

Being at home in one's body

Body image in light of identity development

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Abstract

Although the importance of the body to people's identities has long been theoretically inferred, research linking body image and identity development is scarce. The objective of this thesis was to address this research gap by exploring body image from an identity perspective.

Study I aimed to examine how trajectories of body image development from early adolescence to emerging adulthood are related to young people's sense of identity. A community sample participated from the age of 10 years ($N = 967$, 53% females) to the age of 24 ($N = 542$, 56% females). Results of Study I indicated that body image development is connected to sense of identity in emerging adulthood, such that individuals in trajectories with more negative body image displayed less identity coherence. Results also indicated that girls and women (particularly those with higher body mass index) are more likely to display disadvantageous development in terms of more negative body image and more identity problems.

The aim of Study II was to explore the many ways in which people might experience their bodies as salient to their identities. Young adults ($N = 121$, 51% women; community sample) were interviewed, and a thematic analysis of the interviews identified four main themes: (1) *identification with the body*, (2) *body functionality in performing identity-relevant tasks*, (3) *appearance and identity in social interactions*, and (4) *identity-relevant bodily engagement*. Both positive and negative ways in which the body is salient to identity were described within all four themes, and descriptions highlighted functionality, embodied experiences, and social environments. Gender differences were generally not found, with one exception: more women than men described experiences of identifying with their bodies.

Study III was performed in two parts with the aim of exploring the sociocultural context in which both body image and identity are formed. This was done by investigating young Swedish women's perceptions of and conformity to feminine norms. In Part 1, a community sample of 317 young women participated in a cross-national comparison, showing that Swedish women generally display less gender role norm conformity than do their counterparts in Canada, the USA, and Slovakia. In Part 2, a focus group study conveyed a more nuanced picture of feminine norms, by showing that even though traditional gender roles might be less pronounced in Sweden, gender role conformity is still a pressing issue. Specifically, appearance norms were considered the most important feminine norms to conform to.

In conclusion, the thesis supports theoretical notions of a connection between body image and identity. It also shows that this connection can be experienced in both positive and negative ways and that more women than men experience both negative body image and identification with their bodies,

highlighting the importance of the sociocultural context. Furthermore, the thesis opens up the possibility of a new theoretical approach by including and discussing body image as part of developmental psychology in general and identity theory in particular. In this way, the thesis not only offers innovative results about the connection between body image and identity development, but is also of theoretical importance.

Keywords: body image; identity development; longitudinal development; emerging adulthood; young adulthood; gender role norms

Sammanfattning (Swedish summary)

Begreppet kroppsuppfattning innefattar en persons tankar och känslor relaterade till sin kropp och sitt utseende. Även om dessa tankar och känslor kan vara positiva, brukar forskning kring kroppsuppfattning mestadels fokusera på negativa aspekter, det vill säga kroppsmisnöje. Tidigare forskning har konstaterat att misnöje med den egna kroppen och utseendet är väldigt vanligt och förekommer i alla typer av grupper (t.ex., alla åldrar, kön, etniciteter). Forskningen visar emellertid även att kroppsmisnöje tenderar att öka under tonåren, samt att flickor och kvinnor generellt sett rapporterar mer kroppsmisnöje än pojkar och män. Vad flickor/kvinnor respektive pojkar/män generellt sett är missnöjda med skiljer sig också åt då kroppsuppfattning är tydligt kopplat till stereotypa könsroller och föreställningar om kvinnlighet och manlighet. Förenklat så innebär det till exempel att kvinnor ofta är missnöjda med vikten och vill vara smalare, medan män upplever mer misnöje med sina muskler och vill vara mer vältränade. Kroppsmisnöje är inte bara vanligt förekommande, det är även relaterat till en mängd skadliga beteenden såsom tvångsmässig träning och ohälsosam bantning, samt innebär en ökad risk att utveckla psykisk ohälsa i form av depression och ätstörningar. En bidragande orsak till att det stora kroppsmisnöjet återfinns i vårt omgivande samhälle där vi hela tiden är omgivna av bilder på, och budskap om, hur vi bör se ut. I många moderna samhällen, däribland Sverige, ses kroppen ofta dessutom som något som vi själva bör forma i enlighet med idealen och att inte uppnå den perfekta kroppen upplevs således som ett personligt misslyckande. På så vis blir kroppen en representation för vilka vi är och arbetet med att forma kroppen kan ses som ett identitetsprojekt.

Identitet brukar definieras som en känsla av att vara samma person över tid och sammanhang. Även om vi antar olika roller i olika situationer och tider i livet så har vi oftast en sammanhängande upplevelse av vilka vi är. Identitetsutvecklingen sker i nära samspel med omgivningen (t.ex. så påverkas vår identitet av hur vi bemöts av andra) och är en process som pågår hela livet. Hur förhåller sig då en persons tankar och känslor kring sin kropp till hans känsla av vem hen är? Teoretiskt sett är sambandet mellan kroppsuppfattning och identitetsutveckling väldigt tydligt. Till exempel påpekade Erikson (1956), en av pionjärerna inom identitetsforskningen, att om en person ska kunna uppnå en sammanhängande identitet så krävs bland annat en känsla av att vara hemma i sin kropp. Även inom kroppsuppfattningsforskningen har kroppsliga erfarenheters betydelse för förståelsen av individens utveckling framhållits (se t.ex., Piran, 2017). Trots dessa teoretiska antaganden har väldigt lite tidigare forskning fokuserat på att förstå hur kroppsuppfattning förhåller sig till identitetsutveckling. Syften med den här avhandling-

en är således att utforska kroppsuppfattning utifrån ett identitetsperspektiv. Avhandlingen innehåller tre studier som i huvudsak utgår från två pågående longitudinella projekt vid Psykologiska institutionen, Göteborgs universitet: MoS (Mobbing och Skola) och GoLD (Gothenburg Longitudinal study of Development). Studie I bygger på enkätdata från MoS-projektet, medan Studie II bygger på intervjudata från projektet GoLD. Studie III bygger dels på enkätdata från projektet MoS, men även på fokusgruppsintervjuer med studenter. I **Studie I** var syftet att undersöka utvecklingen av kroppsuppfattning från tidiga tonår till unga vuxenår, samt förhållandet mellan kroppsuppfattningsutveckling och identitet. Samma deltagare svarade på enkäter vid sex tillfällen från 10 till 24 års ålder. Av de ursprungliga 967 deltagarna, deltog 542 (56 %) vid 24 år. Kön fördelningen var jämn vid varje mättillfälle. Tre aspekter av kroppsuppfattning inkluderades i studien: (1) tankar kring det egna utseendet, (2) tankar kring den egna vikten och (3) tankar kring hur en tror att andra uppfattar ens kropp. Resultaten från Studie I visade på tre olika utvecklingsvägar för var och en av de tre olika kroppsuppfattningsaspekterna. I de vägarna med mest kroppsmisnöje fanns flest kvinnor och personer med högre body mass index (BMI). Resultaten visade även på en koppling mellan kroppsuppfattningsutveckling och upplevelsen av en sammanhängande identitet i unga vuxenåren. Till exempel så uppvisade flickor/kvinnor, i synnerhet de med högre BMI, inte bara en problematisk utveckling i form av genomgående mer kroppsmisnöje, utan även mer identitetsproblem som unga vuxna (i form av att de uttryckte mer förvirring kring vilka de är och vad de vill få ut av livet). Sammanfattningsvis så pekar resultaten i Studie I på betydelsen av att sammantaget studera kroppsuppfattningsutveckling och identitetsutveckling för att bättre förstå hur olika aspekter av unga människors, och framförallt unga kvinnors, liv hänger ihop.

För att vidga förståelsen av förhållandet mellan kropp och identitet till att inkludera mer än negativa aspekter i form av kroppsmisnöje och identitetsproblem, syftade **Studie II** till att undersöka på vilka olika sätt unga vuxna själva upplever att kroppen är av betydelse för deras identitet. Intervjuer genomfördes med 121 unga vuxna (51 % kvinnor), med en medelålder på 33 år. Alla intervjuer utgick från följande fråga: "Finns det aspekter som har att göra med din kropp som är viktiga för vem du är som person? I så fall, vilka aspekter?". Intervjuerna, som analyserades med hjälp av tematisk analys, resulterade i fyra huvudteman: (1) beskrivningar av identifikation med kroppen, (2) beskrivningar av kroppsliga funktioner som viktiga för att kunna göra saker av relevans för identiteten, (3) beskrivningar av kroppens betydelse i sociala interaktioner, och (4) beskrivningar av engagemang i kropp och utseende som viktiga för identiteten. I alla fyra huvudteman så fanns både positiva och negativa beskrivningar av kroppens betydelse för identiteten. Resultaten visade även på könsskillnader i tema (1) där fler kvinnor än män beskrev att de identifierade sig med sin kropp. Sammantaget visade Stu-

die II på en stor variation i hur unga vuxna upplever förhållandet mellan kropp och identitet och att förhållandet inkluderar mycket mer än kroppsmisnöje och identitetsproblem. Att ta hänsyn till den stora variationen är viktigt för att kunna förstå komplexiteten i unga vuxnas välmående och förhållande till sina kroppar.

Medan Studie I och Studie II i huvudsak fokuserade på förhållandet mellan kroppsuppfattning och identitet, fokuserade **Studie III** på att öka förståelsen kring det sociala sammanhang i vilket både kroppsuppfattning och identitet utvecklas. Syftet med Studie III var att undersöka unga kvinnors uppfattning av samhälleliga normer (d.v.s. underförstådda regler och förväntningar på beteende) kopplade till kvinnlighet. I sammanhanget är det ett viktigt fokus då föreställningar om kvinnlighet både är starkt relaterat till kroppsuppfattning och till skapandet av en könsrollsidentitet (d.v.s. uppfattningen av en själv som kvinnlig och/eller manlig). Studie III genomfördes i två delar. I den första delen, där 317 kvinnor med en genomsnittlig ålder på 21 år deltog, undersöktes i vilken utsträckning deltagarna anpassar sig till normer om kvinnlighet (t.ex. att vara smal, att lägga tid och energi på sitt utseende, att vara snäll och omtänksam, att ha det rent och fint hemma, att tycka om att ta hand om barn), utifrån ett amerikanskt frågeformulär (Parent & Moradi, 2010). Deltagarnas resultat jämfördes sedan med resultat från unga kvinnor i Kanada, USA och Slovakien, och sammantaget visade första delen av Studie III att svenska kvinnor generellt sett anpassar sig till kvinnlighetsnormerna i mindre utsträckning än kvinnor i de andra länderna. I den andra delen av Studie III genomfördes fyra fokusgrupper med unga kvinnor (genomsnittlig ålder = 20 år). Analyserna av dessa fokusgrupper bekräftade att normerna som inkluderades i första delen av studien generellt sett är närvarande i Sverige, men resultaten nyanserade även bilden av dessa normer. Exempelvis så visade resultaten att alla kvinnlighetsnormer inte betraktas som likvärdiga, på så vis att normer som har att göra med utseende är viktigare än andra normer såsom att ha det rent och fint hemma och att vara snäll och omtänksam. Dessutom gav resultaten stöd för att normer kring kvinnligt utseende inte enbart handlar om smink (vilket var det som primärt undersöktes i studiens första del), utan att det även finns starka normer kring exempelvis hårborttagning och att vara vältränad. Allt som allt visar resultaten från Studie III att svenska kvinnor förefaller anpassa sig mindre till kvinnlighetsnormer än kvinnor i andra länder, men att detta resultat även kan ha att göra med att normerna ser något annorlunda ut i Sverige. Inte minst visade andra delen av Studie III att det finns tydliga kvinnlighetsnormer kring kropp och utseende som många unga kvinnor upplever är viktiga att anpassa sig efter.

Sammanfattningsvis så ger de tre studier som utgör grunden för avhandlingen stöd för att det finns ett samband mellan kroppsuppfattning och identitet, på så vis att för många unga vuxna så verkar tankar och känslor kring kroppen vara intimt förknippat med deras syn på sig själva. Avhandlingen

visar även att förhållandet mellan kroppsuppfattning och identitet kan vara både positivt och negativt. Kroppsmisnöje visar sig kunna kopplas till identitetsförvirring, men kroppen kan också vara betydelsefull för identiteten på gynnsamma sätt (t.ex. genom att kroppens funktioner möjliggör identitetsdefinierande aktiviteter och relationer). För unga kvinnor verkar kroppens betydelse för identiteten ha en särskild roll, då fler kvinnor än män upplever både kroppsmisnöje och identifikation med sina kroppar. En förklaring som avhandlingen erbjuder gäller det sociala sammanhang som unga svenska kvinnor befinner sig i där normer kring kvinnlighet i mångt och mycket kretsar kring kropp och utseende. Vidare så öppnar avhandlingen upp för en större teoretisk ansats genom att inkludera och diskutera kroppsuppfattningen som en del av utvecklingspsykologin i allmänhet, och identitetsteorier i synnerhet. På så vis erbjuder avhandlingen inte endast resultat inom ett nytt forskningsområde, utan bidrar även med fördjupad teoretisk förståelse om sambandet mellan kroppsuppfattning och identitetsutveckling.

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Johanna Kling, Gothenburg 2019

Preface

This thesis consists of a summary and the following three papers, which are referred to by their Roman numerals:

- I. Nelson, S. C., Kling, J., Wängqvist, M., Frisé, A., & Syed, M. (2018). Identity and the body: Trajectories of body esteem from adolescence to emerging adulthood. *Developmental Psychology*, *54*, 1159–1171. doi:10.1037/dev0000435
- II. Kling, J., Wängqvist, M., & Frisé, A. (2018). “This body is me”: Discovering the ways in which the body is salient in people’s identities. *Body Image*, *24*, 102–110. doi:10.1016/j.bodyim.2017.12.009
- III. Kling, J., Holmqvist Gattario, K., & Frisé, A. (2017). Swedish women’s perceptions of and conformity to feminine norms. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, *58*, 238–248. doi:10.1111/sjop.12361

Contents

Introduction	1
Body image.....	2
Body dissatisfaction	3
Positive body image	6
Experience of embodiment.....	7
Identity development	8
Eriksonian identity theory	9
Identity formation after adolescence	11
Gender roles and identity	14
Body image, identity development and the sociocultural context....	16
The Swedish context	16
Appearance culture.....	17
Gender role norms: femininity and the body.....	19
Body image and identity development: previous research.....	20
General aim	27
Summary of the studies	29
Research projects.....	29
Study I	31
Study II	35
Study III.....	38
General discussion	43
Identity and the body.....	43
Salience of the body in people's identities	47
Conformity to feminine norms	51
Theoretical discussion	54
Methodological discussion	59
Clinical implications.....	65
Ethical considerations.....	66
Conclusion.....	68
References	69
Supplemental material	99
Appendix	101

Introduction

Its [i.e., the sense of identity's] most obvious concomitants are a feeling of being at home in one's body, a sense of 'knowing where one is going,' and an inner assuredness from those who count. Such a sense of identity, however, is never gained nor maintained once and for all.

Erik Homburger Erikson (1956, p. 74)

How other people treat us based on how we look, how we evaluate ourselves based on what our bodies can do, and how we choose to alter our appearances to express individuality or group affiliation—these are just a few key examples of how our bodily experiences interact with who we are, i.e., our identities.

As indicated by the above quotation, Erikson considered body image (in terms of “being at home in one’s body”) a significant aspect of identity development, suggesting that identity development is an ongoing process that takes place in close relationship with the sociocultural context. In numerous contemporary societies, including that of Sweden, the body is generally talked about as something moldable and is frequently referred to as an “identity project,” meaning that one’s sense of self is displayed mainly through one’s appearance (e.g., Chrisler & Johnston-Robledo, 2018; Friséñ, Holmqvist Gattario, & Lunde, 2014; Ricciardelli, 2011). Failure to achieve an ideal body is often perceived as a personal defeat (Bulik, 2012; Orbach, 2010) and has been associated with distress in terms of body dissatisfaction (Cafri, Yamamiya, Brannick, & Thompson, 2005; Grabe, Ward, & Hyde, 2008). From previous research it can be concluded that being dissatisfied with one’s body is both common (e.g., Fiske, Fallon, Blissmer, & Redding, 2014; Public Health Agency of Sweden, 2018) and linked to many negative physical and psychological health consequences, including eating disorders (McLean & Paxton, 2018) and depression (Hollander, Siragusa, & Berkson, 2012).

Recently, body image researchers have advocated a more comprehensive view of the concept of body image (Cash, 2011; Tylka, 2018), including a view of body image from the perspective of developmental psychology (Cash & Smolak, 2011; Markey, 2010). As noted by Markey and by Cash and Smolak, the developmental context is essential for understanding body image experiences, both intrapersonal and interpersonal. Additionally, identi-

ty researchers have called for more studies of the body's importance to identity development (Daniels & Gillen, 2015; Schachter, 2018). However, although Erikson originally conceptualized identity development as a process of becoming at home in one's body, and despite past notions that body image evaluations have implications for evaluations of the self (see, e.g., Cash, 1990; Fisher, 1990), research linking body image and identity is lacking. To address this gap, this thesis aims to explore body image from an identity development perspective. More specifically, Study I investigates body image development from early adolescence to adulthood and explores the relationship between body image development and sense of identity. Study II focuses on people's own experiences of how their bodies are salient to their identities. Study III adds a contextual perspective to body image and identity development by exploring women's perceptions of, and conformity to, feminine norms.

The thesis begins by describing relevant aspects of body image, including body dissatisfaction, positive body image, and embodiment. As concerns identity, concepts relating to Eriksonian identity theory, identity formation, and gender role identity are outlined. After this, aspects of body image and identity in relation to the sociocultural context are described, followed by a summary of current research into the relationship between body image and identity development. The subsequent section presents the general aim of the thesis, summaries of the three included studies, and a general discussion of the findings.

Body image

Body image refers to the psychological aspects of the body and is commonly described as people's perceptions, thoughts, and feelings about their bodies (Grogan, 2016). Hence, body image is a multidimensional construct encompassing both self-perceptions and attitudes regarding one's physical body and appearance (Cash & Smolak, 2011), and has accordingly been conceptualized in numerous ways, such as negative/positive body image, body dissatisfaction, body image disturbance, and body esteem. Most research in the field of body image tends to emphasize the negative aspects of those self-perceptions and attitudes (Cash, 2011; Holmqvist Gattario, 2013), and research is dominated by a focus on pathology (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015). Negative body image, in turn, is commonly described in terms of body dissatisfaction, reflecting the evaluative component of the broader body image construct (Cash, 2011).

Body dissatisfaction

Although body dissatisfaction includes the word “body”, it has previously been noted that this concept focuses on dissatisfaction specifically with appearance (Thompson, Heinberg, Altabe, & Tantleff-Dunn, 1999; Tylka & Piran, 2019). Moreover, although “body dissatisfaction” is sometimes used synonymously with the term “body image disturbance,” the two concepts are often distinguished, with body image disturbance being considered a more severe form of negative body image, including not only evaluative components but also perceptual and behavioral dysfunctions (Cash & Deagle, 1997; Delinsky & Germain, 2012). Throughout this thesis, the term “body dissatisfaction” is used to indicate dissatisfaction with one’s body in general and one’s appearance in particular. The term “negative body image” is used in a wider sense that includes both body dissatisfaction and body image disturbance. Specifically, in Study I, body dissatisfaction is indicated by low body esteem, which comprises evaluations about one’s appearance and weight as well as appearance evaluations ascribed to others (Mendelson, Mendelson, & White, 2001).

