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Representation of Women's Body in Social Media:

A More Diverse Space

Kadın Vücudunun Sosyal Medyada Temsili:

Daha Çeşit Sahibi Bir Alan

İdil Damla Bingöl

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Tezin Onaylandığı Tarih: 09.06.2016

Toplam Sayfa Sayısı: 60

Anahtar Kelimeler (Türkçe):

- 1) ideal vücut
- 2) sosyal medya
- 3) kadın bedeni
- 4) fitspiration
- 5) vücut pozitifliği

Anahtar Kelimeler (İngilizce):

- 1) body ideal
- 2) social media
- 3) women's body
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Abstract

There is enough evidence on the mass media's effect on defining and imposing the ideals of women's beauty. Although these ideals are variable, the values they symbolize are very static: attractiveness, social acceptance and happiness. In 20th century ideal body shapes were very distinct and they were imposed on women and even young girls as goals which should be attained with diets, exercise and cosmetics by traditional media with given examples of actresses and models.

In 2010's social media, as the new form of the media, changed power dynamics of traditional media. As an alternative but a more dominating voice, social media has a new power of defining the body ideals of the new era. Instead of the autonomous and patriarchal voice of traditional media, social media has a more liberal, more varied and a more feminist voice where every individual has a say in it. Influencers of social media is more diverse and attainable than the traditional media.

This paper analyses the change in the process of defining body ideals with the new approach and new influencers of social media. Body ideals of the social media is analyzed under three most outstanding cases of: the mainstream beauty ideal defined by social media, beauty trends Fitspiration and Thinspiration that became popular with the social media, and the rise of the plus size models and body positivity in social media. Discussion is detailed in the light of Social Comparison Theory, Social Cognition Theory, Cultivation Theory, Objectification Theory and Feminist Theory.

Özet

Güzellik ideallerinin tanımlanması ve dayatılmasında medyanın etkisi inkar edilemez durumdadır. Bu güzellik idealleri değişken olsa da sembolize ettikleri değerler değişmez: çekicilik, sosyal onaylanma ve mutluluk. 20. Yüzyılın ideal vücut şekilleri oldukça belirgin olup hem kadınlara hem de genç kızlara diyet, egzersiz ve kozmetikler ile ulaşılması gereken hedefler olarak medya tarafından aktris ve modeller örnek gösterilerek dayatılır.

Sosyal medya, medyanın yeni bir formu olarak 2010'lu yıllarda geleneksel medyanın güç dinamiklerini değiştirdi. Alternatif fakat daha baskın bir ses olarak sosyal medya yeni dönemin güzellik ideallerini tanımlama gücüne sahiptir. Geleneksel medyanın baskıcı ve erkek-egemen sesine karşılık sosyal medya her bireyin söz sahibi olduğu daha liberal, daha çeşitli ve daha feminist bir sestir. Sosyal medyada etki sahibi kişiler, geleneksel medyaya kıyasla çok daha çeşitli ve ulaşılabilir kişilerdir.

Bu çalışma vücut ideallerinin tanımlanması süreçlerini sosyal medyanın yeni yaklaşımı ve etki sahipleri ile açıklar. Sosyal medyanın vücut idealleri öne çıkan üç vaka içinde incelenecektir: sosyal medyada tanımlanan ana akım güzellik idealleri; sosyal medyada popüler olan güzellik akımları Fitspiration ve Thinspiration; ve büyük beden modellerin yükselişi ve sosyal medyada vücut pozitifliği akımı. Tartışma Sosyal Karşılaştırma Teorisi, Sosyal-Bilişsel Teori, Yetiştirme Teorisi, Nesneleştirme Teorisi ve Feminist Teori ışığında detaylandırılmıştır.

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1. Introduction

I spent years of my life terrified I would never get “there,” the place where my weight and all perceived rewards of thinness would finally fall into place. Getting thin was the only answer I could think of to most of my problems, and conversely, “being fat” or gaining weight, meant “losing—“ it meant never achieving, never being loved, never “having it all.” (Duke)

Fashion industry, beauty industry, advertisements, sex industry, movies, television and the media, all these sources set a definition of ideal woman, ideal body and ideal beauty for decades (Wood). Celebrities, such as Kate Moss, Nicole Kidman, Jennifer Lopez and many others all symbolize the perfect women with perfect body and perfect hair. In magazines, newspapers and on television, regular women watch the idealization of thinness, fitness, tiny waists, flawless skin and shiny hair for many decades: celebrities with thin bodies in bikinis are applauded and other celebrities with cellulites are ridiculed (Ross). Cosmetic industry, diet industry and cosmetic surgery industry try to make skins flawless, hair shiny, waists slimmer, breasts bigger; while pornography tries make women a sexual object. Standards of feminine beauty defined by these industries create unattainable goals for many women and also these industries impose these goals as a requirement for attractiveness, self-worth and overall happiness (Serdar; Ross 46). As stated by Isabel Foxen Duke “having it all” (2013), being thin, having a flawless skin, having shiny hair are defined by media as goals to attain if a women wants to be happy (Ross). Cosmetics and fashion industries help women create a better version of themselves, help them reach those ideals which will bring attractiveness and happiness (Ross 46). An unending consumerism and body dissatisfaction are grafted to women in the media and especially in women’s magazines (Akanyıldız).

Traditional media helped creation of beauty ideals, and marketed beauty ideals, but the main focus of this article is the representation of women's body in social media. The research question of my thesis is “How social media has changed the representation of women’s body comparing to traditional media?”. In this article, at first the past of body ideals will be examined to have a better understanding of the traditional media’s body ideals; how women’s

body were represented in traditional media, what were the ideals of decades and who were the main figures that influenced the audience will be explained. Then, the social media and its effects on traditional media, businesses and marketing, celebrity and influencer notions will be explained. I will be examining how the social media changed and it is still changing the representation of women's body and body ideals in the recent decades through three main cases: first, the mainstream ideals, new supermodels and celebrities; second, the ideal body trends in social media Fitspiration and Thinspiration; and finally the popularity of plus size models and body positivity movements on social media. These popular movements of body ideal manifests will be explained through different opinions, discussed and analyzed. These cases will be analyzed in the spectrum of five theories: Social Comparison Theory, Social Cognitive theory, Objectification Theory, Cultivation Theory and finally Feminist Theory. Using mainly these five theories, I will try to explain the changes created by social media in representation of women's body and body ideals in the two past decades.

Social media, starting with the popularity of Facebook, changed the media irreversibly, and with 1,590 million active Facebook users, 400 million active Instagram users and 320 million active Twitter users show that social media is much more than a phenomenon (Leading Social Networks Worldwide). Social media changed and defined many relationships: celebrity-fan relationship (Knibbs; Dredge "The Social-Media Style Icons"), brand-consumer relationship (Whaling; Demoss), and media-audience relationship (Jenkins 4) all evolved with social media. All these changes affect media's representation of women's body.

Celebrity-fan relationship changed with social media's power of making celebrities more attainable (Knibbs). Through their social media accounts, celebrities can be seen in their private lives and communicate with their fans directly. Celebrities use social media as an advertisement tool, they advertise themselves as a brand and they advertise brands through their fame. Kardashian family, especially Kim Kardashian West, a household name since the

beginning of this decade, make good use of social media to make their name more popular and to use their popularity to make money with their social media posts (Stewart). According to an article by Eric Wilson for New York Times, in 2010 Kim Kardashian was at the top of the celebrity loyalty index of Brand Keys, a survey which shows consumer engagement with celebrities, and her two sisters Khloe Kardashian and Kourtney Kardashian was in top ten, too (Wilson). This survey belongs to 2010, before the success of two younger sisters: Kendall and Kylie Jenner, one of which will be mentioned in more detail throughout the paper. Celebrities use their lifestyle and their own bodies as marketing tools of brands in social media, and Kardashians are not different. Social media, through its viral and accessible nature, induced new businesses, changed some industries and consequently made new celebrities. YouTube, Tumblr and Instagram helped people start their own businesses, brands and make themselves brands or in other words, celebrities. “Instead of turning to the pages of magazines, catwalks or films, Generations Y and Z now look to Instagram, Facebook and Twitter in search of their idols.” (Haul). Names such as Jen Selter, Tess Holliday, Zoe Sugg and many more become influencers through social media and became celebrities using their social media accounts and they make money with their posts using their popularity (Dredge “The Social-Media Style Icons”). According to the manager of the agency Social Talent, Jason Barrett, a YouTube vlogger with millions of subscribers can make £500.000 - £1.000.000 in one year (Dredge “The Social-Media Style Icons”). This new celebrities also become role models for their followers, a very similar characteristics with the traditional celebrities: movie stars, supermodels and television stars, but with a twist: they seem more real and more approachable than traditional celebrities (Cocker qtd in Dredge “The Social-Media Style Icons”). Social media changed some industries in a revolutionary way, involving fashion and beauty. As YouTube creating its new stars, biggest ones being beauty bloggers, such as Zoella, Tanya Burr and Jaclyn Hill, changed the beauty industry unknowingly (Chan).

As put by Michelle Phan, a YouTube beauty star who launched her beauty subscription service Ipsy in 2011 (Weiss), social media has made the elitist beauty industry more inclusive (Chan). Fashion had its share of change with social media: a new group of social media stars used their fame as runway rookies to become supermodels (Muller); micro bloggers made fashion more accessible and inclusive similar to the change in beauty industry and themselves become fashion royalty (Muller); and the path of modelling changed its course from auditions to social media mining (Muller).

