TURUN
YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU

THE FEELING BODY IN THE MEDIA

Affective Engagements with Body Positive Media

Kaisu Hynnä-Granberg

TURUN YLIOPISTON JULKAISUJA – ANNALES UNIVERSITATIS TURKUENSIS
SARJA – SER. B OSA – TOM. 599 | HUMANIORA | TURKU 2022

TURUN
YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU

THE FEELING BODY IN THE MEDIA

Affective Engagements with Body Positive Media

Kaisu Hynnä-Granberg

TURUN YLIOPISTON JULKAISUJA – ANNALES UNIVERSITATIS TURKUENSIS
SARJA – SER. B OSA – TOM. 599 | HUMANIORA | TURKU 2022

University of Turku

Faculty of Humanities
School of History, Culture and Arts Studies
Media Studies
Doctoral Programme in History, Culture and Arts Studies (Juno)

Supervised by

Professor Susanna Paasonen
University of Turku

Doctor of Philosophy Kata Kyrölä
University College London, UK

Reviewed by

Professor Kathleen LeBesco
Marymount Manhattan College, USA

Associate Professor Carrie A. Rentschler
McGill University, Canada

Opponent

Associate Professor Carrie A. Rentschler
McGill University, Canada

The originality of this publication has been checked in accordance with the University of Turku quality assurance system using the Turnitin OriginalityCheck service.

Cover Image: ©Johanna Naukkarinen

ISBN 978-951-29-9068-9 (PRINT)
ISBN 978-951-29-9069-6 (PDF)
ISSN 0082-6987 (Print)
ISSN 2343-3191 (Online)
Painosalama, Turku, Finland 2022

UNIVERSITY OF TURKU
Faculty of Humanities
School of History, Culture and Arts Studies
Media Studies
KAISU HYNNÄ-GRANBERG: The Feeling Body in the Media – Affective Engagements with Body Positive Media
Doctoral Dissertation, 141 pp.
Doctoral Program in History, Culture and Arts Studies (Juno)
December 2022

ABSTRACT

In contemporary neo-liberal cultures, fat and larger-than-normative bodies are often viewed as bodies in need of change. Due to constant pressure to transform, there is limited space available for the larger-than-normative subject to "simply feel" their body and its feelings. This article-based dissertation studies the affective connections of Finnish media users' bodies to body positive digital media. The study asks how body positive media allows subjects to feel their bodies instead of treating them as objects. The study shows that body positive media moves its audiences in multiple ways, making its users sense their bodies' affective rhythms and the embodied nature of digital media.

The qualitative multimethod study utilizes affect inquiry and affective methodologies to analyze the relationship between media users' bodies and mediated bodies. Through an analysis of affect as a bodily intensity and a relation between bodies and technologies, I zoom in on how material bodies are sensually and vividly felt in relation to their surroundings when in contact with body positive media. Affective methodologies refer to the choices that I have made during the study process: formulating research questions in unexpected ways, combining representation analysis or interviews with methodological choices seldom utilized, and using my own body as a resource for study. Affective methodologies create possibilities to analyze the affective pull of body positive media and the ways in which users become invested in body positive media in both normative and unexpected ways.

The dissertation focuses on four well-known cases of body positive media mostly in Finland: body positive blogs inviting their users to "simply feel" their bodies, a body positive campaign encouraging people to produce selfies of and with their larger-than-normative body, the media discussion around a fat activist theatre monologue, and body positive podcasts discussing weight loss practices and diet-culture. All four case studies showcase the multifaceted intertwinement of mediated body representations, technologies, and the bodies of media users.

The dissertation argues that (digital) body positive media negotiates space and time for the larger-than-normative subject to feel under the barriers of fat-phobic cultures. The dissertation suggests that for a larger-than-normative subject in particular, the experience of "simply feeling" is highly important. The separate cases show how bodies are continuously transformed through the affective flow of their existence in the media and in their surroundings. To emphasize these connections, the dissertation introduces the concept of *the feeling body in the media.*

In the mediatized society, bodies are increasingly lived and felt *in* the media with the media shaping understandings of the body and the body shaping understandings of the media. Making bodies aware of their feelings, as body positive media often does, can help to question widespread ideas of larger-than-normative embodiment, increase the understanding of our relationship with our bodies, and make room for more accepting relations.

KEYWORDS: body positivity, affect, emotion, larger-than-normative, fat studies, social media

TURUN YLIOPISTO
Humanistinen tiedekunta
Historian, kulttuurin ja taiteiden tutkimuksen laitos
Mediatutkimus
Kaisu Hynnä-Granberg: The Feeling Body in the Media – Affective Engagements with Body Positive Media
Väitöskirja, 141 s.
Historian, kulttuurin ja taiteiden tutkimuksen tohtoriohjelma Juno
Joulukuu 2022

TIIVISTELMÄ

Uusliberaalissa kulttuurissa normikokoista suuremmat kehot esitetään lähes poikkeuksetta muutosta kaipaavina. Jatkuvan muutospaineen takia normikokoista suuremmille on tarjolla vain vähän tilaa keskittyä ruumiillisiin tunteisiin. Tämä artikkelimuotoinen väitöskirja tarkastelee affektiivisia kytköksiä suomalaisten mediakäyttäjien kehojen ja kehopositiivisen digitaalisen median välillä. Kysyn, millaisia tuntemisen mahdollisuuksia kehopositiivinen media tarjoaa subjekteille. Mitä vaihtoehtoisia lähestymistapoja tarjotaan esineellistävän kehosuhteen tilalle. Tutkimus osoittaa, että kehopositiivinen media liikuttaa yleisöjään moninaisin tavoin: mediakäyttäjät tulevat tietoisemmiksi kehonsa affektiivisista rytmeistä ja digitaalisen median ruumiillisesta luonteesta.

Laadullinen, monimetodinen tutkimus käyttää affektiteorioita ja affektiivisia metodologioita selvittäessään, miten mediakäyttäjien kehot ja mediassa nähdyt kehot suhteutuvat toisiinsa. Affekti määrittyy tutkimuksessa kehölliseksi intensiteetiksi ja suhteeksi ruumiiden ja teknologioiden välillä. Affektin käsite mahdollistaa sen tarkastelemisen, miten kehopositiivisen median käyttäjät pääsevät mediakäytöllään kosketuksiin kehojen ja ruumiillisten tuntemustensa kanssa. Affektiivisilla metodologioilla tarkoitan niitä valintoja, joita olen tehnyt tutkimusprosessin eri vaiheissa. Olen esittänyt epätyypillisiä tutkimuskysymyksiä, yhdistänyt representaatioanalyysiä tai haastatteluja harvinaisempiin tutkimusasetelmiin ja käyttänyt omaa kehoani tutkimuksen resurssina. Affektiivisten metodologioiden avulla olen päässyt käsiksi kehopositiivisen median kutsuvuuteen ja tutkinut sitä, miten käyttäjät sitoutuvat kehopositiiviseen mediaan paitsi normatiivisilla myös odottamattomilla tavoilla.

Väitöstutkimus tarkastelee neljää tunnettua kehopositiivisen median tapausta. Analysoitu aineisto on pääasiassa suomalaista. Tarkastellut tapaukset koostuvat kehopositiivisista blogeista, jotka kutsuvat käyttäjiään "tuntemaan kehonsa", kehopositiivisesta kampanjasta, jonka painopiste on selfietuotannossa, lihavuusaktivistisen teatterimonologin ympärillä pyörineestä mediakeskustelusta ja kehopositiivisista podcasteista, joissa keskustellaan laihdutuskulttuurista ja painonhallintakäytännöistä. Kaikki tarkastellut tapaukset lisäävät ymmärrystä kehorepresentaatioiden, teknologioiden ja mediankäyttäjien kehojen yhteen kietoutumisesta.

Väitöstutkimus esittää, että (digitaalinen) kehopositiivinen media neuvottelee tilaa ja aikaa, jossa normikokoista suurempi subjekti voi keskittyä tunteisiinsa siitä huolimatta, että elää lihavuusfobisessa kulttuurissa. Väitän, että etenkin normikokoista suuremmalla subjektille tunteisiin keskittymisen mahdollisuus on merkittävä. Neljä tapausesimerkkiä osoittaa, että median ja elinympäristöjen vahvistama affektiivinen liike tuottaa jatkuvaa kehollista muutosta. Väitöskirja esittelee *tuntevan mediakehon* käsitteen, jonka läpi tätä liikettä voidaan tarkastella.

Medioidussa yhteiskunnassa medialla on yhä suurempi rooli siinä, miten tunnemme ja elämme kehomme. Media muokkaa käsityksiämme kehoistamme samalla, kun kehomme muokkaavat käsityksiämme mediasta. Kehopositiivisen median kyky lisätä keho- ja tunnetietoisuutta auttaa kyseenalaistamaan pinttyneitä käsityksiä normikokoisempaa suuremmasta kehollisuudesta ja tekee tilaa hyväksyvämmille kehosuhteille.

ASIASANAT: kehopositiivisuus, affekti, emootio, normikokoista suurempi kehollisuus, kriittinen kulttuurinen lihavuustutkimus, sosiaalinen media

Acknowledgements

Writing your dissertation in the field of humanities is often considered a solitary job. I, however, have always felt that I have a whole village of wonderful, inspiring people behind me gently nudging me onwards. This includes people both within the university community and in my private life. Thank you! Finishing this dissertation would not have been possible without you.

First, I want to thank my brilliant supervisors Kata Kyrölä and Susanna Paasonen. Susanna, you are an incredible scholar and thinker, and I will always look up to you. During the years of supervising this dissertation and my master's thesis before it, you have given me so many irreplaceable comments and suggestions. One of these, which I will surely always carry with me, had to do with the value of letting oneself be surprised by what one is studying. This was a comment that the 20-something-your-old Kaisu, writing her master's thesis on makeover movies, direly needed to hear. You have made me a much better researcher. I appreciate your generosity in inviting me along to conferences, collaborations, and what not. You are a great example of supervisorship in its multiple forms.

Kata, your work on fat embodiment and the media, as well as all your texts on affect, vulnerability, and bad feeling, have been personally very important to me and pioneering in their scholarly contexts. Although we first met not long before I started to plan this doctoral project, I have eagerly read and utilized your work in several essays throughout my bachelor's and master's studies. Not surprisingly, I was extremely happy when you agreed to be my supervisor. Your academic brilliance combined with your warmth and generosity makes you an incredible supervisor. Co-authoring the article "'Feel in your body': Fat Activist Affects in Blogs" was a real pleasure. I learnt so much from you during the process.

I am extremely grateful to the pre-examiners of this dissertation Professor Katleen LeBesco and Professor Carrie A. Rentschler for their encouraging comments and insightful views. I would also like to thank Professor Rentschler for accepting the invitation to act as the opponent in my public defence. I could not imagine a more constructive and engaged opponent.

I am grateful to the editors and reviewers of the journals that have published my work. Their feedback has been invaluable in making this dissertation what it is today.

Thank you Scribendi for proof-reading services and for making sure that all the commas and dots are in the right place.

This dissertation would not have been possible without the amazing people doing body positive and fat activist work in Finland and elsewhere. A warm thank you to the five women who agreed to talk to me about their experiences with body positive selfie-taking. A very special thank you to Raisa Omaheimo, whose activism means the world to me and who met up with me to talk about her monologue *FAT*. Thank you also to all the other people behind the blogs, podcasts, and media content that I analyze in this dissertation. You do invaluable work.

I wish to express my gratitude to Hannele Harjunen for her exceptional work on the field of fat studies in Finland. Having you as a contact has meant the world to me. Thank you, Anna Puhakka, for all our discussions on body positivity, fat activism, and academic work. It has been extremely important to know someone that shares my interests in body positivity and knows how difficult it can sometimes be to juggle with the pressures of the academia. Thank you also to Sanna Spišák, my dear colleague at Media Studies, who I got to know more closely during the final stages of this dissertation work. It is nearly impossible to describe how much your support has meant to me during these very exciting past few months.

To work on this dissertation, I have had the privilege to enjoy almost a continuous funding. From the year 2017 to 2021, I worked as a Doctoral Researcher in the Juno Doctoral Programme at the University of Turku. This allowed me to fully concentrate on my writing. I have also received grants from Jenny and Antti Wihuri Foundation, Juno Doctoral Programme, Kari Mattila's Foundation, and Otto A. Malm Foundation that have allowed me to wrap up this research as well as to start planning for a media education workshop based on the findings of this dissertation. With the help of funding from Turku University Foundation, Juno, and Academy of Finland, the last of which funded the Sexuality and Play in Media Culture research project lead by Susanna Paasonen, I have been able to attend conferences, symposiums, and summer schools in Lisbon, Sydney, Turku, Tartu, Jyväskylä, Coimbra, Shanghai, and Utrecht. My warmest greetings to all the wonderful people that I met on those trips and to everyone that was part of the Sexuality and Play project.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to all the lovely people at the Media Studies Department at the University of Turku with whom I have had the privilege to co-operate during the years of working on this dissertation. Sanna Elden-Pehrsson, Veijo Hietala, Veli-Matti Karhulahti, Tero Karppi, Heidi Keinonen, Marja-Leena Kuronen, Kimmo Laine, Jukka-Pekka Puro, Eliaana Ramula, Tommi Römpötti, Laura Saarenmaa, Matti Salakka, Jukka Sihvonen, Tanja Sihvonen, Jaakko Suominen, Jaana Teinilä, and Annamari Vänskä, you are all pure gold. A huge thank you to all the attendees at the Media Studies research seminar with whom I have had

the pleasure to discuss my research. Ihsan Asman, Mayara Araujo Caetano, Golnar Gishnizjani, Titta Karlstedt, Aleksi Rennes, Niina Oisalo, Hanna Varjakoski, Maria Vihlman, and Lin Zhang. Thank you for your solidarity, collegial support, and friendship. My gratitude goes also to all the other amazing scholars that have visited the seminar throughout the years and shared their invaluable insights.

Before starting on this dissertation project, I had the chance to try my wings on research by working as a research assistant first to Ilona Hongisto and then to Mari Pajala. Ilona, thank you for all the wisdoms passed on to me during our meetings. You are an amazing scholar and a wonderful mentor, whose encouragement will always stay in my heart. Mari, I want to express my gratitude and admiration for your brilliant work but also for the welcoming atmosphere that you create in the Media Studies department. I appreciate all the discussions that we have had on literature, films, and television, as well as your help and guidance in relation to doctoral studies.

Over the years I have had the privilege to belong to the Lähikuva family, first as an editorial secretary for *Lähikuva* journal and then as an editorial board member and a board member of the government of the Lähikuva organization. My sincerest thank you to everyone who has been involved with making the journal. During the early stages of my doctoral studies, I also worked as an administrative secretary for the Association for Cultural Studies (ACS). My heart-felt greetings to all the amazing people that I met and worked with thanks to ACS. A greeting must also go to Outi Sarpila, Iida Kukkonen, Tero Pajula, and Erica Åberg as well as everyone else involved with the "Suomi ulkonäköyhteiskuntana" project. Thank you for inviting me to collaborate.

Some of my fellow doctoral researchers at the Media Studies department have become extremely important to me both as colleagues but also as friends. Laura Antola, Mari Lehto, Heidi Mikkola, Miia Siutila, and Valo Vähäpassi, you have kept me going all the times when research has felt hard or when anxiety has taken over. Laura, I deeply appreciate you as a scholar, as a person, and as a friend. I will never forget how you spent one afternoon with me cooped up in a small office and watching a silly Christmas movie all because I was feeling too lousy to do anything else. Mari, thank you for all the co-operation and support, for all the laughs throughout the years, and for understanding me on such a deep level. We are very different personalities, yet somehow we click and share similar worldviews. Heidi, thank you for your company at all the conferences, seminars, and workshops. You have made attending them so much easier and kept my spirits up throughout the trips. Miia, I truly admire your work-ethics, strength, and ability to take things as they come. It takes a true friend to recognize when brownies and chocolate bars are needed to get through the day. Valo, what a brilliant scholar and theoretical thinker

you are. Thank you for all the meaningful discussions, encouragement, and solidarity.

I also have a group of other friends who have stood by my side throughout this dissertation process. Laura Jalava and Johanna Naukkarinen, we started our university studies simultaneously and have been great friends almost from day one. Being one third of our feminist girl posse has meant everything. A special thank you to Johanna for creating the amazing artwork on the cover of this dissertation. Annu Suvanto, you are such a warm, considerate person, and the greatest friend a person could ever have. Our discussions on body positivity and feminism have given me a lot to think about. Elisa Männistö and Anna Rantanen, with you two I have been friends for the longest. Thank you for always listening, understanding, and making me feel important.

This work would never have been possible without the love and guidance of my family. My parents Kirsti and Ilpo Hynnä, thank you for always supporting my studies and my academic interests. Thank you for making me feel smart and capable even in those moments when I myself did not think that I have what it takes to finish this dissertation. My sisters Virpi and Katri Hynnä, you as well have always believed in me and my abilities. The mental support offered by you throughout this process has been unmatched. Thank you for letting me vent and for all the practical help and kindness that has made it possible to keep on going.

Finally, a very special thank you to my husband Andreas Granberg and our son Elis, the two of whom make it all worth it. Andreas, I feel so privileged to have such a loving spouse who, on top of everything else, knows first-hand what it is like to write a dissertation. Sorry for all the tantrums, especially during the final stages of this dissertation. Elis, my darling child, you are what it is all about. Together we keep on reading the book *Bebbe och fina kroppen* (“Baby and His Nice Body”, written by Mervi Lindman) and learn to respect our bodies the way they are.

In Turku, November 2022

Kaisu Hynnä-Granberg

Table of Contents

List of Original Publications

This dissertation is based on the following original publications, which are referred to in the text by their Roman numerals. All four articles presented in this dissertation are published in academic peer-reviewed publications. Please cite the original place of publication when referring to them. The previously unpublished chapters (pages 14–81) can be read before, after, or even without the articles. The sequence in which the articles appear below follows the chronological timeline of their publishing.

I Hynnä-Granberg, K and Kyrölä, K (2019) 'Feel in Your Body': Fat Activist Affects in Blogs. *Social Media + Society* vol. 5(4). DOI: 10.1177/2056305119879983

II Hynnä-Granberg, K (2021) 'Why Can't I Take a Full-Shot of Myself? Of Course I Can!' Studying Selfies as Socio-Technological Affective Practices. *Feminist Media Studies*. DOI: 10.1080/14680777.2021.1886139

III Hynnä-Granberg, K (2021) Shared Vulnerability – Collectivity and Empathy in Media Reflections of a Finnish Theater Monologue FAT. *Fat Studies* vol. 11(1): 98–111. DOI: 10.1080/21604851.2021.1913829

IV Hynnä-Granberg, K (2022) Enduring Emotions. Fat Time and Weight Loss in the Finnish Body Positive Podcasts Jenny and the Fat Myth Busters and The Soft. *NORA – Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research.* DOI: 10.1080/08038740.2022.2139754

1 Introduction

From the glossy magazines of the 1990s to the social media of the 2020s, media has always played a part in how I understand my body. As an eight-year-old, by far larger than most of my peers, I loved scanning through my mother's magazines to find images of celebrities and color their lips with a red marker pen like it was a fancy Chanel lipstick. With the marker pen in hand, I felt like I was participating in a glamourous beauty practice. I thought it unlikely, however, that I would ever wear lipstick myself since I was not thin and attractive like the celebrities. As a fat 14-year-old, the school nurse had me on strict diet, and I struggled with the effort. At the same time, I was captivated by makeover movies, trying to convince myself that I, too, could one day blossom yet remained highly unconvinced that I would. As a more-normatively sized but not thin 20-year-old university student, I cut glamorous pictures from *Elle*, taped them to my closet door, and used them as inspiration for my own clothing. I remained terrified, however, that I was still too big to be wearing miniskirts or fitted dresses and that someone somewhere would soon tell me so.

As implicated by these stories, my relationship with my body and with the idealized images of thin bodies in the media has always been an ambivalent one. Not only have the images pointed out what is "wrong" with me, but they have also given me inspiration, pleasurable activities, and the stuff of dreams. My body and the media landscape have gone through massive changes during my 34 years of life. Social media has allowed for different shapes and sizes of bodies to become visible, and *body positivity* (see, e.g., The Body Positive website 2022; Cherry 2020), a movement accentuating the worth and beauty of all bodies, has become a recognizable player on the cultural scene. Although body positivity conceptually touches upon a variety of differences, from body shape and size to age, race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability, in practice, many of the representations emphasize questions of size, as discussed in this work. Simultaneously with body positivity, new media technologies, such as smartphones, have guided users like me toward creating content themselves by moving their fingers on the touchscreen or shifting their bodies before the front-facing camera. The body, in other words, has become more distinguishable as not just an object of vision but also an agent creating and using media content (see Coleman 2013a; 2013b; Elo 2012; Woodward 2015).

This doctoral dissertation studies Finnish body positive media, focusing not only on its representational dimensions but, more importantly, on its affective, felt aspects. I first got the idea of studying body positive media in late 2014. The thought was sparked by an observation that representations celebrating the attractiveness and beauty of a fuller female figure kept on appearing at a regular pace. I first became fascinated by Meghan Trainor's hit single and music video *All About That Bass* (US 2014). This was soon followed by Nicky Minaj's *Anaconda* (US 2014). Next, I noticed that reality television series, such as *Big Sexy* (US 2011–) and *My Big Fat Fabulous Life* (US 2015–), were interrupting the usual flow of dieting shows. On the internet and in the blogosphere, *fatshion* (i.e., fat fashion) blogs, such as *A Curious Fancy* (US 2010), were becoming more popular and, according to many journals and news pages (e.g., *Fashion Today* 2013; Kinsman 2012), redefining the words "fashion" and "beauty."

My initial plan was to study North American body positive representations both in digital media as well as on television and in magazines. While I was eager to supplement the US material with Finnish examples, it seemed that these were rather difficult to find. The ulterior status of body positivity in Finland at that point was also reflected in the way that others reacted to my research idea: Whenever I mentioned my plans to a friend, relative, or acquaintance, I needed carefully to spell out what I meant by body positivity and give examples of what kind of material I was thinking of analyzing.

At the time of writing this introduction, in spring 2022, the situation is quite different. Body positivity seems to demand no explanations, and people instantly have an idea of what I am studying when I mention the term. The cases analyzed in this dissertation—the blogs *More To Love* and *PlusMimmi*, the national body positive campaign Scale Rebellion (originally Vaakakapina, translation by Hynnä-Granberg), the theater monologue *FAT* (originally *Läski. Rasvainen monologi lihavuudesta,* translation by Hynnä-Granberg), and the podcasts *The Soft* (originally *Pehmee*, translation by the podcast's authors) and *Jenny and the Fat Myth Busters* (originally *Jenny ja läskimyytinmurtajat,* translation by Hynnä-Granberg)—and presented in detail in section 3.1 have played a significant role in body positivity becoming a household term in Finland. Their arrival on the Finnish cultural scene has further changed the route of my dissertation, making it possible to focus on body positive discussion in Finland. At the same time, my interests have shifted to digital media. While body positive American reality shows are also broadcast on Finnish channels and Trainor's and Minaj's hits are heard on the Finnish radio, most body positive discussions and activities happen in social media. Therefore, this dissertation centers on analyzing *the feeling body* in body positive blogs, selfies, podcasts, and other digitally published media.