Prevalence of body dissatisfaction

It is frequently asserted that body dissatisfaction is common in the general population (Grogan, 2016), being prevalent across all age cohorts (Runfola et al., 2013). However, specific figures for the prevalence of body dissatisfaction vary between studies, often as a result of methodological differences (Fiske et al., 2014). In their review of the epidemiology of body dissatisfaction, Frederick, Jafary, Gruys, and Daniels (2012) concluded that overall body dissatisfaction exists in approximately 20% of all men and 30% of all women, but noted that the estimates vary dramatically depending on the definition of body dissatisfaction. For example, dissatisfaction specifically with weight is generally much more common than is overall body dissatisfaction (Frederick et al., 2012). Body dissatisfaction also includes a wide range of discontent, from relatively benign (i.e., sometimes being slightly dissatisfied) to severe (i.e., always being very dissatisfied), and these nuances are not always taken into account in studies of prevalence (Fiske et al., 2014).

Results of the MoS project (described in “Summary of the studies”; cf., Frisén & Holmqvist, 2010a; Frisén, Lunde, & Berg, 2015; Kling, Rodgers, & Frisén, 2016) indicate that, among Swedish young adults, about half of the men and two thirds of the women experience body dissatisfaction to some degree (Kling, 2019). Moreover, half of the MoS participants (both men and women) reported that they would like to change many things about their appearance, and almost one in five regularly or always felt ashamed of their appearance (23% of females and 13% of males). However, even as levels of

body dissatisfaction are high, approximately 40% of the MoS participants reported being proud of, and liking, their bodies (Kling, 2019).

Body dissatisfaction development

As concerns the development of body dissatisfaction, a few studies have explored body dissatisfaction longitudinally over prolonged periods, concentrating on adolescence and young adulthood (Bucchianeri, Arikian, Hannan, Eisenberg, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2013; Frisé et al., 2015; Holsen, Jones, & Birkeland, 2012). The study by Bucchianeri et al. (2013) showed that participants became progressively more dissatisfied with their bodies over a 10-year period. Body dissatisfaction specifically increased in young adolescence, and then increased further during the transition to young adulthood (Bucchianeri et al., 2013). Frisé et al. (2015), using the sample from the MoS project, also found an increase in body dissatisfaction in early adolescence, after which the levels of body dissatisfaction were generally sustained. Another study (Holsen et al., 2012) found that from the age of 13, girls and boys became gradually less dissatisfied with their bodies until age 21, after which the levels stabilized. Although providing slightly different results regarding body dissatisfaction development, these studies (Bucchianeri et al., 2013; Frisé et al., 2015; Holsen et al., 2012) together point to the stabilization of body dissatisfaction after adolescence. These results are also in line with the review on adult body image development by Tiggemann (2004), which among other things concluded that, for women, body dissatisfaction remains remarkably stable across the adult life span. However, it is important to note that the previous longitudinal studies of body image development (Bucchianeri et al., 2013; Frisé et al., 2015; Holsen et al., 2012) all focus on mean-level, normative trajectories, which might conceal essential variations in the data (Cicchetti & Rogosch, 1996).

Gender differences in body dissatisfaction

Gender differences have consistently been found in many areas concerning body image and body dissatisfaction. For example, women are more likely than men to be dissatisfied with their overall appearance and with specific body parts and body fat (Karazsia, Murnen, & Tylka, 2017; Sobrino-Bazaga & Rabito-Alcón, 2018). Accordingly, in the meta-analysis by Karazsia et al. (2017), the authors concluded that girls and women consistently reported higher rates of body dissatisfaction related to weight and shape than did boys and men (who in turn reported higher muscularity dissatisfaction). In the systematic review by Sobrino-Bazaga and Rabito-Alcón (2018), results indicated that all but one of the included studies identified significant gender

differences, with more women than men reporting body dissatisfaction in adult populations.

Causes and consequences of body dissatisfaction

Why do people develop dissatisfaction with their bodies and appearance? Although the etiology of body image is likely complexly biopsychosocial (see, e.g., Rodgers, Paxton, & McLean, 2014), sociocultural theories have attracted considerable attention and support in body image research (Tiggemann, 2012). For example, the tripartite influence model (TIM; Thompson et al., 1999) suggests that media, parents, and peers, through the processes of social comparison and internalization of appearance ideals, shape a person's body image. The original TIM, and different adaptations of it, have gained much support in research in various contexts (e.g., de Carvalho, Alvarenga, & Ferreira, 2017; Lovering, Rodgers, George, & Franko, 2018; Shroff & Thompson, 2006; Tylka, 2011; Yamamiya, Shroff, & Thompson, 2008), suggesting that sociocultural agents are generally important influences in the development of body dissatisfaction. Regarding gender differences, in most societies, feminine traits and roles are associated with an objectified view of the body (Murnen & Smolak, 2019). Objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) posits that the societal view of the female body as an object to be looked at and evaluated according to appearance standards influences women's feelings about their bodies (Tiggemann, 2013). Through the experience of objectification, women learn to internalize an observer's view of their own body and to evaluate it relative to prevailing social ideals—that is, self-objectification. Self-objectification, in turn, has been related to body dissatisfaction and disordered eating (e.g., Moradi, & Huang, 2008; Schaefer & Thompson, 2018; Tylka & Hill, 2004).

Given that dissatisfaction with one's body and appearance is common, especially starting in adolescence and among girls and women, it is considered a normative perception (Grogan, 2016; Tantleff-Dunn, Barnes, & Larose, 2011). However, "normative" in no way indicates that body dissatisfaction is harmless. On the contrary, body dissatisfaction has been related to higher risks of developing psychiatric disorders such as eating disorders and depression (e.g., Attia, 2010; Atlantis & Ball, 2008; Ghaderi, 2001; Stice & Bearman, 2001; Stice, Hayward, Cameron, Killen, & Taylor, 2000; Stice & Shaw, 2002) and to lower sexual functioning and health-related quality of life (e.g., Davison & McCabe, 2005; Wilson, Latner, & Hayashi, 2013). Body dissatisfaction has further been linked to a wide range of health-compromising behaviors such as unhealthy dieting, compulsive exercise, and steroid use (e.g., De Young & Anderson, 2010; Markey & Markey, 2005; McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2004; Tod, Edwards, & Hall, 2013), decreased like-

likelihood of cancer screening self-exams (Ridolfi & Crowther, 2013), and decreased success in smoking cessation and increased pro-smoking attitudes and behaviors (King, Matacin, White, & Marcus, 2005; Potter, Pederson, Chan, Aubut, & Koval, 2004).

Because of the ubiquity and associated adverse consequences of body dissatisfaction, studies that improve our understanding of this phenomenon are vital. However, as discussed by Cash (2011), Tylka and Wood-Barcalow (2015), and Piran (2017), focusing merely on body dissatisfaction limits the body image research field by preventing a full understanding of the body image concept. The narrow focus on negative aspects hinders both our understanding of the concept and the development of effective prevention and intervention strategies (Piran & Teall, 2012; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015). Accordingly, in recent years, researchers have increasingly started to acknowledge the complexity of the body image concept and to explore body image in a wider sense, including perspectives from positive psychology and embodiment theories.

Positive body image

The concept of positive body image stems from the perspective of positive psychology (cf., Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), which offers a framework for understanding psychology not only in terms of pathology and weakness but also in terms of strengths (Tylka, 2012). A core feature of positive psychology, which also applies to positive body image, is that positive characteristics do not simply represent the absence of negative characteristics (Lopez, Teramoto Pedrotti, & Snyder, 2015). Hence, positive body image is not merely the opposite of negative body image, and possessing a positive body image includes much more than an absence of body dissatisfaction (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015).

Positive body image therefore comprises several components, such as body appreciation, body acceptance, inner positivity, and adaptive appearance investment (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015). Moreover, positive body image also involves a person's ability to broadly conceptualize beauty and to filter information in a body-protective manner (Tylka, 2012; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015). One central aspect relating to positive body image that has recently attracted considerable attention is a focus on everything the body can do—i.e., body functionality (Alleva, Martijn, Van Breukelen, Jansen, & Karos, 2015; Frisén & Holmqvist, 2010b). Studies of body functionality have, for example, found that negative body image can be prevented by encouraging a functionality-based focus on the body (e.g., Alleva et al., 2015; Alleva, Martijn, Jansen, & Nederkoorn, 2014; Alleva, Veldhuis, & Martijn, 2016; Alleva, Tylka, & Kroon Van Diest, 2017).

Taken together, positive body image entails an overarching love and respect for one's body, so the concept extends far beyond simply being the opposite of body dissatisfaction with its appearance-related focus (Tylka & Piran, 2019). Consequently, the conceptual overlap between measures of positive and negative body image is relatively small (e.g., Tiggemann & McCourt, 2013; Webb, Butler-Ajibade, & Robinson, 2014). Studies showing that positive body image is related to many aspects of well-being (e.g., disordered eating), even when controlling for body dissatisfaction (e.g., Alleva et al., 2017), further support the differentiation between the constructs.

Nevertheless, body image can rarely be described as solely positive or negative because individuals' feelings toward and perceptions of their bodies are very complex and in constant flux (Blood, 2005; Tylka & Piran, 2019). For example, people can express a positive body image and at the same time be dissatisfied with certain aspects of their appearance, as described in previous studies (e.g., Frisén & Holmqvist, 2010b; Pope, Corona, & Belgrave, 2014; Tiggemann & McCourt, 2013). Another concept that further improves our understanding of body image by incorporating both negative and positive ways of inhabiting the body is that of "experience of embodiment" from the developmental theory of embodiment (Piran, 2017; Piran & Teall, 2012).

Experience of embodiment

The term "embodiment," originating from the work of philosopher Merleau-Ponty, can be described as the "experience of engagement of the body with the world" (Allan, 2005, p. 177; cited in Piran & Teall, 2012, p. 171). The developmental theory of embodiment (DTE; Piran & Teall, 2012) links embodiment theories with the embodied experiences of individuals in the process of psychological development. As described by Piran (2017), embodiment encompasses a wide range of experiences, both connective and disruptive, so the concept of embodiment can serve as a bridge between positive and negative body image when studying how people inhabit their bodies (Piran, 2016). Examples of positive experiences include body comfort, self-care, and attunement, while negative experiences include body dissatisfaction, feeling alienated from one's body, neglect, and self-harm (Piran, 2016).

According to the DTE, a person's experience of embodiment is shaped in relation to the sociocultural environment and by three key social domains (Piran, 2017). The *physical domain* includes experiences of physical freedom that enhance positive embodiment, such as engagement in joyful and non-objectifying physical activities, as well as experiences of physical corseting that lead to disruptions in the experience of embodiment (e.g., sexual or physical abuse; Piran & Teall, 2012). The *mental domain* includes both mental freedom, such as holding a critical stance toward norms and ideals, and men-

tal corseting in terms of, for example, compliance with norms and ideals (Piran, 2017). The *social power domain* includes experiences of power and relational connections (e.g., access to resources such as education and health) as well as experiences of social disempowerment and disconnection (e.g., prejudice and harassment; Piran, 2017). Because the experience of embodiment construct includes such a wide range of experience domains (previously mainly studied as separate phenomena; Piran, 2019), this construct provides a new understanding of body image and the social experiences that shape it.

As previously stated, body image is a multifaceted concept (Cash, Fleming, Alindogan, Steadman, & Whitehead, 2002), and researchers in the field of positive body image and embodiment have acknowledged this by, for example, emphasizing the importance of taking account of both body-related psychological strengths and sociocultural structures (Piran, 2017; Tylka & Piran, 2019; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015). Moreover, there has also been a call to researchers in the field of developmental psychology to prioritize research into body image, given the importance of factors related to body image from a life-span perspective (Cash & Smolak, 2011; Markey, 2010). This thesis offers a way to acknowledge the complexity of body image, by viewing it in light of identity development.

Identity development

Identity is a concept used in a wide variety of ways in many social science disciplines (van Doeselaar, Becht, Klimstra, & Meeus, 2018). In psychology, definitions of identity usually include a conscious awareness of the self and some degree of reflection about who one was, is, will be, and ought to be (e.g., Caldwell, 2016; Erikson, 1968; McAdams & McLean, 2013; Syed, 2017; Verkuyten, 2016). Apart from this definition of identity as an interior experience of self-sameness, the term identity also frequently refers to social identity (Erikson, 1968; Hammack, 2015; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) in terms of belongingness to and identification with a social group. Body image researchers sometimes explore social identity in relation to body image (e.g., Borowsky, Eisenberg, Bucchianeri, Piran, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2016; Jones, Haycraft, Murjan, & Arcelus, 2016; Rakhkovskaya & Warren, 2016; Tigge-mann, 2015; Udall-Weiner, 2009). Although body image is also highly likely to be related to identity in terms of the experience of self-sameness (see, e.g., Fisher, 1990), this association is surprisingly unexplored. This thesis applies an identity development perspective stemming from Erikson's (1963, 1968, 1980) influential work, described further in the following section.

Eriksonian identity theory

Much of the theory construction and research in the field of identity psychology stems from Erikson's (1963, 1968, 1980) psychosocial theory of development across the lifespan. According to Erikson (1963), identity refers to an individual's sense of sameness and continuity with the past, present, and future and across social roles, and identity development occurs in the intersection between a person's social context and psychological/biological development. On one hand, the concept of identity from an Eriksonian perspective is easy to comprehend, as it answers the question "Who am I?" At the same time, the concept of identity is very complex, mutually constituted by process (i.e., how identity develops), content (i.e., domains important to identity), and structure (i.e., how different identity domains relate to each other). To complicate things further, identity development is also, as described by Erikson (1968), both a conscious and an unconscious process including a conscious sense of who one is and an unconscious striving for the continuity of that sense.

Erikson (1963) described human lifespan development in terms of eight psychosocial conflicts requiring resolutions. The conflict of identity versus identity confusion is situated in adolescence, after the four conflicts of childhood (i.e., trust vs. mistrust, autonomy vs. shame and doubt, initiative vs. guilt, and industry vs. inferiority) and before the three conflicts of adulthood (i.e., intimacy vs. isolation, generativity vs. self-absorption, and integrity vs. despair; Erikson, 1968, 1980). According to Erikson, each of the eight psychosocial conflicts represents a critical developmental period; at the same time, all developmental conflicts are present in some form at any given time across the life span. Subsequently, although the psychosocial conflict of identity versus identity confusion is in focus during adolescence, identity formation is a life-long process (Erikson, 1980; Kroger, Martinussen, & Marcia, 2010). For the stage of identity formation, the resolutions are usually referred to as identity coherence and identity confusion (Rosenthal, Gurney, & Moore, 1981; Schwartz, Zamboanga, Wang, & Olthuis, 2009). Identity coherence includes a person's sense of knowing who one is, where one belongs, and where one is heading in life, while identity confusion includes feelings of not being involved, not knowing where one is going, and continuously changing opinions about oneself (Rosenthal et al., 1981).

Building on Erikson's theory, Marcia (1966) developed a model for understanding the process of forming an identity. This model proposes that people's identity development is indicated by their levels of exploration of identity alternatives and their commitment to the chosen options (Kroger & Marcia, 2011). Based on the presence or absence of identity exploration and commitment, Marcia proposed four identity statuses: achieved, moratorium,

foreclosure, and diffusion (Marcia, 1966; Marcia, Waterman, Matteson, Archer, & Orlofsky, 1993). People who are identity achieved have actively explored alternatives and made identity commitments, while people in moratorium are still exploring various alternatives in order to make future commitments (Kroger & Marcia, 2011). People in foreclosure have made identity commitments without prior exploration of alternatives, and people in identity diffusion have not made commitments and their exploration has been absent or vague (Kroger & Marcia, 2011). Importantly, identity status is not static and findings indicate that identity evolves over time (Carlsson, 2015; Kroger et al., 2010). For example, the meta-analytic results of Kroger et al. (2010) indicated that, although some individuals did not display changes in identity status over time, most people did to some degree.

Identity status can be viewed globally, but is assessed through exploration and commitment processes in different identity domains, for example, in relation to occupation, political views, religion, relationships, parenthood, and gender roles (Ferrer-Wreder, Trost, Lorente, & Mansoor, 2012; Marcia, 1966). These identity domains may vary in importance depending on cultural context and individual preferences, so the processes of identity exploration and commitment must be considered in relation to a person's psychosocial roles and values (Kroger, 2015). Identity domains such as occupational identity and parental identity are relatively well explored (e.g., Frisén, Carlsson, & Wängqvist, 2014; Gyberg & Frisén, 2017; Schwartz, Zamboanga, Luyckx, Meca, & Ritchie, 2013). However, despite its centrality to some people's views of themselves (Cash, 1990), and despite Erikson's (1956, 1968) recognition of the body's importance in identity development, body image as an identity domain remains uncharted.

Body-self

Erikson's (1968) concept of the body-self is relevant when applying an identity development perspective to body image. Erikson (1968) described identity development as including the gradual integration of different selves, so the body-self is the self grounded in one's bodily experiences. Erikson (1956) also emphasized the salience of the body to identity in his description of an optimal identity as "a feeling of being at home in one's body, a sense of knowing where one is going, and an inner assuredness of anticipated recognition from those who count" (p. 78), and further explained that problems with psychological adjustment can occur if one is insecure about one's appearance in social interactions (Erikson, 1980). As described by Kroger (2006), one's sense of body-self is dependent on physiological characteristics such as sex, physical appearance, and physical capacities and limitations, and healthy identity adaptation requires altering one's sense of identity in accordance

with differing physical changes. As concerns the role of physical changes, Erikson (1968) described experiences of “identity loss” or confusion when the body undergoes rapid change. This identity loss is presumed to spark exploration that may lead to a new integration of the personal identity into a coherent whole, but may also lead to identity problems (Erikson, 1963; Schwartz et al., 2009).

In many ways, the part of Erikson’s identity theory that describes the body-self and bodily experiences can be related to the developmental theory of embodiment and the concept of experience of embodiment (Piran, 2017), as previously described. For example, both theories highlight the importance of the community and societal context in understanding people’s body-related self-experiences. Importantly, Erikson’s conceptualization of the relationship between identity development and contextually bound experiences that derive from bodily characteristics have previously been described as a major strength of his theory (Sorell & Montgomery, 2001).

Identity formation after adolescence

According to Erikson (1968), identity development is the process, centralized in late adolescence, of creating a coherent understanding of the self across time and place. In adolescence, this process is encouraged by advances in cognitive capabilities, an expanding social environment, increasing sociocultural pressure to find one’s place in society, and the onset of puberty (McAdams, 2013; Natsuaki, Samuels, & Leve, 2015; Syed & McLean, 2016). Although Erikson noted that identity formation continues after adolescence as well, researchers have more recently noticed a prolonged transition into adulthood in many societies, affecting the psychosocial conflict of identity versus identity confusion (Arnett, 2015). In Sweden, this prolonged transition has been described as normative (Carlsson, 2015; Ferrer-Wreder et al., 2012), exemplified by an increased mean age of first-time parenthood and later entry into the labor market (Statistics Sweden, 2018a). The developmental periods of emerging adulthood and young adulthood are described below, focusing on body-related aspects of identity development during these periods.

Emerging adulthood

The concept of emerging adulthood encompasses the late teens and the twenties as a separate developmental period, distinct from both adolescence and adulthood (Arnett, 2000, 2015; Wängqvist & Frisé, 2016a). Emerging adulthood is usually described as a period in life when young people are trying to figure out who they are and where they are heading (Arnett, 2000). Emerging adulthood is also usually characterized by a strong self-focus and is considered an age of opportunities (Arnett, 2015). The concept of emerging

adulthood has been criticized for its Westernized perspective and for only being applicable to certain young people who have sufficient resources to explore the various opportunities available to them. However, the challenges and characteristics of emerging adulthood are largely relevant to young women and men in Sweden (Carlsson, 2015; Ferrer-Wreder et al., 2012), and the term “emerging adulthood” is therefore considered useful in contextualizing body image and identity development in this age group.

