Resisting the idealised ‘healthy lifestyle’: medical mavericks, fat activists, and Couch Potatoes in U.S. and Dutch newspapers (1967-1989)

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Resisting the idealised ‘healthy lifestyle’: medical mavericks, fat activists, and Couch Potatoes in U.S. and Dutch newspapers (1967-1989)

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ABSTRACT

In the past, advice on healthy living has often been neglected, or even openly defied. However, despite the prevalence of historical resistance against an idealised healthy lifestyle, this phenomenon has seen minimal investigation. Using eight American and Dutch newspapers, this study analyses how various ‘resisters’ found cross-border recognition from journalists for challenging existing norms about diet and exercise. It demonstrates that in the post-war era, lifestyle advice was increasingly contested in the U.S. and the Netherlands, leading to a transnational cacophony on the topic of health, and an increasingly ambiguous role for medical experts.

KEYWORDS

Health; lifestyle; dieting; physical exercise; fat activism

Introduction

In industrialised societies, the decades after World War II saw the rapid popularisation of an idealised ‘healthy lifestyle’. While such discussions about the relationship between health, diet, and exercise were certainly not a novelty, after 1945 scientists, politicians and government officials grew more and more worried about the effects of people’s changing eating habits and sedentary lifestyles. As a result, they increasingly asserted the importance of staying thin and fit. In countries like the U.S. and the Netherlands, the efforts of these professionals found the support of journalists, TV editors and advertisers, who vigorously promoted ways to get ‘in shape’ through optimised nutrition and physical exercise.

By the 1970s, the sustained production and dissemination of idealised images of healthy living had prompted a scholarly reaction. Increasingly, academics interrogated the moral and political charges of representations of health. In this regard, the work of political economist Robert Crawford was particularly influential. Building on the insights of (among others) Michel Foucault, Crawford warned against the notion that individuals bore the sole responsibility for their well-being. In a 1980 article, he asserted that this conceptualisation of health as the result of individual lifestyle choices, what he called ‘healthism’, was becoming a dominant ideology.

The ideology of healthism remains an important focal point in contemporary cultural analyses of health, with some scholars claiming that health has become not just a desired
state, but a civic responsibility. Nutritionists and fat studies scholars, in particular, have directed their attention to this ‘responsible moderation’, adding to the critical historiography examining how the stigmatisation of people’s lifestyle choices has intersected with existing sexist, racist, ableist and classist ideas. Several emphasise the role played by popular media. ‘Newspapers, television shows, and magazines’, sociologist Natalie Boero explains, were crucial in circulating the normative and punitive sentiments that mark discussions about diet and body weight.

However, the image of an inescapable, transnational discourse on the healthiest way to live evoked by the historiography may seem at odds with the relative ineffectiveness of lifestyle advice. To the majority of medical experts, at least, the post-war rise of relative body weight and cardiovascular disease in countries like the U.S. or the Netherlands suggested that people, in the words of sociologist Melanie DuPuis, ‘listened to a sermon of moderation while eating away to excess’. The 1970s and 1980s, in particular, comprised a period of growing concern among health educators and governmental officials in industrialised societies about the inefficacy of promoting fitness and health. It should be said that this apparent contradiction can partially be explained by structural barriers to healthy living, which continue to affect the well-being of marginalised groups. But at times, scholars’ focus on a ‘cult of thinness’ has also led to a narrative about the promotion of healthy living that is too straight-forward, in which it seems the ideal is promoted by resolute medical experts and eagerly picked up eagerly by popular media.

This study traces expressions of resistance against the idealised healthy lifestyle in national newspapers in the U.S. and the Netherlands, in particular between 1967 and 1990. In doing so, it builds on the aforementioned tradition of critical thought about the rise of healthism, and on a modest historiography on the emergence of feminist activists’ protest against the ideals of health professionals in the 1970s and 1980s. However, here the focus will not be on the utterances of these groups per se, but on the ways in which mainstream journalists represented the critiques of these and other groups, to a broader audience, a topic which has received little scholarly attention thus far. Furthermore, by examining the portrayal of these resisters in national media, I seek to strengthen scholarship dealing with what media studies scholar Tania Lewis has called the ‘shifting ground of cultural authority’. As historians of science have demonstrated, in the post-war era the relationship between trained experts and the public became more fraught. Without going as far as declaring the ‘death of the expert’, I aim to demonstrate how the mediatisation of industrialised societies resulted in a more ambiguous societal position for medical experts. In that way, I intend to increase awareness of the cultural resonance of these challenges to existing norms about diet and exercise, and to help better understand the ambiguous effects of post-World War II lifestyle advice in countries such as the U.S. and the Netherlands.

The main source material for this study is drawn from eight digitised newspapers from the United States and the Netherlands (see Table 1). These national newspapers represented a large total readership, meaning they reached a variety of social groups, albeit with a significant bias towards the American and Dutch upper and middle classes. For national dailies in the U.S., the years covered by this study comprised a period of prestige – in which they consolidated their circulation despite growing competition from TV news – and for the press in the Netherlands, they formed an age of expansion where newspapers became, according to some scholars, ‘more influential than ever’.
Although these newspapers will primarily be used as a combined reflection of ‘mainstream’ print media, I will point out relevant dissimilarities in their reporting.

By exploring the connections between American and Dutch lifestyle journalism, this study will be able to gauge the transnational impact of resisters. In the past, scholars have executed comparative analyses of the discourse about the importance of living healthily or the post-war rise of fatness — though most focus on the relationship between the U.S. and Britain.\(^{21}\) Research on historical forms of resistance to this discourse, however, is often focused exclusively on U.S. society, lacking a perspective of the cross-cultural influence of resisters’ narratives.\(^{22}\) Fat studies scholar Charlotte Cooper warns against this approach, and against the assumption that resisters in other countries have simply welcomed and adopted the ‘wisdom’ of resisters (in her case fat activists) from the U.S.\(^{23}\) Therefore, this article will examine whether the U.S. was indeed, as some have argued, an important ‘reference culture’ to the Netherlands, and look into the way in which American ideas about health were mediated, adapted or rejected in the Netherlands.\(^{24}\)

The digitised source material was accessed through two newspaper databases, ProQuest Historical Newspapers and Delpher.\(^{25}\) Although I encountered issues with searchability common to digitised newspapers,\(^{26}\) the quality of Optical Character Recognition (OCR) for the second half of the twentieth century proved comparatively favourable. Furthermore, the use of a fairly large number of overlapping search strings — 191 for the U.S., 282 for the Netherlands\(^{27}\) — means that, while this study is not intended to provide an all-encompassing overview, most significant forms of resistance have been included into my selection. As the majority of search strings used contain a clear indication of resistance (‘excessive exercise’, ‘health crusade’, ‘weight-obsessed’), my personal dataset of 334 American and 208 Dutch newspaper articles is skewed towards more pronounced expressions of defiance. Lastly, while this set does incorporate articles on topics such as smoking and alcohol use, I have chosen to limit the scope of the research by focussing primarily on articles about dieting and physical exercise.