1.1 Objective

In the 2010s and 2020s, it has become commonplace to state that we are living in a world where social media and selfies turn lives into spectacles (e.g., Briziarelli and Armano 2017; Sciortino and Wright 2017). This claim often comes with the suggestion that there is a falseness to how we present ourselves on social media. Images, it is assumed, are dangerous, especially if one does not possess the necessary knowledge of their inauthenticity. Edited images can make real flesh-and-blood people feel bad about their bodies as material bodies cannot compete with the glossy, slimmed-down ones on Instagram (e.g., Conger, Browning and Woo 2021; Fardouly and Vartanian 2016). The assumption of danger comes with a series of implications: Images are understood to be categorically "not real." Images are seen as separate from the material world that is inhabited by humans, and they are assumed to have significant power over the material world and bodies. Yet, it is implied that it is possible to create alternative images which affect their audience in a "more positive" way. (See Abel 2007; Barad 2007.) If edited images make their viewers feel bad, then the alternative, un-edited ones have the potential to make subjects feel if not good then at least *good enough* (Silverman 1996).

In the past 10 years or so, body positivity and body positive activism have taken up the challenge of creating "better" imagery and making fat and larger-than-normative bodies (more on my use on body size terminology in section 1.3) more visible on social media (Cherry 2020; The Body Positive website 2022). In keeping with the above understanding of the power of media and images, research on body positivity often analyzes body positivity as a counter-discourse to unrealistic beauty norms. Images of fat bodies are seen to normalize and create space for the fat subject as a citizen of neoliberal, consumerist societies (e.g., Afful and Ricciardelli 2015; Connell 2013; Gurrieri and Cherrier 2013; Harju and Huovinen 2015). Some scholars (Downing Peters 2013; Kristjansson 2014; Taylor 2018) suggests that fat bodies queer embodiment and practices of beauty by revealing their arbitrary and constructed nature. Yet, according to others (Johnston and Taylor 2008; Murray 2013; Sastre 2014), there can be no resistance outside of norms since all bodies are necessarily constructed by regulatory discourses (Foucault 1995/1975). As body positivity aims to interfere with the narrowness of beauty ideals rather than to displace them, body positive interventions end up making more bodies subject to regulation and reinforcing the importance of beauty practices.

For me, there is something rigid and alienating about the body painted out as first and foremost the target or locus of disciplining power and norms (e.g., Connell 2013; Johnston and Taylor 2008; Murray 2008; Sastre 2014). These studies seem to formulate a body that can either comply with or rebel against norms but is never really felt, experienced, and lived out. This, what I call an *object body,* does not correspond with my experiences of *the feeling body in the media* that is sometimes

invigorated by body positive selfie-taking, sometimes squirms in discomfort when it is pushed to participate in sharing stories on its history on social media, and sometimes yawns out of boredom when it comes into contact with texts that advise me to start loving my body right now.

Whereas representational analysis of media images is often based on the separation of material bodies and images (Abel 2007; Grosz 1994), I am interested in how the two intertwine in practices of using, consuming, and producing body positive media. Rather than there being "good" or "bad" images of bodies that affect the subject's body image in a certain way (see Pollock 1987, 41), it is my understanding that images allow for particular kinds of knowledges and experiences of bodies (Coleman 2012, 19; 2008, 163–164; Kyrölä 2014, 19–21). While these knowledges may be limiting, increasing, or anything in between in relation to the body's capacity to act, they are nonetheless constitutive of bodies.

To understand the experienced, felt aspects of body positive media, this dissertation analyzes such media from the point of view of affects, partaking in and commenting on what has been called the affective turn in cultural studies (Clough 2008; Hemmings 2005). This shift, taking place in the 1990s and forward, is often explained as a move further away from discursive or constructivist explanations of society. Yet, as media scholar Anu Koivunen (2009, 10) suggests, there is no conceptual consensus of this turn. Some scholars regard the turn as a rehabilitation of the "emotional self" (Lupton 1998; see also Middleton 1992), but for some (e.g., Braidotti 2006; Massumi 2002) it is a way to relocate attention from language to materiality or from the psychic to the social. Across the differing interpretations, it is possible to identify some key threads that characterize the affective turn. Koivunen (2009, 11) states that these include: "(1) revisiting the Cartesian subject, (2) an investigation of the subject of feminism as embodied, (3) a critique of social constructionist approaches to the subject, signification and the social, and (4) a historical, critical analysis of emotion cultures."

In this dissertation, the focus on the affectivity of body positive media does not mean that I analyze affects as something that exists in the representations. I do not regard pride, for example, as an affect that can be found in body positive media representations and then analyzed as an isolated experience, nor do I merely analyze how body positive media invites its audiences to feel feelings about their bodies or the bodies of others (cf. Gill and Elias 2014; Murray 2008). Rather, I am interested in the way that material bodies are sensually, vividly, and carnally felt in relation to their surroundings when they come into contact with body positive media. In the exchanges, bodies concretely move about in space and time, sometimes in line with body positive media's "affective invitations" (Kyrölä 2014, 5), sometimes in new and unexpected directions. *Article I*, "'Feel in Your Body': Fat Activist Affects in Blogs," co-authored with Kata Kyrölä, explicitly discusses the shift that takes place

when we, as researchers, approach bodies as living, feeling entities that are constantly constructed by media as well as producing media themselves instead of treating bodies as simple objects of study.

1.2 Research questions

To analyze the ways that subjects experience their bodies when in contact with body positive media, this dissertation asks ***how body positive media allows subjects to feel their bodies instead of treating them as objects.*** I have divided the research problem into four research questions (Q1, Q2, Q3, and Q4) that guide attention to the specifics and differences of bodies encountering body positive media and the specifics of media technologies and platforms. The questions are presented in figure 1.

Q1 is based on the research question in *article I*, Q2 in *article II*, Q3 in *article III*, and Q4 in *article IV*. Yet, I address all four questions in differing lengths in all articles. While Q1, Q2, Q3, and Q4 are general questions addressing body positive media as a larger configuration, in the articles, these questions punctuate specific cases of body positive media and digital technologies.

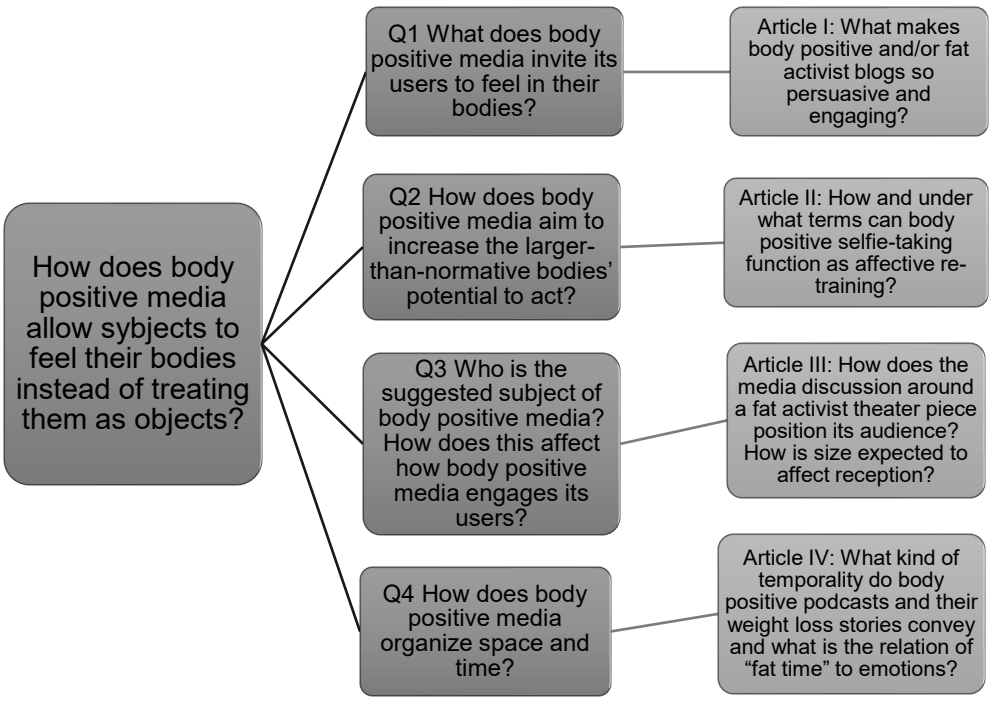

Figure 1. The research problem divided into four main questions (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4) and the more spesific research questions presented in the articles.

Through the questions, it is possible to answer the research problem but also to address the critique that scholars have posed toward the body positive movement. This critique has taken place in *Fat Studies* journal but also in several other gender studies and feminist journals, and fat studies books and anthologies. In one of the most compelling discussions on body positivity, in the book *The 'Fat' Female Body* (2008, 87–121), fat studies scholar Samantha Murray criticizes body positivity for its suggestion that fat subjects should "come out of the closet" as fat and proud. She argues that the act of coming out presupposes a fat woman who simply chooses to disregard the fat-phobic ideas of the society. For Murray, body positivity means a disavowal of the fat flesh. Looked at from the perspective of this study as well, this kind of disavowal is highly problematic as subjects encounter the world as embodied beings and their lived experience cannot be changed. (See also Gill and Elias 2014; Johnston and Taylor 2008; Probyn 2005, 129–134.) Murray also poses extensive critique towards body positivity's punctuation of fat as aesthetically pleasing. She argues that by asking the fat female body to be seen in the frameworks of beauty and desirability, body positivity privileges the attributes associated with a normative, thin body and attempts to make them its own. (See also Johnston and Taylor 2008; Kyrölä 2014, 157–196.)

Beside the previous tendencies, body positivity has been critiqued for its reliance on assimilation rather than working for a structural change, its easy commodification, and its tendency to ignore the differences between fat subjects. Fat studies scholars Kathleen LeBesco (2004) and Charlotte Cooper (1998) argue that body positivity often assumes a single "fat experience" which is thought to represent all fat subjects. Yet, fat people come from various backgrounds, represent several genders, sexualities, and cultures, and experience fatness in varied, often conflicting ways. (See also Gibson 2021; Sastre 2014; Streeter 2021.) Several scholars (Johnston and Taylor 2008; Murray 2013) suggest that body positivity's homogeneity is an emblem of how the movement has become commodified. Normative appearance and messages of self-love and self-care that are part of neoliberalism, can be detected also in body positive representations.

Through the research questions, I engage with the critique posed toward body positivity. Q1 turns attention to the critique that body positivity treats body love as a question of choice, disregarding the way that a subject's body image is negotiated in relation to societal and cultural attitudes toward fat. Q2 addresses the claim that body positivity focuses on increasing the visibility of larger-than-normative bodies and is therefore penetrated by neoliberal values. Q3 focuses on the argument that body positive representations foreground white, ciswoman bodies that are only slightly larger than the norm, leaving other experiences in the margin. Q4 addresses the same critique focusing on the argument that body positivity prioritizes the experiences of more-normatively sized people, thus feeding into fatphobia. Since this dissertation

analyzes body positive media in the Finnish context, and most of studies referred to focus on the Anglo-American context, it becomes relevant to examine how well the critique applies to body positive media created by Finnish content producers. In the next section, I will discuss the Finnish context as well as explain my use of terminology in relation to body size.

1.3 Notes on terminology and the Finnish context

As this dissertation is interested in questions of body shape and size and the media, it operates in the fields of media studies, gender studies, and fat studies. While media and gender studies are established fields of research, fat studies is a relatively young interdisciplinary field, born during the shift of the millennium, centering on the fat body and fat experience. Fat studies analyzes how society conceptualizes and pathologizes fatness (Pausé and Taylor 2021, 1, 3; see also Harjunen and Kyrölä 2007; Rinaldi, Rice and Friedman 2020; Rothblum 2012; Rothblum and Solovay 2009). When talking about larger-than-normative embodiment, fat studies scholars generally prefer the term *fat* rather than *overweight* and *obese* which rely on medical categorizations. They suggest that fat is a cultural description and therefore, despite its pejorative connotations, acclaimable by individuals and groups (e.g., Cooper 2016, 1; Murray 2008, 3).

In this dissertation, I use the term fat whenever I refer to specific fat studies scholars' work or when the subjects whose experiences I discuss describe themselves as fat. When discussing my work in general, however, I prefer the term *larger-than-normative*. While I see fat as a term that always refers to the material presence of adipose tissue, being larger-than-normative is not necessarily a material reality as much as an affective relation to the norm. As such, larger-than-normative includes people such as those who have lost weight yet still experience themselves to be outside of norms.

Although I agree with fat studies' common understanding of fatness, according to which fat people "know who they are and are known as fat by others" (Cooper 2016, 1), I find it necessary to emphasize that that which counts as fat is also a highly debated and politically charged question. Fat is always contextual, defined by place and time. (See, e.g., Kyrölä 2014, 7–12; LeBesco and Braziel 2001, 7.) This means that bodies that are considered fat in one location and at one moment in time may be regarded as average in the next. Fatness' contextuality becomes apparent in negotiations of the borders of body positive or fat activist communities. Discussions on who counts as viable members of the community and who should be excluded or viewed as allies are rather common in body positive media (see Brown and Herndon 2020; Maor 2013; Murray 2008, 102–104). Many of the participants in these spaces view their bodies as larger-than-normative, yet they would not necessarily be called

fat by the people around them. For this reason, their participation sometimes causes resistance in others.

Besides larger-than-normative and fat, I use the term *more-normatively sized*. More-normatively sized refers to people who do not experience themselves as significantly outside of size norms. As larger-than-normative and more-normatively sized are terms that compare size to the norm, they share some of the same problems as the terms obese and overweight do. Yet, I find that it would be more problematic to use the term fat for bodies that usually do not face fat phobia.

As a scholarly field of investigation, fat studies is characterized by its close connections to fat activism. Many fat studies scholars are activists, and important knowledge on fat liberation has always been shared in self-help books, essays, blogs, podcasts, and documentaries in addition to academic publications (Pausé and Taylor 2021; Wann 2009). Most scholars (e.g., Gailey 2014, 25–27; Murray 2008, 85–105) regard the founding of the American civil rights organization National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance (NAAFA) in 1969 as the starting point of fat activism. They further emphasize that in the 1970s, a group of activists separated from NAAFA to form The Fat Underground. Whereas NAAFA operated under the logics of assimilation, The Fat Underground promoted fat liberation and separation from the cultural values of thinness (see also Foreman 2018).

Because of fat activism's long history in the US, most studies understand fat activism as an Anglo-American phenomenon, taking place in fat activist organizations. Yet, the ways of understanding fat activism are becoming more varied. Cooper's work has been influential in broadening the definition. In her book *Fat Activism* (2016), Cooper discusses the movement as a transnational endeavor, sometimes taking place within organizations but more often outside of them. Cooper (2016, 53–94) argues that fat activism can be divided into at least five categories: political process activism, activist communities, cultural work, micro fat activism, and ambiguous activism. This dissertation analyzes examples that can be categorized mainly as cultural work, micro fat activism, ambiguous activism, and activist communities but not political process activism.

In Finland, the first official organization dedicated to "supporting and maintaining a positive body image," Body Posi Finland, was founded in 2018 (Body Posi Finland website 2021). The since-then-ceased organization operated, for example, by organizing the first body positive trade fair in Finland in 2019. Despite the slow start of organizational fat activism in Finland, other forms of fat activism have been around for longer. Early ideas of the cultural meanings of fat traveled to Finland through books such as Wendy Chapkis's *Beauty Secrets* (1986), Naomi Wolf's *The Beauty Myth* (1990), and Susan Bordo's *Unbearable Weight* (1993) (Harjunen, Hämäläinen and Kyrölä 2007). Readers became inspired by the books' ideas and turned them into acts of micro activism and ambiguous activism, such as

making the decision to stop dieting, sharing information with others by passing the books along, or including pieces of them in personal conversation. Alternatively, the people taking part in the activities often did not identify as fat activists. Questions of size and weight were not yet politicized in 1990s Finland, so no general understanding of the possibility of fat activism yet existed (Harjunen 2019b; Harjunen, Hämäläinen and Kyrölä 2007).

The first Finnish popular book on the experience of fatness, *Happy Kilograms* (translation by Hynnä-Granberg, originally *Iloiset kilot*), was published in 1998. It was written by the journalist, novelist, and poet Eila Jaatinen, who was also one of the few people appearing in Finnish media to discuss the politics of fatness at the time. In the 2000s, the first academic fat studies books were published. These included the Finnish-language article collection *Size Matters!* (2007, translation by Kyrölä and Harjunen, originally *Koolla on väliä!),* edited by Kata Kyrölä and Hannele Harjunen, as well as Harjunen's doctoral dissertation *Women and Fat* (2009) and Kyrölä's dissertation *The Weight of Images* (2010). The early 2000s saw the rise of blogs, discussion forums, and mailing lists on the subject (Kyrölä 2019). While most of these were in English, Finns could participate in the discussion and learnt about fat activism. The *More To Love* (2009–2013) blog was one of the few Finnish examples from the time and can retrospectively be described as fat activist or body positive. This blog is studied in *article I* of this dissertation. The blog's authors Peppi and Mimmi (self-chosen pseudonyms) often appeared in the media discussing their views, including love and acceptance of fat bodies.

Despite previous endeavors, fat activism did not become widely known to the Finnish public until the end of the 2010s (see Omaheimo and Särmä 2017). Here, I see three separate cases as instrumental. First, there was the theater monologue called *FAT* which was an instant hit and played sold-out shows during the fall and winter of 2016. Second, in 2017, Finnish broadcasting company Yle started a nationwide campaign called Scale Rebellion whose purpose was to coach people to stop dieting and work toward more lasting lifestyle changes (see Scale Rebellion website 2022). Third, in 2018, a two-person collective called The Soft (originally Pehmee, translation by the collective) was formed by fat activists of color Caroline Suinner and Meriam Trabelsi. The collective became known especially through its popular podcast (also known as *The Soft*, 2018–) and Instagram account (pehmeeofficial 2018–), and their work to make body positivity in Finland more intersectional. *FAT* is discussed in *article III*, Scale Rebellion in *article II and IV*, and *The Soft* podcast in *article IV*.

Many fat studies scholars (e.g., Cooper 2016; Johnston and Taylor 2008) understand *fat activism* and *body positivity* to be significantly different from one another. Body positivity is generally understood as a movement that is based on the ideals of assimilation, body-love, and self-worth, whereas fat activism focuses on

structural issues and aims to improve the status of fat people in the society. Cooper (2016, 12–17) states that much of the critique posed towards fat liberation movements, discussed in section 1.2, applies to body positivity. Fat activism, according to Cooper, however, is a more radical movement than body positivity is and largely not touched by the issues that characterize the latter. Yet in the Finnish context, the concept of body positivity is much better known than fat activism. Body positivity is used by Finnish body activists and social media influencers creating content on the topic of body ideals and pressures, therefore making it the primary term of this dissertation. In the articles, I tease out the tensions between the two terms in relation to specific activist or otherwise change-oriented contexts. I am interested in what the fact that it is body positivity, rather that fat activism, which has become a mainstream concept, says about the bodily cultures of today.

1.4 Articles and the structure of the dissertation

Through the notion of the feeling body in the media, this dissertation studies embodiment in the mediatized society of today. The dissertation consists of this thematic introduction and four journal articles, three of which have been published in academic, peer-reviewed journals and one of which is currently under peer review. The research articles are included at the end. I will introduce the articles briefly below and discuss the general structure of the dissertation.

Article I, "'Feel in Your Body': Fat Activist Affects in Blogs," co-written with Kata Kyrölä, studies body positive blogs and their affective invitations. We analyze how the blogs offer their followers ways to feel in their body rather than changing their affective relation to their body from negative to positive. The analyzed blogs include the Finnish *More to Love* (2009–2013) and its successor *PlusMimmi* (2013) and the American *Queer Fat Femme Guide to Life* (2008–). Through an analysis of three key themes of the blogs, exercise, fashion, and sex, we argue that body positive media invites its audience to experience all kinds of feelings involved in inhabiting a larger-than-normative body in a sizeist society. The blogs offer larger-than-normative people space to experience their bodies in relation to their surroundings. We understand this to be revolutionary for larger-than-normative people who are accustomed to their bodies being treated as objects for improvement.

Article II, "'Why Can't I Take a Full-Shot of Myself? Of Course I Can!' Studying Selfies as Socio-Technological Affective Practices," zooms in on the idea of feeling one's larger-than-normative-body with the help of technology. It does this by focusing on the practice of selfie production. The material consists of in-depth interviews with five Finnish women. The interviews were conducted in connection to a Finnish body positive campaign called #righttobeseen (originally #lupanäkyä, translation by Hynnä-Granberg) in 2017, a sub-campaign of the before-mentioned

Scale Rebellion. #Righttobeseen encouraged Finns to let their larger-than-normative bodies be seen in public through activities such as taking and sharing selfies on social media. The article analyzes how selfie-takers' material bodies, media technologies, and mediated representations of the bodies come together and intertwine in body positive selfie production. It argues for analyzing selfies as socio-technological affective practices, where the process of image production counts at least as much the visual end result of the practice. Selfie production entails feeling the body move in relation to the image that is being produced and making oneself available to the affective experience of image production.

Article III, "Shared Vulnerability—Collectivity and Empathy in Media Reflections of the Finnish Theater Monologue FAT," looks at the media conversations on this fat activist performance piece from the perspective of the relatability of the fat experience. It utilizes the notion of *shared vulnerability* to study the publicly available media material on the Finnish theater monologue *FAT* (2016, directed by Elina Kilkku). Through this concept, I refer to feelings of connectivity that are based on the capacity of people to be physically, emotionally, or mentally hurt by something. I argue that feeling one's vulnerable body in the continuum of a broader female community that is subjected to bodily regulation through dieting and beauty maintenance can offer relief from bodily pressures and relieve feelings of isolation. Furthermore, feeling one's body and feeling vulnerability in relation to differently positioned others can make the more-normatively sized subject realize previously hidden privileges. Yet, I also suggest that talking about shared vulnerability risks decentering fat women's experiences, thus adding to their marginalization.

Article IV, "Enduring Emotions. Fat Time and Weight loss in the Finnish Body Positive Podcasts Jenny and the Fat Myth Busters and The Soft," continues the theme of feeling one's body in relation to others and across differences. The article studies two Finnish body positive podcasts, *Jenny and the Fat Myth Busters* (2016) and *The Soft* (2018–) and zooms in on their way of discussing weight loss. I claim that, when looked at from the viewpoint of temporality and bodily histories, the experience of feeling one's larger-than-normative body is often characterized by *ugly feelings that stay*. As the article focuses on weight loss, it necessarily partakes in the discussion on the more-normatively sized subjects' position within body positivity. The study discusses the concept of a "fat time" in relation to theorizations of queer temporalities. It argues that the affects involved with being fat endure even when the body changes.