Emerging adulthood is usually associated with profound changes in several aspects of life and identity (Arnett, 2000), many of which are seen as due to external conditions or expectations (Bulik, 2012). For example, emerging adults are often expected to move out of the family home (Arnett, 2015). For this reason, it is an important time for young men and women to establish their own behaviors related to eating and physical activity (e.g., Bell & Lee, 2005; Brown, Bray, Beatty, & Kwan, 2014; Nelson, Story, Larson, Neumark-Sztainer, & Lytle, 2008; Papadaki, Hondros, Scott, & Kapsokefalou, 2007). Moreover, during emerging adulthood there is generally a more serious and intimate focus on dating (Arnett, 2000; van de Bongardt, Yu, Deković, & Meeus, 2015), due to which many emerging adults’ concerns and self-presentation behaviors concern enhancing their attractiveness to others (McPherson, 2012). Accordingly, previous studies have shown that both young women and men prioritize attractiveness over other attributes when initiating romantic relationships (e.g., Eastwick, Eagly, Finkel, & Johnson, 2011; Lundy, Tan, & Cunningham, 1998). Also, as concerns external expectations, the emerging adulthood years are also usually associated with increased evaluations from others (i.e., when applying for work, going to university, and establishing new relationships), and young men and women are expected to face and handle these evaluations on their own (Bulik, 2012; Taylor, Doane, & Eisenberg, 2014).

Hence, not all researchers agree that emerging adulthood is a purely positive developmental period, as it entails increased external demands and the risk of making “wrong” choices (Bulik, 2012), not least in relation to body image. For example, the emerging adulthood years have been described as a time in life when “environmental and social conditions are ripe for a collision of self-esteem and body-esteem in vulnerable conditions” (Bulik, 2012, p. 60).

Young adulthood

When people approach their thirties, an increasing number of them start to identify themselves as adults (Arnett, 2000; Carlsson, 2015). In young adulthood, roughly between age 30 and 40 (Arnett, 2012), individuals often encounter new experiences and changing life circumstances that may challenge

their sense of identity (Kroger, 2015). Such experiences and life circumstances are attributable to, for example, the adoption of new roles when young adults establish occupations, settle down with partners, and become parents (Arnett, 2012; Gyberg & Frisen, 2017). According to Erikson's (1963) theory, the main focus of people's psychosocial development as they enter young adulthood is expected to shift from a focus on identity to a focus on forming intimate relationships. However, forming intimate relationships also requires that individuals reflect on their identities in relation to the other person's needs and interests, so the development of a sense of identity and intimate relationships often interact with and affect each other (Årseth, Kroger, Martinsen, & Marcia, 2009). Hence, important identity issues in young adulthood, which are closely related to bodily experiences, include the formation of intimate relationships as well as expressions of sexuality in terms of both reproduction and sexual pleasure (Erikson, 1963; Kroger, 2006).

Moreover, young adulthood typically involves identity development in relation to the process of aging (Kroger, 2006). As stated by Kroger, many biological changes in young adulthood affect appearance, in turn affecting the sense of identity. Starting in emerging adulthood and accelerating throughout the young adulthood years, people's weight generally increases and there is a redistribution of body fat from limbs to the abdominal area (Kroger, 2006; Hurd Clarke, 2012; McPherson, 2012), and from the thirties onwards there is a general decrease in muscle mass (Kroger, 2006). Other biological changes in young adulthood often include graying and/or thinning of the hair, and facial wrinkles (Hurd Clarke, 2012; McPherson, 2012). For many women, pregnancy is another young adulthood experience accompanied by significant alterations in the body's shape and size (Hurd Clarke, 2012), and many women experience sustained postpartum weight gain (Skouteris, 2012). Because many of us live in societies that espouse a thin, athletic, and youthful ideal (Holmqvist Gattario, 2013), appearance-related changes in young adulthood can be problematic, especially for people whose sense of identity is strongly linked to appearance (Kroger, 2006).

In sum, both emerging adulthood and young adulthood include many developmental changes relating to both physical and social aspects of the body, and these changes are likely to influence how identity is shaped. Contrariwise, identity development in other areas of life during these years is likely to influence body image. One important aspect to consider in relation to both body image and identity development is gender roles, which are further described below.

Gender roles and identity

For many people, an important aspect of their identity relates to their self-perception as masculine and/or feminine (e.g., Erikson, 1980; Wood & Eagly, 2009, 2010), that is, their gender role identity. Gender role identity is sometimes used in parallel with the closely related concept of gender identity, sometimes being described as part of gender identity (Wood & Eagly, 2009, 2010). However, while gender role identity concerns femininity and/or masculinity, gender identity is the personal conception of oneself as a woman or man (or both or neither; Eagly & Wood, 2012; McLean, Shucard, & Syed, 2017). Stated in another way, gender role identity is the extent to which a person views himself or herself as possessing masculine or feminine attributes. Gender role identities are proposed to stem from the internalization of societal gender role norms, that is, socially enforced rules as to what constitutes appropriate masculine and feminine behavior (Bem, 1974; Eagly & Wood, 2012; Parent & Moradi, 2011). When exploring body image in light of identity development, questions regarding gender role identity and norms are highly relevant because body image is gendered. Not only are there different levels of body dissatisfaction in women and men, but the body ideals in today's society are closely related to gender roles, and many expressions of femininity and masculinity are inscribed on the body (e.g., Blood, 2005; Coffey, 2016; Murnen & Smolak, 2019; Tylka & Calogero, 2010). For example, femininity is associated with thinness and investment in appearance (Mahalik et al., 2005), so many women strive to become thinner (Chernyak & Lowe, 2010; Grabe et al., 2008) and spend considerable time and effort on beauty treatments (e.g., Marshall, Lengyel, & Menec, 2014; Taylor, 2012). Masculinity, on the other hand, is often closely linked to having a muscular body (e.g., Holmqvist Gattario et al., 2015). However, it is important to keep in mind that while femininity is associated with women and masculinity with men, neither gender nor gender role is a binary construct (Onsjö, 2017). While most people identify as women or men, many people identify as neither or both (Wurm, 2017), and all individuals display feminine, masculine, and androgynous traits to different extents (Bem, 1974). Gender role identity from an Eriksonian perspective is reviewed below, while gender role norms are further described in the section concerning body image, identity development, and the sociocultural context.

Gender role identity in identity development

Establishing a solid gender role identity was suggested to be a key aspect of healthy identity development by Erikson (1956, 1980). For example, Erikson, bound in his time and culture, said that identity problems may arise if people are not sure of their femininity or masculinity (1980), and that a loss of a

sense of identity can be expressed in gender role confusion (1956). Importantly, it should be noted that although Erikson stated that identity development occurs in interaction with the social context (Erikson, 1963), his theory has been criticized for a lack of sociocultural understanding in general, and of gender perspectives in particular (see Archer, 1985a; Sorell & Montgomery, 2001). However, Erikson's basic notion that gender roles are important for identity development is still relevant to contemporary identity development research (McLean et al., 2017).

Marcia has occasionally addressed questions of gender roles in relation to his theory of identity statuses (1966), for example, by asking questions pertaining to sex-role beliefs (e.g., "What does it mean to you to be a man?"; Rogow, Marcia, & Slugoski, 1983). However, despite Marcia's and others' (see Grotevant, Thorbecke, & Meyer, 1982; McLean et al., 2017), recognition of gender roles in identity research, notably little identity development research has focused on gender role identity as an identity domain. Some studies from the 1970s and 1980s (e.g., Archer, 1985a, 1985b, 1989; Futterman, 1988; Matteson, 1975) constitute exceptions. These early studies assessed gender roles in terms of sex-role beliefs and preferences as a content area using Marcia's (1966) theory of identity statuses. In sum, these studies found gender role questions to be relevant to identity for both men and women (Archer, 1985a, 1985b, 1989; Futterman, 1988; Grotevant et al., 1982). Moreover, a great majority of both women and men were categorized as foreclosed in relation to this domain, meaning that most participants had committed to their gender role identities without prior exploration (Archer, 1985b, 1989). More recently, McLean et al. (2017; McLean et al., in press) reintroduced gender roles in identity research in a new way, addressing them using a narrative identity approach (further described in the "Theoretical discussion") and from a master narrative perspective. Largely stemming from an Eriksonian tradition, narrative identity refers to the internalized and evolving story of the self that people construct to make sense of their lives and derive meaning from them (McAdams & McLean, 2013). Relatedly, the term "master narratives" refers to culturally shared stories that provide guidance on how to belong to and be a good member of a given culture (McLean & Syed, 2016). In sum, McLean et al. (2017) showed that gender role identity comprises more than just sex-role beliefs and perceptions, also including, for example, the processes by which individuals learn about, challenge, and accept notions of gender and gender roles, incorporating them into their identities, and how this is done in relation to power structures in society (McLean et al., 2017). The study further proposed that gender role norms are maintained due to a lack of opportunity to discuss deviations from these norms, and that any negotiation of the gendered master narrative (defined as the view that men and women

have separate, traditional roles) that does occur appears to happen mainly in private.

As indicated in the above studies (e.g., Archer, 1985b; McLean et al., 2017), gender roles are seldom openly questioned. Feminine and masculine identities arise because most people accept, conform to, and internalize aspects of cultural meanings associated with their sex (see Wood & Eagly, 2009, 2010). To understand gender role identity, we must therefore understand gender role norms. In the next section, which describes the sociocultural context in which the studies of this thesis were conducted, the interaction between body image, identity development and gender role norms is further outlined.

Body image, identity development, and the sociocultural context

It is vital to keep in mind that the studies of this thesis were conducted in a time and place different from Erikson's. For example, the spread of the Internet has changed the sociocultural environment enormously for many people, and online contexts offer new conditions for identity exploration, self-presentation, and social interaction (Wängqvist & Frisé, 2016b).

The developmental theory of embodiment (Piran, 2017) and other body image theories (e.g., the tripartite influence model, Thompson et al., 1999; objectification theory, Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) further highlight the importance of attending to the sociocultural environment when studying body image. Sociocultural aspects of the Swedish context are briefly outlined below, followed by a description of globalized appearance culture and gender role norms (focusing on femininity).

The Swedish context

Sweden, the fifth largest country in Europe with a population of ten million (Statistics Sweden, 2018b), often stands out in international comparisons of national values and beliefs. According to the World Values Survey (WVS, 2015), which measures cultural values worldwide, Swedes distinguish themselves from people in other countries in several ways. For example, the WVS (2015) showed that Swedes have the highest self-expression values (i.e., valuing individual freedom) and the second highest secular-rational values (i.e., placing less value on religion, family values, and authorities) compared with people in other countries.

Specifically, Sweden is often portrayed as a gender-egalitarian country, and in many ways that is accurate. For example, Sweden often scores high on

international comparisons of gender equality between countries, such as the Global Gender Gap Report index (World Economic Forum, 2017). In Sweden, a strong ideological notion of gender equality is expressed, for example, in a generous parental leave system (Haas & Hwang, 2008; Lunde & Gyberg, 2016) and in strong norms that mothers and fathers are equally responsible for the care of children (Johansson & Klinth, 2008). Moreover, young Swedish men display less perceived control over women at both the personal and social levels than do their counterparts in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia (Holmqvist Gattario et al., 2015). However, although Sweden is more gender equal than most other countries, it is not a fully gender-equal society. For example, it is more common for women than men to take parental leave, and men tend to earn more than do women with the same occupation (Statistics Sweden, 2018c). Furthermore, an increased sexualization and objectification of women in Swedish media has been noted in recent years, and this trend has in turn been suggested to contribute to the reproduction of gender inequality (Wanneberg, 2011). Moreover, gender differences in body dissatisfaction (i.e., significantly more women than men being dissatisfied), in line with international findings, have also been observed in Sweden (e.g., Elmerstig, Wijma, Årestedt, & Swahnberg, 2017; Frisé & Holmqvist, 2010a—MoS data), suggesting gender inequality in relation to body image. However, it is also important to acknowledge that current body ideals are more general and globalized than ever before (e.g., Swami et al., 2010; Tiggemann, 2012), suggesting the importance of not only attending to the Swedish context when studying body image and identity development among Swedes, but to globalized appearance culture as well.

Appearance culture

In many of today's societies, considerable emphasis is placed on physical appearance, and the importance of the body is on display almost everywhere, such as in commercials and magazines, online, and in everyday conversation (Tiggemann, 2012). This pervasive sociocultural environment is often referred to as "appearance culture" (Frisé et al., 2014; Thompson et al., 1999). A distinct feature of appearance culture is the idea that "what is beautiful is good" (Thompson et al., 1999). In line with this notion, meta-analytic studies have demonstrated that people who embody societal appearance ideals are perceived and judged more positively than are other people (e.g., Hosoda, Stone-Romero, & Coats, 2003; Langlois et al., 2000), and that people perceived as attractive are regarded as more successful, honest, and sociable than are less attractive people (e.g., Lorenzo, Biesanz, & Human, 2010). Body dissatisfaction is also crucial in keeping the lucrative beauty industry going (see Jones, 2010). The beauty industry is one of the world's most profitable

industries, far above the average of all industries (Jones, 2010). For example, in Sweden, there has been a steady increase in both beauty treatments and cosmetic surgery in recent years (Joensuu, 2014; Lunde & Gyberg, 2016; Swedish Consumer Agency, 2012). Appearance culture is evident not least in online contexts, and social networking sites in particular can provide potent contexts for forming individuals' views of their bodies and appearance (Frisén, Holmqvist Gattario, & Berne, 2019). In relation to this, research has found that more frequent exposure to social networking sites is associated with higher levels of body dissatisfaction (Fardouly & Vartanian, 2016). Moreover, previous studies have also indicated that appearance is more important on Internet dating sites than on other sites or in offline contexts (Paulsen, 2010; Vasalou & Joinson, 2009). Specifically, larger women on dating sites risk not only being rejected based on their appearance, but also becoming victims of appearance-related harassment (Paulsen, 2010). However, it is also notable that online contexts can be a space promoting positive body image and embodiment. For example, social media include elements that are shaped by their users, making some of these contexts more malleable, less dependent on profit than traditional media, and therefore more susceptible to individual exploration of alternative ideals (e.g., through body activism; Frisen et al., 2019).

Even though, historically, there always have been people invested in their appearance (i.e., through fashion and grooming), the body is now being more exploited and objectified than ever before (Ricciardelli & Williams, 2012; Wanneberg, 2011). Furthermore, there have been increases in media representations of the body as an "identity project" (i.e., the sense that the self is constituted mainly through appearance; Boni, 2002; Gill, Henwood, & McLean, 2005), which is highly germane in relation to identity development. For example, the processes of identity exploration and commitment must be considered in relation to a person's psychosocial roles and values (Kroger, 2006). Consequently, the societal appearance-related values in today's society are likely to affect people's psychosocial roles, and in turn make the body (not least in terms of appearance) a possible identity-defining domain for many people. In sum, today's appearance culture is a global sociocultural milieu in which media and peers jointly impose appearance ideals by creating an environment in which physical appearance is glorified and valued (e.g., Clark & Tiggemann, 2006). As previously described, body and appearance ideals are highly gendered, and the sociocultural context in terms of gender role norms is further elaborated on below.

Gender role norms: femininity and the body

Every society has its socially enforced rules as to what constitutes appropriate masculine and feminine behavior. These rules, referred to as gender role norms, have a profound impact on people's lives and identities in that they influence what people, identified as women or men, should and should not do (Bem, 1981; Parent & Moradi, 2011). Gender role norms have the same characteristics as other social norms, which are often described as "rules and standards that are understood by members of a group, that guide and/or constrain social behavior without the force of laws" (Cialdini & Trost, 1998, p. 152). Gender role norms normally stem from the currently dominant gender roles (Leavy, Gngong, & Ross, 2009). For example, feminine norms in many Westernized societies are based on the image of a white, heterosexual, middle- or upper-class woman (Mahalik et al., 2005), and associated with expressiveness and communion (Bem, 1974; Parent & Moradi, 2010). Furthermore, several specific feminine norms present in US society have been proposed: Thinness (desire to be thin), Investment in Appearance (to improve appearance primarily by using make-up), Sexual fidelity (to maintain sexual intimacy within one committed relationship), Modesty (to refrain from calling attention to one's talents or abilities), Romantic relationship (to express the need to be in a romantic relationship), Domestic (to keep one's home clean and tidy), Care for children (to enjoy spending time with, and caring for, children), Relational (to maintain relationships), and Sweet and nice (to be kind to others; Mahalik et al., 2005; Parent & Moradi, 2011). As concerns Sweden, a white, healthy, athletic femininity has previously been linked to Swedish gender role norms (e.g., Dahl, 2018; Mattsson & Pettersson, 2007), and the importance of motherhood as a feminine norm has also been emphasized in a Swedish context (Dahl, 2018). In one way or another, everyone relates to society's dominant gender roles, even though they do not represent every way of being feminine or masculine (e.g., Cole & Zucker, 2007; Lu & Wong, 2013). Importantly, people differ in the extent to which they incorporate gender role norms into their identities, as well as in the aspects of the gender role norms that they adopt (Eagly & Wood, 2012).

Gender role congruity theory suggests that people generally strive for gender role conformity because those who do not conform to gender roles risk being socially excluded for non-normative behavior (Diekmann & Goodfriend, 2006). According to gender role congruity theory, a person who meets the perceived requirements of the group's social roles will be positively evaluated, so conforming to gender roles has its advantages (Diekmann & Goodfriend, 2006). Although gender role conformity may seem adaptive, it also has a negative side, in that it can limit women's (and men's) potential by limiting the range of socially acceptable behaviors available to them (Murnen

& Smolak, 2009; Parent & Moradi, 2010). Furthermore, a power dimension is associated with these gender roles such that men and masculinity are generally associated with greater value and privilege than are women and femininity. This power dimension, in turn, leads to women's generally having less control over their lives than do men (Murnen & Don, 2012; Parent & Moradi, 2010). Some of the negative consequences associated with conformity to feminine norms are body dissatisfaction, eating disorders, depression, and poor physical health (Green, Davids, Skaggs, Riopel & Hallengren, 2008; Mahalik et al., 2005; Murnen & Smolak, 1997; Sánchez-López, Cuéllar-Flores & Dresch, 2012).

It has previously been suggested that, for women, the body is the primary aspect of identity (Chrisler & Johnston-Robledo, 2018; Sentilles & Callahan, 2012). In support of this notion, appearance has been found to be one of the most salient and pervasive ways to display femininity (Cole & Zucker, 2007). Consequently, for women, achieving the thin ideal generally directly represents being feminine (Mahalik et al., 2005; Murnen & Don, 2012; Parent & Moradi, 2011), while men's conformity to appearance ideals is associated with masculinity, but not central to it (Murnen & Don, 2012). Moreover, women are consistently more likely to hear messages about appearance and to evaluate themselves and be evaluated based on their bodies (Daniels & Gillen, 2015; Smolak & Murnen, 2011a), which is likely to have a great impact on how their identity is formed.