Social media, a new atmosphere where the boundaries between celebrities and regular people disappear, and an atmosphere where regular people become influencers easily, create new and unique beauty ideals for women. This new ideals, which I will be explaining in detail throughout the article, are now not only represented by famous singers or movie stars but now they are represented by normal girls and women who became influencers via social media. With the loss of boundaries between celebrities and regular people, strict body ideals of 20th century become more blurry because these new celebrities come in all shapes and sizes, and with the popularity of social media influencers, unconventional body types can be popular in the media (Haul).

In the upcoming sections the body ideals of 20th century are overviewed; then, the social media concept and changes created by it in different practices is examined; three prominent cases about the different body ideal definitions made in the age of social media and the content related to these cases are presented; in the final part, the content about these three cases is analyzed under scientific theories and the findings are discussed.

2. Methodology

My thesis aims to understand the change created by social media in the representation of women and my research question is “*How did social media change the representation of women’s bodies on the media?*”. Since my research addresses a descriptive question, as stated

by Yin using a case study is a convenient method (5). Comparison between the 20th century's dominant "one ideal" beauty view and the diversified beauty ideals of the 2010s is made by using three different cases of beauty ideal definition on social media. As stated by Berg case study methods aim to collect enough information about a person, a social setting, an event or a group systematically for the researcher to understand how it functions (225). To be able to understand the definition of beauty ideals of this decade made in social media, my cases represent the most prominent beauty ideal trends or definitions made. These three cases are: the mainstream beauty ideals similar to the 20th century's "one ideal" beauty view, Thinspiration/Fitspiration trends and the body positivity views on social media. These three diverse beauty trends gives not a complete but a general idea about the beauty ideals defined by social media. In this chapter, the methodology used in my thesis will explained in detail. The type of the case study, design method and component elements of my design will be explained, although my method does not fit the exact patterns of case study defined by Yin or Berg it will be considered as a case study.

Instrumental case studies assists the researcher to better understand a theoretical question and to refine a theoretical explanation (Berg 229). My thesis, as an instrumental case study, aims to refine a theoretical explanation about the change created in the definition of beauty ideals. Although "ideal beauty" is not a new concept, considering the change created by social media in all practices, my thesis started with the hypothesis of a change created in the definition of beauty ideal, body ideal and women's representation in the media. Understanding the scope of the change created by the social media; cause and effect relationship about the change in the women's representation in media; and making sense of these changes using a more theoretical frame are all parts of this study. Since the changes that women's representation undergo are in a more subtle fashion and as a part of the audience that lives these changes simultaneously, using the case study method helped me as a researcher to distance myself and have a more

objective look at the subject.

The cases chosen for the study are the most prominent trends or movements of the decade, but at the same time they create the best data sample for my theoretical hypothesis. First of my cases, the mainstream beauty definition on the social media is the case that draws some similarities with the traditional media's definition of beauty ideals: beauty is defined over celebrities, actresses and supermodels, except the fact that the process of the definition is the part that is changed by the social media. My second case finds its early roots in traditional media. A trend which became popular in the early 2000s, thinness is the beauty ideal lies that behind Thinspiration trend, this case shows the Pro-Ana and Pro-Mia communities and websites as an underground movement created within the Thinspiration trend and as a community defined by this underground movement. The other trend that is examined under the second case is Fitspiration, a more health-focused beauty ideal that acts as a counterview to Thinspiration trend. This case shows Thinspiration trend, which is rooted in traditional media in the early 2000s, which became a much bigger trend on the social media, consequently created its own community is another dimension of social media's alteration of women's representation. The third and the last case presented was a new trend created by social media and popularized in traditional media similar to Fitspiration trend. At the same time, being the opposite of process defined in the second case, again third case shows another dimension of social media's effect on defining a contemporary beauty ideal. All these cases show "the social media effect" on contemporary beauty ideals from different dimensions and draw an almost complete picture about social media's effect on women's representation in the media.

The data types and sources used for the cases are mostly articles published in digital sources, content of websites that are essential for the trend, images under the tag if necessary and advertisement videos and visuals are used as well. Although there are studies about

Thinspiration and Fitspiration, eating disorders and Pro-Ed websites, most of these studies are psychological studies. Psychological studies conducted about these issues and topics are used as skeleton for this study, along with books of Ross and Wood that mainly focus on gender studies in traditional media.

For the first case, data is mainly collected from fashion magazines such as, interviews and related articles published on digital sources, official websites of newspapers such as The Guardian, The Huffington Post, The Daily Mail; official websites of news magazines such as Time, online publications about fashion or popular culture such as Refinery29, Paper Mag and the Coveteur. Also Instagram pages of the models and celebrities mentioned in first case is viewed for data collection. Second case utilizes websites from The Guardian, The Huffington Post and other websites of newspapers and magazines to collect data about the trends in general and create a framework for the case along with the scientific studies conducted by Tiggemann and Zaccardo, Ghaznavi and Taylor, Tiggemann and Harper, Josie Reade and others as well as articles published on digital sources such as Mim Kempson's *Muscular Muse*. Aside from these two Pro-ana websites and two websites for the Fitspiration trend are examined along with the visuals under the tags Thinspiration and Fitspiration. For the third and final case, The Rise of Plus Size and Body Positivity on Social Media, studies about the representation of overweight people in the media are used to create a framework. Data is collected from articles published on online sources, advertisement campaigns, body positivity campaigns and Instagram accounts of the movement's influencers.

The data collected for the cases are analyzed in the frame of The Objectification Theory, Social Comparison Theory, Social Cognitive Theory, Cultivation Theory and Feminist Theory in the Theories and Discussion chapter.

3. History of Body Image: Ideal Bodies in 20th Century

As stated by Kasey L. Serdar in her article *Female Body Image and the Mass Media:*

Perspectives on How Women Internalize the Ideal Body Standard, representation of “ideal woman” in media is unrealistic and dangerous as they are internalized by women and create body dissatisfaction for women in almost every age. These beauty ideals represented and created by media are mostly unattainable for many women which affects women negatively as they try to fulfill the media ideals which they are exposed chronically (Serdar). As it is very hard to showcase the ideals of every culture, for 20th century my study focuses on the US, which has a very dominant effect on popular culture of this era.

Starting with the 1910s, 20th century has seen many “ideal bodies”. These body ideals were created by their era’s fashion, politics and popular culture, as well as popular icons. Century’s tastemakers, influencers, icons or muses, however they were called, were mainly actresses and models. Although the terms “ideal body” or “body ideals” are very static and almost every decade had distinct body ideals, “the media’s concept of the ideal woman’s body isn’t static” (Hart; Ross 43). By being “not static” it is indicated that, in one decade curvy bodies were considered ideal, although in the next androgynous bodies with flat chests and no hips were considered ideal (Ross 43; Hart).

Although the definition ideal body is a variable of time, the result of having the ideal never changed: the feeling of self-worth, attractiveness and happiness (Ross 46; Duke). According to Ross, women and girls learn or taught that appearance is a crucial part of self-esteem and they are assessed by their appearance in the context of ideal body (46). Having an ideal body type that fulfills the conditions of period’s ideals is very similar to winning a lottery, giving better chances in employment, social acceptance and finding a life partner, which stereotypically defined as an ultimate goal for woman by the media (Ross 45). In this chapter the body ideals of the 20th century will be explained in detail.

In 1910s, ideal body shape was tall, slender but curvy. That curvy bodies were created with corsets and the ideal body definition was made by illustrator Charles Dana Gibson in his

famous illustrations called “the Gibson Girl” (Hart).

1920s ideal body was called “the Flapper”, Flapper girls had androgynous bodies very different from the Gibson Girl, no corsets were used, but large breasts and hips were disguised with clothes or tight bras. This high contrast between ideals can be explained with the change of political scene around the world, with the end of World War I, aristocratic values and ideals were being left behind and Gibson Girls was a reflection of aristocratic beauty. “The flapper style was often described as independent, wise-cracking and reckless. Their easygoing style represented a rejection of the Victorian style and also came to emblemize widespread disagreement with the Prohibition movement.” (“Women’s Body Image and BMI”). Era’s ideal was Miss America in 1921, Margaret Gorman (Hart).

In 1930s with the Great Depression, the Flapper ideal was left and a more curvaceous bodies were idealized. Natural waistlines appeared again, according Photoplay Magazine’s May 1931 issue Dolores del Rio had the best figure in Hollywood (“Dolores Del Rio, Mexican Movie Star”; Look Glam Box).

World War II in the 1940s shaped the era, as well as body ideals. Shoulder width was much emphasized and angular body shapes inspired by military clothing were dominant beauty ideals (“Women’s Body Image and BMI”).

In 1950, pin up girls brought heavier bodies of hourglass shape into popularity. Larger busts and hips were considered “ideal” and girls were encouraged to gain weight to have a curvaceous silhouette (“1930s-1950s Ads Tell Women How to Avoid Skinny”). Ideal bodies of the era were Marilyn Monroe, Elizabeth Taylor and Grace Kelly.

1960s had totally disparate ideals embodied with Twiggy, a model who almost had the body of a prepubescent girl (Hart). Curvaceous bodies of 1950s were left behind and androgynous silhouettes similar to the Flappers was once again popular and the transition between body ideals was similar to the one from Gibson Girl to the Flapper. With the popularity of thinness,

diets were encouraged: in 1963 Weight Watchers was founded and in 1960s a record amount of amphetamines were prescribed for weight loss (Hart).