Each of the articles has been written to stand on its own, but the purpose of this introductory chapter is to familiarize the reader with the central theories, concepts, methodologies, arguments, and findings of this dissertation project as a whole. Chapter 2 presents the dissertation's theoretical background, tracing the line from

representational analysis to my notion of the feeling body in the media. I give a summary of how feminist studies have, during different decades, dealt with questions of body size and fat and discuss how my work relates to these ideas. I discuss in detail the benefits of applying affect inquiry to the study of larger-than-normative bodies in each of the articles.

Chapter 3 discusses the research design and the affective methodologies utilized in this study alongside the materials analyzed. I also discuss the most important ethical considerations of the study. Chapter 4 presents the key findings of this dissertation and considers how they relate to previous studies on body positivity and the fat or larger-than-normative body in the media. I emphasize how the findings support the idea of the body as a feeling agent rather than an object of vision and improvement. Chapter 5 ties together the central arguments and considers the relevance of my findings to the fields of feminist media studies and fat studies and to affect inquiry. I reflect on the merits and limitations of the research and discuss prospects for future research.

2 Theoretical Background: From Feeling about Your Body to the Feeling Body in the Media

While body positivity as an internet-based phenomenon is rather recent, critiques of body norms have a long history within feminism. Scholars interested in the role of beauty maintenance in women's lives (see, e.g., Cahill 2003; Freitas Boe 2011; Rhode 2016) often name Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797) and Virginia Woolf (1882–1941)—both of whom criticize essentialist claims of appearance-related frivolity as an inherently feminine characteristic—as forerunners of the discussion. The critique also has its roots in radical feminist body politics. Radical feminists argued that the patriarchal society controls women by objectifying their body for the pleasure of men. They suggested that strict beauty standards keep women occupied with their appearance instead of focusing on structural issues (see e.g., Rhode 2016; Turunen 2018). In 1968, in what became known as one of the key events of the second wave of feminism, New York Radical Women gathered to protest on the boardwalk outside the Miss America Pageant. Protestors wished to raise awareness on oppressive standards by throwing feminine products, such as make-up, bras, false eyelashes, high-heeled shoes, and *Cosmopolitan* and *Playboy* magazines, into a "Freedom Trash Can" (Morgan and McNearney 2018; see also Bordo 2003, 19–20; Leeds Craig 2006). While for the protestors, idealized media images and beauty products signified women's lack of agency, many of today's body positive activists suggest that social media images can also be used to challenge existing standards. The potential of beautiful images of the larger-than-normative body lies not only in how the body looks. As this dissertation suggests, it is also a matter of how bodies feel in relation to the images.

This dissertation joins the long line of feminist inquiry discussing body norms and the media (e.g., Wolf 1990; Bordo 1993/2003; Stacey 1994; Davis 1995; Handler 2000; Wykes and Gunter 2004; Coleman 2012; Widdows 2020). Feminist scholarship has analyzed and problematized size norms, but the focus has often been on eating disorders, dieting, and weight management and on slim or more-normatively sized subjects. Feminist inquiry has therefore also contributed to the idea of fat or larger-than-normative bodies as something out of the ordinary or even

undeserving of scholarly attention (Harjunen and Kyrölä 2007, 24–25). This dissertation shares fat studies' objective to critically investigate societal and cultural attitudes to fatness as well as to "invite revolution" (Wann 2009; see also Pausé and Taylor 2021; Rinaldi, Rice and Friedman 2020) by challenging existing conceptions of fatness. By focusing on the feeling body, it contributes to the field of affect studies. Here, it utilizes theories by Sara Ahmed, Margaret Wetherell, Lauren Berlant, and Sianne Ngai. The dissertation further takes inspiration from Ahmed's phenomenological thinking (Ahmed 2006a; 2006b). Her insights on the discomfort that queer and racialized bodies feel when inhabiting normatively oriented spaces have helped me to expand my focus from how media users feel *about* their bodies when using, producing, and consuming body positive media toward *the body as a feeling, doing agent* inseparable from media technologies—the so-called *feeling body in the media*.

This chapter starts with an overview on the varied stances that feminist research on beauty and fat has taken on body size as a political category. It highlights several books and anthologies that have been significant for thinking about the relationship of larger-than-normative bodies to media. In discussing the affective turn, it introduces ideas by Ahmed, Wetherell, Berlant, and Ngai. It also discusses the thinking of Rebecca Coleman and Kata Kyrölä, who offer insightful views on applying affect inquiry to studies of body norms. Finally, it introduces my own formulation of the *feeling body in the media* and investigates its utility for the study of media and larger-than-normative bodies.

2.1 Feminist perspectives on fat

Feminist scholarship and activism first began to explore size and fat as independent questions and categories affecting a person's social status in the 1970s and 1980s. Black fat activists and artists had an important role in this process (Farrell 2020, 31–32). In 1972, welfare rights organizer Johnnie Tillmon delivered her well-known speech of how her experience as a woman was informed by race, class, fatphobia, ageism, and ableism (Fourth Floor 2022). In 1984, Guyanese-British poet Grace Nichols's collection of poems *The Fat Black Woman's Poems* was published. In the poems, Nichols questioned the fetishization of the Black body.

In the 1970s and 1980s, white psychologists Susie Orbach and Kim Chernin started to utilize psychoanalytical theories to explore the interplay of size and gender. In *Fat Is a Feminist Issue* (1978), Orbach argued that women binge-eat and gain weight because of an unconscious desire to hide from sexual objectification. Chernin's *The Obsession* (1981) and *Womansize* (1983) discussed the meanings of anorexia nervosa. Chernin suggested that anorexia is a way for women to gain control in patriarchy.

As made evident by the examples of the above mentioned works, while Black feminists started to debate the politics of fatness already in the 1970s and 1980s, white feminists criticized size norms mainly through an analysis of a slim body. A focus on slimness is evident also in the white feminist scholarship of the turn of the 1980s and 1990s. During this time, the French philosopher Michel Foucault strongly influenced cultural studies. In *Discipline and Punish* (originally *Surveiller et punir* 1975, translated into English in 1977), Foucault argued that modern power works as a non-authoritarian, non-orchestrated, and non-centralized network of forces that regulate bodies through obligating self-surveillance and self-correction to comply with norms. Although Foucault´s model of power was based on the idea of a European male prisoner, several feminist scholars saw his thinking useful in explaining how beauty norms produce homogeny between individuals in modern societies. In her article "Foucault, Femininity and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power" (1988), Sandra Bartky examined the disciplinary practices that produce a "feminine" body. Bartky took notice of three categories of practice in particular: dieting and exercise that aim to produce a body of a certain size, feminine postures and gestures, and the ornamentation and decoration of the body's surface. Susan Bordo's classic collection of essays *Unbearable Weight* (originally 1993) similarly used Foucault's ideas to explain culture's hold on the body. According to Bordo (2003, 16, 28–29), bodies learn forbidden and required gestures through routine and habitual activity. Representations of thin, white women function as models against which the subject continuously measures and corrects themselves.

In the 1990s and 2000s, three books explicitly discussing fatness were published. These books, as well as a conference on "Fat Attitudes" held at Columbia University Teachers College in 2004, are often considered the starting point of the field of fat studies. The first book, Marilyn Wann's self-help book *Fat! So?* (1998) encouraged fat women to embrace their fatness. The second, *Bodies out of Bounds* (2001), a scholarly anthology edited by Jana Evans Braziel and Kathleen LeBesco, discussed representations and experiences of fatness across a range of media, literature, and critical theorizations. The third, the *Fat Studies Reader* (2009) anthology, presented fat studies as an independent field. Editors Sondra Solovay and Esther Rothblum (2009, 2) defined fat studies as "scholarship marked by an aggressive, consistent, rigorous critique of the negative assumptions, stereotypes, and stigma placed on fat and the fat body."

During the 2000s and 2010s, the focus of cultural studies shifted from representations to material bodies and the way that these are constantly shaped and reshaped in a complex relationship to cultural images, also mirroring the viewpoints of this dissertation. Scholars interested in questions of size started to increasingly apply methodologies that foreground fat subjects' experiences in fat-phobic cultures. These included works such as Kathleen LeBesco's *Revolting Bodies?* (2004),

Hannele Harjunen's *Women and Fat* (2009), Jeannine Gailey's *The Hyper(in)visible Fat Woman* (2014), and Charlotte Cooper's *Fat Activism* (2016). Some scholars focused on affect and emotion. Amy Erdman Farrell's *Fat Shame* (2011) looked at the history of fatness in the US through the lens of shame, while Kata Kyrölä's *The Weight of Images* (2014) focused on a variety of affects in relation to representations of fatness across the Finnish and Anglo-American media landscapes at the turn of the millennium.

While fat studies has often developed alongside wider trends within feminism and cultural studies, it has come to show a theoretically and methodologically rich character of its own. This richness is exemplified by the recent anthologies *Thickening Fat* (2020, edited by May Friedman, Carla Rice, and Jen Rinaldi) and *The Routledge International Handbook of Fat Studies* (2021, edited by Cat Pausé and Sonya Renee Taylor). In both books, authors refer to theorists such as Michel Foucault; antiracist scholars bell hooks and Kimberlé Crenshaw; and affect and/or new materialist thinkers Sara Ahmed, Elsbeth Probyn, Brian Massumi, Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, and Elizabeth Grosz. The anthologies demonstrate the field's growing interest in producing intersectional analysis (Crenshaw 1991). (See, Pausé 2014.) An intersectional approach is explicitly interwoven into *Thickening Fat* and *The Routledge International Handbook of Fat Studies*, which consider "fat in dynamic and unstable yet indivisible and intricate dialogue with other identity markers and materializations, liberation struggles and academic fields" (Rinaldi, Rice and Friedman 2020, 1). Similarly, although the fat studies field has traditionally centered on the Anglo-American context, the authors of the anthologies come from countries such as Greece, Finland, India, Iceland, Rhodes, China, and the US. They address fat studies' connections to other academic fields, such as trans studies and disability studies, and investigate what the fields can learn from one another.

My work takes its cues from the polyphony that is feminist fat studies, meaning that while the study itself represents affect research, it is in communication with other theoretical traditions utilized within the field. I do not refer to psychoanalytic theories since they stem from binary understandings of gender and primarily do not address other differences. Yet, in *articles III* and *IV*, I discuss the cultural belief that fatness is a medical problem. This kind of assumption is evident particularly in Orbach's thinking. Throughout the dissertation, I refer to studies on body positivity that are strongly inspired by Bordo and Bartky (e.g., Connell 2013; Murray 2008). Scholars have referred to Bordo and Bartky to criticize body positivity for emphasizing the importance of beauty even while aiming to broaden definitions of attractiveness. In my work, I highlight the importance of this critique yet also discuss the way it often ignores how beauty practices are experienced. Throughout the dissertation, I discuss the merits of representational analysis on fat or larger-than-normative bodies but explain my motivations for utilizing affect inquiry. In my view,

affect research aptly captures the experientiality and compellingness of body positive media. My focus on affect does not mean that I disregard the representational level of the content that I am studying. Instead, studying both affect and representations is important if we want to understand how social structures shape experiences (see also Kyrölä 2014). Finally, the dissertation is informed by intersectionality and analyzes how experiences of size layer with gender, sexuality, race, class, and age.

2.2 Affect and larger-than-normative bodies

The most common definition of affect stems from the Dutch philosopher Benedictus de Spinoza (2009, originally 1677). According to Spinoza, affect is the body's capacity to affect and be affected. Affect involves intensity and movement of some kind—however big or small, conscious or unconscious, and cognitive or pre-cognitive. "[A]ffect is found in those intensities that pass body to body (human, nonhuman, part-body, and otherwise), in those resonances that circulate about, between, and sometimes stick to bodies and worlds, and in the very passages or variations between these intensities and resonances themselves" (Seigworth and Gregg 2009, 1).

Affect inquiry helps to decipher the connections of human bodies to technologies, media production, representation, and consumption. Through affect, it is possible to analyze the mutual constructiveness of human and non-human bodies and culture and nature (e.g., Paasonen, Hillis and Petit 2015, 4; Seigworth and Gregg 2009, 1). While the whole of media studies has been associated with a (re)turn to affect (Eder, Hanich and Stadler 2019; Lünenborg and Maier 2018), social media scholars, in particular, have found the concept useful for study. Just the sheer number of edited volumes and issues published in the past few years focusing on affect and social media (e.g., Boler and Davis 2020; Hynnä-Granberg, Lehto and Paasonen 2019; Nebeling Petersen et al. 2017; Paasonen, Hillis and Petit 2015; Sampson, Maddison and Ellis 2018) illuminates the influence of affect inquiry for the field. Several social media scholars have argued that since affect constitutes the very being of social media, the study of social media is impossible without the study of affect (Boler and Davis 2020, 1; Sampson, Maddison and Ellis 2018, 6–7; see also Dean 2010). This is often explained by social media's corporate side—social media companies live off of their users' feelings. They use feelings to capture attention, generate profit, and influence election outcomes. At the same time, it is important to notice that users also find pleasure and gratification in their affective engagements with social media (Paasonen, Hillis and Petit 2015, 2). This dissertation refers to the economical logics of social media, yet it is mainly interested in the affective ambiguity characterizing user experiences.

Since affect, as I understand the concept, describes the relation between two bodies or more (Seigworth and Gregg 2009, 1) and media, it captures an *in-betweenness* of communication. Therefore affect inquiry can be valuable in studying both "old" and "new" media. Media technologies and representations intertwine with users' identities, communication practices, and body images (Nebeling Petersen et al. 2017, 2), which makes them impossible to separate one from the other. At the same time, the politics of affect and emotion are historically bound up with the politics of social difference (Boler and Davis 2020, 5–6). Accordingly, body positive media affects fat or larger-than-normative bodies differently than thin or more-normatively sized bodies.

While several scholars (e.g., Abel 2007; Massumi 2002; Probyn 2003) understand affect to be strictly different from *emotion*, for others (e.g., Ahmed 2014; Hemmings 2005; Wetherell 2012) the difference between affect and emotion is non-existent or, in most cases, irrelevant. Brian Massumi (2002, 27–28), who is often regarded the most important scholar of the former approach and heavily influenced by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, argues that affect and emotion follow different logics and should therefore be held separate. Emotion is the semantically and semiotically formed subjective quality of an experience. Affect, by comparison, is the unqualified, autonomic, and irreducible bodily sensation stemming from it. Sara Ahmed (2014, 6, 204–209) argues against this perspective, stating that the difference between sensation and emotion can only be an analytic one. Since subjects' emotions are shaped by the contact that they have with objects, emotions exist neither in the subject or the object. As a subject's contact with the object generates feeling—that is sensation *and* emotion—sensation and emotion are not really separate but parts of the same process.

In this dissertation, I understand *affect* broadly as a bodily intensity. It is not independent from the social world but rather about our embeddedness within it. Yet affect is less articulable than *emotion*. Emotion, in this dissertation, signifies the nameable quality of an experience, while affect stands for the less fully formed bodily intensity (see also Boler and Davis 2020, 25; Hynnä, Lehto and Paasonen 2019; Paasonen 2017). The dissertation discusses several emotions, such as empathy, happiness, pride, and shame, simultaneously as it studies the often-blurry affective relationships between human bodies, technologies, and the world. These affective relationships may lead to the naming of emotions, or the bodily intensities may remain without linguistic formulation. *Articles I* and *II* utilize the concept of affect, *article III* emotion, and *article IV* feeling and emotion. While *feeling* is less often used in academic texts than affect and emotion are, I utilize it when I talk about the body's general capacity to sense its being in the world. This involves both precognitive and more articulated experiences. In other words, I understand feeling as a combination of affect and emotion.

Besides affect, emotion, and feeling, I also use concepts such as *affective invitation, affective practice, affective re-training*, and *ugly feelings*. These are concepts created by different affect scholars. *Article I* discusses affective invitations as outlined by Kata Kyrölä (2014, 4–5), asking what affect does within the body positive blogosphere. *Article II* utilizes Margaret Wetherell's (2012, 4, 9, 12–14, 23) concepts of affective re-training and affective practice, arguing for attending to selfies as practices rather than mere representations. *Article III* discusses empathy and its theorizations by Lauren Berlant (2004) and Sara Ahmed (2005). The article views empathy as an emotion. It asks how empathy is vitalized by the affective relations between the media, larger-than-normative bodies, and more-normatively sized bodies. *Article IV* focuses on anxiety, hope, and pessimism as *ugly feelings that stay*. The article builds on Sianne Ngai's (2005) concept of *ugly feelings* as psychological experiences that linger.

2.2.1 Affective invitations to pride and happiness

While body positive media includes a variety of media representations, such as user-generated content, non-profit campaigns, and profit-seeking campaigns, body positivity in general has been criticized for its affective tones. Scholars have argued that body positivity makes body love and positivity seem like "simple tasks" or merely matters of "'remembering' how incredible you are" (Gill and Elias 2014, 182; Connell 2013; Johnston and Taylor 2008; Murray 2008). Critiques often mention the self-help book *Fat! So?* as a prime example of how body positivity connects to pride and happiness (Cooper 2016, 12–13; Probyn 2005, 130–131). In this book, Wann (1998, 18) encouraged her "brothers" and "sisters" to reclaim the word fat to feel good: "Reclaiming the word *fat* is the miracle cure you've been looking for, the magic trick that makes all your worries about weight disappear." Despite the critique, there is not much research that looks carefully at what kinds of affective relations body positive media encourages and compares various forms of body positivity with each other. This dissertation bridges the gap in the existing research and investigates what makes body positive media so engaging.

In analyzing the larger-than-normative body's relationship with body positive media, this dissertation turns to Ahmed's phenomenological thinking. Ahmed's phenomenology builds on two concepts that she uses to explain how queer bodies (Ahmed 2006a; 2006b) and racialized bodies (Ahmed 2006a; 2007; 2014) are interpreted as a locus of negative emotion: German philosopher Edmund Husserl's (1989) concept of *orientation*, which refers to how things appear different depending on from where they are observed, and French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (2012/1945) *habitual body*, a body which does not pose a problem for its own actions. Ahmed (Ahmed 2006a, 129–133; 2006b, 552, 554–558) argues that as

human spaces are inhabited by bodies and objects, their contact with each other within that space affects the shape that both take. This intimate co-dwelling teaches bodies orientations. Bodies may, for example, become straight because of the nearness of heterosexual objects and because of the invisibility of queer objects as a possibility to orient oneself toward. Similarly, spaces are oriented around the objects and bodies that inhabit them. In a white institutional space, the arrival of a nonwhite body often causes disorientation (Ahmed 2007, 159). While the orientation of space makes certain bodies feel at home, it makes others feel strange. The bodies that feel at home are habitual bodies. To feel at home in the world, according to Ahmed (2006a, 134–135), is to feel a certain comfort. Yet comfort as an affect only becomes tangible to a subject when they lose it and start to feel uncomfortable.

Like Ahmed, I am interested in how affect marks a body's non-belonging but also how and if this non-belonging can be transformed into experiences of comfort when engaging with body positive media. I analyze the larger-than-normative body as feeling and moving with and through media (see also Deuze 2011, 138). It is a body that, through such movements with and through media, is capable of being opened up as well as closed down to the world around it. Instead of pride or self-love, I argue that many media forms of body positivity do not subscribe to these unambiguously but rather aim for more complex affective relations of comfort and openness. A body that is open to its surroundings is capable of simply feeling its feelings instead of closing down around itself and treating itself as an object. To study the potential opening up of larger-than-normative bodies, I focus on their literal as well as more metaphorical affective movement.

Due to Western culture's pull of treating fatness as shameful, dangerous, and bad (e.g., Farrell 2011; Kyrölä 2014; LeBesco 2004), fatness involves discomfort comparable, yet not identical, to that of nonwhiteness or queerness. The fact that most spaces are oriented around thin bodies has been repeatedly shown by sociological study. Fat people are regularly left unattended in customer service situations, or their bodies become a source of ridicule in public spaces (e.g., Gailey and Harjunen 2019; Harjunen 2019a; 2016).

In *article I*, I and my co-author, Kata Kyrölä, bring together Ahmed's ideas of affective phenomenology and Kyrölä's (2014, 3–5, 24–26) concept of *affective invitations* of the media. Affective invitation refers to mediated ways of inviting audiences to feel a certain way. As fat bodies in the media are routinely ascribed with characteristics such as laziness, dirtiness, and immorality, many representations invite audiences to feel feelings such as disgust and fear toward their own or others' fat bodies. Simultaneously representations guide their viewers to concretely move their bodies in relation to media images, to stare at the fat body or turn their heads away from it. Kyrölä (2014, 1) argues that "[m]edia images weight on our bodies, invite us to direct our attention towards certain directions rather than others." At the

same time, images may affect the viewer's abilities to sense their bodies instead of treating them as objects. As fat bodies are continuously transformed and improved in the media, viewers become encouraged to follow their lead. Yet, personal positions affect whether the viewer becomes moved in the suggested ways.

Article I discusses the affective invitations of body positive blogs, taking as its objective to find out if and when readers are invited to feel proud and happy and whether or not other possible relations are encouraged. In particular, the article focuses on the invitation offered by fat-activist blogger Bevin Branlandingham (2017) to simply feel in one's body. The suggestion brings together the concept of affective invitation with Ahmed's ideas of spaces of comfort and discomfort. Feeling in one's body, as we understand it, is about pushing for space for larger-than-normative bodies to exist under the pressures of heteronormative gender expectations and "normal" size (see Ahmed 2006a, 134–135; Hemmings 2005, 559–565). Instead of analyzing whether or not body positive blogs succeed in making their readers feel proud, the article is interested in finding out how bodies can affectively connect to certain images and technologies in ways that might increase their abilities to connect to the world.

2.2.2 Mitigating shame through affective re-training

Emotions such as pride and happiness are often imagined as positive, but several scholars (e.g., Ahmed 2010; 2014; Probyn 2003; Sedgwick 2003) suggest that, in practice, affects are highly ambiguous. Ambiguity is crucial, for example, to Ahmed's (2010) formulation of happiness. Ahmed discusses happiness as an orientation toward objects that the subject encounters. Yet, happiness does not exist in certain objects. Rather, it is the expected outcome of being in contact with particular objects. Happy objects, such as body positive media representations, do not always lead to feeling good, however. Their audience can also end up feeling disappointed over their inability to conform to the rules of the affective community around them.

Article II turns to the concepts of *affective re-training* and *affective practice*, as coined by social psychologist Margaret Wetherell (2012, 4, 9, 12–14, 23), to study the affective ambiguity involved in using, creating, and consuming body positive media. Wetherell's concepts refer to ways of reacting and relating to things in social settings—and, more importantly, to becoming trained and re-trained in affective patterns. These patterns relate to culturally managed and expected routes that subjects' feelings are supposed to follow. Affective practices entail ways in which subjects enact feelings repeatedly, either according to culturally acceptable affective patterns or against them. *Article II* thinks with these concepts and analyzes body

positive selfie-taking as a socio-technological affective practice and a possible route for affective re-training.