Body image and identity development: previous research

This section reviews the research relating to body image and identity development conducted to date. As research specifically connecting body image and Eriksonian identity theory is scarce, related constructs and concepts are also included to provide a comprehensive view of the literature in this area. Moreover, the distinctions between concepts such as self-perceptions (i.e., how individuals view and evaluate themselves), personality (i.e., a person's predispositions toward certain attitudes, emotions, and behaviors), and identity (i.e., the subjective sense of who one is) are often far from clear (Syed, 2017), so it is relevant to attend to all of these aspects. The following also briefly summarizes body image research concerning social identities (i.e., identities based on group membership) and research into identity development in relation to eating disorders. Lastly, the few existing studies specifically relating to the relationship between body image and identity development are reviewed.

Body image and self-esteem

Self-perceptions concern how individuals view and evaluate themselves and are thus closely related to the concept of identity. A component of self-perceptions that has attracted considerable interest in the body image field is self-esteem. Although defined in many ways (see Ghaderi, 2006), the term “self-esteem” generally refers to one’s sense of worth (Daniels & Gillen, 2015; O’Dea, 2012). Self-esteem can be both general (i.e., overall sense of self-worth) and domain-specific. One example of domain-specific self-esteem is body esteem, which, as previously noted, is a concept sometimes used in parallel with body image (Mendelson et al., 2001). Multidimensional models of self-esteem identify body esteem as a critical predictor of global self-esteem (DuBois, Tevendale, Burk-Braxton, Swenson, & Hardesty, 2000). In line with this, body esteem has also been suggested to be the most crucial constituent of self-esteem, especially among adolescents.

Numerous previous studies have found strong relationships between low self-esteem and body dissatisfaction in community samples (e.g., Choi & Choi, 2016; Davison & McCabe, 2006; Morin, Maïano, Marsh, Janosz, & Nagengast, 2011; O’Dea, 2012; Tiggemann, 2005; Van den Berg, Mond, Eisenberg, Ackard, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2010; Webster & Tiggemann, 2003). These findings further indicate that the association between low self-esteem and body dissatisfaction is similar for females and males, but that females overall have lower self-esteem and more body dissatisfaction. Studies of self-esteem and body dissatisfaction have mainly been conducted using adolescent samples (O’Dea, 2012). In adult samples, the strongest relationship between self-esteem and body dissatisfaction has been found in young women (Webster & Tiggemann, 2003). Research into body image and self-esteem has contributed to our understanding of body image in light of identity development, because it clearly shows that how people perceive their bodies is closely linked to how they value themselves.

Body image and personality

Another construct closely related to identity is personality. The concepts of identity and personality, though overlapping in many ways, are separate (Syed, 2017). Personality can be described as a multilevel system comprising personality traits (i.e., universal predispositions toward certain attitudes, emotions, and behaviors), characteristic adaptations (i.e., how individuals enact their traits in daily lives), and an integrated life-story (i.e., the stories people tell about their personal past; McAdams, 2013). Identity, however, concerns one’s subjective and personal sense of who one is and how one fits into the

world (Erikson, 1968), and a person's identity could in many ways be viewed as part of their personality (see Syed, 2017).

As with body image and identity, the association between body image and personality is a somewhat under-researched topic of inquiry (Allen & Walter, 2016). Moreover, although personality is a complex multilevel system (McAdams & Olson, 2010), the relevant research that does exist tends to focus on personality traits in isolation. Personality traits that have been explored in relation to body image include neuroticism (e.g., Allen & Walter, 2016; MacNeill, Best, & Davis, 2017), narcissism (e.g., Carrotte & Anderson, 2018; Swami, Cass, Waseem, & Furham, 2015), and perfectionism (e.g., Barnett & Sharp, 2016; Dour & Theran, 2011; Iannantuono & Tylka, 2012; Welch, Miller, Ghaderi, & Vaillancourt, 2009).

As concerns neuroticism, there are relatively clear findings suggesting that people who are more susceptible to emotional instability (i.e., self-conscious and anxious people) experience more body dissatisfaction than do others (Allen & Walter, 2016; MacNeill et al., 2017). Regarding narcissism and body image, research findings are not as clear, depending mainly on what kind of narcissism is being studied (Dionne & Davis, 2012). For example, grandiose narcissism (i.e., an inflated sense of self-importance) may have a protective relationship with body image, whereas hypersensitive narcissism (i.e., defensive and insecure narcissism) may be a risk factor for poor body image (Carrotte & Anderson, 2018), and pathological but not normal narcissism seems to be associated with body dissatisfaction (Swami et al., 2015). As concerns perfectionism, this personality trait has been found to be a risk factor for unhealthy eating attitudes and body dissatisfaction among people with eating disorders (e.g., Bulik et al., 2003; Elgin & Pritchard, 2006), and to be associated with higher body dissatisfaction and lower body appreciation in non-clinical samples (Barnett & Sharp, 2016; Dour & Theran, 2011; Iannantuono & Tylka, 2012; Welch et al., 2009).

Taken together, previous research into personality traits shows that the characteristic ways in which people feel, think, and behave are generally related to their body image.

Body image and social identities

Although Erikson's (1963, 1968, 1980) theory of development is referred to as psychosocial, the social aspects of the theory have been somewhat neglected in identity development research (Syed & McLean, 2015). Social identities, for example, as described by social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), concern identity at a group level. Social identities thus refer to the parts of people's identities derived from the social groups to which they consider themselves to belong (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Gender identity, as

previously described, can be one such social identity. However, it is important to remember that social identity does not refer solely to others' categorizations of a person as part of a social group, but to the person's own sense of identity based on group membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Also, social identities are intersecting; for example, one's sense of gender identity is dependent on one's other social identities, such as ethnic identity and sexual identity (e.g., Chun & Singh, 2010; Michikyan & Suárez-Orozco, 2017). The importance of one's social identity further varies depending on context (Spears, 2011). For example, identifying as a woman and being part of women as a group are more important to some people than to others, and might also be more important in some environments than in others. Results of studies of body image and social identities are elaborated on below.

Much body image research has explored body image in relation to gender (e.g., gender differences; Sobrino-Bazaga & Rabito-Alcón, 2018), but few studies have applied the perspective of gender identity (i.e., the personal sense of oneself as a woman or man, or both or neither; Eagly & Wood, 2012). An exception is research into body image among people who identify as transgender (e.g., Jones et al., 2016; Witcomb et al., 2015; Ålgars, 2012). The term "transgender" generally refers to people who feel an incongruence between their assigned sex at birth and their gender identity (Ålgars, 2012). Jones et al. (2016) systematically reviewed the existing literature examining body dissatisfaction among transgender individuals. Their findings suggest that body dissatisfaction is central to the distress transgender people experience, especially before gender dysphoria treatment. In addition, people identifying as transgender generally experience higher levels of body dissatisfaction than do individuals whose gender identity is in line with their assigned sex at birth (Witcomb et al., 2015; Ålgars, 2012). As with gender and gender differences, there are many studies of sexuality and body image relating to comparisons based on sexual orientation (e.g., Alvy, 2013; Frederick & Essayli, 2016; Huxley, Halliwell, & Clarke, 2015; Tiggemann, Martins, & Kirkbride, 2007). However, one's sexual orientation is not necessarily identity defining, and the few studies examining sexual identity development (in terms of level of identification with a social group according to the sexual orientations of its members; Moin, Duvdevany, & Mazor, 2009) in relation to body image (e.g., Udall-Weiner, 2009; Wagenbach, 1999) have arrived at mixed findings.

Some studies have explored body image in relation to ethnic identity (i.e., the degree to which individuals identify themselves in relation to their ethnic group; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014), mainly among African-American females in the USA (e.g., Baugh, Mullis, Mullis, Hicks, & Peterson, 2010; Cotter, Kelly, Mitchell, & Mazzeo, 2015; Rakhkovskaya & Warren, 2014;

Rogers Wood, & Petrie, 2010; Schooler & Daniels, 2014), and taken together, the findings suggest that ethnic identity is positively correlated with lower levels of body dissatisfaction, especially for African-American women.

Identity develops in a social context (see Erikson, 1968; Syed & McLean, 2015), and bringing social identity theories into Eriksonian identity theory is important as it facilitates an understanding of the different components of identity (Syed & McLean, 2015). Although displaying some mixed findings regarding the relationship between body image and social identities, taken together, these studies highlight the importance of the sociocultural context and group identification in understanding body image and identity development.

Eating disorders and identity

Some studies have investigated eating disorders in relation to identity development (e.g., Claes et al., 2015; Sparks, 1994; Stanghellini, Castellini, Brogna, Faravelli, & Ricca, 2012; Stanghellini et al., 2015; Verschuere et al., 2017; Verschuere et al., 2018; Weise, 1997; Wilson, 2004). Eating disorders are usually characterized by a clear disturbance of eating habits, weight-control behavior, and negative body image (Fogelkvist, Parling, Kjellin, & Gustafsson, 2016; Welch & Ghaderi, 2013). The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th edition (DSM-5; American Psychiatric Association, 2013) lists several categories of eating disorders, the most common ones being anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge eating disorder. All eating disorders, but especially anorexia nervosa, are associated with increased mortality (Smink, van Hoeken, & Hoek, 2013; Welch & Ghaderi, 2015). Although the prevalence figures for eating disorders are somewhat uncertain, for example due to different definitions of eating disorders and hidden statistics, a recent estimate in the Swedish population concluded that probably slightly more than 200,000 Swedes (2% of the population) have an eating disorder, and that approximately 85% of these are females (Resource Centre for Eating Disorders, 2017). These numbers correspond to the results of studies in other countries (e.g., Mohler-Kuo, Schnyder, Dermota, Wei, & Milo, 2016; Smink et al., 2013).

Results of previous studies of eating disorders and identity development indicate that patients with eating disorders experience more identity problems than do controls (Sparks, 1994; Verschuere et al., 2017; Verschuere et al., 2018; Wilson, 2004), and that there are generally no differences in identity problems between groups with different eating disorder diagnoses (Claes et al., 2015; Weise, 1997). Other studies have explored embodiment and identity in relation to eating disorders (Stanghellini et al., 2012, 2015). Results of these studies indicate that disruption in the experience of embodiment and

identity problems are associated with eating disorder psychopathology (Stanghellini et al., 2012), and that feeling alienated from one's own body is an experience that discriminates between people with and without a clinical eating disorder (Stanghellini et al., 2015). Qualitative studies have also shown that people with eating disorders can experience the disorder itself as either an important part of their identity or as their entire identity (Ison & Kent, 2010; McNamara & Parsons, 2016). For example, having an eating disorder has been described as providing a sense of purpose, which in turn affects identity (Ison & Kent, 2010), and the eating disorder can become a social identity when among others with the same disorder (McNamara & Parsons, 2016).

As negative body image is both a risk factor for the development of eating disorders and a symptom of these disorders (McLean & Paxton, 2018), understanding the relationship between eating disorders and identity development offers knowledge of body image from an identity development perspective. Specifically, it can be concluded that severe body-related disruptions such as eating disorders are closely connected with identity problems.

Body image and identity development

Very few studies have examined the associations between body image and identity development from an explicitly Eriksonian perspective. The exceptions are two studies by Kamps and Berman (2011) and Wängqvist and Frisé (2013), and parts of two doctoral theses by Herzog (1997) and Meck (2009). In short, these studies indicate that people with more body dissatisfaction have more identity problems. Herzog (1997), who examined identity status specifically in relation to weight preoccupation (including body dissatisfaction) among women college students, found significantly higher weight preoccupation in the women who had not yet committed to an identity than in those who had. Meck (2009), using an identity development approach, found that more identity confusion was associated with more body dissatisfaction (in terms of dissatisfaction with body shape) among young men. Moreover, the qualitative part of Herzog's (1997) study indicated that, for some women, issues related to weight, eating, dieting, exercising, and body image are perceived to play a large role in identity development.

Wängqvist and Frisé (2013), using the sample from the MoS project, investigated body image in relation to identity processes. Body image was assessed in terms of dissatisfaction with appearance and weight, appearance evaluations ascribed to others, and the internalization of appearance ideals. The study explored identity process explorations and commitments in both the ideological (e.g., occupation and politics) and interpersonal (e.g., family and romantic relationships) life areas (Wängqvist & Frisé, 2013). Results of

the study indicated that in the associations between identity exploration and commitment, on one hand, and body image, and appearance ideal internalization, on the other, there is an emphasis on social aspects, especially for women. The social aspects of body image (i.e., attributions to others and appearance ideal internalization) were found to affect women beyond their views of their bodies, by also relating to their perceptions of their identities (Wängqvist & Frisé, 2013). Kamps and Berman (2011) explored identity distress (i.e., distress associated with unresolved identity issues) in relation to several aspects of body image among men and women college students. The study found that people who experienced more body dissatisfaction also reported higher levels of identity distress, and that identity distress was most strongly related to body image in terms of overall appearance and weight dissatisfaction, as well as dissatisfaction with specific body parts (Kamps & Berman, 2011).

Although these previous studies (Herzog, 1997; Kamps & Berman, 2011; Meck, 2009; Wängqvist & Frisé, 2013) highlight important associations between body image and identity development, they also have some limitations. For example, all these studies were cross-sectional and therefore say little about the development of body image in relation to healthy identity development. Moreover, all studies focused exclusively on adverse aspects of body image (e.g., body dissatisfaction) and identity development, and did not explore the various potential ways, both positive and negative, that the body may be important to people's identities. Although two of the studies explored gender differences (Kamps & Berman, 2011; Wängqvist & Frisé, 2013), none of them took gender role norms into account. The study by Kamps and Berman (2011) was also limited by its small sample ($N = 53$), and yet another limitation of these previous studies was the generally unbalanced selection of the mainly female student samples (Herzog, 1997; Kamps & Berman, 2011). Previous studies have also been quantitative (except for six interviews conducted by Herzog, 1997), which might also have precluded a deeper understanding of body image from an identity development perspective.

To sum up the introduction of this thesis, it can be concluded that body image is important to people's self-perceptions, and also strongly related to societal appearance ideals and gender role norms. Body image, as well as identity, is formed in close relationship with the sociocultural context. Moreover, in emerging adulthood and young adulthood, many developmental occurrences concern both one's body and one's identity. Importantly, the connection between body image and identity development is theoretically strong and dates back to the initial work by Erikson (e.g., 1956). This theoretical connection is in turn supported by research in adjacent research areas investigating body image in relation to self-esteem, personality, and social identi-

ties, as well as by studies exploring identity development in relation to eating disorders. However, research exploring body image in relation to Eriksonian identity development theory is very scarce, and the few such studies that do exist have several limitations, such as an exclusive focus on the negative aspects of this relationship.

General aim

The general aim of this thesis was to explore body image from an identity development perspective. Study I concerns body image development from early adolescence to emerging adulthood, and the associations between body image development and sense of identity. Study II focuses on young adults' own perceptions of the salience of their bodies to their identities, and also explores gender differences in those perceptions. Study III explores the sociocultural context in which both body image and identity are formed by investigating young women's perceptions of and conformity to feminine norms.

Summary of the studies

Research projects

The constituent papers of this thesis are based on two ongoing Swedish longitudinal studies, the MoS and GoLD projects. Both projects are being conducted at the Department of Psychology, University of Gothenburg.

The MoS project

MoS (Mobbing och Skola—Bullying and School) is a project that was initiated in the year 2000, and participants were 10-year-olds in 53 public schools situated in socioeconomically different areas of Gothenburg (Erling & Hwang, 2004). Despite its name, the MoS project has investigated both bullying and body image from the start, although the body image focus of the project has increased as the participants have grown older. In the first measurement wave of the MoS project, 967 participants completed questionnaires. Since then, the project has collected questionnaire data from the same group of people at two- to three-year intervals.

Table 1

The MoS project: waves of the project, number of participants, participant age, and variables measured in each wave.*

Wave	<i>N</i> (% females)	Age <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Variables
W1	967 (53)	10.4 (.52)	Body esteem, BMI**
W2	875 (54)	13.6 (.56)	Body esteem, BMI
W3	754 (57)	16.2 (.46)	Body esteem, BMI
W4	712 (55)	18.3 (.50)	Body esteem, BMI
W5	591 (54)	21.3 (.51)	Body esteem, BMI, Conformity to feminine norms
W6	542 (56)	24.4 (.52)	Body esteem, BMI, Identity coherence, Identity confusion, Self-esteem, Psychological functioning

*More variables have been included throughout the project, but these are the ones relevant to studies I and III. **Body mass index calculated as weight in kilograms/height in meters.

Attrition in the MoS project

Of the original sample of 967 participants, 56% remained in W6 ($N = 542$). All original participants have been invited to participate in each wave of the

project, meaning that some drop-outs have come back into the project over the years. In total, 350 females ($n = 200$) and males ($n = 150$) have participated in all six waves of data collection. Most participants who have missed waves have missed one or two of them ($n = 416$), though 201 participants have missed three or more waves. To treat the potential issue of attrition, analyses were conducted in line with the recommendations of the Journal Article Reporting Standards (JARS) group (American Psychological Association; APA, 2008) and Nicholson, Deboeck, and Howard (2017). Participants without missing waves ($n = 350$) and participants with one or more missing waves ($n = 617$) were compared on the baseline variables using independent t -tests and chi-square tests of goodness-of-fit. Results indicated no significant differences between participants without missing waves and participants with one or more missing waves in terms of gender ($\chi^2(1, N = 967) = 3.51, p = .06$), BMI ($t(940) = 0.61, p = .54$), appearance esteem ($t(884) = -1.12, p = .25$), weight esteem ($t(904) = -0.46, p = .65$), and attribution ($t(882) = 0.70, p = .48$). In addition, comparisons between participants without missing waves ($n = 350$) and participants with three or more missing waves ($n = 201$) revealed no significant differences in terms of initial BMI ($t(536) = 1.72, p = .09$), appearance esteem ($t(503) = -0.61, p = .54$), weight esteem ($t(518) = -0.13, p = .90$), and attribution ($t(496) = 1.70, p = .09$). However, there was a significant difference regarding gender ($\chi^2(1, N = 551) = 10.54, p = .001$), and there were fewer men than women in the group of participants with no missing waves and there were more men than women in the group of participants missing more than three waves of data. More information regarding attrition and missing data in relation to the specific study variables at W5 and W6 are reported in studies I and III.

The GoLD project

The GoLD (Gothenburg Longitudinal study of Development) project began in 1982 with a community sample ($N = 144$) of one- to two-year-old children (Lamb et al., 1988). At the start of the study, the participants were recruited from waiting lists for public childcare in different areas of Gothenburg. The families came from various backgrounds and the study group was considered representative of families in Gothenburg (Broberg, 1989). Over the years, the GoLD project has addressed various aspects of development, with a focus on identity development in later waves. The attrition rate in the project has been very low considering its length (see Carlsson, 2015, for details). Accordingly, of the original 144 participants, 124 still remained by the time of wave ten.

The included studies

Table 2 summarizes the aims, methods, data collections, and participant information on the studies included in this thesis. Study I is based on MoS project data gathered in the waves at ages 10, 13, 16, 18, 21, and 24 years. Study II is based on interview data from the 10th wave of the GoLD project, when the participants were around age 33. Study III is based on data from the MoS project from the wave at age 21, and on data from a student sample of young women.

Table 2

Summary of study aims, methods, data collections, number of participants, and participant gender and age.

Study	Aim	Method	Data collection	<i>N</i> (% females)	Mean age (<i>SD</i>)
I	Investigate body image trajectories in relation to sense of identity	Quantitative, longitudinal	MoS project, waves 1–6	See Table 1	See Table 1
II	Explore how people find their bodies salient to their identities	Qualitative, interviews	GoLD project, wave 10	121 (51)	33.3 (0.53)
III (1)	Investigate Swedish women's gender role conformity	Quantitative, cross-sectional	MoS project, wave 5	330 (100)	21.3 (0.53)
III (2)	Explore Swedish women's perception of feminine norms	Qualitative, focus group interviews	Student sample	20 (100)	20.0 (1.50)

Study I

Aim

In an attempt to address the underexplored connection between body image and identity, the aim of Study I was to examine how trajectories of the devel-

opment of body esteem over time are related to young people's sense of identity.