'70s had still slim and slender body ideals but with a bit more curves than 1960s. Farah Fawcett as the poster girl of the era, Atkins Diet (similar to Weight Watchers, still being used as a diet program) was created by Dr. Robert Atkins and bodies were encouraged to be slimmer (Hart). Body ideals of 1970s were similar to 1980s, but the ideals of the '80s were represented by supermodels like Naomi Campbell, Linda Evangelista and Cindy Crawford. Longer legs, tanned and toned bodies were popular and in these years along with the diets, aerobics and other exercises became popular (Hart).

In 1990s with the popularity of Grunge as a music genre and a lifestyle, and the supermodel Kate Moss, who is called a waif, a new wave called "heroin chic" got popular (Costello). Tanned and toned bodies of the 1980s were out shadowed by this pale, petite, once again androgynous shape. Once again a slim body type without any curves which is similar to the ones in the 1920s and 1960s got popular. Women were encouraged to do low fat diets (Hart).

When we look at the 20th century, it is seen that very distinctive body types, very curvy ones in some decades, and very thin ones in others made popular by the media. Also by the media, by magazines, by advertisements there was a visible pressure on women to have that ideal body type ("1930s-1950s Ads Tell Women How To Avoid Skinny").

Today, it is still seen that in magazines, newspapers and on television celebrities with so-called flaws, such as cellulites, stretch marks or celebrities who gain weight is ridiculed or shamed while women who has allegedly have ideal bodies are shown as examples (Andersen).

Advertisements published in women's magazines in mostly 1950s shows that women are encouraged to put on weight rather than looking "skinny" ("1930s-1950s Ads Tell Women How to Avoid Skinny"). Advertisements with titles such as "Don't Let Them Call You

“Skinny” or “If You Want to Be Popular You Can’t Afford to Be Skinny” show a visible pressure on women to have a certain body type (Marie Claire, 2011). In the advertisements, it is seen that having the ideal body type is correlated with a good love life, popularity and overall happiness, and the girls shown in the advertisements who are “skinny” shows a visible envy to the ones who have ideal bodies.

A very recent study by Çiğdem Akanyıldız, shows that dominant discourse in women’s magazines in the 1990s advertise this ideal body types as a source of happiness, femininity and sex appeal. If women have body flaws, they need to eliminate them to be happy, feminine and sexy (Akanyıldız). Magazines targeting women suggesting an endless construction for women’s bodies with diet and exercises to stay in “shape” and with fashion and cosmetics to be “desirable” and “sexy” (Serdar). Having a body in a certain shape, as explained which is changing in time, being sexy and desirable through consuming fashionable clothes and cosmetics is shown as the main goal of a woman’s life (Akanyıldız). The pressure created by traditional media does not seem to be changed since 1950s, the importance of having a certain body type and the results of having it is still presented in a similar attitude. Women throughout 20th century was and still is pressured to have ideal body shapes with no flaws through traditional media.

There are ongoing discussions about the effects of the portrayal of body ideals on media. Especially with the thin body ideals that became popular at the end of 20th century and conserved its popularity in the beginning of 21st century, there are many studies that shows the correlation between media portrayal of thinness as a body ideal and the rise in the number of cases with eating disorders (Serdar; Tiggemann and Slater; Reade). A study by Myers and Biocca points that watching body ideals in the media can cause create changes in mood and self-perception; and it can cause nervous disorders such as Anorexia Nervosa and Blumia Nervosa. Similar studies have made about the exposure to thin ideals in the media to point out

the relation between media and eating disorders (Harrison; Tierney; Polivy and Herman).

4. Theoretical Frame

In the following section three prominent cases will be shown about the representation of women's body in social media. As explained in my methodology section, the studies about women's body image and its relationship with media are mainly psychological studies. My thesis focuses on the representation of women in social media, not its psychological effects, but still these studies serve as a framework for my study. Some of the theories used in these studies serve as an explanation tool for the cases chosen for my thesis. These theories are: Social Comparison Theory, Social Cognitive Theory, Cultivation Theory, Objectification Theory and Feminist Theory.

Social Comparison Theory and Social Cognitive Theory are used in studies about women's body image and proliferation eating disorders and their relationship with media. Both Social Comparison Theory and Social Cognitive Theory are used for analyzing my second case about the trends popularized by social media called Thinspiration and Fitspiration.

Social Comparison Theory by Festinger says that people determine their own worth by comparing themselves to the other people. The theory is used for explaining media's representation of body ideals has an effect on eating disorders, women's body dissatisfaction and self-esteem (Tiggemann et al.; Corcoran et al.). As stated by Tiggemann and Zaccardo, Social Comparison theory argues that women evaluate themselves by comparing themselves with the media's representation of women and the beauty ideals (62). Corcoran et al. states that women gets dissatisfied with their bodies by comparing themselves to representations of women in the media which are too perfect such as models, actresses and so on, which may cause developing eating disorders and psychological problems in the long term (133). According to Holmstrom, Festinger's theory says that people are most likely to compare themselves with people who are similar to them and people who are attractive to motivate

themselves (Holmstrom 197). Since the models portrayed in the media are 180 cm and 54 kg in average and women in US are 1.62 cm and 63.5 kg in average (Wolf qtd. in Holmstrom) these comparisons might cause sadness, discouragement and depression (Holmstrom).

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory is another theory that is used for explaining the effect of mass media on people. According to Bandura, people learn behaviors by observing other people and by the result of the behavior, if the behavior is rewarded the observer may replicate it (Bandura 1986; Bandura 2001). Social Cognitive Theory, is widely used in studies about eating disorders and Thinspiration (Perloff; Ghaznavi et al.). Ghaznavi et al. states that, idealizing thinness and working towards a thin ideal is a modeled behavior in the media, especially in the Thinness imagery (Ghaznavi et al. 55). That idea is also supported by Holmstrom, whom says women that finds thin models attractive will try to imitate them by dieting and eventually they may develop eating disorders (Holmstrom 198).

Objectification Theory is another theory used studies about women's body image and self-esteem. Also this theory is used in gender studies about traditional media, especially in advertisements where basic examples of objectification are very common (Ross). Objectification Theory by Frederickson and Roberts says that when objectified, women are treated as bodies that exists for the use and pleasure of others (175) and also objectification functions to socialize women internalizing observer's evaluation of themselves as primary view of their selves (177). Objectification Theory is used in many studies as a framework of women's body image and body dissatisfaction (Holmstrom; Tiggeman and Zaccardo; Tiggemann and Williams; Tiggemann and Harper). According to Ghaznavi and Taylor, exposure to objectified images, such as Thinspiration and Fitspiration imagery, increase self-objectification, weight related anxiety, body dissatisfaction and eating disorders (55). According to Tiggemann and Harper, images featuring thin models encourage women to evaluate the appearance of the body similar to a third-person view (655). As stated by

Frederickson and Roberts, attractiveness and beauty is the primal currency for women's social and economic success (178), as long as thinness or any other type of body is seen as ideal and definition of beauty is imposed on women, women will strive to that ideal and objectify themselves.

Aside from these three theories, Cultivation Theory by Gerbner et al. is another theory which is used for explaining the effect of media, states that people who watch television more than the others have a stronger internalization of television reality (Gerbner et al. 1994). Cultivation Theory is used for showing the importance of overall representation of women in social media, by comparing this new medium with the original medium in the theory, television.

Feminist Theory and feminist issues are also important for this study. Social media's effect on feminist issues are analyzed in Discussion and Conclusions chapter.

5. Social Media: What is It and How Has It Changed the Life as We Know?

Social media is currently web 2.0 internet based applications that differs from World Wide Web where users are not only consumers but also producers (Obar and Wildman). Users of social media creates profiles in social media applications or social media websites to share the content they created. The broad spectrum of content varies from news content (Twitter) to videos (YouTube), from photography (Instagram) to music (Soundcloud). Social media sites are available for very niche interests to general usage, whereas VampireFreaks is a website that aims to connect alternative people that share same gothic tastes, Facebook aims to connect people globally with its huge number of 1,5 billion active users (Leading Social Networks Worldwide).

Social media started as a big trend and after a decade it has impact on every aspect of daily life: now we chat with our friends on Facebook, put a picture of our food on Instagram, read

the news on Twitter, find our new favorite song on Spotify or Soundcloud. Other than being a part of our daily lives as users, social media changed many other things. It changed the media, communication, globalization, politics and news making, marketing and businesses. The aim of this paper is to explain how social media changed the representation of women's body but to be able to explain this, first it is necessary to understand how social media changed everything around the world.

Social media changed the media and communication (Jenkins). As stated in Henry Jenkins' *Convergence Culture*, today's media is a collision of old and new media, an evolution of the old media (Jenkins). The media changed its shape to adapt a new climate and as a result changed its audience, this new media is an evolved version of old media and its old audience. Previous experiences of the media is seen as passive experiences, television watching is an example of a passive experience where the audience is only taking but not giving (Livingstone). Social media changed the engagement of the audience with the media and crashed longstanding habits, a survey made by CNN in 2010, showed that: "Seventy-five percent of respondents said they get news forwarded through e-mail or posts on social networking sites, while 37 percent of online users said they've reported news, commented on a story or shared it on sites like Facebook and Twitter." (CNN.com 2010). Audience is now as an active part of media engagement with shares and comments, thus becomes a part of the media. Social media, as a new form of media experience, creates a communication between the medium and the audience, where audience participates in the final product whether it is news or culture or art. This new experience shapes the media, as well as the audience and it creates an unending evolution for the medium.