While the concepts of affective practice, affective patterns, and affective re-training have seldom been used in media studies, Kaarina Nikunen (2018) has utilized the notion of affective practice to study group boundaries on social media. She focuses on how emotions are managed as social media architecture shapes affect. (For other examples on utilizing Wetherell's concepts, see Kyrölä 2017; Lehto and Paasonen 2021.) Affective practices easily become routinized. Wetherell (2012, 4), explains that it is still possible to decompose and replace them with other affective routes. *Article II* studies body positive selfie production's potential as affective re-training yet acknowledges that decomposing practices around fat shaming is difficult since fat shaming is tightly knitted into our cultural fabric.

The production of body positive selfies aims for new kinds of knowledge of and with one's body (cf. Coleman 2013a; 2013b). Posing for the camera, looking at the body from different angles, and moving it in interaction with the screen involve cognitive and corporeal techniques. The body is both the object of the photograph and the subject creating the image with its movement (Coleman 2013b, 11). Body positive selfie production offers tools for re-imagining and discerning extant affective practices. Yet, the orientations of one's surroundings affect the outcome (see Ahmed 2006a, 129; Kyrölä 2010, 6–8). One's cultural and social positioning toward as well as one's proximity to or distance from bodily norms affects one's possibility to take part in affective re-training. As I argue in *article II*, body positive selfie production is therefore an affective practice where feelings of pride and shame tend to collide.

Scholars such as Elsbeth Probyn (2005, 129–134) and Jeannine Gailey (2014, 145–146) comment on body positivity's inability to rid the subject of shame. Gailey's research suggests that members of body positive communities tend to oscillate between feelings of empowerment and shame. Because of this, body positivity, according to Probyn and Gailey, has failed in its aim to erase shame. This dissertation does not regard shame as a failure. Rather, facing one's shame, disgust, or pain is important for living a livable life (Probyn 2005, 130–131). As Ahmed (2010, 50) suggests, affects cannot be separated into good and bad based on whether they are felt as pleasant or unpleasant. If only feelings such as happiness or pride were allowed, historical forms of injustice, such as fat shaming, would disappear. To keep on living, larger-than-normative subjects must be allowed to talk about their vulnerability as well as negotiate room for comfort through practices such as selfie production.

2.2.3 Sharing vulnerability and empathy

The public discussion on young women, social media, and body image often centers on vulnerability and "negative" feelings. According to the logics of this discussion, social media has a negative effect on young women's self-esteem (e.g., Conger, Browning and Woo 2021). Contrary to these views, several scholars argue that despite social media's ability to perhaps induce vulnerability, social media can bring people from various backgrounds together and unite them in their struggles (see, e.g., McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Cook 2001). An example of this is the #MeToo movement. #MeToo is characterized by *affective homophily,* "bringing people together through expressions of similar feeling" (Sundén and Paasonen 2019, 2). While body positivity, contrary to #MeToo, is assumed to center on positive feelings, the larger-than-normative subject's understanding of themselves is generally shaped by vulnerability, shame, and disgust, as discussed in the previous section. Both #MeToo and body positivity are motivated by experiences of marginalization and abuse. Yet, in their ability to unite middle-class cis women in particular, they involve feelings of sisterhood. By utilizing the affectively charged language of vulnerability, body positivity and #MeToo showcase the ambiguity of shame, pain, happiness, pride, and empathy.

Article III studies the bonding power of body positive affects through the theoretical concept of *shared vulnerability* (see also Lagerkvist and Andersson 2017). With this concept, I turn attention to critiques of body positivity for pushing aside the subjects who are the most marginalized while foregrounding white, straight women whose bodies are only slightly bigger than the norm (e.g., Gibson 2021; Johnston and Taylor 2008; Murray 2013; Sastre 2014; Streeter 2021).

Vulnerability, as a concept, is characterized by inner contradictions. On one hand, it refers to the universal capacity of people to be physically, emotionally, or mentally hurt by something (Bost 2008; Gilson 2016; Lagerkvist and Andersson 2017). On the other hand, vulnerability tends to accumulate. Black larger-than-normative women are more vulnerable and more likely to face discrimination than white larger-than-normative women, for example (cf. Cole 2016; Koivunen, Kyrölä and Ryberg 2019). By using the concept of *shared vulnerability,* I wish to highlight this tension within vulnerability—the way that it connects across differences yet tends to hide privilege by implying that all can be equally hurt by body ideals.

Some feminist scholars (e.g., Kafer 2013) argue against using vulnerability as a theoretical concept, whereas others (e.g., Butler 2016, 22) claim that its power lies precisely in its capacity to unite people. According to Erinn Cunniff Gilson (2016, 72), "shared vulnerability constitutes the basis for ethical responsiveness." She argues that the realization that all of us are vulnerable, that we can all feel feelings such as sorrow or concern, is what makes us ethically responsible toward each other. The formulation reveals the proximity of vulnerability to the concept of empathy: It

is through empathy that the one who can be injured by fat prejudice is expected to relate to the one who has been injured by it.

In *article III*, I bring together the concept of shared vulnerability with an analysis of *empathy* as an emotion that unites subjects while being based on the power imbalances between them. Berlant (2004) discusses empathy as a technology of belonging that denotes privilege. The capacity of the empathizer to feel empathy derives precisely from a privileged position. The empathizer is situated elsewhere, away from suffering, which opens spaces to feel empathy for others. Ahmed (2005, 74) similarly takes notice of the power relations between the empathizer and the empathized. According to Ahmed, empathy is about the appropriation of the other's suffering. The empathizer claims to understand the other's pain, yet they can never truly know what the other one is feeling.

Using the concept of shared vulnerability, *article III* studies the functions of vulnerability and empathy in body positive discussions. It analyzes mediated audience reactions to the Finnish fat activist theater monologue *FAT.* In these reactions, differently sized audience members reflect on their bodies, discuss their affective relations to fatness, and negotiate their position in a neoliberal system that marginalizes fat people. I am interested in whether the reflections assume a similarity of feelings between people of different sizes or discuss privileges that come with having a more-normatively sized body. As such, the article contributes to discussions on the dangers and advantages of using vulnerability as a political language. Instead of taking a pro or con stance on the matter, the article critically investigates what happens when shared vulnerability becomes the defining feature of discussions around beauty ideals and size-based marginalization.

2.2.4 The ugly lingering of anxiety, hope, and pessimism

Understandings of vulnerability as an ontological condition obscure the temporal distinction between general susceptibility to harm and actual injuries that specific individuals and communities endure (Cole 2016, 265). However, since having a larger-than-normative body is not necessarily a static feature (as bodies continuously change during their lifetime), larger-than-normative subjectivity has a complex relation to temporality. This becomes especially clear when considering weight loss and people with weight loss histories as members of body positive communities. *Article IV* focuses on the temporality of feelings such as anxiety, hope, and pessimism, arguing that their lingering shapes the experiences of being larger-than-normative. Building on Sianne Ngai's (2005, 2–3, 6–7) concept of *ugly feelings* and Rebecca Coleman's (2008) idea of *things that stay*, the article studies larger-than-normative subjectivity as an affective presence beside a material reality. This, in turn, explains why so many people of different sizes feel the pull of body positive media.

Ngai (2005, 5–6, 20–21) defines ugly feelings, inclusive of anxiety, paranoia, envy, and irritation, as feelings that are defined by flatness and ongoingness. Ugly feelings are semantically negative since they are saturated with socially stigmatized meanings. They are feelings the subject often tries to rid themselves of. Ngai (2005, 209–247) discusses anxiety as one example of ugly feelings and an *expectant emotion* (Bloch 1995, 74–75) that is not oriented toward specific objects but is rather a larger configuration of the world. Since anxiety has an anticipatory character, it has a close relation to time. Similarly, I understand hope, to which Ngai (2005, 210) refers to in passing, and pessimism, which Ngai does not discuss, as ugly feelings.

Article IV discusses anxiety, hope, and pessimism as *ugly feelings that stay*, maintaining focus on their ambiguity as well as shifting attention to the temporal nature of being larger-than-normative. The concept collides together the term ugly feelings and Coleman's analysis of things that stay. Both concepts pay attention to the temporality of experiencing. In Coleman's research on 13- and 14-year-old girls' ideas on the relation of their bodies to images, Coleman discusses comments that the girls have received regarding their looks. She calls remarks that have stayed with the girls and shape the way they experience their bodies at present as "things that stay." Coleman follows Henry Bergson (2002/1908) in analyzing these comments as durations, as intense moments that stay and shape the girls' present and future. While Coleman is interested in the duration of verbal comments and how they affect one's body image, ugly feelings that stay bring focus to feelings as lingering and affecting one's body image. Like things that stay, feelings that stay are not something that have happened to the subject but something that they are still going through (Coleman 2008, 93).

Through an analysis of weight loss stories on body positive podcasts, *article IV* takes notice of ugly feelings as things that remain as the larger-than-normative subject loses weight. As such, the article discusses larger-than-normative subjecthood as an affective presence based on the subject's experiences of fatness in the past. I analyze how ugly feelings affect the person's ability to feel comfort and feel their feelings in the here and now. I further discuss in which ways the temporality outlined in body positive podcasts can be experienced as enabling and in which ways as limiting for the subject.

2.3 The feeling body in the media

Feminist discussions on body norms and the previously introduced ideas by several affect scholars have guided my research from the study of representations of bodies alone to the study of affects, emotions, and the feeling body in the media. *The feeling body in the media*, as I define it, is a body shaped in and through its connections to media. It is a central definer of who and how we are in the world (see also Coleman

2012; 2013; Kyrölä 2014). The study of the feeling body in the media means research on the subject's affective ways of being in a mediated society. Since the dissertation studies body positivity primarily in social media, it shares similarities with studies published within the past 10 years or so (e.g., Gerbaudo 2012; Tiidenberg 2018) focusing on empowerment and agency on platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Yet, what makes this dissertation unique is its emphasis on the body's ability to *feel* while using and consuming media. It is the first larger research project to carefully analyze the affective relations in body positive media and compare forms of body positive media with each other (for separate articles on the themes, see, e.g., Gill and Elias 2014; Hill 2022). Moreover, this dissertation is the first study to date to critically discuss and map out the landscape of Finnish body positive media.

In analyzing pleasure along with shame, anxiety, and pessimism, the study takes its cues from feminist voices that emphasize the pleasure of consuming idealized images (e.g., Davis 1995; Gimlin 2002; Stacey 1994). Queer studies scholar Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (2003) has famously criticized feminist and queer analysis that takes anticipation of oppression as its starting point, simultaneously interpreting all findings as proof of an unequal society. Sedgwick maintains that although we live in a world of systemic oppression, this strategy of *selective scanning* jeopardizes becoming positively surprised or finding pleasure in what one is studying. Feminist analysis of body norms similarly often closes possible interpretations in its prescription that idealized images can *only* oppress and hurt the subject. One example of this is found in *Unbearable Weight,* where Bordo (2003, 31–32) criticizes studies that focus on women's pleasure in viewing idealized images. Bordo seems to argue that the pleasure subjects may feel while consuming the images is a part of how and why people submit to oppressive regimes and that feminist inquiry should first and foremost focus on the institutionalized values and practices that guide behavior instead of discussing personal experience. Yet, studying subjective experiences does not have to mean ignoring structural marginalization. Indeed, Black feminist thought has since the 2010s increasingly emphasized that there is significant power in focusing on oppressed groups' pleasure (e.g., Cooper 2015; Morgan 2015). Recognizing pleasure is an integral part of fully realized humanity. A focus on pleasure is capable of redefining dominant narratives about embodiment since it focuses on the experiential in cultures where bodies such as the Black body are often eroticized at the same time as they are demonized (Morgan 2015, 44).

To take seriously and respect the experiences of subjects encountering body positive media, this dissertation calls for a phenomenological understanding of embodiment (Ahmed 2006a; 2006b). As affect marks a body's (non)belonging in a world, or a world's (non)belonging in a body (Seigworth and Gregg 2009, 1–2; see also Guenther and Harbin 2012; Spinney 2014), a focus on affect unravels

established separations between subjects and objects. This is also a central aim for my own research.

The concept of the feeling body in the media turns attention to media technologies' ways of becoming incorporated into the body. According to Ahmed (2006a, 131–132), we are oriented toward objects as things we do things with. An object can become absorbed into the body so closely that it is no longer viewed as something apart from it. Ahmed cites Merleau-Ponty (2012, 144), who discusses an example of a blind man's cane that becomes part of his body as it extends his mobility and helps him feel at home in the world. Similarly, media technologies can become incorporated into the bodies that they are structured to accommodate. *Article II*, in particular, plays with the idea of the selfie camera fading into the body simultaneously as the camera shows the body both as a subject and an object of vision.

The dissertation studies the potential of body positive media to allow for larger-than-normative subjects to feel their body in the world in ways that are healing for them. Yet, I am mindful of moments when the constant weight of mainstream dieting-focused media weighs too heavily on larger-than-normative subjects, and they are unable to focus on simply feeling. When analyzing the connections of bodies to media, I utilize an intersectional approach. While body positive media in Finland (see also Puhakka 2019b) as well as elsewhere (Johansson 2020; Williams 2017) is primarily focused on body size as an affective element, size is merely one thing that affects a subject's possibility to live a livable life. This dissertation interrogates how body size intersects with qualities such as gender, sexuality, race, and age when it comes to engaging with body positive media. *Article I* discusses how the larger-than-normative body's ability to simply feel is connected to sexuality. *Article II* is interested in larger-than-normative women's connections to body positive media across age. *Article III* comments on the issue of body size as the foremost quality that dictates women's experiences of beauty culture and their bodies. The article argues that body positivity without intersectionality risks hiding the experiences of those subjects whose chances of feeling comfort are the most limited. *Article IV* discusses the experiences of racialized larger-than-normative people side by side with the experiences of white larger-than-normative women.

3 Research Design: Affective Methodologies

Body positive media has previously been studied within the fields of gender and women's studies (Afful and Ricciardelli 2015; Connell 2013; Puhakka 2019a; 2019b; 2019c), sociology (Johnston and Taylor 2008; Williams 2017), fashion studies (Downing Peters 2013; Kristjansson 2014), media studies (Gill and Elias 2014; Sastre 2014; Williams 2021), and marketing and management research (Gurrieri and Cherrier 2013; Harju and Huovinen 2015). Across varied fields, the tendency has been to study media examples, such as body positive blogs and content shared under hashtags, by focusing on their representational aspects. While much of the studied representations are on social media, social media is seldom studied as a co-created, participatory space (for exceptions, see, e.g., Mowat et al. 2020). As a result, the spatial, temporal, and communicative specificities of sites and platforms have not been sufficiently addressed.

Body positive media needs to be discussed as a living practice of communication rather than as a simple message sent by an author to an audience (see Paasonen 2011, 16–17). I suggest that the technologically specific workings of body positive media can be analyzed through employing *affective methodologies* (Knudsen and Stage 2015; see also Auchter 2002; Tedesco 2021). Through these, it becomes possible to theorize the affective pull of body positive media and the ways users may become invested in this media content in both normative and unexpected ways.

Since affect as a bodily force or relation is often fleeting or shifting in intensity, most scholars (see, e.g., Coleman and Ringrose 2013, 9; Knudsen and Stage 2015, 1–2; Lury and Wakeford 2012, 8) suggest that examining affect through qualitative research is challenging and demands innovation from the researcher. Britta Timm Knudsen and Carsten Stage (2015, 1), for example, define *affective method* as an innovative strategy for formulating research questions and agendas, processing and producing embodied data, and interpreting these data for academic purposes. Affect scholars have experimented with research material and tried out methods such as personal field diaries (Punch 2012), reflection essays on experiencing a particular material (Kyrölä 2017), or staged laboratory experiments of observation (Staunæs

and Kofoed 2015). In this dissertation, affective methodologies do not demand a break from certain materials or methods as such.

In my research, affective methodologies stand for formulating research questions in unexpected ways, combining more "traditional" representation analysis or interviews with methodological choices seldom utilized and using my own body as a resource. Against the backdrop of representation analysis, I focus on the felt and experienced aspects of body positive media and ask how body positive media allows for larger-than-normative subjects to feel their bodies instead of treating them as objects. I maintain that images, texts, and sounds (never simply good or bad) should not be studied in isolation from material bodies. Media material and bodies meet in affective encounters through which they may or may not influence how one sees one's body or those of others (Ahmed 2014, 6; Kyrölä 2010, 21–23). I use thematic analysis, interviews, close reading, and situated close reading as my methods. Selfies, for example, are commonly analyzed as visual objects alone, but I discuss them as practices that can best be understood by conducting interviews (see also Abidin 2016; Warfield 2018). Susanna Paasonen, Ken Hillis, and Michael Petit (2015, 12, 11–13) state that writing is always "an act of mediation where bodily impressions, modulations, arousals, and motions are translated in order to be brought into the representational space of the text." To take into account the mediated nature of affects, I emphasize the specificities of the bodies that I am studying while reflecting on the way that my own embodiment affects the analysis.

Inspired by media scholar Theresa M. Senft's (2008, 46) concept of the *grab*, I suggest that affective methodologies work as a series of grabs in which the researcher makes decisions to produce knowledge on the studied topic. The study process also involves elements where the researcher is drawn to specific topics and viewpoints based on personal experience and preference. For Senft, the grab is a way to explain how people operate on the internet, and it signifies multiple acts: "to touch, to seize for a moment, to capture attention, and to leave open to interpretation" (Senft and Baym 2015, 1598). Susanna Paasonen (2011, 14) talks about the grab of the internet, specifically the grab of online pornography, as a combination of affective intensity, material forms of transmission, aesthetics, visual style, camerawork, and forms of address. Bringing these perspectives together, I argue that the grab as a research method can be both the researcher's way of seizing their studied cases and the researcher's openness to the affective flow between the content and their body: the researcher grabs certain material that grabs them in return. The way that certain content grabs the researcher can mean that the research can progress in ways that the researcher had not anticipated. In my own case, I had not planned on studying weight loss stories as part of this dissertation, yet my experience with weight loss allowed the stories to grab me tightly. In the end, they became the topic of *article IV*. Besides

the studied cases, the researcher also grabs methods as tools to shed light on the affectivity of the content and to investigate their own role in the series of grabs.

3.1 Research material: Where to grab affect

The material for this dissertation consists of four cases of mainly Finnish body positive representations, campaigns, or discussions, each taking place on different media platforms or utilizing different media technologies. Together, these point to the trajectory of body positive practices in Finland, all the way from the beginning of the *More To Love* blog in 2009 to the newest season of *The Soft* podcast in 2019–2020. I have taken my time to choose which cases to analyze, and only *More To Love* has followed me from the first draft of the research plan to the finished dissertation. Making decisions on the analyzed cases one article at a time has been beneficial since it has allowed me to react to changes on social media and enabled me to give a more updated account of where body positivity is today.

In this dissertation, I have opted for analyzing mainly Finnish cases. As discussed in the beginning of Chapter 1, this has not always been a self-evident decision. In fact, the lack of Finnish body positive content during the early years of the research was a significant reason why I chose the analyzed cases one at a time as the research project progressed. Studying Finnish body positivity is in line with what fat studies scholars (Cooper 2016, 159; Pausé 2014) find critical for the development of the academic field. Although the US is presumed to be the center of fat activism and body positivity, fat activist groups have significant histories in Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and many other countries. There is a lack of documentation, however, on fat activist national groups in countries other than the US, or, when such documentation exists, it is often based on reports filtered for North American audiences (Cooper 2016, 139, 153–154).

Studying body positivity in a context such as Finland challenges existing assumptions about the Anglo-Americanness of body positivity. It also speaks to the importance of social media for the movement in general and gives a more nuanced understanding of what body positivity is and can be. As discussed in section 1.3, Finland does not have a significant history with organizational fat activism. Despite this, body positivity has relatively swiftly become a well-known movement, from the first body positive blogs in the 2010s to discussion groups, vlogs, podcasts, and today's body positive influencers working on several media platforms. Focusing on body positive social media produced by Finnish activists alone and holding their content separate from body positive social media in countries such as the US is not necessarily straightforward, however. On Instagram and TikTok, many Finnish content creators use hashtags such as #bodypositivity and #bodypositive alongside, or even without, their Finnish equivalents #kehopositiivisuus and #kehopositiivinen,

thus blurring the lines between body positivity in different countries. Internet makes the networking of body positive activists easy and creates flows of influence and inspiration across national borders.

Several North American activists and scholars (Cwynar-Horta 2016; Sastre 2014) note that body positivity online largely centers on white, more-normatively sized women. They argue that body positivity has therefore betrayed fat women in their aim at improving their social status. In Finland as well, scholars and activists (Harjunen 2019c; Omaheimo and Särmä 2017) have posed extensive critique towards body positivity's whiteness, thinness, commercialism, and ignorance of structural discrimination. According to Harjunen (2019c, 40) body positivity gathers its strength from fat activism yet mellows fat activism down into a feel-good mantra of self-acceptance. She argues that body positivity marginalizes fat women and pushes them out of their own movement. The Soft collective, in their podcast that is analyzed in *article IV*, similarly discusses their frustration over scrolling Instagram for pictures tagged with the English term #bodypositivity and finding mainly images of white, cis, straight, and toned-down bodies. (See also Puhakka 2019b.)

In Finnish scholarly discussion, body positivity is often viewed as a global movement and examples on body positivity are largely taken from the US context. While some thesis works have discussed the movement's history in Finland (e.g., Alentola 2017; Shemeikka 2018), the material for analysis is gathered across national borders. There is not much study that focuses on the characteristics of Finnish body positivity per se. An exception to this is gender and fat studies researcher Anna Puhakka's work (2019a; 2019b; 2019c). Puhakka notes that body positivity in Finland focuses mainly on body size. She states that there is a lack of discussion on body positivity in the context of "race", ethnicity, non-binary gender, and disability. Finnish body positive activists often discuss body positivity as a movement for people of all sizes. Puhakka (2019b, 27) sees this as a response to the critique posed by health educators that body positivity aims to make fatness the new norm. According to Puhakka (2019b, 27), Finnish body positivity works to counter this healthist critique by suggesting that body positivity is for everyone, and that body positivity centers on equality both on an individual level and on the social level.

Like Puhakka, I see Finnish body positivity often considering both the individual and structural levels of size. Since Finnish body positivity has developed alongside the scholarly and fat activist critiques of its North American counterpart, Finnish body positivity has in many cases striven to respond to the critique that body positivity ignores structural fat marginalization. Yet, I also see Finnish body positivity as a movement that is characterized by inner contradictions. Although the best-known body positive activists in Finland are fat, in body positive peer support groups and body positive online spaces, there are often at least as many more-normatively sized members than fat members. This is likely to affect how and if fat

people experience body positive spaces as their own. The lack of inclusion of Black, Brown, disabled, queer, trans, and non-binary people in Finnish body positivity makes the movement normative through several parameters. Furthermore, body positivity, in Finland as well as elsewhere, is sometimes used as a tactic to sell products, such as in the case of the *More To Love* blog whose authors soon became models for plus-size clothing lines in Finland.