The structure of the article reflects two distinct phases in the history of resistance against the idealised healthy lifestyle. After a short prologue about the years between 1945 and 1966 to set the scene,\(^{28}\) the first section deals with the period of 1967–1977, tracing the rise of fat activism in the late 1960s, the start of feminist commentary on the relationship between sexism and fat stigma, and the emergence of mass interest in physical exercise and jogging. The second section delves into the years between 1978 and 1989, when the volume of resistance increased greatly in both the U.S. and the Netherlands, and the debate about healthy living became both more serious and more playful.

### Table 1. Selection of newspapers (1945–1989; De Telegraaf from 1949 onwards).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The United States</th>
<th>The Netherlands</th>
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<tr>
<td>Los Angeles Times [LAT]</td>
<td>De Telegraaf [TEL]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wall Street Journal [WSJ]</td>
<td>De Volkskrant [VOL]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Post [WaPo]</td>
<td>Het Vrije Volk [HVV]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1945-1966: Prologue

Shortly after the Second World War, a transnational consensus emerged among scientists problematising the dietary habits and the sedentary lifestyle of industrialised nations. Government institutions such as the United States Department of Agriculture and the President’s Council on Youth Fitness in the U.S. and the Nutrition Education Bureau in the Netherlands became involved, fervently promoting a healthy lifestyle as an antidote to ‘affluenza’. Because relative body weight was taken as a proxy for a person’s general health, the mid-1950s saw the inception of what the Washington Post called a transatlantic ‘war against obesity’. Although trained experts portrayed fatness as a health issue, or even the ‘greatest single hazard to human life’, their assertions were sometimes hard to distinguish from existing beauty norms, such as when prominent nutritionist Ancel Keys called it both unhealthy and ‘repugnant’. Although women were the principal target of this increased bodily scrutiny, men were also criticised for leading a sedentary life: their ‘desk-itis’, U.S. and Dutch observers concluded, was partly to blame for the rising incidence of cardiovascular disease. 

In the years between 1945 and 1966, American and Dutch newspapers printed very few opinions contradicting this perceived importance of the healthy lifestyle. Occasionally, journalists did show an interest in contrarian medical professionals such as Alvan Feinstein or Peter Steincrohn. The former, an epidemiologist, was cited in the New York Times, pointing a finger at his colleagues in the field of medicine. They, Feinstein claimed, were not giving fat individuals the help they needed by imposing the neo-Calvinist dogma of ‘Thou must eat kale’. According to Feinstein, Americans could afford to be less preoccupied with moderate excess body weight, as it seemed to carry few health risks. Similarly, Steincrohn, a best-selling author and a self-styled ‘medical maverick’, was popular among American and Dutch journalists for his many challenges of existing health rules. A sympathetic article in De Telegraaf from 1953, for example, called him a ‘prophet of (appropriate) laziness’. A decade later, the LA Times extensively cited claims made by Steincrohn, such as that there was ‘no special honor in belonging to the cult of the physically active’ for people over age 40, and that there was little scientific evidence that exercise guaranteed either good health or a longer life. However, all in all, such challenges to dominant norms about healthy living were very rare in American and Dutch newspapers between 1945 and 1966. Both the rise of fat activism and the growing backlash against jogging meant that this would start to change from the year 1967 onwards.

1967-1977: Protesting fat stigma and the rise of jogging

The United States

Dieting and fatness

In the U.S., the years between 1967 and 1977 formed a key period in the popularisation of physical fitness and healthy eating. Kenneth Cooper’s book Aerobics (1968) sold millions, and by the year 1970, Americans were spending 175 USD million annually on exercise equipment. The rising popularity of jogging among young, affluent people became the premier indication to observers that the ‘age of exercise’ had begun, with polls showing a tenfold increase in the number of regular runners in the 1970s. At the same time, the
foundation of Weight Watchers in 1963 had meant a further commercialisation and popularisation of weight reduction diets, causing some to conclude that in the U.S., 'slimness [was] the new god'.

In this 11-year period, as media coverage of health trends intensified, newspaper journalists also increasingly discussed forms of resistance against mainstream thinking about lifestyle. Particularly the LA Times, based in the city that many saw as the epicentre of health movements, documented various forms of resistance against then-prevailing lifestyle trends. As newspapers hired journalists specialised in science writing, reports on nutrition research and dieting also became noticeably more critical in the late 1960s. Concurrently, amidst a growing scholarly scepticism about the intentions and merits of medical science (which would later result in the critique of healthism), the public increasingly scrutinised expert opinion. With newspapers more often pointing out the contradictory findings of nutrition researchers, some doctors openly worried about losing the 'confidence of the public'.

This more critical attitude towards medical expertise seems to have been a stepping stone to the rise of fat activism in the United States. The year 1967 saw an important turning point in the form of a carnivalesque 'Fat-in' in Central Park. In an interview with the New York Times, its organiser explained that the demonstration, which attracted around 500 people, was intended to protest discrimination against fat people: 'People should be proud of being fat'. In the years following the event, the fat acceptance movement became more organised and well-known through the formation of the National Association to Aid Fat Americans (NAAFA; 1969); the publication of a manifesto by Llewelyn Louderback titled Fat Power: Whatever You Weigh Is Right (1970); and the founding of several radical feminist fat activist groups like the Fat Underground (1972). NAAFA, which copied much of its language from the civil rights movement ('Fat-in', 'fat power', 'fat is beautiful'), attracted a modest amount of press. Journalists gave its founders a platform to explain the organisation's goals, informing readers that fat people formed a marginalised group that was now 'beginning to fight back'. However, on health, as on other matters, NAAFA's views were cautious, with founders Bill and Joyce Fabrey stressing that, although fat pride was an important goal, they did not 'accept being fat'.