Method

Participants and procedure

Study I included six waves of data collection from the MoS project (see Table 1). Females constituted 53% to 57% of the sample at each time point. Of the original sample of 967, 56% were still participating in W6 ($N = 542$). To deal with the missing data, the data were analyzed using independent t -tests and chi-square tests to compare those individuals with at least one wave of missing data (64%) and those with no missing waves (36%). Results for all outcome variables (i.e., identity coherence, identity confusion, and self-esteem) and gender were non-significant ($p = .07-.96$).

In W1, surveys were administered in Gothenburg schools; in W2 and W3, paper-and-pencil questionnaires were sent via post along with participation invitations. From W4 and onward, participants were sent letters via e-mail or post along with participation invitations containing a link to an Internet questionnaire. Before each wave of data collection, the regional ethical review board in Gothenburg reviewed the study.

Measures

To evaluate body dissatisfaction, the Body Esteem Scale for Adolescents and Adults (BESAA; Mendelson et al., 2001) was administered at each time point of the study. The scale comprises three subscales representing evaluations of one's appearance (i.e., appearance esteem), one's weight (i.e., weight esteem), and one's appearance as ascribed to others (i.e., attribution). To assess identity coherence and confusion in W6, the Erikson Psychosocial State Inventory, Identity subscale (EPSI; Rosenthal et al., 1981) was used. The Single-Item Self-Esteem Scale (SISE; Robins, Hendin, & Trzesniewski, 2001) was used in W6 to measure self-esteem. At each time point, participants self-reported their height and weight, which were used to calculate their BMI.

Data analyses

Body esteem trajectories were created using group-based trajectory modeling (GBTM), which uses full information maximum likelihood (FIML) estimation to handle missing data. The GBTM analysis was conducted with two, three, and four classes using linear, quadratic, and cubic terms for each of the three types of body image (i.e., appearance esteem, weight esteem, and attribution) to determine the best model fit. After best fit was determined for each type of body image, we examined the characteristics of each trajectory group. To do so, chi-square analyses of gender differences in each group

were conducted, and the confidence intervals of Cohen's *d* for differences in BMI were examined for each trajectory group. Moreover, analyses of covariance (ANCOVAs) were conducted with body esteem trajectory group entered as the independent variable, self-esteem as the control variable, and identity coherence and identity confusion in W6 (age 24) as dependent variables.

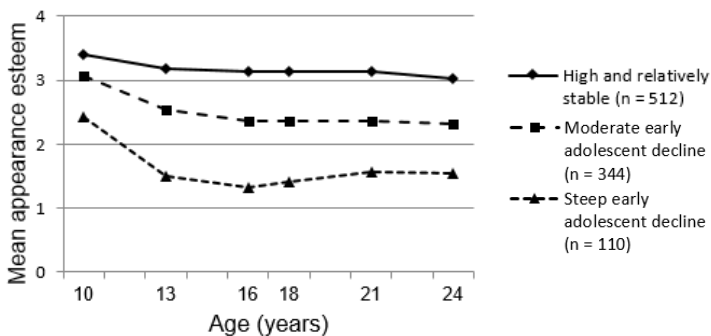
Main findings

Across all three types of body image, holistic analysis of fit statistics provided support for the three-group cubic models (see "Supplemental material"). These three-group cubic solutions were then graphed to examine their trajectories (see Figures 1–3).

Appearance esteem and identity

For the appearance subscale, the three groups were as follows: (1) high and relatively stable, (2) moderate early adolescent decline, and (3) steep early adolescent decline. The three appearance trajectory groups differed significantly in terms of gender, such that women were more likely to be in the moderate early adolescent decline and steep early adolescent decline groups and less likely to be in the high and relatively stable group than were men. Individuals in the steep adolescent decline group had higher BMI than did individuals in the high and relatively stable group (in W1, W2, W3, and W6) or the moderate early adolescent decline group (in W2). Controlling for self-esteem, the groups with declines in appearance esteem in early adolescence and lower levels of appearance esteem going into emerging adulthood exhibited lower identity coherence and greater identity confusion at age 24.

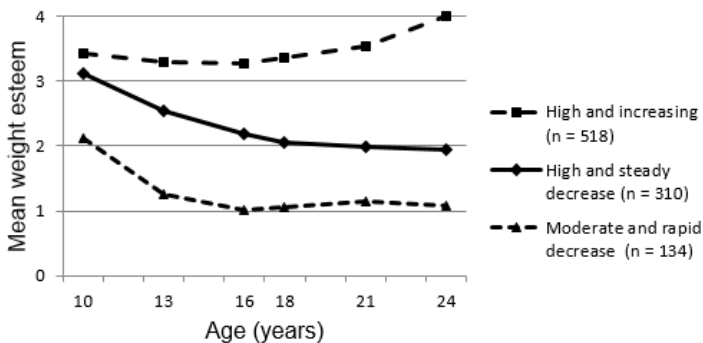
Figure 1



Weight esteem and identity

The weight subscale also revealed three patterns of change: (1) high and increasing, (2) high and steady decrease, and (3) moderate and rapid decrease. The three weight trajectory groups differed significantly by gender, such that women were more likely to be in the moderate and rapid decrease and high and steady decrease groups and less likely to be in the high and increasing group than were men. Regarding group differences in BMI, individuals in the moderate and rapid decrease group had higher BMI than did individuals in the high and steady decrease group (in W1, W2, W3, and W4). Individuals in the moderate and rapid decrease group had higher BMI than did those in the high and increasing group in all waves. Controlling for self-esteem, the high and increasing group displayed greater identity coherence than did the moderate and rapid decrease group, with no differences in identity confusion.

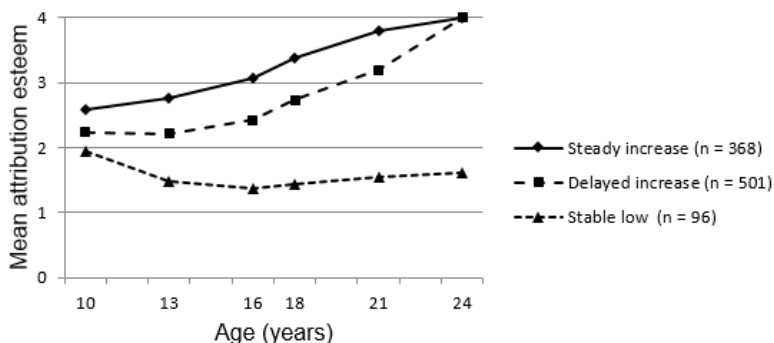
Figure 2



Attribution esteem and identity

The patterns of change for the attribution subscale were: (1) steady increase, (2) delayed increase, and (3) stable low. The three attribution trajectory groups did not differ significantly by gender. Individuals in the stable low group had higher BMI than did individuals in the steep increase group in W4. In contrast to the appearance and weight subscales, only the stable low group had the lowest identity coherence, with no differences in identity confusion (controlling for self-esteem).

Figure 3



Conclusions

Taken together, the findings of Study I indicate that identity development (mainly in terms of identity coherence) is an important process related to body image, particularly regarding evaluations of appearance and weight. Importantly, as self-esteem was entered as a control variable, the findings suggest that body image is related to identity that cannot be accounted for by general positive feelings about the self. Girls and women, particularly those with higher BMI, are more likely to be in appearance and weight esteem trajectory groups experiencing decreasing esteem in adolescence and to display more identity confusion and less identity coherence. These results highlight the importance of attending to the changes young people, especially females, experience in *both* body image and identity during adolescence and emerging adulthood.

Study II

Aim

Although previous research has revealed associations between negative body image and identity problems, there are theoretical reasons to assume much greater complexity in the relationships between body image and identity. Therefore, the aim of Study II was to explore different ways in which young adults experience their bodies as salient to their identities.

Method

Participants and procedure

A total of 121 women ($n = 62$) and men ($n = 59$) from the GoLD project (W10) were interviewed in Study II. The participants' mean age was 33.3 years ($SD = 0.53$). The participants met with one of the five interviewers at the university, in their homes, in public libraries, or at their workplaces. Five participants were unable to be interviewed face to face and were therefore interviewed by Skype or telephone. Before data collection, the regional ethical review board in Gothenburg reviewed the study.

Interview structure

The overall interviews of Study II were extensive, including a structured background interview and an identity status interview (Marcia et al., 1993). After being interviewed about their identities in relation to areas such as work and family, the participants were asked about their experiences of their bodies' salience to their identities. The main question was: "Are there any aspects related to your body that you consider important for who you are as a person? If so, what aspects?"

Data analyses

The interviews were analyzed thematically (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To ensure inter-rater reliability, a subsample of 30 interviews was independently coded by the first and second authors (Cohen's kappa of .75, $p < .001$). In addition, building on a mixed-methods approach (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998), quantitative analyses were conducted to explore how common each theme was among the participants, and chi-square analyses were performed to reveal possible gender differences.

Main findings

The thematic analysis identified four main themes and several subthemes (see Table 3). All excerpts from the interviews were coded according to the main themes and to one or more of the subthemes, which described various aspects of the main themes. The first main theme, *identification with the body*, reflected how participants identified with their overall appearance or aspects of their body. *Body functionality in performing identity-relevant tasks* captured the importance of bodily functions in people's performance of activities central to their identity. *Appearance and identity in social interactions* reflected the body's role in displaying one's identity in social interactions, and how appearance-related interactions reciprocally influence identity. *Identity-relevant bodily engagement* captured the importance of participants' appear-

ance-related attitudes and behaviors to their identities. *Identification with the body* was significantly more common in women than men ($\chi^2(1, N = 121) = 5.14, p < .05, \Phi = -0.21$), but there were no significant gender differences in the other three main themes.

Table 3

The four main themes and their subthemes, with theme descriptions and quotations from participants.*

Main theme	Subtheme	Description	Quotation
1. Identification with the body	1.1. Body and identity as inseparable	Experiences of defining the body and self as one	"This is the body that I've had and the one I've got so this body is me."
	1.2. Changing body changing identity	Body-related changes that influenced identity	"You should have seen me before with my long lifeless hair—it was another me."
2. Body functionality in performing identity-relevant tasks	2.1. Acknowledging and appreciating functionality	Valuing the body for enabling identity-relevant activities	"For me it's important to have a body that functions, to carry my children."
	2.2. Discovered function	Discovering bodily functions perceived as important for identity	"After being pregnant, I realized this was what my body was meant to do."
	2.3. Lost function	Losing bodily functions and no longer being able to perform identity-relevant tasks	"Three years ago I broke my leg. It was an abrupt end to my football career."
3. Appearance and identity in social interactions	3.1. External representation of identity	Using appearance to display one's identity to others	"I would have a really hard time going to work with abraded nail polish."
	3.2. External influence on identity formation	How others' appearance-related assumptions affect one's sense of self	"A lot of people are, like, addicted to exercise and it affects me."
4. Identity-relevant bodily engagement	4.1. Cognitive engagement	Preoccupation with appearance evaluations	"Being overweight is an issue that has always preoccupied my thoughts."
	4.2. Positive engagement	Identity-relevant bodily engagement as a way of taking care of oneself	"I think it's super-wonderful to take care of my hair!"
	4.3. Negative preoccupation	Bodily preoccupations to reduce body dissatisfaction	"I've not been eating enough in order to punish myself a bit, to become thinner."
	4.4. Balance between priorities	Negotiating a balance between different bodily engagements	"I'd like to be fitter, but at the same time I want to be able to eat certain dishes."

*Some descriptions and quotations are shortened in this version of the table; see Kling et al. (2018) for full details.

Conclusions

Study II offers valuable knowledge in a novel research area by showing the diversity of the body's importance and meaning for identity among young adults. The results indicate that how the body is salient to people's identities includes, but also goes far beyond previous research findings of associations between body dissatisfaction and identity problems. Attending to this diversity is essential in order to understand the complexity of young adults' well-being and relationships with their bodies.

Study III

Study III was performed in two parts using an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011); this involved conducting a quantitative study followed by a qualitative study to deepen our understanding of the results of the former. The overall aim of Study III was to explore the sociocultural context in which both body image and identity form. This was done by investigating Swedish women's perceptions of and conformity to feminine norms.

Part 1: Aim

The aim of Part 1 was to investigate young Swedish women's gender role conformity in relation to previously published results concerning women in other countries.

Part 1: Method

Participants and procedure

In Part 1 of Study III, 330 women from the fifth wave of the MoS project participated ($M_{\text{age}} = 21.3$ years, $SD = .53$). Participants were contacted by post or e-mail, and those who consented to participate completed an online questionnaire. Before data collection, the study was reviewed by the regional ethical review board in Gothenburg.

The procedure for finding previous studies examining conformity to feminine norms in other countries began with a literature search using Google Scholar and the following databases: PsycINFO, PubMed, KVINNSAM, and ERIC. The search terms were "Conformity to Feminine Norms Inventory," "Conformity to Feminine Norms Inventory 45," "CFNI," "CFNI-45," "conformity to feminine norms," "feminine norms," and "femininity." Inclusion criteria were that the study had used the abbreviated version of the scale of interest (i.e., CFNI-45) and that the sample was female. The final sample

consisted of three studies with participants from three countries: Canada (Parent & Moradi, 2010), the United States (Parent & Moradi, 2011), and Slovakia (Lyócsa & Lyócsa, 2013).

Measure

Conformity to feminine norms was assessed using the Conformity to Feminine Norms Inventory 45 (CFNI-45; Parent & Moradi, 2010). CFNI-45 consists of nine five-item subscales: Thinness (e.g., “I would be happier if I were thinner”), Invest in appearance (e.g., “I spend more than 30 minutes a day doing my hair and make-up”), Sexual fidelity (e.g., “I would feel guilty if I had a one-night stand”), Modesty (e.g., “I hate telling people about my accomplishments”), Romantic relationship (e.g., “Having a romantic relationship is essential in life”), Relational (e.g., “I believe that my friendships should be maintained at all costs”), Sweet and nice (e.g., “I would be ashamed if someone thought I was mean”), Domestic (e.g., “I enjoy spending time making my living space look nice”), and Care for children (e.g., “Taking care of children is extremely fulfilling”).

Data analyses

To compare our Swedish CFNI-45 results with previously published Canadian, US, and Slovak CFNI-45 results, 29 one-sample *t*-tests were conducted. The alpha level was set to 0.05, but because 29 group comparisons were performed with the possibility of finding differences in all tests performed, the Bonferroni correction was applied to avoid multiple testing bias. Hence, in the cross-national comparison, only values with a *p*-value below 0.002 (i.e., significance level [0.05]/number of tests [29]) were considered significant.

Part 1: Main findings

Swedish women generally reported high conformity to the Domestic and Sweet and nice norms, and low conformity to the Modesty and Sexual fidelity norms. When their results were cross-nationally compared, Swedish women generally displayed less conformity to feminine norms than did Canadian and US women, as measured by the total score on CFNI-45 (Cohen’s $d = -0.43$ and $d = -0.47$, respectively). No total score comparison could be made with the Slovak sample because the total score was not reported in the study. However, the Swedish and Slovak women displayed significant differences on seven of the nine subscales, with lower conformity among the Swedish women on four of them. The largest cross-national difference was seen in the Sexual fidelity subscale, with Swedish women displaying much lower conformity than did women from the three other countries (Cohen’s d values ranging from -0.85 to -1.36).

Part 2: Aim

The aim of Part 2 was to deepen our understanding of feminine norm conformity and femininity in Swedish society, by exploring young women's perceptions of feminine norms within, as well as beyond, the domains measured by CFNI-45.

Part 2: Method

Participants and procedure

In Part 2, 20 women ($M_{\text{age}} = 20.0$ years, $SD = 1.50$) participated in four focus groups. The participants were social science students at the University of Gothenburg, and were recruited during lectures at the university and via student e-mailing lists. Each focus group interview consisted of three sections. In the first section, the participants discussed each of the nine femininity domains measured by CFNI-45. In the second section, the extent to which the norms included in CFNI-45 are present in Swedish society was investigated by asking the participants in each group to rate their relevance. In the third and last section, the participants were invited to discuss whether there are feminine norms in Swedish society that were not captured by the nine domains presented.

Data analyses

In Part 2, four analyses were conducted. In the first analysis, the relevance ratings of the different focus groups were compiled to determine which CFNI-45 domains were perceived as most prevalent in Swedish society. In the second analysis (i.e., thematic analysis: themes by domain), a qualitative analysis was conducted for each CFNI-45 domain using the thematic approach proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Using the same approach, in the third analysis (thematic analysis: overarching themes), the whole transcript content was analyzed to discover overarching themes that were not domain specific. The two thematic analyses were conducted by the first author and were recoded by the second author to ensure inter-rater reliability (Cohen's kappa = .79, $p < .001$). In the fourth analysis, judgments were made about the frequency and extent of each theme. Frequency refers to the number of focus groups in which a particular theme was mentioned, while extent refers to how many participants mentioned or discussed a particular theme.

Part 2: Main findings

The results of the first analysis (i.e., relevance ratings) and fourth analysis (i.e., judgments of frequency and extensiveness) together indicated that ap-

pearance norms (i.e., Thinness and Invest in appearance) were considered the most important in the participants' lives. The second analysis (i.e., thematic analysis: themes by domain; see Table 4) identified 13 themes reflecting how the focus groups discussed the nine CFNI-45 domains. These 13 themes indicated that many of the norms covered by CFNI-45 are acknowledged by young women in Swedish society, but that they might be interpreted differently. For example, regarding the norm Invest in appearance, participants talked about body hair removal (not mentioned in CFNI-45) as well as the greater importance of "natural" beauty (i.e., pretending to look good without effort) relative to investing intentionally in appearance. The third analysis (i.e., thematic analysis: overarching themes) distinguished four additional themes reflecting how the participants discussed the following feminine norms: (1) being high achieving, (2) beauty compensates for not conforming to other feminine norms, (3) maintaining an image of non-conformity to beauty norms, and (4) conformity to some norms becomes more important with age.

Conclusions

The cross-national comparison in Part 1 indicated that Swedish women generally displayed less gender role norm conformity than did their counterparts in Canada, the USA, and Slovakia. The largest difference was observed in the Sexual fidelity subscale. Moreover, the qualitative Part 2 of the study conveyed a more nuanced picture of feminine norms among young women in Sweden, with appearance being highlighted as a superior way to display femininity. Study III makes valuable contributions to research into feminine norms by suggesting that CFNI-45 does not comprehensively capture how young women express femininity, and that gender role conformity is perceived as important despite living in a relatively gender equal society. The importance of appearance norms was particularly stressed, highlighting the relevance of body image in the sociocultural context of young Swedish women. Study III improves our understanding of both the sociocultural environment in which body image and identity develop and an important aspect of identity, namely, gender role identity.

