range of studies were found with particular attention paid to those on popular magazines (Conley & Ramsey, 2011; Hatton & Trautner, 2011; Labre, 2005; Lanzieri & Cook, 2013; Pope Jr. et al., 2001; Rohlinger, 2002; Saucier & Caron, 2008; Yang et al., 2005) but other formats were also reviewed including those that coded popular websites (Buote, Wilson, Strahan, Gazzola, & Papps, 2011) and popular TV programmes (Fouts & Burggraf, 2000; Fouts & Vaughan, 2002). The material coded, the codes and levels within the codes, the coding procedure and reliability analyses were all reviewed across studies. For an excerpt of this literature review please see Table 5. Across the studies, the sample sizes, codes and sources differed vastly. For example, sample sizes of previous content analyses have ranged from eight issues (Buote et al., 2011) to 53 issues (Taylor, 2005). Therefore there were no set conventions for these issues and instead some

general principles were garnered. Specifically as the number of issues in previous magazine content analyses ranged vastly, it was decided that eight issues per magazine type (gay and straight) would be a sufficient sample size as well as what was pragmatic to code and obtain. This sample size was also comparable to Lanzieri and Cook (2013) who analysed, on average, 3.5 and 4.9 issues per gay and straight male magazine, respectively. In addition codes were designed to be as comprehensive as possible as well as concretely defined and it was also decided to pilot and test for inter-rater reliability.

Table 5. Excerpt of method summary table from content analysis literature review

Author/s	Materials	What was coded?	Levels of codes	Coding procedure	Inter-rater procedure
Taylor (2005)	Four months selected randomly and all magazine (<i>FHM</i> , <i>Maxim</i> and <i>Stuff</i>) issues of these months obtained up to May 2003.	1. All articles about a sexual topic 2. Images accompanying the above sex articles	-Sexualised article type -Explicitness of images -Interpersonal contact of images	Two coders were trained intensively in the coding (for 8 hours) and then carried out the coding (perhaps 50% of material).	To check inter-rater reliability: the two coders coded the same 20 articles & images..
Thompson-Brenner, Boisseau & St. Paul (2011)	462 Ebony magazine issues from 1968-2008 (targeted at African American women)	1. Cover images (which were of women) 2. No of articles about diet/exercise for appearance listed in the table of contents	-Amount of body shown -Figure size -Number of articles on diet/exercise for appearance in the table of contents	Three coders were trained in the coding procedure.	Appears (though not explicated) that the two coder's rated 100% of the images and article types.
Hatton & Trautner (2013)	931 (89%) <i>Rolling Stone</i> front covers from 1967 – 2009.	1. Images of men 2. Images of women	-Sexualisation frequency -Sexualisation intensity	10% of sample was double coded for inter-rater reliability.	
Conley & Ramsey (2011)	790 full-page adverts featuring adults from 19 US magazines published around Nov '09	1. Images of women 2. Images of men	Variety of indications of gender stereotyping or objectification inc: -Dismemberment -Flawlessness	100% of sample was double coded for inter-rater reliability. Note: Some aspects of Objectification ambiguous (e.g., whether image was a body or head shot).	

As recommended by Bauer (2000) and Luyt (2011), coding categories were devised both through previous empirical findings as well as through pilot testing of the codes on a sample of the material. This inductive-deductive process allows for comparisons of findings of previous studies as well as codes that fit the material well (Luyt, 2011). Codes used in previous content analyses of images of men were adapted for use in the current study by making them more specific and/or comprehensive. For example, the *Nudity* code from Saucier and Caron (2008) was expanded from *clothed*, *shirtless* and *naked* to include more specific levels of nudity e.g., *naked – underwear only*, *naked – genitals covered* etc. A further example concerned the *Attractiveness* code defined only by Buote et al. (2011, p. 324) via its level descriptions: “(a) very attractive (more attractive than the average person), (b) average attractiveness (neither very attractive nor unattractive) and (c) unattractive (less attractive than the average person)”. This code was made more specific to *Facial Attractiveness* with concretely defined levels e.g., *symmetrical facial features and unblemished skin (no obvious wrinkles, spots, or discolouration)* etc.

Codes were not uncritically adopted from previous content analyses. Related research and critiques were consulted in the development of the codes used in this study. For example, research that has content analysed media representations (Rohlinger, 2002; Taylor, 2005) as well as using other methodologies (APA, 2007) has varying definitions of objectification. Specifically, Rohlinger, (2002, p. 70) defines male objectification as when “*the male body and its related parts are increasingly coming to signify the whole man*”. In contrast, the APA (2007, p. 1) defines objectification as when a person is “*made into a thing for others’ sexual use, rather than seen as a person with the capacity for independent action and decision making*”. In addition, some consider objectification to be a concept that unhelpfully masks other important aspects of media representation (e.g., racialization and sexual agency; Gill, 2009 see also Egan, 2013). It was decided then to code for the concrete aspect of objectification, *Dismemberment*, separately to the more abstract aspect: *Sexualisation*. In addition, *Sexualisation* was coded at two levels: *subtle* and *explicit or obvious*. As well as being clearly defined, this would allow future readers to later decide whether to accept one, both

or neither of the levels of *Sexualisation* (or *Dismemberment*) as meaningful aspects of these representations.

The final codes were based on the *Age*, *Attractiveness*, and *Body Type* codes from Buote et al. (2011), the *Nudity*, *Chest Hair* and *Ethnicity* codes from Saucier and Caron (2008), and the *Dismemberment* and *Sexualisation* codes from Rohlinger (2002). Additionally, codes for the type of articles and adverts featured were adapted from Saucier and Caron (2008), Taylor (2005) and Labre (2005). Finally, as amount of head hair has not been assessed before, a code was created for purpose (*Head Hair Amount*).

The codes were piloted by myself and my supervisor, Dr Helen Fawkner, on previous issues of each of the four magazines (these issues were not used in the analysis). Codes were tested to see if they and the levels within the codes captured attributes of the images that were coherent, relevant and comprehensive. Codes were also piloted to see if they were practical and not too time consuming. After independent coding of the magazine issues, the coders met to discuss any refinement or removal of codes. For example, it was decided to code specific aspects of the appearance of images of men rather than the degree to which the image conformed to the male corporate appearance ideal. At this stage, experts in the field of body dissatisfaction and collaborators on this study, Dr Amy Slater and Professor Marika Tiggemann, were both consulted on changes to the codes. In total there were 9 codes developed for images of men, 4 for images of women and 2 for adverts and article types. Coding took part in four consecutive stages: (1) Images featuring men, (2) Images featuring women, (3) Appearance advertisements and (4) Appearance articles.

Coding scheme

Images featuring men

Any adult man (18+ years) in an image over 4.25cm² was coded. Children were not coded and women were coded separately. If an image featured the same model more than once, this was treated as one instance unless the image differed significantly.

There were six codes for the physical appearance attributes of the male model including:

- 1) *Age*: (1a) *Very young* (under 25 years), (1b) *Young* (26-40 years), (1c) *Middle-aged* (40-60) and (1d) *Older* (60+);
- 2) *Facial attractiveness*: (2a) *Symmetrical facial features and unblemished skin* (no obvious wrinkles, spots, or discolouration), (2b) *Non-symmetrical facial features, and/ or unblemished skin* and (2c) *Other/unknown*;
- 3) *Body type*: (3a) *Thin*, (3b) *Average*, (3c) *Ambiguously average or mesomorphic* (model's level of muscularity and/or leanness obscured but evident model is not thin, hypomesomorphic, overweight or obese), (3d) *Mesomorphic* (sufficiently low level of body fat and high degree of muscularity that the outline of his muscles are visible e.g., biceps, abdominals), (3e) *Hypomesomorphic* (extreme level of muscularity where veins are present akin to a bodybuilder), (3f) *Overweight* (endomorphic body shape, excess weight is visible particularly around stomach), (3g) *Obese* (heavily overweight);
- 4) *Head Hair Amount*: (4a) *Full head of hair*, (4b) *Some recession of hair*, (4c) *Bald*, (4d) *Shaved* and (4e) *Unable to tell/ other*;
- 5) *Ethnicity* (as visible to reader): (5a) *white*, (5b) *Black*, (5c) *Asian*, (5d) *Mixed Race* and (5e) *Unknown*;
- 6) *Chest Hair Amount*: (6a) *Model is clothed/Unknown*, (6b) *No chest hair*, (6c) *Some chest hair visible* and (6d) *A lot of chest hair visible*.

Further, these images were coded for degree of nudity and objectification (i.e., sexualisation and dismemberment). The specific codes follow:

- 7) *Nudity*: (7a) *Fully clothed*, (7b) *Shirtless*, (7c) *In underwear only*, (7d) *Naked: Genitals covered* and (7e) *Naked: Genitals shown*;
- 8) *Sexualisation*: (8a) *None*, (8b) *Subtle* (model part undressed, two models in suggestive pose etc.) and (8c) *Explicit* (model in sexual pose e.g., focus on crotch, model with phallic prop etc.);

- 9) *Dismemberment* (where part or all of a model's body is featured without their face visible; Rohlinger, 2002): (9a) *None* and (9b) *Dismembered*.

Images featuring women

Any adult woman in an image over 4.25cm² was coded. One code was constructed specifically for images of women: *Conformity to the female corporate appearance ideal*: (1a) *Ideal-* from what is visible model appears to be: young (under 40 years of age), white, thin and has medium or larger sized breasts, (1b) *Ideal except not young*, (1c) *Ideal and model is of colour*, (1d) *Ideal except not thin or has small breasts*, (1e) *None* - model conforms to two or fewer of the attributes above and (1g) *Unable to tell*.

The following codes used for images of men were also used to code images of women:

- *Nudity*;
- *Sexualisation*;
- *Dismemberment*.

Appearance adverts

All full-page adverts were counted whether or not they contained images of men or women. Those that were for appearance products (e.g., clothes, cosmetics, protein shakes, underwear) were coded as *Appearance*.

Appearance articles

Any articles listed in the magazine's content page were counted. Those that encouraged behaviour change or product purchase to change appearance (including weight loss and muscle building) were coded as *Appearance*. Additionally, articles featuring celebrities with accompanying sexy/attractive photos were also coded into this category.

Analytic strategy: Coding checks

Preliminary data screening was conducted to ensure there was no missing data in the datasets or data entry errors. Inspection revealed no missing data though some cases had been entered incorrectly and these were corrected by locating the original image and recoding as appropriate. Although some unusually high or low

frequencies (in comparison to other issues within that magazine title) coded at particular levels were found, inspection of the actual images, advert or article types revealed these to be valid. For example, *Men's Health* September 2011 had an unusually high number of women coded as nude ($N = 64$) compared to average ($M = 14.25$, $SD = 7.83$). Closer examination revealed this to be because this issue of *Men's Health* featured an article about the ideal female body accompanied by approximately 20 images of topless women. The variable *Conformity to female corporate appearance ideal* was reversed so that a higher score indicated higher conformity, in line with other codes. In addition, two codes *Sexualisation* and *Dismemberment* had incorrect levels within them (e.g., the level *Unknown* for *Sexualisation*). These levels were incorrect as it was not theoretically possible for an image to have an unknown level of dismemberment or sexualisation (as in this case the image should be coded at the level of *None*). Eighteen images that were coded at these levels were recoded into the other viable levels of these categories (the specific images were also revisited to ensure this recoding was valid).

Analytic strategy: Inter-rater reliability

As mentioned, codes were first pilot tested on issues of the magazine that were not subsequently analysed in the study. After pilot testing, the second author randomly selected one of each of the magazines (two issues from 2012 and two from 2011) for themselves and the first author to, independently, double code. A detailed coding plan was devised by myself and sent to Helen Fawkner before double coding. This plan included how to code ambiguous attributes of the image. For example, one tip for coding was that both raters should code the model's body if below neck is shown. If only neck and none or very little of the torso is shown code *Body type* as *Unknown*. The first magazine double coded had below acceptable inter-rater reliability ($k < .70$) for two codes used for the images of men. These images that had been coded differently were revisited by both authors and the discrepancies involved were resolved via discussion and revision of the coding procedure and its application. Apart from these initial discrepancies, the coding of the images of women, adverts, articles and remaining three magazines was coded to an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability ($k > .70$). The first author then proceeded to code the 28 magazines; resolving any ambiguities in coding via

further discussion and refinement of the codes with the second author. In total, 4,949 images of men, 1,151 images of women, 1,233 adverts and 977 articles were coded.

RESULTS

Data screening

The data was checked to see if it met the assumptions for chi-square. Specifically whether the cells or data points were independent and whether each data point met the minimum expected count. The first assumption was met (i.e., no image could be coded into the more than one level of a variable). Regarding the second assumption, only two of the levels had counts smaller than five (with only 4 images of women being coded as *Ideal except not thin or has small breasts* in the straight men's magazines and with no images of women coded as *Dismembered* in the gay men's magazines). Although Field (2009) recommends that no more than 20% of cells have count of less than 5 and none have less than 1, others argue that this cut off is too conservative and cells with counts less than one is acceptable as long as it is very few and the contingency table is large (Kirkman, 1996; University of Strathclyde, n.d.). As *Dismembered* could not be collapsed into the other *Dismemberment* code level, *None*, and this was the only cell count less than 1 it was decided to precede with the analysis.

A series of chi-square analyses were conducted to compare the gay men's magazines (*Attitude* and *Gay Times*) and the straight men's magazines (*Men's Health* and *FHM*) in terms of the physical, nudity and objectification codes of the images of men and women, and the number of appearance –focused adverts and articles featured. Cramer's V statistic, a chi-square effect size which can be interpreted using the following size guidelines specified by Pallant (2010): $r = .01$ indicating small, $r = .30$ indicating medium and $r = .50$ indicating large, is also presented.

Descriptive analysis

How appearance potent are the magazines?

Across all magazines, the majority of images of men were coded as *Very young* or *Young* (82.3%), having *Symmetrical and unblemished faces* (81.3%),

Mesomorphic (44.0%), having *Full heads of hair* (76.2%), *white* (88.8%) and when their chests were visible having *No chest hair* (80.0%)¹¹. Many of the images had physical characteristics obscured i.e., were *Ambiguously average* or *Mesomorphic* (36.2%) or had *Unknown -facial characteristics, -age, -body type and –head hair amount* (8.8-15.5%). Few did not conform to the corporate appearance ideals i.e., were in *Mid- /Later- life* (9.9%), had *Non-symmetrical and/or blemished faces* (4.1%), were *Thin/Average/Hypomesomorphic/Overweight/Obese* (11.2%) had *Some hair recession/were Bald* (5.3%) or were *People of colour* (10.2%). Finally, many of the images were *Fully clothed* (55.9%), *Not sexualised* (65.9%) and most were *Not dismembered* (94.1%).

Once again, across the magazines, three quarters of the images of women *Conformed to the female corporate appearance ideal* (80.6%), more than a third displayed some degree of *Nudity* (40.7%) and more than half were *Sexualized* (52.9%). Few were *Dismembered* (3.5%). Finally of the 866 articles coded, 273 (31.5%) focussed on *Appearance* and of the 1,193 adverts coded, 573 (48.0%) focussed on *Appearance*.

Focal analysis

Do the gay men's magazines feature more images of men that are ideal, nude and objectified in comparison to the straight men's magazines?

The chi-square analyses showed a significant difference between the magazine types on *Age* ($\chi^2 (4) = 94.22; p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .14$), *Facial attractiveness* ($\chi^2 (2) = 53.54; p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .10$), *Body type* ($\chi^2 (6) = 509.93; p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .32$), *Head hair amount* ($\chi^2 (4) = 64.55; p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .11$), *Ethnicity* ($\chi^2 (2) = 76.74; p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .13$), *Chest hair amount* ($\chi^2 (3) = 574.34; p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .34$), *Nudity* ($\chi^2 (4) = 825.56; p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .41$), *Dismemberment* ($\chi^2 (1) = 2.75; p = .097$, Cramer's $V = .02$) and *Sexualisation* ($\chi^2 (2) = 1319.80; p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .52$).

More specifically, analyses of the standardized residuals revealed that there were more images of men in the gay genre magazines coded as *Very young*, as

¹¹ Percentages in text may be different to those presented in Tables as percentages are calculated without the proportion of images coded as 'Unknown' for that code.

having *Symmetrical and unblemished faces*, as being *Mesomorphic*, as having *Full heads of hair*, as having *None- or Some- chest hair visible*, as being *Shirtless*, in *Underwear only* and *Naked*, and as *Subtly- or Explicitly sexualised* compared to the images of men in the straight genre magazines. These results support the first hypothesis. Percentages and cross tabulation statistics are presented in **Table 6**.

Table 6. Average and total frequencies of images of men in *Attitude*, *Gay Times*, *Men's Health* and *FHM* coded at each level of the physical, nudity and objectification codes

Code	Level	Magazine genre						Total	
		Gay		Straight		Z score	N	N (%)	
		N	%	n	%				
Age	Very young	358	12.3	3.9	136	6.7	-4.7	494	10.0
	Young	2141	73.6	0.9	1424	70.3	-1.0	3565	72.3
	Mid life	186	6.4	-2.9	203	10.0	3.4	389	7.9
	Later life	28	1.0	-0.7	26	1.3	0.8	54	1.1
	Unknown	195	6.7	-3.7	237	11.7	4.5	432	8.8
Facial attractiveness	Symmetrical and unblemished	2461	84.6	2.0	1552	76.6	-2.4	4013	81.3
	Non-symmetrical/ or blemished	88	3.0	-2.9	115	5.7	3.5	203	4.1
	Unknown	359	12.3	-3.1	359	17.7	3.7	718	14.6
Body type	Thin	44	1.5	1.7	14	0.7	-2.0	58	1.2
	Average	159	5.5	-1.0	132	6.5	1.1	291	5.9
	Ambiguously average or mesomorphic	801	27.5	-7.7	984	48.6	9.3	1695	36.2
	Mesomorphic	1649	56.7	10.4	520	10.5	-12.4	2169	44.0
	Hypomesomorphic	8	0.3	-2.6	25	1.2	3.1	33	0.7
	Overweight or obese	68	2.3	-3.0	98	4.8	3.6	166	3.4
	Unknown	179	6.2	-4.7	253	12.5	5.7	432	8.8
Head of hair	Full	2315	79.6	2.1	1446	71.4	-2.5	3761	76.2
	Some recession	131	4.5	0.9	75	3.7	-1.0	206	4.2
	Bald	68	2.3	-2.3	84	4.1	2.7	152	3.1
	Shaved	19	0.7	-1.7	29	1.4	2.1	48	1.0
	Unknown	375	12.9	-3.6	392	19.3	4.3	767	15.5
Ethnicity	White	2660	91.5	1.5	1720	84.9	-1.9	4380	88.8
	Black	144	5.0	-3.2	174	8.6	3.8	318	6.4
	Asian	44	1.5	-1.7	53	2.6	2.1	97	2.0
	Mixed race	53	1.8	-.1	38	1.9	0.1	91	1.8

	<i>Unknown</i>	7	0.2	-4.0	41	2.0	4.8	48	1.0
<i>Chest hair amount</i>	<i>Chest hair covered</i>	1383	47.6	-9.4	1640	80.9	11.3	3023	61.3
	<i>None</i>	1202	41.3	10.0	326	16.1	-12.0	1528	31.0
	<i>Some</i>	296	10.2	6.8	44	2.2	-8.1	340	6.9
	<i>A lot</i>	27	0.9	0.3	16	0.8	-0.4	43	0.9
<i>Nudity</i>	<i>Fully clothed</i>	1227	42.2	-9.9	1531	75.6	11.8	2758	55.9
	<i>Shirtless</i>	913	31.2	6.4	342	16.9	-7.6	1255	25.4
	<i>Underwear only</i>	437	15.0	10.6	11	0.5	-12.8	448	9.1
	<i>Naked</i>	265	9.1	8.1	10	0.5	-9.7	275	5.6
	<i>Unknown</i>	66	2.3	-4.7	132	6.5	-5.6	198	4.0
<i>Sexualisation</i>	<i>None</i>	1321	45.4	-13.6	1929	95.2	16.3	3250	65.9
	<i>Subtle</i>	366	12.6	8.2	39	1.9	-9.9	405	8.2
	<i>Explicit</i>	1221	42.0	17.0	58	2.9	-20.4	1279	25.9
<i>Dismemberment</i>	<i>None</i>	2750	94.6	0.3	1893	93.4	-0.3	4643	94.1
	<i>Dismembered</i>	158	5.4	-1.0	133	6.6	1.2	291	5.9
Total		2908	100.0	-	2026	100.0	-	4934	100.0

Note. Percentages denote proportion of images coded at particular level in relation to the sum of the other levels of that code.

Do the straight men's magazines feature more images of women that are ideal, nude and objectified in comparison to the gay men's magazines?

The chi-square analyses showed a significant difference between the magazines types on *Conformity to female corporate appearance ideal* ($\chi^2 (5) = 191.30; p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .41$), *Nudity* ($\chi^2 (2) = 315.44; p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .52$), *Sexualisation* ($\chi^2 (2) = 371.14; p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .57$) and *Dismemberment* ($\chi^2 (1) = 19.48; p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .13$).

More specifically, the standardized residuals revealed there were fewer images of women in the gay genre magazines that were coded as *Ideal*, as *Nude*, as *Dismembered* and as *Explicitly sexualised*. These results support the second hypothesis. Percentages and cross tabulation statistics are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Average and total frequencies of images of women in Attitude, Gay Times, Men's Health and FHM coded at each level of the physical, nudity and objectification codes

Code	Level	Magazine genre						Total		
		Gay		Straight		Z score	N	(%)		
		N	%	n	%					
<i>Conformity to female corporate appearance ideal</i>	<i>Ideal</i>	21		-4.5	70	90.	3.1			
		9	59.5		9	5			928	80.6
	, “ except not young	33	9.0	5.8				-4.0		
	, “ and of colour	36	9.8	2.5	6	0.8			39	3.4
	, “ except not thin-toned	8	2.2	2.1	39	5.0			75	6.5
	<i>None</i>	55	14.9	7.9	7	0.9	-5.4	62		5.4
	<i>Unknown</i>	17	4.6	1.7	18	2.3	-1.2	35		3.0
	<i>None</i>	34		-0.5	31	39.	-6.5			
		9	94.8		2	8			661	57.4
	<i>Some</i>			-	45	58.	7.7			
<i>Nudity</i>	<i>Some</i>	13	3.5	11.2	5	1			468	40.7
	<i>Unknown</i>	6	1.6	-0.4	16	2.0	0.3	22		1.9
	<i>None</i>	31		11.0	22	28.	-7.5			
		8	86.4		5	7			543	47.2
	<i>Subtle</i>	30	8.2	0.9	49	6.3	-0.6	79		6.9
<i>Sexualisation</i>	<i>Explicit</i>			-	50	65.	7.9			
	<i>None</i>	20	5.4	11.5	9	0			529	46.0
	<i>None</i>	36	100.	0.7	74	94.	-0.5	111		
		8	0		3	9		1		96.5
<i>Dismemberment</i>	<i>Dismembered</i>			-3.6			2.5			
		0	0.0		40	5.1		40		3.5
	Total	36	100	-	78	100	-	1,15		100.
		8			3			1		0

Note. Percentages denote proportion of images coded at particular level in relation to total average images coded in magazine.

Do the gay men's magazines differ in the proportion of appearance adverts in comparison to the straight men's magazines?

The chi-square analysis showed a significant difference, with the gay genre magazines featuring significantly fewer *Appearance* adverts than the straight genre magazines ($\chi^2 (1) = 233.47; p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .44$). These results do not support the third hypothesis. Percentages and cross tabulation statistics are presented in Table 8.

Do the gay men's magazines differ in the proportion of appearance-focused articles in comparison to the straight men's magazines?

The chi-square analysis showed a significant difference in the number of *Appearance* articles between the magazines ($\chi^2 (1) = 4.06; p = .044$, Cramer's $V = .07$), though analyses of the residuals revealed these differences were not in fact significant. These results do not support the final hypothesis. Percentages and cross tabulations are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. *Average and total frequencies of appearance adverts and appearances articles in Attitude, Gay Times, Men's Health and FHM coded at each level of the coding categories*

Type of advert/article	Magazine genre			Total				
	Gay		Straight					
	n	%	Z score	n	%	Z score	N	%
<i>Appearance</i>	124	23.4	-8.2	449	67.8	7.3	573	48
<i>Other</i>	407	76.6	-	213	32.2	-	620	52
<i>Appearance</i>	144	28.8	-1.1	129	35.2	1.3	273	32
<i>Other articles</i>	356	71.2	-	237	64.8	-	593	68

SUMMARY OF STUDY 3

Study 3 aimed to compare the appearance potency of the gay male and straight male subcultures by a detailed content analysis of images of men and women, appearance advertisements and articles presented on popular UK magazines. The method of Study 3 has been presented which included a rationale for sources selected, a detailed description of the coding strategy as well as methods to ensure coding reliability. Results showed that images of men in the gay men's magazines were more likely to conform to corporate appearance ideals, were sexualised and nude compared to images of men presented in the straight men's magazines. In contrast images of women were more likely to conform to the

corporate appearance ideal, were nude, explicitly sexualized and dismembered, and there were more appearance adverts in straight men's magazines. Although this content in general was prevalent across magazines, images of men outnumbered the other types of appearance potent content suggesting that gay male media is the more appearance potent of the two types. A fuller discussion of these results follows (Chapter 8) after the methods and results of Study 3 (Chapter 7).

Although these results are clear, they only explore one type of media format: magazines, which may well be less relevant in gay and straight men's lives compared to other media sources, in particular the internet such as dating and porn websites (Morrison & McCutcheon, 2011). Unlike magazines, many internet websites are free, are instantly accessible and have content that is frequently updated. Additionally, in recent years there has been a significant increase in internet usage in the Western world, whilst print media consumption has decreased (e.g., Stempel, Hargrove, & Bernt, 2000). For these reasons websites may be a more accurate gauge of the appearance potency of gay and straight men's subcultures. In addition, a fuller appraisal of the differing appearance potency between gay and straight men's media is still warranted particularly as there is a continuing need to explore culture and its relation to body dissatisfaction and that previous explorations of gay men's media have been few and limited in scope.

Therefore like Study 3, Study 4 aimed to explore whether the content that was potentially appearance potent (i.e., images of men and women who conformed to corporate appearance ideals) differed between gay and straight men's media as a way to account for gay men's greater reported levels of body dissatisfaction. As the most visited websites by all men are those that are geared towards general audiences(e.g., news websites, social networking websites), the current study selected dating and porn websites for analysis as these websites reflect the desires and needs of gay and straight men (mostly) separately and contain images of both men and women. Study 4 builds on Study 3 by exploring another form of media format that may have more relevance in gay and straight

men's lives than print magazines: dating and porn websites. The method and results of Study 4 therefore follow.

CHAPTER 7:

STUDY 4: METHOD AND RESULTS OF WEBSITES CONTENT ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

As mentioned previously, there is a continuing need to explore the culture's effect on body dissatisfaction so as not to pathologise people. This is particularly the case for gay men whose greater reported body dissatisfaction in relation to straight men has resulted in researchers stereotyping them as appearance obsessed. Instead, exploring the appearance potency of gay men's media (as a proxy for culture) in relation to straight men's media is warranted. Study 3 (Chapter 6) found that gay men's magazines had more appearance potent content overall than straight men's media and this study builds upon these results by exploring a further, more relevant type of media format: gay and straight men's dating and porn websites. The method and results of Study 4 then are presented in this chapter.

METHOD

Source selection

The most visited UK websites for straight and gay men were used for analysis. Specifically these were personal dating websites and pornography websites. Dating and porn websites were selected for analysis (as opposed to other types of website) as within these websites types there exist distinct websites that target a gay male and heterosexual male audience and therefore can be taken as proxies for the gay male and heterosexual male subcultures. In contrast simply selecting the website for analysis that was most visited by gay and heterosexual men (e.g. *Facebook.com*) would merely represent the wider sociocultural environment that gay and heterosexual men share.

According to Alexa (2012), the web-trafficking information site, the two dating websites most visited in the UK (and targeted at straight men) are *Match.com* followed by *Shagaholic.com*. The porn websites most visited in the UK (targeted at straight men) were *Xhamster.com* followed by *Xvideos.com*, respectively. For gay men, the most visited dating websites were *Gaydar.co.uk*

and *Adam4Adam.com*, and the most visited porn websites were *Manhub.com* and *Gaytube.com*. The homepage and main tabs of these websites were captured using a screen capture programme that created video files of the websites between February and March 2013. Each homepage of the website and main tab of the websites were captured as these provided a balance to garnering enough content off the websites whilst being pragmatic about how much content was feasible to code. For details about the screen grabbing procedure see Appendix L as well as Slater, Tiggemann, Hawkins and Werchon (2012).

Coding procedure

The codes used on images of men and women from Study 3 were adopted in Study 3. Full details of the codes used in the focal analyses are presented in Table 9 and Table 10 as well as Chapter 6. Coding took part in two phases: 1) Images featuring men and 2) Images featuring women. Images of men and women (larger than 4.25cm²) were coded for their conformity to the male and female corporate appearance ideals (e.g., approximate Age, *Ethnicity*, *Body Type*, etc.), levels of *Nudity* and objectification (i.e., *Sexualisation* and *Dismemberment* codes e.g., Rohlinger, 2002). All websites were coded by myself, and four of the websites (50%) were also independently coded by a collaborator on the study: Dr Amy Slater. As in Study 3, any discrepancies were resolved via discussion between the two raters and appropriate revision of the coding. For example, Amy had been coding images of men as *Naked – Genitals shown* if the man in the image had his genitals visible even if he also had a top on. This was agreed as a correct interpretation of that level so coding by myself was adjusted to incorporate this interpretation. After appropriate discussion and revision of codes, inter-rater reliability for both sets of coding was acceptable ($k > .70$).

RESULTS

Data screening

As before, the assumptions of chi-square analysis were checked to make sure the data met them (e.g., that cell were independent). One of the assumptions of chi-square analysis was that expected cell counts were above 5. As mentioned, although Field (2009) recommends that no more than 20% of cells have count of

less than five and none have less than one, others argue that this cut off is too conservative and cells with counts less than one are acceptable as long as they are few and the contingency table is large (Kirkman, 1996; University of Strathclyde, n.d.).

Six levels within the codes (*Age, Body Type, Head Hair Amount, Ethnicity and Chest Hair Amount*) had cell counts smaller than 5. Subsequently, levels within these codes that could be collapsed, so that the cells counts would be greater than 5, were. For example, the *Age* levels *Older* (60+) and *Mid-life* were collapsed to form the level *Mid-life or older*. Some code levels with cell counts smaller than 5 were not collapsed as this would lose meaningful information about the images (e.g., the *Head hair amount* levels: *Some recession/bald* and *Full head of hair* were not collapsed). This left seven cells (10%) of the contingency table. Four of these cells had counts of zero as no images were coded at the level *Unsymmetrical or blemished* for the variable *Facial attractiveness* and no images on the straight men's websites were coded at the *Age* level of *Very young* or *Nudity* level of *Underwear Only*. As this was only four cells out of sixty six (i.e., 5%), the expected cell count assumption had not been violated and the analysis on the images of men could proceed.

Unfortunately there were only four images of women across the four gay men's dating websites meaning there were six cells that had cell counts of zero (i.e. 21% of the contingency table). Following other's recommendations (Field, 2009; Kirkman, 1996; University of Strathclyde, n.d.) it was decided that the expected counts assumption for chi-square could not be met and subsequently the analysis could not be performed.

Descriptive analysis: How appearance potent are the websites?

Across all the websites, the majority of images of men were coded as *Very young* or *Young* (71.7%), having *Symmetrical and unblemished* faces (69.0%), *Mesomorphic* (53.9%), having *Full heads of hair* (64.5%), *white* (86.1%) and when their chests were visible having *No chest hair* (69.0%). Some of the images had physical characteristics obscured i.e., were *Ambiguously average* or *Mesomorphic* (14.2%) or had *Unknown -facial characteristics, -age, -body type and –head hair amount* (1.4-32.2%). Few were non-appearance ideal: i.e., were in *mid- /later- life*

(4.9%), none had *non-symmetrical and/or blemished faces* (0%), few were *Thin/Average/Hypomesomorphic/Overweight/Obese* (7.6%) had *Some hair recession/were Bald* (3.3%) or were *People of colour* (12.4%). Finally, many of the images were *Fully clothed* (19.4%), *Sexualised* (82.7%) and most were *Not dismembered* (22.8%). Frequencies and percentages of the levels at which the images of men were coded are presented in Table 9

Table 9. Frequencies and percentages of images of men in the gay men's websites and the straight men's websites coded at each level of the physical, nudity and objectification codes.

		Gay men's websites			Straight men's websites			Total	
		N	%	Z score	n	%	Z score	N	(%)
Age	<i>Unknown</i>	209	17.5	-4.2	122	54.7	9.7	331	23.4
	<i>Very young</i>	97	8.1	1.7	0	0.0	-3.9	97	6.9
	<i>Young</i>	828	69.5	2.0	89	39.9	-4.6	917	64.8
	<i>Mid life or older</i>	58	4.9	-.1	12	5.4	.3	70	4.9
Facial attractiveness	<i>Unknown</i>	303	25.4		136	61.0	8.0	439	31.0
	<i>Symmetrical and unblemished</i>	889	74.6	2.3	87	39.0	-5.4	976	69.0
	<i>Non-symmetrical/ or blemished</i>	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	0
Body type	<i>Unknown</i>	215	18.0	-4.4	128	57.4	10.1	343	24.3
	<i>Thin or hypomesomoprhic</i>	15	1.3	-.3	4	1.8	.6	19	1.3
	<i>Average</i>	37	3.1	-.9	14	6.3	2.1	51	3.6
	<i>Ambiguously average or mesomorphic</i>	166	13.9	-.3	35	15.7	.6	201	14.2
	<i>Mesomorphic</i>	723	60.7	3.2	40	17.9	-7.3	763	53.9
	<i>Overweight (or obese)</i>	36	3.0	.7	2	0.9	-1.6	38	2.7
Head of hair	<i>Unknown</i>	323	27.1	-3.1	132	59.2	7.1	455	32.2
	<i>Full</i>	832	69.8	2.3	81	36.3	-5.2	913	64.5
	<i>Some recession or balding</i>	37	3.1	-.4	10	4.5	1.0	47	3.3
Ethnicity	<i>Unknown</i>	14	1.2	-0.7	6	2.7	1.6	20	1.4
	<i>White</i>	1037	87.0	.3	182	81.6	-.7	1219	86.1
	<i>Black</i>	111	9.3	-.1	22	9.9	.2	133	9.4
	<i>Asian or mixed race</i>	30	2.5	-1.0	13	5.8	2.4	43	3.0
Chest hair amount	<i>Chest hair covered</i>	493	41.4	-3.5	191	85.7	8.0	684	48.3

	<i>None</i>	663	55.6	3.2	31	13.9	-7.5	694	49.0
	<i>Some or a lot</i>	36	3.0	.9	1	0.4	-2.0	37	2.6
<i>Nudity</i>	<i>Unknown</i>	66	5.5	1.2	2	0.9	-2.7	68	4.8
	<i>Fully clothed</i>	213	17.9	-1.2	62	27.8	2.8	275	19.4
	<i>Shirtless</i>	255	21.4	2.2	9	4.0	-5.1	264	18.7
	<i>Underwear only</i>	75	6.3	1.5	0	0.0	-3.4	75	5.3
	<i>Naked – genitals covered</i>	140	11.7	1.1	11	4.9	-2.6	151	10.7
	<i>Naked – genitals shown</i>	443	37.2	-2.1	139	62.3	4.9	582	41.1
<i>Dismemberment</i>	<i>None</i>	983	82.5	2.1	109	48.9	-4.8	1092	77.2
	<i>Some</i>	209	17.5	-3.8	114	51.1	8.8	323	22.8
<i>Sexualisation</i>	<i>None</i>	194	16.3	-.9	51	22.9	2.0	245	17.3
	<i>Subtle</i>	18	1.5	-.5	6	2.7	1.1	24	1.7
	<i>Obvious/explicit</i>	980	82.2	.5	166	74.4	-1.1	1146	81.0

Note. Percentages in brackets denote proportion of images of men coded at particular level in relation to total number of images of men coded from that website).

Once again, across the websites the majority of the images of the women were *Ideal* (80.7%). Few images conformed to the female corporate appearance ideal except were *Not young/ Of colour/ Thin or toned* (9.8%) or had characteristics that were *Unknown* (7.2%). Only 2.0% of the images of women did *Not conform to the female corporate appearance ideal*. Many of the images of women were *Nude* (61.7%) and were *Sexualized* (84.5%), though few were *Dismembered* (15.5%). Frequencies and percentages of the levels at which the images of women were coded are presented in Table 10.