With the technological convergence, as stated by Jenkins, social media broken the barriers of communication: today, communication has no physical barriers, no creative barriers and more importantly I think it is open to break more barriers. Cellular phones are multiple-tasking

capable of taking pictures and videos, sending texts, images, sounds and videos. They work as GPSs, computers, calculators and game consoles. Communication is not dependent on distance, it is only dependent on technology.

Social media changed politics and news making (Boulianne). Best concepts explaining this new order are participatory culture and collective intelligence. Stating from Henry Jenkins' Convergence Culture, the defined roles of media producer as active and media consumer as passive is not relevant with the participatory culture created by the media (Jenkins 19). Before explaining the changes in news making and politics, collective intelligence is another concept explained by Jenkins in his book as: "None of us can know anything; each of us knows something; and we can put the pieces together if we pool our resources and combine our skills." (4). These two terms, in my opinion, explains how big of a power social media has in news making and consequently in politics. In the last decade there has been many important events that shows the power of social media in politics and how it reforms news making: Gezi Park Protests in Turkey, is an example of social media's power in politics and news making (Arat). Arab Spring is another example, where social media created collective intelligence and shown the power of political influence (Boulianne). In this events another notion became crucial: citizen journalism. Living proof of active media engagement, citizen journalism came into prominence when the media is controlled by the governments and did not share the complete truth, citizens took the control of media and created, shared their content and showed their own truth.

Social changed marketing and businesses (Whaling; Neti et al.; Demoss). Social media created new opportunities for brands to engage with the consumers in new fashions. Social media is a versatile tool which can be used by the businesses as a research tool, a communication tool, an advertisement tool and a space where brand loyalty is strengthened. There are examples of cases in which brands use social media as a tool and make good uses of

it, or cases in which brands make a mess out of their presence in social media. #LikeAGirl social awareness campaign of Always (Orkid in Turkey) was a powerful campaign that shows a good and beneficial usage of social media. #LikeAGirl campaign was posted June 26, 2014 and has more than 61 million views (YouTube 2016). As stated by Dr. Ledbetter in Huffington Post, #LikeAGirl campaign aims to make the world a better place thanks to the leaders of Procter & Gamble who have vision (Ledbetter).

Social media created an equal space for ideas and creativity. Websites such as Kickstarter, Instagram and Soundcloud create opportunities for many independent artists to share their work with bigger crowds and find opportunities for funding their projects. Kickstarter, with the words of the company's chief executive, is "a space that can exist, and in a strong creative economy a place where new ideas happen." (Dredge "Kickstarter on Public Good"). Kickstarter is a website where projects of filmmakers, musicians, designers and other creators share their ideas and find financial backers to realize them (Kickstarter 2016). Since the launch of the company in 28 April 2009, 105.619 projects have been successfully funded (Kickstarter 2016).

Social media changed the notion of celebrity and role models (Knibbs). With the change in businesses and marketing, as stated before social media created new opportunities for people with creative ideas and also created an equal space for this ideas. With this new creative space of social media, people started sharing their ideas, started telling their own stories via blogging websites such as Blogspot, Tumblr and Wordpress, video blogs – aka. Vlogs – in YouTube and as a result creating their own audience. Celebrities, once actresses, fashion models and musicians who are represented by managing agencies, always perfect and as shiny and distant as stars are not anymore. Natasha Courtenay-Smith as quoted in the Guardian "The social media stars of today: they are real, honest (qtd. in Dredge "The Social Media Style Icons"). "Their sharings are often unedited, unpolished. They don't always look perfect.

What matters most is that this is real and authentic, and you get the feeling you are seeing the person ‘as they are’, warts and all,” (Dredge “The Social Media Style Icons”) These creative people who use social media to their benefit are now today has loyal and niche audiences to tell their stories (Saul 2016). Zoe Sugg, known as Zoella, started her beauty and lifestyle channel in 2009, and as of 2016 she has more than 10 million Youtube subscribers, and has an estimated £3.5 million fortune (“How Has Social Media Changed the World?”). Kayla Itsines, a 24 year-old fitness trainer from Australia (Saul), has 4.6 million Instagram followers (2016) and by the help of her popularity she created a mobile application named Sweat with Kayla where subscribers pay monthly.

As social media changing everything around it, the representation of women’s body in traditional media had its share (Weiner qtd. in Kelly). Women’s body ideals -as explained in the previous chapter- were created and represented mainly by the traditional media and its celebrity culture, but the change in the media and celebrity culture as well as created social awareness about women’s body in social media (through many campaigns such as Always’ #LikeAGirl campaign) changed the representation of women’s body as well. Women’s body ideals, become an active engagement with the women where women themselves, not the men-dominated traditional media, has a say in it. Representation of women’s body gained variety; women stopped trying to fit into molds, but started creating and choosing their own body ideals. Three cases that embodies women’s active engagement in defining the beauty ideals. Women’s active participation in social media created trends, stars and influencers. Forthcoming sections will explain them, analyze the differences in representation of women’s body and analyze those using theories.

5.1. Social Media Defining Mainstream Beauty in the New Age

A study made by the Unilever brand Dove revealed that 82 percent of women in US believe that social media is influencing beauty is defined today (Kelly). Beauty ideals and body ideals

once defined by magazines, movies and television is now in the domain of social media. The same study conducted by Dove showed that 63 percent of US women believes that social media has a greater impact on how beauty is defined than mainstream media (Kelly). While the overall usage of social media has risen from 7 percent in 2005 to 65 percent in 2015 in US (Perrin) social media having more power over defining beauty standards is unavoidable. Jess Weiner, Dove's global self-esteem ambassador explains this as women's being less reliant on outside sources and defining their own views about beauty (qtd. in Kelly). Today, social media defines beauty standards in many different ways: Some trends are being created by celebrities who are actively engaged in social media; some celebrities who define beauty standards are created and popularized by social media; and some trends become popular on social media, create its own celebrities on social media and affect mass media as well. However modern beauty ideals or trends are defined, social media has an undeniably great role in it.

Social media created a gap between celebrities, the ones that use it well and the ones who get behind the social media game. Since celebrities are very similar to brands, marketing themselves on social media is a lesson to be learnt. According to Sofia Katsali, when used right social media can change the public opinion about celebrities so public figures should pay attention to how they use social media accounts (2015). Celebrities who use social media effectively become influencers, tastemakers and trendsetters in many areas and beauty ideals is one of them. A very obvious example of this is Kim Kardashian West: a celebrity made by a sex tape and a reality show named Keeping Up with The Kardashians, Kim Kardashian West is one of the most popular celebrities on social media with 70,9 million followers on Instagram (2016). Her curvy physique and large buttocks has shaped the decade's beauty ideals, helped making buttocks one of most popular features of women's body for this decade (Hart; Karlin) and made her one of the most influential people of 2015 according to Time

Magazine (Stewart). Two powerful and famous women celebrity also has a big role in this trend: Beyoncé and Rihanna. Both of these women were very powerful celebrities before social media, but their usage of social media made them trendsetters of the decade, as stated by Time Magazine in 2014 when Beyoncé entered the most influential 100 person list (Sandberg). Both using social media effectively to promote albums and singles, leaving traditional marketing methods behind and using the power of social media to the fullest (Sisario; Keneally).

There are celebrities who use social media to promote themselves and also there are celebrities who are made celebrities by social media. The “it” supermodels of this decade have this characteristic in common, they all owe their fame to social media. As put by Crissy Rutherford in Harper’s Bazaar, in “The Era of the Social Media Models” (2014) Kendall Jenner, Gigi Hadid and Cara Delevingne all took their modeling careers to next step thanks to their social media presence. Karlie Kloss and Cara Delevingne were in the cover of 2014 September issue of American Vogue as “Instagirls!” (Testino). Kendall Jenner, step-sister of Kim Kardashian, who was a social media star took her first big campaigns due to her social media presence (Muller; Bazilian). Model’s role as the global ambassador of Estee Lauder is largely about her “extraordinary social media power” as stated by brand’s global brand president Jane Hertzmark Hudis (Muller; Bazilian). Balmain’s creative directive Olivier Rousteing likens Jenner to supers of 1990’s Naomi Campbell and Claudia Schiffer, who turned from anonymous to supermodels with the power of paparazzi, with her fame thanks to social media (Muller). On the cover of Adweek Magazine Gigi Hadid is defined as Social Supermodels along with Kendall Jenner, is one of the biggest supermodels of the era due to her presence in social media, as well (Bazilian). She says that her Instagram profile has made her land big brands such as Tom Ford, Victoria’s Secret and Maybelline (Bazilian). Along with other supermodels of the era, Karlie Kloss, Cara Delevingne, Kendall Jenner and Gigi

Hadid are most successful names of the fashion industry and all of them have very strong presences on social media (Bazilian).