The scholarly field of fat studies has long called for an intersectional approach to the analysis of size (e.g., Pausé 2014). Intersections, such as size, gender, and race, have recently become an object of broader academic interests (for exceptions and examples on this analysis, see, e.g., Kwan 2010; Stewart and Breeden 2021; Williams 2017; 2021). Studies of the intersections of size and non-normative gender (for exceptions, see White 2020) and size and ability (for exceptions, see Gill 2020), however, are still scarce. Yet those studies that do exist offer important information on how fat affects one's possibility to pass as a specifically gendered person or how fatness influences the reading of one's body as sick or capable. In the case of this dissertation, I was unable to find Finnish body positive material created at the intersections of size and non-binary gender or size and disability or include these experiences in my self-gathered interview material. Yet, intersectionality has guided my research process. My analysis emphasizes the normative gender of the authors of the material and pinpoints its possible consequences for the discussion. I am also aware that in the analyzed cases, the able-bodiedness of the content creators works as a norm regulating what larger-than-normative bodies are assumed to be capable of doing.

In this dissertation, I have purposefully chosen to analyze cases that rely on different types of communication: from textual to visual and audio media. I have done this to discuss how different technologies and platforms come into contact with media users' bodies. Much of the analyzed representations are produced or distributed online. I have also gathered interview material myself by using the internet as a resource. I am interested in how texts, still images, moving images, and sounds play together on the internet and how they are experienced together, separately, and in hybrid ways (Hillis 2009, 27; Paasonen 2011, 14). The richness of the representations, discussions, and campaigns discussed in this study allows for zooming in on this feature.

To get to the question of how body positive representations are experienced not only personally but also collectively, I have focused on cases that are well-known in Finland. While some of the authors of the analyzed content can be termed as microcelebrities (see Abidin 2015), some are known by the broader Finnish public. Many of the body positive influencers who are referred to in this dissertation have a multimedia presence, ranging from social media content that they themselves

produce to appearances on television and in newspapers. This allows for mapping the broader body positive media atmosphere and its shifts.

Article I analyzes the Finnish blogs *More To Love* (2009–2013) and *PlusMimmi* (2013–2020) and the US blog *The Queer Fat Femme Guide to Life* (2008–). *More To Love* is a co-authored blog between two female friends, Peppi and Mimmi. *PlusMimmi* is Mimmi's personal blog, started shortly after the end of *More To Love*. *PlusMimmi* is centered mainly on fashion. *More to Love* discusses several topics, such as fat discrimination, representations of fatness in the media, clothes, cosmetics, food, and travel. During its first few years, *More To Love* enjoyed huge popularity among the Finnish public and media. This was showcased by the way that Peppi and Mimmi were often invited onto television and radio to comment on the status of fat people in the society. *The Queer Fat Femme Guide to Life* is similarly a well-known blog in its cultural context of the US. The blog includes posts about fashion, style, sex, relationships, politics, art, and food discussed from an intersectional perspective. *The Queer Fat Femme Guide to Life* started out as a blog but soon developed a multi-platform presence, consisting also of a podcast, Instagram and Twitter accounts, and a Facebook page. In 2017, the blog and its author, Bevin Branlandingham, reached wide visibility when the video of Branlandingham's dance class, "Fat Kid Dance Party," went viral on PopSugar. This dance class and the videos shared of it in the blog are discussed in detail in *article I*.

While *article I* discusses size, gender, and sexuality*, article II* zooms in on questions of size, gender, and age in body positive selfie-taking. The material of *article II* consists of in-depth interviews and email exchanges with five Finnish women aged 25–57. The interviews focus on the informants' relationships to selfie practices in general. The interviews also touch on a Finnish body positive campaign called #righttobeseen (in Finnish, #lupanäkyä) in specific—a campaign that encouraged Finnish people to take and share body positive selfies. Of the five interviewees, three took and shared a #righttobeseen selfie on social media, while two did not take part in the campaign in this way but followed it as members of a Finnish body positive support group called *Jenny and the Fat Myth Busters* (originally *Jenny ja läskimyytinmurtajat*, translation by Hynnä-Granberg; currently under the name *Kehomyytinmurtajat*). Both #righttobeseen and *Jenny and the Fat Myth Busters* were part of a larger nationwide campaign called Scale Rebellion (originally Vaakakapina*,* translation by Hynnä-Granberg) that spread throughout the year 2017 on Finnish National Broadcasting Company Yle's media outlets. The aim was to start "Finland's biggest rebellion of weight control and body positivity" (Scale Rebellion website 2022) by urging people to desert quick diets and focus on slow lifestyle changes instead. Since Scale Rebellion was hosted by Yle, it became well-known in Finland. Scale Rebellion's sub-campaign #righttobeseen also

gathered considerable popularity, and the hashtag has been used on public Instagram accounts over one thousand times.

Article III covers all publicly available media material on the Finnish fat activist theater monologue *FAT. A Greasy Monologue about Fatness* (originally *LÄSKI. Rasvainen Monologi Lihavuudesta,* translation by Hynnä-Granberg). The material was published between January 1 and December 12 in 2016, and it includes six theatrical reviews, six newspaper/journal interviews, two stories in an online journal, four radio interviews, four television interviews, 14 blog posts, and one podcast. The monologue, acted and scripted by Raisa Omaheimo and directed and dramatized by Elina Kilkku, consists of various anecdotes and descriptions from Omaheimo's life as she sheds light on Finnish society's fat-phobic tendencies. On *FAT's* opening day, January 8, 2016, Finland's biggest newspaper, *Helsingin Sanomat,* ran a full-page story on the monologue in its supplementary edition *Nyt*. This raised the interest of other media. A series of articles, interviews, and social media discussions followed. In its popularity, *FAT* played a significant role in body positivity becoming known and recognized in Finland. Since 2016, Omaheimo has appeared in several interviews, events, and panels discussing the status of fat people in Finland.

Article IV analyzes two Finnish body positive podcasts, *Jenny and the Fat Myth Busters* (2016) and *The Soft* (originally *Pehmee*, translation by Hynnä-Granberg, 2018–). *Jenny and the Fat Myth Busters* is hosted by journalist Jenny Lehtinen—the face of Scale Rebellion mentioned in connection to *article II*—and Saara Sarvas, Lehtinen's companion in Scale Rebellion. *Jenny and the Fat Myth Busters* is produced by Yle and was broadcast on the Yle Puhe radio channel besides being shared on Yle's audio service, Audio Areena. In the six episodes of the podcast, Lehtinen and Sarvas discuss different myths related to fatness and interview doctors, celebrities, and researchers on the topic. *The Soft* (2018–) is part of Ruskeat Tytöt Media (Brown Girls Media), an independent online publication dedicated to "centering and normalizing the perspectives of Brown women and people with underrepresented genders in Finnish and Nordic media" (Ruskeat Tytöt Media website 2022). *The Soft's* is hosted by two Brown fat artists and activists, Caroline Suinner and Meriam Trabelsi. Together they curate, host, and create content on several media platforms in addition to the podcast. *The Soft* thus far has had two seasons, one published in 2018 and the other in 2020. *The Soft* is well-known among Finnish feminists and activists. Since the body positive discussion in Finland is predominantly white, Suinner and Trabelsi want to bring fat Brown bodies to the center.

These four cases shed light on body positivity in Finland. At the same time, in their variety, they offer a view on how body positive media allows for feeling the larger-than-normative body across media technologies and platforms. Together, the four cases reveal how the body positive discussion has evolved in Finland from the

first attempts to negotiate space for the larger-than-normative body in *More To Love* to the intersectional discussions in *The Soft*.

3.2 Research methods: How to grab affect

The methods that I use in analysis are not new to media studies, but I utilize them in ways that are apt for thinking together with affect. Knudsen and Stage (2015) regard rhythms of bodies, practices, and texts as important in studying affect since changes in rhythm can point to affective peaks. Similarly, ruptures of style and emotional recollections of previous bodily states can be used to explore affect. In this dissertation, I use thematic analysis, in-depth interviews, close reading, and situated close reading as ways of grabbing rhythms and emotional or sensorial recollections. Since I follow Ahmed's definition of affect, I maintain that no material can ever be thoroughly explained or "emptied out" of affect so that no new affective shades could be discovered (see Paasonen, Hillis and Petit 2015, 11–12). Affect, as discussed in this dissertation, is the relation between the research materials, their authors, audiences, and me—not something that exists objectively in the analyzed texts, images, and sounds or the bodies in contact with them. Furthermore, since affect is an immediate force or intensity, it is impossible to study affect as such (see Paasonen 2011, 20–21; Seigworth and Gregg 2009, 1).

For the analysis of the blogs, Kyrölä and I use thematic analysis to focus on specific embodied practices that are relevant for larger-than-normative subjects. While in the article itself we do not specify our method, the method can be understood as thematic analysis (see, e.g., Javadi and Zarea 2016; Terry, Hayfield, Clarke and Braun 2017) since we focus on identifying recurring themes in the blogs. The concept of thematic analysis is sometimes used in a (post)positivist manner to describe how certain themes "emerge" from material. Victoria Clarke, Virginia Braun, and Nikki Hayfield (2015, 222–223), however, suggest that thematic analysis is a highly contextual method in which the researcher's role is significant. Thematic analysis is compatible with affective methodologies where the researcher position is a valued resource rather than an obstacle. Thinking through affect in thematic analysis helps pinpoint themes and practices where affects compound. At the same time, the research findings are bound up with the researcher's understandings of affectivity—the things in the analyzed content that grab the researcher's senses and therefore become a topic of analysis.

Thematic analysis consists of several stages in which the researcher first familiarizes themselves with the material and seeks to find similarities and construct themes. After reviewing the themes, the researcher names the themes and uses them as a basis for analysis (Terry, Hayfield, Clarke and Braun 2017). Our analysis progressed through similar stages throughout which we stayed mindful of our

interest in exploring affect. We read and saw through the entire *More To Love*, *PlusMimmi,* and *Queer Fat Femme Guide to Life* blogs, taking specific notice of passages in which bloggers and followers express emotions and bodily sensations. We also paid attention to the most-commented-on posts in the blogs. Although looking at the number of comments on a post cannot tell everything about the affective relations between a post, the bloggers, and the followers, it is indicative of clusters of attention in the blog space (Paasonen 2015, 28–29). A large number of follower comments may increase the affective intensiveness of a post for other users and bloggers (see Ahmed 2014, 13). In this case, many of the most-commented-on posts, as well as posts where emotions and sensations became explicitly expressed, addressed practices of exercise, fashion, and sex. The posts discussed not only the empowering qualities of the practices but also, and perhaps even more importantly, the feelings of marginalization and alienation that larger-than-normative subjects often face when taking part in the practices. *Article I* therefore zooms in on the themes of exercise, fashion, and sex.

To study body positive selfies, or more precisely, the affective experience of producing them, I used in-depth interviews (e.g., Boyce and Neale 2006; Legard, Keegan and Ward 2003). The in-depth interview is a flexible and interactive method where the researcher guides the interviewee through pre-determined topics but where the interviewee also has power in steering the conversation and initiating discussion (Legard, Keegan and Ward 2003). Since it is a method for grasping experience, it is suited for affect inquiry. Yet, as with thematic analysis, exploring affect through interviews is fraught with challenges that have to do with the immediateness of affects. Questions such as how the interviewee remembers the discussed topic, how the researcher and interviewee play together, what the interviewee does not wish to discuss, and what the interviewee assumes the researcher wants to hear can significantly affect the research findings.

My decision to study selfies through interviews had to do with the limited way that public discussion and academic scholarship often approach the genre. Selfies are topics of heated exchange, yet also their production, especially in the case of larger-than-normative subjects, is affectively charged. Although representation analysis continues to dominate the study of selfies, it is impossible to capture the affective experience of the selfie practice by studying the genre only through this method. Interview research, surprisingly seldom used on selfies (for important exceptions, see, e.g., Abidin 2014; 2016; Albury 2015), can highlight how taking selfies is experienced by the larger-than-normative subject.

My interview process where I talked to larger-than-normative women on their experiences with selfie production had three phases. First, I posted a short description of myself and the study on the *Jenny and the Fat Myth Busters'* Facebook wall, welcoming all interested members of the group to write to me concerning their

relationship with the #righttobeseen campaign and selfies. Five people contacted me describing their picture-taking practices and their affective experience with body positive selfies. Second, I met all the informants personally and interviewed them on the same topics as well as their relationships to selfie practices in general. I recorded the interviews and transcribed them myself with the interviewees' permission. Third, after the interviews, I contacted the informants a few times with the purpose of clarifying some remaining questions. One of the questions I asked afterward concerned which term the interviewees typically use to describe their bodies.

In the analysis of the media reflections of *FAT*, I used the method of close reading (e.g., Brummet 2018; Culler 2010). Close reading is a form of mindful, disciplined reading with the intention of uncovering a deeper understanding of the analyzed material. As a method, close reading consists of dividing the material into smaller units, scrutinizing them in detail, and revisiting pieces that seem relevant several times during the process (Brummet 2018, 8–11). While "the closeness of close reading" (Culler 2010) is often understood as minute scrutiny of the material, I suggest that when used in relation to affect studies, closeness also signals the aim of getting to the intimate, affective shades of experience. Literary and cultural studies scholar Isobel Armstrong (2001, 94–95) argues that affect is a central element shaping all acts of close reading. For Armstrong (2001, 93), affect is "the cathecting or build-up and release of energies in this intense analytic process [of close reading], as well as the process itself." She suggests that researchers need to recognize the power of affect if they wish to get fully close to their studied material.

In close reading, as well as in thematic analysis and interviews, there is a danger that the researcher makes stark speculations of what the authors of the analyzed texts, images, and sounds may be feeling. To avoid speculations, qualitative analysis through affect often focuses on verbal expressions of feelings and sensations. Yet, no mediated or verbal accounts of affective experiences are fully encompassing of all their authors' reactions during or after the experience. As Paasonen (2014, 2) suggests, however, these accounts are often the primary material available to cultural scholars for analyzing affective experiences.

The close reading process in *article III* started with a preliminary reading, watching, and listening of/to the reflections on *FAT,* during which I concentrated on the authors' reflections of their bodies and descriptions of how the monologue had made them feel. Next, I zoomed in on the parts where an affective attachment of some sort was expressed. I looked at the passages side by side, seeking ways to conceptualize affective relations. I turned to vulnerability and shared vulnerability as the concepts that best described the affectivity of the reflections. In the last round, I revisited all the texts, images, videos, and sounds, keeping in mind the idea of vulnerability and ascertaining that I had not missed any significant parts that would either support or counter the figuration of shared vulnerability. During the last phases

of the analysis then, my approach to the material was conceptual as well as theoretical (see Bal 2002, 8), as is so often the case with cultural research.

For the analysis of the podcasts, I similarly used the method of close reading or situated close reading/listening (e.g., DiPasquale 2018; Solomon 2017). I do not consider situated close reading/listening a separate method from close reading but rather a subclass as well as a terminological choice to emphasize certain aspects of the method. As already discussed, all acts of close reading are contextual and dependent on the researcher position (Brummet 2018, 9). Situated close reading, or in the case of podcasts, situated close listening, as a term emphasizes the researcher's position. Situated close listening is further transparent in regard to the way that the researcher's bodily history affects their interpretations. Since *article IV* focuses on stories of weight loss, and since I have significant history with the practice, I found it ethical to bring this forth in the analysis. Secondly, using my own body as a resource (Braun and Clarke 2020, 3; Ellingson 2017, 1) was something that interested me. I wanted to experiment with grabbing affect through the fabric of my experience.

The analysis process of the podcasts resembled that with the media reflections on *FAT* except for one part: When analyzing the reflections, I wished to gather a general view of them and how and when affect was expressed. Then I zoomed in on some parts that I found representative of the whole. With the podcasts, I consciously let my intuition and reaction guide the way. This tactic led me to focus on sequences of the podcasts that felt pressing and caused anxiety in me. Of course, this is not to say that the scrutinized sequences would be unrepresentative of the podcasts in general. Rather, my belief is that they are parts that, in addition to me, intensively grab many of the listeners with weight loss histories.

3.3 Research ethics: In which cases to grab affect?

While this dissertation analyzes some pieces of material that were published on television and radio and in newspapers and journals, its focus is on the internet and digital technologies. The dissertation represents internet research on multiple levels: The internet is simultaneously an object, a source, and a tool for research (Markham and Buchanan 2012, 3–4; Turtiainen and Östman 2013, 62–64). Since internet research is always research on human subjects (Markham and Buchanan 2012, 4–5), ethical considerations are inevitable. The ethical considerations of this project include ponderings over the public or private nature of the analyzed content; the vulnerability of the people that have created the texts, images, and sounds; informed consent, and the anonymization of the material. I have also spent time thinking about my own position in relation to the studied people. All together, these considerations

have led me to ask: In which cases is it appropriate to try to grab affect in digital spaces and in which cases is it not?

The distinction between public or private content online is one of the most relevant questions concerning the ethics of internet research (see, e.g., McKee and Porter 2009; Rosenberg 2010; Zimmer 2010). In 2002, The Association of Internet Researchers compiled guidelines for scholars and students for an ethical approach to internet research. The guidelines, which have since been updated twice, in 2012 and 2020, emphasize that it is unethical to study content whose author has not meant it to be public. The guidelines further suggest that besides the private or public nature of the content, scholars should consider the vulnerability of the studied people and the topic (Ess and the Association of Internet Researchers 2002; Markham and Buchanan 2012; franzke, Bechmann, Zimmer, Ess and the Association of Internet Researchers 2020). The suggestions stem from several national and international codes of conduct for ethical study on human beings (e.g., European Commission 2018; Finnish National Board of Research Integrity TENK 2019). The codes state that the researcher's primary ethical responsibility is to make sure that no harm is caused to the people involved in the study.

Despite the existing guidelines and codes, there are numerous examples of when the privacy of the studied people has been compromised or the research has caused them harm. In a case relevant to the topic of this dissertation, a researcher published an article discussing a body positive website in a science-related, popularized online journal in 2011. The readers of the article had never heard of body positivity and expressed their dismay toward the movement. They posted critiques not only in the comments section of the article but also on the body positive site itself. The example concretely shows that while before and in the beginning of the 2000s, social and cultural studies scholars often claimed that their research published in obscure academic journals cannot hurt the research participants since it never reaches the general public, this claim is no longer viable, if it ever was (see Markham 2012, 336). The example has stayed with me throughout this dissertation project as a reminder that all stages of the research need to involve careful ethical consideration and that even then, the unthinkable can happen. Content that appears publicly online and does not seem sensitive to the researcher can be experienced as highly intimate by its author. In cases such as these, the author of the online content can end up feeling like their privacy has been violated by the research (Markham and Buchanan 2012, 6–7; Turtiainen and Östman 2013).

In this dissertation, I have opted for what Helen Nissenbaum (2010) calls *contextual integrity,* meaning that since people's experiences of privacy are contextual and changing, the researcher needs to make research decisions on a case-by-case basis. Today, many people creating online content are aware that the content is public, yet they can still maintain that the context in which they publish is private

and restricts how the content ought to be used (Markham and Buchanan 2012, 6–7). It is therefore up to the researcher to know the communication habits, social codes, and hierarchies of the communities and platforms that they are studying (McKee and Porter 2009; Rosenberg 2010; Turtiainen and Östman 2013, 54–55). Knowing one's researched site or platform decreases the risk of a misevaluation of vulnerability and leads to better research in general. In all the studied cases, I have spent time getting to know the sites in question as well as immersed myself in the world of online body positivity in general. While in the articles, I concentrate on specific blog posts or episodes of podcasts, I have made sure that I know the blogs and podcasts in their entirety. I have not myself produced content on the sites other than posting a call for interviewees on selfie production in the body positive Facebook group.

Although body positivity is a well-known movement in Finland today, I have been careful not to make rash decisions of the publicity of the content that I am studying. After careful consideration and talks with my supervisors and other scholars, I have decided that it is ethical to study the blogs *More To Love*, *PlusMimmi*, and *Queer Fat Femme Guide to Life* and the podcasts *Jenny and the Fat Myth Busters* and *The Soft* without permission from their authors. All the previous examples are well-known among people in Finland. There is therefore no significant risk of "outing" them to the general public or making them susceptible to hate speech. With follower comments to the blogs, however, I have been very careful with my politics of quoting and mainly summarized the comments instead of using direct quotes. In the case of the media discussion around *FAT*, I have similarly concluded that the blog posts that I analyze are intentionally public and directed toward a wide readership. I have, however, decided to leave other online discussions on the monologue outside of the analysis since their participants may experience the conversations as intimate despite their publicity online.

In *article II*, I concentrate on the analysis of the interviews and do not discuss the communication in the closed Facebook group *Jenny and the Fat Myth Busters*, through which I found the interviewees. I kept in touch with the interviewees throughout the research process, making sure that they understand the purpose of the research as well as that they have the right to opt out of the study at any point. I asked the interviewees for their permission to record the interviews and to store anonymized transcripts of the interviews in The Finnish Social Science Data Archive. I left out any personal identifiers, such as names, cities, and jobs, from the article and the transcripts and destroyed the recordings after the transcripts were ready. In the article, I used pseudonyms to refer to each of the interviewees. To form a confidential and more equal relationship with my informants, I shared manuscripts of the article with them and encouraged them to comment on them if they wished either to add in or leave out some piece of information. None of them made any such

suggestions. I further told the interviewees that I have experiences of fat marginalization in my past that have led me to do this research.

In relation to the interviews, and during this dissertation project as a whole, I have spent many hours thinking about how my position as someone who was fat throughout their childhood and a significant part of their teenage years has affected this study. Feminist research has long emphasized how the researcher's social and cultural backgrounds affect their research process (e.g., Haraway 1991, 183–201; Harding 1993). Feminists and cultural studies scholars have further paid increasing attention to which groups get their voices heard and who gets to speak on behalf of whom in scientific as well as everyday contexts (e.g., Alcoff 1992; Phipps 2016). I am aware that my position as someone who used to be fat but who is no longer marginalized because of my size means that I am privileged in relation to many of the subjects whose experiences this dissertation discusses. I am also a white cis woman coming from a relatively well-off background and living in a heterosexual relationship and therefore very privileged on many fronts of my life. Therefore, although I considered the possibility of doing auto-ethnographic research in *article IV*, I concluded against it. I decided that it was more ethical to make room for the experiences of Brown larger-than-normative people than discuss my own affective relations to body positive podcasts. I did, however, specifically in *article IV* but also throughout this research, strive to be as open as possible about how my background has affected my analysis.