Table 4

Study III, Part 2. The second analysis (thematic analysis: themes by domain), reported with theme descriptions and quotations from participants.*

Domain	Themes	Description	Quotation
1. Thinness	1.1. Pervasive norm	This norm is easy to detect and all women are affected.	"It's very clear that the norm is to be thin—it's absolutely still there."
	1.2. Fitness and health	It is important to be well-toned and appear healthy.	"Before, maybe the girls didn't eat, but nowadays it's, like, extreme exercise instead."
2. Invest in appearance	2.1. "Natural" beauty	Women pretend to look good without effort.	"It should be like, 'I just got out of bed.'"
	2.2. Hair removal	Body hair removal is a powerful norm.	"People aren't afraid to react if you don't shave your armpits."
3. Sexual fidelity	3.1. Sexually active	Young women are expected to be sexually active.	"If you've never had sex, then people think you're weird."
	3.2. Choosy and discreet	When it comes to sex, women have to be cautious.	"You have to handle it wisely to make sure that as few as possible find out."
4. Modesty	4.1. Not taking up too much space	Women who take up space are viewed as difficult.	"You don't want to be too visible because then it's easier to get criticized."
	4.2. Feminine norm or Swedish norm?	In Sweden, modesty is a strong social norm.	"In Sweden you're not supposed to say 'I'm really good at this.'"
5. Romantic relationship	5.1. Validation of a woman's worth	Being in a relationship gives a woman social recognition.	"If someone wants me it means that I am someone, it means that I count."
6. Relational	6.1. Staying in touch	Women are expected to keep regular contact with friends.	"Even though none of you have had the time [to meet], you still have to apologize to one another."
7. Sweet and nice	7.1. Being considerate	It is important to communicate in a considerate way.	"I think that everyone should be nice in general, but girls are expected to be considerate."
8. Domestic	8.1. Keeping things tidy	People expect women to have a clean and well-decorated home.	"If you come home to a guy with a messy home then it's more, like, 'well, typical.'"
9. Care for children	9.1. Being fond of children	Women are expected to be fond of children.	"They put a child in front of you and if you're uncomfortable with that it gets really awkward."

*Some descriptions and quotations are shortened in this version of the table; see Kling et al. (2017) for full details.

General discussion

The general aim of this thesis was to explore body image from an identity development perspective, and in the following section, I address and discuss how the results of studies I, II, and III advance our understanding of this topic. Discussion of the three studies is followed by an overarching discussion of theoretical understandings of “being at home in one’s body” and the importance of viewing body image from an identity development perspective. Thereafter, methodological issues, clinical implications, and ethical considerations are outlined, followed by the conclusions. Limitations and possible future research directions are delineated throughout the discussion.

Identity and the body

By applying an Eriksonian identity perspective, Study I examined how body image trajectories over time are related to young people’s sense of identity. Findings of Study I indicated that identity development (mainly in terms of identity coherence) is a process related to body image, particularly to appearance and weight evaluations. The main results are discussed in detail below.

Body image development and sense of identity

Previous longitudinal studies of mean-level body image development (Bucchianeri et al., 2013; Frisé et al., 2015; Holsen et al., 2012) indicate that, after an increase in body dissatisfaction in adolescence, levels of body dissatisfaction seem to stabilize in emerging adulthood. Study I supported the results of previous longitudinal studies, for example, by finding a general plateauing of appearance esteem at age 24. These results are consistent with findings suggesting that individuals stop becoming more dissatisfied with their bodies as they enter emerging adulthood (Bucchianeri et al., 2013). However, Study I also varied the picture by suggesting three developmental pathways for each of the three facets of body esteem (i.e., appearance, weight, and attribution). For example, concerning appearance esteem, the results suggest that a large group of people is stably satisfied with their appearance from age 10 to 24, while another group of people experiences drastic deterioration in body esteem during the early adolescent years. These very diverse developmental trajectories highlight the importance of using person-centered approaches to complement mean-level analysis of change.

In Study I, all three facets (i.e., appearance, weight, and attribution) were related to identity coherence (i.e., a person’s sense of knowing who one

is, where one belongs, and where one is heading in life; Rosenthal et al., 1981). In addition, appearance esteem was also related to identity confusion (i.e., feelings of not being involved, not knowing where one is going, and a continuous change in opinions about oneself; Rosenthal et al., 1981). Specifically, the groups experiencing declines in appearance esteem in early adolescence and lower levels of appearance esteem going into emerging adulthood displayed lower identity coherence and greater identity confusion at age 24. These results support theoretical notions of the importance of body image to identity development (Erikson, 1968), and are largely in line with previous research into body image and identity development (Herzog, 1997; Kamps & Berman, 2011; Meck, 2009; Wängqvist & Frisén, 2013). By exploring body image development in relation to identity coherence and confusion, which no previous study has done, Study I expanded our understanding of these relationships.

One of the most important contributions of Study I was finding that girls and women, particularly those with higher BMI, are more likely to be in appearance and weight esteem trajectory groups characterized by increased body dissatisfaction in adolescence. Previous body image research has consistently reported gender differences in body dissatisfaction (Sobrino-Bazaga & Rabito-Alcón, 2018), and previous research has also found clear associations between BMI and body dissatisfaction (e.g., Calzo et al., 2012; Stevens, Herbozo, Morrell, Schaefer, & Thompson, 2017). The fact that women generally display greater body dissatisfaction than do men can largely be attributed to sociocultural expectations and pressures (see, e.g., Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Regarding BMI, previous studies have generally indicated a linear relationship between body dissatisfaction and BMI among women (i.e., higher BMI correlates with higher body dissatisfaction; Calzo et al., 2012). Among men, there often exists a curvilinear relationship between BMI and body dissatisfaction, in that those reporting BMI categorized as underweight or overweight are more likely to report dissatisfaction than are those of average weight (Fawkner, 2012). Although the relationship between BMI and body dissatisfaction is complex, as with gender differences in body image, sociocultural factors are key to understanding the relationship. For example, Stevens et al. (2017) found that weight stigmatization mediates the relationship between BMI and body dissatisfaction.

However, even though Study I showed that more women than men, and more people with higher than lower BMI, experienced body dissatisfaction in adolescence and less identity coherence in emerging adulthood, the results were not as clear for identity confusion. Moreover, there were still a fair number of males and people with lower BMI in the precarious development trajectories as well as women in the more advantageous trajectories. This suggests that other aspects, apart from gender and BMI, are similarly im-

portant in understanding the relationship between body image development and identity development. For example, other aspects of body image, such as body image disturbance, may be germane. Perhaps some of the body dissatisfaction captured in Study I was not well entrenched or, even more importantly, not as central to the participants' self-definitions. Chances are that a measure of body image disturbance, often considered more pathological than body dissatisfaction (Cash & Deagle, 1997; Delinsky & Germain, 2012), would be more strongly associated with identity confusion. Future studies could consider body image disturbance, as well as other aspects of body image, in relation to identity development to further delineate these relationships. Also, it would be useful to approach body image development and identity from the perspective of positive body image, for example, by exploring what characterizes people in the trajectories with more body satisfaction and more identity coherence, and by using measures of positive body image to capture more aspects of body image than simply negative body image and body (dis)satisfaction.

The interaction between body image and identity

Although the associations found in Study I were correlational and associations are likely to be bidirectional (which is further discussed in the "Methodological discussion"), there are theoretically sound reasons to believe that people's adolescent body image development might influence their sense of identity later in life. First, as described by Erikson (1956, 1968), the bodily changes of adolescence are likely to spark identity exploration, and the perceptions of one's pubertal and/or post-pubertal body have to be integrated into the body-self to achieve an optimal sense of identity. As illustrated in Study I, the appearance and weight esteem trajectories displayed varying declines in esteem in early to mid adolescence, and these declines coincided with puberty. In relation to body image, puberty is often conceptualized as a time of abrupt and unwelcome change in appearance, especially for girls (Frisén & Holmqvist, 2010a; Natsuaki et al., 2015). For girls, puberty generally moves their bodies away from the cultural body ideal by adding fat, particularly around the hips, abdomen, and thighs, while the ideal is prepubescent thin (Natsuaki et al., 2015). Accordingly, early-maturing girls are more likely than their peers to report body dissatisfaction, dieting behaviors, and disordered eating (see Stice & Whitenton, 2002); importantly, these problems tend to remain even after their peers have caught up in terms of pubertal development (Striegel-Moore et al., 2001).

Turning to the developmental theory of embodiment (DTE; Piran, 2017), this theory suggests that people's experience of embodiment is shaped by their physical, mental, and social power experience. Moreover, DTE suggests that adverse experiences in these three domains can lead to psychologi-

cal adjustment problems (Piran & Teall, 2012) that likely include identity issues. Hence, it could be that the body dissatisfaction in adolescence and related identity issues in emerging adulthood found in Study I are due to the fact that participants in the trajectories with more body dissatisfaction and more identity problems have had more adverse experiences in these domains, such as higher internalization of appearance ideals and self-objectification, and/or more experiences of appearance- or weight-related bullying. Given that females and participants with higher BMI were overrepresented in those trajectories, this is also in line with previous research identifying negative body-related experiences in girls, women, and people with higher BMI (e.g., Berne, Frisén, & Kling, 2014; Bucchianeri, Eisenberg, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2013; Lawler & Nixon, 2011; Piran & Teall, 2012). Consequently, adverse body-related experiences may prevent both the experience of embodiment and healthy identity development and functioning.

Another important notion regarding the interaction between body image and identity development comes from Daniels and Gillen (2015). They proposed that body image problems may relate to identity problems in that having a negative body image may restrict the options for identity exploration perceived as possible. For example, perceiving negative messages about their bodies from different sociocultural sources may restrict young people's opportunities for healthy relationships and limit their educational and career choices. These restrictions may, in turn, impede healthy identity development (Daniels & Gillen, 2015). In accordance with Daniels and Gillen (2015), empirical studies have found associations between negative body image and problems forming romantic and sexual relationships (e.g., Shaw, Sherman, Fitness, & Elder, 2018; Woertman & van den Brink, 2012) as well as problems realizing educational and career aspirations (Slater, Halliwell, Jarman, & Gaskin, 2017; Yanover & Thompson, 2008). For example, in the review by Woertman and van den Brink (2012), the authors concluded that, among women, body dissatisfaction affects all domains of sexual functioning. Yet, it remains to be explored whether the restrictions proposed by Daniels and Gillen (2015) hinder identity development by, for example, leading to more identity confusion and less identity coherence. Hence, the influence of body dissatisfaction on sense of identity via identity domains such as relationships and occupation may be one explanation for the results of Study I. Assessing the direct and indirect influences of body image on identity development is an important task for future studies.

Salience of the body in people's identities

Study II highlighted and connected many of the concepts of body image and identity development described in the introduction of this thesis, such as the role of the body-self in identity and the importance of acknowledging positive body image and sociocultural environments. These results are further elaborated on below.

More than body dissatisfaction

A key finding of Study II is that how the body is salient to young adults' identity includes, but also goes far beyond, associations between body dissatisfaction and identity problems. For example, the theme *appearance and identity in social interactions* highlights the importance of the sociocultural context in shaping the relationship between body image and identity development. In relation to the developmental theory of embodiment, descriptions illustrating this theme support the notion that people are treated differently in different social contexts based on their appearance, in turn affecting how they perceive themselves (Piran, 2016; Piran & Teall, 2012). Extensive research has shown that social mediators such as the media, family, and peers have a crucial impact on people's body image and related behaviors (e.g., Gustafsson, Edlund, Davén, Kjellin, & Norring, 2010; López-Guimerà, Levine, Sánchez-Carracedo, & Fauquet, 2010; Tatangelo, McCabe, Mellor, & Mealey, 2016). It is therefore important to consider an individual's social and cultural environment in relation to body-related aspects of their identity. For example, the relationship between body image and identity development likely intersects with social identities such as sexual identity, gender identity, and ethnic identity. Previous body image studies have identified the importance of attending to social identities in relation to body image (e.g., Jones et al., 2016; Rakhkovskaya & Warren, 2016; Udall-Weiner, 2009), and an important future focus would be to include a social identity perspective in studies of body image and identity development. For example, one way that future studies could investigate this relationship is through the concept of social comparison, because social comparison is central to both social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and sociocultural body image theories (see Thompson et al., 1999). Comparing oneself to similar others to evaluate oneself has been proposed to be an important aspect of identity formation (Erikson, 1968; Festinger, 1954; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), so it would be interesting to investigate body image-related social comparison in relation to identity development.

Study II identified many positive aspects of the body's salience to people's identities. For example, in the subthemes Acknowledging and appreciating functionality and Discovered function, participants generally described

their body and its importance to their identity in positive terms. Appreciating the body and its functions has previously been described as central to achieving an embodied experience (Piran, 2017; Piran & Teall, 2012), and as a key component of positive body image (Alleva et al., 2016; Frisén & Holmqvist, 2010b; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015). Other descriptions from Study II that can be related to positive body image were found in the subtheme Positive engagement. In many ways, this subtheme reflects what is described as adaptive appearance investment within the framework of positive body image (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015). This facet of positive body image is described as engaging in appearance-related self-care that reflects an individual's sense of self, and enhancing one's natural appearance using benign methods (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015).

The findings of Study II concerning the great diversity of people's body–identity relationships are important for two main reasons: (1) they suggest that the relationships between body image and identity go beyond associations between negative body image and identity problems; and (2) they emphasize the previously stated importance of integrating positive aspects of living in the body into body image research (Tylka & Piran, 2019), specifically in relation to identity development. In sum, body image is unlikely to have only a negative *or* positive impact on identity development, but likely both.

Body-self and physical changes

As described by Erikson (1968), the body-self refers to the part of the identity grounded in the experience of one's body. In Study II, all participants' descriptions related to some aspect of their body-selves. Specifically, regarding physical changes, Erikson (1968) described experiences of identity loss when the body undergoes rapid change. This identity loss presumably sparks exploration that may lead to a new integration of the body-self into a coherent identity, but may also lead to identity problems. Erikson's descriptions of identity loss due to physical change were clearly manifested in the subtheme Changing body–changing identity, which included participants' descriptions of the effect on identity of different types of physical change. Some of these changes were described as positive experiences with positive impacts on the sense of identity, while others were described as negative (e.g., illness and injury). Although all physical changes must in some way be integrated into one's identity, changes experienced as negative and disruptive may be harder to integrate into one's body-self. This notion is not only in line with Erikson's (1968) descriptions of identity loss due to physical change, but has also been illustrated in previous qualitative studies of identity and mastectomy

following breast cancer (e.g., Avdi, Ziliaskopoulou & Roussi, 2012; Fallbjörk, Salander, & Rasmussen, 2012; Grogan, & Mehan, 2017; Piot-Ziegler et al., 2010; Sun, Ang, Ang, & Lopez, 2017). In sum, these studies suggest that for some women, mastectomy results in a feeling of identity loss. Furthermore, the review by Sun et al. (2017) concluded that the perceptions of losing a breast are especially difficult considering societal expectations of femininity, which highlights the significance of attending to the sociocultural context and gender role norms when studying body image and identity.

A changing body is likely to spark identity exploration (Erikson, 1968), which is in turn characteristic of the identity status of moratorium (Marcia, 1966; Marcia et al., 1993) and can also be described in terms of identity crisis (Marcia, 1994). However, it is important to acknowledge that undergoing a moratorium or experiencing an identity crisis is not negative in terms of development, as it can result in identity achievement. Experiencing physical changes is not necessarily related to adverse outcomes in terms of identity in the long term. To determine whether physical changes result in a temporary moratorium status or lasting issues with the body-self, long-term studies of body image development in relation to identity development are crucial.

The body as a personal project

As illustrated in Study II, the salience of the body to young adult's identities can take many forms. One of these forms concerns the salience of one's *appearance* to identity, for example, by emphasizing one's looks and viewing the body from an external, rather than internal, perspective. Viewing one's body in a self-objectifying way is in turn troublesome because it affects the quality of embodied experiences (Piran, 2017) and has been associated with various mental health issues, such as depression and disordered eating (e.g., Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Tiggemann & Slater, 2015). Many participants in Study II were preoccupied with appearance-related attitudes and behaviors, and their descriptions resulted in the theme *identity-relevant bodily engagement*. For example, several participants described detrimental efforts to achieve socially promoted appearance ideals, exemplified by Carina who said that "From time to time, I've not been eating enough in order to, you know, punish myself a bit ... to become thinner," and Hans who concluded that "After three weeks of hard exercise when getting back into fairly good shape, then 'boom!' it [i.e., the body dissatisfaction] is gone and you like yourself again."

Contemporary Western societies differ substantially from the society in which Erikson (1956) originally conceptualized his theory of identity development. As concerns appearance, examples of these drastic differences include the importance of appearance in an online context (e.g., on social media

and dating sites; Frisé et al., 2019) and the increased availability of cosmetic surgery (Joensuu, 2014). In sum, based on the results of Study II and on the literature on appearance culture (e.g., Thompson et al., 1999) and the body as a personal project in today's societies (e.g., Orbach, 2010), it can be argued that, although experiences related to body image have always been part of shaping people's identities (e.g., Erikson, 1968), experiences related to narrow appearance ideals have recently become more salient. The predominant sociocultural view regarding the importance of appearance may explain why so many participants in Study II, when asked what aspects of their body were important to their identity, answered by describing appearance-enhancing attitudes and behaviors. Linking appearance to identity is in turn problematic because appearance-related changes are part of normal lifespan development, and for people whose sense of identity is strongly linked to appearance, these normal changes are likely to cause difficulties in their identity development (Kroger, 2006).

Developmental aspects

The participants in Study II were 33 years old, an age when most people have started to identify themselves as adults (Arnett, 2000). During adulthood, changing life circumstances (e.g., establishing a career, relationships, and having children), together with changing psychological and biological changes (e.g., aging), affect people's sense of identity (Kroger, 2015). Although Study II did not explicitly aim to investigate participants' experiences of being in young adulthood, many descriptions concerned age and aging in relation to the body's salience to identity.

As concerns romantic relationships, some of the interviews contained reflections on the importance of looking good when trying to find a partner. Some participants spoke of relationships specifically in relation to aging, describing how, due to age, they were no longer as attractive as they had been and, as a result, no longer able to flirt and date as before. Other participants spoke of aging in relation to bodily functions, highlighting the importance of exercising to maintain the body's functionality. Moreover, the importance of occupational life to young adults' sense of identity is well established (see Marcia et al., 1993). As concerns body image and occupational life, participants in Study II also spoke of the importance of looking presentable at work, and of body functionality in order to perform at work. Hence, for young adults, the body may serve as a tool for work achievement, which in turn might be important for their identity.

As regards pregnancy, another common developmental experience in young adulthood, many women spoke of this experience as something important to their identities. For example, Amanda said that "After being preg-

nant, I realized that, well, this was what my body was meant to do.” However, not all descriptions of pregnancy concerned positive experiences, as some women also described feelings of not recognizing their bodies and not feeling as attractive as before pregnancy and childbirth. These descriptions are in line with research showing that women’s body dissatisfaction tends to increase during the postpartum period (Silveira, Ertel, Dole, & Chasan-Taber, 2015), and that many women experience pressure to quickly return to their pre-pregnancy bodies after giving birth (Watson, Fuller-Tyszkiewicz, Broadbent, & Skouteris, 2015).

Young adulthood is an appropriate developmental period in which to explore the various ways that people experience their bodies as salient to their identities, mainly because young adulthood is usually considered a time of initial identity consolidation (Carlsson, 2015), and young adults are very likely to have experienced various body-related events that have affected their integration and maintenance of a sense of identity (Erikson, 1980). However, an important future research focus would be to replicate this study with participants in other developmental periods in life. Specifically, given that Erikson stated that identity development is a main task in adolescence, using an adolescent sample would build our knowledge of the body’s salience to people’s identities during a period in life when these issues are especially prominent.