Social media's power of creating fame is not its only power. Once only pretty faces on runway or in magazine pages, social media has given the opportunity of showing their personality to models (Muller; Bazilian; Yi). As stated by the editor-in-chief of Teen Vogue Amy Astley, social media has given models to a platform to have a voice (qtd. in Bazilian) which is stated by Hadid herself in her interview for Vogue (Yi). Models use social media as a tool to advance in their careers as well as having more control over their careers: Cara Delevingne's usage of her power in social media to become a superstar is a great example (Keirans). The person who is responsible for obsession about brows with her full brows (Andersen), Cara Delevingne is one of the trendsetters of the decade. As a model who walked for big fashion houses such as Burberry, Mulberry, Dolce & Gabbana and Jason Wu (Models.com), Cara Delevingne is one of the bigger names in fashion industry, but model used the power of social media as "her weapon of choice" stated by her model sister Poppy Delevingne (Kirkova) to branch out to acting and singing (Muller). She has the leading role in movie adaptation of famous writer John Green's book Paper Towns (Lancaster) and co-starred in superhero movie Suicide Squad (Geier). She sang next to musician Pharell in Chanel's campaign in 2015 (Muller "Cara Delevingne Proves She Actually Can Sing Live"). Not only Delevingne, all of the new generation of supermodels have impact on popular culture. They are in music videos: Delevingne, Kloss and Hadid starred in one of the most influential names (Hargitay) of music, Taylor Swift (Spanos); Hadid starred in the videos of Calvin Harris and Zayn Malik; Karlie Kloss has named one of the most influential people of 2016 by Time Magazine (Furstenberg); Jenner has chosen by one of the most beautiful people in the world in 2014 by People.

Supermodels of the social media age are in fashion shows, music videos, magazines, movies,

advertisements, long story short they are everywhere. It is undeniable that they will be (if they are not already) the most powerful influences on young girls and women. As explained in the second chapter the mainstream beauty standards of decades show influences of supermodels, actresses and popular culture icons, this generation of social media savvy models are, supermodels, actresses and cultural icons, I think it is safe to say that they have and will have great influence on this decade's beauty ideals. They already have: Cara Delevingne's eyebrows have 920.000 results in Google search engine (Google 2016) and now, there is even a plastic surgery for having thicker brows similar to Delevingne's (Andersen). Similar to the Kim Kardashian West's buttocks which attempted to "Break the Internet" (Fortini) making butt implants popular (Stern).

Social media didn't demolish beauty ideals but it changed the process of defining beauty standards and body ideals. (Weiner qtd. in Kelly)) A study conducted by Unilever brand shows that the number women who believe that they can control their view of beauty have more than tripled in the last decade (Kelly), as stated by Jess Weiner who is Dove's global self-esteem ambassador: "We are finally shaping, sharing and owning our beauty stories." (qtd. in Kelly). Today, women have the power of choosing who will define their beauty ideals, up and coming models become supermodels with the power of social media, reality stars with sex tapes become household names who define biggest mainstream beauty trends. That is not the only power social media have over the beauty ideals it has the power of creating trends that define decades, create communities or make them visible. Forthcoming two sections will define social media's power over alternative beauty trends and power on creating their influencers.

5.2. Fitspiration and Thinspiration: Body Ideal Trends on Social Media

Aside from the faces and trends created by social media, there are trends popularized by social media. Thinspiration, combination of words thin and inspiration is a trend that idealizes

overly skinny bodies via images of skinny girls or images of body parts of very thin bodies such as collarbones, hip bones, etc. Fitspiration, on the other hand, combination of fit and inspiration, idealizes more toned and fit bodies as opposed to Thinspiration. Both of these trends shape around the thin body ideal but they promote different methods: while Thinspiration images promote thinness via every possible way such as extreme dieting or fasting, Fitspiration promotes thinness via healthy eating and exercising. In this section, these trends will be examined and compared in detail.

One of the many online trends in social media associated with body ideals is fitspiration. Fitspiration, combination of the words fitness and inspiration, is an online trend promoting a healthy lifestyle choice combining fitness and healthy eating (Tiggemann and Zaccardo). The trend promotes this lifestyle via visual media images consisting slim but muscular or toned bodies of women, women in athletic gear and healthy foods. There are imagery consisting motivational quotes such as “Exercise to be fit, not skinny.” or “You only fail when you stop trying” or the most popular one of them “Fit is the new skinny which is probably a reference to another very popular body ideal trend called Thinspiration.

Tumblr, a microblogging platform and a social networking website founded in 2007 (Tumblr 2016), and Instagram, an online mobile photo and video sharing application (Business Insider) which allows users to share their posts on other social networking websites. These platforms create a very suitable atmosphere, due to their image focused structure, for sharing motivational images.

Fitspiration, as it expressed in the term, aims to inspire people to exercise, to eat healthier, to be fit and turn this choices into a lifestyle. Most of the content examined for this study under the fitspiration tag contains positive messages about eating healthy and exercising by encouraging every little step (“No matter how slow you go, you are still lapping everyone on the couch”, “Only bad workout is the one you didn’t do”) or self-love (“Don’t try to be

perfect. Just try to be better than you were yesterday.”). There are images which contain negative or potentially negative messages are also present (“Excuses don’t burn calories” or “When it feels rough, you’re doing it right”). There are messages in the context that shows more relation to the body image reasons than health reasons (“One run closer to being sexy as f***.”, “Do it for the holy sh*t you got hot”).

Most of the imagery online is anonymous, but there are famous influencers of this online movement: trainers and fitness models are the main influencers of this trend. Jen Selter, however is neither an educated fitness trainer nor a fitness model, she is a girl with a very attractive body and a backside in the age of butts. She was a receptionist at a local gym who decided to change her physique via fitness, she started sharing the changes in her body and became a fitness enthusiast and a social media influencer as a result (“Jen Selter: You Love Her Butt”). Her Instagram profile has 9.2 million followers, she has a popular hashtag with her own name called #seltering with 1547 posts (Instagram 2016) and she created and popularized the term “belfie” which is as defined by Urban Dictionary a photographic self-portrait which includes the buttocks, a bottom selfie. Kayla Itsines, an Australian trainer who created her own mobile application, is another celebrity of fitspiration trend (Kempson). She posts pictures of the people who transformed using her fitness program and typical fitspiration pictures to motivate people to exercise more and eat healthier. Itsines, who is 24 year-old, is also posts the images of her own muscular body in her Instagram page, her body is a representation of her lifestyle which she is marketing via her app (Kempson).

Another online body ideal trend is Thinspiration, the combination of thin and inspiration. A lot older than Fitspiration, online Thinspiration imagery shows a similar style with Fitspiration imagery: both of them uses motivational quotes and set a body type as a goal body type, but with one difference: while fitspiration draws a very definitive route through fitness and healthy eating, Thinspiration is mostly focused on the result.

Thinspiration is known to exist at the start of this millenium (Holahan). As explained in the previous section 1990s ideal body type was represented by supermodel Kate Moss, a petite body type with no curves, who has known with her famous quote in 2009 “Nothing tastes as good as skinny feels.” (Costello; Selby). This quote is a much known Thinspiration quote and it is found in Thinspiration imagery, making Moss a role model for the followers of Thinspiration trend. The beginning of 2000s was a period where both models in fashion shows and celebrities are showcasing the “size zero” trend (Super Slim Me). As documented in BBC’s documentary Super Slim Me, celebrities such as Victoria Beckham and Nicole Richie who were known in these years as famous size zeros and designers who were using unhealthy skinny models on fashion shows held responsible for the size zero trend, caused the proliferation of thin-ideal (Super Slim Me). Many scholar studies shows the relation between body dissatisfaction and eating disorder symptomology with thin-ideal representation of women’s body in media (Ghaznavi et al).

Started in Yahoo Chat Rooms at the beginning of the millenium (Holahan) and continuing its notoriety to more image-focused websites such as Tumblr and Instagram, an underground movement named Pro-ED (Pro eating disorder) went hand in hand with thinspiration. Pro-ana (Pro Anorexia Nervosa) and Pro-mia (which means pro Blumia Nervosa and is not frequent as Pro-ana) are the names given to websites which are mostly blogs and diaries that support, glorify and encourage characteristic behaviors of eating disorders (Nationaleatingdisorders.org) and they endorse eating disorders as desirable (Borzekowski et al.). Pro-ana websites usually contain diary-like entries such as administrators’ food diary, daily exercises and daily calorie intake; tips and tricks on how to lose weight, fasting and how to hide eating disorders from families and friends under socially acceptable concepts; Thinspiration images; and conceptual writings where the disease Anorexia Nervosa is characterized as a girl under the name Ana; and it is stated that Pro-ana is like a religion

and/or it is a lifestyle not a temporary diet (Gregoire; Slater; Harshbarger; Brown)

Thinspiration imagery examined for this study is focuses on imagery more than quotes comparing to fitspiration imagery. Mostly images of very thin models and celebrities, or girls with collarbones, flat stomachs and hipbones are used. Quotations include motivational ones (“Stay strong you can do this.”), the ones about others’ perception about the body (“Make them regret the day they dared to call you fat”, “Do it for the stares”), there are more extreme ones (“Wanna get skinny? Fine. Then put down your fork, shut your trap and starve.”) and there are related to body image (“Do it for the thigh gap”, “Do it for the flat stomach”).