Around the year 1970, a more fundamental critique of dieting also arose. At first glance, it may have seemed as if journalists were continuing their stories on the 'national fetish' of weight reduction and its 'devious fads'. However, an important shift had occurred in the late 1960s: now, reporting on the excesses of diet culture sometimes discussed medical experts in an unfavourable light. The catalyst was a 1968 article in Life magazine by Susanna McBee, whose tour of ten different physicians' offices yielded her thousands of diet pills, including amphetamines and hormones – despite her 'slender' figure. The LA Times, Washington Post and New York Times reported on her exposé and on the congressional investigations that followed.

In the early 1970s, newly founded activist organisations like the feminist Fat Underground incorporated the growing distrust of health experts into their arguments. Founded in 1972, the California-based FU took an approach to fat activism inspired by second-wave feminist thought. In part because the discussion around fatness, dieting and exercise often targeted women, FU claimed that fat prejudice, like sexism, was a patriarchal way of thinking that objectified women's bodies. The group sometimes
relied on ‘prankish’ tactics like crashing weight-loss meetings to criticise the intimate ties of such groups to what historian Katrina-Louise Moseley has called ‘an established culture of female beauty cultivation’. But FU was also engaged in more serious efforts, publishing pamphlets with titles like Health of Fat People: The Scare Story Your Doctor Won’t Tell You. Hence, with regard to the medical implications of fatness, it was more nonconformist than NAAFA, asserting that fat people could be ‘as healthy as anyone else’.

Like NAAFA, the Fat Underground received little attention from journalists between 1967 and 1977. One exception, published by the LA Times in 1976, was a sympathetic 2,300-word article by Jane Wilson, who explained that the U.S. had a ‘fiercely antifat culture’, which had made FU ‘habitually sceptical of received medical and psychiatric wisdoms’. In the article, Wilson extensively quoted FU founder Vivian Mayer, then known by her radical name Alderbaran, who suggested that fat stigma, not fatness, was making people ill. Activists like Alderbaran claimed that weight cycling, or yo-yo dieting, might be more harmful than simply being fat. Although this claim was supported by a growing number of nutritionists, activists also presented their own bodily experiences as a form of expertise about fatness. This was a significant addition to the repertoire of resistance: now, instead of arguing that fat people deserved respect despite existing notions of the optimal lifestyle, feminists asserted that these ideas were factually incorrect. While fat activist groups like FU received little national publicity between 1967 and 1977, these arguments, and a more general scepticism about nutritional expertise, were increasingly finding their way to mainstream outlets.

**Physical exercise**

Between 1967 and 1977, the benefits of physical exercise, unlike those of dieting, were frequently disputed. Therefore, when more Americans started jogging in the late 1960s, journalists’ personal distaste for this cultural phenomenon often dovetailed with doubts about its health effects. Some conservative critics, such as author Tom Wolfe, related jogging to broader cultural trends, claiming that the individualism of the 1970s – the ‘me decade’ – was bringing the importance of self-improvement ‘to a cosmic level’. To these observers, excessive interest in exercise was a sign of ‘a narcissistic preoccupation with the self’. Several journalists, like Osgood Caruthers, also had their doubts about the physiological consequences of jogging, remarking that people running along the beach in Los Angeles were ‘in various stages of cyanosis as they trot the trail blindly, slack-jawed and gasping for survival’. Stories of mid-jogging heart attacks played into these reservations, and were covered extensively by newspapers, whose pages offered, according to one journalist, ‘haunting testimony’.

Despite these negative views of physical exercise, medical experts cited in newspapers were generally optimistic about its health effects. Jogging, they asserted, protected against some of the ills of industrial societies such as coronary heart disease and hypertension. Nonetheless, these trained experts, together with the American Heart Association, did show some reserve, and warned that would-be joggers would need to undertake a full physical examination, or stress test. Having lost some of their influence on Americans’ nutritional choices – by the mid-1970s, articles about dieting no longer told readers to consult their doctor – it seems that some physicians now tried to use the domain of physical exercise to establish themselves as gatekeepers of healthy lifestyle choices.
All the same, journalists, striving for a balance of opinion, frequently cited conflicting opinions. Interviews with experts such as Peter Steinroh, who remained a famous figure well into the 1970s, may have sown doubt among readers as to whose medical judgements they should trust. Occasionally, famous runners also showed a disregard for the opinion of some medical experts. George Sheehan, in his best-seller book *Running and Being*, described doctors who were doubtful about jogging as ‘stupid’ and ‘[il] logical’, 64 while James Fixx, in what would become the most successful book on running of its time, wrote that ‘neither our doctors nor the government can be expected to bring us good health’. 65 Hence, like fat activists, on the topic of health these runners explicitly countered traditional medical expertise with their own form of embodied, ‘experiential knowledge’. 66 The result was that, between 1967 and 1977, certain doubts about the insights of trained experts seemed to be growing among both advocates and sceptics of physical exercise.

**The Netherlands**

**DiETING AND FATNESS**

In the Netherlands, dieting and physical exercise also received increasing media attention between 1967 and 1977. Weight reduction became a ‘collective obsession’ for the Dutch in the 1960s, and fatness was increasingly framed as a problem, particularly for women. 67 Politicians now lamented the spread of potbellies and weak muscles in national newspapers, 68 and started promoting the ‘Sport for All’ movement. 69 Although a significant proportion of the Dutch middle class joined ‘anti-tummy clubs’ to go out and exercise on specially designed ‘trimming’ tracks, it should be noted that it was only after 1977 that the cultural significance of physical exercise dramatically rose in the Netherlands. 70 This means that for the years between 1967 and 1977, critiques of diet culture formed the most prominent resistance against mainstream ideas about healthy living. These critiques, therefore, form the basis for this section. 71

In the late 1960s, Dutch newspapers expanded their horizons, increasingly devoting pages to consumerism and lifestyle. 72 It was here, away from the columns dedicated to hard news, that fatness was often framed as a women’s issue. Looking at fatness through a heteronormative lens, newspapers such as *De Telegraaf* conceptualised body weight as an aesthetic issue, telling women they were foolish for ‘following each other like sheep in the great slimming parade’, 73 because men, in fact, preferred fat women. 74 More generally, the perceived problem of high relative body weight was downplayed. Perhaps in reference to the rise of fat activism in the U.S., one 1973 article even suggested that it was time for a Dutch ‘club of superfatties’. Fatness, according to author Henk van der Meyden, was quickly becoming fashionable:

‘If fat continues to mean more success in showbiz, then I expect a booklet soon on “How-do -I-get-fat-advice”. A welcome and perhaps also a healthy change from all the diets meant for becoming as thin and gaunt as possible’. 75

In other instances, newspapers published articles which framed fatness as a health issue. For these articles, Dutch journalists tended to refer to trained experts, citing members of the Nutrition Education Bureau to warn readers about diet gurus. 76 Correspondingly, when Robert Atkins’ *Diet Revolution* was published in the
Netherlands in 1975, it was negatively received in Dutch newspapers. All the same, the case of the Atkins diet demonstrated that in the Netherlands, too, expert opinion on dieting could vary greatly. Not only was Atkins himself a physician, but the Dutch translation of his guide also came with a foreword by Hans van Swol, perhaps the most well-known Dutch physician of his time. Subsequently, in an article denouncing the book, a dietician of the Nutrition Education Bureau accused Van Swol, the first ‘television doctor’ of the Netherlands, of ‘a lust for publicity’. Just two years later, in 1977, another organisation, the Dutch Heart Association, openly quarrelled with a professor of cardiovascular disease named Frits Meijler on the pages of De Volkskrant. Meijler had questioned the idea of a healthy diet as a preventive measure against heart conditions, but according to the association’s director, he was ‘talking nonsense’. Art Verburg, the article’s author, explained to readers that professor Meijler was defying health educators, and suggested that he was ‘not averse to publicity’. Hence, this Dutch ‘medical maverick’, too, was presented as a seeker of attention. At the same time, however, readers were informed that there was a small chance that Meijler’s sceptical views about the importance of diet were actually correct, and that other trained experts were mainly concerned that these public disagreements would diminish the efficacy of popular health advice.

Generally speaking, Dutch forms of resistance against dominant ideas about healthy living in the period between 1967 and 1977 paralleled trends in the U.S., and many revolved around the same cultural products. In both countries, observers remarked that discrimination against fat people was a societal problem, and that being fat should not be an obstacle to living a fulfilling life. Another similarity between resisters on both sides of the Atlantic was the way in which they stressed the importance of health, while attempting to turn the conversation around. Foreboding some of the assertions made by critical health scholars in the subsequent decades, they claimed that the obsessive preoccupation with being thin may be much less healthy than being fat.

That does not mean, however, that journalists did not perceive clear differences between the two societies. In the Netherlands, fat prejudice was often conceptualised as a foreign problem, with newspapers looking abroad and citing resisters from countries such as the U.S. and Britain. Similarly, diet mania and the popularity of physical exercise were also presented as foreign phenomena in the Netherlands. Sceptical of American lifestyle trends, and perhaps influenced by the increase of anti-American sentiments in the late 1960s, journalists used the U.S. as a reference culture to warn Dutch readers about possible future scenarios. Relatedly, such scenario’s also included a further rise in people’s relative body weight, as it turned out that in this regard, the Dutch – and North-western Europe in general – followed the American trend. Hence, while the critical assessments of journalists implied the existence of a more level-headed Dutch readership, one unpersuaded by these uniquely American pursuits, it appears they also functioned as a warning against the possible cultural influence of American health ideas and practices. At the same time, because these lifestyle trends were mostly presented as foreign, Dutch newspapers hardly reported on Dutch articulations of resistance against dominant ideas about health between 1967 and 1977. However, that would change after 1978, with both Dutch fat activism and Dutch scepticism about physical exercise finding their way to newspaper columns.
1978-1989: the amplification of resistance and the turn towards satire

The United States

Dieting and fatness

In U.S. society, the cultural significance of the healthy lifestyle was at a high point in the late 1970s and the 1980s. By 1981, around 20 million Americans were on a ‘serious diet’, often making use of the abundance of diet books and light products on offer in shops and supermarkets. And though the jogging craze ‘only [got] crazier’ according to some observers, the interest in physical exercise partly moved indoors: by 1988, 10.5 million members of the U.S. population had joined a health club. Nevertheless, many were still having a hard time with healthy eating and physical exercise. Diets remained decidedly ineffective for most Americans, and a 1984–1985 Gallup poll showed that 50 per cent of applicants to exercise programmes quit within the first six months. The apparent effect was that in the American ‘era of the body beautiful’, both women and men were growing increasingly dissatisfied with their bodies.

In these years, as it was becoming clearer that people could not, or would not, live up to the demands associated with the healthy lifestyle, both scholarly and popular resistance against this dominant ideal also grew. Journalists increasingly focused on this resistance between 1978 and 1989; indeed, 253 of the 334 American newspaper articles selected for this study were published in these years. In 1978, mass media reporting on fat activism became a regular feature, and members of fat activist groups were interviewed for both the Phil Donahue Show and 60 Minutes as well as for a number of newspaper articles. In particular, NAAFA’s lawsuits against cases of fat discrimination gave journalists a reason to focus on what they called a ‘militant minority’. Fat prejudice, according to members of NAAFA, was becoming the ‘last bigotry’. By the late 1970s, the gendered subject of fatness was also more frequently discussed in newspapers because many of them hired more women. As feminist authors such as Susie Orbach, Marcia Millman and Kim Chernin published critical books on dieting, the works of these ‘crusaders for the corpulent’ were favourably reviewed by female journalists. Especially significant was the impact of Orbach’s Fat Is a Feminist Issue (1978), which drew connections between the growing incidence of bulimia and anorexia, the persistent policing of female bodies, and women’s restricted agency. Later, when a 1986 study found that many girls under the age of ten were already dieting, observers built on this perceived connection between aesthetic ideals and eating disorders. As resistance against diet culture appeared to be growing in the 1980s, even readers chimed in, protesting the ‘thin craze’ that was ‘being pushed on us public’.

Apart from increased worries about eating disorders and the veneration of thinness, other developments also helped shift the tone of articles on fatness. By the early 1980s, an increasing number of studies demonstrated the complexity of the relationship between fatness and lifestyle. According to the LA Times, new conclusions about the yo-yo effect and the adverse bodily consequences of continued dieting led to doctors telling some patients that it was better to stay fat. Over the course of the decade, journalists increasingly challenged the moralisation of lifestyle choices, citing claims that some bodies simply ‘refuse to shrink’ and that ‘skinny people tend to eat more than fat people’. More importantly, some articles now discussed the underlying causes of fatness. Newspapers focused on the interests of the powerful food industry and the
unmistakable relationship between health and class, citing medical experts who were averse to the ‘responsibleisation’ of health and who explained that Americans lived in an environment that promoted fatness. At the same time, some researchers concluded that moderate fatness was actually healthier than being thin, a finding which was popularised by members of NAAFA. To some observers, like the syndicated columnist Ellen Goodman, the abundance of contradictory information about fatness and health had a paralysing effect. In both the LA Times and the Washington Post she complained:

‘I think it has become impossible for Americans to keep their health IQ updated. We are all suffering from an information glut, research overload. But worse, we have accumulated a midriff bulge of confusing and contradictory health advice.’