Despite my attempt to ensure ethicalness, the fact that in *article IV* I discuss weight loss stories can be seen as problematic by some fat studies scholars. As stated in section 1.3, this dissertation focuses on larger-than-normative embodiment rather than fat embodiment, and it understands larger-than-normative as less of a material reality than an affective presence. Larger-than-normative therefore also includes people such as those who have lost weight but who sometimes feel fat. Rather than claiming space from the experiences of those who are "truly fat," larger-than-normative is a way of approaching the affective endurance of experiences concerning size. As stated by fat studies scholars Heather Brown and Apryl M. Herndon (2020, 145), experiences of fatness do not suddenly disappear when one's body changes. Continuing to engage with people who have lost weight is important for fat studies if the field wishes to be inclusive and develop a deeper understanding of how different groups are affected by fat prejudice (see also LeBesco 2016; Maor 2013). It would be highly problematic to discuss *only* the experiences of formerly fat subjects in the fat studies context. Yet, I also see the systematic ruling out of slimmed down people's experiences as troubling. In this dissertation, I have striven to emphasize the most marginalized voices in each of the studied cases yet aimed to understand why people closer to norms also feel the pull of body positivity.

4 Findings

In this dissertation, I have set out to find out *how body positive media allows subjects to feel their bodies instead of treating them as objects.* To explore this question, I have analyzed the introduced four cases of body positivity in the Finnish media by exploring the feelings expressed in the analyzed texts, images, and sounds and focused on the agency of larger-than-normative subjects while producing and using body positive social media. I have studied who is the assumed user of body positive media and focused on the spatiality and temporality of the larger-than-normative subject's experience.

In this chapter, I will introduce the findings of this research. Each sub-chapter focuses on one specific research question, highlighting the research article in which that question is most thoroughly discussed. Yet, since all four articles comment on all questions, the sub-chapters also refer to the other three articles.

It is noteworthy that this dissertation is the first larger project up to date to critically discuss not only the affectivity of body positivity but also Finnish body positive media. In the following sub-chapters, I will consider how Finnish cultural context shapes both the mediation of body positivity and the subjective experiences of using, consuming, and producing body positive media. Only *article I* zooms in on content from other cultural contexts beside the Finnish one. Therefore, a more thorough discussion on the differences and similarities between Finnish body positive media and body positive media in other contexts such as the most frequently discussed North American body positivity is out of scope of this dissertation.

I encourage the reader to become acquainted with the research articles to get a fuller picture of the findings and this project in general. The articles can be found at the end of this introduction in the order of their publishing.

4.1 Beyond pride and positivity

Body positive media is usually understood as media that emphasizes the beauty of larger-than-normative bodies and aims to change the subject's affective relationship to their body from negative to positive. It is seen to touch "positive" emotions alone and to ignore or hide "negative" ones (Murray 2008; Probyn 2005, 129–134). To discuss how the North American critique applies to Finnish body positive media and

to produce new knowledge on the affective register through which the movement operates, this dissertation asks *what body positive media invites its users to feel in their bodies.* The dissertation further centers on what makes body positive media so persuasive and engaging.

Article I zooms in on these questions by doing a thematic analysis on the blogs *More To Love, PlusMimmi*, and *Queer Fat Femme Guide to Life*. It investigates how the blogs invite their audiences not only to feel feelings *about* their own and others' larger-than-normative bodies but to feel *in* their bodies. The suggestion to simply feel one's body stems from the blog *Queer Fat Femme Guide to Life*, where the author, Bevin Branlandingham (2017), gives this advice to the participants of her body positive dance class. Treating the suggestion as a conjunctive element that cuts through the analyzed blogs, together with Kyrölä, I ask what kind of feelings and how the blogs invite their followers to feel.

We identify exercise, fashion, and sex as some of the most discussed themes in the blogs. They are further themes that, based on the followers' reactions, are particularly "sticky" (Ahmed 2004, 2–13). Many of the posts around the themes have received an unusually high numbers of comments. In the comments, the followers reflect on their relationship to their bodies as well as express a strong affective engagement toward the blog and blogger(s) in question. The tone of the posts and comments, however, is not proud or positive alone but highly ambiguous. Exercise, fashion, and sex are practices where fat and larger-than-normative subjects have a high risk of becoming marginalized and where their bodies easily turn into objects of scrutiny (e.g., Afful and Ricciardelli 2015; Gailey 2014; Harjunen 2019a). Therefore, it makes sense that the posts and comments focus not only on the pleasure that subjects feel when participating in the practices but also on the alienation that they experience as part of them. In the case of Branlandingham's body positive dance class for example, Branlandingham asks her participants to shout out whenever they feel awkward, thus acknowledging that fat and larger-than-normative people are likely to feel discomfort while exercising and inhabiting spaces of exercise. At the same time, other participants are asked to cheer when someone expresses their awkwardness.

More To Love's, *PlusMimmi's,* and *Queer Fat Femme Guide to Life's* discussion on ambiguous affects creates space for larger-than-normative bodies to participate and feel comfort when exercising, being fashionably dressed, and having sex. To feel comfort in such spaces and during such practices is not the equivalent of feeling proud or happy, however. Rather, following Ahmed (2006), comfort is an experience of fitting in. Comfort opens up space for feeling one's body and its feelings instead of treating the body as an object. While comfort is often momentary for fat or larger-than-normative people, simply feeling (see also Featherstone 2010; Sobchack 2004)

is itself revolutionary since larger-than-normative subjects are used to their bodies being treated as objects to be molded and evaluated.

The expression of multiple affects and the invitation to feel one's body and its feelings are what makes the analyzed blogs appealing. As the followers comment, discuss, and reshare the posts, the discussions become stickier and even more engaging. In body positive selfie-taking, media discussions around the monologue *FAT*, and body positive podcasts as well, affects grow in intensity via digital practices. None of the cases displays pride alone. They focus on the difficulty of feeling positive and appreciating one's body all the time. On one hand, users and producers of body positive media relate strongly to content that searches for ways to mitigate shame. On the other hand, they welcome content that discusses the endurance of anxiety and pessimism associated with living in a larger-than-normative body. A focus on pride alone does not therefore seem to explain the affective appeal of body positive media. Rather it is the ambiguity of body positive affects itself that makes body positive media so engaging.

As *article I* analyzes the US blog *Queer Fat Femme Guide to Life* beside the Finnish blogs *More To Love's* and *PlusMimmi*, the article teases out differences and similarities between the blogs' cultural contexts and makes it possible to contemplate how context affects the production and consumption of body positive media. The Finnish blogs' focus on the feelings of anxiety, shame, discomfort, and awkwardness could easily be read as an implication of a cultural context where body positivity and fat activism were, during the early 2010s in particular, very unknown movements. *More To Love* and *PlusMimmi* often include sections where the bloggers explicitly aim to teach their followers as well as themselves what body positivity is (see also Puhakka 2019a). This does not mean that ambivalence towards fatness is a passing feeling that the subject grows out of once they delve deeper into body positivity, however. Rather ambivalence seems to follow fat and larger-than-normative subjects throughout their years of body positivity and throughout the years of body positive content production. Anxiety, shame, discomfort, and awkwardness are a recurring feature also in the US blog *Queer Fat Femme Guide to Life*. Ambivalence therefore does not seem to be a specificity of Finnish body positive media. Rather ambivalence can be hypothesized to be part of the affective glue that keeps readers emotionally invested in body positive media for long periods of time in and across different cultural contexts.

Perhaps the biggest difference between *Queer Fat Femme Guide to Life* and *More To Love* and *PlusMimmi* is their way of discussing style and fashion and how these can either enhance or deduce the comfort of fat and larger-than-normative subjects. While all three blogs include several posts that focus on fat "feminine" styles, *Queer Fat Femme Guide to Life's* explicit queerness and *More To Love's* and *PlusMimmi's* heteronormativity stand as dividing factors. *More To Love* and

PlusMimmi mainly feature what could be termed as normative feminine styles, whereas *Queer Fat Femme Guide to Life's* style is more flashy and flamboyant. *More To Love* and *PlusMimmi* aim to style the fat body so that it will pass and feel more comfortable in its thin-normative surroundings. *Queer Fat Femme Guide to Life,* by contrast, emphasizes "fierceness" that can, in some situations, result in fat bodies becoming objects of (heteronormative) scrutiny, yet represent belonging to the queer community. The difference in style has to do with the differences between straight and queer contexts but also the differences between the Finnish and North American contexts. In Finland, not as accustomed to the idea of fat activism and body positivity as the US is, accentuating one's fat body is more easily read as a fashion failure and dressing in flashy clothes stands as a deviation from fashion rules that explicitly advice larger-than-normative women to dress in conservatively feminine attire. In posts focusing on sex, by contrast, all three blogs seem to agree that sex is something that fat people of all genders have difficulties with, since fat bodies are most often excluded from discussions on the practice in the US and in Finland. Yet, the blogs emphasize that sex also has the potential to make one forget one's bodily insecurities and to just focus on feeling pleasure. Sex therefore becomes viewed as a healing practice that is capable of redirecting the fat or larger-than-normative subject's attention from looking sexy to feeling sexual both in the sex-positive US blog and the Finnish blogs more focused on other themes.

4.2 Re-making the body through feeling and doing

Larger-than-normative people and members of body positive communities often have trouble in overcoming bodily insecurities (Gailey 2014; Probyn 2005, 129–134). The persistence of shame, anxiety, and "hopeful pessimism" (Coleman 2016) may result in the avoidance of situations and practices where larger-than-normative bodies carry a risk of becoming the focus of attention. Body positive media aims to increase the agency of larger-than-normative-bodies by negotiating space for them to exist.

Several Anglo-American studies (e.g., Gill and Elias 2014; Sastre 2014) suggest that body positive representations and campaigns aim to support larger-than-normative bodies' agency through increasing their "positive" visibility. The studies read the representations' suggested focus on visibility as a sign of harmful neo-liberal values. As discussed in this dissertation, however, media images, especially in the age of social media, have several functions beside representational ones. Social media images are increasingly not only seen but also actively felt and lived out. Therefore, body positive media should not be analyzed *only* as representational. To focus on the practiced side of body positivity, I ask *how body positive media aims to increase the larger-than-normative bodies' potential to act.*

Article II emphasizes these questions by analyzing body positive selfie production as a socio-technological affective practice in the context of the Finnish, non-commercial #righttobeseen campaign and #righttobeseen selfies. Since two of the five interviewees in the article have not shared a body positive selfie on social media, the article questions some of the usual definitions of selfies (see, e.g., Iqani and Schroeder 2016; Marwick 2013, 13) as vehicles of public visibility. Moreover, as two of the interviewees have asked someone else to take the selfie for them, my definition of selfie differs from some technological understandings of the genre (e.g., Saltz 2014). The interviewees nevertheless describe their images as selfies since they themselves determined how, when, and where the pictures were taken.

Article II finds that body positive selfie-taking involves at least three types of movement and/or agency. First, as with body positive blogs, selfie production creates space for larger-than-normative bodies to exist and also to be seen under the pressures of fat-phobic cultures. Besides representing the larger-than-normative body to others, body positive selfie production makes room for the larger-than-normative subject to see themselves. In the cultural and media landscapes of the 2000s, photographs are important confirmations of identity and elements of identity work (Cruz and Thornham 2015; Woodward 2015). Yet, the interviewees describe having avoided appearing in pictures for several years. Selfie production differs from traditional photography, where the photographer and the object of photographs are separate people, by colliding the roles together. The larger-than-normative body is not only the object of the images but also the agent creating the image with its movement. Body positive selfies' meaning should not therefore be connected only to the visibility they give to larger-than-normative bodies before others but also to the way that they make the subject see and sense themselves.

Movement and agency are often the theme of body positive selfies. For many larger-than-normative people, selfie production is a way of challenging stereotypes of laziness and in-activity, and larger-than-normative subjects may picture themselves going to the gym or climbing on top of a steep hill. At the same time, selfie production is in itself movement. The picture is created by the body moving and positioning itself in front of the camera. The experience differs significantly from that of seeing printed or published images of oneself. When the photographer and the object of the image are the same person, the photographer can follow the formation of the image on the digital screen. The body can sense itself and become aware of its movements in new ways (Coleman 2013a; Woodward 2015, 40–57). When repeated several times, selfie production can start functioning like affective re-training, where new knowledge of the body is being produced.

Since affect, by definition, is a "modification of the body, whereby the active power of the said body is increased or diminished, aided or constrained" (Spinoza 2009, 151), any affective experience taking place as part of selfie production is

movement. Affects, according to Wetherell (2012, 12), have the habit of sometime coming to the front, sometimes receding to the back, but their flow never ceases. Affects and affective movement are part of all selfie production no matter how neutral the situation may appear. Selfie production as affective re-training aims to change the usual pattern of affects woven into cultural meaning-making. Yet, there is particular rigidity to the social practice of fat shaming (e.g., Gailey 2014; Murray 2008). Although larger-than-normative people may experience selfie production itself as pleasurable, experiences of fat shaming easily push the body back to old affective patterns. In the case of one of the interviewees, for example, selfie production in the locker room of a gym was interrupted several times because of someone walking in. This stirred fears of shaming in the interviewee.

As in the case of body positive selfie production, in body positive blogging, visibility and images are an important element. In both cases, making oneself seen to oneself is at least as important as increasing visibility in the eyes of others (see also Afful and Ricciardelli 2015; Gurrieri and Cherrier 2013). Yet, both practices do connect with neoliberal ideals of visibility (Banet-Weiser 2018; McRobbie 2008). Making oneself seen through selfies or blogging, *and* sensing one's body and its feelings, is often treated as the larger-than-normative subject's own responsibility.

In Finland, as well as elsewhere, most well-known body positive activists are micro-celebrities or public figures that use their own names in their activist work (see Puhakka 2019c, 23). Yet, due to the movement's recency and experienced intimacy, many body positive discussions in Finland take place in closed Facebook groups, such as *Jenny and the Fat Myth Busters/Body Myth Busters*. In the North American contexts, although similar closed groups also exist, there are several well-known sites and groups such as *MyBodyGallery* (2009–) where anyone can upload their image to become part of the public project of increasing knowledge on "what real women look like" (MyBodyGallery website 2022). While there is reason to argue that in Finland as well as in North America, body positive campaigns and representations are often tied with neoliberal values, in Finland, there may also be considerable resistance to these practices. In the case of #righttobeseen campaign and *article II*, interviewees expressed worries over their body positive images leaking from the closed group to public and their images becoming objects of scrutiny. Body positivity's recency may therefore partly confine larger-than-normative subjects' media practices but also ward against forms of neoliberalism.

In the case of the media discussion on *FAT* and the body positive podcasts, visibility is not as explicitly connected to the cases as with selfie production and blogging. The discussion on *FAT* emphasizes the importance of being heard and having one's experience as a larger-than-normative person taken seriously. The same can be said about the analyzed podcasts, which, due to technology as well, focus on the heard and not seen. The media material on *FAT*, *Jenny and the Fat Myth Busters,*

and *The Soft* often search for spaces to feel one's body as part of a body positive community. This feeling of belonging is in itself energizing. Larger-than-normative bodies become sensed as part of a group, and this group can together strive for making the society a more body positive one.

4.3 Feeling the same yet different

Although many critics of body positivity (e.g., Cooper 2016; Sastre 2014) suggest that body positivity is fundamentally different from fat activism, for others (Darwin and Miller 2020), the two are separate factions of the same movement. In this dissertation, I have opted for the latter approach. Yet, I have remained mindful of the critique posed towards body positivity, such as the critique that body positivity, as opposed to fat activism, pushes the experiences of fat people to the margin by claiming that it is a movement for all body shapes and sizes. Based on studies done in the US (Shaw 2006; Williams 2017), the participants of body positive websites and spaces are not only surprisingly normative in size but also largely white, able-bodied, heterosexual, middle-class, and cis-gender. Fat activism, in comparison, has historically been intertwined with other forms of social activism and queer activism in particular (Hill 2009; LeBesco 2001). Since this dissertation analyzes body positive media in Finland, it is relevant to repeat the questions *who is the suggested subject of body positive media* and *how does this affect how body positive media affects and engages its users?*

Article III answers these questions by analyzing shared vulnerability in the media reflections of the theater monologue *FAT*. In 10 out of the 37 analyzed media pieces, the authors identify as fat, while in 12 pieces, the authors say that they are not fat but can relate to the feelings of being and looking somehow wrong. *Article III* therefore asks what happens when a fat activist piece is discussed in terms of its relatability to not only fat-identifying audiences but also to more-normatively sized people.

The analyzed pieces discuss vulnerability to beauty and size norms as a common experience among women—a shared vulnerability that creates feelings of collectivity and belonging. While the focus is on feelings of discomfort and pressure in relation to norms, the authors also express pleasure in sharing the experience with other women (see also Berlant 2008; Kanai 2019). The more-normatively sized authors do not claim their experience to be identical with that of fat people, however. Rather, they say that they are surprised to hear about Omaheimo's experiences of fat marginalization and angry and ashamed to hear what fat people have to face. The authors generally express empathy toward Omaheimo and other fat people. Several feminist scholars (Ahmed 2005; 2014; Berlant 2004; Pedwell 2014) claim that expressions of empathy necessarily put the more privileged subject's experiences before the more marginalized one's. In the analyzed pieces, however, empathizers

are aware of their bodily privilege. They express a concern as to whether their empathic relating to fat marginalization is ethically sound or if they should withhold from discussing the topic based on privilege.

In the Finnish context, where body positivity and fat activism were in 2016 when *FAT* was in theatre, relatively unknown endeavors, shared vulnerability and empathy successfully bring attention to fat marginalization. The sense of identification and feeling one's body in relation to other women's bodies paves the way for acknowledging the problem but also realizing the more-normatively sized subject's privileged position. Authors acknowledge the difficult feelings that they have *about* their own bodies but simultaneously, and more importantly, become aware of their bodies in relation to their surroundings. In the case of more-normatively sized bodies, this means an increased understanding of privilege through a momentary loss of comfort (Ahmed 2006a; 2006b). Feeling one's body through shared vulnerability does not therefore only allow the more-normatively sized subject to "feel their way into" (Papacharissi 2014, 5) the topic at hand. In its destabilizing effect, shared vulnerability forces more-normatively sized subjects to reorientate themselves in the changed surroundings. In its most fruitful forms, shared vulnerability creates space for the fat or larger-than-normative body to exist alongside the more-normatively sized.

The discussion around *FAT* centers on the structural differences between fat, larger-than-normative, and more-normatively sized bodies by emphasizing the differences in their ability to experience comfort in their surroundings. Yet, race, ability, and class, are largely absent from the discussion. Omaheimo's whiteness, in particular, makes her a likely object of empathy in the largely white Finnish cultural context. The analyzed pieces further mention Omaheimo's past with an eating disorder. This contributes to the understanding of Omaheimo as a subject "worthy of empathy" (Ahmed 2014; 2005; Pedwell 2014).

Since in this dissertation I have consciously wished to analyze cases of body positive media that do not discuss young, white, heterosexual, middle-class, and larger-than-normative bodies alone, the cases do include intersectional discussion. *The Queer Fat Femme Guide to Life* is an explicitly queer and sex-positive blog that acknowledges gender-fluidity and, in its fashion posts, searches for ways for the larger-than-normative body to dress fiercely in ways that oppose consumerism. The interviewees in *article II* represent varying ages and reflect on the way that age can affect one's ability to take part in the #righttobeseen campaign. *The Soft* podcast centers on Brown fat bodies. At the same time, the *More To Love*, *PlusMimmi*, and *Jenny and the Fat Myth Busters* podcasts do not address differences other than size, thus corresponding to the critique that body positivity has faced from Anglo-American researchers in particular.

According to several fat studies scholars of color in the US (e.g., Stewart and Breeden 2021; Williams 2017; 2021), the homogeneity of body positive representations strengthens the movement's normativity further by making it difficult for Black or Brown subjects to participate. The whiteness of the authors and participants in body positive spaces functions like an absent-present discourse (cf. Dyer 1997, 2–3), pushing Black and Brown bodies further away. It is important to acknowledge that my own position as a white, cis woman as well may have at times worked in the same way—especially in *article II*, where I found my interviewees by posting a message on a body positive peer support group page. In the post, I suggested that I was looking for informants for a study on body positive selfie production. Since I did not mention differences other than size, this arguably affected which participants felt inclined to reply to me.

4.4 Feeling the changing body

In this chapter, I have thus far discussed the spatial experience of being larger-than-normative. I have shown that body positive media can create space for the larger-than-normative body to exist by increasing its comfort and allowing it to feel its feelings. Yet, comfort is not only a matter of space but also of time. As Ahmed (2006, 552–554) explains, bodies are continuously shaped by their histories and the repetition of gestures that they perform in space and time. To consider both the spatiality and temporality of being larger-than-normative, this dissertation asks *how body positive media organizes space and time.*

While *article I*, *article II*, and *article III* center on how larger-than-normative bodies reside in body positive spaces and thin-oriented surroundings, *article IV* focuses explicitly on the temporal experience of being larger-than-normative. It explores what kind of temporality the body positive podcasts *Jenny and the Fat Myth Busters* and *The Soft* and their weight loss stories convey. It further discusses the relationship between time and emotions. The article develops and expands on existing ideas of fat time (see Crawford 2017; Kargbo 2013; McFarland, Slothouber and Taylor 2018; Tidgwell et al. 2018; White 2013) by discussing it as temporality that, despite of being based on hurtful experiences and structural inequalities, is resistant to dominant notions of temporality and temporarity of fatness.

In the analyzed podcasts, weight loss stories have an important function. They convey the disruptive side of dieting and reveal that being larger-than-normative is experienced as a cyclical temporality. In neoliberal diet cultures in North America, Finland, and elsewhere, fatness is assumed to equate with sickness and death (e.g., Hass 2018; White 2013). Fat subjects are expected to only reach a future through weight loss. Diet culture treats weight loss as a happy object (Ahmed 2011, 162–163, 166–167), a thing that can bring happiness and promises to guarantee the larger-

than-normative person a tomorrow and return them to the order of linear time. *Jenny and the Fat Myth Busters* and *The Soft* discuss quick diets and bariatric surgeries as practices that force the subject into a loop of continuous self-management. Temporalities overlap as the podcasts' hosts and interviewees navigate through their experiences of changed and changing bodies (see also Coleman 2013, 94).

While neoliberalism treats fatness as a weak orientation to the future (see, e.g., Berlant 2011), in the analyzed podcasts, the future is continuously present either as a hoped-for potentiality or as a thought of what could have been (see also Harjunen 2007). *In The Soft,* interviewee Javiera Marchant Aedo talks regretfully of having undergone bariatric surgery. She says that because of the surgery, she will have to monitor every last thing that she eats for the rest of her life. In *Jenny and the Fat Myth Busters,* the hosts and interviewees continue to express a wish to lose weight. They are, however, searching for methods to manage their weight in ways that do not cause anxiety and pain, as past diets have done.