Table 10. *The total number of images of women coded at each level of the physical, nudity and objectification codes on the websites.*

		Gay		Straight		Total ¹			
		n	%	Z score	N	%	Z score	n	%
<i>Conformity to female appearance ideal</i>	<i>Unknown</i>	0	0.0	-	53	7.2	-	53	7.2
	<i>Ideal</i>	4	100.0		594	80.6	-	598	80.7
	<i>, “ except not young</i>	0	0.0	-	1	0.1	-	1	0.1
	<i>, “ and of colour</i>	0	0.0	-	57	7.7	-	57	7.7
	<i>, “ except not thin/toned</i>	0	0.0	-	15	2.0	-	15	2.0
	<i>None</i>	0	0.0	-	17	2.3	-	17	2.3
<i>Nudity</i>	<i>None</i>	1	50.0	-	283	38.4	-	284	38.3
	<i>Some</i>	3	25.0	-	454	61.6	-	457	61.7
<i>Dismemberment</i>	<i>None</i>	3	75.0	-	623	84.5	-	626	84.5
	<i>Some</i>	1	25.0	-	114	15.5	-	115	15.5
<i>Sexualisation</i>	<i>None</i>	1	25.0	-	44	6.0	-	45	6.1
	<i>Subtle</i>	3	75.0	-	70	9.5	-	70	9.4
	<i>Obvious/ explicit</i>	0	0.0	-	623	84.5	-	626	84.5
<i>Total</i>		4	100	-	737	100	-	741	100

Note. Percentages in brackets denote proportion of images of women coded at particular level in relation to total number of images of women coded from that website.

¹Average total calculated across only those websites that featured at least one image of a woman.

Focal analyses

Do the gay men's websites feature more images of men that are ideal, nude, sexualized and dismembered in comparison to the straight men's magazines?

A series of Pearson Chi Squares were conducted to see how the gay men's websites differed to the straight men's websites in terms of the physical, nudity and objectification codes of the images of men featured. Cramer's V statistic, a chi-square effect size which can be interpreted using the following size guidelines specified by Pallant (2010): $r = .01$ indicating small, $r = .30$ indicating medium and $r = .50$ indicating large, is also presented.

The Chi-square analyses conducted upon images of men showed a significant difference between the website genres on Age ($\chi^2 (3) = 154.55, p <.001$, Cramer's $V = .33$), Facial attractiveness ($\chi^2 (1) = 111.05, p <.001$, Cramer's $V = .28$), Body type ($\chi^2 (5) = 192.86, p <.001$, Cramer's $V = .37$), Ethnicity ($\chi^2 (3) = 10.53, p = .015$, Cramer's $V = .09$), Nudity ($\chi^2 (5) = 99.42, p <.001$, Cramer's $V = .27$), Chest hair amount ($\chi^2 (2) = 147.65, p <.001$, Cramer's $V = .32$), Dismemberment ($\chi^2 (1) = 120.30, p <.001$, Cramer's $V = .29$) and Sexualisation ($\chi^2 (5) = 7.66, p = .022$, Cramer's $V = .07$).

More specifically, analyses of the standardized residuals revealed there were more images of men on the gay genre websites coded as *Young*, as having *Symmetrical and unblemished faces*, as being *Mesomorphic*, as having *Full heads of hair*, as having *No chest hair visible*, as being *Shirtless* and in *Underwear only* and as *Not being dismembered* compared to the images of men on the straight genre websites.

SUMMARY OF STUDY 4

Study 4 aimed to compare the appearance potency of the gay male and straight male subcultures by a detailed content analysis of images of men and women presented on popular UK dating and porn websites. The method of Study 4 has been presented which includes a rationale for sources selected, a detailed description of the coding strategy as well as methods to ensure coding reliability. Similar to Study 3, results showed that images of men on the gay men's websites

were more likely to conform to corporate appearance ideals compared to images of men on the straight men's websites. As there were only four images of women across the 4 gay websites, the chi square analysis for images of women was unable to be performed. Nonetheless, clearly images of women who conform to the female corporate appearance ideal were abundant on straight men's websites though. A further discussion of this discrepancy shall be provided in Chapter 8.

Appearance potent content in general was prevalent across the websites (Study 4), as was the case across the magazines (Study 3). For the straight men's websites, images of women outnumbered images of men and this was the opposite for gay men's websites. As both content are potentially appearance potent, this suggests that there is equivalence in appearance potency across the two website genres; unlike the results of men's magazines in Chapter 6. A fuller discussion of both of the results of Study 3 and 4 now follows in Chapter 8.

CHAPTER 8:

STUDIES 3 AND 4: DISCUSSION

DISCUSSION

Chapter overview

Studies 3 and 4 (Chapter 6 & 7) aimed to explore and compare the appearance potency of gay and straight men's media; as a way of moving the focus in body dissatisfaction away from individual people onto culture. In addition these studies wished to critically appraise the explanation that gay male subculture was more appearance potent than its straight counterpart based on our current understanding and research of media appearance potency (e.g., Aubrey & Taylor, 2009; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). A discussion of the findings now follow, before a critical literature review of efforts to tackle media appearance potency.

Studies 3 and 4: Appearance potency overview

In general, the magazines were appearance potent. Across the four magazines, the majority of the images of men conformed to the corporate appearance ideal in that they were *Young* or *Very young* (83.3%), had *Symmetrical and unblemished faces* (81.3%) were *Mesomorphic* or *Ambiguously average* (80.2%), had a *Full head of hair* (76.2%), were *white* (88.8%) and had *No visible body hair* (80%). In addition, many were *Sexualized* (34%) and *Nude* (54%). The majority of images of women were also *Ideal* (80.6%), and a significant proportion were also *Nude* (41%) and *Sexualized* (53%). Finally there were many *Appearance adverts* (48%) and *articles* (32%). Similarly, across both websites types, *Ideal*, *Nude* and objectified images of men and women abound.

Like other media formats including men's magazines (Law & Labre, 2002) women's magazines (Leit, Pope Jr., & Gray, 2001) and mainstream TV shows (Dallesasse & Kluck, 2013), objectified and images of men and women that conformed to the corporate appearance ideals are frequently portrayed. Such images represent a narrow and unrealistic appearance standard for the majority of the population (Leit et al., 2001; Probert & Leberman, 2009). Research also suggests that objectified content can have effects on men including their attitudes towards women and feeling body dissatisfied (Aubrey & Taylor, 2009; P. J. Wright,

2012). The high percentages of this content parallels high numbers of men reporting body dissatisfactions in surveys (e.g., Liossi, 2003) and indirectly highlights the importance of focusing on media and culture as relevant to men's body dissatisfaction.

Study 3: Differences in appearance potency between genres

Images of men in the gay men's magazines were more likely to conform to the corporate appearance ideal compared to images of men presented in the straight men's magazines. That is, the former images were more often very young, mesomorphic, had symmetrical and unblemished faces, full heads of hair and little or no chest hair. Further, the images in the gay men's magazines were more likely to be nude and sexualised. Conversely, the straight men's magazines featured fewer images of men that were appearance ideal and a greater diversity of male appearances. As the images of men were less likely to be nude, they were also more likely to have their chest hair covered and less likely to be sexualised.

Images of men who were in later life, were Asian or had a lot of chest hair and images of men that were dismembered (where the body but not face of the model is visible) may not have differed between the two magazines types as they featured equally rarely. These findings are in line with other media content analyses showing images of dismembered men (7%; Conley & Ramsey, 2011) men of colour (5%; Saucier & Caron, 2008), older men (5-7%; Buote, Wilson, Strahan, Gazzola, & Papps, 2011; Saucier & Caron, 2008) and men with visible chest hair (1%; Saucier & Caron, 2008) are rarely featured. Finally, the majority of both magazine types' images of men were young, though the gay men's magazines featured more images that were very young and fewer in mid-life. This difference may reflect the gay male subculture's particular idolization of the Twink (the young, slim, smooth-chested white gay man; Filiault & Drummond, 2007).

These findings are consistent with that of Lanzieri and Cook (2013) who found that male images in gay men's magazines had lower body fat than in straight men's magazines. These findings extend these initial findings by showing that images of men in gay men's magazines are more likely than those in straight men's magazines to conform to corporate appearance ideals beyond their

leanness and muscularity, in particular, in their youth, amount of head hair, and facial symmetry.

Here, unsurprisingly, it was found that the straight men's magazines featured more images of appearance ideal, nude, sexualized and dismembered women than the gay men's magazines. These findings support other studies that suggest that Western objectification of the female body is ubiquitous; particularly so in media targeted at straight men (Buote et al., 2011; Conley & Ramsey, 2011).

Both types of magazines featured a significant proportion of adverts for appearance products and articles focussing on appearance. Other research on men's magazines has also found a high proportion of such content (Labre, 2005; Saucier & Caron, 2008; Taylor, 2005). The gay men's magazines did not differ in the number of appearance articles, but did have fewer appearance advertisements, than the straight men's magazines. This is perhaps surprising and likely attributable to the high frequency of protein supplement and perfume adverts in the straight men's magazines, particularly *Men's Health*. In addition, the proportion and selection of adverts featured will be dictated upon the magazines by market forces and advertiser's preferences. For example, the gay men's market may already be saturated with appearance advertisements and therefore advertisers may seek to capitalize on the relatively untapped straight male market.

The findings regarding images of women, appearance adverts and appearance focussed articles do not support a greater appearance potency in the gay male subculture. This is because the sheer number of appearance ideal and sexualized images of men in these magazines far outnumbered the other content investigated (images of women, appearance adverts and articles). Thus, taking all content together, the gay men's magazines were more appearance potent than the straight men's magazines. As media are such a pervasive influence, this supports the greater appearance potency of the gay male subculture assumed in explanations of gay men's body dissatisfaction (Y. Martins, Tiggemann, & Kirkbride, 2007; Silberstein et al., 1989). Researchers have been asked to base assertions regarding gay men on evidence (Kane, 2010). By systematically appraising gay and straight men's magazines for their appearance potency, the present study goes some way towards doing this.

Study 4: Differences in appearance potency across genres

The gay men's websites featured more images of men that conformed to the corporate appearance ideal (i.e., *Young, Mesomorphic, with Symmetrical and unblemished faces, Full heads of hair and No chest hair visible*) and that were nude (i.e., *Shirtless* and in *Underwear only*) compared to the images of men on the straight genre websites. Conversely images of men on the straight men's websites were unknown on many of these physical characteristics (e.g., *Facial attractiveness* and *Age*) relating to the high proportion of men that were *Dismembered* (51.1%) where these characteristics were obscured. This relates to the heteronormativity of straight men's websites; where men are depicted as the subject and women as the object of attention. As such in both straight men's dating and porn websites, images of men were featured with the viewer taking on their perspective; with women being the focus of the camera and men's bodies rather than their faces being in the background or side of the lens. This fits with other research that has found the objectification of women is prevalent in porn (McKee, 2005; Monk-Turner & Purcell, 1999).

These findings extend and support previous research with more traditional forms of gay male media (Epel et al., 1996; Lanzieri & Cook, 2013). The greater appearance potency of the gay male websites demonstrated here also adds indirect support to the theory that gay men report more body dissatisfaction than straight men because of their exposure to a more appearance potent subculture (Y. Martins et al., 2007; Silberstein et al., 1989).

There were only four images of women across the gay men's dating and porn websites. Images of women who conformed to corporate appearance ideal were abundant on straight men's websites. In terms of content on the websites, this may be because men are featured as both the object and subject of romantic/sexual desire. In contrast, on straight men's websites men are the subjects and women are the objects of these desires. Thus these differences are not surprising. In general, the results of the current Study as well as others (Conley & Ramsey, 2011; Rohlinger, 2002) show there are myriad ways in which images of men and women can be sexualized and this differs between media format and gender of the person in the image featured.

Study 3 and 4: The objectification of gay men

Recent support of *Objectification Theory* (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) suggests that gay men's experience of body dissatisfaction is partially related to sociocultural sexual objectification (Y. Martins et al., 2007; Michaels, Parent, & Moradi, 2013). The findings of both studies show that although the gay men's media had a high proportion of nude and sexualised male images, and appearance related content, so too did the straight men's magazines (albeit to a smaller degree). Perhaps these former media are more emblematic of their subculture for gay men for whom the effects of objectification are experienced regularly. In contrast, for straight men there exist many other magazines and spheres of culture that do not focus on appearance and do not objectify men (e.g., of the top 14 straight men's magazines four i.e., *Wired*, *BBC Focus*, *RWD* and *How It Works* focus on the topics on science, sport, business and technology; Ponsford, 2014). These magazines, though not explicitly marketed towards straight men, are like much of society: heteronormative. Therefore straight men are less likely to experience sociocultural objectification and subsequently are less likely to experience body dissatisfaction, on average, compared to gay men as studies consistently show (M. A. Morrison et al., 2004).

Studies 3 and 4: Limitations

A limitation of both studies is that only two titles of each magazine or website type were analysed. For both studies, each title were the most read or visited in the UK (during 2012). Nonetheless, there was some heterogeneity of type. Future studies could usefully analyse more of these media titles. Secondly, titles were selected for analysis as they attempt to capitalize on distinct gay male and straight male subcultures. As media migrates online, these magazines (following print media circulation trends in general) have declining circulations (Ponsford, 2014). Therefore Study 3 was conducted in order to explore a more relevant and popular form of media in men's lives (websites). Although the choice of websites in Study 3 was guided by the need to assess aspects of gay and straight men's subcultures, other types of websites such as social networking sites and mobile phone applications (e.g., *Tinder* and *Grindr*) are likely to have more salience for both groups of men. These websites differ to dating and porn websites in that they are

more popular and highly interactive. Research has begun to explore individual accounts of the effects of social networking websites on men's body dissatisfaction (Haferkamp & Krämer, 2011) though as mentioned earlier, this study design is limited by focusing on individual accounts' of media rather than media itself. Instead then it is important for future research to explore the appearance potency of this media itself via content or other media analyses.

It is important to acknowledge the analysis of this media content was somewhat superficial; focusing on physical characteristics and objectification and framing this in terms of body dissatisfaction. Therefore, the meaning of these images was not analysed. Images are never just collections of pixels, they too have messages and symbolism which can themselves too be appearance potent (Bordo, 2003). For example, Tiggemann, Polivy, and Hargreaves (2009) have shown how exposure to the corporate appearance ideal differs in relation to body dissatisfaction depending on whether the accompanying text's content encourages fantasy or comparison (and as elaborated in Chapter 9). In addition, these images should not be supposed to affect men only. As discussed in Chapter 5, there is cross-over, images of women can affect men. For example, Bordo (1999, p. 287) notes "*straight male sexuality is honed on images [of sexualized women], even fixated on them*". So too then can images of women affect women. Thirdly and more broadly, it is important to acknowledge that this media content is not just appearance potent. It conveys racial, classed, gendered and other messages that can be prescriptive to consumers beyond body dissatisfaction. For example, images of sexualized women might relate not only to men's body dissatisfaction but to men's sexist attitudes and behaviours towards women (for a review see; Wright, 2012). This latter point is particularly important given there is a tendency in social science research on men to efface power differences between men and women (Bordo, 2003; Connell, 1995). A further example relates to ethnicity; these studies may have assessed how often Black men and women were represented but it did not assess the stereotypical and negative portrayal of such images (see hooks, 1992).

Studies 3 and 4: The media is not homogenous

It should also be noted that the specific types examined were not necessarily homogeneous within type. In Study 3 for example, the images of men and women featured, as well as the number of appearance adverts and articles, differed according to magazine title reflecting the somewhat different purposes and independence of each magazine title. For example, *Men's Health* focuses (or at least claims to focus; see Labre, 2005) on *Men's Health* whereas *FHM* positions itself more as a 'lads' magazine. Similarly in Study 4, the gay men's websites differed to each other in their images of men and women as well as in comparison to straight men's websites. For example, the number of men featured that *Conformed to the corporate appearance ideal* across the four gay websites ranged from 91 (32.0% Gaytube) to 145 (45.5%; Adam4adam). This was also the case within the two website types. Specifically, *Gaydar.co.uk* featured 16 (69.6%) *Sexualised* men compared to the other gay male dating website Adam4adam which featured 271 (89.7%) *Sexualised* men. Likewise, *Xhamster.com* featured no men that *Conformed to the ideal* compared to the other straight male porn website that featured 15 (10.4%) men. Thus, although this media are similarly marketed towards certain populations (e.g., gay men) and may have similar purposes (entertainment, news, and facilitation of dating, sexual gratification) they differ substantially in the number and type of images of men and women they portray.

In innovative research by Buote et al. (2011), the effect of heterogeneous media (i.e., media that has varied content) on viewer's body dissatisfaction is highlighted. As per other media exposure studies, the authors found that male participants exposed to mesomorphic images of men experienced significant increases in their body dissatisfaction. Importantly, however, they found that other participants who were exposed to these same images of men in addition to images of men who were not appearance ideal (who were older or were not mesomorphic) experienced no change in their body dissatisfaction. These findings suggest that the presence of images of men who did not conform to the corporate appearance ideal may have a cancellation effect on the effects that would normally result from mesomorphic images; a finding echoed by participants in qualitative research (Diedrichs et al., 2011; Fawkner & McMurray, 2002). Clearly then some media

content is appearance potent and some is not. It is important that the drivers behind this differing media content (i.e., heterogeneity) is explored further.

STUDY 3 AND 4: SUMMARY

Both studies aimed to compare the appearance potency of the gay male and straight male subcultures by detailed content analyses of images of men and women (and for the Study 3, appearance advertisements and articles) presented on popular UK magazines, dating and porn websites. It is important to emphasize that these studies do not themselves speak to the effects of media content on gay or straight men. Nonetheless, the results suggest these magazines are appearance potent for both gay and straight men, based on our current understanding of what media content plausibly has detrimental effects on men's body dissatisfaction (Aubrey & Taylor, 2009; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). So what can be done? In this next section I shall critically review efforts to tackle media appearance potency by body dissatisfaction advocates.

WHY BODY DISSATISFACTION ADVOCATES TARGET MEDIA APPEARANCE POTENCY

The first reason researchers have tackled media appearance potency is because this advocacy targets culture. In contrast, attempts to change other purported causes are all individualizing (e.g., biological, hormonal or genetic; Cash & Pruzinsky, 1990; Cash & Smolak, 2011b). For example, hormonal interventions, gene therapy and other medical interventions for body dissatisfaction all focus on changing the individual (e.g., the prescription of pharmaceutical drugs for binge eating disorder; Vocks et al., 2010). As discussed previously (Chapter 5) the problem is not with the individual but culture (Bordo, 2003). Furthermore, the individualization of the corporate appearance ideal creates a double edged sword where people must conform to it but never be seen to conform to it. This can be seen through media representations of cosmetic surgery. Popular media very often denigrates celebrities, particularly women, who have cosmetic surgery as vain, self-indulgent and risking their health (M. Jones, 2004). This stigma blithely ignores the existence of the corporate appearance ideal often promoted through the very same popular media channels that denigrate those who have cosmetic surgery. For these people, cosmetic surgery may be an entirely rational step in the

culture they are in. As feminist blogger Glosswitch noted, for some people “*it’s easier to change [their] appearance than it is to change the [culture]*” (Glosswitch, 2013, para. 3). Researchers who tackle media appearance potency admirably recognise the problem is not with individuals then.

Changes to media can also have more impact than changing individuals. This is the second reason researchers have tackled media appearance potency. From representations of men and women that conform to narrow corporate appearance ideals, to adverts for appearance products to messages about appearance, the appearance potency of certain media is strong. Thus, there is a lot of media content to change.

Thirdly, media creators have expertise in reaching people that researchers often do not have. From market researchers, advertisers, brand management consultants, those working in the media are expert in engagement. This engagement dwarfs the number researcher’s normally reach through publications, for instance. Demonstrably, when Diedrichs and colleagues collaborated with the UK’s *Channel 4* broadcaster (Diedrichs, 2011) more than 40,000 people completed a body dissatisfaction questionnaire. The sample size by other body dissatisfaction questionnaires rarely gets above 500 (e.g., Jankowski, Diedrichs, & Halliwell, 2013; Karazsia & Crowther, 2009). Furthermore, in collaboration with *The Dove Self Esteem project*, Diedrichs and colleagues plan to improve 15 million girls’ body dissatisfactions by 2015 through a media literacy intervention (Unilever, 2013). Again the reach for a typical intervention is rarely in the hundreds (Levine & Smolak, 2006). In this next section I shall review how media appearance potency has been tackled.

HOW MEDIA APPEARANCE POTENCY HAS BEEN TACKLED

Promoting media literacy

The first and most prominent way in which media appearance potency has been tackled is through the promotion of media literacy. The UK media regulator, Ofcom, defines media literacy as that which:

“enables people to have the skills, knowledge and understanding to make full use of the opportunities presented by both traditional and new communications services [as well as].... protect themselves and their

families from the potential risks associated with using these services”
(Ofcom, n.d.).

In the context of body dissatisfaction, media literacy is regarded as the promotion of critical evaluation skills about the media's appearance potency (Levine & Smolak, 2006). Media literacy has been promoted in interventions by highlighting the problematic messages, ideals and content of media as well as the ways in which media manipulate consumers (e.g., via airbrushing). For example, *Media Smart* was an 8-session intervention run with 107 Australian boys (M age = 13.62, SD = 0.37 years) that involved lessons on how the media manipulated images and how to challenge media messages. The intervention had some success in that improved boy's body dissatisfaction and restrained eating at post-test and their body dissatisfaction at 3-month follow up (Wilksch & Wade, 2009).

Media itself can also promote media literacy. Researchers in body dissatisfaction can blog about media literacy which can then be shared on social media. Additionally, community forums can be joined by the researcher and the researcher can post from there. For example, as discussed below I posted on the hairlosstalk.com website about the medicalization of hair loss (Jankowski, 2014b). Alternatively, in interviews by radio, TV and magazines media literacy can also be promoted by researchers.

Promoting media literacy is limited, however, for two reasons. Firstly, because literacy is not immunity. Most people are media literate already as seen by the participant's responses in the *Body Project M* intervention (see Chapter 4). Airbrushing and other image deception tricks are well known about for instance (Diedrichs, Lee & Kelly). This does not reduce the media's potency nor stop people feeling body dissatisfaction (Bordo, 2003). Furthermore this advocacy is individualizing. It implies that if the participant just knew better than it is within their control to resist appearance ideals. Such an implication can also place responsibility on the participant to undo their own body dissatisfaction. In this next section I shall review efforts to tackle media appearance potency that are not individualizing.

Changing or banning media content

Another way in which researchers have attempted to tackle media appearance potency is by changing or banning media content itself. The most common form of

this media content advocacy is by changing who is represented. For example, in 2013, former model Katie Green started a petition for fashion shows to ban female models who were size 0 or smaller (Green, 2014; S. E. Smith, 2013). Others have called for average-sized clothes mannequins in retail (STV, 2013) and some designers and corporations are beginning to use older female models in their advertising (Cochrane, 2012). There has also been a recent campaign for greater body diversity of the images of men featured in the UK edition of *Men's Health* magazine (Farr, 2013).

Steps such as these campaigns urge editors and the media elite to represent those who are underrepresented. Unsurprisingly, media representation of those marginalized in society tends to be problematic. For example, the sacking of TV presenters Arlene Phillipps and Miriam O'Reilly received widespread criticism for media ageism and sexism (Holmwood, 2009; Plunkett, 2011). The BBC's employment of *Blue Peter* presenter Cerrie Burnell (born without a hand) and actress Francesca Martinez (born with cerebral palsy) (Mangan, 2009) are the few times in which people with disabilities are represented on prime TV without being there for their disability. Although these steps are important for equality in society generally, they are also important for reducing media appearance potency. Greater representations of these groups normalizes appearances that do not conform to corporate appearance ideals whether because of their age, disability or otherwise. In addition, when these groups are represented without comment or derision for their appearance, this may also reduce appearance potency.

Media content may also be changed not by changing who is represented *per se*, but how they are represented. Campaigns for more positive representations of people who do not conform to the corporate appearance ideals are numerous. For instance, the UK charity for people with visible differences, *Changing Faces*, have recently campaigned against the negative portrayal of characters with visible differences (e.g., tumours, birthmarks) in film (*Changing Faces*, n.d.). Founder of the charity, James Partridge, explains why the campaign is needed:

"It would seem as if all the film industry has to do to depict evil and villainy is apply a scar or a prosthetic eye socket or remove a limb and every movie goer knows that it's time to be suspicious, scared or repulsed" (*Changing Faces*, n.d.).

Other campaigns have called for more positive representations of higher weight people arguing that the typical ‘headless fatty’ image used to portray higher weight people in the media was dehumanizing (Cooper, 1998). As a response to this, *Stocky Bodies* was set up which provides images of higher weight people that the media can use that do not stereotype fat bodies as lazy, gluttonous or in any other demeaning way (Gurrieri, n.d.). Other equality campaigns and organizations have been set up that provide directories of women (The Women’s Room, 2013) and people of colour (Media Diversified, n.d.) as available expert commentators in the media. Although not set up to challenge narrow corporate appearance ideals themselves (though Media Diversified does aim to “*challenge the ubiquity of whiteness*”) the effects of greater representation of these groups for their ideas and not their appearance may also have positive effects for appearance potency.

Media appearance potency has also been targeted via campaigning against certain media practices. This could include the text, storylines, and content of media around appearance and representation of people. For example, complaints against Channel 4’s choice of title, *The Undateables*, for a documentary about people with disabilities including visible differences were made, citing it was offensive and reinforced negative stereotypes about the subjects. Other media practice campaigns include those against the use of airbrushing of media images. This is arguably the most successful media campaign about appearance with several magazines (e.g., *Seventeen*; Hu, 2012; *Pylot*, *Pylot* magazine, 2014) corporations (e.g., *Debenhams*; Sauers, 2013) and celebrities refusing to have their images airbrushed (DoSomething, n.d.a). In addition, some beauty adverts have been banned by the UK *Advertising Standards Authority* for misleading consumers (Sweney, 2012).

Campaigning for the banning or withdrawal of certain media content is another way researchers have attempted to tackle media appearance potency. For example, campaigns have been made to ban *pro-anorexia* and *pro-bulimia* websites, which encourage anorexic and bulimic behaviours (Casilia, Pailler, & Tubaro, 2013). More recently, a mobile phone game *Plastic Surgery for Barbie* marketed at children aged 9 years and older featured a character Barbie who was “ugly”. Users of the app could perform liposuction and other cosmetic surgery procedures that

would make *Barbie* slim and ‘really beautiful’. Campaigners called for this app to be banned.

The *Daily Mail* is a British newspaper that has been long criticized for its reductive and objectifying representations of women (Meyer, 2010; Object, 2012). This representation was recently subverted by UK feminist online magazine *Vagenda* (Enlow, 2014; Noble, 2014). What was subverted were articles that emphasized famous women’s conformity to corporate appearance ideals (and in the specific case of actress Jane Fonda her conformity despite her age). Examples of the headlines subverted include “*Still svelte: Jane Fonda, 76, shows off toned legs 32 years after her first aerobics workout video was released*” to “*Woman ages, does not become fat*” and “*Homeland star Claire Danes displays her fit figure in tight exercise gear as she sweats it out during a gruelling run*” to “*Woman runs in appropriate exercise clothing*”. These subverted headlines, written over the original, with a screenshot of the article were widely shared on *Twitter* and other social media. This subversion highlighted the problematic representation of women in mass media and how mundane the ‘news’ actually was. Further, this subversion showcased how famous women were represented as a means of regulating conformity to corporate appearance ideals. Finally, this subversion was also successful as it was widely shared and well received as one response to the subversions demonstrates: “*These stories are already non-news in my opinion: even better when [Vagenda] call[s] them out*” (Enlow, 2014).

Another popular form of media subversion is ‘brandalism’, where adverts are physically drawn over or changed so that their message is subverted. This happened to a bus stop advert for the diet cereal *Special K*. Over the advert image was written: “*Hey there Special-K Lady, I know that you think I should diet so I can be slim just like you. Thing is, I look pretty fabulous just the way I am. Also, Special-K tastes like cardboard so piss off*” (loveyourrebellion, 2013). Subversions of men’s appearance potent media such as *Men’s Health* magazine or a protein shake advertisement can also be subverted by highlighting the unattainability and/or banality of the corporate appearance ideal.

Unfortunately, this avenue of tackling media appearance potency is also limited. Firstly, these campaigns for media change are rarely successful. For example, Daniel Farr’s campaign to *Men’s Health* gained only 226 signatures and

was closed down by Farr after more than 2 years because it was too much work and made little impact (D. Farr, personal communication, 16th April, 2014).

Similarly, the *Surgery for Barbie* app was only withdrawn by *Google* and *Apple*, the game distributors, because of the unauthorized use of the *Mattel* trademark name: *Barbie*. That is the ban came about due to a copyright / legal issue rather than because of the inappropriateness of the game itself. Indeed other similar games such as *Plastic Surgery for Barbara* and *Plastic Surgery* are still available for download and made by the same company (Butterly, 2014; RT, 2014). Secondly, even when this advocacy is successful it is very small scale. For example, very few beauty cream adverts have been successfully withdrawn by the ASA and when they are withdrawn the banning (which features the advert) garners widespread media attention (e.g., in *The Guardian*) for its rarity (Sweeney, 2012). Similarly, advertisers will always have much greater resources, including having their actions considered legal, than those who subvert. Thirdly, and relating to the previous limitation, this advocacy against appearance potency can be implemented in such a superficial manner in which media is still appearance potent but differentiates itself against its rivals by appearing not to be. For example, *Pylot* magazine is a fashion magazine that announced to considerable fanfare that it would not airbrush its images (e.g., *Pylot* magazine, 2014) though to date its selection of models, its camera lighting and other pre-photoshoot work means it promotes the corporate ideal regardless.

Creating non-appearance potent media

Another way in which researchers have attempted to tackle media appearance potency is by creating media that is non appearance potent. Media can be created by individual people themselves. For example, there are media platforms for blogging (e.g., *Wordpress.com*), videos (e.g., *Xtube.com*) and images (e.g., *Flickr.com*). In addition, Zines are short magazines or newsletters that are self-published by an individual or community. Not only is this media more likely to be free of corporate interests (although platforms do feature advertising), it also allows greater possibilities for creating non-appearance potent media content. Amateur porn creators, for instance, on *Xtube.com* are unlikely to have the professional lighting, airbrushing and editing of mainstream porn corporations.

Thus, the media they produce is likely to be less appearance potent. In addition, porn can be and is made by and with people who do not conform to mainstream corporate appearance ideals such as the gay *Bear* community (Hennen, 2005).

Blogs about body positivity and fat pride also exist (e.g., *NearSightedOwl.com*; *malebodypositivity.wordpress.com*). Another example is the popular zines created within and by the feminist movement *Riot Grrrl* including *Bikini Kill*, *Jigsaw* and *Girl Germs* (British Library, n.d.; Schilt, n.d.). Much of the content of the zine focuses on body positivity, fat acceptance and, with regards to *Girl Germs*, white privilege (Schilt, n.d.). The online newsletter *Never Diet Again UK* is produced by Angela Meadows a weight stigma researcher who provides critiques of weight stigma research and gives advice to readers to resist corporate appearance ideals (Meadows, n.d.).

The funding site *Kickstarter.com* has opened up possibilities for people to create media that is not small scale and therefore is able to be seen by a wider audience, competing with mass media. Specifically the *Kickstarter.com* website allows people to canvass donations from others in order to create their media. A recent example of this is the film *Fattitude* a documentary highlighting the stigma higher weight people face in mass media and beyond as well as challenging the idea that fat equals bad health or immorality (Averill & Lieberman, 2014). This provides a further, larger-scale, example of media created by people that in some cases as with *Fattitude*, can be critical of media appearance potency.

Social media can also be used as a way of tackling media appearance potency. For instance *Vagenda's* campaign against *The Daily Mail's* representation of women (described above) originated and was popularized by on *Twitter* (Enlow, 2014). Various *Twitter* hashtag campaigns (a code used in a tweet where *Twitter* collates all tweets with that code in a searchable form) challenging the corporate appearance ideals are also popular. For example, the hashtag campaign *#FUrBeautyStandards* was started by a fat activist who uploaded a picture of herself where her untoned and stretch marked stomach was shown making a 'fuck you' hand gesture. From this tweet, other *Twitter* users (i.e., tweeters) also uploaded a picture of themselves that did not conform to corporate appearance ideals unapologetically using the same hashtag. Other similar *Twitter* hashtags include *#downwithweightstigma* and *#airbrushfree*. These are examples

of tackling media appearance potency because each image is one less iteration of the corporate appearance ideal.

Other social media sites can also be used to challenge the corporate appearance ideals e.g., by the presence of body confidence resource pages and groups (e.g., the *Facebook* page: *The Body Is Not An Apology*). *The Body Is Not An Apology*, for example, produces interactional content including videos and status updates that users can share, comment and contribute to. It has, as of November 2014, amassed over 42,000 *Facebook* likes. More simply, users can use their profile to subvert appearance norms e.g., via uploading, sharing and making their profile picture an image of themselves that is not conventionally flattering.

These media avenues have created possibilities for non or anti-appearance potent content. Obviously individual's creating their own media does not generate non appearance potent content itself (and indeed it is important to note that appearance potent blogs, selfies etc. proliferate). So too then have these avenues created further possibilities for more appearance potent content. For example, fitspiration and thinspiration content on Instagram and *Twitter* proliferates. As does the regulation of people that do not conform to corporate appearance ideals on social media particularly through fat shaming. For example, the blogger and activist Carly Findlay, who has the visible skin condition Ichthyosis, had one of her images stolen from her blog and uploaded onto the community forum *Reddit.com*. Since being posted in December 2013, it has received 567 user comments (Vroschleiche, 2013). Many of the comments mocked her appearance, some commented that she must be in denial about being happy: “[Her smile] looks like a lie; [people like her] are only smiling in an attempt to fool themselves that their lives aren’t horrible” (Findlay, 2014). Although Carly Findlay responded to the thread herself and regarded the incident as a learning opportunity for others; “a win” she concluded (Findlay, 2014), this is not an isolated incident.

Others have also had their personal photos stolen and mocked virally because of the user’s appearance. For example, in 2013 self-identified fat activist Rachel Cateye posted on her blog an image of herself in a bikini underneath the caption: “*Anchors away! I finally have myself a proper high-waisted fatkini. I took*

my body and put it on a beach and voila! Beach body!" (Cateyes, 2014). This image was stolen and used in an advert for a weight loss product as the 'before' picture. Similar appropriations have happened to Kelly Martin Broderick (Martin Broderick, 2013) as well as 31 higher weight men whose images are, according to internet ranking website *Ranker.com*: "*the heaviest hitters in viral internet history.... the greatest, most memorable and therefore epic fat males from popular viral videos, pictures and memes*" (Wabash, 2014).

Compared to mass media, media that does subvert appearance potency successfully is still small scale in its reach and sophistication and should not be seen as evidence that appearance potent media does not exist. In this next section I shall reflect on my own experience of working with media and attempts to tackle media appearance potency.

Reflections: Working with the media

Although tackling the media from a distance is possible, it may also be necessary to work with existing media too. This can present problems. For instance, body dissatisfaction researcher's collaboration with *Dove* has led to the widespread implementation of a body dissatisfaction intervention that is evaluated empirically. In this sense, the collaboration can be seen as a positive step. However, Dove still sell beauty creams designed to remove wrinkles and its parent corporation, *Unilever*, still make *Fair and Lovely* a skin bleaching cream marketed at South Asians. Reflecting on my own complicity, a body confidence quote from me included in *Glamour* magazine will still be dwarfed by the 100 plus pages on why readers should lose weight, gain muscle and turn back the time on wrinkles; content that is typical of women's magazines (e.g., Conley & Ramsey, 2011). In this section, I shall reflect upon my own attempts of working with the media and discuss the problems associated with this.

I have attempted to disseminate the findings of others. For example, I joined the popular hair losstalk.com forum and posted a summary of Harvey's findings about media depictions of balding men (Harvey, 2013). In addition, in *Body Project M*, I designed activities described above based on work by Dixon and Pope Jr (Dixon, 2013; Pope Jr., Olivardia, Gruber, & Borowiecki, 1999). Although the barriers to this are few, disseminating other's research requires a sound

knowledge of the findings and potentially asking for permission from the authors. Further, as many articles are not open-access there is a balance struck between sharing the findings whilst maintaining copyright. Indeed, as I posted on the *hairlosstalk.com* forum I encouraged readers to access the article themselves and not take my word for this. Kevin Harvey, the author, agreed to share the article with anyone requesting it but it still required them emailing him. In addition, the academic language can often be inaccessible for many. Writing a summary then required a balance between keeping the message engaging, clear, and concise whilst honouring the complexity and nuance of another's research and findings.