More than ever before, newspapers consulted medical experts for tips on the healthiest lifestyle. But at the same time, it could be difficult for readers to draw conclusions. A 1987 Washington Post article, titled ‘Does Obesity Kill?’, was typical in this regard: it contrasted the opinion of two specialists (both ‘YES’ and ‘NO’), leaving the reader to decide. A year later, the New York Times drew a similarly ambiguous conclusion from the abundance of scientific knowledge on fatness: there was ‘no definitive way to say exactly what someone should weigh’.

**Physical exercise**

As the perceived relationship between diet and health became more complex during the 1980s, so did the connection between physical exercise and health. The backlash against exercise, and jogging in particular, started definitively in 1978. Many observers felt that running drew fanatics, proselytisers who had joined a cult. If Karl Marx were alive in this country today’, Richard Restak wrote for the Washington Post, ‘he might well select exercise rather than religion as the “opiate of the people”’. Many authors used humour to ridicule joggers, while cartoonists provided matching illustrations. However, some people seemed genuinely angry, like the reader of the LA Times whose letter to the editor derided joggers as ‘exhibitionistic idiots’. The crucifix, for syndicated columnists like Ellen Goodman and Art Buchwald, was that ‘the lean look down on the lax’, ‘mak[ing] us feel guilty’. Physical exercise, journalists explained, was a somewhat elitist pastime for well-off Americans. However, the four national newspapers, whose readerships and staff also consisted predominantly of members of the middle class, published many articles arguing both for and against exercise. This phenomenon suggests that perhaps not just exercise itself, but conversations about the perceived importance of physical exercise were a typically middle-class phenomenon. As one reader criticised the LA Times’ editorial choices: ‘Writing a trendy column knocking the virtues of jogging is as much a running-related status symbol as double-knit warmup suits and multi-striped sneakers. Welcome to the club.’

As with their coverage of dietary trends, journalists’ writing about physical exercise touched on the connection between health and class, but hardly on the relationship between health and race. This affected their discussions of healthy living in multiple ways. First, the severe effects of structural racism on people’s health, now often a research topic in (critical) health studies, received little mention. Second, the four predominantly white newsrooms showed little interest in the fact that parts of mainstream health culture were inaccessible to people of colour, as some articles on the exclusionary practices of health clubs demonstrated. Third, journalists did not cover the rise of alternative
health movements founded by people of colour. And lastly, forms of resistance to the
equation of thinness and health that were particular to communities of colour went
unreported.

Although their articles on jogging and aerobics tended to focus on class, the elitist image
of exercise was not the only reason for journalists’ dismissive attitude. Just as with the
relationship between thinness and health, the connection between exercise and health was
increasingly under scrutiny. An important factor was the increase of high-profile run-
ning incidents, such as president Jimmy Carter’s collapse in 1979, and the unexpected
deaths of Congressman Goodloe Byron in 1978 and jogging guru James Fixx in 1984. The
latter’s passing in particular generated a significant number of alarmist articles on the
dangers of running. Sometimes, medical professionals were among the most pessimistic
of commentators, calling jogging ‘a miserable post-collegiate athletic travesty that has already
killed scores, possibly hundreds’. Cardiologist Henry Solomon’s The Exercise Myth,
which came out in the same year as Fixx’s death, also received a great deal of attention.
The book by this ‘highly qualified medical sceptic’ was well-received by journalists, who
now seemed more open to the idea that exercise was needless and potentially dangerous.

Another discursive trend that was similar to the way journalists treated the pursuit of
thinness was that they now increasingly pathologised the desire to be ‘fit’. The lay opinion that
a preoccupation with exercise was a sign of a personality defect, often touted by conservative
thinkers in the 1970s, was now given credence by medical experts. A 1980 article in the
Washington Post asked, ‘Are You Addicted?’, and cited psychiatrist Norman Tamarkin, who
had spoken at a White House Symposium on the ‘compulsive athletic personality’. Tamarkin
explained that exercise might not only be physically, but also psychologically unhealthy:
‘When everything becomes secondary to physical exercise, the person may be literally
running away from some deep problems.’ Several articles now presented some people’s
joint obsession with sports and body weight as a growing societal problem. Influenced by
famous athletes, these people were setting unrealistic standards for themselves, which meant
that fitness regimes resulted in ‘the very stress they were prescribed to relieve […]’.
Whether the discussion was about diet or exercise, by the early 1980s, a more general concern
about the effects of a very restrictive lifestyle emerged, with one reader of the LA Times
claiming that it was not a good idea to avoid ‘all the things the “experts” say are bad.’

Hence, in the late 1970s and the 1980s, the growing doubts of journalists and some
trained experts about the health effects of dieting and exercise resulted in frequent calls
for a more flexible approach to the healthy lifestyle. In the past, the majority of these
appeals had been serious in tone, with ‘medical mavericks’ and fat activists supported by
a changing group of sympathetic journalists. Humorous takes on health subcultures were
not unknown, but from the late 1970s onwards, satire writers devoted increasing
attention to the topic in their newspaper columns. The wry observations on health trends by
syndicated columnists such as Ellen Goodman and Colman McCarthy were reflected in
other cultural products as well. Films such as Health (1980), Going Berserk (1983), and
Perfect People (1988) made fun of the health-obsessed. At the same time, books such as
Vic Ziegel and Lewis Grossberger’s The Non-Runners Book (1978), which sold over
200,000 copies, and Jack Mingo’s The Official Couch Potato Handbook (1983, see
Figure 1) ridiculed the societal preoccupation with exercise.