Conformity to feminine norms

For many people, a key aspect of identity relates to their gender role. When it comes to body image, gender roles are of particular interest because many expressions of gender roles, especially femininity, take form by means of appearance (e.g., Murnen & Smolak, 2019; Tylka & Calogero, 2010). Study III contributed knowledge of the sociocultural context in which body image and identity develop, by exploring young women’s perceptions of and conformity to feminine norms. For example, the study supported previous notions that, for women, appearance is characterized as a primary way of displaying feminine identity (see, e.g., Sentilles & Callahan, 2012).

Femininity as identity: the centrality of appearance

Results of Study III indicated that, among young Swedish women, norms of appearance (i.e., thinness and investing in appearance) were regarded as the most important norms to uphold in order to be feminine. Even so, participants further noted that investing in appearance entails much more than just using make-up (the primary aspect of appearance measured by the instrument used

in Study III), for example, including body hair removal as well. The importance attributed to body hair removal is in line with previous research findings (e.g., Smolak & Murnen, 2011b; Tiggemann & Hodgson, 2008; Toerien, Wilkinson, & Choi, 2005). For example, results have indicated that body hair removal is a strong normative part of young women's production of an acceptable femininity (Toerien et al., 2005), and that young women themselves associate body hair removal with femininity and attractiveness (Smolak & Murnen, 2011b; Tiggemann & Hodgson, 2008).

In Study III, the focus group participants said that thin and beautiful women are considered feminine regardless of their conformity to other norms. However, in addition to being feminine, attaining female appearance ideals is associated with benefits such as being viewed as a woman who is in control and successful, which might also help explain why people conform to appearance ideals (e.g., Eagly & Wood, 2012; Gill, 2007; Lemay, Clark, & Greenberg, 2010). In line with gender role congruity theory (Diekmann & Goodfriend, 2006), these benefits of having an appearance that matches the ideal could encourage young Swedish women to actively develop behaviors associated with the female gender role (e.g., wearing make-up, removing body hair, exercising, and dieting). However, also in line with gender role congruity theory, and supported by the results of Study III, young women who present behavior incongruent with current appearance ideals tend to be devalued, as illustrated by a quotation from one participant talking about body hair removal: "People aren't even afraid to react if you don't shave your armpits." In sum, the sociocultural pressure on women to integrate femininity as part of their identity seems to be strong, and in many ways, the most salient feminine norms concern body image.

Integrating gender role perceptions into the identity

Although society's gender roles do not represent everyone's way of being feminine or masculine, everyone must relate to them (Cole & Zucker, 2007). When interacting with society, people encounter societal messages about how women or men are supposed to act, think, and feel (Mahalik et al., 2005), and one way for the individual to handle these messages is through gender role conformity. The process of gender role conformity entails adjusting one's gender-related opinions, judgments, and/or actions so that they match the normative social standards (Mahalik et al., 2005). Hence, gender role conformity can be viewed as an active, though not always conscious, process by which the individual adopts societal views of gender roles (Diekmann & Goodfriend, 2006). From an identity development perspective, conformity to gender role norms can be viewed as part of the process of integrating the gender role as part of one's identity (McLean et al., 2017). Applying an iden-

tivity perspective nuances the results of Study III by suggesting that, depending on individual factors and cultural context, gender role identity is likely to differ in value between individuals. For some, gender role identity is central to identity, whereas for others it is marginal. For some, it is in conflict with other identity domains, such as work (e.g., partially described in Part 2 of Study III by participants describing the conflict between conforming to feminine norms of appearance while being part of a gender-equal society), whereas for others, gender role identity might go hand in hand with other identity domains such as romantic relationships or parenthood. Nevertheless, because femininity is so closely related to appearance and thinness, as described in Study III, having one's gender role identity central to one's identity will likely make body image a great identity influencer.

Another crucial aspect of gender role norms and their salience to people's identities is the fact that, while femininity is associated with women and masculinity with men, neither gender nor gender role is a binary construct (Onsjö, 2017). Study III only included participants who self-identified as women, and future studies of gender role norm conformity could usefully include participants who do not identify themselves as women or men. For example, including participants across a spectrum of gender identities (e.g., people identifying as non-binary, genderqueer, and/or gender fluid; McGuire, Beek, Catalpa, & Steensma, 2018) would contribute valuable insights into the importance of gender role norms in body image and identity development.

Feminine norms and age

Participants in Study III were in emerging adulthood, a period in life that generally entails exploration and independence (Arnett, 2000). The importance of this developmental period was revealed, for example, when the focus group participants discussed how conformity to certain gender role norms would probably become more important with age. Specifically, due to their age, the participants considered the norms Domestic, Care for children, Sexual fidelity, and Romantic relationship less important for their femininity than other norms. While the participants acknowledged these norms, they claimed that they might be more relevant to somewhat older women's expressions of femininity. This result is in line with identity development theory (e.g., Erikson, 1963; Kroger, 2006), suggesting that parenthood and intimate relationships are identity issue domains mainly related to adulthood.

As previously discussed, the focus group participants in Part 2 of Study III stressed appearance as a means to display femininity among women their age. Moreover, as related to demands for independence in emerging adulthood, the focus group participants raised the issue of a feminine norm in Swedish society that is not captured by CFNI-45, specifically, the norm of being high achieving. They said that young women are encouraged to study

at university and have careers, so being professionally high achieving has become a feminine norm to which they must conform. However, according to the participants, being professionally high achieving is not enough. To be considered feminine, young women must achieve in all areas of life simultaneously, something described by one participant as being “some kind of damn power woman” (see Kling et al., 2017). Although these results are probably biased by the fact that all participants in Part 2 of Study III were university students, they are in line with previous research showing that women often experience demands to be both ambitious and caring, a phenomenon referred to as the Superwoman ideal (e.g., Mensinger, Bonifazi, & LaRosa, 2007; Rottenberg, 2014). The importance of achieving in multiple areas of life simultaneously highlights the need to take account of intersecting social identities when studying identity development. It also emphasizes the importance of studying how different identity content areas are organized in relation to each other. This could preferably be done using an identity configuration approach (Schachter, 2004; further discussed below in the “Theoretical discussion”) to capture how young women negotiate the balance between various feminine norms important to their identities, as well as how their gender role identity is structured in relation to other identity domains.

By exploring conformity to and perceptions of feminine norms, Study III addressed both the sociocultural environment in which body image and identity develop and a key aspect of identity, namely, gender role identity. However, this study was not explicitly grounded in Eriksonian identity development theory, and as studies of gender role identity in identity development research are scarce (McLean et al., 2017), this would be an important future focus. For example, it would be interesting to replicate the studies performed by Archer (1985a, 1985b, 1989) in the 1980s. In her studies, Archer found that a vast majority of men and women were foreclosed in the area of gender role identity, and it would be interesting to see whether people might engage in more exploration related to gender roles today, and also how this exploration differs between social contexts and relates to body image.

Theoretical discussion

Returning to Erikson’s (1963, 1968, 1980) view of the body, he emphasized the importance of the body-self in understanding identity development, by stating that an optimal identity includes a feeling of being at home in one’s body (Erikson, 1968). However, what does it mean to be at home in one’s body? This question is addressed below in relation to body image theory, followed by reflections on what identity development perspectives can add to body image research.

Being at home in one's body

Returning to the definition of body image, I will start by describing what being at home in one's body is not. As described in the introduction, the vast majority of body image research focuses on negative, pathological phenomena such as body dissatisfaction (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015). As shown in previous research (Kamps & Berman, 2011; Wängqvist & Frisé, 2013) and in Study I, there seem to be some relationships between body dissatisfaction and identity problems. However, just as researchers in the field of body image (e.g., Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015) argue that a positive body image is much more than just an absence of body dissatisfaction, being at home in one's body is more than just an absence of pathological body image. In that sense, the view of body image from an identity development perspective is very much in line with the multidimensional definition of body image as consisting of people's perceptions, thoughts, and feelings about their bodies (Grogan, 2016). This view of being at home in one's body is also in line with a recent notion from the identity researcher Schachter (2018), suggesting that Erikson's description of the body relates more to the concept of embodiment than to body image.

The developmental theory of embodiment (Piran, 2017) offers valuable insights into the experience of inhabiting the body. In many ways, the phrase "experience of embodiment" is an excellent description of Erikson's term body-self, as it describes identity processes related to the body and its reciprocal relationship with the sociocultural environment. Piran and Teall (2012) described the body's role in relation to the sociocultural environment by citing the following example:

The 'body' of a girl who just immigrated to a country where she would be classified as a member of a specific visible minority, an appearance associated with negative social projections by the dominant social group as well as one that exposes her to prejudicial treatment, is different from her pre-immigration 'body.' (pp. 172–173)

Reading the above quotation from an Eriksonian identity development perspective, the experience in the new sociocultural context is likely to spark identity exploration. One possible solution to this psychosocial conflict is for the new experience to be integrated into the girl's body-self and in relation to other identity domains (e.g., ethnic identity), resulting in identity coherence. Struggles to integrate this new view of the body might result in long-term identity confusion. This example cited by Piran and Teall (2012) can also be related to Study II and the participants' descriptions referring to the subtheme External influence on identity formation. For example, some participants

described experiences of appearance-related harassment that had contributed to shaping their identities, while others described how their identities had been influenced by appearance-related norms and societal appearance ideals.

Accordingly, a coherent body-self and a feeling of being at home in one's body are arguably similar to having a positive experience of embodiment. Hence, drawing on the DTE, a feeling of being at home in one's body includes an absence of body dissatisfaction but also so much more, such as freedom from abuse, the opportunity to engage in meaningful physical activities, holding a critical stance toward appearance norms and ideals, freedom from prejudice and harassment, and access to societal resources (Piran, 2017). All these physical, mental, and relational experiences help shape a person's experience of embodiment and the degree to which a person feels at home in their body. In that sense, the DTE can enrich our understanding of how the body-self develops in interaction with its surrounding context.

In the next section, possible important contributions of identity development theories and methods are further discussed, focusing on how they can enhance our understanding of body image.

Why add identity theory to body image research?

First, viewing body image from an identity development perspective puts body image in a solid theoretical context. As previously noted by Cash and Smolak (2011) and Markey (2010), adding a developmental perspective to research into body image in general is important because it helps us understand how body image is shaped in relation to developmentally important intrapersonal (e.g., experience of aging) and interpersonal (e.g., relationships) factors. Similarly, viewing body image from an identity development perspective helps clarify how body image is shaped in relation to other aspects important to identity. For example, while much body image research has focused on the role of the media, peers, and family in shaping body image (e.g., López-Guimerà et al., 2010; Tatangelo et al., 2016), an identity development perspective opens up the possibility of exploring the formation of body image in relation to identity content areas such as occupation, religion, romantic relationships, and parenthood. It also helps clarify, for example, why body-related changes can cause severe distress (e.g., Fallbjörk et al., 2012), and why this distress is greater for some people than others. For example, as noted by Kroger (2006), appearance-related changes related to normal aging can be especially problematic for people whose sense of identity is strongly linked to the physical appearance of the body.

As described above, the DTE and Eriksonian identity development theory have a lot in common, for example, by emphasizing the sociocultural context and describing positive body image as more than just the absence of body dissatisfaction (i.e., positive experience of embodiment vs. being at

home in one's body). However, while the concept of experience of embodiment stems from philosophical and sociological perspectives on the role of sociocultural factors (e.g., prejudice and harassment) in shaping body image (Piran, 2017), Eriksonian identity theory (which has its background in psychoanalysis) offers valuable insight more focused on individual psychological development (Sorell & Montgomery, 2001). For example, Eriksonian theory advances our understanding of *how* bodily experiences are integrated in relation to psychological development, for example, through integration into the identity and in relation to other identity domains. The "experience of embodiment" concept, as described by Piran (2017), contributes valuable in-depth insight into what it might mean to be at home in one's body in relation to one's sociocultural context, and in that sense, Eriksonian identity theory and the DTE are complementary. In addition, identity development theory offers a framework for understanding the processes of integrating bodily experiences into the identity at a personal level, which goes beyond the scope of the DTE and other body image theories.

As previously described, identity development is complex as it consists of process, content, and structure. To explore these three aspects, identity researchers have developed useful approaches that might also be very applicable to body image research. For example, in Study II, the interviews were performed in conjunction with the identity status interview (Marcia et al., 1993). This type of interview is used to study identity development in accordance with the identity status model (Marcia, 1966) and in relation to different identity domains. In Study II, body image was introduced as one such domain, in addition to the more traditionally used occupational, romantic relationship, parenthood, and family/work domains. After assessment of participants' degrees of exploration and commitment, the participants were assigned one of four status positions: achievement, foreclosure, moratorium, or diffusion. As the aim of Study II was to explore various ways that the body is salient to people's identities, a thematic analysis procedure (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was chosen. However, investigating body image from an identity status point of view might also be an interesting way forward, as it could reveal people's explorations and commitments in terms of, for example, appearance ideals and beauty norms. It could also answer questions regarding the extent to which people tend to actively explore the body and make commitments relating to it versus the extent to which they unreflectively inhabit their bodies, which is crucial in order to better understand why the body is more important to some people's identities than to others'.

Moreover, it should be emphasized that it is not only body image research that would benefit from applying an identity development perspective, as identity research could also gain much by taking account of body image. As previously mentioned, the body has been surprisingly ignored in identity

research (see, e.g., Schachter, 2018), and there has been a call for more identity studies considering body image, specifically due to the centrality of body image to overall psychological well-being and aspects of the self (Daniels & Gillen, 2015). For example, theories of body image (see, e.g., Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Thompson et al., 1999) are useful in identity research because they encompass both sociocultural norms of appearance and self-evaluations of the body (Daniels & Gillen, 2015). In addition, identity research could benefit from applying the developmental theory of embodiment (Piran, 2017) because this theory, especially the concept of experience of embodiment, is very much in line with Erikson's conceptualization of the body-self. In sum, the inclusion of body image in identity research and identity in body image research would advance our understanding of these constructs, both independently and as these essential aspects of the self interact.

As concerns the concept of identity domains, another useful theoretical construct from identity development research is that of identity configuration (Schachter, 2004). A configurational approach to identity portrays the various possible ways in which individuals configure the relationship among different identifications in the process of identity formation. In relation to body image, such an approach would yield information regarding how one's thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of the body are understood relative to other potentially conflicting areas of life, such as work, romantic relationships, gender roles, and parenthood. For example, for many women, pregnancy is associated with body dissatisfaction (e.g., Silveira et al., 2015), and an identity configuration approach could provide a framework for understanding how women structure their body image in relation to parenthood into a meaningful configuration.

Body image could also be explored using a narrative identity approach. Briefly described in the introduction of this thesis, narrative identity concerns how personal history, experience, and social context affect identity development (McAdams, 2001; McAdams & McLean, 2013). From a narrative perspective, a sense of identity is created through constructing a life story connecting individuals' past experiences with their present life and imagined future (McAdams, 2001), and the use of a narrative methodology allows researchers to ethically and meaningfully understand lived experiences in context (Fivush, 2010). In many ways, the narrative methodology is reminiscent of the life history methodology, which formed the basis of the DTE (Piran, 2017) and that has been found to be a promising way to approach female body image (e.g., Piran, 2016). Being well established and well used (see Adler et al., 2017), a narrative identity approach could facilitate interviews by allowing participants to talk about their bodies in a way that is meaningful to them and their lives in general, consequently revealing a more complex picture of body image. In narrative identity, one approach that might be specifi-

cally useful in body image research is the use of written narratives (see e.g., Gyberg, Frisé, Syed, Wängqvist, & Svensson, 2018). By using narrative prompts, the researcher can amass a relatively large number of life stories and learn more about the content and meaning of the phenomena of interest. Consequently, it has been suggested that prompts regarding specific experiences can be applied to all kinds of psychologically meaningful phenomena (Adler et al., 2017), such as body image. That is, narrative methods such as the use of prompts and written narratives can be powerful tools for body image studies even if the studies are not designed with narrative identity as the primary focus.

In sum, applying well-established theories and associated research methods from the identity development research field may enhance our understanding of body image from an identity development perspective, and of body image as a more multifaceted concept than has traditionally been acknowledged.

Methodological discussion

Conceptualizing and exploring body image within a framework of identity development is a broad approach to the study of body image, and a broad approach is merited partly because identity development is so complex. Accordingly, the constituent studies of this thesis apply a wide range of theories and methods to expose, identify, and examine the associations between body image and identity. This wide theoretical and methodological range could itself be viewed as a general limitation because it makes the thesis point in multiple directions. However, as previous research into body image and identity development is scarce, the three constituent studies of this thesis represent different ways to approach the subject, and such diversity could be viewed as a key strength in a novel research area. Specific methodological issues related to sample characteristics, data collection methods, and data analyses in the present thesis are further discussed below.

Participants and generalizability

In all three studies of this thesis, the generalizability of the findings might be restricted by the characteristics of the studied samples. When participants were originally recruited to the MoS and GoLD projects, they were considered representative of the general population of children in the Gothenburg area (Erling & Hwang, 2004; Lamb et al., 1988). Nevertheless, as representative of this population, this also means that these participants were not only young and Swedish, but were also mainly white, able-bodied, cis-gendered,

and heterosexual. These characteristics have implications for the applicability of the present results to other groups of people. Especially because identity develops in close relationship with the social and cultural environment (Erikson, 1968), and given that body image is shaped by various life experiences (Piran, 2017), an important future focus in the field of body image and identity would be to expand on current research by including a wider range of participants. For example, experiences that are often overlooked in psychological research, but that are especially important in relation to body image, identity, and gender roles, are the experiences of people identifying as transgender. Findings of a systematic review by Jones et al. (2016) suggest that body dissatisfaction is a major issue for many trans people. Accordingly, future studies linking body image and identity development would benefit from examining samples of transgender people because their experiences, both intra- and interpersonal, might contribute crucial knowledge in this research field.

Additionally, another group that might be influential in our understanding of body image and identity is people with visible differences. Living with a visible difference (i.e., a condition, injury, or treatment side effect that results in an appearance generally considered by society to be “different from the norm”; Rumsey & Harcourt, 2004) is often psychologically challenging, and adjusting to a visible difference is particularly hard when it occurs as a result of a sudden event (Rumsey & Harcourt, 2012). Despite this, and even though the theoretical importance of identity has previously been highlighted in visible difference studies (Jaspal, 2012), the associations between body image and identity development in people with visible differences remain unexplored. Moreover, a few studies of identity development and disabilities (Adler, 2018; Fentin-Thompson, 2012) have indicated that physical and sensory impairments might affect the process of identity development. Hence, another future focus would be to explore the role of body image in identity development among people with various disabilities.

Apart from investigating body image from an identity development perspective in different groups of people, it would also be useful to explore body image and identity in different sociocultural contexts. For example, the constituent studies of this thesis were all conducted in Gothenburg in Sweden, and it would be of interest to see whether they replicate in other regions and countries. Apart from different geographical regions and nations, body image and identity development could be explored in online contexts. For example, appearance and body image are in many ways obvious on social media (e.g., Frisé et al., 2019), and it has been concluded that a lot of identity work is conducted on these sites (e.g., Wängqvist & Frisé, 2016b). An informative

next step would therefore be to explore the role of body image and appearance in identity development on social media.

Despite potential limitations concerning participants' characteristics and the contexts in which the studies of this thesis were conducted, a strength of these studies, except for Part 2 of Study III, was their use of community samples.