Media interviews are also an obvious place in which media literacy can be promoted. Although in my own radio interviews (*Women's Hour*, *Russia Today*, *ShoutOutBristol*) I was able to do this, editing was still out of my control. Although the content of each show included what I wanted to say, one, *ShoutOutBristol*, promoted the show on their website accompanied by an image of a sexualized man who conformed to the corporate appearance ideal. I felt this undermined the message about media appearance potency I was promoting. In addition, when I worked on a TV programme about men's body dissatisfaction I became concerned about the show's inclusion of four young men. When I was sent mini-biographies of the men I was struck by how heavily invested in their appearance they were depicted as. Meeting them in person, I realized this description was not accurate. Indeed, the men told me they had been asked to exaggerate how invested in their appearance they were for the cameras. They said they were uncomfortable with certain aspects of the show but felt they could not drop out as they had signed contracts. I felt they had not given informed consent, as many aspects of the show were not revealed to them until after they had waived their rights.

I agree it is better to do something, however small, than nothing. To reconstruct if deconstructing. But this must be balanced. My motivations to work with this media were because it gave me a platform, because it was exciting and fed my ego. Although I did not receive payment, I did receive expenses from the TV show. Acknowledgement and transparency about this involvement is important. A certain level of complicity is arguably necessary for change – and small change can come –but a balance is to be struck. Financial reward blurs the boundaries of researcher independence. Networking and meeting with producers (as I did)

humanizes them; people have friendly faces. This familiarity and humanization impedes unbiased scrutiny.

To summarise this section, it is important advocacy against media appearance potency is not undervalued. Small gains have been made particularly in the creation of media content that is not appearance potent such as body confidence campaigns on social media. However as outlined this advocacy is also limited by being small scale and in some ways working with media content can be particularly pernicious whether through impeding effective scrutiny of its contents or through body dissatisfaction advocacy being co-opted (a fuller discussion of this co-option shall be presented in Chapter 9). In this final section, I shall outline why tackling media appearance potency ignores a bigger picture.

TACKLING MEDIA APPEARANCE POTENCY IGNORES THEIR ECONOMIC UNDERPINNINGS

The results of Studies 3 and 4 indicate the media is appearance potent. It is argued, however, that body dissatisfaction researcher's depiction of the media as a cause for body dissatisfaction misses the bigger picture. Specifically media appearance potency arises not from the media itself but from capitalism which means media's bottom line is not news, entertainment or otherwise but profits. Media appearance potency is driven through three ways: Firstly by the inclusion of adverts, second by the dictation of content by the corporations that pay for the adverts and finally through the media's own need to sell itself to its consumers and thus operate as a business.

The inclusion of advertising as a driver of media appearance potency

The first driver of media appearance potency is advertising. Adverts formed a large proportion of the media content. For example, on average the magazines carried 37 full page adverts. As discussed the proportion of these that were appearance potent was also high. Similarly, the websites analysed in Study 3 also carried many adverts on the banner and sides of the pages, through embedded hyperlinks and in interactive content.

Media is heavily reliant on this advertising. This can be seen through the prominence devoted to gaining advertisers in their media packs which detail the

number of consumers they have, their interests and the potential for corporations to reach audiences if only they sponsor that media (Bauer Media, 2011; Gardiner, 2012; Tassie, 2011). Similarly the websites from Study 4 each have their own pages devoted to potential advertisers with each competing for advertisers. The dating websites for example, offer potential advertisers the chance to tailor their content based on information from users' profiles such as smoking status, number of children and postcode (Match, n.d.).

These adverts are appearance potent. In the magazines, the most likely page to feature images of the ideal were the adverts. The editorial content usually had some purpose other than the promotion of the corporately beautiful ideal particularly in *Gay Times* and *Attitude* such as LGBT lifestyle or socio-political issues. In contrast the adverts often used the corporately produced appearance ideals to sell the products. Similarly, the adverts on the websites were also appearance potent featuring adverts for other porn videos, for gay hookup sites, for saunas or for LGBT events each featuring multiple corporately beautiful men.

Adverts are different to other types of media in that they are far more wide reaching (e.g., adverts pop up on social media websites, product placements in TV shows), ubiquitous, and are created to sell although other media (e.g., magazines, TV shows, social media) are created for other purposes (entertainment, news, education etc.). Indeed, advert's purpose should arguably make them more concerning for researchers interested in the media's potentially harmful effects on its consumers. This is because other media are at least on the surface more likely to be created for more neutral or indeed positive purposes (e.g., entertainment, news, education). In contrasts adverts have one overarching purpose: to sell. Nonetheless, there is substantial crossover between advertising and other forms of media. For example, product placements are common in entertainment media; adverts make up large proportions of the content of magazines, and news media's and social media's funding is often generated via sponsorship and advertising (Advertising Standards Authority, 2014; Jankowski, Fawkner, et al., 2014; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; LePage, 2015). Adverts are thus widely and intricately embedded in many forms of media; media whose seeming purpose would appear to not to be to sell a product but rather to entertain, inform or facilitate socialization.

These adverts should not be seen as appearance potent only though; they may be engender body dissatisfaction and other impairments to wellbeing via their materialistic focus. Dittmar (2007) notes that materialism and appearance potency are intimately linked in that materialism promotes buying products as a means of attaining corporate appearance ideals as well as associated success, happiness, sex and popularity. Specifically, adverts sell not only “*the body perfect*” Kasser and colleagues have noted but also “*the material ‘good life’ too [where]....it is important and valuable to prioritize the goal of attaining money and having many possessions*” (Kasser et al., 2014, p. 1). Dittmar further notes that this link between materialism and identity/wellbeing is well known and exploited by advertisers and marketers; corporations sell their products not on the product’s merits but on the perceived social, personal, and cultural capital accrued from attaining that product. Advertisers already know this. Furthermore, although some media may not be appearance potent they are still likely to be materialistic (e.g., adverts for watches without a model or messages about appearance).

Researchers have noted and explored the impact of this materialism on consumers (Dittmar, 2007; James, 2008; Kasser, 2002; Kasser et al., 2014). For example, in a series of studies, Kasser and colleagues (2014) found among a varied sample of US and Icelandic young adults negative associations between materialism, mental health problems (e.g., substance abuse problems, anxiety) and subjective wellbeing. They also found that 71 US adolescents who participated in a three-session anti-consumerist intervention reported less materialism motives and greater wellbeing than those in a control condition.

Some research has also recently begun to explore the association between body dissatisfaction specifically and materialism (Ashikali & Dittmar, 2011; Bell, 2011). For example, Ashikali and Dittmar (2011) demonstrated through experimental and cross-sectional research that exposure to materialistic media content increased the importance of appearance to women’s self-concept and their body dissatisfaction. Bell (2011) found similar results among UK adolescent girls. Finally, Gudnadottir et al (2014) found that for young men ($n = 226$) internalization of materialistic values predicted their internalization of the muscular-ideal, body dissatisfaction and body shaping behaviours.

Although only one study has explored the association of materialism on body dissatisfaction among men, its ubiquity in everyday life (people are estimated to be exposed to an average of 300 adverts per day), its intimate centrality to media and its association with men's general wellbeing (e.g., Kasser et al., 2014) strongly indicate that the two are linked.

The dictation of content by advertisers as a driver of media appearance potency

The second driver of media appearance potency is the dictation of advertising on editorial content. The divide between the media and corporations is increasingly blurred though this is not always easy to detect. Although advertising has long sponsored media, this relationship has become increasingly close in recent years. For example, print media is now more reliant on advertising through its online content given declining paper circulations (Goldfingl, 2014; Press Gazette, 2012). The blurring of these boundaries should be of concern given media plays a pivotal role in democracy and the conflict of interests to the corporations that advertise in them is potentially huge.

It is important that media's relationship with advertisers is not taken at face value. This is because it benefits both the media and advertisers to not draw too much attention to their relationship. The potential conflict of interest is huge and if advertisers believe the media readers are too cynical they will pull the adverts. For those who do speak out about this relationship, they run the risk of offending the corporations, of the corporations withdrawing their revenue, of the media folding.

For example, British journalist, Peter Oborne (2015), recently resigned from his role on the British newspaper *Telegraph*. In an open letter about his resignation he complained about the growing influence by advertisers over the *Telegraph's* editorial content. Specifically, Oborne complained of the *Telegraph's* failure to cover anything even vaguely critical of a corporation that advertised with them. In contrast, the paper frequently carried plugs thinly disguised as features or positive coverage for the corporations including *Tesco* and *HSBC*. Eventually, Oborne was forced to quit his role as political editor when the *Telegraph* failed to cover *HSBC's* widespread tax evasion because, as one executive told him, *HSBC* is "*the advertiser you literally cannot afford to offend*" (para. 34). Oborne concluded: "*The*

past few years have seen the rise of shadowy executives who determine what truths can and what truths can't be conveyed across the mainstream media" (para. 31). Fortunately, Oborne found independent media committed to transparency that would publish his criticisms of the *Telegraph* as well as HSBC's tax evasion: *Opendemocracy.net*. However, most media is not independent. It is dependent on advertising revenue, rather than reader donations as *Opendemocracy.net* is, and thus is subject to the same pressures the *Telegraph* is. The problem then is not exclusive to the *Telegraph*, it is systematic.

Others have also spoken out. For example, Matthew Todd, editor of *Attitude* magazine, has also discussed the media's reliance on advertising revenue. Specifically, Todd levelled criticisms at advertisers for homophobia, noting the many corporations reluctant to advertise in his magazine for fear of being associated with an LGBT publication, urging them to reconsider (Goldfingle, 2014).

This blurring of boundaries directly relates to the appearance potency of magazines. One example of this relating to appearance potency is provided by journalist Hannah Pool who chaired a debate about the politics of Black women's hair in London, in 2014. During the debate Pool asked whether anyone in the audience worked for a Black women's magazine and if so how they represented natural hair across their pages (Pool, Dabiri, Udofot & Abbott, 2014). Reluctantly, and only after being pointed out by other members of the audience, Shevelle Rhule, Fashion and Beauty Editor at *Pride* magazine, said:

"I think the biggest frustration definitely comes down to revenue. Erm unfortunately you know natural hair it's not a huge, it's not a huge money making revenue. Erm what makes money? Weaves. What makes money? Relaxers. And it's trying to find that balance. Obviously we want to cater to every sort, every hair type, you know I've got pages of the magazine that cater just for natural hair, I've got pages that cater for chemically straightened hair. Erm and obviously in terms of editorial content you have to find that balance obviously in [gaining enough] advertorial revenue and that's probably the biggest frustration. And it's also a frustration for us because we would love to see a greater representation of natural hair in the magazine".

Rhule was clearly defensive to accusations that her magazine contributed to the reverence of European-style hair over natural hair that Black women had to contend with. This is understandable. Rhule had to be careful to not offend the weave and relaxer corporations that do advertise in *Pride* through fear of losing

their revenue. Clearly though Rhule and her *Pride* colleagues are aware of how much emphasis and editorial content they can devote to natural hair. A cursory glance at previous issues of *Pride* show that most cover models tend to have relaxed hair or weaves rather than natural hair (see **Image 2**).

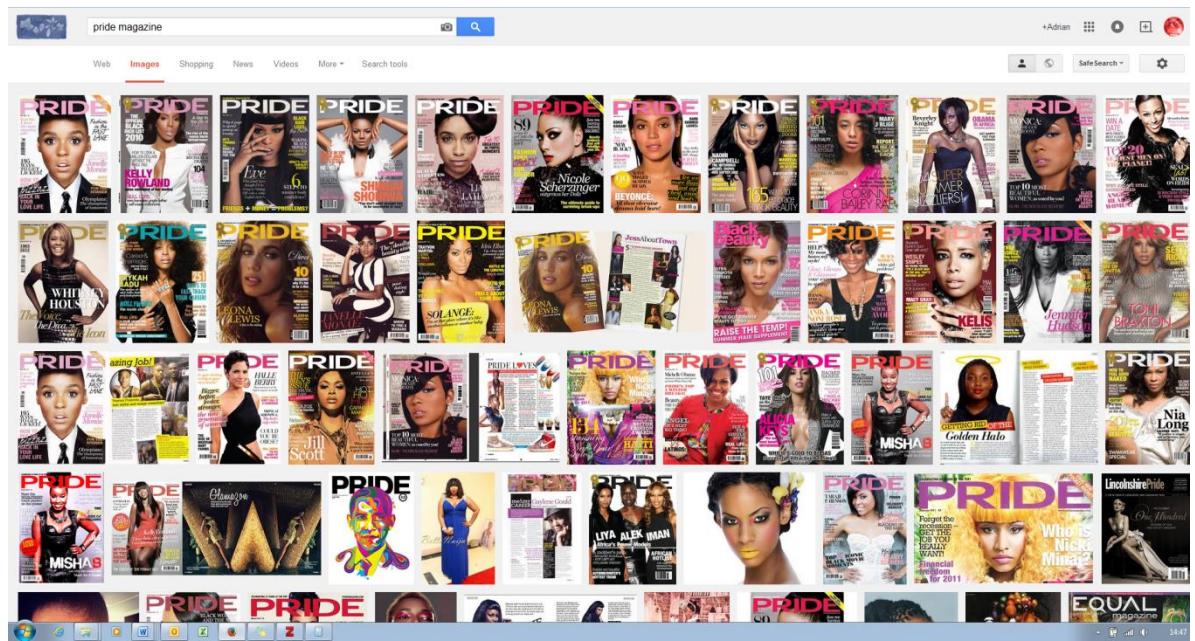


Image 2: Screenshot showing previous Issues of Pride magazine

The rarity of representations of natural hair is by no means limited to *Pride* magazine though. Other magazines targeted at Black women also rarely feature it. For example, of the 21 back issues of *Black Beauty* magazine ranging from Feb/March 2015 to October-November 2011, only five (24%) of the front cover models have natural hair (Pocketmags, 2014a). This is relatively high compared to *Hypehair* magazine, however, where of 88 back issues (ranging from March 2015 back to Jun-July 2005) only two (3%) of the front cover models, those featuring Solange Knowles (November 2014) and Nicki Minaj (Jan-Feb, 2013), have afro hair (Pocketmags, 2014b).

Both of these do much better than the more popular women's magazines. For example, of the 14 back issues of *Woman and Home* (April 2015 to February 2014) not one of the front cover models is a women of colour, let alone is featured with natural hair (0%). Indeed this is a trend across mass media more generally where people of colour tend to be invisible or relegated to stereotypical depictions

(Bordo, 1999a, 2003; Buote et al., 2011; Jankowski, Fawkner, et al., 2014; Kilbourne, 2010).

Magazines such as *Woman and Home*, *Glamour* and *Stylist* have readerships close to 400,000 (Turvill, 2015) which is much higher than *Pride*'s readership (last estimated to be 155,000; *Pride*, 2012). Subsequently *Pride* have to fight even harder to have and keep their advertising revenue. This is exemplified in their most recent media pack where they write about their readers:

"Importantly, 71% said they took note of the adverts in Pride because they felt that corporations were targeting them specifically and this was something that would make them more likely to respond" (*Pride*, 2012, p. 3).

Here *Pride* are forced to state that advertisers should choose their magazine because their readers will feel that advertisers acknowledge the existence of women of colour (as opposed to other advertisers in other magazines that may not) and through this acknowledgement readers will purchase their products. Magazines such as *Pride* as well as *Attitude* and *Gay Times* should be recognized then not only for their general representation of bodies outside corporate ideals but for their role in justice. Unlike other more popular and profitable magazines, these magazines are often advocating for minority groups whilst managing the need to make a profit. Singling out these or any other media title as individually culpable is not only unfair, once again it misses the bigger picture.

Media as corporations: The third driver of media appearance potency

The third driver of media appearance potency is argued to be media as corporations itself. Most magazines, websites and other media formats are either funded by advertising or less frequently through consumer sales. Both require media to have as large a consumer base as possible. Thus media often uses the corporately beautiful ideal to sell itself to consumers. This is particularly evident through magazine front covers or website home pages, the first part of media seen by potential consumer, which are more likely than even the magazine adverts to have a corporately beautiful ideal featured. Like sex, appearance potency sells.

Attitude magazine provide good examples of this. Specifically, Matthew Todd defended his magazine's extensive use of corporately beautiful models on their front cover in a body dissatisfaction debate in London, 2011. He pointed out

that when his magazine had featured front cover models who were not appearance ideal (e.g., Stephen Fry, Beth Ditto) sales fell considerably and he was forced to change them back (Todd, 2012). *Attitude* needs sales from consumers and as well as money from advertisers, he defended. Indeed, *Attitude* is heavily dependent on corporate sponsorship, as can be seen from its website's covert promotion of corporations. For example, at the time of writing, *Attitude* had the following promotional features on the site: the *USN Body Makeover Challenge* which is a weight loss programme (Bond, 2015) an 'article' on natural weight loss pills which includes a link to the page of the website *LAMuscle.com* selling the pills (*Attitude*, 2015b) and an 'article' promoting protein shakes featuring another page of the same website (*LAMuscle.com*) selling protein powder (*Attitude*, 2015a). A fuller discussion of media as business will be discussed later in Chapter 9.

With its inclusion of adverts, its need to sell itself using the corporately produced appearance ideal and its reluctance to feature anything too critical about appearance potency lest it offends its appearance potent advertisers, the potential for media to be non-appearance potent is severely limited. For example, *Attitude* magazine runs a feature called: *Real Bodies, Real Attitudes*. This involves a reader discussing any body dissatisfaction they have, their preferences in partner's bodies and a large image of their 'real body' (see **Image 3**). The readers tend to be 'average' gay men with 'average' bodies and the implication of the feature is to provide an antidote to appearance potent content typical of mass media. The feature is a small antidote to the corporate appearance ideal. However, it is only 1 page of many and is dwarfed by the adverts and other appearance potent content. Other magazines have also taken progressive stances



Image 3: Real Bodies feature from *Attitude* magazine

against appearance potency such as Australian teen girl magazine *Girlfriend* by announcing it would label its images if they had been airbrushed. However Tiggemann and colleagues caution the extent of this stand was limited, however: “*At this stage, Girlfriend magazine can include these labels on only a small number of their in-house images, and not on images from other sources (such as advertisements or images of celebrities)*” (Tiggemann, Slater, & Smyth, 2014, p. 108). In total, the celebration of diverse appearance or other non appearance potent content of the media is dwarfed by its need for appearance potent content. As Avril Mair (2014, para. 12) writes: “*No matter how many 'feminist' features magazines may run, body fascism is reinforced by the advertisements, the fashion stories and the beauty pages*”.

The problem of appearance potency in media is systematic. It must be seen as such. In his book, *The Establishment and how they got away with it*, Owen Jones’ (2014).writes about the coverage of the phone hacking scandal by various British tabloid newspapers in 2009-11:

"By focusing their fire at those at the bottom – often with coverage based on distortions, myths and outright lies – they deflect scrutiny from the wealthy and powerful elite at the top of society....because of how and by whom they are run, much of the media today serves as a highly partisan defender of the interests of those with wealth and power"

Jones is referring to the Levenson inquiry into media ethics, particularly of the widespread phone hacking by the *News of the World* newspaper. He criticizes the inquiry as being overly focused on minor media players (individual journalists, sub-editors and paparazzi) that were alleged to be phone hackers. Instead, those who own and fund the media and the wider system in which media is situated who ordered the phone hacking were ignored. It is this wider system that should be appraised, rather than focusing on singular media features or media organizations alone.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has presented a discussion of Studies 3 and 4. It has been noted how these studies have found that men’s media frequently feature images that conform to corporate appearance ideals and are objectified as well as (for the magazines) adverts and articles that promote the pursuit of these ideals. This media is consumed frequently (weekly, monthly etc.) and by many people. Media

would not exist without consumers, and without affecting them. Its consumption, proliferation and ubiquity alone should be enough cause to merit researchers' actions. Researchers should not focus on fine-tuning and testing their tools for understanding the complex relationship between media consumption. Instead, action is needed.

Some have taken such action. Changing, subverting and consuming media critically are all ways in which the appearance potency of media has attempted to be tackled. These avenues represent promising small change and should not be undervalued. Nonetheless, it has also been shown how such advocacy is also limited as it ignore the economic structure that underpins media. In this next chapter (Chapter 9), this economic structure shall be outlined.

CHAPTER 9:

HOW CAPITALISM DRIVES BODY DISSATISFACTION

INTRODUCTION

“The main spur to trade or rather to industry and ingenuity, is the exorbitant appetite of men which they will take pain to gratify” (John Carey, 1695 as cited in Green, 2012).

Throughout prior chapters (Chapters 1-4), it has been argued that a pervasive individualization of body dissatisfaction exists within body dissatisfaction research. That is there is a sustained focus on individual's accounts of body dissatisfaction, a promotion of individual actions to counter body dissatisfaction and explorations of individual's attitudes about culture rather than explorations of the culture itself. This individualization has limited the focus and applicability of body dissatisfaction research and it is important to move the focus onto culture. The rare acknowledgment of culture in body dissatisfaction research has come in the form of media content analyses in body dissatisfaction research (Chapters 5-9). However this is only one actor embedded within a larger system itself, namely capitalism.

In this chapter then I aim to highlight how capitalism itself is responsible for body dissatisfaction. More specifically I argue three points: first, that capitalism and its related broader ideology (e.g., neoliberalism) are directly responsible for body dissatisfaction via the promotion of the corporate appearance ideal. Second, that capitalism often subsumes resistances to this corporate appearance ideal. Finally, that mainstream body dissatisfaction research props up capitalism.

Throughout this chapter I use examples of the widespread co-option of women's body dissatisfaction advocacy as well as men's. I use both examples to highlight how this problems of co-option is a problem that exists beyond men's body dissatisfaction and, indeed, body dissatisfaction advocacy itself. In addition, these examples of women's body dissatisfaction being co-opted indicate where the co-option of men's body dissatisfaction advocacy can go. Ultimately co-option takes place because of the profit imperative, it does not make gendered distinctions.

WHAT IS CAPITALISM?

Capitalism can be defined as “*an economic system in which investment in and ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange of wealth are held primarily by individuals and corporations*” (Sturken & Cartwright, 2009, p. 350). Capitalism can be distinguished into various stages such as industrial capitalism and consumer capitalism. Such distinctions refer to the shift of capitalism from its industrial stage characterised by the large scale production of goods to its consumerism stage referring to the centring of consumption in daily lives, the purchase of products based on not needs but wants, as well as planned obsolescence (Curtis, 2002). Others distinguish consumer capitalism further into ‘cool capitalism’ as “*the incorporation of disaffection into capitalism itself*” (McGuigan, 2012, p. 431). This latter definition refers to consumer capitalism in its most present iteration, with particular reference to its ability to co-opt any criticisms under a guise of ironic coolness and ‘don’t-take-yourself-too-seriously’ attitude. Nonetheless, capitalism is referred to in this research project because it is capitalism itself rather than any present or preceding form which is argued to be the lynchpin of causing body dissatisfaction and also because all forms of capitalism involve production, consumption and placing profits above other goals (Fraser, 2014). Specifically, as set out below, capitalism has direct and more indirect influences on society, governance, culture etc. and capitalism is not only an economic system but forms a cultural ideology; which compounds and includes other cultural ideologies such as neoliberalism and postfeminism (Fraser, 2014).

This research project takes a Marxist perspective to capitalism, arguing that it is a system that is “*driven by [its] ability to exploit labour*” so that the greater exploitation of labour, the greater profits under capitalism (Harvey, 2010; Fraser, 2014). Furthermore, that radical analyses of capitalism evades many left wing activists and academics in favour of critiques of culture. Specific to this research project, an analysis of capitalism is absent by body dissatisfaction researchers in place of an unrelenting focus on the individual.

Critical perspectives on capitalism and power have shown how capitalism forms ideologies so that people, governance and other bodies think and behave in certain ways (*Capitalism and Socialism*, 2012). For instance, David Harvey discusses changes in the meaning of language as one example of this capitalist ideologies. Specifically, the words ‘individual’ was first applied to people and the

word ‘career’ to employment (rather than something related to horses) in the 17th century when industrial capitalism took force (*Capitalism and Socialism*, 2012). A discussion of this ideology follows.

Capitalism as grounded in a neoliberal consensus

“There are many pleasant fictions of the law in constant operation, but there is not one so pleasant or practically humorous as that which supposes every man to be of equal value in its impartial eye, and the benefits of all laws to be equally attainable by all men, without the smallest reference to the furniture of their pockets” (Dickens, 1839, p. 455).

Charles Dickens wrote the above quote in 1839. This is neoliberalism where all people are regarded as equal and injustices such as racism, sexism etc. do not exist. Capitalism is facilitated by and contributes to neoliberalism (Lawn, 2013; Martinez & Garcia, 1996). Neoliberalism can be defined into two parts. The first is economic neoliberalism, the practice of deregulating capitalism, privatising state institutions and cutting social welfare spending, so that corporations can operate uninfluenced by state or other governance in a free market (Lawn, 2013; Martinez & Garcia, 1996). The second part is cultural neoliberalism which can be defined as *“the extension of free market principles and corporate structures into the wider social and cultural spheres”* (Lawn, 2013, para. 1). Specifically, arising from liberal ideology, a neoliberal consensus states that individual people are rational actors who have full control and therefore responsibility over their own lives. It fetishises choice, free will and autonomy so that any structural influences are ignored and crucially individual people come to make sense of their lives as solely dictated by their own autonomous actions (Baker, 2008; Gill, 2007a). One of cultural neoliberalism’s expressions is the ‘Healthy Citizen’ discourse which places responsibility over health onto the individual and their lifestyle, with those that have ill health considered to be burdens on society (Petersen, 1996). In addition, this ideology is also characterised by a postfeminism in which sexism is seen to be a relic of the past, women and girls’ choices and agency are revered, whilst the regulation of women’s and girl’s bodies remains heavy (Gill, 2007b).

Corporations capitalize on neoliberalism. As feminist blogger Susannah notes: *“Capitalism...loves the focus on the self, on identity, on transformation of the individual separated from real theories of injustice. It loves the cancelling out of authenticity via the irony of language games”* (Susannah, 2014). An example of

this embracement of neoliberalism is provided by Gill. She discusses her discovery of the advertising practice of Kids Getting Older Younger (KGOY; Gill, 2007a). This is the targeting of advertising to kids in a way that allows the kid to feel older, more sophisticated and particularly so for girls, sexier. This marketing, Gill notes, is deliberately aimed at getting around gatekeeper adults who could potentially stop kids from watching adverts. In particular the marketing practice uses the discourse of choice and empowerment, aware of consumer scepticism, to sell the product to the child as her own individual expression of her own identity. The child is led to believe they are not being ‘got at’ and certainly not being duped by the advertisers at all (Gill, 2007a). The practice of KGOY demonstrates capitalism’s use of neoliberalism to unabashedly target consumers all the while claiming that it isn’t happening.

In this chapter, I argue academia increasingly endorses neoliberal values. Gill calls this “*the retreat from cultural influence*” (Gill, 2008 pg. 433). This is the trend in academia to disavow any cultural criticism and erases any ability to engage in sustained coherent cultural critiques (Bordo, 2003; Gill, 1995). Instead certain postmodern scholars solely emphasize choice, agency and resistance of individual people ignoring the culture that has so much hold on our lives. This also follows the subversion of Marxism in psychology as the skewing of the consequences of capitalism (e.g., alienation and exploitation) into individual pathologies such as false beliefs and unhealthy experience (Parker, 2009). As McGuigan (2012, p. 425) writes: “*For researchers keen to avoid the kind of economic reductionism that once seemed to characterise Marxism, there has been a tendency to over-emphasise cultural autonomy and ideological determinacy*” .

As discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, body dissatisfaction researchers focus on individual people as causes of body dissatisfaction rather than capitalism. This coheres to neoliberalism. More generally any critique of capitalism is popularly depicted as frumpy, outdated or harpish (Bordo, 2003). Critics of capitalism are depicted as ‘not being in on the joke’. For example, when Claire Short was campaigning against the *Sun* newspaper’s objectification of women she was widely lampooned in the media as “*fat*” and “*jealous*” (Short, 2012, para. 2). Similarly, lads magazines that regularly feature sexist portrayals of women are defended as being ironic and cheeky (Benwell, 2007). Bordo (2003) discusses the

tendency of body dissatisfaction researchers to disavow any cultural criticism as being tired, outdated and even patronising to consumers who are, under neoliberalism, assumed to be able to eschew the corporate appearance ideal. Consumers are seen as able to playfully deconstruct and ultimately wave off corporate beautiful ideals. Body dissatisfaction researchers also increasingly interpret appearance related behaviours (e.g., getting cosmetic surgery, taking weight loss pills or using make up) as evidence of resistance to corporate appearance ideals. Such work arises from an important recognition that individual people do have agency and are not cultural dopes, that culture is not a top-down, one way force and people are not mindless, vulnerable consumers of it (Bordo, 2003; Gill, 2007a). However, when these questions are asked without any acknowledgment of the wider structures whatsoever, a reverse and pernicious pressure is exerted where people can only discuss these in terms of their agency and choice; the corporate appearance ideal becomes invisible.

Instead what is needed is critical respect as advocated by Gill (2007a). This is where participants' own expertise over their food and appearance related behaviours is honoured, whilst these behaviours are also situated within the wider context that all people, both researcher and participant included, have to contend. It is this context, made invisible partially by neoliberalism that constrains people's behaviour regardless of the individual iteration in which that behaviour is expressed. For example, in the *Body Project M* groups, men would often explicitly deny having any food concerns but would then go onto detail how they would feel deeply ashamed and sometimes would 'compensate' through intense exercise if they strayed from their strict high-protein and low fat diets. Men would be unaware that such behaviours would approach a disordered relationship with food and that their body dissatisfaction could be related to the corporate appearance ideal and in particular its equating of six pack abdominals with masculinity, autonomy and attractiveness. But as Gill (2007a) notes, mutely agreeing with participants that failing to conform to such diets was shameful and intense exercise was needed would not help the participant. Instead, it is important to try and challenge participants about where these behaviours come from, to highlight the culture. Highlighting culture's role is not necessarily easy to do, neoliberalism firmly places responsibility on the individual and culture is internalized. Further, it can seem

overwhelming to suddenly have this culture to contend with. Nonetheless, this is of paramount importance, if culture is not identified then it cannot be tackled.

As mentioned, neoliberalism is also used to disguise the existence of the corporate appearance ideal. So advertisements for cosmetic surgery promote their wares based on choice, autonomy and freedom rather than dictation to corporate appearance ideals. For example, the *Harley Medical Group* created an advert for breast surgery with the caption: “*The best decision I’ve made*” (Daily Mail Reporter, 2009). This focus on decisions or choice, divorces the behaviour from the context or from the widespread pressure to conform to the corporate appearance ideals that people elect to get cosmetic surgery for. Other adverts for cosmetic surgery imply they are innocently supplying a demand for people who just happen to want to change their appearance rather than creating the problem by promoting the corporate appearance ideal in the first place. To consumers, the adverts say: let us give you “*the look you’ve always wanted*” as well as “*the body you’ve always had in mind*” (Sturme, 2012). These discourses of neoliberalism make it difficult for people to identify the corporate appearance ideal. People may come to believe that their body dissatisfaction is a product of their own individual desire to change their personal appearance and not a normative response to the sustained, heavy and ubiquitous promotion of the corporate appearance ideal. As Bordo writes (2003, p. 246): “*Our bodies are now regarded as ‘cultural plastic’ and ourselves ‘the master sculptors of that plastic’*”. This arises from an “*intoxication with freedom, change, and self-determination*”. For example, speaking about her cosmetic surgery in a radio interview, British ex-model Annabelle Giles explained: “*I only had tiny bits and bobs done. Just for my own purposes, nobody else’s. I couldn’t care less what anybody else thinks. I just did it for me*” (Bull, 2011).

To sum up then, neoliberalism is used by capitalism to defend against criticisms of exploitation by asserting that all individual people are equal, empowered and able to resist any tactic corporations could possibly use in order to sell. Many body dissatisfaction researchers collude with neoliberalism by failing to link people’s appearance and food related behaviours to wider forms of injustice that characterize modern life (e.g., lookism and sexism).

The origins of consumer capitalism: The work of Edward Bernays

In this next section I shall discuss the career of Edward Bernays in order to highlight the origins of capitalism. Bernays is widely regarded as the father of public relations (PR) (Curtis, 2002; The New York Times, 1995). His lifetime's work made a monumental impact not just on capitalism itself but also, via capitalism, sociocultural life, our relationships, identities and wellbeing. Bernays helped shift industrial capitalism into capitalism's present day form in many of the countries of the world today: consumer capitalism. In the early 20th century, the Industrial revolution meant consumables could be produced on a mass scale and industries were concerned that supply would outgrow demand. Responding to industries' concerns, Bernays helped shift advertising from a 'needs-based economy' (e.g., extolling the practical advantages of a car) to a 'desires-based economy' (e.g., where the car itself wasn't important but what it symbolized). He also advocated the use of planned obsolescence, where products are specifically designed to break down, in order to ensure demand always kept up with supply (Curtis, 2002). This shift led to consumer capitalism or late capitalism where the economy is less dependent on machines and technology (as it was in industrial capitalism) but more so on globalized trade and continuous consumption (Harvey, 2013; Lawson, 2010; Sturken & Cartwright, 2009). According to Noam Chomsky, consumer capitalism's goal is:

"to create a philosophy of futility, to focus [people] on the insignificant things in life like fashionable consumption....The ideal is to have individuals that are totally dissociated from one another. Who's conception of themselves, the sense of value, is just how many created wants can I satisfy?" (cited in Achbar, Abbott, & Bakan, 2003).

Bernays believed capitalism was the true version of democracy. In the words of his daughter, Anne Bernays, he believed you "*couldn't have real democracy in anything but a capitalist society*" (Curtis, 2002). In his own book *Propaganda* he wrote uncritically to his readers:

"The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society... We are governed, our minds moulded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of" (Bernays, 1928, p. 37).

The men, Bernays mentioned, were those who owned corporations, particularly those who hired Bernays for his PR services. Ultimately, Bernays promoted the

idea that it was not the citizen that was useful to the state but the consumer via their consumption and investment in shares (Bramhall, 2014; Curtis, 2002).

Subsequently, under Bernays capitalism ousted political democracy. For example, Bernays was the publicity director for the highly successful 1939 New York World Fair, which was designed to demonstrate that it was only corporations, and not governments, that could adequately meet people's independent needs. Similarly, Bernays was also hired by the National Association of Manufacturers to create a vast media campaign that would convince the US public that it was capitalism and only capitalism that was responsible for progress and that corporate regulation, unions and immigration would undo this progress. This was in direct response to US President Roosevelt's New Deal, which proposed strengthening unions and introduced some regulations against corporations (Bramhall, 2014). Bernays' subsequent campaign for the National Association of Manufacturers was successful: it defeated the New Deal and ousted Roosevelt.

In the most chilling demonstration of capitalism superseding political democracy, Bernays mobilized public support and engineered a coup that overthrew socialist Guatemalan Prime Minister Arbenz (Bramhall, 2014; Curtis, 2002). This was because Bernays worked for the *United Fruit Corporation* (UFC) who monopolized Guatemala's banana plantations. UFC were unhappy about Arbenz's plan to give these plantations back to the Guatemalan people. Using propaganda veiled as PR, Bernays subsequently portrayed Arbenz as a Soviet sock puppet and a threat to democracy right on America's doorstep. Specifically, he invited US journalists over to visit Guatemala, staged a violent anti-US protest by Guatemalans, got selected Guatemalan politicians to say Arbenz was a communist and set up a fake independent US news desk called the *Middle American Information Bureau* that regularly sent press releases saying the Soviets controlled Arbenz. As a result, the CIA and UFC jointly paid for the training and arming of a Guatemalan military group who promptly ousted Arbenz and murdered many of his supporters (Bramhall, 2014; Curtis, 2002).

Bernay's career highlights the way in which capitalism may supersede media, politics, and democracy. His understanding of the power of public relations, whether to make dowdy US President Coolidge more appealing to voters, to overthrow the democratically elected Arbenz, or to persuade women to take up

smoking his client's cigarettes, has to this day left a tremendous legacy on sociocultural life, wellbeing and body dissatisfaction (Curtis, 2002). His and other's (e.g., Ivy Lee) appropriation of psychology demonstrates today how some branches of psychology has been and is used to prop up capitalism.