The use of humour also brought something different, since it allowed observers to go
beyond questioning existing norms about healthy living. Now, an increasing number of
Figure 1. The cover of Jack Mingo’s *The Official Couch Potato Handbook* (Santa Barbara, CA, 1983). © Jack Mingo and Robert Armstrong.
critics of diet culture and exercise trends unapologetically refused to participate: they dropped the ‘health frame’ altogether. As New York Times columnist Don Lessem explained, he was ‘aerophobic’: ‘most of us are overweight and out of shape, and we enjoyed getting there’.\textsuperscript{119} The Non-Runner’s Book, meant to reassure ‘people who feel guilty for not running’,\textsuperscript{120} emboldened journalists to reveal themselves as non-runners and non-dieters, proudly acknowledging their ‘years of careful pastry selection and strain aversion’.\textsuperscript{121} The Couch Potatoes, a group of Californian men, were propagandists for another lifestyle choice seen to have a degenerative effect on health: watching television.\textsuperscript{122} By the early 1980s, their movement was eagerly covered by print media. Regardless, though its satirical handbook was seen as ‘very much of its time’, most of its spoofs on diet and fitness culture were not picked up by the press.\textsuperscript{123} The rebellious club grew into an international organisation of 8,000 members over the course of the 1980s, and couch potatoes became, according to the New York Times, the new in-crowd.\textsuperscript{124} To summarise, although the vast majority of resistance to dominant ideas about healthy living between 1945 and 1989 was provided by medical experts and fat activists, by the 1980s, satirists had joined these sceptics on the pages of national newspapers. Together, these resisters questioned, according to Ellen Goodman, the wisdoms of ‘Jane Fonda, Richard Simmons and the entire medical establishment’.\textsuperscript{125}

The Netherlands

Dieting and fatness

Like their American colleagues, Dutch newspaper journalists published more articles than ever on the societal quest for the healthiest lifestyle. Between 1978 and 1989, jogging rapidly gained in popularity, and many Dutch people joined a gym.\textsuperscript{126} Dieting was still immensely popular, with people in the Netherlands spending 60 million guilders (around 30 USD million) per year on different regimes.\textsuperscript{127} By the second half of the 1980s, journalists were claiming that the ‘thinness and health mania’ had definitively blown over from the U.S.\textsuperscript{128} But despite the continued dominance of these ideals, government reports showed that Dutch people were feeling moderately less healthy as time went on. Tellingly, in 1992, one survey found that 20 per cent of men and 30 per cent of women in the Netherlands of ‘normal’ size were unhappy with their relative body weight.\textsuperscript{129} It seems likely that some felt they were to blame for their perceived lack of good health. This healthiest way of thinking was encouraged by organisations such as the Dutch Heart Association, which confided to De Telegraaf that it aimed to make people feel guilty about their lifestyle.\textsuperscript{130} It was in this climate that resistance against ideas about the healthy lifestyle became much more visible in Dutch newspapers.\textsuperscript{131}

The focal point, for many Dutch journalists, remained diet culture. Continuing an earlier trend, many of them claimed that diet regimens amounted to a shake-down industry, and that weight reduction was often detrimental to health, no matter what people thought. However, despite increased scepticism about dieting, journalists’ conclusions could still be equivocal: Willem Schrama’s critical article on dieting in Trouw, for instance, concluded with an appeal for ‘sensible’ weight reduction, recommending the paper’s own three-week diet plan.\textsuperscript{132} Nonetheless, by the second half of the 1980s, it had become common knowledge that most diets were severely ineffective, and their health effects – in part because of the yo-yo effect – ambiguous.\textsuperscript{133}
The continued promotion of weight-loss diets now seemed particularly problematic to journalists, because research increasingly demonstrated that fatness was more than a matter of individual willpower. As early as 1978, *Het Vrije Volk* and *De Volkskrant* revealed the importance of environmental factors to readers, explaining how having thin siblings and a thin partner, as well as one’s income, were significant predictors of adult relative body weight.\(^{134}\) Hence, around the same time as Robert Crawford’s problematisation of healthism, without making mention of the scholarly discourse, journalists’ critical coverage of the relationship between socioeconomic status and health also contested the ‘responsibilisation’ of people’s health. Another similarity between American and Dutch journalists was that the latter also had little to say about the effect of structural racism on people’s health, even though it seems probable that this was an issue of some significance in the Netherlands as well.\(^{135}\)

Occasionally, Dutch journalists would try to present the relationship between class and health as a specifically American problem. In a 14-part (!) series in *De Volkskrant* on ‘Healthcare in the United States’, foreign correspondent Caspar Bleys critically assessed the usefulness of health education, explaining that in the U.S., tens of millions were living under the poverty line, ‘with bad health as a consequence’. In an extreme example of the importance of environment to one’s well-being, he remarked that the premier health risk of black men living in American cities was homicide.\(^{136}\) Two readers of *De Volkskrant*, however, argued that Bleys ‘everything’s better here’ perspective was wrong, as the structural relationship between health and income was similar in the Netherlands.\(^{137}\) Some promoted more permanent solutions to this problem, such as the socialist *Het Vrije Volk*, which asked why the Dutch government did not make light food products more affordable.\(^{138}\) By the second half of the 1980s, the causes of fatness were beginning to seem ever more complicated, as several journalists reported that people’s metabolism also played an important role.\(^{139}\)

In the 1960s and most of the 1970s, journalists had presented Dutch health trends, and resistance to them, as delayed echoes of changes in American society. Now, however, that delay seemed to disappear: in many ways, the Dutch debate about fatness took on the shape of the discussion in the U.S. In the late 1970s, the feminist works of Susie Orbach and Marcia Millman struck a chord with Dutch journalists, many of whom had already pointed out the gendered mechanisms of fat stigma. By the 1980s, Dutch newspapers had hired more female journalists,\(^{140}\) who popularised Orbach’s ideas about the relationship between eating disorders and sexism. They also interviewed Dutch psychologists such as Lola Verkuil, who adapted Orbach’s writings into ‘food addiction’ therapy. Such therapies were aimed at helping women to be more accepting of their bodies, but some journalists, echoing Robert Crawford’s work on healthism, remarked that this individualised the problem of fatness, which to them seemed to be of little use in the fight against fat stigma. Verkuil herself explained that such structural critiques were better left to others: ‘That’s something you should talk to *Vet Vrij* about.’\(^{141}\)

*Vet Vrij* (‘Fat Free’) was a Dutch fat activist organisation founded in 1981. The group was one of the first non-U.S. fat activist organisations, and was followed by feminist groups founded in Australia, France and Britain.\(^{142}\) Often using literal translations of the mottos of New Haven’s Fat Liberation Front and other American fat activist groups (‘How Dare You Presume that I’d Rather Be Thin?’), this Dutch organisation quickly gained the attention of the press.\(^{143}\) In the first article on *Vet Vrij* in *De Telegraaf,*
Annemarie Bremer, one of its founders, explained that the group had been very directly influenced by their American ‘sister group’:

‘In America there’s “Fat Liberation”, an organisation of fat women, who are proud of their own bodies. I am in contact with them and they often send me material that is very useful.’