Data collection methods

Some methodological limitations concern how the data were collected. For example, data collection in Study I and Part 1 of Study III rely on self-report measures, particularly using web-questionnaires. The disadvantages of these methods usually include the tendency to underreport deviant behavior or to respond in socially desirable ways (Streiner & Norman, 2008), as well as a tendency for low response rates (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014). However, self-report web-questionnaires also have certain advantages; for example, they allow the collection of large amounts of data relatively quickly, are relatively easy to administer and give the participants greater anonymity (Streiner & Norman, 2008). To increase the response rates in the MoS project, participants were not only contacted via the web-questionnaires, but also reminded about the study via personal telephone calls. In Part 2 of Study III, focus groups were used to collect data. Focus groups are a well-established data-collection method among qualitative researchers in psychology (Willig, 2013), having previously been used when investigating aspects of appearance and gender roles (e.g., Berne et al., 2014; Mahalik et al., 2003, 2005). The focus group technique has strengths, such as the ability to mobilize participants to respond to and comment on one another's contributions (Willig, 2013), as well as disadvantages, such as responses possibly arising from conformity, coercion, and conflict avoidance (Kidd & Parshall, 2000). To facilitate participant openness, the focus groups in Study III were kept small (four to six participants per group), two moderators were used to ensure that all participants and statements were heard, and the group sessions included a simple cooperative exercise (i.e., the Lego exercise; see Kling et al., 2017 for details).

In Study II, data were collected using semi-structured interviews. As with focus group interviews, this method has advantages and disadvantages. For example, semi-structured interviewing is the most widely used method of data collection in qualitative research in psychology, and the data so gathered can be analyzed in various ways (Willig, 2013). However, the method has been criticized for not paying enough attention to the many contextual features of the interview material, such as the relationships and interactions between the participants and the interviewer (Potter & Hepburn, 2005). One

potential contextual issue with the interviews conducted in Study II is that the interviews were performed in conjunction with the identity status interview (Marcia et al., 1993), which may have affected how the participants spoke about identity. Although the participants may have been affected both positively (i.e., by better understanding the topic) and negatively (i.e., being restricted by previous answers), future studies would benefit from performing in-depth interviews with a more demarcated focus on body image in relation to identity. Another limitation concerns the fact that the body image part of the interviews came last, when participants and interviewers were possibly more tired than in the initial phase of the interviews. Accordingly, each interview section pertaining to the body's salience to people's identities was relatively short (5–15 minutes). However, although the body image section of each interview was quite short, a major strength of the present study is the great number of participants.

Measurements and analyses

There are limitations specifically related to the measurements and analyses performed in the three studies. In Study I, identity coherence and confusion were measured only at age 24 and treated as outcome variables, meaning that although body image was explored longitudinally, the associations between body image development and identity were correlational and restricted to that age. It may be that the large early adolescent decline in appearance and weight esteem hinders identity development at age 24. However, it is equally likely that early identity problems result in body image issues. Although the inferences are somewhat limited by assessing identity development only at age 24, linking identity in emerging adulthood to trajectories of body image still provides several new and interesting ways of thinking about these aspects of development. For example, the high and increasing as well as high and steady decrease weight esteem groups both began at similar levels of weight esteem at age 10, but then diverged dramatically by age 24. Despite this difference at age 24, the difference in identity confusion and coherence between the groups was negligible. This suggests the possibility of a protective function, with initial high levels of body satisfaction at age 10 having residual impact going into emerging adulthood. This is speculative, and just one example, but illustrates the utility of applying a longer-term developmental approach to these issues.

Other limitations regarding measurement in Study I concern the Body Esteem Scale for Adolescents and Adults (BESAA; Mendelson et al., 2001), which was used to measure body image longitudinally. Although this scale has been found to be psychometrically sound among young people (Kling et al., 2019), and was validated for Swedish use in early stages of the MoS project (Erling & Hwang, 2004), it has been criticized for not attending to mus-

cle dissatisfaction (Cragun, DeBate, Ata, & Thompson, 2013). Attending to muscle dissatisfaction is particularly important in relation to body image in male populations, and using a measure incorporating muscle dissatisfaction might have altered the body image trajectories for the males in Study I. Moreover, as also concerns the longitudinal analyses of BESAA in Study I, the manifest analytical approach of group-based trajectory modeling was used, meaning that no control variables were included in the longitudinal analysis. However, control variables (i.e., self-esteem) were included in the subsequent analyses, and the different trajectory groups were compared in terms of gender and BMI, which are two important variables considered in body image research (Calzo et al., 2012; Karazsia et al., 2017).

As concerns BMI specifically, it is important to emphasize the limitations of its use as a measure of body mass. First, in Study I, BMI was calculated based on self-reported height and weight. Self-reported height and weight are sometimes biased in that both men and women tend to underreport their weight and over-report their height, resulting in underestimated BMI (e.g., Gorber, Tremblay, Moher, & Gorber, 2007). Notably, the under-reporting tends to increase at higher levels of BMI (e.g., Nawaz, Chan, Abdulrahman, Larson, & Katz, 2001). Another issue regarding BMI concerns its use as a measure of obesity, as it has been noted to be an inaccurate measure of body fat content because it does not take into account key factors such as muscle mass, bone density, and overall body composition (Ahima & Lazar, 2013). These problems with BMI should be kept in mind when considering the results of Study I. However, in Study I, BMI was not used as a measure of obesity, but was introduced primarily as a control variable because of its well-established relationship with body image.

In Study III, participants' scores on the Conformity to Feminine Norm Inventory 45 (CFNI-45; Parent & Moradi, 2010) were compared with previous published data. An important limitation is that no psychometric exploration was performed to investigate whether the measures display the same factor structure in the different populations. Before making cross-cultural comparisons, it is favorable to, for example, perform a multi-group confirmatory factor analysis to discover whether the instrument apparently measures the same underlying construct in both groups of interest. In Part I of Study III this was not done, and the cross-national results should be interpreted in light of this limitation. This limitation applies to much research in the body image field, as rigorous cross-cultural validation of measures is often lacking (Kling et al., 2019). However, Study III made the first attempt to evaluate CFNI-45 among Swedish participants, for example, in terms of content validity (including face validity) in the population of interest.

As concerns Study III, the definitions of femininity and masculinity used in psychology are not uniform or consistent, and it has previously been argued that all definitions of these concepts have multiple limitations because they either neglect certain subgroups or are based on stereotypes (Watzlawik, 2009). Concerning the study of gender role norms, it should be emphasized that femininity and masculinity are not restricted to women and men, respectively. Although femininity is the gender role usually associated with women and masculinity is usually associated with men, individuals display both femininity and masculinity (and androgyny) to different extents. It would therefore have been valuable also to include participants self-defining as males, to investigate conformity to masculine norms among the young women, and to include non-binary participants. This could have helped further distinguish between what constitutes gender role norms and what constitutes social norms in Swedish society, and for whom.

In relation to gender roles, in Study I, the Identity subscale of the Erikson Psychosocial State Inventory (EPSI; Rosenthal et al., 1981) was used to measure identity coherence and confusion. One of the items of EPSI reads: “I have a strong sense of what it means to be female/male.” According to the scale, having a strong sense of what it means to be female/male is considered a sign of identity coherence. Although in line with Erikson’s theory, this is problematic for several reasons. First, it assumes that gender role conformity, in terms of women conforming to femininity and men conforming to masculinity, is healthy and desirable when in fact gender role conformity has been associated with many adverse outcomes (see, e.g., Green et al., 2008; Holmqvist Gattario et al., 2015; Murnen & Smolak, 1997; Sánchez-López et al., 2012). Moreover, it suggests that there are, and should be, only two gender role options in order to achieve a sense of identity. This item may have biased the results in the sense that people not identifying as female or male may have incorrectly displayed less identity coherence. Hence, the item from EPSI concerning what it means to be female/male might be interpreted in very different ways depending on one’s gender identity, and this has to be acknowledged in future studies using this measure. In addition, future studies would also benefit from, in addition to assessing identity coherence and confusion, considering other types of identity measures. For example, it would be valuable to assess distress associated with unresolved identity issues (e.g., regarding long-term goals, career choice, sexuality, and friendships; see, e.g., Berman, Montgomery, & Kurtines, 2004) in order to discover identity content areas especially relevant to body image.

Optimally, a study of body image in light of identity development would be longitudinal and start before adolescence, following a large and diverse sample of young people through adolescence and into adulthood using both

quantitative and qualitative methods. In addition, such a study would take sociocultural aspects (e.g., social norms, media, family, and peers) into account. This way, potential causality in the relationship between body image and identity development could be uncovered and thoroughly explored.

Clinical implications

The three studies of this thesis focused on body image from an identity development perspective in community samples. Although not specifically aiming to explore body image and identity in clinical populations, specific findings of the studies might have clinical implications, for example, by informing intervention strategies or the treatment of body image- and identity-related disorders. Some of these implications are described in the following section.

First, it has previously been suggested that the concept of identity should be an important focus in the creation of development programs intended to foster positive adjustment and optimal functioning (Ferrer-Wreder et al., 2002). The constituent studies of this thesis build on this notion by suggesting that the concept of identity is also important for body image and therefore might be considered in programs intended to strengthen positive body image. Study II could inform such interventions by illustrating various ways the body may be salient to identity in a community sample of young adults. For example, a person's engagement with their body need not be entirely positive or negative to their identity, and this is important to consider in relation to body image and our understanding of young adults' well-being. Study I identified particularly vulnerable developmental trajectories, suggesting the possibility of early clinical intervention. For example, the results of Study I suggest that it is particularly important to direct preventative body image and identity efforts toward girls, as well as toward girls and boys with high BMI, before they reach adolescence. In conjunction with preventative and intervention efforts intended to promote positive body image, some recent studies of body functionality have found that body satisfaction can be enhanced by encouraging a functionality-based focus on the body (Alleva et al., 2014). Adding an identity perspective to these findings, Study II emphasizes acknowledging identity relevance when using body functionality considerations in an intervention. The aspects of body functionality necessary to perform identity-relevant tasks likely have a greater influence on body image than do other body functionality aspects. Hence, attending to the degree of relevance to identity is also important.

Promoting healthy identity development has recently been suggested to be an important strategy to prevent eating disorders (Corning & Heibel, 2016). For example, in a recently initiated project to improve long-term outcomes

among patients with eating disorder in Sweden, identity has been included as one of the components (Clinton, 2019). In line with this, the developmental theory of embodiment suggests that the clinical assessment of people with negative body image and eating disorders should include the broad evaluation of their experience of embodiment to discover important etiological factors that might facilitate or limit treatment (Piran & Teall, 2012). The present results add to this proposal by suggesting that such etiological factors could include identity and gender role norms. Hence, the clinical assessment of people with negative body image might benefit from including initial evaluations of, for example, identity confusion and conformity to gender role norms. Conversely, as indicated by the correlational associations between body image and identity in Study I, it might be valuable also to conduct assessments of body image among people seeking treatment for identity-related issues.

Moreover, according to the APA (2007) guidelines for psychological practice with girls and women, improving our knowledge of feminine norms would be useful because women's gender role socialization can have deleterious implications for their mental health, task performance, and aspirations. The results of Study III are in line with the APA's call as they provide information about feminine norms outside of North America and among young women in Sweden—a country with relatively high gender equality. As it has previously been proposed that CFNI-45 might be useful in counseling and therapy to address the potential roles of conformity to feminine norms in women's lives and psychological health (Parent & Moradi, 2010, 2011), this information would be valuable for clinicians both inside and outside Sweden.

Taken together, the present results are relevant to clinical practice primarily as they highlight the importance of acknowledging possible identity-related issues in body image interventions and treatments, and of attending to body image when people present identity concerns.

Ethical considerations

The three constituent studies of this thesis were reviewed beforehand by the regional ethical review board in Gothenburg. In addition, ethical aspects of the three studies were also taken into account and discussed in light of the research ethics principles of the American Psychological Association (2002). Still, some ethical issues merit further discussion. The surveys in the MoS project and the interviews conducted as part of the GoLD project all contain personal questions relating to the participants' lives and well-being, which might have caused discomfort to some. However, to avoid such discomfort, participants were informed beforehand of the focus of the surveys and inter-

views, and it was emphasized that their participation was voluntary and could be terminated at any point. In addition, after completing the surveys, participants received information about where to turn if they experienced, for example, body dissatisfaction, disordered eating, depression, or anxiety.

Regarding Study I, potential risks connected to asking participants questions about body image have previously been highlighted (see Piran & Teall, 2012), and these ethical concerns are especially problematic in relation to adolescents. For example, it has been suggested that asking people to rate their satisfaction with their bodies can induce body dissatisfaction and self-objectification (Piran & Teall, 2012), causing harm to study participants. To avoid this as much as possible, but still measure body image in terms of body dissatisfaction, the BESAA (Mendelson et al., 2001) has been used throughout the MoS project. The BESAA was considered more appropriate than many other body image measures, partly because it was developed for use in adolescent samples and partly because it does not include questions about specific body parts. While many body image measures (see, e.g., Brown, Cash, & Mikulka, 1990; Franzoi & Shields, 1984) require that participants rate specific body parts (e.g., face, thighs, and appearance of stomach), the BESAA items are more general, such as “I like what I see when I look in the mirror” and “I’m satisfied with my weight,” which might not promote the same negative effects as making participants think of their bodies in terms of body parts. The risk of lasting negative effects due to the use of the BESAA was therefore considered small, as further supported by the fact that no actual evidence of iatrogenic effects has been found when using body image measures in prevention programs (O’Dea & Yager, 2011).

Regarding Study III, conformity to feminine norms was measured in Part 1 and gender role norms were discussed in focus groups with young women in Part 2. That asking questions about gender role norms could cement these norms has been acknowledged as a potential ethical issue (Watzlawik, 2009). However, in our society, gender role norms do exist and people are forced to address them in one way or another, even if they do not uphold them (Mahalik et al., 2005). In Study III, focus groups were encouraged to discuss feminine norms openly as well as critically, in an attempt to reduce the risk of cementing the norms.

In sum, several potential risks facing the participants were addressed in the three studies of this thesis, for example, discomfort when answering personal questions and potential increases in body image awareness and gender role consolidation. However, the benefits were considered to outweigh the risks because precautions were taken both before and after the data collections.

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to address a gap in the literature by exploring body image from an identity development perspective. This was done in three studies primarily using community samples of Swedish women and men in emerging adulthood and young adulthood.

In conclusion, this thesis supports theoretical notions of a connection between body image and identity, in that young people's thoughts and feelings about their bodies seem to be intimately associated with their sense of personal continuity over time. It also shows that the relationship between body image and identity development can be experienced in both positive and negative ways. For example, while body dissatisfaction was found to be linked to identity confusion in Study I, Study II showed that the body can also be essential to identity in favorable ways, for example, via bodily functions that allow identity-defining activities and relationships. This thesis further showed that the body seems to have a special salience to identity among young women, because more women than men displayed both body dissatisfaction-related identity problems and identification with their bodies. These gender differences can be interpreted in light of the sociocultural context of young Swedish women. For example, Study III indicated that appearance norms are considered superior to other feminine norms, and conformity to these norms, in turn, is likely to affect how young Swedish women's body image and identities are shaped and develop.

Moreover, the thesis articulates a broad theoretical perspective by highlighting body image as part of developmental psychology in general and identity theory in particular. For example, viewing body image in light of identity development invites new ways of thinking about body image in relation to human development that go beyond the study of body dissatisfaction. Taken together, the constituent studies of this thesis are of theoretical importance, making notable contributions to a novel field of research.

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Supplemental material

Study I: Fit statistics for all unconditional GBTM models.

	ssBIC	Entropy	BLART	LMR	Count smallest group	Posterior probabilities
Appearance subscale						
Two-group						
Linear	9012.36	0.78	-4976.18, $p < .001$	-4976.18, $p < .001$	262	.97, .86
Quadratic	8941.02	0.77	-4936.69, $p < .001$	-4936.69, $p < .001$	269	.96, .86
Cubic	8849.56	0.78	-4920.43, $p < .001$	-4920.43, $p < .001$	273	.96, .88
Three-group						
Linear	8763.87	0.70	-4485.85, $p < .001$	-4485.85, $p < .001$	120	.92, .84, .78
Quadratic	8620.62	0.72	-4425.84, $p < .001$	-4425.84, $p < .001$	110	.92, .85, .80
Cubic*	8562.94	0.73	-4397.05, $p < .001$	-4397.05, $p < .001$	110	.92, .80, .86
Four-group						
Linear	8703.93	0.72	-4356.06, $p < .001$	-4356.06, $p = .027$	32	.85, .50, .80, .91
Quadratic	8531.52	0.75	-4362.75, $p < .001$	-4362.75, $p = .09$	48	.91, .79, .77, .80
Cubic	8505.73	0.68	-4244.50, $p < .001$	-4244.50, $p = .375$	49	.77, .76, .87, .76
Weight subscale						
Two-group						
Linear	10492.92	0.83	-5872.38, $p < .001$	-5872.38, $p < .001$	275	.98, .90
Quadratic	10409.71	0.82	-5852.36, $p < .001$	-5852.36, $p < .001$	282	.90, .97
Cubic	10400.10	0.83	-5850.22, $p < .001$	-5850.22, $p < .001$	282	.97, .90
Three-group						
Linear	10251.59	0.70	-5226.11, $p < .001$	-5226.11, $p < .001$	172	.89, .78, .90
Quadratic	10140.08	0.75	-5180.81, $p < .001$	-5180.81, $p = .03$	137	.93, .80, .88
Cubic	10128.69	0.75	-5172.30, $p < .001$	-5172.30, $p = .0158$	137	.93, .80, .88
Four-group						
Linear	10127.37	0.70	-5099.89, $p < .001$	-5099.89, $p < .001$	63	.81, .78, .85, .81
Quadratic	10024.04	0.70	-5038.59, $p < .001$	-5038.59, $p < .001$	67	.83, .81, .76, .87
Cubic	10096.48	0.70	-5027.34, $p < .001$	-5027.34, $p < .001$	68	.87, .81, .83, .77
Attribution subscale						
Two-group						
Linear	8209.34	0.62	-4423.31, $p < .001$	-4423.31, $p < .001$	375	.91, .83
Quadratic	8181.00	0.64	-4422.82, $p < .001$	-4422.82, $p < .001$	353	.82, .93
Cubic	8166.98	0.65	-4417.46, $p < .001$	-4417.46, $p < .001$	341	.93, .82
Three-group						
Linear	7966.81	0.68	-4084.34, $p < .001$	-4084.34, $p < .001$	91	.76, .86, .85
Quadratic	7926.48	0.68	-4066.46, $p < .001$	-4066.46, $p < .001$	95	.85, .77, .86
Cubic	7919.60	0.68	-4055.77, $p < .001$	-4055.77, $p < .001$	96	.84, .86, .76
Four-group						
Linear	7936.90	0.66	-3957.53, $p < .001$	-3957.53, $p < .001$	28	.65, .64, .85, .78
Quadratic	7887.07	0.64	-3931.82, $p < .001$	-3931.82, $p = .65$	39	.84, .71, .73, .71
Cubic	7876.61	0.65	-3922.84, $p < .001$	-3922.84, $p < .001$	32	.85, .70, .75, .67

*Bold indicates the chosen models

Appendix

- I. Nelson, S. C., Kling, J., Wängqvist, M., Frisé, A., & Syed, M. (2018). Identity and the body: Trajectories of body esteem from adolescence to emerging adulthood. *Developmental Psychology*, *54*, 1159–1171. doi:10.1037/dev0000435
- II. Kling, J., Wängqvist, M., & Frisé, A. (2018). “This body is me”: Discovering the ways in which the body is salient in people’s identities. *Body Image*, *24*, 102–110. doi:10.1016/j.bodyim.2017.12.009
- III. Kling, J., Holmqvist Gattario, K., & Frisé, A. (2017). Swedish women’s perceptions of and conformity to feminine norms. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, *58*, 238–248. doi:10.1111/sjop.12361