Consumer capitalism is directly responsible for body dissatisfaction via the promotion of corporate appearance ideals.

Marxists critique capitalism for being a system in which the masses are disadvantaged and only the very few are advantaged (Fraser, 2014; Harvey, 2010). Beyond the material widespread inequality that capitalism creates, Marxist theorists describe how capitalist exploitation leads people to be alienated from their bodies, their selves and other people (Cohen, 2013; Parker & Spears, 1996; Fraser, 2014). For the purposes of this section I shall outline another injustice capitalism causes: body dissatisfaction.

Capitalism achieves this by creating a problem that specifically requires consumption to solve. One of the many problems capitalism creates is the inability to attain corporate appearance ideals. The corporate appearance ideals for both men and women have low body fat, clear skin, symmetrical facial features, full heads of hair, straight white teeth and minimal or no body hair. They are also young, white and able-bodied. The corporate appearance ideals differ for men and women, and in this difference, they also preclude the acceptance of bodies that lie outside of binary genders (e.g., intersex bodies). So, the male is mesomorphic, with a V-shaped torso, a strong brow, broad shoulder, and is tall (approximately 6ft) with a thick, long penis. The female is large breasted, toned but not too muscular, has a small waist, with a smooth, tucked vagina. The corporate appearance ideal differs from individual's ideals of beauty by their inability to be attained, their consistency regardless of the nation, media format or audience to which they are promoted and by their construction through technology such as airbrushing. Although corporate appearance ideals evolves through slightly different variations, each one remains unattainable. The ideals may one month have rare physical features (e.g., the thigh gap) or features that were previously considered undesirable (e.g., tooth gap). That there is some flexibility in the corporate appearance ideal; it is generally acceptable to depart from it but only in

one of a few previously determined degrees. Hollywood actors Bruce Willis and Jason Statham, for example, do not have full heads of hair but stay close enough to the corporate appearance ideal through their muscularity and machismo (see also Chapter 4). This is inherent to the nature of capitalism, it promotes multiple, sometimes contradictory commodities such as these different appearance ideals. This multiplicity, akin to moving targets, can leave true resistance difficult. I shall now outline how the corporate appearance ideal is promoted through advertising, airbrushing, discourses of beauty and the effacement of cultural and social differences.

HOW CORPORATE APPEARANCE IDEALS ARE PROMOTED

Advertising

Advertising promotes the corporate appearance ideal in two ways: first, by implicating the purchase of a product as necessary to achieve corporate appearance ideals (e.g., protein shakes for muscles, cosmetic surgery for a full hair line) and second, by the widespread use of images of men and women manipulated to conform to corporate appearance ideals in the adverts themselves.

Advertising is a ubiquitous and sophisticated 12 billion dollar industry (Klein, 2002). It is an industry that uses the talent, creativity and skills of people for one outcome: to sell a product. Representation of this industry abound in popular culture; for example, in the 2013 film *Friends with Benefits* Justin Timberlake's character starts a new job in marketing. His worth is proven to the corporation when he has the bright idea to commodify the popular flash-mobs of San Francisco by staging his own and forming it into a giant version of the corporation's logo. Timberlake's character is considered brilliant for recognizing the trend's popularity and ability to go viral in order to sell the corporation's product. The film is celebratory of this moment: it is an indication of Timberlake's attractiveness and success in the eyes of his friend/lover (Mila Kunis' character). The film (and likely the audience) do not consider the potential effects of this commodification of transforming what was a movement to reclaim social spaces (i.e., flash-mobs) into a way of selling a product. The skill, time and resources that go into advertising, marketing and PR are for one outcome only: to sell. Putting aside whether selling is good, bad, both or neither, this example demonstrates the

diversion of skills, resources and time that could go into other pursuits that are more discernibly important for people (e.g., for improving wellbeing, access to water, resistance to corporate appearance ideals etc.).

Advertising ostentatious' purpose is to manipulate consumers. In particular market researchers spend a long time researching the development of children and then sell using what are termed their "developmental vulnerabilities" such as their inability to distinguish between advertising and media (Achbar et al., 2003; Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, 2008). Children are a particularly prime target of marketers not only because of such developmental vulnerabilities, but also because of the "*nag factor*" (Achbar et al., 2003). This is children's perceived persuasiveness in getting bought for them what they want from their parents. Finally, children are also perceived as tomorrow's consumers. Once brand loyalty develops at a younger age (the aim for marketers) then children are likely to become lifetime consumers. Hence many corporations use student discounts or student based promotions. For example, the recently founded *Mr & Ms. University* competition is one example of a corporation aiming to hook consumers early on. The corporation sets up a bodybuilding competition that university students compete in order to be crowned Mr or Ms. University. Despite having the veneer of promoting justice (e.g., in the words of Ms. University 2014: "*Maybe we can change the stereotype [of students] from lazy to lean!*"; The Huffington Post UK, 2014, para. 7), the competition has a heavy corporate influence. As prizes the winners receive protein shakes and other supplements from corporations and the judging panel include celebrity bodybuilders that each have their own sponsorship deals from the same corporation. Ultimately, the corporation is a business that charges entrants fees to compete and takes sponsorship from other corporations



Image 4: Terrence Higgins Trust social media advert



that hope to associate their supplements with student's physiques whilst creating long term consumers that last beyond student's university days.

Corporate appearance ideals are used to sell anything (Bordo, 2003; Kilbourne, 2010) from fishing line, watches and cars to products that exclude the visual sense such as music, perfume and alcohol (Kilbourne, 2010). Such are the ideals' ubiquity that to sell without them puts a corporation at a disadvantage; hence, charities and health promoters often use corporate appearance ideals in their promotions as well. For example, Image 4 shows a social media advert for the Terrence Higgins Trust's campaign *It Starts with Me*. The campaign aimed to promote safe sex practices for gay men, a group that are particularly at risk of catching HIV. The advert image features five men each holding campaign T-shirts with a woman holding a campaign sign in the middle. Only the men's shirtless torsos are visible which show they are highly mesomorphic, with a visible 6 pack, minimally haired bodies, young and white. They are embodiments of the corporate appearance ideal. The campaign is important. However the charity is doing worthwhile and desperately needed work, the use of the corporate appearance ideal is contrary to promoting gay men's health inclusively and emphasizes the ubiquity of its promotion.

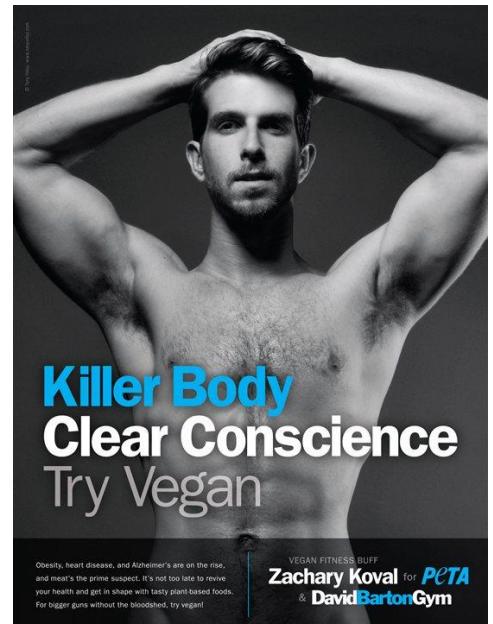


Image 5: PETA advert featuring Vegan model Zachary Koval

This is also true for PETA's sexiest vegan competition. The male winner of 2012, Zachary Koval, is white, mesomorphic, has a full head of hair and conforms (as celebrated by PETA) to the corporate appearance ideal. The advert for PETA featuring Koval modelling shirtless (see Image 5) was unveiled at David Barton's gym (whose motto is "Look Better Naked") which PETA explained represented PETA's "first-ever gym partnership" (PETA, 2013, para. 2). The advert was also featured on the *Men's Health* website and during the unveiling Koval gave a talk about his use of vegan muscle supplements. Here Korval's image quickly became another mean in which the corporate appearance ideal was promoted whether to

sell gym memberships or diet supplements (David Barton) or, indeed, promote veganism (PETA).

The promotion of the corporate appearance ideal is not only limited to advertising, however. The corporate appearance ideal is also increasingly promoted covertly through media. For instance, via plugs for products by celebrities who are depicted as conforming to those corporate appearance ideals. Media figures such as actors, singers and sports stars for instance, often become ambassadors for corporations. An early example of this was actress Clara Bow being paid by Edward Bernays to advertise his client's hats in the 1930s (Curtis, 2002). Sometimes this ambassadorship occurs through lucrative contracts (e.g., Julia Roberts is the face of *Lancome*) or, more recently and covertly, through social media. For example, celebrities are often sent free 'gifts' from corporations and are then expected to tweet a 'thank you' in reply to the corporation along with how happy/beautiful/amazing their life will now be with this product. Crucially, this same reply will also go out to the sometimes millions of *Twitter* followers of that celebrity. Jamie East has documented the hundreds of such tweets reality TV stars from *The Only Way is Essex* (TOWIE) and *Geordie Shore* have sent as a thank you to Protein World's 'gifts' (East, 2012). These tweets often include a picture of the celebrity holding the slimming pills or protein shakes that Protein World send them, along with a caption such as "*Sculpting my guns with help [from] @proteinworld #tonecollection*" (East, 2012). Although some have called for these tweets to be clearly marked with hashtags such as #spon (sponsored) #paid or #samp (sample) in practice, this rarely happens, as East also points out. Indeed, even if the hashtags were included they are unlikely to make any difference. It is the image and endorsement rather than the moral (on hashtag) that is likely to stay with people (Bordo, 2003).

Another way in which corporate appearance ideals are promoted is through native advertising. Native advertising is defined by The Guardian as "*the practice of using content to build trust and engagement with would-be customers*" (Hallett, 2014, para. 4). Put more simply, it is an article or content paid for by a corporation to plug their brand or product disguised as regular editorial content in a newspaper, magazine or website. Though there are no established regulations for disclaiming native advertising, often a discrete "sponsored" or "advertorial" label

will feature at the top of the content. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these disclaimers is minimal. Native advertising is popular because of its non-detectability from other forms of editorial content; with research suggesting only half of readers are able to tell the difference between native advertising and legitimate editorial content (Shewan, 2014). Another study conducted by *Sharethrough* (Sharethrough & IPG Media Ltd, 2013) has revealed that consumers are more likely to share native adverts rather than traditional banner adverts on their own social networks as well as spend as long reading native adverts as editorial content. Though demonstrating the close links between corporations, research and media once more, it should be noted that *Sharethrough* is itself a native advertising corporation (Sharethrough & IPG Media Ltd, 2013). One example of using native advertising to sell the corporate appearance ideal are the “*article features*” by cosmetic surgeons in the popular news website *The Huffington Post*. Unsurprisingly these extoll the benefits of cosmetic surgery whilst mentioning none of its costs: financial or otherwise (e.g., Bowler, 2014; McCulley, 2014).

The blurring of corporate and media boundaries can begin to be traced back by looking at native advertising’s pioneer: Jonah Paretti. Paretti co-founded the *Huffington Post* and created the reblog (or retweet) feature popular in social networking sites such as *Twitter* and *Tumblr* (Crook, 2014). In 2014, *Buzzfeed*, currently estimated to be worth \$850 million, announced that 100% of its total income comes from native advertising (J. Oliver, 2014). Examples of native advertising on *Buzzfeed* come from corporations such as *TacoBell* and *Virgin Mobile* (*Buzzfeed*, n.d.). Native advertising is not limited to *Buzzfeed*, of course. More traditional forms of media, such as the *New York Times*, have had articles sponsored by the TV show ‘*Orange Is The New Black*’ as well as energy corporation *Chevron* (J.Oliver, 2014).

Other blurrings of the boundaries between media and advertising can be seen in custom publishing, corporate media, content marketing and captive media. Captive media refers to media whose audience’s attention is held captive by the place or time they happen to be in. For instance, Advagames are adverts disguised as games. Some of these advagames have been placed in men’s urinals where the game (and the advert) becomes clear when it comes into contact

with urine (Online MBA, 2013). Corporate media refers to the practice of corporations creating their own media that covertly advertises their products. For example, *L’Oreal* set up the website: *makeup.com* which sells *L’Oreal* products under the guise of giving makeup and beauty advice (Rose, 2013). According to Diane Farsetta of PR Watch, *Dove* also tried to do the same in 2008 by creating “*a new online community for women that offers entertainment, blogs, advice and advertising*” (Farsetta, 2008, para. 1). According to Farsetta, this arose because *Dove’s Real Beauty* campaign had, despite its success in garnering media coverage, failed to get consumers to link the campaign to *Dove’s* products (Farsetta, 2008).

To sum, the corporate appearance ideal is heavily promoted in advertising. This promotion in traditional advertising is well known (Diedrichs et al., 2011; Elliott & Elliott, 2005). What is less known about though is the covert promotion of the corporate appearance ideal through the media; whether through native advertising, corporate media or otherwise. This covert promotion is particularly insidious because, unlike traditional advertising, it is much more difficult to detect. In this next section I shall discuss how airbrushing makes the corporate appearance ideals impossible to attain.

Airbrushing

Airbrushing, the digital or lighting manipulation of an image, is a widespread practice in mass media today (Bordo, 2003). It is something that is no longer reserved for Hollywood film stars in promotional images of their films, but for anyone whose image happens to grace media. For example, in 2007 the then French president Nicholas Sarkozy was photographed in a canoe on a river. Before the photos were published his love handles were discretely lopped off (Allen, 2007). Even Tina Fey, someone who has been so publicly critical of corporate appearance ideals (Fey, 2011), in a TV show in which she produced, directed and starred, only allows the right side of her face to be seen on camera so as to hide a childhood scar (Chicago Tribune, 2008). Even models in *Dove’s Real Beauty* campaign adverts, supposedly celebrating women’s real beauty, had it (Brook, 2005).

Airbrushing technology is also extensive and sophisticated. Whole heads can be displaced onto entirely new bodies with bigger arms, as in the case of British Tennis champion Andy Roddick when he was on the cover of the May 2007 issue of *Men's Fitness*. Ironically, next to Roddick's head (though not his body) was the cover story: "*How to build big arms in easy moves*" (DoSomething, n.d.b). Technology exists to airbrush not just images but also videos. For example, Ryan Gosling jokingly nicknamed the six pack creating electronic vest that he wore in the film *Drive*: "*abatar*" (Lewinski, 2011). Indeed, people are now free to airbrush their own pictures through the smart phones apps that add eyelashes, stretch smiles, erase blemishes and make the user look slimmer such as *SkinnyPix*, *Perfect365* and *ModiFace* (Bosker, 2013).



Image 6: Image of a man whose facial and chest hair has been airbrushed

Despite the existence of airbrushing being widely known about (e.g., Diedrichs et al., 2011) in everyday life, it is still difficult to detect. For example, **Image 6** is an image of a man that has been airbrushed so expertly it is difficult to tell whether chest and facial hair have been added or removed onto the original picture. As *Huffington Post* journalist Bosker writes about the new generation of airbrushing apps:

"Unlike the previous generation of portrait-editing apps, which left figures with the two-dimensional masks of anime characters, these apps, like the best plastic surgeon, leave few obvious marks. I, for one, would never have guessed the #carselfie had a little help" (Bosker, 2013, para. 4).

Often it only becomes clear an image or media has been airbrushed by accident. For example, *Buzzfeed* regularly compile a list of “*airbrushing disasters*” where legs have been unnaturally elongated or a model has two belly buttons (e.g., Gerstein, 2014). Similarly, Bordo (2003) notes the time when *Newsweek* decided to airbrush the smile of Bobbi McCaughey shortly after she had given birth to sextuplets. Nobody would have known that Bobbi didn’t have a perfect, white and straight set of teeth had it not been for *Time* magazine also featuring her picture on their front cover, but this time unairbrushed, with McCaughey’s real teeth on show.

Airbrushing means the corporate appearance ideal is never achievable, as it is never attainable, it is not human. This is quite deliberate, its unattainability means people will continually consume, continually striving toward corporate ideals that continually evade them. Despite its status as a relatively open secret , that is often mocked (Gerstein, 2014), the effects of airbrushing are still real. Literacy is not immunity. As Bordo (2003, p. xviii) argues, airbrushing is defining our realities of what is and what is not acceptable for appearance, it is “*perceptual pedagogy, How to Interpret Your Body 101*”.

Discourses of the corporate appearance ideals

Corporate appearance ideals do not come only in the form of an image (though this is arguably their most ubiquitous form). Discourses, ways of speaking and representing (Braun & Clarke, 2013), specific to the ideal exist. Specifically, discourses of how achievable, important and beneficial conforming to corporate appearance ideals are, abound in mass media (Dittmar, 2007). For example, in her own programme of research on advertising, Dittmar finds that endless consumption is promoted through the promise of a ‘Good Life’(i.e., health, wealth and success) and ‘good body’ (conforming to corporate appearance ideals) (Ashikali & Dittmar, 2011; Dittmar, 2007). Another example of these discourses is provided by Harvey (2013). The author discursively analysed the texts of popular hair loss websites and found that the websites positioned balding men as lonely, depressed and suicidal. In contrast, men with full heads of hair were happy, successful and partnered. These websites were funded by pharmaceutical corporations that sold hair loss prevention products. A passing glimpse through

any women's magazine or the newspaper *Daily Mail* also shows the level of scrutiny and mockery afforded to any famous women (and increasingly, famous man) whose appearance does not conform to corporate appearance ideals (e.g., *Heat* magazine's Circle of Shame or Hoop of Horror feature; Plunkett, 2013). This includes the recent *Daily Mail* article about 22 year old *One Direction* boyband member Liam Payne. It was headlined: "*Liam Payne reveals his less than toned physique as he puffs on a cigarette and drinks with friends aboard luxury yacht*" (Ojumu, 2014). Those in the public eye that do manage to approximate corporate appearance ideals (as much as any person without airbrushing ever does) are revered. Women who are perceived to defy their age 'gracefully' (meaning invisibly; Hurd-Clarke, 2001; Jankowski, Diedrichs, Williamson, Christopher, & Harcourt, 2014), are particularly held up as role models (see Image 7). For example, in 2008 the *Daily Mail* wrote about British actress Helen Mirren praising her for her slim waist and taught stomach in her 60s. The article was titled: "*Helen Mirren the bikini queen reigns supreme at 63*", (Daily Mail Reporter, 2008). Similarly while *People* magazine featured an interview with US supermodel Christie Brinkley who was asked for her diet and exercise secrets to staying so youthful at 60. Brinkley also featured on their front cover, wearing a swimsuit, her arms in the air, next to the caption: "*Christie Brinkley at 60!*" (Rivera, 2014).



Image 7: Media coverage of American model Christie Brinkley and British actress Helen Mirren.

These discourses speak to consumers of how easily corporate appearance ideals may be attained through ‘healthy’ or minimal eating and regular exercise alone. These are particularly promoted as they tie into the promotion of the ‘Healthy Citizen’ discourse where individual people are encouraged to take responsibility of their own health which is implied to not only be highly possible but also patriotic as it alleviates the financial and social burden on society (Petersen, 1996; J. Wright & Harwood, 2012). Ehrenreich’s *Smile or Die* (2010) is a polemic on the healthy citizen discourse surrounding cancer patients; specifically the heavy burden placed on them to stay positive, take charge of their cancer, fundraise for cancer charities, all whilst bravely smiling and ultimately fending off death. This neoliberal discourse is intimately tied to corporate appearance ideals as the embodiment of the Good Citizen is the corporate appearance ideal. For example, Crawshaw’s (2007) discursive analyses of 21 issues of *Men’s Health* magazine showed that despite the magazine’s promotion of hegemonic masculinity, the Good Citizen discourse is heavily featured. This is a magazine where approximately 2/3rds of the images of men also conform to the corporate appearance ideals (Jankowski, Fawkner, et al., 2014).

The erasure of cultural, social and national differences

The final manner in which the corporate appearance ideal is promoted is through the erasure of cultural, social and national differences. Capitalism requires an expansionary imperative i.e., the cheapest most efficient labour in the newest markets. As Marx and Engels wrote in the Communist Manifesto, capitalism must spread across “*the whole surface of the globe, it must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere*” (Marx & Engels, 1848; 1998, p. 54).

The pursuit of profit, corporations’ sole purpose, does not bend to cultural differences or national borders. This would entail corporations adapting a specific product to particular cultural tastes or customs; increasing production and distribution costs and reducing profit margins. Instead, as Klein notes, many corporations simply “*force the world to speak [their] language and absorb [their] culture*” (2002, p. 115–116). In particular a global teen market has been created that despite living in different countries, being of different religions, having different

familial and cultural backgrounds, means teenagers wear similar branded products, enjoy similar TV and music shows, and consume similar branded food and drink (Klein, 2002). This market has been created by using a tokenistically diverse range of actors and models in advertising with similar catchphrases (e.g., skittle's 'taste the rainbow'). These eschew traditional and outdated cultural differences in favour of unity over shared values such as freedom, fun and individuality; values attainable only through the purchase of certain branded products (Klein, 2002).

Various other cultural analysts have spotted the global ideals used to sell the same product to different women of different cultures, religions and languages. She is, of course, the embodiment of corporate appearance ideals (white, slim, young), is playfully (hetero)sexual (Gill, 2008) and empowered by her purchasing of certain brands. Gill calls her "*the midriff*" (Gill, 2008, p. 437); Machin and Thornborrow call her the "*Fun, Fearless, Female*" (Gill, 2008; Machin & Thornborrow, 2003, p. 457) and feminist blogger, Twisty, calls her "*Empowerful Woman*" (Twisty, 2006). Her origins are also summarized by Twisty: "*She was invented for precisely that purpose by the global corporatocracy, without whose tireless sponsorship of consumer feminine consciousness real-life women might have no clue how ugly and unfeminine they are*" (Twisty, 2006, para. 4).

There is of course a male globalized archetype - 'Buff Man' - who most frequently graces the cover of *Men's Health*; he is resolutely heterosexual,



Image 8: Men's Health magazine featuring 'Buff Man'

protective of the corporately-beautiful ideal woman that normally is cowering to his torso, whispering in his ear, or looking longingly up at him (e.g., see front cover of *Men's Health Spain*, March 2013). She is invariably seduced by his "sex magic" (*Men's Health South Africa*, June 2011). He is also powerful and confronts the reader's gaze, conforming to the male corporate appearance ideal, he naturally takes active charge of his health, body, looks and keeps his six pack and hairline in check. He is wealthy ('earn more work less'), is able to defy aging and death ("never get a heart attack" as *Men's Health India* promises, March 2014 or "eternal youth" as *Men's Health Australia*, June 2011, promises), and has a James Bond air of confidence (see Image 8).

Men's Health magazine provides a particularly powerful example of how the promotion of the corporate appearance ideal occurs through the erasure of differences. The magazine publishes 47 different editions in 61 different countries with a total readership of 35 million (Rodale, n.d.a). *Men's Health* magazine has its own global market, as founder Ronan Gardiner attests:

"One of the reasons that I think our international footprint is so big is because men the world over are a lot more alike than we think they are....[it] doesn't matter whether you live in Russia or China or New York City, men the world over really care about mostly the same things" (Husni, 2013, para. 32).

Like Bernays, *Men's Health* is upfront about plans to reach other men regardless of culture, religion or otherwise. Even developing countries constitute, according to Gardiner, "great opportunities" for *Men's Health* (Husni, 2013, para. 34). As he further observes: "It's rather funny to say there are 3 billion men on the planet and we've only touched two percent of them. I'm totally serious. Until we've touched them all, we're not done" (Husni, 2013, para. 34).

Despite the different markets of *Men's Health*, the same central content of the US edition is supplemented by minimal local content commissioned by a local editorial team. This means each edition still carries the *Men's Health* 'brand' (Machin & Thornborrow, 2003). A significant part of the brand or focus of *Men's Health* is the promotion of the male corporate appearance ideal. For instance, the US, Australian, German and UK editions of the June 2014 *Men's Health* each featured a cover interview with white Australian actor Hugh Jackman. The issues also featured the similar cover stories headlined: "Lean muscle" (*Men's Health*

Australia), “7kg of lean muscle in a week” (UK), “Big muscle” (US) and “More muscles in only 24 hours” (Germany). Similarly, white British celebrities Jason Statham and David Beckham have between them been the cover stars of Turkey, Serbia, Russia, Ukraine, Spain and Greece (FamousFix, n.d.). Or indeed, of the cover stars featured on the 10 most recent issues of the South African *Men’s Health*, nine were white and all conformed to the male corporate appearance ideal (MySubs, n.d.). According to *Men’s Health* then you can be Greek, Turkish, Serbian, Russian or otherwise but be only interested in one goal: conforming to the corporate appearance ideal. Although these celebrities featured maybe famous beyond their respective home countries, they are all white and Western, indicating how imbalanced the reverence is, and racialized the corporate appearance ideal is (see Chapter 10).

Corporate domination does not only entail the implementation of the corporate appearance ideal in bigger and more diverse markets. It also extends to colonization of other aspects of sociocultural life. In *No Logo*, Klein (2002) discusses the imperialist aspirations of *Disney*, who are not only comfortable with monopolizing children’s entertainment but wish to create ‘a whole new world’ in which activities, products, food, accommodation are ‘Disneyfied’. This is a place where consumers can be immersed fully in the *Disney* brand without any interference of rival brands or non-commercial pursuits. This culminated in the founding of *Celebration Town*, a small Florida planned community, in which banks, churches, houses and shops were all created by Disney as well as the *Disney Worlds* in nearby Florida and Paris (Klein, 2002).

Similarly, *Men’s Health* is not, according to its publishers, just a magazine but a “multimedia brand that includes branded books and DVDs, mobile apps, and renowned events” (Rodale, n.d.b, p. About the brand). In addition, it is also not content on only having a male readership: *Women’s Health* magazine was launched in 2005 and today has 28 editions in 51 countries and more than 22 million readers worldwide (Rodale, n.d.b). Like *Men’s Health*, its focus too is on the promotion of corporate appearance ideals. Take for example, *Women’s Health Middle East* whose front cover stars and features over the last year have included: Elizabeth Banks and the feature “Tone Every Zone” (*Women’s Health Middle East*, May 2014), Drew Barrymore and “Get Your Best Body” (*Women’s Health Middle*

East, June 2014) and Jessica Alba: and “*Hot Body Fast*” (*Women’s Health Middle East*, March 2014). Once again, like *Men’s Health*, *Women’s Health* is also a “*multimedia brand*” having its own range of apps, DVD line and sporting events (Rodale, n.d.b).

Capitalism’s dissemination of corporate appearance ideals beyond cultural and national differences should not be simplified. For example, colonialism and neo-colonialism has long contributed to white Westerner’s dominance, of the “*white man’s burden*” where the West is considered progressive and elsewhere should imitate it (Abagond, 2010). Nonetheless the erasure of differences via the corporate appearance ideal does highlight how body dissatisfaction is a commodity that can be exported and promoted globally (Bordo, 2003).

CAPITALISM SUBSUMES RESISTANCES

Capitalism is said to never solve its crises but only to shift them geopolitically (Harvey, 2010; Lawson, 2010). For example, the global recession has paradoxically only increased income inequality as billionaires become richer whilst wages stagnate and the cost of living increases for the majority (Harvey, 2010; R. Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010). The problems caused by capitalism, including inequality, alienation, poverty, etc., are then commodified by capitalists so that the solutions to these problems are upheld through further consumption rather than the ending of capitalism itself. In effect, then, capitalism turns its criticisms into commodities. For instance, the existence of charities allows those who are advantaged under capitalism to assuage their guilt by giving a nominal, discretionary and minimal donation. The existence of charities can also impede scrutiny at the broader culture (e.g., capitalism) that created the need for charities in the first place. In this next section I shall discuss how capitalism subsumes resistances by either co-opting them as their own unique selling points or overpowering them in the context of the corporate appearance ideals.

Capitalism co-opts justice advocacy

Capitalism has a long history of co-opting justice advocacy. For example, *Standard Oil*, a Rockefeller family corporation, hired Ivy Lee in the 1910s to manage the corporation’s failed public image due to the massacre of strikers and

11 of their children in Ludlow (Bramhall, 2014; Curtis, 2002). Ivy Lee wrote press releases on behalf of *Standard Oil* stating that the children were killed by an overturned stove rather than murdered on the orders of *Standard Oil* in order to quash the strike. He also arranged for the Rockefeller family to donate to various charitable causes and sponsor non-commercial institutions (such as libraries and hospitals) in order to rehabilitate their image (Curtis, 2002). This tactic was a success; the Rockefeller family wealth grew to \$340 billion and today their descendants are considered to be America's most powerful and wealthiest family (Whitelocks, 2013).

Another example of the co-option of this advocacy is provided once again by Bill Phillipps of *Men's Health* magazine who stated in a recent interview: "*Men have changed over the last 25 years and largely, I think the magazine has given men permission to care about today, things like fatherhood [and] cooking*" (Husni, 2013, para. 24). Arguably it would be cynical not to see the promotion of fatherhood and housework in *Men's Health* as anything but good. However, given that women still bear the vast majority of housework and unpaid caring, and that when men do "*chip in*" it is regarded as remarkable rather than them sharing their responsibilities, some cynicism is important.

Not only do corporations take responsibility for justices when they are achieved (e.g., MTV once said that they went into Berlin and the next day the Berlin wall fell; Klein, 2002) but so do they too about human relationships and emotions. Corporations argue that they are solving human problems, listening to the needs of people and fulfilling their desires. For example, Edward Bernays benignly characterizes corporations as "*taking the public into partnership... corporation is conscious of the public's conscience*" he writes. "*This consciousness has led to a healthy cooperation... the public has its own standards and demands and habits, you may modify them, but you dare not run counter to them*" (1928, p. 82–86). Another example is provided by Ronan Gardiner, publisher of *Men's Health* magazine, who states:

"I think the secret [of Men's Health] is very simple: it's that the magazine is, and always has been, about the reader. It reflects what the reader is thinking and is worried about and it reflects what the reader wants to learn" (Husni, 2013, para. 8).

These examples depict the consumer, the public, as strong willed and corporations as haplessly bending to their wills.

Subvertising refers to the practice of inverting an advert to highlight the corporation's hypocrisy or culpability in injustices. Despite this important, critical and at times ingenious work, it too is easily subsumed by capitalism. Whether it is automobile industry critic *Ralph Nader* being approached by *Nike* to sell trainers (Klein, 2002) or prints of Banksy graffiti sold as coffee table companions (Banksy, 2006), examples abound. Similarly, subvertisers' messages have all too often been repackaged and sold back to consumers by corporations. For example, corporations now market the same products using the corporate appearance ideal but this time using feminist discourses of empowerment, agency and freedom (Bord; 2003; Klein, 2002). Another example is provided by privatized universities responding to criticisms they are too white and male. Responses have not included the implementation of positive discrimination policies or hiring more Black professors. Instead, many universities have airbrushed Black student's photos into their prospectuses and other marketing materials, using this newly visible (though note not actual) diversity as a way to further market themselves to future students (L. Wade, 2009).

This co-option extends to body dissatisfaction advocacy. For example, *Southern Comfort's Beach* advert features higher-weight, balding and post-40 years of age actor Mel Shampain walking along a beach in only his speedos (Southern Comfort, 2012). Overlaid on the video is the song *Whatever's Comfortable* including the lyrics "*Aint nobody just like this, I gotta be me, baby hit or miss. Look at you sitting there, all by yourself, listening to everybody say 'everybody be everybody else' can't you see*". Shampain isn't corporately beautiful and isn't made to cover up his "unsightly" body. In fact, walking along the beach he steals a lot of admiring glances from young, corporately beautiful women (women must always conform to corporate beauty standards in Southern Comfort land). In an interview about the advert, Southern Comfort's UK marketing manager Gwen Risdale explained:

"[The] millennials of today are pretty insecure. They're living at home much longer, they're not going to get jobs, so they're really insecure about what's going to happen to them. Then the other side of it is that they constantly live their lives as if they're brands on Facebook and Twitter. This can also

create more insecurity. When you have all these other brands telling them, “you’ve got to be rich”, “you’ve got [to] be smart”, this just creates more angst. Whereas Southern Comfort as a brand, we’ve always been different, we’ve always challenged the norms and through that we came up with the positioning of “Whatever’s Comfortable” (Charles, 2013, p. 8–9).

Southern Comfort are critiquing materialism as being unhelpful particularly for today’s young people who are already economically and socio-politically insecure from unemployment and an over-inflated housing market. This critique is valid. But it is used only as a unique selling point, to position *Southern Comfort* as different from other corporations, to sell the *Southern Comfort* brand; only to gain more profits to add to their multi-billion surplus (Brown-Forman, 2014). It is a criticism that leaves its target (capitalism) unidentified.

Southern Comfort is not the only corporation to capitalize on body confidence. Other corporations have also slapped ‘Be Body Confident’ or variants of this across their products as a way to differentiate themselves from competitors and get free media coverage for a ‘body confidence revolution’. Arguably the most notable co-opter here is *Dove* whose ‘Real Beauty’ Campaign was launched in 2004. According to *Dove* the idea for the campaign came from *Dove* being a brand who is “rooted in listening to women” (*Unilever*, 2014b). The ‘About’ page of the campaign notes that *Dove* surveyed thousands of women across the world and was shocked to realise they had body dissatisfaction. The reason why *Dove* did the survey in the first place instead of listening to any of the feminists, body dissatisfaction researchers or others who had been saying the exact same thing for years beforehand about women’s body dissatisfaction is unclear (Lazarus & Wunderlich, 1979; Orbach, 1978; Wolf, 1991).

Fortunately others have been more revealing about the origins of the campaign. Giulia Carando (2009) who did a PR analysis of the campaign, notes that *Dove*’s sales had plummeted prior to 2004 and that increasingly *Dove*’s rivals such as *Avon* and *Proctor and Gamble* were dominating the beauty cream market. This was the real reason behind the campaign, *Dove* needed a new unique selling point. Martin Staniforth, who sits on *Dove*’s Global Advisory Board (*Unilever*, 2013) reveals more. He writes on his corporation’s (*Laughing Phoenix*), website: “[*Dove*] challenge[d me to] drive aggressive growth [and make *Dove*] an iconic masterbrand with a purpose” (*Laughing Phoenix*, n.d.c). Staniforth was hired by

Dove because his corporation specializes in “*driv[ing] brand growth with cause-related marketing programmes*” (Laughing Phoenix, n.d.a). One way he did this was via the use of his “*Purposeful Pulse*” tool where he guides corporations to “*support a relevant social issue [which] benefits a specific needy group*”. This he tells corporations: “*build[s] customer preference for your brand increasing purchase[s]*” (Laughing Phoenix, n.d.b). The outcomes of his specific work with Dove is, he writes: “*13 million young people have used [Dove] resources, unprecedented publicity, government bodies that are partnering [and a] measureable consumer preference for products [which equals] huge sales*” (Laughing Phoenix, n.d.c).

The campaign was extremely successful for Dove, generating huge profits of 700% or returning \$3 for every \$1 spent in the first 6 months of its launch (Carando, 2009). Beyond the mere hike in profits Dove have made, the Dove brand has also fared well in three ways. First, through unprecedented media coverage, including having Dove videos shown on over 25 major TV channels and in more than 800 articles, and having its campaign videos syndicated on both the Oprah Winfrey and Ellen Degeneres TV shows as well as highly televised panel discussions. Second, through unprecedented interaction of consumers with the Dove brand whether through visits to Dove’s own website or through Twitter users posting a hashtag with Dove’s name in it. People have also been encouraged to sign a pledge of body confidence on Dove’s website, share Dove’s anti-airbrushing videos and more generally engage ‘in the conversation’ as long as the conversation has Dove’s logo on it (Carando, 2009). For example, Carando reports that in 2005 alone 1 million visitors ‘joined the debate’ and visited Dove’s campaign website. The third benefit to Dove is through partnership and recognition by ‘legitimate’ bodies of the Dove brand; including Harvard University (whose Aesthetics research programme is funded by Dove), the University of the West of England’s *Appearance Matters 6* conference (in which Dove was a sponsor), as well as governmental organizations. The campaign has also won multiple awards. Collectively, for many, this has transformed Dove from beauty cream corporation to body dissatisfaction ally and trusted friend.