_Vet Vrij_’s annual ‘Fat Women’s Day’ in Amsterdam, an attempt to create an atmosphere for fat acceptance in the Netherlands, received a lot of coverage. In interviews scheduled around this day, the group’s members explicated their feminist approach, pointing out that they were ‘not a marriage agency’. Not every article on the organisation was positive: journalist Lisette Lewin (‘not fat’) got into a discussion at a Fat Women’s Day when she remarked that _Vet Vrij_ was not letting women think for themselves. Nevertheless, the group expanded, with small clubs of fat women being organised outside of Amsterdam by 1983. On at least two occasions, members of _Vet Vrij_ presented the group’s position in prime-time TV shows. More generally, the goal of Dutch fat feminists – fat acceptance – was becoming a commonly heard refrain in the Netherlands. In the early 1980s, _De Telegraaf_ showed a particular interest in the topic, publishing multiple articles on _Vet Vrij_, a plus-size fashion special, and 10 letters to the editor from authors who were unapologetic about their relative body weight. As one reader wrote, ‘Being fat is unhealthy? What nonsense!’

As had happened in the U.S., fat activism arrived in the Netherlands amidst rising doubts about the value of nutrition expertise. By 1980, the popularisation of various contradictory nutritional theories had caused considerable confusion. As historian Alex Mold’s work on Britain has shown, the resultant scepticism was sometimes voiced in ‘more libertarian’ newspapers. Again, the right-wing _De Telegraaf_, which was by now well-known for its anti-establishment sensibility, struck a rebellious tone. In an article titled ‘The War of the Food Experts’, journalist Wim Koesen paraphrased British nutritionist Magnus Pyke:

‘People are being scared to death with threats, are getting confused because almost every expert has a contradictory theory, and have wandered into the middle of an outright nutrition war.’

Koesen’s conclusion was simple: ‘Go ahead and stuff yourself every once in a while’. _De Volkskrant_, though much more moderate in tone, also observed that the findings of American nutritionists were creating a heated debate in Europe about the relationship between nutrition and health.

As a consequence of such controversies, feminist fat activists in the Netherlands, like their counterparts in the U.S., increasingly focused on the role of medical experts in the perpetuation of fat stigma. _Vet Vrij_’s ‘book of complaints’ (1982, see Figure 2) even contained an entire chapter on gendered fat prejudice among Dutch physicians, claiming that doctors’ health advice was indistinguishable from societal beauty norms, and that they were obsessed with dieting. Correspondingly, their American colleagues, historian Jessica Parr shows, were also accused of entertaining negative stereotypes about fat people. By the end of the 1980s, Dutch journalists placed nutrition research within what they now called the ‘medical-industrial complex’: to them, it was a field of study which necessitated a ‘fresh, cynical view’. Hence, over the course of the 1980s,
Figure 2. The cover of Vet Vrij’s *Fat and Happy: Book of Complaints by Fat Women* (Amsterdam, 1982). © Annemarie Bremer, Anna van der Bijl, Jetteke de Visser and Annelies Vos.
newspaper journalists had come to follow nutrition science with increasing suspicion, advocating a more fundamental discussion about the merits of healthy dieting.

**Physical exercise**

In contrast to nutrition fads, trends in physical exercise started slowly in the Netherlands. However, by the early 1980s fitness studios were emerging and the Dutch, encouraged by national celebrities, were getting into aerobics. Jogging and marathon-running also increased in popularity. ‘Even the Dutch are giving in’, De Volkskrant’s Hans van Wissen wrote. ‘Sober. Sceptical. Relativistic. But in ever-greater numbers.’ Journalists presented jogging and aerobic dancing as highly commercialised, bourgeois trends from the U.S. ‘Though American observers’ levels of derision were never reached in Dutch newspapers, some commentators did describe aerobics as a brain-damaging, ‘jacked-up fad’, and jogging as a collective madness, blown over from America, from which nothing good has come since jazz music […]’. Because newspaper editors increasingly encouraged a more personal style, journalists revealed themselves as runners or non-runners. The animosity between the two groups even entered the offices of Het Vrije Volk, as columnist Bert van Dommelen openly ridiculed two colleagues who liked to jog:

‘A born masochist and a converted chain smoker: these are the people who regularly use these columns to tell you that long-distance running feels good, and is good for you. You should decide for yourself, but if I were you, I wouldn’t fall for it. And you can trust me. Every day I smoke about one and a half packs and pour myself a generous swig of beer.’

Apart from the ridicule reserved for running, most articles on strenuous physical exercise were more serious in tone. The Netherlands had its own jogging scare, most clearly illustrated by Het Vrije Volk’s front-page article about the death of James Fixx. Dutch authorities, from the minister of public health to the head of medical affairs of the Heart Association, were apprehensive about the trend as well. Whether they were describing jogging or bodybuilding, by the mid-1980s journalists at different newspapers claimed the occupation with ‘fitness’ was going to cause multiple deaths. Fixx’s sudden death, coupled with that of Dutch professional runner Stijn Jaspers (also in 1984), even caused enthusiastic runners to entirely abandon the health argument, now claiming that running simply ‘felt good’.

In the early 1980s, similar to their American colleagues, Dutch journalists also partially shifted their attention from the physiological effects of strenuous exercise to its psychological consequences. As in the U.S., this was primarily presented as an argument in favour of moderation. Some echoed conservative thinkers in the U.S., warning against narcissism. Most observers, however, made use of expert opinion when discussing the relation between exercise and anorexia or people’s compulsive need for running. The research of American psychiatrists, which focused on people who ran more than 80 kilometres per week (almost two marathons), was quickly extrapolated to all enthusiasts of aerobics, ‘trim’ exercises, and jogging. Others employed a biological framework, drawing attention to runners’ physiological dependence on the release of endorphins, comparing these hormones to heroin. Perhaps because journalists often saw these problems as American imports, they also looked to medical experts from the U.S. for an analysis of their causes. The effect was that the Dutch
debate about ‘unstable’ and ‘masochistic’ fitness enthusiasts showed remarkable similarities to that found in U.S. newspapers.\(^{167}\)

However, in contrast to some of their American colleagues, Dutch journalists maintained a fairly serious tone when discussing lifestyle trends throughout the 1980s. With some exceptions, the pathologisation of dieting and exercise was framed as genuine concern for public health. Where American newspapers assigned a significant portion of their lifestyle pieces to the opinion pages or to sections on popular culture, Dutch articles on the same topics were placed on the sports pages or categorised as science writing. It thus seems that satirical books for non-runners and couch potatoes translated poorly to the Dutch debate on exercise. Though newspapers in the Netherlands increasingly struck a more light-hearted tone in the 1970s and 1980s, their use of humour was still limited in comparison to that of their American counterparts.