Fitspiration differentiates from Thinspiration with its emphasis on health. For this study, to make a comparison between the Fitspiration and Thinspiration content, the imagery under the tags, and popular websites about Thinspiration and Fitspiration has viewed. For Fitspiration, Fit Girl Code, Gymaholic.co websites’ content has viewed and analyzed as well as the tagged imagery; for Thinspiration mostly Pro-Ana websites have viewed but the most popular ones are shut down or relocated due to regulations towards Pro-Ana websites (Shade), so only My Pro Ana and The Pro Ana Lifestyle Forever have viewed, along with the tagged imagery online. When the images under the tags and websites or articles about this trend are examined, it is seen that while fitspiration articles focus on balance between diet and exercise, content is mostly about believing in yourself, changing yourself in a better way, loving food and loving exercise for benefitting the body, and mostly it is stated that this is a lifestyle which creates a desirable body but it more importantly creates a healthier and stronger body (#Fitgirlcode, Gymaholic.co). Although there is content about diet and exercise in Pro-Ana websites, the discourse is quite different, the main message is thinness is a goal that should be attained under any circumstances. A very popular content of Pro-Ana websites called “Thin Commandments” has a sentence stating “Being thin is more important than being healthy” (The Pro Ana Lifestyle Forever). Thinspiration or Pro-Ana websites does not emphasize on

health, they only emphasize on thinness. The messages in content about body and body image are quite negative, fatness is associated with worthlessness and ugliness (My Pro Ana). The relationship with food is a crime-punishment relationship: if you eat, you need to be punished (“Thin Commandments”).

Whether containing positive or negative messages, these two very popular body ideal trends became popular by the help of social media. These trends created communities in which people can share the same ideals, communicate and motivate each other, find influencers other than celebrities to act as role models; which they can feel more related to than celebrities (Fardouly; Tiggemann). Communities which create solidarity for people, where the people don't feel alone and they feel supported (Shade) and in my opinion this is the main reason why this trends are still continuing to be popular in social media.

Social media did not destroy the culture of thin, but it gave different attitude than traditional media by creating and uniting communities that share the same body ideals; by creating influencers other than celebrities which people can feel closer to. Dr. Liz Dean explains that although so social media did not eradicate body ideals, it gave power the power of refusing or actively engaging in body ideals they choose (qtd. in Kempson).

5.3. The Rise of Plus Size and Body Positivity on Social Media

Traditional media presented mainstream ideals as normal, glorified and as the only acceptable choice through its dominance for many years. A study conducted by Raley and Lucas in 2006 shows that stereotyped representation of minorities in mass media affects the perception of audience and give uniformity in opinions about the minority groups (22). Overweight people as one of those minorities, are presented as lazy, unattractive, unintelligent and lacking energy/motivation in the mass media (Simmons 3). These stereotyped portrayals in the media create a pressure on individuals as well (Simmons 3). Also in popular television shows overweight people are portrayed as lonely, comedic characters or freaks who rarely are

romantic leads or in high level professions such as medicine or law (Whyte 321). Another point made by both Simmons and Whyte about the media portrayals of overweight people is being overweight is represented as their individual failure rather than a situation caused by genetics, environment and individual reasons (Simmons 3; Whyte 322). A research conducted by Greenberg et al. shows that comparing to portrayals of overweight people in the entertainment media in 1977 with the 20 percent of characters (5 percent obese, 15 percent overweight) (Kaufman qtd. In Greenberg et al.) and in 1999 in four situation comedies 27 percent of characters were overweight (Fouts and Burggraf qtd in Greenberg et al.). Greenberg et al.'s research in 1999 showed that 14 percent of the female characters and 24 percent of the male characters portrayed were overweight or obese and these characters were not shown as romantic leads or were not seen discussing about their love lives and more likely to be shown eating (Greenberg 1342).

The power given to the women by the social media of choosing and engaging in their body ideals, give rise to alternative body ideals. Women with body types which do not find realistic representations in mainstream media other than stereotypes found an opportunity of being represented in social media (Cassano). As stated by plus size clothing designer Chloe Pierre in an interview for Gal Dem, plus size community which was an invisible community for many years have become more visible through micro blogging and social media platforms such as Instagram and Twitter (2016). The visibility of plus size community created opportunities in several areas: it gave plus size women acceptance in professions in the commodity of skinny such as modelling and the size of the community gave plus size clothing designers more opportunity and a higher profile (Milnes). In the 2015 social media advertisement campaign of plus size retailer Lane Bryant #ImNoAngel for their lingerie line, referring to Victoria's Secret angels with tall and slender bodies, used plus size models and showed that they are sexy and confident, the advertisement video has 13 billion views (Milnes

2015; Milnes 2016). Another campaign by Lane Bryant #PlusIsEqual is built upon the inequality of representation of plus sized women, according to company's website for the campaign "67 percent of US women are size 14 to 34. But they are underrepresented on billboards, magazines, TV... everywhere." (Plus Is Equal Official Website). Hashtag created for the campaign is very popular on Instagram with 112,276 posts (2016).

There are certain influencers in this movement/trend who are mainly plus size models: Tess Holliday, first model over US size 20 to sign with a mainstream agency and Ashley Graham, who became the first plus size women to be featured in Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue, are two very famous and notable ones. Known with her body positivity campaign on Instagram #effyourbeautystandards in 2013 US size 22 model Tess Holliday defines herself as a "body positive activist" (Weingarten). In 2014 she appeared on a video on Vimeo called #everyBODYisflawless with plus size blogger Gabi Gregg and model Nadia Abuolhosn (Bahadur). Holliday is a famous face of plus size community with 1,2 million Instagram followers (Instagram 2016). She also became the first plus size model over size 20 to sign with a mainstream modelling agency when she signed with Milk Management in 2015 (Ospina). She has also posed for famous magazines such as Vogue (Olya) and Nylon (The Guardian 2015). Ashley Graham, another influencer of the community famous for social media campaigns, became popular with Lane Bryant's 2010 TV advertisement "Not What Mom Would Wear" (Bain) which has over 4 million views on YouTube (2016). Although this advertisement is very popular and controversial (Bain). Along with the popular social media campaigns of Lane Bryant, she appeared in many campaigns including Levi's Curve and many magazines including Elle (Cruz) and Bust Magazine (Tejada). She became the first plus size model to appear on Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue in 2016 (Sports Illustrated).

The invisibility of plus size community and popularity of body positivity messages affected mass media. Plus size models Tess Holliday, Ashley Graham, Iskra Lawrence became more

popular and some brands changed their marketing strategies to include all body types or made campaigns about body positivity. Lingerie brand of American Eagle Outfitters, Aerie made a decision to stop using retouched photography in their campaigns and they also stopped using supermodels for their campaigns (Torgerson). Another campaign by Aerie about body positivity of men, which eventually announced to be a joke for April 1st, created speculation and until it is declared as a joke collected favorable reviews (Feldman) proving body positivity campaigns are getting more popular. Another campaign by Levi's featured models in different sizes including Victoria's Secret Models Miranda Kerr and Lily Aldridge and plus size model Ashley Graham (Bickham). Sports Illustrated Magazine featured different body types in their 2016 Swimsuit Edition ranging from previous UFC Women's Bantamweight Division Champion Ronda Rousey to popular model Gigi Hadid to Ashley Graham. Vocalist of band Gossip, Beth Ditto who is also a plus size woman modeled for Jean Paul Gaultier fashion show in 2010 and also for Marc Jacobs in 2015 (Harrod; Nauman). Tess Holliday featured on the cover of People Magazine in 2015 (Feldman) and also appeared on H&M's Sustainable Fashion campaign along with Iggy Pop and Karley Sciortino (Chung), she also. In 2016, Ashley Graham featured in music video of pop band DNCE as the romantic lead along with the band's vocalist Joe Jonas and video had very favorable reviews in the media (Zuckerman; Feldman).

There are controversial opinions around the popularity of plus size models or body positivity campaigns. These opinions mostly revolve around the idea of plus size models' popularity promotes obesity and it is unhealthy. After the cover of Sports Illustrated with Ashley Graham, in an interview model Cheryl Tiegs said glamorizing plus size women sets a bad example about obesity (McAfee). A very similar controversial idea came from Australian fitness trainer Ashy Bines in 2016, comparing Tess Holliday to a dead model Ana Carolina Reston who was an anorexic and said both of these women set an unhealthy role model for

young girls (News.com.au). The audience of a television program *This Morning* reacted negatively against Tess Holliday as the programme's and her "promoting obesity" (Corner). Aside from these controversial ideas, the popularity of the plus size created bullying and fat-shaming. A bullying/fat-shaming campaign by Project Harpoon, photoshopped images of famous plus size women without their permission such as actresses Rebel Wilson, Melisa McCarthy and model Tess Holliday. The photoshopped images were shared on the Instagram and Facebook pages of Project Harpoon under the hashtag #ThinnerBeauty. On their social media profiles, popularity and acceptance of plus size has labeled as "pro-obesity trend", it is stated that this trend may cause people to give up on exercise and healthcare (Vagianos). Another bullying/fat-shaming example was by the website *Skinny Gossip*, who called Kate Upton "fat", "pig" and "confidently lumbering up a runway like there is a buffet at the end of it" (*Skinny Gossip*).