Image 9: Dove anti-cellulite cream advert

But the question must be asked if *Dove* is really able to promote body confidence whilst also selling firming creams to hide cellulite or skin bleaching creams to whiten dark skin? Similarly, one of *Dove*'s adverts featuring real woman was captioned: “*Let's be honest, size 8 thighs wouldn't have been a challenge to firm*” (see Image 9). Why must thighs need firming in the first place? A further example of *Dove*'s hypocrisy is their ‘pro-age’ creams in which its advert featured older models with the caption “*too old to be in an anti-aging advert? No, because we're pro-age*” (Marketing Heart, 2011). In classic double speak though, on its website, the creams are categorized under an ‘Anti-Aging’ tab and marketed as “*for youthful, healthy skin*” (Unilever, 2014a). Ironically, *Dove* dismissed rival corporations’ body confidence marketing as simply ‘band wagonning’ (M. Hurst, personal communication, 1st July 2014). As the Canadian psychologist and researcher Carla Rice concluded on her former collaboration with the *Dove's Real Beauty* campaign, ultimately *Dove* had a bottom line and it was not combating body dissatisfaction (Rice, 2014)

Others that have ‘bandwagonned’ include fashion magazine, *Pylot*'s, refusal to airbrush (Sitch, 2014) and Thomas Knight’s *Red Hot* campaign which aims to “*change perceptions of red-haired males*” (Knights, n.d., para. 2). It is difficult to see how these corporations are helping people’s body dissatisfaction when *Pylot*

still use models that are unusually thin and always young in their magazine (see Image 10) and when the *Red Hot* campaign says it celebrates red headed men and yet none featured in the campaign are disabled, older than 30 or not mesomorphic. From the outset then corporations' motivation for being body confident is for profit. Not, as Dove would proclaim for a 'real beauty revolution'.

Anti-airbrushing advocacy was also co-opted by a corporation. Most explicitly by Dove who developed an anti-airbrushing application: *Beautify Action*. In the video announcing *Beautify Action*'s creation, the corporation explained it wanted to step up its campaign and reach the people actually airbrushing who were "graphic designers" and "artists" (Ogilve, 2013; YouTube User, 2013). Once downloaded, the application covertly reversed the airbrushing that graphic designers had been working on. Text also appeared on the image that stated: "*Don't manipulate our perceptions of real beauty*" along with, of course, the Dove logo. One problem in Dove's plan was that the application was not actually used by airbrushers as evidenced by it being downloaded only 4 times (Souppouris, 2013). More critically though and as Dove well know, the graphic designers and artists are not the ones in control of the image, it's the corporations, like Dove, that commission the images. If those particular graphic designers who found *Beautify Action* did decide to never airbrush an image again they would likely be out of a job and some other graphic designer would do it instead. From its inception *Beautify Action* was never going to reduce the prevalence of airbrushing as it ignored the cause of airbrushing: corporations like Dove. Nonetheless, Dove's video announcing the creation of *Beautify Action* garnered Dove extensive media coverage (and also likely increased their sales). For example, the YouTube video received over 4,000 views (Ogilve, 2013). Other co-options include the advert by

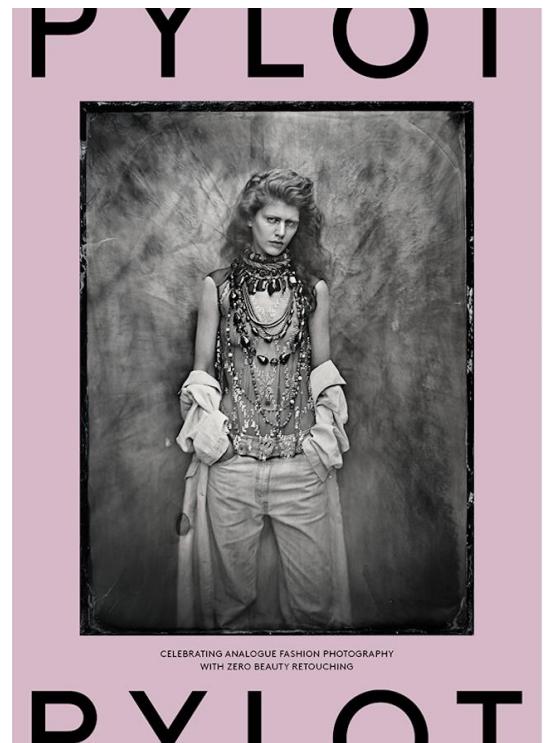


Image 10: Pylot magazine

BMI The Harbour Hospital that caption their cosmetic surgery advert with “*more than skin deep: cosmetic surgery can positively enhance your inner confidence*” (BMI Healthcare, 2014).

The problems with co-option

One of the problems with co-option is that the language created originally to identify injustices loses its meaning when corporations use it to sell their own products. Feminist language has long been co-opted by capitalism so that terms like empowerment, choice, and agency are used to sell cosmetic surgery, to promote the corporate appearance ideal or a bra brand (Bordo, 2003; Gill, 2008). Similarly, body confidence no longer means being comfortable with your appearance regardless of what it looks like but has come to mean being comfortable *if* you buy this product or *if* you look like this model who is slightly less corporately beautiful than most models. Always be comfortable *if*, never be comfortable *regardless*.

If there are any positive changes by the co-option of body confidence by corporations they are primarily representational changes. So, instead of a corporately beautiful model selling *Southern Comfort* it is Mel Shampain. Instead of corporately beautiful women and men in the pages of *Pilot* magazine or on Dove’s billboard adverts or on Thomas Knights’ modelling campaign it is corporately beautiful men and women removed by one degree (i.e., by having red hair, or by not being slim or by not being airbrushed).

However, body dissatisfaction can not only be solved by representational changes alone. Specifically, Klein (2002) discusses how campaigns to change representation are ultimately flawed as they fail to critique economic structures that underpin injustices. Representational changes assume those doing the representing are not part of the problem; the problem that is itself when profits are prioritized over wellbeing, sociocultural life, over body dissatisfaction. This shall be further discussed in Chapter 10.

Resistance is overpowered

People individually might resist commodification of their bodies, but this resistance is a struggle and often ineffective. For example, people might attempt to switch off

from corporate media but this is, like all choices, constrained. People can mute the adverts that interrupt their television but they cannot mute the product placement featured within their favourite television show. People can protest at the *News of the World's* phone hacking practices so that it closes down. But the same proprietor, Rupert Murdoch will only resurrect a new weekly tabloid under a different name to comparable readership (i.e., *Sun on Sunday*). People can stave off consuming any mass media at all but they cannot escape captive media or advertising on billboards or cultural events (e.g. McDonald's sponsorship of the Olympics; Olympic.org, 2014). Even if a person were able to live apart from currency, consumerism and capitalism itself, as some have (e.g., Boyle, 2009), they may still have family members etc. who are affected by the corporate appearance ideal and who displace this influence onto them. Even if a person removes themselves from other people entirely, they are unlikely to escape their own young socialization or exposure to corporate appearance ideals in their childhood. The system marches on.

More generally, the domination of capitalism not only on the media but in everyday life is inescapable. This colonization is quite deliberate. For example, defending *Dove* against criticisms of hypocrisy for being part of the same corporation that makes *Fair and Lovely* skin bleaching cream and *Slimfast*, Will Burns wrote in Forbes: “*No one thinks of Dove as a Unilever brand, for starters (nor should Dove, by the way)*” (Burns, 2013, para. 12). People do not think of *Unilever* as one brand precisely because *Unilever* doesn’t want people to think it is one brand. The corporation wants people to think that buying *Dove* moisturising cream as opposed to *Lynx* deodorant is merely a consumer choice, not the monopolization of *Unilever* of the beauty industry. But ultimately *Unilever* is one corporation with money all going to a few pairs of hands.

Knowledge about the corporate appearance ideal does not equal resistance. For example, body dissatisfaction interventions that take place in schools and beyond, now frequently call attention to airbrushing as a way to demonstrate how corporate appearance ideals are falsely constructed. How even models, they point out, who are much more likely to conform to corporate appearance ideals than the average person, still require their thighs slimming, their abs defining, jaws sculpting or otherwise (Becker & Stice, 2011). *How unrealistic is*

that? Those bodies aren't real. You're real! Now that you know, now you can resist.

Literacy, unfortunately, does not entail immunity. Research has studied the effectiveness, for instance, of airbrushing labels on adverts (Selimbegović & Chatard, 2015; Tiggemann et al., 2014). The results are decidedly underwhelming. It appears disclaiming that an image is airbrushed does not reduce body dissatisfaction but can, for some, increase it (Selimbegović & Chatard, 2015). Why so? Bordo (1999, p. 138) writes that when it comes to mass media "*it is the image and not the moral*" that has the real effect on consumers. Advertisers know this. Hence why alcohol corporations embrace the 'drink responsibly' disclaimers they're made to use at the end of their 30 second TV advert. They know that the message of hedonism, fun, of 'having sex with corporately beautiful women if you buy this alcohol' stays with the consumer. 'Drink in moderation' does not. In relation to the corporate appearance ideal, the fantasy implied alongside it, whether airbrushed or not, remains. This is the intoxicating fantasy that anyone can be corporately beautiful and this readily brings health, wealth, success etc.; it is much more enticing than a label six times smaller informing consumers this fantasy is all constructed and to 'beware'. Airbrushing is perceived as banal; a mundanity so frequent that mentioning its existence is tired (Bordo, 2003). It is easy to assume if a problem is well known enough about then someone somewhere must be doing something to solve it. But ultimately criticisms of airbrushing are meaningless if they cannot be heard against the corporate appearance ideals.

Body confident activists and fat positive role models celebrate their appearance and often have social media profiles to spread their body acceptance messages. However, they also receive sustained abuse from internet trolls, particularly when they are women (Cateyes, 2014; Findlay, 2014). Likewise, people with visible differences or appearance that deviates from the corporate appearance ideals in other ways, regardless of their own acceptance of their appearances, face stigma and discrimination day to day (Puhl & Heuer, 2009; Rumsey & Harcourt, 2012). These people are against all odds, loving their bodies in a world that hates them. It's impressive. But it is also the exception and shouldn't be seen as disproving the

rule. As Bordo (2003, p. 263) laments: “*this is a battleground, [not] a postmodern playing field*” and when it comes to body dissatisfaction, it is one that is being lost.

BODY DISSATISFACTION RESEARCH PROPS UP CAPITALISM

Attention has also been paid to the ways in which institutions including academia prop up capitalism and serve to depoliticise those who are disadvantaged by it. For example, Ayers (2005) has analysed how US community college prospectuses endorse neoliberal ideology by depicting potential students as consumers of education and corporations and industry leaders as the best provider of education. This follows a wider commodification of education where learning is increasingly ranked on graduate employability and earnings, students are treated as consumers and faculty are service providers. All to the detriment of free, inclusive and progressive learning (Olssen & Peters, 2005; Shumar, 2013). Indeed what this research has revealed is not some problem unique to education prospectuses but rather the growing institutionalization of neoliberalism on even those traditionally outside of dominant market forces (i.e., higher education).

This applies to psychology as much as any other discipline. For example, Marecek and Gavey (2013) have explored the commodification of the Diagnostic Statistics Manual V (DSM-V; which clinicians diagnose mental health problems) by the pharmaceutical industry. Specifically they criticise the latest DSM V for further medicalizing behaviour that has little evidence of being a clinical disorder but does happen to coincide with a new pharmacological treatment designed by a Big Pharma. Despite how widespread criticisms were, including from many psychiatry sections such as the BPS’ as well as from the DSM early editors, little has been done. The manual still exists and psychiatrists are still implementing it.

A further example of psychology’s complicity with capitalism is provided by Cosgrove and Wheeler (2013). The authors note that between 58% and 69% of APA taskforce or panel members have financial ties to pharmaceutical industries. They note how members with the most financial ties are also those who are also most likely to advocate for forms of pharmacological treatment and that the ways in which these ties may bias APA members cannot always be identified and may be subtle in their nature. Furthermore, they caution that the current APA resolution

to these conflicts of interest, making them transparent, is inadequate as it neither reveals the extent or nature of the financial tie.

This collusion with corporations also occurs by body dissatisfaction researchers. For example, the *International Conference of Eating Disorders* (ICED) is often sponsored by various private eating disorder clinics who give out free pens, sweets and key rings to conference researchers. This collusion is not limited to logo-bearing freebies. In 2014, the *ICED* committee required all researchers to declare any financial conflicts of interests prior to presenting at the conference. One researcher announced before his presentation that he was a consultant with various pharmaceutical corporations but he would not say which as "*none of them were relevant*". But as Cosgrove and Wheeler (2013) have found, simply making financial conflicts of interest transparent does not regulate them. Indeed, the researchers show how the *APA*'s recent regulation that all its members must specify their conflicts of interests did not decrease them but in fact increased them in 2013. Conflicts of interest, they note, can lead to explicit or implicit biases between researcher and corporation and transparency does not change this. Indeed it is not clear whether ICED or anyone even checked that researcher's declarations were accurate let alone conflicting.

Another method in which the body dissatisfaction field collude with corporations was pioneered by Edward Bernays (Curtis, 2002). He employed psychologists to issue reports to say that his client's products were good for people (though he marketed them as independent studies; Curtis, 2002). This practice is alive and well today. At least eight studies 'exploring' the body dissatisfaction of balding men have been funded by pharmaceutical hair loss corporations (Jankowski, 2014a). Although the studies on hair loss funded by *Merck* did not explicitly recommend their pharmaceuticals, each study did invariably conclude that hair loss severely impacted body dissatisfaction and that a solution was needed. As *Merck* also fund the hair loss support websites that give out advice, the solution promoted is not therapeutic, societal change or anti-medicalization of what is a benign aspect of the body, but the purchase of *Merck*'s pharmaceutical products (Jankowski, 2014a). In contrast, research that was free from this funding, by Kranz (2011) found that men who had hair loss and accepted it fared better than those who tried to disguise it. The author concluded then:

“Responsible practitioners and dermatologists might be correct when hesitating to medically or even surgically treat balding in young men” (pg. 347). This is not a finding or recommendation the studies funded by Merck could make. Indeed, at least one of these study funded by Merck was not published as it had results they did not agree with (Jankowski, 2014a). Admittedly, researchers are hard pushed to fund studies and finding funding from external sources is a common practice as discussed by Cosgrove and Wheeler (2013). Nonetheless, this context should not mean this practice is not critically appraised, particularly for the biases it can create.

Body dissatisfaction researcher’s defence of capitalism is extant. For instance, Nancy Etcoff, former Dove collaborator who launched the original survey on which Dove’s *Real Beauty* campaign was founded, is author of *Survival of the Prettiest: The Science of Beauty* (Etcoff, 2002). According to the blurb on the back, the book: “demonstrates how beauty is not a cultural construct that exists to tyrannize women [and] line the pockets of fashion designers, but a universal fascination with the human form which developed along Darwinian lines since the dawn of man” (Etcoff, 2002). Her anti-critical stance of the beauty industry (i.e., ‘not lining pockets’) made her the perfect Dove collaborator.

The consequences of body dissatisfaction researchers’ collusion might be subtle perhaps in researchers being less critical of a specific corporation because of implicit biases they have accrued through working closely with them or more explicit defences of capitalism. More specifically, body dissatisfaction researchers have failed to call out or identify corporations as causing body dissatisfaction problems and instead situated body dissatisfaction problems as problems caused by individual people; as ties in with a wider neoliberal consensus that also facilitates capitalism.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has argued that capitalism causes body dissatisfaction, though it is rarely identified as such. Body dissatisfaction, and more recently body confidence, have been commodified, exported and imported by corporations for profits. A perniciousness surrounds this relationship because capitalism is adept at subsuming resistances and in particular researchers’ attempts to promote body

confidence. Furthermore body dissatisfaction researchers typically, unwittingly, not only fail to scrutinize capitalism but also disavow any identification of capitalism as the cause by situating body dissatisfaction problems individualistically.

Marecek and Gavey (2013) argue that any form of suffering (e.g., body dissatisfaction) is always linked to the broader culture where privilege is dished out on intersecting lines of injustice. Body dissatisfaction needs to be connected in a wider system of injustices that include racism, sexism etc. They are all interlinked. In Chapter 10 I shall discuss why researcher's failure to scrutinize capitalism has led to a failure to take an intersectional approach to body dissatisfaction and how body dissatisfaction and other injustices can be tackled using *The Status Model of Justice* by Fraser (1995).

CHAPTER 10: SUMMATIVE DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

As discussed in Chapter 9, there has been a neglect of analysing capitalism (and more generally culture) in body dissatisfaction research. To understand this neglect, the origins of body dissatisfaction research are traced. These origins reveal that the overarching goal of body dissatisfaction research is to undo one form of injustice, namely body dissatisfaction. It is argued that body dissatisfaction must return to this goal. The next section reveals how body dissatisfaction intersects with other forms of injustices that it cannot be separated from. Finally, Fraser's (1995) Status Model of Justice is applied to body dissatisfaction research as a guide to undoing these injustices. Specifically, Fraser's model highlights that injustices will not be undone if we advocate for representational changes alone, we must also advocate against maldistribution (as exemplified by sweatshops).

The goal of body dissatisfaction advocacy is justice

As described in Chapter 1, body dissatisfaction refers to an individual's shame, disgust, dislike or negative appraisal of their own appearance. Body dissatisfaction advocacy then, in the form of research and activism, has as its goal the undoing of body dissatisfaction or appearance-based injustice. The origin of body dissatisfaction advocacy arose from research into the stigma and discrimination associated with having a visible difference (e.g., burns, cleft lips, facial scarring etc.) in society (Rumsey & Harcourt, 2005, 2012). This important work documented the prevalence and impact of this injustice and advocated for its undoing. It also led to the realization that even people whose appearance did not deviate from the 'norm' (i.e., did not have visible differences) faced related stigma and sometimes discrimination, and that this injustice impacted upon their wellbeing. Subsequently a field of body dissatisfaction was borne in which researchers documented the prevalence, impact and variety of appearance-based injustice on people and advocated for its undoing.

As mentioned, this approach is driven by justice values. For example body dissatisfaction have been variously described as "*an injustice*" (Rhode, 2009, p.

1033) as “*suffering*” (Grammas & Schwartz, 2009, p. 31; Pruzinsky, 2004, p. 71) and “*distress*” (Avalos, Tylka, & Wood-Barcalow, 2005, p. 286). Appearance pressures specific to body fat (i.e., weightism) have been described as “*appearance stereotyping and discrimination*” (Lavin & Cash, 2001, p. 51) a “*form of prejudice*” (Maine, 2013, p. 25) and “*as a social justice issue*” (Steiner-Adair et al., 2002, p. 403). Researchers have also made parallels to other forms of injustice. For example Macgregor (1979; as cited in Rumsey & Harcourt, 2004, p. 83) argues that “*a visible difference comprises a ‘social disability’*” and Margaret Maine argues weightism is “*potentially more powerful and pervasive than racism, sexism or ageism*” (Maine, 2013, p. 26). Body dissatisfaction is identified as an injustice then by being a highly prevalent form of suffering that results for many in unequal treatment, and in which action is desperately needed to resolve.

This goal of justice is shared by other fields too. As Michael Murray and Blake Poland (2006, p. 383) demonstrate by describing critical health psychologists:

“*As agents of change [we must] define [our]selves not as scientist-practitioners but rather as scholar-activists. We challenge injustice in its many forms and we participate in movements for social justice. It is through this broader work that we can expose the impact of social inequities on health and can contribute to the building of a healthier society*”.

Beyond critical health psychology, other academics reject traditional academia and psychology, believing it to shore up the status quo, to legitimize injustices, pathologise rational discontent with a toxic society and create docile workers and bodies (Bordo, 2003; B. Cohen, 2013; Gill, 2007a; M. Murray & Poland, 2006). They commit to fight against forces that mask these injustices (e.g., neoliberalism), to highlight their existences, and to move outside of the ivory tower of academia and create real and meaningful change in communities. This work is increasingly intersectional acknowledging injustices such as sexism and racism intersect and cannot be fought against separately (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991).

The media content analyses in Study 3 and 4 (Chapters 6 -8) of media was limited by focusing on appearance potency. Beyond the physical characteristic of the images, the symbolism and messages are important too (Bordo, 2003). This media was not just appearance potent; it contributes to injustices in other way. It was clear when coding the images that they were more than appearance potent,

racialized messages for instance abounded. For example, although the ideal's whiteness was acknowledged the racist stereotypes surrounding it were not. For example, the association of Black women with wild animals in advertising or Black gay men as only ever having large penises and always being a top (the penetrative role in anal sex) went ignored (Brennan et al., 2013; hooks, 1992). The ideal was also able bodied (as in most mass media, disabled people were rarely and poorly represented; Garland-Thomson, 2005; M. Oliver, 1990). However this too went unacknowledged. If unacknowledged then it is harder to challenge. To focus only on the physical characteristics and objectification of the images was the way media contributed to injustices in many other ways.

One of the limitations of the intervention, *Body Project M*, was its unremitting focus on body dissatisfaction (Chapters 3 and 4). Specifically, participants in the group suffered in ways beyond this and wanted to use the intervention to discuss these problems. They wanted to discuss issues other than their appearance including their conflict with friends and family members, degree worries etc. Participants felt pressures other than appearances including those surrounding hegemonic masculinity. For example, *Kevin* writes: "*I was put under an immense amount of pressure to get my provisional, to start driving [because] like [otherwise you're] seen as less of a man*". As *Tom* further clarified: *There's always...society pressures on men...to be like you know...strong*".

Participants were discouraged from doing this by myself because of the study's specific remit. For example, *Tim* explains: "*Erm my favourite one was treat yourself. I feel like if I'm ever a bit er down in the dumps not necessarily about [my appearance] but I guess it could apply to this if you just treat yourself to a night out or a nice, something that you like*". Other participants criticized the letter task by only focusing on body dissatisfaction: "*I just felt weird and almost awkward like because it was supposed to be tailored towards this [topic]. Not just the general 'hey stop being such a twat' so I don't know it was odd. I don't know how else to say it*" (*Ted*). Similarly *Joe* said: "*I kind of felt like if I was writing to my younger self about something [irrelevant]. I'd talk about other stuff. I probably wouldn't talk about body dissatisfaction or anything*". But how do participants benefit from the intervention if they can discuss only those issues that fit with the researcher's specific remit? What if they have other issues more concerning to them? Should

they really be ignored? This is a particularly important point given that we live in what Gill, Henwood and McLean (2005) call an increasingly somatic society, where subjectivity is intimately tied to the body. Where an individual uses their body dissatisfaction as a way to express other problems.

To focus on body dissatisfaction to the detriment of other wellbeing related issues that the participant may have can be unethical (Campbell & Murray, 2004). Such a situation may arise as researchers have vested agendas in producing studies that highlight the relevance, utility and validity of their area. As researchers have noted it is unfair to focus on healthy eating or smoking cessation when people face more pressing issues such as high rates of knife crime (Campbell & Murray, 2004). This further emphasizes the need to have a safe space in which men can talk about body dissatisfaction in addition to other concerns.

These limitations of these studies highlight the limitations of body dissatisfaction advocacy more generally. The aims of both of these studies was justice, but its limited focus on the corporate appearance ideal meant that for many men, be they disabled, racialized and/or concerned with other issues, were not helped. It is important to recognize the corporate appearance ideal's intersections with other forms of injustice. Especially as they themselves intersect (Crenshaw, 1989; 1991). In this next section I shall outline these.

THE NON INTERSECTIONALITY OF BODY DISSATISFACTION

In this section I demonstrate how body dissatisfaction research's tendency to situate body dissatisfaction at the individual level and the niche status of the field has led to an analysis of body dissatisfaction that is non-intersectional. Instead, I argue that the corporate appearance ideals intersects with various other forms of injustices so that the consequences of both forms of injustice are additive, compounded and cannot be separated. Specifically, I discuss how racism, sexism, weight stigma, homophobia, ableism as well as other injustices intersect with corporate appearance ideals. In each discussion I critically reflect on responses to date that researchers have made to these intersections. I finish with a discussion of how these intersections themselves intersect, how the majority of researchers in body dissatisfaction have formed essentialist ideas about these identities and how a critical psychological perspective of body dissatisfaction is needed.

Intersectionality has come to be understood as a critical tenant for anyone wanting to reduce injustice (Crenshaw, 1989). It is becoming less and less accepted that to make the world a fairer place one can focus on any injustice in its singularity (e.g., sexism, ableism, racism). Instead, intersectionality posits that these injustices are enmeshed and cannot be removed alone (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). The intersectional approach used in this thesis is Marxist, one that recognizes injustices based on identities (such as race, sexuality etc.) occur in parallel and intertwined with economic injustices (Fraser, 1995; Parker & Spears, 1996; further discussed in latter half of this chapter).

Crenshaw (1991) discusses the non-intersectionality of the civil rights and second wave feminist movements as both narratives were voiced by those whose intersecting identities were considered default or normative (i.e., Black men and white women, respectively). This is wryly captured in Gloria Hull's, Patricia Scott's and Barbara Smith's seminal book titled: *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But some of us are brave* (1993). Arguably, the narratives of body dissatisfaction researchers and body positive activists have also been largely characterized by the white, Westernized, middle classed, straight and abled bodied. By those who do not face injustices pivoted upon their identities (i.e., I am male and do not face sexism). This partially explains the neglect of intersectional thinking in the field. I shall now discuss how racism, sexism, weight stigma and other forms of injustice intersect with the corporate appearance ideals.

Racism

“Who taught you to hate the color of your skin? Who taught you to hate the texture of your hair? Who taught you to hate the shape of your nose and the shape of your lips? Who taught you to hate yourself from the top of your head to the soles of your feet?” (Malcolm X, 1962).

Corporate appearance ideals intersect with racism through a number of ways. First through the dominance of white, Western models used to embody the corporately produced appearance ideal (Fouts & Burggraf, 2000; Fouts & Vaughan, 2002; Jankowski, Fawkner, et al., 2014). For example, of the 27 US situation comedies coded, Fouts and Vaughan (2002) found that 97% of the central male characters were white, compared to just 3% who were Black. When the corporate appearance ideal is embodied through a model of colour, their features will

often be Westernized. For example, sociologist Lisa Wade discusses the tendency for African female models in advertising to have thin noses and lips (Bordo, 2003; L. Wade, 2014). Another example is the continued devaluation of Afro-textured hair by associating it with unemployment or being “*uncivilized*” in contrast to chemically straightened hair for Black women or short, cropped hair for Black men (see Image 1; Afro-Europe, 2013; Nudd, 2011). For example, Image 11 is a recent Nivea Men’s skincare advert which depicts a Black man with short hair “*re-civiliz[ing]*” himself by preparing to throw away his old head which includes an afro. The text of the advert also says “*look like you give a damn*”.



Image 11: Nivea advert stereotyping Black afro hair as uncivilized

Second, the corporate appearance ideal will be airbrushed to have more Westernized features such as lighter skin. Beyonce, Gabrile Sibide, Kelly Rowland, Halle Berry and Frieda Pinto have all had their skin visibly lightened using airbrushing (see Image 12; Greenspan, 2010). *Time* magazines revealed just what this practice really meant, beyond any shadow of a doubt, when they darkened the skin of OJ Simpson who was on trial at the time for the murder of his wife, Nicole Brown, and her friend Ron Goldman. *Time* were reflecting a widespread fear that OJ Simpson would be found not guilty at his trial despite being guilty (a fear that was later proved correct). So instead *Time* pronounced him guilty by reifying the racist trope of light equals innocence and dark equals guilt.



Image 12: Beyoncé in L'Oréal advert
airbrushed

Digital skin lightening has variously been defended as an unintended by-product of set lighting, or the camera's contrasts and colour ratios (LaPointe, 2014). Perhaps the photographers, editors and others involved in the images do not intentionally set out to lighten Beyoncé's skin. Regardless of intentions though, their actions result in this. Furthermore, consumers are unlikely to notice that Beyoncé's skin is lighter than it would be in real life nor are they able to distinguish between lightening through deliberate airbrushing or as an unintended consequence of the photo shoot set's lighting. It is the effect then rather than the process here that is important; lighter skin is better. *Vogue* proudly proclaims on their website that they "define the culture of fashion" (*Vogue*, 2014, para. 2). Like it or not, *Vogue* and many others also set the skin tone lightening trend and have a duty to stop furthering racist ideals. If not *Vogue* then who?

Finally, when the corporate appearance ideal is embodied by people of colour, who do not have Westernized features, they are fetishized (Bordo, 2003; hooks, 1992). As Kilbourne highlights in her *Killing Us Softly* series, people of colour are often depicted in advertising as exotic, as animals and as hypersexual (Kilbourne, 2010). For example, in 2008 US *Vogue* announced that their April cover would feature a Black man on it for the first time in their 122 year history Image 13. The cover featured basketball player Lebron James along with the white model Gisele Bundchen (Eboda, 2008). But the front cover did not turn out to be the progressive move *Vogue* claimed, as bloggers were quick to point out. In the photo James' jaw is hanging open, he is positioned in an aggressive stance whilst the white Bundchen is dressed in silk, is precariously balanced on one foot and is smiling. In effect then the stereotype of the Black male savage and civilized white woman is fully resurrected by *Vogue*. Furthermore, the cover's resemblance to King Kong did not go unnoticed particularly as James is also known to fans as King James; thus the racist trope that Black men are apes was also resurrected (Eboda, 2008).



Image 13: *Vogue* cover featuring basketball player LeBron James (Right) contrasted with film poster for King Kong.

This Westernization of the corporate appearance ideal has significant consequences. The promotion of skin bleaching creams (e.g., *Fair and Lovely*) sold by *Unilever* and Westernizing cosmetic surgery through the corporate appearance ideal are perhaps the most pernicious. For example, in May 2013 *Buzzfeed* writer Chris Stokel-Walker interviewed 24 year old Chinese-British teacher Leo Jiang. In the article Jiang explains why he spent \$16,000 on cosmetic surgeries including eyelid augmentation and nose and jaw reshaping: “*I just want[ed] to have my moment in the sun. What comes after [the surgery] is to] live a good life. I view it as a facilitator. It makes me happy. It makes me confident*” (Stokel-Walker, 2013, p. 18). Jiang further added “*cosmetic surgery is a way to gain equality*” (Stokel-Walker, 2013, para. 8).

Some have questioned whether this form of cosmetic surgery and skin bleaching are indeed really westernizing; that critiques are misdirected colonial discomfort with practices that do not fit under racist internalizations but are performed for many different reasons (Heyes, 2009). I would counter this critique by distinguishing between the promotion of these practices and the uptake of them. It is

important to highlight the former as this makes the corporate appearance ideal culpable for these practices rather than the latter, as following typical body dissatisfaction research, this would situate the responsibility of these practices on the individual. Asking an individual why they undergo these practices should be carefully done, if at all, given that critique is often not on the context in which these individual people felt they had to undergo cosmetic surgery (i.e., through the promotion of corporate appearance ideals) but rather on their own culpability in erasing their familial and cultural heritage. This is demonstrated by the most liked comment to the Jiang interview above which said:

“The author of this article ridicule[s] racial pathologies among people of color - pathologies which white people helped to create, or at least benefits from...If [the author] really cared about Asian self-esteem, [he’d] worry more about what Western culture is doing to help or hurt Asians, instead of just blaming the victim”.

I would argue that then that the promotion (i.e., the advertising and marketing) of these practices capitalizes on white corporate appearance ideals. For example, Elizabeth Arden's skin bleaching cream is widely sold in India to women of colour. Yet the face of their campaign is white, Western actress Catherine Zeta Jones who has Caucasian skin (Bracchi, 2007; see Image 14).. Another example is provided by the multinational corporation, Unilever which markets their skin

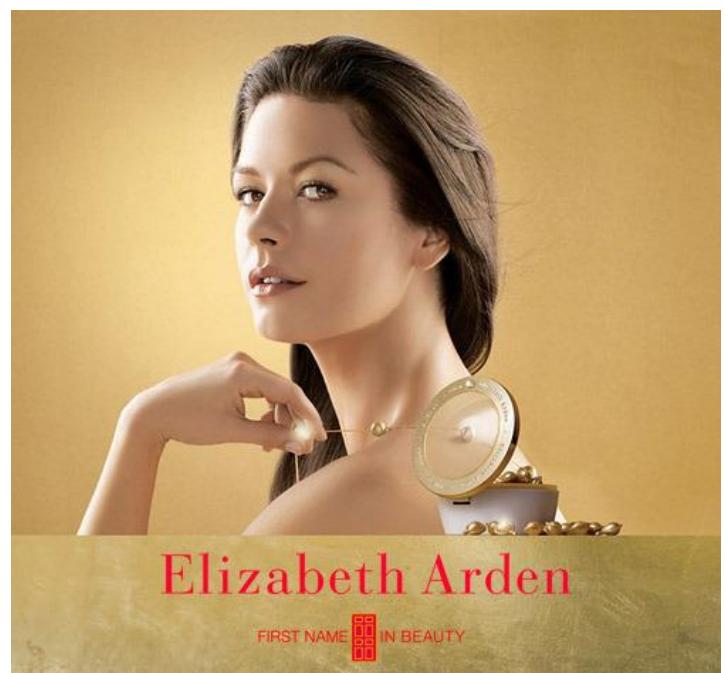


Image 14: Elizabeth Arden's Visible Whitening Pure Intensive Capsules advert

bleaching cream, *Fair and Lovely*, in India (Bracchi, 2007). The advert for this cream depicts an unhappy Indian woman with dark skin being handed a tube of *Fair and Lovely* by her sister. In a flash of light she is suddenly transformed as happy and glamorous in her dream job with, of course, light skin (Bracchi, 2007). Such an advert is typical of the unabashed promotion of these products which very explicitly associates dark with bad and light with pure.

I would also note that any reason given for undertaking these practices should be understood in a context in which identification of such reasons is extremely difficult. Specifically, neoliberalism means the promotion of the corporate appearance ideal is hidden from identification. What person would explain that they would undergo skin bleaching or cosmetic surgery because they have internalized racist standards? How would that level of consciousness benefit their everyday life? Surely it is much easier to ascribe these actions to personal choice and agency than recognizing that the ethnicity to which you belong is widely devalued. This relates to the extent to which people recognize corporate motives in general. More broadly, who can ever unequivocally identify what their motivation for surgery or any other appearance related choice is? It's a moot question that most people, including body dissatisfaction researchers, have difficulty answering (Bordo, 2003).

In *Unbearable Weight* Bordo (2003) wrote that when she lost weight, although she was pleased in some ways, she was also disappointed as knew she was no longer a role model for her students who did not conform to the slim aspect of the corporate appearance ideal. Likewise, one of the outcomes of getting westernizing cosmetic surgery or bleaching skin is that there is less ethnic diversity. The corporately-produced appearance ideal gets another embodiment. Though white people, like most people, depart from the corporately produced appearance ideal in many ways, the corporately produced appearance ideal is racist because people of colour are one step further away from it. White people¹²

¹² With the exception of the beginning of sentences, "white" is not capitalized throughout this thesis in order to mark the supremacy of white people in relation to people of colour. Black in contrast is capitalized as it is a political term akin to racialized that references those affected by racism. Furthermore this is hoped to underscore that the value of talking about ethnicity is only ever in order to challenge racism or the dominance of white. See also DiversityInc (2009).

will not have to have their skin bleached (literally or digitally) or have to undergo Westernizing cosmetic surgery, unlike people of colour to attain it.

The consequence of a Westernized corporate appearance ideal plays out in everyday life through racism, ethnocentrism, colonialism and xenophobia. Obvious examples include nightclub door policies that allow entry only to white or light skinned patrons (Hipp & Kistner, 2013; Sharp, 2010) or employment and school regulations that ban Afro-style hair (Feagin, 1992). These instances of racialized appearance-based discrimination cannot be separated from other forms of racism such as those that produce the economic, political, health and employment inequalities that exists between people of colour and whites (Brief, Dietz, Cohen, Pugh, & Vaslow, 2000; Brondolo, Gallo, & Myers, 2009; Uzogara, Lee, Abdou, & Jackson, 2014). Like many forms of discrimination, racism is often enacted on the basis of a person's read appearance (i.e., ethnicity).

This racialization of the corporate appearance ideal is not new. It has sprung from a long history of using appearance to mark out those that were deemed by society as racially desirable. For example, Gilman (2000) discusses the hooked-nosed and large feature anti-Semitic depictions of Jews in contrast to the tall, lean and blonde German Aryans by the Nazis. Furthermore the corporate appearance ideals are not the only representation that privilege white people, since the general representation in mass media of people of colour is still largely negative (hooks, 1992; Partnership, 2011).