**Concluding remarks**

The period between 1945 and 1989 saw a transnational rise in the cultural significance of healthy living. However, at the same time, resistance to this idealised lifestyle became increasingly visible in American and Dutch newspapers. At first, journalists voiced cautious criticisms focused on the ‘excesses’ of diet culture and exercise enthusiasm, often deferring to medical experts. Then, from the 1970s onwards, they pathologised the healthy lifestyle, amplifying a varied group of resisters that pointed out its seemingly negative physiological and psychological effects. Therefore, by this decade, the perspectives printed by newspapers increasingly paralleled those of both active and future critical health scholars. In the 1980s, American observers definitively added another approach to the resistance genre: now, many used satire to oppose public health directives, sometimes straightforwardly asserting their right to live an unhealthy life.

The analysis of newspapers from the Netherlands demonstrates how easily ideas about health and lifestyle crossed borders. Dutch journalists generally organised the discussion about healthy living around the same talking points as in the U.S. while citing American journalists, medical experts and activists. At the time, the overwhelming majority of Dutch journalists saw the U.S. as a vital reference culture, and the Netherlands, on most occasions, as a passive adopter of health routines. This meant that while they tried to reject certain ‘problematic’ health trends seen in the U.S., American practices were often treated as a vision of the future, with journalists looking to the U.S. for analysis of these cultural phenomena. It should be noted that despite the transnational impact of American thinking about healthy living (both from enthusiasts as well as resisters), there were actually significant differences between the two societies regarding lifestyle trends. Not only did the fitness boom never reach American heights in the Netherlands, but newspaper journalism about health issues also remained – with some notable exceptions – much more serious in tone.

While the post-war era assuredly saw the spirited popularisation of an ‘ideal’ lifestyle, supposedly resulting in both thinness and health, an analysis of newspaper journalism between 1967 and 1990 shows that American and Dutch ideas about the topic were more complex and contested, with popular media amplifying a variety of critical voices – from ‘medical mavericks’ to fat activists to satirists. The hiring of more female journalists,
together with an increased focus on ‘soft’ news and lifestyle issues, had a significant impact on the breadth of opinion on health issues printed by American and Dutch newspapers.

Here, journalists’ representations had a dual effect on how expertise could be forged and maintained. First, while trained experts certainly remained important authorities on health throughout this period, their role took on a more ambiguous character. Physicians and researchers were regularly accused of bias and disreputable commercial interests, and those who were quoted in newspaper articles also had to contend with colleagues opposing their views. By the 1980s, a growing number of journalists were exposing contradictions in expert opinion about the effect of people’s lifestyle on their well-being. The effect was, in part, that viewpoints in newspapers sometimes paralleled arguments in critical health studies of the time. Second, by highlighting the subjective nature of health, journalists in the 1970s and 1980s helped activists, satirists, and celebrity athletes claim a type of embodied expertise, which was based on their own physical experiences. Accordingly, the post-war history of newspaper journalism on healthy living demonstrates how such claims facilitated the expansion of access to popular debates about health, and further contextualises the resultant cacophony of lifestyle advice.

Notes


23. Charlotte Cooper, Fat Activism: A Radical Social Movement (Bristol, 2016) 154.


27. There is a discrepancy between the number of search strings used, in part, because English terms were searched in Dutch sources but not vice versa.

28. The research for this study covers 1945–1989, but the period between 1945 and 1966 saw only 52 ‘resistance’ articles (2.4 per year).

29. Later renamed the President’s Council on Physical Fitness. McKenzie, Getting Physical, Ch. 1; Verriet, ‘Struggling over Healthy Lifestyles’.


32. Strings, Fearing the Black Body, 178.

33. McKenzie, Getting Physical, Ch. 3; Stokvis and Van Hilvoorde,Fitter, harder & mooier, 16.


38. McKenzie, Getting Physical, Ch. 2 and 3.


42. 27 out of 55 American newspaper articles selected for the 1967–1977 period (49%) were published by the LA Times.
48. At the end of the 1980s NAAFA, while keeping the acronym, changed its name to National Association for the Advancement of Fat Acceptance.
52. Rasmussen, *Fat in the Fifties*, 141–42.
56. Here, FU claimed that people could be healthy ‘at every size’, in contrast to NAAFA. Ibid, 226. For different ‘frames’ regarding reporting on fat acceptance, see: Abigail Saguy, *What’s Wrong with Fat?* (Oxford, 2013) 66.
71. 24 out of 208 Dutch newspaper articles selected for this study were published in the period 1967–1977.
81. Wevers, Consuming America, 418.
89. It should be noted that this effect can partially be explained by an apparent increase in the quality of OCR in ProQuest and Delpher’s databases.
106. See note 19.
122. Lynn Spigel, Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Post-War America (Chicago, IL/London, 1992) 114.
130. Marie-Thérèse Roosendaal, ‘“Way of Life” krijgt weinig respons’, TEL, 18 August 1988. This idea of the ‘unfit’ body also springs from an ableist logic, as historian Jürgen Martschukat points out, but this was not explicated by resisters in U.S. and Dutch newspapers. Martschukat, ‘The Age of Fitness’, 158.
131. 158/208 Dutch newspaper articles selected for this study were published in the 1978–1989 period.
132. Willem Schrama, ‘Snelle dieetkuur vaak een zinloze methode’, TRO, 26 April 1980. The booklet was bought by 17,000 readers.


140. Van der Hoeven and Wijffjes, ‘Concentratie en kritische autonomie’, 271.


146. Lisette Lewin, ‘“En dan néém ik een gebakje”’, VOL, 29 November 1982.


150. Wolf, Het geheim, 377.


156. Stokvis and Van Hilvoorde, Fitter, harder & mooier, 130.


166. Ludwig Benecke, ‘De verslaving van de langeafstandsloper’, VOL, 10 September 1983.

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