A great opposite of *Fitspiration* or *Thinspiration* and overall glorification of thinness, the trend of plus size acceptance made a community more visible. Overweight, curvy or plus size women became more visible first in social media and with the popularity and acceptance that came from social media, they became more popular in mainstream media. Plus size models such as Tess Holiday, Ashley Graham and Iskra Lawrence were featured in photo shoots of popular magazines, modeled for mainstream brands; a plus size musician and a style icon such as Beth Ditto modeled for famous fashion houses. Campaigns about body positivity and body acceptance grow popular in social media, brands started designing lines for plus size, and they increased the visibility of plus size women which showed that every women in every size has their place in society and they are strong and beautiful. Although this popularity created controversies which claim the visibility of plus size women as a pro-obesity movement, although they get bullied and fat-shamed often, there are undeniably positive views about this movement. Overall, these women do not advise the world to become obese;

they only say that there is place for everyone in the world and they only advise people to love and believe themselves no matter what.

6. Literature Review

This study aims to understand the women's popular body ideals throughout the 20th century, and how social media changed the concept and the definition process of the beauty and body ideals. My thesis mainly consists of three parts: in the first part the body ideals of 20th century is examined; in second part, the social media concept and changes created by it in different practices is examined and then three cases about the different body ideal definitions made in the age of social media and the content related to these cases are presented; in the final part, the content about these three cases is analyzed under scientific theories and the findings are discussed. In this section the sources of data will be examined.

To be able to understand the aim and scope of this study, an understanding of beauty and body ideals is important. How these are ideals are defined and by whom; what do they represent and why are they important for women, answers of these questions create a foundation for the study. In the first part the concept of body ideals is explained, although there is not an exact definition, the concept is explained using the studies about body image, content related to body ideals from different periods and digital sources about body ideals, presented cases and social media. It is seen that most of the study about women's body ideals and body image are psychological researches: some of them focuses on the effects of body ideals on women's body image psychologically and most of them analyzes the relationship between women's body image and eating disorders. Although most of these concepts, body ideals, body image and eating disorders fall into the scope of this study, the aim of the study is to understand the representation not the effects. Consequently, data used in the study is collected from digital sources, websites of magazines and newspapers and the scientific studies serve as a guide.

First layer of the research conducted includes publications about the media and gender roles. Understanding the concepts such as gender roles defined by the media; women's representation in the media; objectification of women in the media, fashion and beauty industries, and pornography work as an infrastructure for this study. *Gendered Media* by Karen Ross explains all these concepts generally within a contemporary frame. In the part "The Body In Question" Ross explains issues related to female and male body issues such as obesity, traditional media and advertisements' representation of women bodies, weight obsession of the media as a normative force on women and the role of fashion and beauty industries in women's body ideals. Although the chapter gives a very general idea and does not examine the many cases related to the body ideals, it creates a framework for understanding the representation of women's body in traditional media. The scientific studies focusing on the media's effect on women's body such as Serdar's *Female Body Image and the Mass Media: Perspectives on How Women Internalize the Ideal Body Standard*, Dittmar's *How Do Body Perfect Ideals in the Media Have a Negative Impact on Body Image and Behaviors? Factors and Processes Related to Self and Identity*, Holmstrom's *The Effects of Media on Body Image: A Meta-Analysis* help understanding the relationship between women's body image and the media's representations of women. As stated before, although this study does not focus on the psychological effects of body ideals on women, understanding them is important in the process of analyzing the change created by the social media. Aside from these work on women's body ideals and body image, content analyzing body ideals of women from digital sources such as Greatist.com's article *See How Much the "Perfect" Female Body Has Changed in 100 Years*, advertisements from mid-20th century and some image content are viewed.

In the next part social media and its effects on different sectors and notions are analyzed. This part, similar to the previous one works as a base for understanding the social media's power

and the scope, because without understanding the workings of social media its role in redefining the beauty ideals will be lacking. Henry Jenkins' *Convergence Culture* is used as a main source about the concepts related to social media: the book explains important terminology related to social media such as participatory culture, media convergence and collective intelligence. Sonia Livingston's *Television and the Active Audience* is also used as source for comparing and explaining the difference between the traditional media and social media which is a new form of media, as stated by Jenkins an evolution of the traditional media. About the concepts related to social media and its representation of women's body, digital sources are used in larger numbers than previous sections. Social media's effect on different industries and notions are examined in online articles such as Li-Anne Chan's *How Social Media Has Changed the Beauty Industry* or Heather Saul's *Instafamous: Meet the Social Media Influencers Redefining Celebrity* explains the effects of social media on fashion and beauty industries which are very important in women's representation in a very contemporary fashion.

The data related to the cases presenting women's representation in social media are collected from articles in digital sources such as, The Huffington Post, The Daily Mail, Vogue Magazine and Shape Magazine.

For the second case a variety of studies published about Thinspiration and Fitspiration have been viewed. Ghaznavi and Taylor's *Bones, Body Parts and Sex Appeal: An Analysis of #thinspiration Images on Social Media* and Tiggeman and Harper's *The Effect of Thin Ideal Media Images on Women's Self-Objectification, Mood and Body Image* create a theoretical framework for analyzing the Thinspiration trend. For Fitspiration, Tiggemann and Zaccardo's *"Exercise to be fit, not skinny": The Effect of Fitspiration Images on Women's Body Image* and Reade's *The Female Body on Instagram: Is Fit the New It* creates a theoretical framework for the analysis of imagery content and online content. Another article that explains the trend

Fitspiration is *The Muscular Muse* by Mim Kempson published in Catalyst Magazine. After the trends' framework is formed, the contents of two Pro-ana and two Fitspiration websites are viewed and examined as well as imagery posted under these tags.

For the third case the theoretical frame is formed by using the existing studies about overweight and obese' s visibility in the media, which are very similar to the studies made in the 20th century about minorities' visibility in the media such as Berry's *Television and Afro-Americans: Past Legacy and Present*. For this study John Whyte's *Media Portrayal of People who are Obese* creates a framework about the representation of untraditional body types in the media. Aside from these studies, in my third case, the Rise of Plus Size and Body Positivity on Social Media, data is mostly collected from, digital sources, advertisement campaigns about body positivity, Instagram profiles of the influencers of the movement such as Tess Holliday and Ashley Graham and visuals.

In Theories and Discussion chapter, the published scientific studies about the theories are used in order to explain and create a structure for the discussion related to the cases presents.

7. Conclusion and Discussion

In previous chapters, traditional media's representation of women in 20th century have overviewed and three cases that are prominent in social media's representation of women's body are presented with the data collected. In this chapter these data will be analyzed using the theoretical frame which explained before: Social Comparison Theory, Social Cognitive Theory, Objectification Theory, Cultivation Theory, Feminist Theory will be used for analyzing the cases explained.

The cases analyzed shows that comparing to traditional media, social media's representation of women is more inclusive for the regular women. In social media, we see celebrities doing, regular things such as exercising, walking their dogs or eating or reading etc. activities never shown by traditional media, which makes them more relatable, thus real. Influencers in social

media are regular people, they are real and relatable (Cocker qtd. in Dredge “The Social-Media Style Icons”): their representation is different from traditional media’s perfect women representation. Social media is a more equalitarian atmosphere comparing to traditional media, we see celebrities with #nomakeup, we see more women with untraditional body types, and we see other women struggling with weight issues, skin issues, hair issues and feel solidarity. Moving from Social Comparison Theories framework, in social media women compare themselves with less perfect women comparing to traditional media.

At the same time social media gives women the opportunity of comparing themselves with peers depending on their usage of social media, constantly (Tiggemann and Zaccardo). On social media people can use pictures that shows them more attractive, slimmer or more beautiful (Kramer and Winter 106) using the filters of some social media applications such as Instagram or Facebook or using other types of photo alterations such as Photoshop. Social Comparison Theory also says that people tend to compare themselves with people who are similar to them (Festinger 123), in this case comparisons with peers will be stronger in social media and if the peers use pictures that shows themselves more attractive than usual, social media’s representation of other women can be more harmful.

According to Social Cognitive Theory, people can learn from modeled behaviors (Bandura, 2001) and in second case presented, content of Thinspiration and Fitspiration imagery and websites/blogs model a behavior that idealizes a certain body type. Especially the content of Thinspiration images, Pro-ana and Pro-mia blogs/websites idealize thinness through every action that results in weight loss such as dieting, fasting and excessive exercising. As mentioned in the second case, the characteristic that makes Thinspiration and pro-ed (pro eating disorders) content different from Fitspiration is that it shows a behavior that is ready to sacrifice health for the sake of thinness.

Looking from another angle, Perloff says that women with low self-esteem, women who

suffer from depression and women who are vulnerable towards that kind of imagery seek Thinspiration imagery and content (Perloff), and eventually as stated in Cultivation Theory (Gerbner and Gross 1976) by heavily viewing this type of media images, they start believing in the thin crowded population of Pro-ana world is real (Holmstrom 198). Cultivation Theory by Gerbner et al. is another theory which is used for explaining the effect of media, states that people who watch television more than the others have a stronger internalization of television reality (Gerbner et al. 1994). In a similar view, people who view Thinspiration and Fitspiration imagery often can believe that a reality where people are mostly thin or fit, creating a thin or a fit beauty ideal. Although in the framework of this theory, regarding the third case presented, the more visible the untraditional body types of women and overweight people in social media and consequently on traditional media, the more “real” they will become. Increase in visibility of untraditional body types may result in larger acceptance and visibility of this body types and women with untraditional body types. Social media by creating an atmosphere where every body type is represented, in my opinion, is creating the perception of these women with untraditional body types are a part of the society and more than being a part of the society, they are beautiful and attractive as much as thin women.