The analyzed podcasts discuss weight loss as a process that is strongly animated by feelings of anxiety, hope, and hopeful pessimism. These so-called ugly feelings (Ngai 2005, 2–3, 6–7) have endurance. Because of their lingering effect, they create and strengthen the experience of time as cyclical. Even in the case of the interviewees that have lost significant amounts of weight and kept the weight off for a long time, ugly feelings shape the relationship to one's body. Despite the interviewees now having more-normatively sized bodies, the fear of gaining weight and the hope of forming a more positive body relation keep fat affectively present.

Article IV suggests that fat time is a temporality that is grounded in the present. The present is negotiated in relation to one's hurtful experiences of marginalization in the past and the hopeful potential of the future. Since fat time portrays fat as always present and staying (see Crawford 2017), it is a temporality shared by both those who are currently treated as fat and those who have past experiences of fat marginalization. Despite the privileged social position of the latter to the former, both experience fat as a staying quality. Harjunen's (2007) study on fat Finnish women's experiences shows that in Finland, fatness is often understood as a liminal state. Similarly in the US, many fat women describe fatness as a passing characteristic of their body (Gailey and Harjunen 2019). Fat time and ugly feelings make the future always already fat. Fat time therefore has the potential to challenge existing ideas of fatness as a passing characteristic of the body.

While fat or larger-than-normative temporality is not the focus of *articles I, II,* and *III*, all the articles of this dissertation discuss body positive spaces and practices as ones that support *momentary* comfort and create space for the larger-than-normative subject to *momentarily* feel their feelings. Since the formation of certain spaces as thin spaces takes time (cf. Ahmed 2006b, 552–553), permanently re-orienting them may be unachievable during the course of body positive projects like

the one's analyzed in this dissertation. Yet, as shown by this study, having even the temporary space to feel one's body is highly important for a larger-than-normative subject living under the strain of fat-phobic cultures.

5 Conclusions

> What we need, however, is not to rid ourselves of images but to flesh them out. (Sobchack 2004, 187)

The purpose of this dissertation has been to study body positive media focusing on its experienced, felt aspects. Through the notion of the feeling body in the media, I have argued that body positive media moves its audiences in multiple, often contradictory, ways, making its users and producers sense their bodies' affective rhythms as well as the embodied nature of digital media. The dissertation speaks of the value of "simply feeling" in cultures that view all bodies, and larger-than-normative bodies in particular, as objects in need of change. The topics of the individual studies range from the affective invitations of body positive blogs to selfie production as a socio-technologically meaningful affective practice, the collective experience of sharing accounts of vulnerability, and the potential and drawbacks of living in fat time. The dissertation points toward several ways in which media users' material bodies entangle with mediated body representations, technologies, and the bodies of other media users, both in everyday and uncommon body positive media practices.

As the dissertation studies the larger-than-normative body in the media by considering its mutability and the varied ways that its size is understood in place and time, it discusses bodies as processual instead of as stable entities (see Coleman 2013a; 2012; Grosz 1994). The studies in each article show how bodies are continuously transformed through the affective flow of their existence in the media and in their surroundings at large. The dissertation discusses how the body's shape and size change during a person's lifetime although the ways in which the subject remembers the body may remain similar. The analyzed cases show that a processual understanding of the body, often supported by body positive media, can be healing for the larger-than-normative subject. When bodies are understood as always transforming, the worth of specific changes such as weight loss is instantly diminished.

While the individual studies focus on how being larger-than-normative is felt and experienced in and through body positive media, taken together, the dissertation reaches toward wider conceptualizations of the relationship between the body and the media. One of my objectives throughout the project has been to look for new kinds of ways to theorize and conceptualize this relationship. Scholars in the fields of psychology (e.g., Marengo and Longobardi 2018), sociology (Toffoletti and Thorpe 2020), and health sciences (Rafati, Dehdashti and Sadeghi 2021) have published extensively on media use and body image, arguing that as media and its beauty images are now an integral part of people's daily lives, body dissatisfaction has increased. Yet, the correlation between the media and body image remains unclear in most of these studies. This dissertation suggests that bodies are lived and felt *in* the media (see Deuze 2011), with the media shaping understandings of the body and the body shaping understandings of the media.

From the point of view of this dialectical understanding, making bodies aware of their feelings can help to question widespread understandings of bodies as stable entities and prove successful against body image issues. As feminist media scholar Vivian Sobchack (2004, 187) suggests, we do not necessarily have to "rid ourselves of images but to flesh them out." Although bodies are always objects for social vision, they are also much more than that: they are the locus of our being that makes it possible for us to connect and feel the world around us. This feeling aspect of bodies needs to be emphasized. In this dissertation, I have shown that (body positive) media can help the subject to feel their body as belonging in the world. Even if these experiences are fleeting, they are significant in their capacity of making bodies aware of themselves and other bodies close by.

As this dissertation is theory driven, it is not meant to be generalizable or representative of all the ways that body positive media is experienced in Finland or elsewhere. Throughout the study process, I have sought to discuss, develop, and debate existing theories and methodologies regarding media and bodies instead of gathering large sets of material. The analyzed cases focus on how body positive media is experienced by a specific group of Finns: participants of body positive online spaces who often understand themselves to be larger-than-normative. The analyzed experiences are accounts of particular bodies in a particular point in time, not ahistorical accounts of the feeling body in the media in general.

The analyzed cases succeed in bringing light to the ambiguity of body positive media practices. The analysis focuses on the experiences of people who are more or less active in body positive spaces and could therefore be assumed to be optimistic about its power to resist. Yet, the analysis brings forth a multitude of affects or emotions all the way from pride and happiness to hope, hopeful pessimism, anxiety, and shame. The dissertation shows the ambivalence through which larger-than-normative people approach practices such as exercise, fashion, sex, selfie

production, and dieting. Since the independent studies counter existing understandings of the affects involved with body positivity (Gill and Elias 2014; Murray 2008; Probyn 2005, 129–134), they need to be taken seriously in the discussions on body positivity, larger-than-normative embodiment, and the affectivity of digital media.

Studying body positive media and the relationship between the media and larger-than-normative bodies using Finnish content was an intentional choice that, in my opinion, should not be considered as a limitation. Rather, more studies on body positivity outside the Anglo-American context are needed to give a more nuanced understanding of the movement (Cooper 2016, 159; Pausé 2014). Studying body positivity in contexts such as Finland helps to challenge understandings of what counts as meaningful resistance to body norms. There is a lack of organizational body positive activism in Finland, yet social media can offer an important channel to advance body positivity. In cases such as the ones analyzed in this dissertation, activism and resistance consist also of acts such as taking a selfie or building a network of body positive people. In other words, activism is not only marches, protests, sit-ins, and petitions, as Western contexts often define it (Stewart and Breeden 2021, 223).

It is important to continue the discussion on how body size together with other social categories affects one's experience with body positivity (Pausé 2014; Pausé and Taylor 2021; Rinaldi, Rice and Friedman 2020). Unfortunately, this study does not contribute to the understanding how body positivity is experienced by disabled, trans, or non-binary people. Ttrans and disabled people's experiences with using and producing body positive media could provide important information on the potential and limits of body positive practices. Herein therefore lies a significant prospect for future research.

Throughout this thematic introduction, I have discussed the feeling body in the media as a theoretical concept. I wish to conclude by stating that the feeling body in the media is not only a matter of abstract debate. In the mediatized society, considering the worth of body positive media practices has practical importance. "Fleshing out" the ways in which we approach the media can help larger-than-normative people—and others—to understand their relationship with their bodies and make room for more accepting relations.

List of References

Abel, M (2007) *Violent Affect: Literature, Cinema, and Critique after Representation*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Abidin, C (2014) #In$tagLam: Instagram as a Repository of Taste, a Burgeoning Marketplace, a War of Eyeballs. In M Berry and M Schleser (eds) *Mobile Media Making in the Age of Smartphones.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Pivot, pp. 119–128.

Abidin, C (2015) Micro-microcelebrity: Branding Babies on the Internet. *M/C Journal* 18(5): https://doi.org/10.5204/mcj.1022

Abidin, C (2016) "Aren't These Just Young, Rich Women Doing Vain Things Online?": Influencer Selfies as Subversive Frivolity. *Social Media + Society* April-June 2016: 1–17.

Afful, AA and Ricciardelli, R (2015) Shaping the Online Fat Acceptance Movement: Talking about Body Image and Beauty Standards. *Journal of Gender Studies* 24(4): 453–472.

Ahmed, S (2005) The Politics of Bad Feeling. *Australian Critical Race and Whiteness Studies Association Journal* 1: 72–85.

Ahmed, S (2006a) *Queer Phenomenology. Orientations, Objects, Others*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Ahmed, S (2006b) Orientations: Toward a Queer Phenomenology. *GLG: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 12(4): 543–574.

Ahmed, S (2007) A Phenomenology of Whiteness. *Feminist Theory* 8(2): 149–168.

Ahmed, S (2010) Happy Objects. In M Gregg and GJ Seigworth (eds) *The Affect Theory Reader*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 29–51.

Ahmed, S (2014/2004) *The Cultural Politics of Emotion.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Albury, K (2015) Selfies, Sexts, and Sneaky Hats: Young People's Understandings of Gendered Practices of Self-Representation. *International Journal of Communication* 9(2015): 1734–1745.

Alcoff, L (1992) The Problem of Speaking for Others. *Cultural Critique* 20(Winter 1991–1992): 5–32.

Alentola, AE (2017) *Changing the Narratives of Marginalised Bodies – A Study about Body Positivism.* Master's Thesis. Stockholm: Stockholm University.

Armstrong, I (2001) *The Radical Aesthetic.* Hoboken: Wiley.

Auchter, J (2002) Orienting the Body. Affective Methodology and Embodiment. In E Van Rythoven and M Sucharov (eds) *Methodology and Emotion in International Relations. Parsing the Passions*. London: Routledge, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429443930

Bal, M (2002) *Travelling Concepts in Humanities. A Rough Guide.* Toronto: Toronto University Press.

Banet-Weiser, S (2018) *Empowered: Popular Feminism and Popular Misogyny.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Barad, K (2007) *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Bartky, SL (1988) Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power. In I Diamond and L Quinby (eds) *Feminism and Foucault. Reflections on Resistance*. Boston: Northeastern Press University, pp. 61–86.

Bergson, H (2002/1908) *Matter and Memory.* New York: Zone Books.

Berlant, L (2004) Introduction: Compassion (and Withholding). In L Berlant (ed.) *Compassion: The Culture and Politics of an Emotion.* New York: Routledge, pp. 1–13.

Berlant, L (2008) *The Female Complaint. The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in The American Culture.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Berlant, L (2011) *Cruel Optimism.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Bloch, E (1995) *The Principle of Hope*, Volume I, trans. N Plaice, S Plaice and P Knight. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Body Posi Finland website (2021) https://www.facebook.com/bodyposisuomi/

Boler, M and Davis, E (2020) Introduction. Propaganda by Other Means. In M Boler and E Davis (eds) *Affective Politics of Digital Media. Propaganda by Other Means.* New York: Routledge, pp. 1–50.

Bordo, S (2003/1993) *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Bost, S (2008) From Race/Sex/Etc. to Glucose, Feeding Tube, and Mourning: The Shifting Matter of Chicana Feminism. In S Alaimo and S Hekman (eds) *Material Feminisms.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 340–372.

Boyce, C and Neale, P (2006) *Conducting In-Depth Interviews: A Guide for Designing and Conducting In-Depth Interviews for Evaluation Input.* Watertown, MA: Pathfinder international.

Braidotti, R (2006) *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics.* Cambridge: Polity.

Branlandingham, B (2017) The PopSugar video about fat kid dance party. http://queerfatfemme.com/2017/07/18/popsugar-video/

Braun, V and Clarke, V (2021) One Size Fits All? What Counts as Quality Practice in (Reflexive) Thematic Analysis? *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 18(3): 3280–3352.

Braziel, JE and LeBesco, K (eds) (2001) *Bodies out of Bounds. Fatness and Transgression.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Briziarelli, M and Armano, E (eds) (2017) *The Spectacle 2.0: Reading Debord in the Context of Digital Capitalism.* London: University of Westminster Press.

Brown, H and Herndon, AM (2020) No Bad Fatties Allowed? Negotiating the Meaning and Power of the Mutable Body. In M Friedman, C Rice and J Rinaldi (eds) *Thickening Fat. Fat Bodies, Intersectionality and Social Justice.* New York: Routledge, pp. 139–149.

Brummett, B (2018) *Techniques of Close Reading.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Butler, J (2016) Rethinking Vulnerability and Resistance. In J Butler, Z Gambetti and L Sabsay (eds) *Vulnerability in Resistance*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 12–27.

Cahill, AJ (2003) Feminist Pleasure and Feminine Beautification. *Hypatia* 18(4): 42–64.

Chapkis, W (1986) *Beauty Secrets. Women and the Politics of Appearance.* Cambridge: South End Press.

Chernin, K (1981) *The Obsession. Reflections on the Tyranny of Slenderness*. New York: Harper & Row.

Chernin, K (1983) *Womansize: The Tyranny of Slenderness*. London: The Women's Press.

Cherry, K (2020) What is Body Positivity? https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-body-positivity4773402#:~:text=Body%20positivity%20refers%20to%20the,the%20acceptance%20of%20all%20bodies

Clarke, V, Braun, V and Hayfield, N (2015) Thematic Analysis. In JA Smith (ed.) *Qualitative Psychology. A Practical Guide to Research Methods.* Los Angeles: Sage, pp. 222–248.

Clough, P (2008) The Affective Turn: Political Economy, Biomedia and Bodies. *Theory, Culture and Society* 25: 1–22.

Cole, A (2016) All of Us Are Vulnerable, but Some Are More Vulnerable Than Others: The Political Ambiguity of Vulnerability Studies, An Ambivalent Critique. *Critical Horizons* 17(2): 260–277.

Coleman, R (2008) The Becoming of Bodies. *Feminist Media Studies* 8(2): 163–179.

Coleman, R (2012/2009) *The Becoming of Bodies. Girls, Images, Experience.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Coleman, R (2013a) *Transforming Images: Screens, Affect, Futures.* London and New York: Sage Publications.
Coleman, R (2013b) Sociology and the Virtual: Interactive Mirrors, Representational Thinking and Intensive Power. *The Sociological Review* 61(1): 1–20.
Coleman, R (2016) Austerity Futures: Debt, Temporality and (Hopeful) Pessimism as an Austerity Mood. *New Formations* 87: 83–101.
Coleman, R and Ringrose, J (eds) (2013) *Deleuze and Research Methodologies.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
Conger, K, Browning, K and Woo, E (2021) Eating Disorders and Social Media Prove Difficult to Untangle. *New York Times* October 22, 2021,
Connell, C (2013) Fashionable Resistance: Queer 'Fa(t)shion' Blogging as Counterdiscourse. *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly* 41(1–2): 209–224.
Cooper, BC (2015) Love No Limit. Towards a Black Feminist Future (in Theory). *The Black Scholar* 45(4): 7–21.
Cooper, C (1998) *Fat and Proud. The Politics of Size*. London: The Women's Press.
Cooper, C (2016) *Fat Activism. A Radical Social Movement.* Bristol: HammerOn Press.
Cooper, C and Murray, S (2012) Fat Activist Community: A Conversation Piece. *Somatechnics* 2(1): 127–138.
Crawford, L (2017) Slender Trouble. From Berlant's Cruel Figuring of Figure to Sedgwick's Fat Presence. *GLQ* 23(4): 447–472.
Crenshaw, K (1991) Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review* 43(6): 1241–1299.
Cruz, EG and Thornham, H (2015) Selfies beyond Self-Representation: The (Theoretical) F(r)ictions of a Practice. Journal of Aesthetics & Culture 7 (1): 28073. DOI: 10.3402/jac.v7.28073
Culler, J (2010) The Closeness of Close Reading. *ADE Bulletin* 149(2010): 20–25.
Cwynar-Horta, J (2016) The Commodification of the Body Positive Movement on Instagram. *Stream: Culture/Politics/Technology* 8(2): 36–56.
Darwin, H and Miller, A (2020) Factions, Frames, and Postfeminism(s) in the Body Positive Movement. *Feminist Media Studies.* DOI: 10.1080/14680777.2020.1736118
Davis, K (1995) *Reshaping the Female Body. The Dilemma of Cosmetic Surgery.* New York: Routledge.
de Freitas Boe, A (2011) I Call Beauty a Social Quality: Mary Wollstonecraft and Hannah More's Rejoinder to Edmund Burke's Body Politic of the Beautiful. *Women's Writing* 18(3).
de Spinoza, B (2009/1677) *Ethics: Ethica Ordine Geometrico Demonstrata.* Auckland: Floating Press.
Dean, J (2010) *Blog Theory: Feedback and Capture in the Circuits of Drive.* Cambridge, Malden: Polity Press.
Deuze, M (2011) Media Life. *Media, Culture & Society* 33(1): 137–148.
DiPasquale, TM (2018) Ways of Reading Donne's St. Paul's Epitaph: Close, Comparative, Contextu[r]al, Concrete. *Connotations* 27: 167–189.
Downing Peters, L (2013) Queering the Hourglass: Beauty and New Wave Fat Activism. Conference paper,http://www.interdisciplinary.net/criticalissues/wpcontent/uploads/2013/07/LDPeters_wpaperbeau3.pdf
Dyer, R (1997) *White.* London, New York: Routledge.
Eder, J, Hanich, J and Stadler, J (2019) Media and Emotion: An Introduction. *European Journal of Media Studies* 8(1), Spring 2019: 91–104.
Ellingson LL (2017) *Embodiment in Qualitative Research.* New York and London: Routledge.
Elo, M (2012) Digital Finger: Beyond Phenomenological Figures of Touch. *Journal of Aesthetics & Culture* 4(1): 1–12.
Ess, C and the Association of Internet Researchers (2002) Ethical Decision-Making and Internet Research. Recommendations from the Aoir Ethics Working Committee. https://aoir.org/reports/ethics.pdf

European Commission (2018) Ethics in Social Science and Humanities. https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/h2020_ethics-soc-science-humanities_en.pdf

Fardouly, J and Vartanian, LR (2016) Social Media and Body Image Concerns: Current Research and Future Directions. *Current Opinion in Psychology* 9(June 2016): 1–5.

Farrell, AE (2011) *Fat Shame: Stigma and the Fat Body in American Culture.* New York: New York University Press.

Farrell, AE (2020) Origin Stories. Thickening Fat and the Problem of Historiography. In M Friedman, C Rice and J Rinaldi (eds) Thickening Fat. Fat Bodies, Intersectionality, and Social Justice. New York: Routledge, pp. 29–39.

Fashion Today (2013) https://www.fashiontoday.co.in/2013/05/15-plus-size-bloggers-redefining.html

Featherstone, M (2010) Body, Image and Affect in Consumer Culture. *Body & Society* 16: 193–221.

Finnish National Board of Research Integrity TENK (2019) Ihmiseen kohdistuvan tutkimuksen eettiset periaatteet ja ihmistieteiden eettinen ennakkoarviointi Suomessa. https://tenk.fi/sites/default/files/202101/Ihmistieteiden_eettisen_ennakkoarvioinnin_ohje_2020.pdf

Foreman, M (2018) The Fat Underground and the Fat Liberation Manifesto. The Feminist Poetry Movement December 20, 2018, https://sites.williams.edu/engl113-f18/foreman/the-fat-underground-and-the-fat-liberation-manifesto/

Foucault, M (1995/1975) *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison.* Originally *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison*, transl. A Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books.

Fourth Floor (2022) Your Anti Fatness is Anti-Blackness. August 19, 2022, https://www.thefourthfloor.co.uk/politics-and-economy/your-anti-fatness-is-anti-blackness

franzke, as, Bechmann, A, Zimmer, M, Ess, C and the Association of Internet Researchers (2020) Internet Research: Ethical Guidelines 3.0. https://aoir.org/reports/ethics3.pdf

Friedman, M, Rice, C and Rinaldi, J (eds) (2020) *Thickening Fat. Fat Bodies, Intersectionality, and Social Justice.* New York: Routledge.

Gailey, JA (2014) *The Hyper(in)visible Fat Woman. Weight and Gender Discourse in Contemporary Society.* New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Gailey, JA and Harjunen, H (2019) A Cross-Cultural Examination of Fat Women's Bodies: Stigma and Gender in North American and Finnish Culture. *Feminism and Psychology* 29(3): 374–390.

Gerbaudo, P (2012) *Tweets and the Streets: Social Media and Contemporary Activism*. London: Pluto Press.

Gibson, G (2021) "Just There for the Fashion, Basically": Politicized Fem(me)ininity in the Fat-o-sphere. *Fat Studies.* DOI: 10.1080/21604851.2021.2013051

Gill, M (2020) "Hey, Little Fat Kid." My Impaired, Fat, Hairy, White, Male Body. In M Friedman, C Rice and J Rinaldi (eds) *Thickening Fat: Fat Bodies, Intersectionality, and Social Justice.* New York: Routledge, pp. 209–218.

Gill, R and Elias, AS (2014) "Awaken Your Incredible": Love Your Body Discourses and Postfeminist Contradictions. *International Journal of Media and Cultural* Politics 10(2): 179–188.

Gilson, EC (2016) Vulnerability and Victimization: Rethinking Key Concepts in Feminist Discourses on Sexual Violence. *Signs* 42(1): 71–98.

Gimlin, D (2002) *Body Work: Beauty and Self-Image in American Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Grosz, E (1994) *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Guenther, L and Harbin, A (2012) Living Feeling: Affect, Emotion, and Phenomenology. *Phaenex* 7(2): i–iv.

Gurrieri, L and Cherrier, H (2013) Queering Beauty: Fatshionistas in the Fatosphere. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal* 16: 276–295.

Handler, S (2000) *The Body Burden: Living in the Shadow of Barbie.* Cape Canaveral: Blue Note Publications.

Haraway D (1991) *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women. The Reinvention of Nature.* London: Free

Harding S (1993) Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What Is "Strong Objectivity"? In I Alcoff and E Potter (eds) *Feminist Epistemologies.* New York, London: Routledge, pp. 49–82.

Harju, AA and Huovinen, A (2015) Fashionably Voluptuous: Normative Femininity and Resistant Performative Tactics in Fatshion Blogs. *Journal of Marketing Management* 31:1602–1625.

Harjunen, H (2009) *Women and Fat. Approaches to the Social Study of Fatness.* Doctoral dissertation. Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä Press.

Harjunen, H (2016) Ulossulkemisia liikunnan kentällä: lihava liikkuva naisruumis katseiden kohteena. In P Berg and M Kokkonen (eds) *Urheilun Takapuoli: tasa-arvo ja yhdenvertaisuus liikunnassa ja urheilussa.* Helsinki: Nuorisotutkimusverkosto.

Harjunen, H (2019a) Exercising Exclusions: Space, Visibility, and Monitoring of the Exercising Fat Female body. *The Fat Studies Journal* 8(2): 173–186.