Despite this long and ongoing history, the intersection of racism and the corporate appearance ideals has rarely been acknowledged. Instead of assessing how racism influences body dissatisfaction, researchers have attempted to assess how race affects body dissatisfaction (Gluck & Geliebter, 2002; Powell & Kahn, 1995). For example, Powell and Kahn (1995) found that Black university women reported a smaller discrepancy between their ideal body size and their actual, compared to their white counterparts. The authors theorized that Black women in the US were “*able to ignore the predominantly white media message that extreme thinness is essential for a happy successful life*” (p. 192) and that “*Black culture appears to ‘protect’ Black women from eating disorders*” (Powell & Kahn, 1995, p. 194). Perhaps but this fails to acknowledge the reason why these messages are “white” i.e., because Black people are excluded from positive representations in

US media. Or in other words, media messages are not directed at Black women to be thin, because media messages are not directed to them, full stop. Furthermore, despite assessing identification and exposure to Black and white culture, the authors only reported the Black participant's answers on this. They found that Black participants identified strongly with Black culture and not at all with white culture. Again, uncritically the authors failed to consider why it might be that Black participants strongly identify with Black culture and not with a systematically racist white culture.

The reader of the paper is left with the impression that Black people are better off than white women for their body dissatisfaction and eating concerns. Indeed, Gluck and Geliebter (2002) in another study fully eschewed differences that Black people and white people experience instead arguing it was the group's different BMI levels that resulted in body dissatisfaction differences. Once again the argument is made that Black people are better off when it comes to body dissatisfaction. Racist clichés about Black people's idealization of women with larger bums or 'bootys' has created a double perniciousness where those people of colour who do bear the consequences of the corporate appearance ideal promotion do not gain the support or recognition they need (Bordo, 2003). The acknowledgment of ethnicity as a factor in body dissatisfaction has largely been to discuss Black people's ability to resist the corporately produced appearance ideal which in light of researcher's as well as support organization's long neglect of participants of colour could also seem highly convenient: '*People of colour have not been included in this study because body dissatisfaction is not an issue for them*'.

Sexism

Corporate appearance ideal interlink with sexism in at least three ways. The first and most prominent way in which the two are interlinked is that the corporate appearance ideal is more heavily promoted for women than it is for men. Evidence shows that the corporate appearance ideal for women is more frequently featured in the



Image 15: Collage of popular US TV couples showing men's greater freedom from the corporate appearance ideal.
Credit: www.jezebel.com.

media than for men (Buote et al., 2011; Jankowski, Fawkner, et al., 2014). For example, bloggers have noted a pattern in the discrepancy between popular US sitcom characters (see Image 15). Specifically, this is the pattern where the actor playing the husband is often fat, balding and old. In other words, he does not embody the corporate appearance ideal in direct contrast to his on-screen wife (pianoshootist, 2014).

Evidence shows this heterogeneity directly relates to women's greater body dissatisfaction in relation to men's (Buote et al., 2011; Diedrichs et al., 2011). Furthermore, beyond the corporate appearance ideal, men are not socialized from birth into believing their appearance is their most important attribute (Banet-Weiser, 1999; Peirce, 1990) and unlike women's bodies, men's bodies are not scrutinized to the same degree for any deviation away from the corporate appearance ideal (Bordo, 2003; Gill & Elias, 2014). Currently, at least, it's not the gap between men's thighs or the wrinkles on men's knees that are scrutinized in the media. The beauty cream, cosmetic surgery, fashion and other corporately-producing appearance ideal disseminating industries still largely target women in relation to men (Bordo, 2003; Davis, 2002). The promotion of the corporate appearance ideal then is heavily gendered.

Gill and Elias (2014) provide a second example of the double standard in the promotion of the corporate appearance ideal for men and women. The authors refer to the Love Your Body (LYB) discourses which are the product of the recent co-option of body dissatisfaction advocacy by corporations such as *Dove*, *Weightwatchers* and *Southern Comfort* (discussed in Chapter 9). Gill and Elias (2014) note these discourses (e.g., “*Awaken Your Incredible*”) pressure women to ‘get over’ their body dissatisfaction without any appraisal or advocacy against the pressure from corporate appearance ideals. Furthermore, these discourses work on the assumption that women’s ultimate value is in their appearance (and that women just did not realize how attractive they are) and that men’s validation of this appearance is all that is needed. Body dissatisfaction researchers also adopt these discourses. For example, (Pope Jr. et al., 2000, p. 240) wrote in *The Adonis Complex*: we “*hope to help men achieve the freedom and relief that has been attained by many women with eating disorders and body dissatisfaction problems*”.

The third link between sexism and the corporate appearance ideal is through sexual harassment. It has been well documented that sexual harassment is still endemic globally today, with most of the victims being women and the perpetrators men (The White House Council on Women and Girls, 2014). For example, a recent report issued found that 1 in 5 US women had been sexually assaulted and that schools and colleges were particular ‘hotbeds’ of sexual harassment (The White House Council on Women and Girls, 2014). This includes the recent development in schools of ‘Slap Ass Fridays’ which was described by one girl as happening: “*every single Friday of every single week of every single month throughout the whole entire year*” (Murphy, 2014, para. 13). Sexual harassment not only merits researcher’s attention and action in of itself but also because of its relevance to body dissatisfaction. Many survivors of sexual harassment explicitly report feeling body shame, disembodiment, disordered eating and other body dissatisfaction problems after the ordeal (Drage, 2014; Kearney-Cooke & Ackard, 2000; Larkin & Rice, 2005; Levine & Smolak, 2006).

Responses to sexual harassment are poor. The White House report, for instance, describes responses to sexual harassment as “*inadequate*” because of low prosecution rates and police biases that favour the perpetrator (The White House Council on Women and Girls, 2014, p. 1). Body dissatisfaction researchers

respond no differently, it seems. Despite the evidence of the high rates of sexual harassment from boys reported by girls when body dissatisfaction researchers go into schools, many either do not report sexual harassment or euphemistically describe it as appearance teasing (a problem identified by Drage, 2014; Larkin & Rice, 2005). For example, Piran and Teall discussed how one eating disorder patient's history of persistent sexual harassment and bullying, from not being appropriately feminine enough, had not been acknowledged as significant to their eating disorder by clinicians (Piran & Teall, 2012). Piran concluded that this concretely limited treatment options and success for the patient. As a consequence, critical body dissatisfaction researchers have issued calls to body dissatisfaction researchers to acknowledge and tackle boys' sexual harassment of girls in schools (Levine & Smolak, 2006).

Despite this evidence showing a double standard in the corporate appearance ideal researchers in body dissatisfaction frequently equate men's body dissatisfaction as equal to or even surpassing women's (e.g., Leit, Pope Jr., & Gray, 2001; Pope Jr. et al., 2000; see also Davis, 2002). In contrast, women's body dissatisfaction is trivialized as a problem that has already been solved

due to women's perceived ability to identify and critique the corporate appearance ideal (e.g., Pope Jr. et al., 2000). Further, researchers also have contributed in the apportioning of blame on women for other people's body dissatisfaction through their greater focus on mother's yet not father's role in children's body dissatisfaction (e.g., McPhie et al., 2011; Rodgers et al., 2013) as well as in blaming feminism for men's body dissatisfaction (see Image 16 from Pope Jr. et al., 2000). Not only do researchers fail to acknowledge the deeply imbalanced

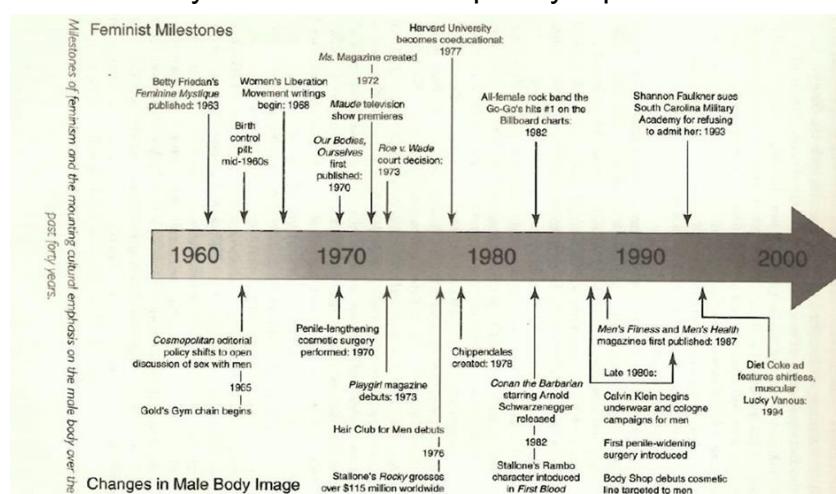


Image 16: Timeline from page 52 of The Adonis Complex juxtaposing feminist milestones against growing male body dissatisfaction.

potency of the corporate appearance ideal for women and men but they have also furthered sexism by blaming women for men's body dissatisfaction.

The sexism of these ideals has also been furthered by researchers who have uncritically explored men's attraction to various parts of women's bodies. For example, researchers have asked groups of men to judge what the most attractive waist to hip ratio (Marlowe, Apicella, & Reed, 2005) breast size (Marlowe et al., 2005) and weight is on a woman. Indeed one of these studies, published in *Body dissatisfaction*, was titled: "*Do men find bony women attractive?*" (Bergstrom, Neighbors, & Lewis, 2004). As if such a question is even acceptable to ask. Such research has led to the recommendation that school boys tell school girls what their idea of the perfect woman is with the view to this reducing girls' body dissatisfaction (Espinoza, 2015). The proposed logic being that school boys like women heavier than school girls think as well as other physical characteristics such as their hair and eyes. Similarly, memes that appear to promote body dissatisfaction confidence juxtapose curvy women against skinny women implying men only like the former (see Image 17). Both of these examples reinforce the sexist idea that women's value is in their physical attractiveness to men.

To sum up, corporate appearance ideals are more heavily promoted to women, as is, paradoxically and unhelpfully, the pressure to resist them and love your body (Gill & Elias, 2014). In addition, the widespread sexual harassment of women and girls linked to body dissatisfaction also causes body dissatisfaction. Body dissatisfaction researchers have furthered sexism through failing to acknowledge these intersections with the corporate appearance ideals. It is important to not ignore this intersection particularly within research exploring men's body dissatisfaction, given its close relation to the men's health and men's right field, which has been likened to "*imperialists [bandwaggoning] a rebellion of slaves*" (Tolson 1977 as cited in Connell, 1995; pg. 235).

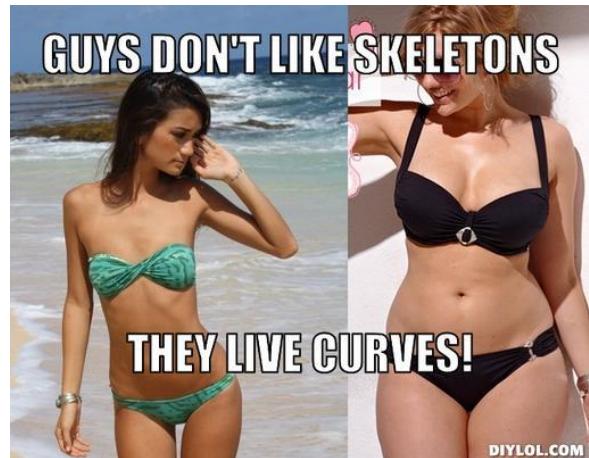


Image 17: Meme showing 'curvy women' vs. 'skinny women'

Weight stigma

The ‘obesity crisis’ is argued to be a widespread moral panic that positions higher weight people as lazy, unhealthy and burdensome to not only other people but to society at large (Fouts & Burggraf, 2000; Fouts & Vaughan, 2002; J. E. Oliver, 2006; Saguy & Gruys, 2010). For example, Fouts and colleagues (Fouts & Burggraf, 2000; Fouts & Vaughan, 2002) found that higher weight men (13%) and women (7%) were rarely depicted on popular TV shows and when they were, there were frequent negative references made to their weight and this was reinforced by audience reaction (e.g., canned laughter). Due to this rhetoric, the stigma and discrimination people who are higher weight face in employment, education, healthcare and other spheres of sociocultural life is now rampant (J. E. Oliver, 2006; Puhl & Heuer, 2010). This is despite the evidence that being higher weight is not the same as being physically unhealthy (Bacon & Aphramor, 2011), that the determinants of wellbeing, including physical health, are largely beyond the individual’s control (M. Murray & Poland, 2006) and that stigma and discrimination do not make people lose weight; indeed in order to cope, stigma and discrimination are more likely to make people gain weight via binge eating and the avoidance of exercising (Hunger & Tomiyama, 2014).

Fat stigma then should be considered a separate form of injustice to the corporate appearance ideals because not conforming to the weight feature of the corporate appearance ideals carries unique consequences that not conforming to other features of the corporate appearance ideals do not carry. For example, being thin still holds privilege relative to higher weight people as the built environment does not discriminate against thinness even though being thin does not conform to corporate appearance ideals (i.e., airplane seats will accommodate thin people and thin people are not discriminated against in employment etc.). To sum up, the consequences of not conforming to the corporate appearance ideals do not replace the discrimination higher weight people face, they merely add to it.

This fat stigma intersects with the corporate appearance ideals in a number of ways. First, because weight is one of the more apparent features of corporate appearance ideals. Specifically, both the female and male iterations of the corporate appearance ideals are lean and have little body fat and unlike other

aspects of the ideal (e.g., facial symmetry and body hair amount), weight is more easily detectable in representations of the corporate appearance ideals (as it is in everyday life). Secondly, unlike other features of the corporate appearance ideals such as head hair amount and height, the weight feature of the corporate appearance ideals is considered to be beneficial as it is perceived to be health motivating to those who it is promoted to (Bacon, 2010; J. E. Oliver, 2006). Indeed it is precisely the corporate appearance ideals' leanness that makes challenging its legitimacy so difficult. Thirdly, both corporate appearance ideals and weight stigma are enacted through the 'Good Citizen' discourse that promotes the idea that individual people must discipline their bodies into ones that are healthy, youthful, abled so as not to be burdens to society (Petersen, 1996).

Despite this obvious intersection, body dissatisfaction researchers have a long history of failing to challenge weight stigma. For example, body dissatisfaction research has often assessed weight as a determinant of body dissatisfaction rather than the stigma associated with weight (as noted by Riley, 2014; D. Burgard, *personal communication*, 4th October 2013). Such assessments have entailed asking participants to report their BMI immediately prior to being asked about their body dissatisfaction (Riley, 2014). This can make a participant's deviation from the corporate appearance ideals salient and implies that body dissatisfaction researchers hold value in the BMI measure (despite it being discredited as inaccurate and stigmatizing; Bacon & Aphramor, 2011; J. E. Oliver, 2006). Specifically, that BMI is likely to classify more than a third of people incorrectly, that it fails to account for muscularity or race and often age, that it only weakly predicts longevity and health outcomes, and that many of these predictions can be explained by other factors such as exercise or insulin level (Bacon & Aphramor, 2011; Burgard, 2011; Leit et al., 2001; J. E. Oliver, 2006; Tylka et al., 2014). Body dissatisfaction researchers have even gone into schools and assessed children's BMI in front of the child's entire class resulting in the stigmatizing situation where the whole class know exactly who is the heaviest (Riley, 2014).

Other examples include the promotion of the anti-fat talk campaign and fat talk research (Becker, Diedrichs, et al., 2013; Jankowski, Diedrichs, & Halliwell, 2013) which fail to challenge the assumption that fat is negative. Other studies

have assessed men's preferences for women's weight. For example, instead of Powell and Kahn (1995) asking the men in their study how they felt about their own bodies (as they did with their women participants) the authors asked the men what body size a woman should have for him to ask her out and what body size a woman would have that would cause his friends to ridicule him. By simply asking these questions, with no context of weight stigma or sexism at all, the authors were endorsing the view that judging a women on her body shape before dating was legitimate and that friend's ridicule must be guarded against by choosing a woman who is slim. Another example is provided by an adaptation of *The Body Project* for British school girls by colleagues in the body dissatisfaction field. One of the adaptations proposed was to encourage girls to attain a "*socially acceptable body weight*". In myriad ways body dissatisfaction researchers, including myself, have contributed to the pathologisation of fat and therefore contributed to fat stigma.

Ableism and visible differences

Despite the body being so central to body dissatisfaction, body dissatisfaction researchers have almost exclusively focused on able bodies. This includes me, who coded multiple physical attributes of the images of people in men's media but not whether their bodies were visibly disabled or not (see Chapters 6 & 7). These images might have been an unlikely occurrence given the rarity of disabled bodies in advertising generally (Charlton, 1998; Garland-Thomson, 2005) but nonetheless, their rarity or exclusion went undocumented and therefore unchallenged in this study. Corporate appearance ideals are of course able bodied; its embodiments are never featured with mobility aids or other visible sign of disability.

It is not just research that has failed to acknowledge the intersection of ableism and the corporate appearance ideals. Researcher's advocacy has also failed too. Specifically, body dissatisfaction researchers have called for the reverence of differently shaped and differently aged bodies in order to combat the corporate appearance ideals but have failed to advocate for disabled bodies. For example, even the *Health At Every Size* movement that has advocated against weight stigma has been critiqued for being ableist; for privileging higher weight

bodies that can move and exercise above higher weight bodies that cannot e.g., because of having a chronic illness (S. E. Smith, 2014). As Hamilton writes this means that “*those with complicated bodies, ill bodies, disabled bodies –and the attendant complex relationships with their own bodies—are often not so lucky [in being able to accept their bodies]*” (Hamilton, 2014, para. 16).

This blind spot in body dissatisfaction researcher’s analysis of the corporate appearance ideals is depressing given one of the origins of body dissatisfaction research arose from the study of a singular type of disability: visible differences such as facial scarring, cleft lip palates, burns and neurofibromatos etc. (Rumsey & Harcourt, 2005, 2012). In this important research, the consistent conclusions are that it is not the severity or size of the visible difference itself that is the problem, but the associated stigma and discrimination people with visible differences face (Rumsey & Harcourt, 2005, 2012). Similarly, in their review of patients reporting an eating disorder and a disability, the authors found that it was not the interaction between a specific disability and eating disorder per se that caused suffering but the stigma associated with a disability (e.g., feeling like a burden) that compounded the consequences of the eating disorder (Cicmil & Eli, 2014). Others have explored how visual impairments intersect with body dissatisfaction and found that, contrary to the visual impairment being protective against the promotion of the corporate appearance ideals, it can compound this pressure as carers or school friends can take it upon themselves to become the person’s ‘seeing eye’ and pressure them into conforming to the corporate appearance ideals (Pinquart & Pfeiffer, 2012). Indeed the social model of disability (M. Oliver, 1990) explicates that people are not disabled because of their bodies but because of the built environment that makes them disabled. The problems are not the leg’s inability to walk per se but the lack of dropped kerbs or ramp access in society. Disabled bodies have demonstrated how all bodies can be disabled or marginalized because of societal structures (e.g., the corporate appearance ideals or the built environment) though body dissatisfaction researchers have failed to acknowledge this precedent laid out by disability theorists (Charlton, 1998; M. Oliver, 1990; Werner, 1998).

Other injustices: Class and ageism

Other forms of injustice such as class injustices, ageism and cissexism also intersect with corporate appearance ideals. For example, corporate appearance ideals are classed particularly for women, so that beauty work including fake tan, breast enhancement and amount of make-up are commonly used to label demarcate women as dangerous, sexually promiscuous and/or tasteless (Ahearne, 2013). Appearance stereotypes abound for those who are classed, through the stereotypes of Chav, Townie and Gypo (Ahearne, 2013; J. Richardson & Ryder, 2012; Tyler, 2008). Though like other forms of injustice, class has had little recognition as relevant in body dissatisfaction research reflecting the minimal exploration of it in mainstream psychology in general (Day, Rickett, & Woolhouse, 2014).

The non intersectionality of body dissatisfaction: Summary

These intersections themselves intersect with each other. For example, the White House report on sexual harassment highlights how women of colour, disabled women and transwomen are more likely to face sexual harassment than their counterparts (The White House Council on Women and Girls, 2014). Likewise Image 15 shows the pattern of the popular US TV sitcom wife embodying the corporately-produced appearance ideal whilst the sitcom husband does not. Although the analysis of these images does not make it explicit, all of the sitcom wives and husbands are White (with the exception of one couple), are able bodied and heterosexual (pianoshootist, 2014). Another example of the intersection of these intersections is provided by Fikkan and Rothblum (2012) who conducted a systematic review of research into weight-based discrimination in education, employment, health care among other domains. The authors found that fat women were consistently discriminated against and this was more so than thin women and more so than (fat or thin) men. Similarly whilst Fouts and colleagues found that both higher weight men and women were rarely depicted on popular TV shows it was higher weight women's bodies that were more likely to be the target of negative references than higher weight men (Fouts & Burggraf, 2000; Fouts & Vaughan, 2002). The authors concluded there is a “*double standard that may*

influence viewers' attitudes about women's and men's bodies in our society"

(Fouts & Vaughan, 2002, p. 441).

Just as the corporate appearance ideals intersect with various other forms of injustice so to these injustices intersect with each other. This entanglement demonstrates how body dissatisfaction may arise as a consequence of failing to attain corporate appearance ideals (e.g., body dissatisfaction) but it may also arise or be furthered from experiencing other injustices (e.g., racism, sexism). Within certain marginalized groups, people of colour, women, higher weight people etc. and indeed higher weight, women of colour face injustices that cannot be separated from one another (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). Not only would separating them be impossible, it would also be pointless; as the nature of body dissatisfaction or suffering does not change whether it is from failing to conform to the corporate appearance ideals or from racism or from both. It is ultimately still the same problem: injustice.

Essentialism refers to the notion "*that there is a single woman's, or Black person's, or any other group's experience that can be described independently from other aspects of the person—that there is an "essence" to that experience*" (Grillo, 1995, p. 19). Researchers have occasionally acknowledged intersections between other forms of injustice and body dissatisfaction pressures; but their individualized focus has resulted in essentialisms about these groups. More specifically, instead of assessing how the stigma and discrimination (that marginalized groups face) compound the effects of the corporate appearance ideals, researchers have instead pronounced certain features that they perceive these groups to have as making them immune or vulnerable to the corporate appearance ideals (Bordo, 2003). I am guilty of this as much as anyone. In a proposal for a project exploring people of colour's experiences of cleft lip and palate, I wrote about the various cultural and religious differences that I perceived could affect the experience of a cleft lip (e.g., what cleft lip might be symbolic of in certain religions). I never considered how racism, xenophobia or even language barriers might impact these experiences.

Other examples of these essentialisms include Black people being deemed more resistant to the corporate appearance ideals based on cultural tropes of 'booty idolization' (Bordo, 2003), and gay men particularly vulnerable because they

are inherently appearance obsessed (Kane, 2009, 2010). The implication is that being Black and/or gay itself makes one able to resist/succumb to the corporate appearance ideals which continues to individualize a societal injustice. However, as argued in this chapter it is not being Black and/or gay or being a part of Black and/or gay culture that compounds the effects of the corporate appearance ideals but the discrimination and stigma associated with these identities. For example, in Brennan and colleagues (2013) qualitative research with gay and bisexual men (GBM) of colour the authors found that despite participant's identifying as different ethnicities (e.g., Southeast Asian and Black Caribbean), participant's experiences of their identities and body dissatisfaction were remarkably similar. Indeed the only differences that emerged in participant accounts were not culturally or individually specific to participant's ethnicities but rather were related to the different racist media stereotypes reserved for the different ethnicities to which participant's identified as.

Sojourner Truth was a former slave, abolitionist and suffragette born at the end of the 18th century (Truth, 1998). She was said to address the 1851 Women's Rights Convention in Ohio: "*Ain't I a woman?*" In this simple statement she highlighted how the divided causes of 20th Century suffrage and abolition excluded Black women such as herself. Justice movements that focus on one injustice be that ableism, sexism, or the corporate appearance ideals can be in danger of excluding all those people affected by that injustice as well as other injustices. Body dissatisfaction is no different. Researcher's aim is to ameliorate body dissatisfaction; a form of injustice; ignoring the intersectionality of body dissatisfaction excludes many and defeats researchers' best intentions.

Intersectionality is not designed to create a web of intricacies in which layer upon layer of injustice is added to an analysis serving all efforts to undo one injustice defunct. So that any coherent analysis or attempt to fight injustices is rendered obsolete. In the words of Mackinnon intersectionality "*has no true postmodern scholar*" who "*reinterprets[Black and women identities] out of existence*" (MacKinnon, 2013, para. 2) but rather has someone who is ready to acknowledge and work towards undoing consequences of intersecting identities and how these result in power inequalities (Crenshaw, 1991). So then how should justice work proceed intersectionally? It needs careful thought and patient

attendance to pioneers of intersectional work (Crenshaw, 1991; hooks, 1995). The first step, as argued, is to acknowledge these intersections.

Second is to move beyond a representational analysis. Specifically, this section has highlighted the failure to advocate against intersecting forms of injustice with the corporate appearance ideal. What has been outlined is largely how the representations of the corporate appearance ideal carry racialized, gendered and other messages bounded up in injustices. Although important, this analysis focuses on how various industries (i.e., fashion, media etc.) represent people and the resulting consequences these representations have on people. Chapter 9 highlighted how, capitalism is responsible for the corporate appearance ideal, but representation by industries and consumption of such representations are only one part of the capitalist system. Capitalism causes injustices beyond representation. In this final section, I apply Fraser's (1995) Status Model of Justice to the field of body dissatisfaction to demonstrate the injustice of misdistribution. Specifically I demonstrate how many of the industries identified by body dissatisfaction advocates including the fashion, fitness and beauty industries not only promote the corporate appearance ideal but they also use sweatshops which cause great injustice to their workers.

THE STATUS JUSTICE MODEL OF BODY DISSATISFACTION

An approach driven by justice values should consider how injustices arise. Nancy Fraser's (1995) Status Model of Justice does so. This model defines injustices as those arising from both cultural stigmatisation (misrecognition) and economic inequalities (i.e., misdistribution).

Fraser sees misrecognition as having your status subordinated or more specifically "*[the] institutionalized patterns of cultural value [that] constitute some actors as inferior, excluded, wholly other or simply invisible, hence as less than full partners in social interaction*" (Fraser, 2001, p. 24). Maldistribution refers to having your resources withheld. Specifically, Fraser defines misrecognition as where "*economic structures, property regimes or labour markets deprive actors of the resources needed for full participation*" (Fraser, 2001, p. 27). The status model that Fraser advocates, does not result in economic injustices being ignored or treated as separate (such as is common in identity politics activism) nor does it result in

cultural essentialisms or reifications (where members of a minority group are held to have one unitary identity that they alone determine). Instead the model depicts both as intertwining yet separate processes that must be tackled together.

Fraser (1995) asserts that justice cannot be achieved when either misrecognition or maldistribution are advocated for separately. To demonstrate, Fraser provides the example of a campaign to give single mothers higher welfare benefits. She notes whilst this campaign may help to undo economic injustices, it fails to attend to the cultural stigma associated with being a single mother on benefits. Thus advocating for higher benefits alone is not adequate to give single mothers full parity in social life (i.e., justice). The stigma must be tackled too. Likewise advocacy to destigmatize sex work fails to tackle the poverty (i.e., maldistribution) that drives many into sex work in the first place. In this case, decriminalizing sex work actually can make sex workers' lives harder by driving them further into poverty by increasing competition and reducing earnings. Redistribution and recognition must instead be tackled together.

Relating to body dissatisfaction specifically, there is just one approach that comes close to Fraser's (1995) Status Model of Justice: the sociocultural approach to body dissatisfaction. As described above, this holds that people, particularly women and girls, experience the injustice of misrecognition manifesting in body dissatisfaction, disordered eating and other health impacts. Misrecognition is caused by unrealistic appearance representations the fashion, fitness and beauty industries promote via mass media. The sociocultural body dissatisfaction approach seeks to undo this misrecognition by advocating for greater and more diverse representations.

This body dissatisfaction approach begins to tackle the injustice of misrecognition as specified in Fraser's (1995) model. However, it is limited by its failure to acknowledge let alone tackle maldistribution. Specifically three assumptions are produced by this approach that omits the injury of maldistribution by the fashion, fitness and beauty industries. In this next section each assumption is described using examples of this approach to demonstrate.

Assumption 1) The only injury these industries produce is misrecognition

The first assumption produced by this approach is that these industries only injure through misrecognition or that misrecognition is their most pressing injury. For example, Chrisler and colleagues (2013) analysed tweet responses to the 2014 *Victoria's Secret Fashion Show*. Published in the journal *Body Image*, they found many reported body dissatisfaction in their tweets after viewing the fashion show. The researchers recommended that people sent their own 'body positive' tweets the next time the show aired in order to counter this injustice.

American plus-size model Tess Holliday also provides an example of this assumption (that these industries only injure through misrecognition). In May 2015, Holliday criticized various fashion corporations for having inconsistent clothing sizes through her Instagram social media account. In her post, she included a collage of different clothing labels with differing sizes to demonstrate (see Image 18). She captioned the image: "*At the end of the day, it's how you feel that matters, not the label in your clothes*" (Stern, 2015, para. 7).

At the time of writing, Holliday's post has gone viral, amassing over 20,000 likes and has received widespread media coverage. For example, a *Huffington Post* article covered Holliday's post. It was titled "*Plus Size Model Tess Holliday Shows Why You Shouldn't Worry About Your Clothes Label*" (see Image 19).

These industries produce injuries other than misrecognition. Specifically the use of sweatshops, factories in which workers are underpaid and abused, is rife. For example, as reported by *Global Labour Rights* many of



Image 18: Tess Holliday Instagram post showing various clothing labels



Image 19: Media coverage of above Tess Holliday's Instagram post

Victoria's Secret's clothes are made by Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan women in Jordan (ds3375, 2014; Tasini, 2007). The women work up to 15 hours a day, receiving 1 day off every 3 months. They are allowed only 3 minutes to sew each *Victoria's Secret* bikini, sold for approximately 14 dollars in the US, for which they are paid the equivalent of just 4 cents.

Indeed in Holliday's Instagram post (see **Image 19**) three of the labels reveal the clothes pictured were made in Mexico and China. Both countries that have many sweatshops (Daly, 2014). In addition, Holliday finished the post recommending her favourite clothing corporations one of which was ASOS. Apart from their Green Room that stocks only ethical brands, ASOS regularly distribute clothes made in sweatshops and have a factory in the UK also described as having sweatshop conditions (Clifton, 2015; Stern, 2015).

Others who regularly make use of sweatshops include the beauty and toy industries; also made out to injure only through misrecognition. For example, *Disney* have been widely criticized for their unrealistic depiction of women and girls in their films (A Mighty Girl, 2013; Moore, 2015). Workers in *Disney*'s sweatshops are paid very little, are not allowed to speak to each other and are forced to do overtime (Mattera, 2015; Ye, 2013). Some have killed themselves (Chamberlain, 2011). In China, *Disney* pay workers just 21p an hour, in Haiti 18p an hour and in Bangladesh just 3p an hour (Chamberlain, 2011; Mattera, 2015; Ye, 2013). For example, *Proctor and Gamble* who make *Wella* hair, *Gillette* shaving cream and *Docle and Gabana* fragrances among many other products, also employ sweatshops (Shop Ethical, n.d.). *Proctor and Gamble* also demonstrate that sweatshops are not the only injustice these industries cause, as they have been criticized for using unsafe ingredients, for political lobbying against toxin regulation and animal rights abuses (Shop Ethical, n.d.).

The abuses in sweatshops are rife. Low pay, forced overtime, repressed unions and an utter disregard for health and safety regulations mean the workers in these factories are faced with some of the worst circumstances of any job. Furthermore their low pay and lack of compensation when these factories close or collapse mean these workers are exploited whether the factory operates or does not.

Sweatshops are not particular to the production of low cost fast fashion as many believe (e.g., Primark) but produce high fashion too (Smestad, 2009; *The Business of Fast Fashion*, 2013). Beyond fashion, sweatshops produce of general garments, toys, electronics (e.g., laptops and mobile phones), cosmetics and more (China Labour Watch, 2012, 2014; McGuigan, 2012; Shop Ethical, n.d.).

The prevalence of sweatshops is often underestimated for two reasons. First, because of industry's own whitewashing of their sweatshop use. For example, factory supervisors regularly coach sweatshop workers on what to say to inspectors so to mask the abuses. In addition, corporations direct a lot of money to disguise their practices in mass media by using expensive PR corporations (Klein, 2002; People and Planet, 2015). Instead independent organizations like the *Worker's Rights Collective* and *Electronics Watch*, working on the ground in the factories, speaking to the workers away from the supervisors and factories to properly assess the conditions (People and Planet, 2015).

Second, because it can be falsely assumed that heavy media coverage or international outrage translates into the ending of sweatshops. Sadly, outrage does not equal reform. For example, the 2013 Rana Plaza factory collapse that killed over 1,100 Bangladeshi workers garnered widespread media coverage (Parveen, 2014; Viederman, 2014). Disturbingly, the factory was rated safe shortly before it collapsed, further indicating the need for independent appraisals. Most of the corporations who used the factory like *Nike* and *Benneton* were reluctant to pay any compensation to the families of the workers who died (Parveen, 2014; People and Planet, 2015). In particular *Addidas* refused to pay proper compensation, instead only offering worker's families vouchers that could only be used in one chain of supermarkets. It took activists and worker's families a long and bitter 2-year campaign to get *Addidas* to pay up eventually (People and Planet, 2015). Even today at the time of writing the Rana Plaza compensation fund is still £6 million less than the survivors and their families are legally owed (Parveen, 2014; Viederman, 2014).

Indeed, the rise of globalization and the increasing power that these industries are quietly gaining has meant sweatshops are becoming more and more common. The Trans-Atlantic Trade Agreement, where corporations can sue governments if perceived to be infringing on their right to make profits, provides

one example. It has allowed corporations like the cigarette corporation *Phillip Morris* to successfully sue (or intimidate by the threat of suing) state governments who have implemented or planned to implement anti-smoking legislation (Monbiot, 2013).

This injustice is actively masked by this advocacy, however. Specifically, Holliday's post and related media coverage actively encourage consumers not to worry about labels (and by proxy the clothes' sweatshop origins). This is in spite of advocacy that encourages consumers to tweet photos of their clothing labels to corporations in order to highlight their sweatshop origins (The Fashion Mob, 2013). Similarly, if advocates went with Chrisler's suggestion the trending criticism on Twitter of *Victoria's Secret* would be about their representation of too-thin models and not their use of sweatshops (ds3375, 2014; Tasini, 2007). To sum then the injuries caused by industry are not limited to misrecognition but extend to widespread, powerful and growing maldistribution most poignantly exemplified by sweatshops.

Assumption 2) These industries only injure white, western women

The second assumption is that these industries only injure white, Western women. For example, one article in *The Conversation*, an online news blog, is titled: “*What Role Does the Fashion Industry Play in Women’s Health and Self Image?*” (Koskie, 2015). Another in *i-D*, another online blog, carries the headline: “*How does the fashion industry affects the bodies of young women*” (Mair, 2014). In this latter article the author writes:

“*Powerful industries - the \$33-billion-a-year-worldwide diet industry, the \$20-billion-a-year-worldwide cosmetics industry, the \$300-million-a-year-worldwide cosmetic surgery industry - have grown from the money made out of the conscious and unconscious worries of women*” (Mair, 2014, para. 5).

Body dissatisfaction studies also make this assumption. For example, researchers have focussed on highlighting the harms of the fashion industry on white women and girls by assessing the body dissatisfaction of select groups of those who work in fashion. The logic being those closest to the industries must be the most harmed. Specifically researchers have surveyed fashion models (Santonastaso, Mondini, & Favaro, 2002; Swami & Szmigelska, 2013) and fashion students (Petersons, Phillips, & Steinhaus, 1996) arguing that they experience even higher

levels of body dissatisfaction because of their proximity to the fashion industry. Another example of this assumption is provided by Chrisler and colleagues' (Chrisler et al., 2013) study mentioned above, which is titled "*Suffering by comparison: Twitter users' reactions to the Victoria's Secret Fashion Show*".

According to these articles and studies, it is only white Western women's health and bodies that count as being affected by the industries. What is made invisible is the many women and girls who work in the industries sweatshops. So in Chrisler's studies only white Western women and girls are assumed to be suffering in comparison to *Victoria's Secret*. In the latter studies, it is only those who study fashion or who model the fashion garments that count as workers affected by the fashion industry (Petersons et al., 1996; Santonastaso et al., 2002; Swami & Szmigielska, 2013). The largest group of workers in the industries, those most harmed by the industries, the sweatshop workers are rendered invisible once again.

Indeed when people other than white Westerners are acknowledged as impacted by these industries, recognition is still nonetheless, advocated. Specifically, fashion industries have been called upon to represent women of colour, older women and women with disabilities in their magazines and on their catwalks. Lewis and colleagues (2011) write, for example:

"What would it take to make the fashion industry act on the vast potentials of the gray market? How could industry practices become more inclusive and make room for all minority groups, ages, bodies and abilities?"