Social media’s representation of women intersects with Objectification Theory in many issues. Thinspiration and Fitspiration images mostly focus on certain body parts as stated in related section: Thinspiration images focus on flat stomach, collarbones, thigh gap, thin arms, hip bones, generally they focus on bones which emphasize the thinness; Fitspiration images focus generally on muscles, muscular stomach, legs, glutes, arms, back, toned bodies are the center of attention. These examples of dismembering creates the core of Objectification Theory, these body parts become less than human, they become objects that emphasize body ideals (Ross 46) As stated above these images increase women’s self-objectification, they cause women to feel shame about their bodies.

Media's representation and evaluation of women's body works as the observer's evaluation in this case, and it values women as long as they are thin. As stated in Objectification Theory, women internalize this idea as their primary view of themselves and they feel worthless if they do not measure up to thinness ideal of media. A body positivity movement, presented in third case, in my opinion shows a stance against self-objectification by advocating the idea of all women are beautiful in every shape, every age and women should love themselves even if media or society does not find their body shape ideal or beautiful. This idea encourages women to see themselves not from the third-person view of judgmental media but to see themselves from their eyes and love themselves unconditionally.

Another intersection point can be seen in first case. Models are represented as hangers for clothes without character deepness or personalities (Muller). Social media's representation of women, especially in the case models, shows their personalities, their character traits, makes them more real and less objects that present designer clothes. Models' objectification in traditional media is lessened in social media, I cannot say that it is totally diminished, but lessened.

The cases presented have a relationship with Feminist Theory and feminist issues as well. Social media changed the face of feminism, made it more approachable and visible (Chittal). In her article, *How Social Media is Changing the Feminist Movement* Chittal argues that social media removed the barriers of distance and geography, making the feminist activism more easy and more mainstream via social media platforms and the shared language of hashtag ("How Social Media is Changing the Feminist Movement"). Chittal gives the example of women's reaction against Victoria's Secret's Perfect Body Campaign, where the models are mostly white and thin, via Twitter and Change.org, which is a website that lets users to start petitions and raise awareness about the issues they want (Change.org 2016). The issues about the representation of women's body in traditional media such women's visibility,

women's objectification and standards of beauty imposed on women, have a chance to be solved in this new medium. In the cases I present, I tried to show the change created in social media comparing to more patriarchal traditional media in feminist issues about women's body representations.

A similar opinion about social media's contribution on making Feminism more mainstream and relatable is explained by Kat Lazo in her TEDxNavesink talk, *Feminism Isn't Dead, It's Gone Viral* (2013). Lazo explains that social media platforms such as Tumblr and YouTube have made feminism more approachable for everyone without seeking a higher education and ignoring geography or age. She also points out the social media's power of making activism stronger and more visible by giving examples of Seventeen Magazine and Reebok (Lazo). She says "Online feminism is the future of feminism." (Lazo)

As stated by Gerbner et al., the television reality is perceived as real by heavy viewers (1972; 1986). It is stated by many studies that women are outnumbered in traditional media comparing to real life (Gerbner et al. 1972; Wood 31), thus creating a reality that women are outnumbered by men. In social media, women outnumber men: in 2010 percentages of social media users are 53 percent of the male population and 68 of the percent female population, while in 2015 73 percent of the male population and 80 percent of the female population (Andersen). Social media offers a platform where women are not underrepresented. Thus, creating a new reality where women is equal to men, either in number or power.

Standards of women's beauty, ideal beauty and ideal body notions are not disappeared yet, but there are positive steps like body positivity movements and women's growing engagement in feminist activism on social media (Chittal). Quoting from Jess Weiner: "We are seeing women take control over their definition of beauty. In fact, they feel like they are responsible of defining their view of beauty." (qtd. in Kelly).

As seen in my analysis, social media is not the ultimate solution for women's body

representation issues, in my opinion, it is not a solution but a powerful tool and a new environment that can be the part of the solution. First and most importantly, social media is an environment where women are more visible, therefore more real and more powerful. Comparing to traditional media, in social media women are more visible as users and content: as content this includes not only picture perfect women but every women from every race, every shape and every age. These women who has different beauty ideals, use the social media as a tool to define their own ideals of beauty, rather than patriarchal media. Body positivity movements and many other activist movements are creating a new female community that is more powerful, liberal and united. So in my opinion social media's representation of women's body is still flawed, but more feminine and equalitarian than traditional media's representation. It is not as controlled as traditional media, as we see in the case of Thinspiration, but this flaws can be overcome and women finally having their own voice about their beauty standards is worth the hard work.

Throughout my thesis, by using the method of case study, the answer is for the question "How social media has changed the representation of women's body, comparing to traditional media' representation" is sought for. By presenting cases and analyzing them in the framework of theories, the results reached by this thesis are summed as the following:

- Social media make women more visible, without discriminating shape.

Comparing to traditional media, where it has shown by studies that women is outnumbered by men, social media is a new atmosphere where women outnumber men. In social media women are more visible, not just in numbers, but with their attitude. Women become more engaged in feminist activism using the power of social media and its shared language hashtag. Social media has shown its inclusive power by not adopting the discriminating characteristics of traditional media where obese or overweight people are shown with stereotypical characters who are always lazy, unattractive and not sexually

active. In social media overweight or obese women can become influencers like Tess Holliday, or women with untraditional body types like Kim Kardashian can become big celebrities.

Social media creates an atmosphere more inclusive towards regular women. Regular women, non-celebrity or non-socialite women has a place on social media, comparing to traditional media where women are represented by celebrities or actresses in the roles of regular women, mostly. However, in social media women in all professions have visibility in their every state, from most natural to best looking as well as celebrities. With social media, a new face of celebrities are seen in #nomakeup, #nofilter and not polished.

- Women shape their beauty standards on social media.

Different from traditional media, where patriarchal business industries such as fashion and cosmetics, plastic surgery or even pornography define beauty ideals for women, social media gives women a voice to speak for themselves. While traditional media and the mentioned industries make women's beauty and women themselves an object for men's pleasure, on social media women stand up against these patriarchal definitions, as in the example of women's reaction against Victoria's Secret's Real Beauty Campaign on Twitter and Change.org, or women participating in the body positivity campaign created by Tess Holliday #effyourbeautystandards.

Women create trends in social media, as shown in second case. Although Thinspiration trend has its roots in traditional media and Fitspiration acts as counter-argument to the values of Thinspiration, both of these trends were shaped in social media. Without looking at their extremism or the discussions about their being unhealthy, these trends are women created beauty standards and communities that share the same ideals.

- Social media does not have one strict beauty ideal for all.

While there is usually one mainstream and strict beauty definition in traditional media,

which is mostly seen; there are more than one beauty ideals in social media. There may be other beauty ideals in decades aside from the mainstream one in media, but they are seen as alternative and not shown by traditional media. Social media has a place for every beauty ideal, not only the ones in cases that presented in my thesis but different and even more extreme ones, such as body modification. An artist, Grace Neutral has extreme body modification: her whole body is covered in tattoos, her belly button is cut off, her eyes are inked and her tongue is forked, with her 315.000 Instagram followers she is an influencer in social media (Brennan) making the definition of her own ideal beauty.

Aside from more niche tastes, social media is more accepting towards every shape, every ideal and every woman. Body positivity campaigns against traditional media's excluding attitude towards different body shapes, body flaws and ageing take place in social media in the form of feminist activism or social awareness campaigns. Social media's visibility and acceptance of different ideas of beautiful can make women feel less excluded and more attractive, resulting in less body dissatisfaction and body image related issues.

- Social media encourages women to create communities and feel solidarity.

Traditional media shows people with body ideals, which are possible attain by a small percentage of women, as attractive, happy and socially accepted while leaving many other women feeling inadequate, depressed and alone (Ross 45-46). Some of these women feel like they are not understood by society, excluded and alone. As mentioned in previous chapters many times, this is one of the mind sets that lead to body dissatisfaction and eventually eating disorders.

Social media creates communities of women who share the same ideals, same body related problems or feelings towards their body and gives them a place where feel they belong. This is a statement found about Pro-ana and Pro-mia websites and stated by an administrator of one of those sites in ITV1's documentary *The Truth about Online*

Anorexia (2009) that these websites create a supporting mechanism for these women with eating disorders and give them a place to belong. A similar statement is made by plus size clothing designer Chloe Pierre about social media making plus size community more visible.

Social media is a powerful tool for feminist activism. As stated before, social media makes feminism easier to understand, more approachable and less restricted and feminist activism more powerful. Women can be a community as women and feel solidarity with the power of social media. They can create a voice that is clear and strong and they can unite without boundaries. I think more than any other community, this is the most important community women need.

Although not being the perfect space for women and representation of women's body yet, social media has a very long way to go for elimination objectification, discrimination and exclusion. Nevertheless, social media, different from the traditional media is a more feminine voice which can promise women the golden age of feminism. As stated by Kat Lazo: "Online feminism is the future of feminism" and women's body representation is a huge part of it. Body positivist movements explained are the first signs of the change that can be created by social media. Women with the power of social media can demolish the barriers of body ideals, define their own beauty ideals and create variety. In my opinion these make social media's representation of women's body now, and in the future.

So, looking from my perspective, the data presented by the cases, analyzed in theories and the general structure of social media, as stated in the results draw a more hopeful picture than traditional media. Social media is medium that has a more equal voice than men-dominated traditional media and hopefully this will result in the future for the benefit of all women and women's body ideals.

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