Harjunen, H (2019b) Personal e-mail to K Hynnä-Granberg.

Harjunen, H. (2019c). Lihavuusaktivismi yhteiskunnallisena liikkeenä Charlotte Cooperia mukaillen. *Sukupuolentutkimus* 32(2): 36–40.

Harjunen, H and Kyrölä, K (2007) Johdanto. Lihavuustutkimusta toisin. In K Kyrölä and H Harjunen (eds) *Koolla on väliä! Lihavuus, ruumisnormit ja sukupuoli.* Helsinki: Like, pp. 9–46.

Harjunen, H, Hämäläinen, A and Kyrölä, K (2007) Oikeus olla oman kokoinen. In H Harjunen and K Kyrölä (eds) *Koolla on väliä! Lihavuus, ruumisnormit ja sukupuoli.* Helsinki: Like, pp. 277–295.

Hass M (2018) One Summer to Change: Fat Temporality and Coming of Age in I Used to Be Fat and Huge. *Fat Studies* 7(2): 170–180.

Hemmings, C (2005) Invoking Affect: Cultural Theory and the Ontological Turn. *Cultural Studies* 19(5): 548–567.

Hill, AC (2009) *Spatial Awarishness. Queer Women and the Politics of Fat Embodiment.* A Master of Arts Thesis. Graduate College of Bowling Green State University, https://etd.ohiolink.edu/apexprod/rws_etd/send_file/send?accession=bgsu1257110459&disposition=inline

Hill, S (2022) Locating Disability within Online Body Positivity Discourses: An Analysis of #DisabledAndCute. *Feminist Media Studies*. DOI: 10.1080/14680777.2022.2032254

Hillis, K (2009) *Online a Lot of the Time: Ritual, Fetish, Sign.* Durham: Duke University Press.
http://www.pathfind.org/site/DocServer/m_e_tool_series_indepth_interviews.pdf?docID=6301
https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/22/technology/social-media-eating-disorders.html

Husserl, E (1989) *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. R Rojcewicz and A Schuwer. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic.

Hynnä-Granberg, K, Lehto, M and Paasonen, S (2019) Affective Body Politics of Social Media. *Social Media + Society* October 2019. DOI: 10.1177/2056305119880173

Iqani, M and Schroeder, JE (2016) #selfie: Digital Self-Portraits as Commodity Form and Consumption Practice. *Consumption Markets & Culture* 19(5): 405–415.

Jaatinen, E (1998) *Iloiset kilot: Totta ja tarua tuhdeista tytöistä.* Helsinki: WSOY.

Javadi, M and Zarea, K (2016) Understanding Thematic Analysis and Its Pitfall. *Demo* 1.1(2016): 333–339.

Johansson, A (2020) Fat, Black and Unapologetic: Body Positive Activism Beyond White, Neoliberal Rights Discourses. In E Alm, L Berg, M Lundahl Hero, A Johansson, P Laskar, L Martinsson, D Mulinari and C Wasshede (eds) *Pluralistic Struggles in Gender, Sexuality and Coloniality: Challenging Swedish Exceptionalism.* London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 113–146.

Johnston, J and Taylor, J (2008) Feminist Consumerism and Fat Activists: A Comparative Study of Grassroots Activism and the Dove Real Beauty Campaign. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 33(4): 941–966.

Kafer, A (2013) *Feminist, Queer, Crip.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Kanai, A (2019) *Gender and Relatability in Digital Culture: Managing Affect, Intimacy and Value.* London, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

Kargbo, M (2013) Toward a New Relationality: Digital Photography, Shame, and the Fat Subject. *Fat Studies* 2(2): 160–172.

Kinsman, K (2012) 'Fatshion'' Bloggers Find Beauty in All Sizes. *CNN* March 31, 2012, https://edition.cnn.com/2012/03/31/living/fatshion-beauty-bloggers/index.html

Knudsen, BT and Stage, C (2015) Introduction: Affective Methodologies. BT Knudsen and C Stage (eds) Affective Methodologies: Developing Cultural Research Strategies for the Study of Affect. Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1–22.

Koivunen, A (2009) An Affective Turn? Reimagining the Subject of Feminist Theory. In M Liljeström and S Paasonen (eds) *Working with Affect in Feminist Readings: Disturbing Differences.* London: Routledge, pp. 8–27.

Koivunen, A, Kyrölä, K and Ryberg, I (2019) Vulnerability as a Political Language. In A Koivunen, K Kyrölä and I Ryberg (eds) *The Power of Vulnerability. Mobilising Affect in Feminist, Queer and Anti-Racist Media Cultures.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 1–26.

Kristjansson, M (2014) Fashion's "Forgotten Woman": How Fat Bodies Queer Fashion and Consumption. In C Pausé, J Wykes and S Murray (eds) *Queering Fat Embodiment.* Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, pp. 131–146.

Kwan, S (2010) Navigating Public Spaces: Gender, Race, and Body Privilege in Everyday Life. Feminist Formations 22: 144–166.

Kyrölä, K (2010) *The Weight of Images. Affective Engagements with Fat Corporeality in the Media.* Doctoral dissertation. Turku: University of Turku.

Kyrölä, K (2014) *The Weight of Images: Affect, Body Image and Fat in the Media*. London: Routledge.

Kyrölä, K (2017) Feeling Bad and Precious (2009): Black Suffering, White Guilt, and Intercorporeal Subjectivity. *Subjectivity* 10(3): 258–275.

Kyrölä, K (2019) Personal e-mail to K Hynnä-Granberg.

Kyrölä, K and Harjunen, H (2007) *Koolla on väliä! Lihavuus, ruumisnormit ja sukupuoli.* Helsinki: Like.

Lagerkvist, A and Andersson, Y (2017) The Grand Interruption: Death Online and Mediated Lifelines of Shared Vulnerability. *Feminist Media Studies* 17(4): 550–564.

LeBesco, K (2001) Queering Fat Bodies/Politics. In JE Braziel and K LeBesco (eds) *Bodies out of Bounds. Fatness and Transgression.* Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 74–87.

LeBesco, K (2004) *Revolting Bodies? The Struggle to Redefine Fat Identity.* Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

LeBesco, K (2016) On Fatness and Fluidity: A Meditation. In C Pausé, J Wykes and S Murray (eds) *Queering Fat Embodiment.* New York: Routledge, pp. 49–60.

LeBesco, K and Braziel, JE (2001) Editors' Introduction. In JE Braziel and K LeBesco (eds) *Bodies Out of Bounds. Fatness and Transgression.* Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 1–15.

Leeds Craig, M (2006) Race, Beauty, and the Tangled Knot of a Guilty Pleasure. *Feminist Theory* 7(2), 158–177.

Legard, R, Keegan, J and Ward, K (2003) In-Depth Interviews. *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers* 6(1): 138–169.

Lehto, M and Paasonen, S (2021) 'I Feel the Irritation and Frustration All Over the Body': Affective Ambiguities in Networked Parenting Culture. *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 24(5): 811–826.

Lünenborg, M and Maier, T (2018) The Turn to Affect and Emotion in Media Studies. *Media and Communication* 6(3): 1–4.

Lupton, D (1998) *The Emotional Self: A Sociocultural Exploration.* London: Sage.

Lury, C and Wakeford, N (2012) *Inventive Methods. The Happening of the Social.* London: Routledge.

Maor, M (2013) "Do I Still Belong Here?" The Body's Boundary Work in the Israeli Fat Acceptance Movement. *Social Movement Studies* 12(3): 280–297.

Marengo, D and Longobardi, C (2018) Highly-Visual Social Media and Internalizing Symptoms in Adolescence: The Mediating Role of Body Image Concerns. *Computers in Human Behavior* 82(May 2018): 63–69.

Markham, A (2012) Fabrication as Ethical Practice: Qualitative Inquiry in Ambiguous Internet Contexts. *Information, Communication, and Society* 5(3): 334–353.

Markham, A and Buchanan, E (2012) Ethical Decision-Making and Internet Research: Recommendations from the AoIR Ethics Working Committee (Version 2.0). http://www.aoir.org/reports/ethics.pdf

Marwick, AE (2013) *Status Update. Celebrity, Publicity, and Branding in the Social Media Age.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Massumi, B (2002) *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation.* Durham: Duke University Press.

McFarland, J, Slothouber, V and Taylor, A (2018) Tempo-Rarily Fat: A Queer Exploration of Fat Time. *Fat Studies* 7(2): 135–146.

McKee, H and Porter, J (2009) Playing a Good Game: Ethical Issues in Researching MMOGs and Virtual Worlds. *International Journal of Internet Research Ethics* 2(1): 5–37.

McPherson, M, Smith-Lovin, L and Cook, JM (2001) Birds of a Feather: Homophily in Social Networks. *Annual Review of Sociology* 27: 415–444.

McRobbie, A (2008) *The Aftermath of Feminism. Gender, Culture and Social Change.* London, New York: Sage.

Merleau-Ponty, M (2012/1945) *Phenomenology of Perception.* Originally *Phénoménologie de la perception.* New York: Routledge.

Middleton, P (1992) *The Inward Gaze: Masculinity and Subjectivity in Modern Culture.* London: Routledge.

Morgan, J (2015) Why We Get off: Moving Towards a Black Feminist Politics of Pleasure. *The Black Scholar* 45(4): 36–46.

Morgan, R and McNearney, A (2018) I Was There: The 1968 Miss America Pageant Protest. *History* September 7, 2018. https://www.history.com/news/miss-america-protests-1968

Mowat, H, Dobson, AS, McDonald, K, Fisher, J and Kirkman, M (2020) "For Myself and Others Like Me": Women's Contributions to Vulva-Positive Social Media. *Feminist Media Studies* 20(1): 35–52.

Murray, DP (2013) Branding "Real" Social Change in Dove's Campaign for Real Beauty. *Feminist Media Studies* 13(1): 83–101.

Murray, S (2008) *The "Fat" Female Body.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

MyBodyGallery website (2022) https://www.mybodygallery.com/

Nebeling Petersen, M, Harrison, K, Raun, T and Andreassen, R. (2017) Introduction: Mediated Intimacies. In R Andreassen, M Nebeling Petersen, K Harrison and T Raun (eds) *Mediated Intimacies: Connectivities, Relationalities and Proximities.* London: Routledge, pp. 1–16.

Ngai, S (2005) *Ugly Feelings.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Nikunen, K (2018) *Media Solidarities. Emotions, Power, and Justice in the Digital Age.* Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Nissenbaum, H (2010) *Privacy in Context: Technology, Policy, and the Integrity of Social Life.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Omaheimo, R and Särmä, S (2017) Kuuma Läskikeskustelu. *Häiriköt-päämaja*, https://hairikot.voima.fi/tag/sarma/

Orbach, S (1978) *Fat Is a Feminist Issue. The Anti-Diet Guide to Permanent Weight Loss.* New York: Paddington Press.

Paasonen, S (2011) *Carnal Resonance: Affect and Online Pornography.* Cambridge: MIT Press.

Paasonen, S (2015) A Midsummer's Bonfire: Affective Intensities of Online Debate. In K Hillis, S Paasonen and M Petit (eds) *Networked Affect*. Massachusetts: MIT Press, pp. 27–42.

Paasonen, S (2017) Affekti suhteina ja intensiteettinä. *Tieteessä tapahtuu* 35(2): 42–43.

Paasonen, S, Hillis, K and Petit, M (2015) Introduction: Networks of Transmission: Intensity, Sensation, Value. In K Hillis, S Paasonen and M Petit (eds) *Networked Affect.* Massachusetts: MIT Press, pp. 1–24.

Papacharissi, Z (2014) *Affective Publics. Sentiment, Technology, and Politics.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pausé, C (2014) X-Static Process: Intersectionality Within the Field of Fat Studies. *Fat Studies* 3(2): 80–85.

Pausé, C and Taylor, SR (2021) Fattening Up Scholarship. In C Pausé and SR Taylor (eds) *The Routledge International Handbook of Fat Studies*. New York: Routledge, pp. 1–18.

Pausé, C and Taylor, SR (eds) (2021) *The Routledge International Handbook of Fat Studies*. New York: Routledge.

Pausé, C, Wykes, J and Murray, S (2014) *Queering Fat Embodiment*. London and New York: Routledge.

Pedwell, C (2014) *Affective Relations. The Transnational Politics of Empathy*. London, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Phipps, A (2016) Whose Personal Is More Political? Experience in Contemporary Feminist Politics. *Feminist Theory* 17(3): 302–321.

Pollock, G (1987) What's Wrong with Images of Women? In R Betterton (ed.) *Looking On: Images of Femininity in the Visual Arts and Media.* London: Pandora Press, pp. 40–48.

Probyn, E (2003) *Carnal Appetites.* Florence: Taylor and Francis.

Probyn, E (2005) *Blush. Faces of Shame.* Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press.

Puhakka, A (2019a) Can Ambivalence Hold Potential for Fat Activism? An Analysis of Conflicting Discourses on Fatness in the Finnish Column Series Jenny's Life Change. *Fat Studies* 8(1): 60–74.

Puhakka, A (2019b) Rodullistettujen naisten lihavuusaktivismi internetissä: Hypernäkyvyys ja hypernäkymättömyys kehopositiivisuuskeskusteluissa. *Kulttuurintutkimus* 36(3–4): 3–15.

Puhakka, A. (2019c) Suomalaisten kehopositiivisuusaktivistien vastineet kehopositiivisuuden kritiikkiin: analyysi diskursiivisista strategioista. *Sukupuolentutkimus* 32(4): 21–36.

Punch, S (2012) Hidden Struggles of Fieldwork: Exploring the Role and Use of Field Diaries. *Emotion, Space and Society* 5(2): 86–93.

Rafati, F, Dehdashti, N and Sadeghi, A (2021) The Relationship Between Instagram Use and Body Dissatisfaction, Drive for Thinness, and Internalization of Beauty Ideals: A Correlational Study of Iranian Women. *Feminist Media Studies*. DOI: 10.1080/14680777.2021.1979065

Rhode, DL (2016) Appearance as a Feminist Issue. 69 *SMU L. REV.* 697(2016), https://scholar.smu.edu/smulr/vol69/iss4/2

Rinaldi, J, Rice, C and Friedman, M (2020) Introduction. In M Friedman, C Rice and J Rinaldi (eds) *Thickening Fat. Fat Bodies, Intersectionality, and Social Justice.* New York: Routledge, pp. 1–11.

Rosenberg, Å (2010) Virtual World Research Ethics and the Private/Public Distinction. *International Journal of Internet Research Ethics* 3(12): 23–35.

Rothblum, ED (2012) Why a Journal on Fat Studies? *Fat Studies* 1(1): 3–5.

Rothblum, ED and Solovay, S (2009) Introduction. In E Rothblum and S Solovay (eds) *The Fat Studies Reader.* New York: New York University Press, pp. 1–7.

Rothblum, ED and Solovay, S (eds) (2009) *The Fat Studies Reader.* New York: New York University Press.

Ruskeat Tytöt Media website (2022) https://www.ruskeattytot.fi/

Saltz, J (2014) At Arm's Length: A History of the Selfie. *New York Magazine* January 26, 2014.

Sampson, TD, Maddison, S and Ellis, D (2018) Introduction: On Affect, Social Media and Criticality. In TD Sampson, S Maddison and D Ellis (eds) *Affect and Social Media: Emotion, Mediation, Anxiety and Contagion.* London: Rowman & Littlefield, pp. 1–9.

Sastre, A (2014) Towards a Radical Body Positive. Reading the Online "Body Positive Movement." *Feminist Media Studies* 14(6): 929–943.

Scale Rebellion website (2022) https://yle.fi/aihe/vaakakapina
Sciortino, R and Wright, S (2017) The Spectacle of New Media: Addressing the Conceptual Nexus Between User Content and Valorization. In M Briziarelli and E Armano (eds) *The Spectacle 2.0: Reading Debord in the Context of Digital Capitalism.* London: University of Westminster Press. DOI: 10.16997/book11.e
Sedgwick, EK (2003) 4. Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay Is About You. In MA Barale, J Goldberg and M Moon (eds) *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity.* New York: Duke University Press, pp. 123–152.
Seigworth, GJ and Gregg, M (2009) An Inventory of Shimmers. In M Gregg and G J Seigworth (eds) *The Affect Theory Reader*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 1–25.
Senft, TM (2008) *Camgirls: Celebrity and Community in the Age of Social Networks.* New York: Peter Lang.
Senft, TM and Baym, N (2015) What Does the Selfie Say? Investigating a Global Phenomenon. *International Journal of Communication* 9(2015): 1588–1606.
Shaw, EA (2006) *The Embodiment of Disobedience: Fat Black Women's Unruly Political Bodies*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
Shemeikka, T (2018) Vitun läski! Tapa ittes! Yleisön reaktioita kehopositiivisiin YouTube-videoihin. Thesis work. Helsinki: Metropolia Ammattikorkeakoulu.
Silverman, K (1996) *The Threshold of the Visible World.* London: Routledge.
Sobchack, V (2004) *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture.* Berkeley: University of California Press.
Solomon CT (2017) Anarcho-Feminist Melodrama and the Manic Pixie Dream Girl. *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 19.1(2017). DOI: 10.7771/1481-4374.2896
Spinney, J (2014) Close Encounters? Mobile Methods, (Post)phenomenology and Affect. *Cultural Geographies* 22(2): 231–246.
Stacey, J (1994) *Star Gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship.* London and New York: Routledge.
Staunæs, D and Kofoed, J (2015) Experimenting with Affects and Senses—A Performative Pop-Up Laboratory (Self-)Critically Revisited. In BT Knudsen and C Stage (eds) *Affective Methodologies.* London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 45–68.
Stewart, TJ and Breeden, RL (2021) "Feeling Good as Hell": Black Women and the Nuances of Fat Resistance. *Fat Studies* 10(3): 221–236
Streeter, R (2021) "Bargaining with the Status Quo": Reinforcing and Expanding Femininities in the #Bodypositive Movement. *Fat Studies.* DOI: 10.1080/21604851.2021.2006958
Sundén, J and Paasonen, S (2019) Inappropriate Laughter: Affective Homophily and the Unlikely Comedy of #MeToo. *Social Media + Society* 5(4): 1–10.
Taylor, A (2018) "Flabulously" Femme: Queer Fat Femme Women's Identities and Experiences. *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 0(0): 1–23.
Tedesco, D (2021) Curating Political Subjects: Fashion Curation as Affective Methodology. *GeoHumanities* 7(1): 328–344.
Terry, G, Hayfield, N, Clarke, V and Braun, V (2017) *Thematic Analysis. The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research In Psychology* 2(2017): 17–37.
The Body Positive website (2022) https://thebodypositive.org/about-us/
Tidgwell, T, Friedman, M, Rinaldi, J, Kotow, C and Lind, ERM (2018) Introduction to the Special Issue: Fatness and Temporality. *Fat Studies* 7(2): 115–123.
Tiidenberg, K (2018) Selfies: Why We Love (and Hate) Them. Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited.
Toffoletti, K and Thorpe, H (2020) Bodies, Gender, and Digital Affect in Fitspiration Media. *Feminist Media Studies*. DOI: 10.1080/14680777.2020.1713841
Turtiainen, R and Östman, S (2013) Verkkotutkimuksen eettiset haasteet: Armi ja anoreksia. In SM Laaksonen, J Matikainen and M Tikka (eds) *Otteita verkosta. Verkon ja sosiaalisen median tutkimusmenetelmät.* Tampere: Vastapaino, pp. 49–67.

Turunen, A (2018) Feminists in High Heels: The Role of Femininity in Second-Wave Feminists' Dress in Finland, 1973-1990. *The Journal of Dress History* 2(3): 122–143.

Wann, M (1998) *Fat! So? Because You Don't Have to Apologize for Your Size.* Berkeley: Ten Speed Press.

Wann, M (2009) Fat Studies: An Invitation to Revolution. In E Rothblum and S Solovay (eds) *The Fat Studies Reader.* New York: New York University Press, pp. ix–xxv.

Warfield, K (2018) Im(matter)ial Bodies: A Material and Affective Rethinking of Selfies for Digital Literacy Resources. *Language and Literacy* 20(3): 73–88.

Wetherell, M (2012) *Affect and Emotion: A New Social Science Understanding.* London: Sage Publications.

White, FR (2013) No Fat Future? The Uses of Anti-Social Queer Theory for Fat Activism. In EH Yekani, E Kilian and B Michaelis (eds) *Queer Futures: Reconsidering Ethics, Activism, and the Political.* Farnham: Ashgate, pp. 21–36.

White, FR (2020) Embodying the Fat/Trans Intersection. In M Friedman, C Rice and J Rinaldi (eds) *Thickening Fat. Fat Bodies, Intersectionality, and Social Justice.* New York: Routledge, pp. 110–121.

Widdows, H (2020) *Perfect Me. Beauty as an Ethical Ideal.* Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Williams, AA (2017) Fat People of Color: Emergent Intersectional Discourse Online. *Social Sciences* 6(1). DOI: 10.3390/socsci6010015

Williams, S (2021) Watch out for the Big Girls: Black Plus-Sized Content Creators Creating Space and Amplifying Visibility in Digital Spaces. *Feminist Media Studies.* DOI: 10.1080/14680777.2021.2004195

Wolf, N (1990) *The Beauty Myth. How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women.* London: Chatto & Windus.

Woodward, K (2015) The Politics of In/Visibility: Being There. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Wykes, M and Gunter, B (2004) *The Media & Body Image.* London: Sage Publications.

Zimmer, M (2010) But the Data Is Already Public: On the Ethics of Research in Facebook. *Ethics & Information Technology* 12(4): 313–325.

Appendix

Statement of the doctoral candidate's individual input in co-authored journal article to be included in an article-based dissertation.

Hynnä, Kaisu and Kyrölä, Katariina (2019) 'Feel in your body': Fat Activist Affects in Blogs. *Social Media + Society* vol. 5: 4, https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305119879983

The undersigned jointly acknowledge Kaisu Hynnä-Granberg as the first author of the co-authored article published in the peer-reviewed academic journal *Social Media + Society*. Hynnä-Granberg's individual input is as follows:

- 50 % of the initial idea for the article including the research material, method, and theoretical perspective
- 50 % of the conducting contextual literature review and developing the argument on body positive blogs offering a space to feel through their affective contradictions
- 50 % of the qualitative analysis of the research material through the thematic lenses of exercise, fashion, and sex in order to investigate how the blogs invite their followers to simply feel in their bodies
- Percentual breakdown of Hynnä-Granberg's total authorial responsibility: 50 %

Turku & London, June 13, 2022

Kaisu Hynnä-Granberg
MA, doctoral researcher

Katariina Kyrölä
PhD, lecturer in Media Studies

TURUN
YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU

Painosalama, Turku, Finland 2022

ISBN 978-951-29-9068-9 (PRINT)
ISBN 978-951-29-9069-6 (PDF)
ISSN 0082-6987 (Print)
ISSN 2343-3191 (Online)