Women who are disabled and/or of colour, however, do not have the spending power for the fashion industry to target. They are not necessarily a hidden market which older white Western women are (at least according to Lewis and colleagues). Indeed even if these groups were represented better by the fashion industry this would not undo the maldistribution these groups face and that these industries contribute to. A poster campaign, for example, that positively represents the sweatshop workers in Rana Plaza will not result in their pay being increased, their children's school fees being paid or their healthcare costs being met. Undoing maldistribution is needed.

Assumption 3) That misrecognition can be undone without loss of profits

The third assumption this approach produces is that the fashion, beauty and toy industries can undo their injuries not only without losing any profits but by actually gaining profits. Specifically, the industries are told if only they represent better they can continue selling and continue making profits. For example, Dr Hains, a media and body dissatisfaction researcher, set up a petition for the fitness garment corporation, *Lulamon*, to use bigger fashion models and to make larger clothes. At the time of closing, in Summer 2014, it gained 20,000 signatures (Hains & Warhaft-Nadler, 2013). Others have also advocated upon the fashion industries to represent bigger fashion models (MAD Chic Blog, 2011) to not airbrush images (Berwald, 2012) and to make a Bald *Barbie* (Bingham, 2012). Similarly, *Disney* has been called upon to desexualise their *Brave* character Merrida (Rakoska, 2015) and to feature plus size (averaging, 3,000 signatures per month; Moore, 2015) and disabled princesses in their films (averaging 1,000 signatures per month; Rakoska, 2015). *Disney* was also petitioned to “stop bullying gluten-intolerant characters” on an episode of their children’s TV show *Jessie* (Raslevich, 2013).

These industries are told that they are harmless, acceptable if only they undo misrecognition. This assumption actively legitimize these industries. Lewis and colleagues (Lewis et al., 2011) for example, conducted a content analysis of images of women in US fashion magazines. They argue that white, Western and wealthy women have “*high spending power*” (pg. 101) and have “*vast potential as a market*” (pg. 108) and on this basis should be recognized by the fashion industry in their magazines and on their catwalks. Further legitimizing these industries, the researchers depicts these industries as harmless as benignly “*cater[ing] to needs and desires*” (pg. 106). They are merely asked to “*facilitate*” and “*make room for*” older women (pg. 108). Such euphemistic language belies the reality of these industries that by their nature must create profits above any other goal. These industries do not cater for needs then they create them as can be seen by the medicalization of hair loss by pharmaceutical corporations (Harvey, 2013; McGuigan, 2012).

Furthermore, this advocacy actually can help industries profit more and become even more powerful. Demonstrably a body of research has offered recommendations for advertisers to become even more effective whilst representing bigger models, using airbrushing labels or changing their representations in other ways (e.g., Diedrichs & Lee, 2010, 2011; Tiggemann, Slater, & Smyth, 2014). For example, in 2010 Diedrichs and Lee explored the body dissatisfaction of Australian men who viewed adverts that featured average-sized models against men who viewed adverts that featured muscular male models. They also measured advertising effectiveness by asking the men how likely they would be to buy the products. From their results, the body dissatisfaction researchers concluded that the fashion industry should use average-sized models in their adverts not only because these adverts were rated as effective by participants but also, they noted, because these adverts did not make men feel body dissatisfied (therefore implying that men would be even more likely to buy the products). A similar study with female fashion models made the same recommendations to industry the following year (Diedrichs & Lee, 2011). A further example of this assumption is provided by Tiggemann and Polivy (2010) who argued that adding an airbrushing warning labels to beauty and fashion adverts reduced female viewer's body dissatisfaction at the same time as enhancing their brand recall of the adverts. Thus implying that consumers would actually be more likely to buy the products with the label. Similarly, Slater, Tiggemann, Firth and Hawkins (2012) also found advertising effectiveness and brand recall improved with the addition of such labels. They concluded that "*this finding should offer reassurance to advertisers who may otherwise be reticent about suggestions by politicians and policy makers to enforce the use of warning labels on media images*" (pg. 119).

This assumption is flawed because maldistribution such as sweatshops fundamentally occurs because of the profit imperative. Industries wish to save as much money as possible. Therefore they pay their workers low rates, they invest minimally in health and safety, force overtime and repress union work so as to keep workers docile and, most crucially, cheap (Holt, 2014; Klein, 2002). The injustice of maldistribution cannot be undone without financial redistribution on the industry's part.

A dose of perspective: Working in a sweatshop is worse than having body dissatisfaction

Some perspective is needed in body dissatisfaction advocacy. Advocacy against maldistribution pales in comparison to recognition advocacy, which is much more likely to be successful. Specifically whereas many of the above calls to undo misrecognition have been successful, calls against misdistribution have not. For example, responding to an online *Change.org* petition which gained over 34,000 signatures calling for the recognition girls with alopecia in 2012, *Mattel* created and sold a bald *Barbie* for the first time (Bingham, 2012). Likewise a call for *Disney* to reverse its sexualized redesign of the Merrida character, from their movie *Brave*, garnered over 260,000 signatures as of April 2015 (Rakoska, 2015). This also resulted in success with *Disney* claiming the redesign was only a “one-off” and that future Merrida representations would not be sexualised. Finally, the petition against the bullying of gluten-free characters in *Disney* was successful in less than a month (averaging 2,000 signatures per month). Shortly after the petition was launched, *Disney* removed the episode and offered an apology:

“We received your feedback about tonight’s “Jessie” episode....we are removing this particular episode from our regular programming schedule and will re-evaluate its references to gluten restrictions in the character’s diet” (Raslevich, 2013, para. 8).

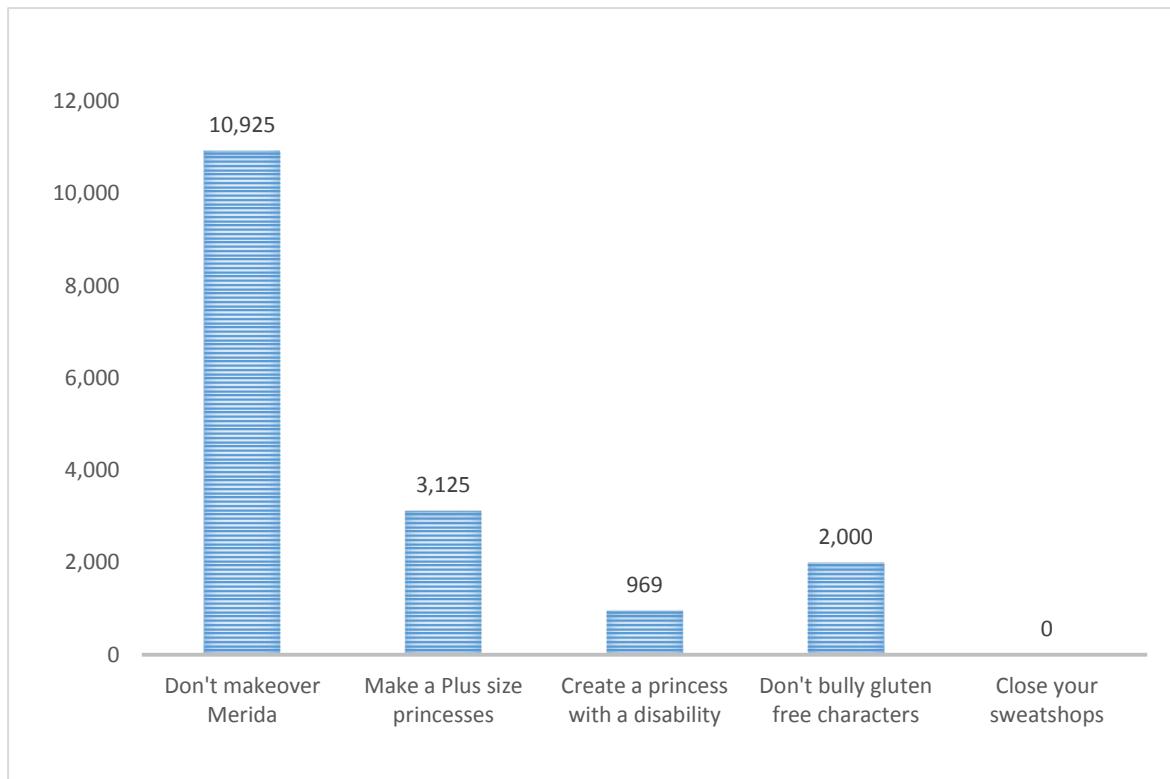


Figure 3: Number of average signatures per month by Change.org online petitions that target Disney.

Indeed there are very few petitions against sweatshops on *Change.org* in general and none specific to *Disney* (see Figure 3: Number of average signatures per month by Change.org online petitions that target Disney.). One of the rare petitions about the industries' sweatshops is provided by *China Labour Watch* (China Labour Watch, 2015). This arose from the organization's own investigations into Chinese toy factories between June and November 2014. The factories created various toys including *Barbie*, *Thomas the Tank Engine* and *Mickey Mouse*. They found that factories abuses including low pay, forced overtime, poor living conditions and abusive management (China Labour Watch, 2014). The petition addressed *Mattel*, and other corporations selling the toys, to address the poor conditions.

To date the petition has gained only a little over 1,000 signature and has had little success. The only corporation to respond to the petition, *Mattei* have denied all allegations of abuse, refusing to even allow *China Labour Watch* to make their response public. Another rare petition against sweatshops was created in 2013 by *The Fashion Mob* to pressure fashion industries to invest 1% of their profits in ending sweatshops (The Fashion Mob, 2013). Again, this petition has

also had similar limited success gaining only 729 signatures and is currently closed. This follows *The Fashion Mob* itself becoming inactive; its last update on its website being over a year ago (The Fashion Mob, 2014).

Many might blanch at the ranking of injuries, and certainly any injury, misrecognition or maldistribution, deserves redress. As Fraser (1995) specifies, justice comes in the forms of both. However when there are limited resources and voices advocating for redress, when these resources and voices all go to recognition to the expense of redistribution, then it is important to regain some perspective. That is to say that developing body dissatisfaction is a relative privilege compared to other more urgent, common injustices on wellbeing (e.g., the physical and psychological injuries sweatshop workers face). As Bordo (2003) notes:

"The economically deprived may not have developed eating disorders to the same extent as their counters because for them hunger was a matter of survival not resistance or rebellion".

As deep and profound the injustice of body dissatisfaction undoubtedly is, it is hard to see how this can be greater than those who suffer in the hot, cramped and debilitating conditions of sweatshops. For these workers, concerns other than appearance take precedent; the need for food, for security, for safety. Body dissatisfaction may not be as evident a problem among some not because they are privileged but rather because they not have the time, energy or relative privilege to develop body dissatisfaction. This omission also relates to the non-intersectionality of body dissatisfaction; where body dissatisfaction is not contextualized as one injustice that intersects with many and that may be, for many people, people of colour and/or the disabled and/or LGBTI groups, not the most salient or immediate of the injustice they face.

It could be argued that some advocate against body dissatisfaction whilst others advocate for another, and that this is just part of the plurality of academia and is healthy. Putting aside the issue of whether plurality here is healthy, which academics are advocating against sweatshops? Who checks and how do we know that what these anti-sweatshop academics are doing is effective? The field of body dissatisfaction, though it spends so much time talking about these industries is patently closed to acknowledging the industries' sweatshops. It is clear others follow suit. The most vocal and popular campaigns against these industries are

about recognition as Graph 1 shows. Most importantly, as outlined, this plurality is not healthy, advocating for recognition occurs at the expense of maldistribution. It actively worsens it.

An alternative research and advocacy approach

The following six recommendations are made for body dissatisfaction researchers encompassing directions for future researchs, routes of intervention and theoretical approaches:

1. First, as outlined above, researchers must not seek to undo misrecognition alone. Maldistribution must be tackled. Regarding sweatshops specifically researchers could incorporate advocacy into their research. The *People and Planet* campaign to affiliate universities to *Electronics Watch* and the *Worker's Rights Consortium* provides one means of doing this (Willgress, 2014). Academics are unusually positioned to advocate against sweatshops. Universities represent large buyers of these products and thus have considerable negotiating power in the conditions in which these products are made in. For example, universities in the UK are estimated to spend £10 billion each year on computers, laptops, printers and other electronics (Willgress, 2014). Over the last 2 years, the national *People and Planet* group then have been campaigning for universities to sign up to the *Worker's Rights Consortium* and *Electronics Watch*. These are two organizations that use the university's vast buying power to push, alongside workers in the factories, for better conditions.
2. Second, researchers, including those in body dissatisfaction, should align with contemporary political movements that seek to undo injustices including feminism and anti-fascism. In other words researchers should seek to be “scholar-activists” rather than ivory tower researchers (Murray & Poland, 2006, p. 383). Notably, Fine tackles maldistribution in her work. Specifically she has led projects that encompass advocacy against school closures, unemployment, racial incarceration and more (Fine, 2012; 2014; Weis & Fine, 2004). Fine’s work has been widely recognized as trailblazing (Fine, 2012); a fitting description, as her work provides a sorely needed path in which other researchers committed to justice can follow.

3. Next, researchers must not accept men's pronouncements that they are body dissatisfaction free at surface value. For many men this is not the case, body dissatisfaction impacts most people, sometimes unknowingly. Researchers should as Ros Gill (2007) advocates 'critically respect' participant's account. Honouring their own expertise in their experiences whilst being wary of the norm for men to dismiss body dissatisfaction concerns. Undoubtedly this is a fine balance to be struck, not to patronise, not to be naïve. As a start researchers should be willing to gently dig a little deeper, reveal their own body dissatisfaction, the ubiquity of appearance ideals, before accepting men accounts of being unaffected if talking to men about these issues. Alternatively researchers should attend to culture in documenting the corporate appearance ideal in its many iterations (e.g., through content analyses of adverts).
4. Fourth, researchers should recognize that body dissatisfaction may impact men in ways other than leading to full-blown clinical psychological and physical disorders. As shown by participants, body dissatisfaction affects men in myriad, intimate ways that are often described as mundane. They're not mundane though. Body dissatisfaction's impacts men in myriad ways: from avoiding being in photographs to feeling compelled to have gel in their hair at all times. The impacts are real, visceral and significant. Their frequency should not be mistaken for normalcy. Researchers should document and later aim to undo through interventions these myriad impacts that go beyond clinical presentations.
5. Fifth, body dissatisfaction researchers should take an intersectional approach to body dissatisfaction. It is one aspect of a person's wellbeing and one that intersects with other determinants of wellbeing (such as poverty, racism, sexism etc; Horrocks & Johnson, 2012; M. Murray & Poland, 2006). Researchers should follow critical health psychologists then who recognize that focusing on one singular aspect of wellbeing (e.g., smoking cessation, self-esteem, body dissatisfaction) and ignoring others, does not help the individual. This is because people have problems apart from body dissatisfaction that nonetheless impair their wellbeing. These problems may be of greater significance or resonance than the one the

researcher specializes in and must be documented and tackled too (Stephens, 2013).

6. Finally, researchers need to be collaborative. The phrase “*nothing about us without us*” was popularized in 1998 by the disability scholar- activists Charlton (1998) and Werner (1998). The phrase referred to the approach that people with disabilities should be included in the design, implementation and review of disability research and policy, in short in every decision made about disabilities. As Michelle Fine (*Youth Participatory Action Research*, 2014) notes: “*the people who have experienced injustice have brilliant insight into injustices, the nature of injustices, the origins of injustice and the capillaries of injustice and possible solutions to injustices*”. An example of collaborative research under this approach is provided by Brennan and colleagues (2013). The researchers conducted a series of focus groups and interviews with gay and bisexual men (GBM) of colour. In keeping with the “*nothing about us without us*” approach, the authors collaborated with a panel of participant representatives in the design, analysis and dissemination of the research. The authors found that participants reported strong pressure from media and commercial white gay scene such as gay bars surrounding appearance (i.e., the corporate appearance ideals) as well as various racist stereotypes that were abundant (e.g., that all Black men had substantial sexual prowess). These significant intersectional forms of injustice (related to their sexuality, ethnicity and gender expression) that the participants reported led the authors to conclude: “*it is important to approach challenges in body dissatisfaction for GBM [of colour] not simply as an internal/individual process but one that is impacted by larger socio-cultural structures*” (Brennan et al., 2013, p. 396).

THESIS SUMMARY

Chapter 1 outlined the problem of men’s body dissatisfaction. Specifically how it is a consequence of an injustice that those interested in undoing advocate against. This chapter also clarified the goal of the thesis is to highlight the culpability of culture by focusing on one specific form of injury caused to people; namely male

body dissatisfaction. The next chapter was concerned with work that has sought to undo body dissatisfaction. Specifically, Chapter 2 reviewed existing interventions to reduce men's body dissatisfaction. One particularly promising intervention, *The Body Project*, was noted, as amassing widespread evidence of its usefulness among women and girls and more recently, gay men. Therefore the first study in this thesis adapted and evaluated the intervention for undergraduate men (named: *Body Project M*). Chapters 3 and 4 provided a mixed-methods evaluation of this intervention concluding it was useful but limited by its focus on the individual. Chapter 5 then contextualized this individualizing problem. Research on body dissatisfaction, it was shown, effaces culture and focus on individual people as causes of body dissatisfaction. This focus has been criticized for pathologising individual people, particularly gay men whose superficiality makes them responsible for their body dissatisfaction. It is concluded that culture must be appraised to understand the causes of body dissatisfaction and to avoid pathologising groups of people.

Chapter 6 and 7 provides the method and results of two detailed content analyses of gay and straight men's UK media, as a way to move the focus off the individual. These two studies showed that men's media, in general, is highly appearance potent (i.e., reveres the corporate appearance ideal strongly). The discussion of these chapters next follows, revealing that neither the individual nor media is the cause of body dissatisfaction. Specifically, the appearance potent content in this media was driven by need for profit, whether through adverts featured in the magazines (Study 3) or the need to have as many unique visitors as possible to the websites (Study 4). Chapter 9 detailed how specifically capitalism is a system that promotes the corporate appearance ideal which in turn drives body dissatisfaction and how its presence evades body dissatisfaction researcher's gaze. Finally, Chapter 10 offers a summative discussion of the thesis. It was argued that the slight and recent shift from body dissatisfaction researchers to appraising capitalism is limited by its failure to move beyond recognition or acknowledged intersecting injustices tied to body dissatisfaction. Specifically, it was shown that body dissatisfaction legitimizes capitalism and its actors (e.g., the fashion, fitness and toy industry) by pushing for minimal changes in how they represent people and ignoring any other injustice these industries cause. Injustice

that intersect with each other so they cannot be undone separately. For example, *Mattei* have been pushed to make *Barbie* less thin though little is said, or more crucially done, about *Barbie*'s manufacture in sweatshops in the Global South. Finally it is concluded that as body dissatisfaction researcher's goal is ultimately to undo a form of injustice, and injustices cannot be separated from one and another, then advocates must move beyond recognition to tackling the other injustices capitalism causes.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Recruitment poster for the intervention in Study 1

Men's body image study

Are you **male, heterosexual & 18–25?**

If, yes then we need you to:

- Participate in a **2-session, 90 minute, intervention** that aims to help men deal with appearance pressures. The intervention involves a discussion & some written tasks. It's not too cringey & even is enjoyable.
- Complete **3 questionnaires** on body image

Psychology student? If yes, you will gain **15 pool credits** if you participate in the whole study. For more info & to take part please contact:

g.jankowski@leedsmet.ac.uk

I WANT YOU

g.jankowski@leedsmet.ac.uk
g.jankowski@leedsmet.ac.uk

g.jankowski@leedsmet.ac.uk

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Appendix B: Leeds Beckett University Ethics Approval for Study 1
PSYCHOLOGY GROUP – LOCAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
APPLICATION REVIEW

Applicant's name	Glen Jankowski	Application no.	
Project title	Exploring the acceptability of a cognitive dissonance based intervention on young adult men	No. of participants	4-6
Target participants	Straight men aged 18-25	LREC member	Andrew Wilson

SUMMARY PROVISIONAL CONSIDERATION

Criteria for approval	Yes	Uncertain	No
1. Is it ethical to conduct the research?	X		
2. Is the proposed method of investigation appropriate?	X		
3. Is the proposed method of investigation thorough?	X		
4. Is the proposed method of investigation ethical?	X		

PROVISIONAL RECOMMENDATION

Approve	Approve with recommendations or comments	Provisionally approve with conditions (Chair's Action)	Re-submission	Reject
	X			

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Appendix C: Pre- questionnaire for intervention participants

CREATE YOUR UNIQUE PARTICIPANT IDENTIFICATION CODE

You have the right to withdraw your data after you have completed the questionnaire at any time.

Please enter the first three letters of your mother's maiden name and the last two digits of your mobile phone number. EXAMPLE: If your mother's maiden name is Brown and your mobile phone number was 07891234567 your ID would be: BRO67

--

How often do you think the following?					
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
I think my body should be leaner	1	2	3	4	5
I think I have too much fat on my body	1	2	3	4	5
Eating sweets, cakes, or other high calorie food makes me feel fat	1	2	3	4	5
I feel excessively fat	1	2	3	4	5
Seeing my reflection (eg, in a mirror or window) makes me feel bad about my body fat	1	2	3	4	5

For each item, please circle the number that best characterizes your attitudes or behaviours					
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
I respect my body	1	2	3	4	5
I feel good about my body	1	2	3	4	5
Despite its flaws, I accept my body for what it is	1	2	3	4	5
I feel that my body has at least some good qualities	1	2	3	4	5
I take a positive attitude toward my body	1	2	3	4	5
I am attentive to my body's needs	1	2	3	4	5

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My self-worth is independent of my appearance	1	2	3	4	5
I do not focus a lot of energy being concerned with my appearance	1	2	3	4	5
My feelings toward my body are positive, for the most part	1	2	3	4	5
I engage in healthy behaviours to take care of my body	1	2	3	4	5
I do not allow unrealistically muscular/lean images of men presented in the media to affect my attitudes toward my body	1	2	3	4	5
Despite its imperfections, I still like my body	1	2	3	4	5

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Please read each item carefully then, for each one, circle the number that best applies to you						
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always
I wish that I were more muscular	1	2	3	4	5	6
I think I would feel more confident if I had more muscle mass	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel guilty if I miss a weight-training session	1	2	3	4	5	6
Other people think I work out with weights too often	1	2	3	4	5	6
I think that I would look better if I gained 10 pounds in bulk	1	2	3	4	5	6
I think about taking anabolic steroids	1	2	3	4	5	6
I think that I would feel stronger if I gained a little more muscle mass	1	2	3	4	5	6
I think that my weight-training schedule interferes with other aspects of my life	1	2	3	4	5	6
I think that my arms are not muscular enough	1	2	3	4	5	6
I think that my chest is not muscular enough	1	2	3	4	5	6
I think that my legs are not big enough	1	2	3	4	5	6
I lift weights to build up muscle	1	2	3	4	5	6
I use protein or energy supplements	1	2	3	4	5	6
I drink weight-gain or protein shakes	1	2	3	4	5	6

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I try to consume as many calories as I can in a day	1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Using the following scale please select a number that comes closest to how you feel:					
	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
At parties or other social events, I compare my physical appearance to the physical appearance of others	1	2	3	4	5
The best way for a person to know if they are overweight or underweight is to compare their body size to the body sizes of others	1	2	3	4	5
At parties or other social events, I compare how I am dressed to how other people are dressed	1	2	3	4	5
Comparing your "looks" to the "looks" of others is a bad way to determine if you are attractive or unattractive	1	2	3	4	5
In social situations, I sometimes compare my body size to the body sizes of other people	1	2	3	4	5

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How often do you think the following?					
	Completely disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Completely agree
I would like my body to look like the men who appear in TV shows and films	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that clothes look better on men who are in good physical shape	1	2	3	4	5
Music videos that show men who are in good physical shape make me wish I were in better physical shape	1	2	3	4	5
I do not wish to look like the male models who appear in magazines	1	2	3	4	5
I tend to compare my body to TV and film stars	1	2	3	4	5
Photographs of physically fit men make me wish that I had better muscle tone	1	2	3	4	5
I often read magazines and compare my appearance to the male models	1	2	3	4	5
I often find myself comparing my physique to that of athletes pictured in magazines	1	2	3	4	5
I wish I looked like the men pictured in magazines who model underwear	1	2	3	4	5

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Please circle the response that best captures your own experiences					
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
I've felt pressure from my friends to be muscular/ and or lean	1	2	3	4	5
I've noticed a strong message from my friends to have a muscular and/or lean body	1	2	3	4	5
I've felt pressure from my family to be more muscular and/or lean	1	2	3	4	5
I've noticed a strong message from my family to have a muscular and/or lean body	1	2	3	4	5
I've felt pressure from people I've dated to be more muscular and/or lean	1	2	3	4	5
I've noticed a strong message from people I've dated to be more muscular and/or lean	1	2	3	4	5
I've felt pressure from the media (eg, TV, magazines) to be more muscular and/or lean	1	2	3	4	5
I've noticed a strong message from the media to be more muscular and/or lean	1	2	3	4	5

Appendices

<p>The following questions are concerned with the past four weeks (28 days) only. Please read each question carefully and answer all questions. Remember they refer to the past four weeks (28 days) only</p>						
	No days	1-5 days	6-12 days	13-15 days	23-27 days	Every day
Have you been deliberately <u>trying</u> to limit the amount of food you eat to influence your shape or weight (whether or not you have succeeded)?						
Have you had a definite fear that you might gain weight?						
Have you felt fat?						
Have you been trying to lose weight?						
Has your <u>weight</u> influenced how you think about (judge) yourself as a person?						
Has your <u>shape</u> influenced how you think about (judge) yourself as a person?						

<p>For each question, please answer in the box on the right.</p> <p>Remember these questions only refer to the past four weeks (28 days)</p>	
Over the past 28 days, how many <u>times</u> have you eaten what other people would regard as an <u>unusually large</u> amount of food (given the circumstances)?	
On how many of these times did you have a sense of having lost control over your eating (at the time you were eating)?	
Over the past 28 days, on how many <u>DAYS</u> have such episodes of overeating occurred (ie, you have eaten an unusually large amount of food <u>and</u> have had a sense of loss of control at the time)?	
Over the past 28 days, how many <u>times</u> have you made yourself sick (vomit) as a means of controlling your shape or weight?	

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Over the past 28 days, how many <u>times</u> have you taken laxatives as a means of controlling your shape and weight?	
Over the past 28 days, how many <u>times</u> have you exercised in a “driven” or “compulsive” way as a means of controlling your weight, shape, amount of fat or to burn off calories?	

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<p>Listed below are a number of statements about the way you feel. Circle the number which corresponds best with the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.</p> <p>Answer how you actually feel about the statement not how you think you should feel. Also, indicate how you feel about yourself <u>most of the time</u></p>				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel that I'm a person of worth at least on an equal basis with others	1	2	3	4
I feel that I have a number of good qualities	1	2	3	4
All in all I am inclined to feel that I'm a failure	1	2	3	4
I am able to do things as well as other people	1	2	3	4
I feel that I do not have much to be proud of	1	2	3	4
I take a positive attitude toward myself	1	2	3	4
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself	1	2	3	4
I wish I could have more respect for myself	1	2	3	4
I certainly feel useless at times	1	2	3	4
At times I think that I am no good at all	1	2	3	4

<p>Please rate the following statements as true or false</p>			
It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged			True False
I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way			True False
There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right			True False

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No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener	True	False
There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone	True	False
I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake	True	False
I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget	True	False
I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable	True	False
I have never been annoyed when people expressed ideas very different from my own	True	False
There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others	True	False
I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favours of me	True	False
I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings	True	False

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Please rate your agreement with the following statements										
	0 = Very strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 = Very strongly agree
I really don't like fat people much										
I don't have many friends that are fat										
I tend to think that people who are overweight are a little untrustworthy										
Although some fat people are surely smart, in general, I think they tend not to be quite as bright as normal weight people										
I have a hard time taking fat people too seriously										
Fat people make me somewhat uncomfortable										
If I were an employer looking to hire, I might avoid hiring a fat person										
I feel disgusted with myself when I gain weight										
One of the worst things that could happen to me would be if I gained 25 pounds										
I worry about becoming fat										
People who weigh too much could lose at least some part of their weight through a little exercise										
Some people are fat because they have no willpower										
Fat people tend to be fat pretty much through their own fault										

What do you think about your own appearance?

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Does the way you think or feel about your appearance have any impact on your life?

What do you think would provide support to men who were concerned with their appearance?

Finally, please tell us a bit about yourself.	
How old are you?	_____ (years)
How would you describe your sexuality?	
How would you identify ethnically?	
What is your nationality?	

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Appendix D: Edited and missing values from data screening of Study 1

Matching incorrect participant IDs.

1. One of the participants JAY78 (post) was 23 years old. There was only one pre questionnaire that this could have been (the only 23 year old; TW87). There were no pre questionnaires that were 22 (in case participant had birthday in between pre/post). Looking at the handwriting confirmed TW87 was the same participant who gave the ID JAY78.
2. The other participant MAR11 was 20 years old. Of the 6 pre questionnaires this could have been (i.e., from participants who took part UWE and were either 19 or 20) only one's handwriting, other demographics and group number matched: ID JRG05.
3. Other participants data was unmatchable and therefore was excluded from the analysis as available information from group numbers, demographics and handwriting did not unambiguously confirm which participant answered which.

Edited responses

The following two responses were out of the normal ranges of responses and required editing.

1. The first was for participant SPSSID: 79 who put 112 for *B1* which is beyond the expected range for this response (0-28). This item, *B1*, asks: "Over the past 28 days, how many times have you eaten what other people would regard as an unusually large amount of food (given the circumstances)?". As the participant has answered 18 days for the 6th item of this variable (*B6*): "how many times have you exercised in a driven or compulsive way as a means of controlling your weight, shape or amount of fat or to burn off calories?" it is clear the participant is reporting some binging behaviour. Therefore the value of 112 was changed to 12 as it looks like a typing error in qualtrics.
2. Secondly, for participant SPSS ID:266 the response inputted was 13 for item *Pres5* which was also beyond the response scales. This was changed to "never" or 1 as the participant had answered 1 for all other items in this on this variable.
3. Finally the responses to items *B1* to *B6* were open ended and many participants answered in words rather than numbers. These were changed to their corresponding numerical value. For instance "never", "none" and "zero" were all changed to 0.

Missing data

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The following were missing data in the dataset:

1. The response on item *DMS9* for participant SPSSID: 6.
2. The response on item *BA8* for participant SPSSID: 9.
3. The response on item *Comp3* for participant SPSSID: 30.
4. The response on item *B_Int5* for participant SPSSID: 239
5. The response on item *DSM15* for participant SPSSID: 246.
6. The response on item *DSM15* for participant SPSSID: 247.

Dealing with outliers

As can be seen from table 1, there were three outcome variables that had outlier responses. Inspection of the data points revealed these were the following outliers:

1. Participant SPSSID2's score on body appreciation: 1.25
2. Participant SPSSID274's score on DMSBehaviour: 5.50
3. Participant SPSSID74's score on Eating pathology: 41

Table 1

Minimum and maximum Z scores for outcome variables.

	BodyFat Dissatisfaction	BodyA ppreciation	MeanD MS_Attitudes	MeanDM S_Behaviours	Eating Pathology	App_C omparisons	Intern alization	Pre ssures
M in	-1.22	-3.74*	-1.84	-1.00	-1.02	-2.29	-2.75	- 1.82
M a	2.69	1.99	2.08	3.31*	3.53*	2.47	2.04	2.99
x								

As z score value is beyond +/- 3.29 the data point is an outlier.

SquareRoot and Log10 transformations were performed on all variables in the dataset in order to see if outliers improved. As can be seen from Tables 2 and 3 one outcome variable (Body appreciation) still had outliers and the transformations resulted in new outliers on another outcome variable (Internalization).

Table 2

Minimum and maximum Z scores for squareRoot transformed outcome variables

	BodyFat Dissatisfaction	BodyA ppreciation	MeanD MS_Attitudes	MeanDM S_Behaviours	Eating Pathology	App_C omparisons	Intern alization	Pre ssures
M in	-1.40	-4.51*	-2.20	-1.12	-1.72	-2.68	-3.34*	- 2.07

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M	2.33	1.82	1.82	2.64	2.48	2.15	1.82	2.52
a								
x								

As z score value is beyond +/- 3.29 the data point is an outlier.

Table 3

Minimum and maximum Z scores for Log10 transformed outcome variables

	BodyFat Dissatisfaction	BodyA ppreciation	MeanD MS_Attitudes	MeanDM S_Behaviours	Eating Pathology	App_C omparisons	Intern alizati on	Pre ssur es
M	-1.58	-5.49*	-2.63	-1.23	-2.3	-3.13	-4.08*	-
in								2.33
M	2.00	1.64	1.55	2.20	1.92	1.84	1.60	2.10
a								
x								

As z score value is beyond +/- 3.29 the data point is an outlier.

Finally as transformations on the outliers did not result in any improvement, the original outliers were 'cleaned'. Specifically, as mentioned, SPSSID2 had the lowest score of body appreciation compared to the other participants (1.25 vs Exp M=3.57, SD=.713.35) so this was changed to 1 below the next lowest 1.91. Similarly, SPSSID274's score on DMSBehaviour was changed from 5.50 to 4.51 and SPSSID74's score on Eating pathology which was changed from 41 to 38.

Appendix E: Intervention script

Session 1

Key: Session X

1. Activity X title

- a. Activity Xa *instructions by facilitator*
 - i. [Specific activity]

1. Overview, introduction, ice breaker, rules & commitment

- a. Programme overview: Hello everyone. *As you know today you're here to experience a psychological intervention that aims to improve wellbeing. In the next two sessions (inc. today's and next week's seminars) we're going to go through one such intervention that aims to improve concerns with appearance (aka body image). In the sessions we are going to discuss appearance pressures men face as well as practise resisting them.*

Adherence (1= none; section was skipped, 10=Perfect adherence):

- b. *Please respect each other's opinion and keep what we say confidential. As you know, these sessions are being recorded to make sure I run the sessions correctly. I hope that's ok.*

Adherence (1= none; section was skipped, 10=Perfect adherence):

- c. *So I'm Glen and am running these sessions because of my interest in men's body image concerns. I'm interested in this professionally, as part of my PhD, but also personally as someone who has not always felt comfortable in their skin. As researchers we know that there are appearance pressures on men. So to start off can we each say our names and an appearance pressure that annoys us? For instance, it could be some of the headlines on a Men's Health front cover (e.g., "Get a six pack in six minutes") or how about airbrushing of models. I'll start and mine is 'AB fix' cream.*

- i. [Members give names & answers]

Adherence (1= none; section was skipped, 10=Perfect adherence):

- d. *Previous experience shows that this intervention will be more successful if we fully take part, complete the home exercises which I will explain about later and keep an open mind. So please can we each say why we think it might be a good idea to participate in these groups?*

I'll start- I am happy to give this a try even if I am a little embarrassed because if I can make myself more confident it will be worth it. I also know that the more honest we are the more fun these groups will be. Right, who is next?

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- i. [Members offer some commitment]
Adherence (1= none; section was skipped, 10=Perfect adherence):
2. Define the appearance standard men are expected to meet
 - a. *What do you think society tells us the perfect man should look like? Think of his hair, height, skin etc. Could someone write these on the flipchart?*
 - i. [One member writes other member's attributes on FLIPCHART].
 - b. *So in body image research we call this the male appearance ideal. Has anyone got a better name?*
 - i. [Group discusses and decides on name. Leader crosses out perfect man and writes male appearance ideal on flipchart]
 - c. *It's important here to note the difference between the healthy ideal and the [name assigned to male appearance ideal]. The healthy ideal is the way our body looks when we are doing the things that are good for our mental and physical wellbeing. So this would include exercise and eating a nutritious diet but also being appropriately involved in social/ academic life, eating for pleasure, appreciating our body for what it can do etc. The point to remember here is that for many people they can be perfectly healthy but not match the standards of the [male ideal]. So this intervention isn't about encouraging people to eat junk food and never exercising. Instead we want everyone to be as healthy and happy as they can be.*
 - d. *Is the [male ideal] always the gold standard of attractiveness? Can you think of a time when the perfect man didn't have to look like this?*
 - i. [Members offer answers]
 - e. *Where do you think this standard, the [male ideal], came from?*
 - i. [Members offer answers]
 - f. *How is the [male ideal] promoted to us? Who/what tells us that this is ideal?*
 - i. [Members offer answers]
 - g. *Has any of you ever had a comment about your appearance from your friends, family or partner? If so, how were you feeling when that happened?*
 - i. [Members offer answers]
 - h. *How do you think appearance messages from the media make men feel about their appearance?*
 - i. [Members offer answers]
 - i. *How much airbrushing do you think these images of men in the media have?*
 - i. [Members offer answers]

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- j. *About the airbrushing – what does it say about the male fitness and fashion models that they have to be airbrushed to be included in the magazine?*
 - i. [Members offer answers]
 - k. *What about the people that do the airbrushing? The editors and photographers. Do you think they meet the [male ideal]?*
 - i. [Members offer answers]
 - l. *What does society tell us will happen if we look like the [male ideal]?*
 - i. [Members offer answers]
 - m. *And would these things actually happen if we did look like the [male ideal]? Think of celebrities who embody the [male ideal] do they have perfect lives?*
 - i. [Members offer answers]
 - n. *So, is the [male ideal] really ideal then? Are there other ways of being happy, healthy and successful?*
 - i. [Members offer answers]
3. Discuss costs associated with pursuing [male ideal]
 - a. *Now let's make a list about the costs of pursuing the [male ideal]. So costs can harm our psychological-, physical-, academic-, and social-wellbeing? [Leader may need to counter the false idea that the ideal is health/fitness motivating. It is not as the ideal is unrealistic, and many aspects like head hair amount and facial symmetry are not within an individual's control].*
 - b. [Members write down costs using the Workbook Wk 1 Costs List]. [Prompts:] E.g., it's harder to put up your hand at school when we think we're fat. Or what about our self-esteem. Or how about the side effects of steroids? [Elaborate on side effects if appropriate].
 - c. *What were you thinking/feeling when you made the lists?*
 - i. [Members discuss]
 - d. *Now can everyone share a cost with the group?*
 - i. [Members share a cost].
 - e. *If many men are preoccupied with these issues what does it cost us a society?*
 - i. [Members offer answers]
 - f. *So with all these costs, who actually benefits from society pursuing the [male ideal]? Who makes money from this?*
 - i. [Members offer answers]
 - g. *Let's go through this then. Who among us owns a magazine that sells copies by making men feel crap about their bodies?*
 - i. [Members offer answers]
 - h. *Which one of us will get rich by selling steroids, diet pills or hair transplants?*
 - i. [Members offer answers]

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- i. [Members offer answers]
 - i. *Who owns a porn/fashion/ gym company?*
 - i. [Members offer answers]
 - j. *To review. Are we personally part of the group that are benefiting? And given the costs we mentioned, does it make sense to try and look like the [male ideal]? To finish this section let's each of us say one statement about why pursuing the [male ideal] doesn't make sense.*
 - i. [Members offer answers]
4. *Teach challenge 'appearance ideal endorsing talk'.*
- a. *We have spent time noting how the media and other people pressure us to pursue the [male ideal]. But what about how we ourselves place this pressure on us? Can you think of anyways in which we do this (even without knowing it)? How do the statements that we mentioned keep the [male ideal] ideal/going? E.g., I need to tone up.*
 - i. [Members offer answers]
 - b. *What can we do to stop this talk?*
 - i. [Members offer answers]
 - c. *How would it help you and others if you stopped talking like this?*
 - i. [Members offer answers]
5. *Behavioural challenge exercise:*
- Is there anything that you want to do but don't because of appearance concerns? For example, dancing at a party, gelling hair or getting changed in the communal bits of the changing room? Now, let's all try and do the thing that you mentioned at least once. Can we all commit to doing this at least twice during the following week? Doing this should help increase your confidence and disprove any worries you may have. If yes, please share your plans with the rest of the group.*
- i. [Members share plans and completes the Workbook Wk 1 Behavioural Challenge Plan]
6. *Home exercises (Adolescent Letter & Mirror Exercise):*
- a. *Adolescent letter: During the next week could you write a letter giving advice to a teenage boy who really hates his appearance. Write about the costs of pursuing the [male ideal] and how he could resist these. Please bring the letter next week. I would really recommend doing this as I have done this and was surprised at how passionate I felt about helping this younger person.*
 - i. [Members offer commitment and completes the Workbook Wk 1 Adolescent Letter for homework]
 - b. *Final exercise is to stand in front of a mirror and write down 15 positive things about your body. Some of these can be functional (e.g., I like my ability to dance like a boss). Some should be about appearance. As strange as this exercise might seem I would again*

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encourage you to give it a go. When I did this I was surprised at how I felt saying something positive. It made me feel good.

- i. [Members offer commitment and completes Workbook Wk 1 Mirror Exercise for homework]
- c. *Is everyone ok with these tasks? Please remember to try these activities as you might be surprised how positive they make you feel. These tasks are supposed to be fun so feel free to discuss them with each other.*
- 7. *Close: Lastly, please can everyone say one last thing about the intervention? Something you liked, learned, you wanted to say but couldn't etc. I'll start. Today I really liked pointing out how magazine editors are the only people that benefit from front covers like Men's Health.*
 - i. [Members feedback]
 - b. *That's it for today. Thanks very, very, much. Have a good week and I'll see you here next week.*

Session 2

- 1. *Overview:*
 - a. *Thanks everyone for coming today and welcome back. Today's session is about further exploring the costs of the [male ideal] and how we can resist pressures to attain this. Before we do this, can we each say we are going to keep an open mind and take part in the intervention this week? I'll start....*
 - i. [Members offer commitment]
- 2. *Review home assignments*
 - a. *Letter: Last week you were asked if you would be willing to write a letter giving advice to a teenage boy who is suffering with body image concerns. If you are happy to, could you share this letter with the rest of the group? I'll start...*
 - i. [Members feedback]. If member doesn't have a letter ask them to state the points they would make in a letter.
 - b. *Thanks very much. I thought your letters were all great.*
 - c. *Behavioural challenge exercise Last week I asked you to do something you wouldn't normally do. How did that go? Did you find the exercise useful and did you learn anything from it? (If p' didn't do an exercise - ask what barriers they encountered to doing the exercises).*
 - i. [Members feedback]
 - d. *Great job. As you probably noticed, it was challenging to complete the exercise at first, but it gets easier the more often that you engage in these challenges. So we would recommend that you continue with challenging in future, after these seminars.*

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- e. *Mirror: The last task we asked you to do was to stand in front of a mirror and list some of your positive qualities. How did it go?*
 - i. [Members feedback]. Prompts: *How did you feel? Did you find it challenging?*
- f. *Why is it so difficult to compliment ourselves? How can we teach younger boys there is a difference between confidence and arrogance and that being confident is good?*
 - i. [Members offer answers]
- g. *Can we now each go around the room and say one of the aspects we like about ourselves (try not to pick easier ones e.g., the colour of my eyes). I'll start...*
 - i. [Members offer answers]
- h. *OK let's do that again but if you gave a physical quality give an emotional quality this time and vice versa. I'll start...*
 - i. [Members offer answers]
3. *Engage in role plays*
 - a. *Now for role plays. Each of us will play a person obsessed with pursuing the [male ideal]. The other person's job is to convince them that they should not pursue it. Feel free to mention any of the costs we discussed last week or in your letters. For instance one of you could play someone who is obsessed with steroids in order to get bulked up, or someone who is looking to get an expensive hair transplant because their worried about going bald or someone who avoids eating lunch and dinner because they think they're overweight. If you are playing the person obsessed feel free to play them over the top so that it's a bit more fun. After this, we will then swap roles. So let's use the next 5 minutes to work out your strategy for each role-play.*
 - i. [Members plan role play in pairs]. Prompts: steroid obsessive, dieting man.
 - b. *So how did that go? How did it feel to hear us sound like that? How did it feel to play the obsessed role?*
 - i. [Members feedback]
4. *Top 10 list*
 - a. *We have talked about some ways to resist statements that endorse the [male ideal]. We would like you to generate a top-10 list of things boys/men can do as individuals to resist the [male ideal]. What can you avoid, say or do to battle the [male ideal]? This could be referred to as 'body activism'. Let's use the next 5-10 minutes to plan these out.*
 - i. [Members plan body activism and completes Worksheet 2: Top 10 List]

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- b. *What are some of the ideas that you came up with? Everyone please share two items.*
 - i. [Members share]
5. *Future pressure to change appearance*
 - a. *Now let's each of us think of a future pressure to change our appearance. This could be short- or long- term. For example think of going to the beach, seeing old friends/family, going to a wedding etc. Now lets workout how to respond to these pressures when/if they happen. This may seem strange but it is often easier to come up with responses ahead of time so that you are prepared to deal with these pressures when they happen. If you get stuck, we can all brainstorm together. .*
 - i. [Members offer responses]
6. *Quick comebacks to [male ideal] statements*
 - a. *Now I am going to say a statement that endorses the [male ideal] and each of you need to explain why you disagree with it and why it's a bad idea.*
 - b. *I really want a six pack*
 - i. [One member offers response]
 - c. *I look so scrawny*
 - i. [One member offers response]
 - d. *Bald men aren't attractive to women*
 - i. [One member offers response]
 - e. *Short men are angry and aggressive (short man syndrome)*
 - i. [One member offers response]
7. *Self-Affirmation Exercise (encourage positive body talk)*
 - a. *We think it's a good idea to continue with challenging the [male ideal] even after these seminars. So it might be a good idea for you to mention some of the things you like about your body to other people, to do the mirror exercise we did for homework and to refuse to refer to say anything negative about your appearance. Does anyone else have any ideas of how you can act more positively about your body?*
 - i. [Members offer answers]
 - b. *Let's go around the group to commit to at least one exercise.*
 - i. [Member offer commitment]
8. *Close:*
 - a. *Lastly, please can everyone say one last thing about this intervention? Something you liked, learned, you wanted to say but couldn't etc. I'll start. Today, I really liked advice in your letters.*
 - i. [Members feedback]
 - b. *Please take time now to complete this questionnaire [hands out questionnaire].*
 - i. [Members spend 10 – 15 minutes completing questionnaire].

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- c. *That's it for today. Thanks very, very, much. If you have any questions or comments contact details are on the debrief, remember.*

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Appendix F: Excerpt of transcription file from Study 1

First part of men's body image intervention with university-aged men (18-24 years old) run by myself (Glen Jankowski) who is also the transcriber with Pseudonyms (e.g., G=Glen (researcher) etc.)	
	[00.00 – 0.18; chattering]
G	So yeah the session has been used for women, a lot, particularly in this university and as you might know some women really struggle with body image concerns, which is any concern about your appearance, um, but also some men struggle as well and there are, there is a lot of research that shows men, some men, face appearance pressures so we're trying to figure out if this intervention has any use whatsoever with men and this is why you're here today. Um after next week's session, if you come, which I hope you do, there's a feedback form and I'd appreciate it if you'd say what you liked about the intervention, what you didn't and whether you think it will be any use. It's not my intervention so I won't be offended if you're not happy with it but please um you know say, say what you feel um all it involves I er just discussing in a group, like we are, any appearance pressures that men face as well as how to resist them. Um and I'll be leading that discussion. Um so I think the first thing to do is an ice breaker, they say, they say it's an ice breaker it's um to identify any appearance pressure for men that you find annoying. And I'll start. Um, I went into Boots last month and they've got this new product out it's called Ab Fix and Pecs, Pec Fix have you heard of it?
Group	No
G	Good. Because it's crap.
Group	[laughs]
G	But it's to tone up your abs and your pecs so these firming creams that they used to use with, marketed at women, they're ineffective. They don't do anything and you know my abs and pecs or whatever don't need to be fixed. So that, that, pissed me off. Anyone want to start?
PAUL	I'm going to have a go at Diet Coke, I think.
Group	[laughs]
G	Yeah? What is about Coke?
PAUL	Um, well, yeah I find it annoying that men get objectified and more annoying still is when I mention it women seem to get annoyed that I feel men are being, object-, objectified. It's like 'ohh we get it much worse'.
G	Yeah
PAUL	[mock voice] but it's [male objectification] happening right there.
G	Yeah, yeah absolutely. Um, Jean Kilbourne, she talks, she's documented objectification in the media a lot and she says that this isn't the kind of equality we

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	have are hoping for. So even though men are more objectified, it's, it's not a good thing just because women have been for so long. It's really good point, thank you. Um sorry what was your name
PAUL	PAUL
Group	[give names; JORDAN joins group 02.48 – 03.44]
G	OK [JORDAN] please take a seat . OK. So I don't know if you know I've just explained that this is um, this seminar and next week's seminar are two joint um two joint seminars to go over a intervention to improves somebody's health using psychology. And in particular to improve their, it's to improve or to try and improve men who feel concerned about their appearance and um to help them resist their appearance pressures in the media. Er so this programme has been tried and tested and developed with women, it's really successful but hasn't been tested with men so this is why we're trying it out. If you're not happy with it or you don't think it works feel free to say
Jordan	Nah
G	...and we can um you know adapt it or scrap it or whatever. It's not my programme so I'm not invested in it or whatever. SO we're just about to go around the group and say one appearance pressure that particularly annoys us. I mentioned there's this firming cream that they've started to market towards men for abs. And PAUL mentioned Diet Coke, the advert, which objectifies men. So do you want to go next PHILLIP? Is that ok?
PHILLIP	Um, I haven't really got any to be honest.
G	Cool. OK. What about airbrushing images or...?
PHILLIP	Yeah
G	[laughs] There's nothing um, that's a bit of a leading question to be honest isn't it?
Group	[laughs]
G	Alright, fair enough. PETER?
PETER	Can you give me some time to think about it?
G	Yes. That's fine. Of course. Jordan?
Jordan	Erm what do you mean like in the media stuff like that?
G	So any pressure directed towards men to change their appearance to put on muscle or to not go grey or not get wrinkles.
JORDAN	Yeah, er Men's Health magazine. It's like they always put on the really like
G	/yes/
Jordan	You know like the buff ones and they shouldn't do that. Not really.
G	Yes. Not only that but they also put on loads of little bylines
Jordan	Yeah
G	Saying 'lose your gut'

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Jordan	Yeah
G	'Abs in six minutes'
?	[laughs]
G	<p>It's ridiculous. Yes, we, we were saying in the last session that we think they should come with a little warning label like with cigarettes saying they're toxic. Because I think they are.</p> <p>Erm, thank you. Erm ROBIN?</p>
ROBIN	<p>Er I think my number one pet hate has to be hairless men. They don't really exist technically because we should all be hairy yet all in the media they have no hair whatsoever and they're usually a slight bit of stubble but other than that. It's just, I mean come on, like the chances of, like say for instance, if I had the body for it, I'd never be able to get a modelling because they'd like photoshop every single bit of hair off me. Which is, it's such a pain for guys, like 'guys don't look like that women, they look hairer'.</p>
G	Yeah. Yeah. Absolutely so it's not realistic.
ROBIN	Yeah
G	Um we'll talk about that later as well. Thank you. Um Jason?
Jason	<p>I, I just hate like all the ads that come up on the internet and youtube and stuff. That just like stuff that I've never look at like things like all the protein things and stuff. It's like '<u>I don't care</u>'. I don't want to see them. Like, fair enough if you're interested in that kind of stuff it's like I haven't chosen to be like shown this. Like if I'm going to pick up a Men's Health magazine you'd expect to see it. Like all this stuff like about getting fit and stuff</p>
G	Sure
Jason	Obviously by being on a website you know there's going to be ads but obviously it's like selecting people to show certain things like because like.
G	<p>Sure. So because of your age and your gender it's targeted you and it's not interesting. So with Men's Health you choose to buy it, so maybe there's some agency there but you're just on...yeah absolutely. That's a really good point, thank you. MARK?</p>
MARK	<p>I kind of feel the same way as PHILLIP in the sense that, it, I don't know, it doesn't really bother me that much because I just choose to ignore it, in the sense that I know it's there but it doesn't affect me so therefore I don't get annoyed by it I just ignore it I just/</p>
G	/That's the ideal and we want all men to feel like that. Some men do get bothered by it and it is an impact and it impacts for some men [inaudible]. Um so that's, we all want, we want all men to do it and I think it's great that you are and it doesn't mean you're not going to be useful today.

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MARK	If I was to say something it's the peer pressure from other people who are, who are affected by that they put a lot of pressure on you to be like that because coming from them it's the ideal way to look.
G	Sure, yeah.
MARK	So I'd that's the only thing that I'd say.
G	They don't necessarily think that it's not the ideal for everyone.
MARK	Yeah exactly [inaudible].
G	Did you want to say anything or...?
PHILLIP	No he's pretty much said exactly how I feel. I just don't really care.
Group	[laughs]
G	And that's great. It's actually quite, when you think of some of the pressures that men face like looking at Men's Health or an advert for protein shakes whatever it's I think its quite remarkable that some men don't internalize them and we want all men to to feel like that. And women of course. OK thank you. Erm so this intervention, when I looked at the script originally because it's not mine I did think some of the activities were quite corny and I was worried that you know reading them and thinking how am I going to discuss these kinds of pressures with other men. It didn't seem quite normal. <u>But</u> running earlier, practising it before, I actually believe that doing and you know keeping an open mind and trying it actually it seems ok. Um so doing it rather than thinking about it is better. If that makes any sense. So I would ask you to please keep an open mind, give it a go and erm even if it is corny give it a try. So first task is to identify what society tells us the perfect man looks like. And we've already mentioned some of the aspects already. Does somebody want to be the chart scribe please? No pressure.
ROBIN	I'll do it.
G	Thank you. So if you can write down different aspects that we all identify.
Jason	Can you go ahead and put hairless?
?	Exactly.
ROBIN	And anyone else?
PAUL	Er hairless but not bald.
?	Yes [laughs]
G	The last guy in the session said 'nobody likes bald men' so I went to write it...
ROBIN	Wait as in bold as in 'Mark' or...? I forget the difference.
PHILLIP	A, a.
MARK	[Put in] brackets stubble.
ROBIN	Oh yeah
MARK	Stubble is allowed.
?	Stubble is allowed but only [inaudible]

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?	[laugh]
MARK	Only, only, a five Mark'clock shadow is allowed.
ROBIN	Ummm
PHILLIP	Muscle?
ROBIN	Oh muscle, obviously.
G	DO you guys want to carry on and I'll just update you [the new arrival] if that's ok?
MARK	Muscle, er,
PHILLIP	Tall as well.
?	Ah yeah tall
PHILLIP	They're usually massive guys ain't they?
ROBIN	Right, so muscle, tall. Um I'm kinda tempted to say short hair but like
Group	Yeah, yeah
MARK	That's what I would say
ROBIN	Shaved, sort of, shaved, short hair
PHILLIP	On average yeah but then you get is the odd perfume advert with/
MARK	/Yeah some guy with a huge mop
PHILLIP	/a mane
Group	[laughs]
ROBIN	There's the odd one like Chris Hemsworth or Robert Downey Jr gets away with it but
PAUL	Like Tarzan
ROBIN	Um, trying to think what else. I think we've pretty much...
PHILLIP	Yeah I think that's quite
MARK	There's gotta be something about fashion actually hasn't there?
PETER	They're either well dressed or very [not dressed at all?].
MARK	Yeah
PETER	So it's
Group	[inaudible]
ROBIN	Yeah, no clothes or expensive clothes
MATTHEW	Need to put pout in aswell.
ROBIN	Pout?
MATTHEW	Yeah
ROBIN	Um, can't think of anything else.
G	Teeth?
ROBIN	Oh yeah, perfectly white teeth.
PETER	'Has teeth'
Group	[laughs]
PHILLIP	No glasses.

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MARK	Oh true. That's a good shout.
	Yes.
PHILLIP	Or sunglasses maybe.
MARK	Yes, no, no. NO.
ROBIN	Um think we've pretty much covered it. Anyone else?
G	Er face?
ROBIN	Face? They have a face.
G	So can they have a birthmark or
ROBIN	Yep
G	But any blemish is that ok?
ROBIN	No. Flawless.
G	And what about bodyfat?
ROBIN	None.
MARK	Zero percent.
PETER	The old series of adverts with Peter Kay where he did diving and...
G	[ALEX enters group; G updates him outside of session] And you might think about height aswell?
ROBIN	Yeah we done that.
?	[inaudible]
ROBIN	So hairless, muscley, tall, short hair, no clothes or expensive clothes, white teeth, no glasses
MARK	Um, big feet.
Group	[laughs]
PETER	Nobody likes a size 6 do they?
ROBIN	Big feet or no..?
MARK	Just put big feet down.
Jason	Why?
PETER	Um there is a lot of stigma with small feet.
PHILLIP	Yeah
Jason	Not, with big feet.
MARK	Big socks.
PHILLIP	Yeah if you've got big feet [laughs]
ROBIN	Erm
Jason	Airbrushed face.
ROBIN	Comes down to blemishes. I'll just put photoshop. See one of the things like 10 years ago would have been curly hair but now it's come into fashion.
MARK	No moles or anything like that either.

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ROBIN	Yeah I put it.
G	Looks good to me. Thank you. You know the funny thing is whenever we ask people what the perfect man looks like, it's, it's, all these attributes come up and it's really consistent so even if you don't hold this ideal yourself you can still say it, you can still describe it. Good, good. Ok so can you think of a time when this hasn't always been the ideal throughout history?
ROBIN	Um, probably about prehistory.
Group	[laughs]
G	When, sorry?
ROBIN	[inaudible] cavemen.
G	Yep, they were hairy I suppose. I imagine.
PHILLIP	King Henry VIII? He was always drawn as really fat.
G	Yep, yeah. He was really portly.
PETER	Because that was a sign of wealth
?	Yeah
G	Body fat you said was a sign of wealth and was a positive thing.
PETER	Like in the typical 50s it would just be a guy in a suit. Like that's all they needed.
?	Or like in the 60s it was almost cooler to be unkempt.
MARK	Oh yeah, yeah.
G	Yep. Long hair and the
?	The hippy, the hippy generation.
PAUL	Even though they probably were there still was the perfect man like that. But it wasn't as accepted.
MARK	It was versatile. Yeah.
PAUL	It wasn't as accepted because it was cool.
G	Yep, yeah. Absolutely. OK. Who tells us that this is the ideal? Where do we get this idea from?
PETER	Media?
G	In particular?
PETER	Films, music videos, magazines, adverts.
G	So a lot?
PETER	All of 'em. Pretty much everything you, there is to...
G	Absolutely. OK. Anywhere else?
MARK	Norm...obviously you just see it around you. Like go to the gym and you just see everyone like huge.
G	Yeah. Yep. Do you know gyms are weird places because they are supposed to be about health and exercise is a good thing generally but particularly the mainstream gyms are really focussing on, on this narrow ideal.

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ROBIN	It's quite funny 'cause it always works out for me because I'm like tiny compared to everyone else there's these massive guys using all the big weights and the little weights are there, always, for me.
G	Yeah
Group	[laughs]
?	[inaudible]
G	Perfect, your own gym. Um, is there a better name – we in body image research we call this the male appearance ideal is there a better name you can think of for it? The last session they came up with Super Man. That seemed to be the most popular. Would you rather Super Man or the Male Appearance Ideal?
PETER	I'd prefer the male appearance ideal. Superman implies that's still better.
G	Yes, yeah, absolutely. OK cool. Um has anyone ever had a comment about their appearance from other people?
ROBIN	Yeah
PHILLIP	Yeah
Jason	Yep
G	Yep? And who was it from?
ROBIN	Oh it's, I've, I've had it all my life just about erm being hairy. That's the same hair thing again. My flatmates are always threatening when I am asleep or when I get stupidly drunk they are going to wax my chest or something. I'm just like 'I can't help it. Have you never seen a hairy guy before? It's just like crazy'.
G	Sure. Anyone else?
PETER	I had like [inaudible] when I was 7 [?] and like the first two weeks of meeting her she was like 'god you've got such dry skin haven't you? Like it's really bad!'
Group	[inaudible] laughs
G	Erm, how does the media tell us to look like the appearance ideal? In what ways.
PHILLIP	By buying their products.
G	Yeah. So which kind of products?
PHILLIP	Erm, I suppose, like er, shampoos stuff like that, body wash.
G	Yeah yeah so there's/
PHILLIP	Protein shakes 'if you take them you'll be massive'.
MARK	Yeah
G	Yeah. And why is massive good?
PHILLIP	I don't know.
G	What do they say?
MARK	It makes you look strong and powerful.
G	Sure
MARK	Desirable

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G	Sure. And successful, maybe.
MARK	And successful.
G	OK and erm so I think adverts are a real way that the media definitely, puts pressure on us for appearance. Is there any other way you can think of? Like you mentioned the front cover of Men's Health?
ROBIN	Well, it's like, you walk into a shop and you see it even if you're not looking to buy it you'll just see it on the front shelves like these perfect guys, perfect woman [inaudible]
G	Yep, yeah.
MATTHEW	Yeah and the perfect guys kind of match the perfect woman. So you want to be that guy so you want to
G	Yeah, yeah.
Jason	Yeah you could say like maybe some guys affected by the [dark kind ?] of ads like 'right I've got to look like that guy so that those girls wanna get me'.
?	Yeah
G	Yep. I see.
ROBIN	I see like, I've got to admit this one kind of thing annoys me is that like girls think it's really creepy for guys to buy <i>Nuts</i> and <i>Zoo</i> magazines [British lads mags] and like drooling over girls who are half naked but it's perfectly fine for girls to be like 'ohhhh he's so hot, he's got his top off'. I'm like 'it's the same thing'. It really annoys me.
G	Mm yeah.
ROBIN	When it's fine for women to do it.
G	Yep. Erm have you heard of...er images of men being airbrushed before?
ROBIN	Erm well I picked up on specific, 3, the film 300 it's like only 10 of them had six packs all the rest of them were CGI-ed on.
?	[inaudible] yeah CGI
MARK	Yeah they were like/
M	Spray cans. Yeah.
G	Really? I didn't know you could airbrush videos. That's depressing.
Group	[laughs]
G	What's the film called?
ROBIN	300.
MARK	They take the mick [piss] in 'Meet the Spartans' 'cause they all have them drawn on.
ROBIN	Yeah, yeah, yeah
PHILLIP	With pens.
G	Right. So there's a parody of it?

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MARK	Yeah [inaudible]
G	So what, what does it say about the images, what does it say about the models who pose for these images that they're still airbrushed because there are, they are and it's starting to coming out.
MARK	Nobody's perfect.
G	Yeah, absolutely. So the model is pretty also close to the, is likely to be close to the male... they're going to be lean, they're going to be muscular, full head of hair, young etc but even so they're still airbrushed. And who do you think it is that is airbrushing? Who's doing it?
ROBIN	Well it's the company to start with.

Appendix G: Examples of error types found in external transcription files

Error	Transcribed as	Actual recording.
Omissions & mishearing	I: Yeah so that's a sufficiently low level of body fat and high level muscularity that you can see the muscles so they are visible so it's a combination of both and my first PhD study was coding every image of men and women in FHM and Mens Health 3 times and the vast majority were mesomorphic great um teeth.	I: Yeah so that's a sufficiently low level of body fat and high level of muscularity so that you can see the muscles so they are visible so it's a combination of <u>both</u> . And my first PhD study was coding every image of men and women in FHM and Mens Health [Gay] 3 times and the vast majority were mesomorphic. Great um teeth?
Order	R2: Bleach white all perfect all in a line. I: Great head hair amount?	R2: Bleach white. I: Great R2: All perfect all in a line. I: Head hair amount?
Incorrect meaning [no question asked]	R4: Full head of hair no receding lines or anything. I: Yeah? I: Yeah skin so not just white.	R4: Full head of hair no receding lines or anything. I: Yeah. Erm skin so not just white [but]?
Could not hear tape but I can	R2: Usually [unclear 00:06:12] as well.	R2: Usually oiled up as well [laughs].

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Appendix H: Coding of reflections during transcription from Study 1

Reflections during coding LBU Group 12 Session 1 3rd Feb

- Intervention doesn't only endorse capitalism. So do the participants. So do I. Its hard not to. I'm conscious not to blame this on the intervention purely...but that said the intervention and I should be better than society. That's the aim, not to replicate but to change etc.
- This is so interesting and I am glad – in the end – that these were transcribed.
- Participants really get a bit angry about the appearance pressures and it is such a testament to Body project M that this happens. Really. I do want to praise the intervention as it works well.
- Its bizarre how they do bloody have body image issues even though they and others might say else wise. They do, they do and I'm not sure how to stress this enough.

Reflections during coding LBU Group 13 Session 1 3rd Feb

- I really want to do justice to my participants and not vilify them. Some of the appearance pressures they talk about from women are real and valid i.e., the need for men not to be short.
- R1 in this group said "and I don't want to sound offensive but White" (I thought I remembered saying that wasn't offensive and of course he could say this but this isn't on the transcription). I remember him being of colour.
- God it's sad one participant doesn't take pics of himself
- One of the theme to write up (how we are told everyone invests in this ideal but actually we don't).
- Another session in which participants liked the intervention quite a bit ☺

Reflections during coding LBU Group 14 Session 1 4th Feb

- Theme idea: what the ideal man looks like (like the ideal identified by body image but more specific and even narrower). Also very very consistent and shows how exploring men's body image really cannot be limited to bodyfat and muscularity dissatisfaction. Some minor variation facial hair or tattooing between groups but these are minor aspects of appearance.
- Participants do know a fair bit about appearance pressures: they come from businesses. Which makes me wonder that body image researchers are behind – participants know where to look (often unprompted) as the originators of appearance pressures. But we don't
- I love how I attempt to teach about intersectionality and then rant and then see blank faces and go "ok great so next" as if they get it. I feel like I have

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to be realistic about what I can teach in 90 minutes.... Some critical seeds are better than being overwhelmed with a politics rant.

- Participants body image issues again are hidden but if you dig a little.
- Interesting thing is where they do have slight body image concerns (one participant's shape up) but that it isn't a big deal. And maybe on its own its appearance as a plaything but the fact that they hate it means it is an issue. The lines between the two are blurred actually.
- There is definite coding overlap

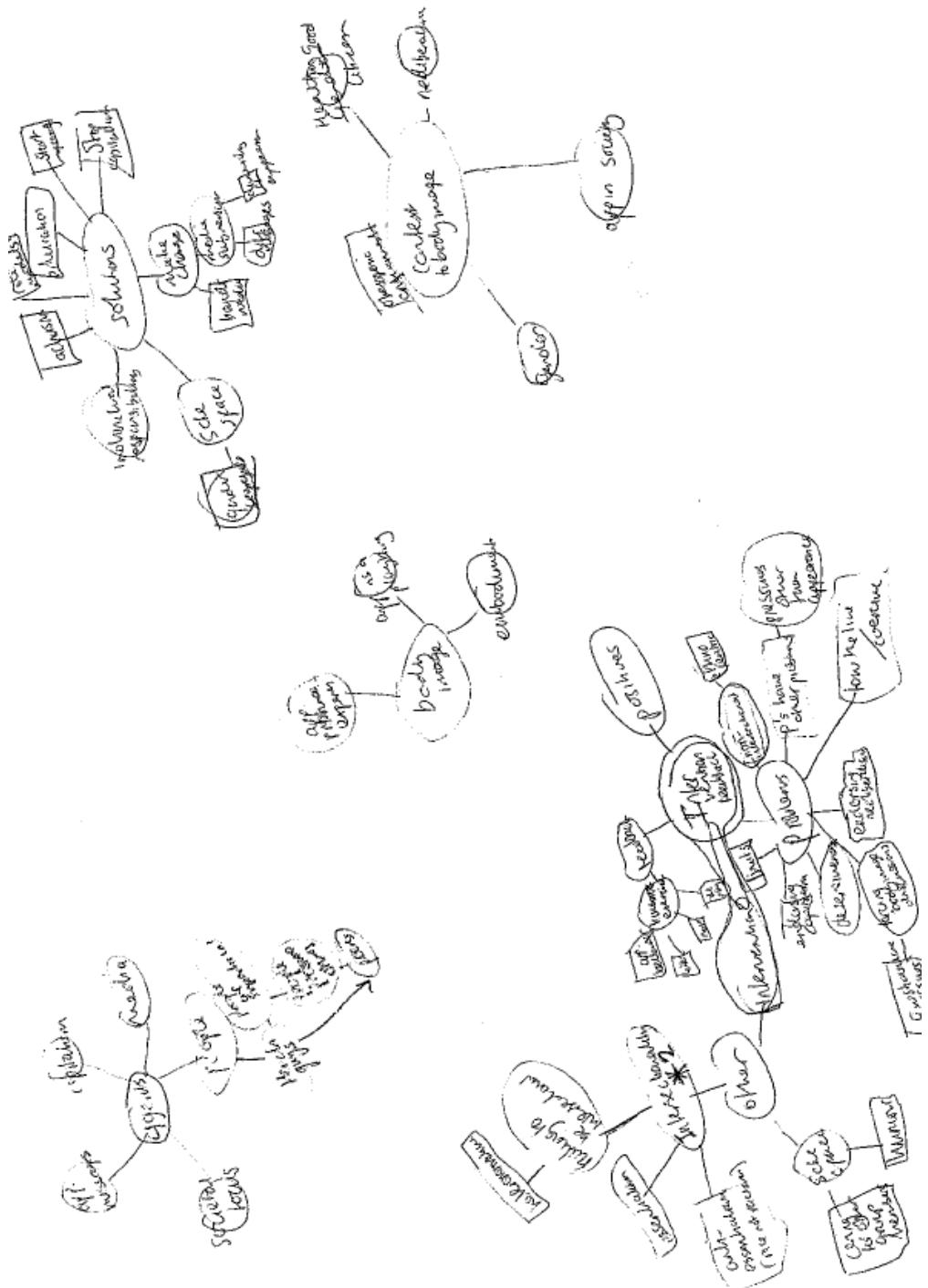
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Appendix I: Initial codes generated from thematic analysis of Study 1

- Causes
 - o Types
 - Capitalism/ consumerism
 - Media and culture is appearance potent
 - o Hard to resist
 - o Hench men
 - Competitive/ better than others
- It's not people
 - o Relationships are protective
- Healthy ideal
- Endorsing appearance ideal
 - o Nobody's perfect
 - o Obesity discourse
- Minimizing
 - o Body image concerns are not an issue
- Body image concerns are an issue
- Neoliberalism (individual choices)
- Evolutionary psychology
- Gender
 - o Gender differences
 - o Sexism
- Positioning
 - o Therapist
 - o Educator
- Intervention feedback
- Advocacy

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Appendix J: Coding map from thematic analysis of Study 1



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Appendix K: Rules for coding images, adverts and articles in Study 1 for two raters

Website type	Marketed at	Rank	URL	Source ranking
Porn websites	Gay*	1 st	www.manhub.com/	Alexa individual website ranking
		2 nd	www.gaytube.com/	Alexa individual website ranking
	Straight	1 st	xhamster.com/	Alexa UK ranking
		2 nd	www.xvideeos.com/	Alexa UK ranking
Dating websites	Gay*	1 st	gaydar.co.uk/	Alexa individual website ranking; Bolding, Davis, Sherr, Hart & Elford (2007)
		2 nd	www.adam4adam.com/	Alexa individual website ranking; Evans et al., 2010; Supakoja, 2009
	Straight	1 st	uk.match.com/	Alexa UK ranking
		2 nd	www.shagaholic.com/	Alexa UK ranking

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Appendix L: Instructions for screen capture of the websites in Study 2

Hi Amy – as discussed here is a list of the most visited websites: My suggestion would be to code the homepage of each of the websites and then any of the major tabs (but not the links at the very bottom of the page). For example scrolling down on the homepage of uk.match.com:



At the bottom of the website there are also links to other pages:



I don't think these are too numerous to code. What are your thoughts?

Also for ethics I agreed not to code 'lock and key' data which is any data that requires you to register with the website to view.

As you've done the coding before please feel free to ignore these suggestions – I'd be grateful for you to lead on this given your experience with the adolescent websites .Thanks, Glen

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Appendix M: Excerpt of Jankowski, Fawkner, Tiggemann & Slater (2014) based on Study 3

Body Image 11 (2014) 474–481



"Appearance potent"? A content analysis of UK gay and straight men's magazines

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ABSTRACT

With little actual appraisal, a more 'appearance potent' (i.e., a reverence for appearance ideals) subculture has been used to explain gay men's greater body dissatisfaction in comparison to straight men's. This study sought to assess the respective appearance potency of each subculture by a content analysis of 32 issues of the most read gay (*Attitude, Gay Times*) and straight men's magazines (*Men's Health, FHM*) in the UK. Images of men and women were coded for their physical characteristics, objectification and nudity, as were the number of appearance adverts and articles. The gay men's magazines featured more images of men that were appearance ideal, nude and sexualized than the straight men's magazines. The converse was true for the images of women and appearance adverts. Although more research is needed to understand the effect of this content on the viewer, the findings are consistent with a more appearance potent gay male subculture.

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