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Social Media and Body Image in Adolescent Males

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Dedication and acknowledgements,

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To my friends, Robert, Sophie, Milton, Elias among many others who were always there to cheer me on, I am very grateful.

To my father, who would have been very proud.

Abstract

Concerns with body image are becoming increasingly more prominent among the male youth. Researchers have pointed to gender roles and social media as being the main drivers behind this phenomenon. Social media is now recognized as the most dominant form of media communication where the majority of its users are young adolescents. Image-based applications such as Instagram allows for immediate access and exchange of a plethora of idealized body images. The mediatization of the muscle ideal and the popularity of social media presents a new male youth-oriented problem. The present study aims to investigate how exposure to social media, Instagram, influences body image concerns in adolescent males between the ages of 15-19 years old. It uses an experimental in-between study method examining the effects of exposure to naturalistic viewing, appearance neutral and appearance focused images on Drive for Muscularity Scale (DMS), Body Esteem Scale (BES) and Appearance Comparison Scale.

Keywords: Social Media, Instagram, Body Image, Adolescence, Muscularity

INTRODUCTION

"You have to look good on camera, or people are going to judge you."

These are the words of 13 year-old Charlie from the UK. After being picked on and pushed around in school for being skinny, Charlie began 'working on his body' (Williams 2020). Because Charlie is too young to enroll in the gym, he developed his own daily work-out routine which consists of waking up at 6 am, doing 40 pull-ups, 165 push-ups, planks, sit-ups among other exercises. His meal plan consists of eating five eggs, four toasts, rice and grilled fish and has cut out all chocolate and sweets. The diet plan alludes to caloric surplus which involves purposefully overeating to exceed the amount of calories required a day. The intention behind consuming more calories than can be broken down, is to eventually transform the food intake into muscle mass (Preiato 2019).

Upon becoming more muscular, Charlie felt bigger and stronger. He was not being pushed around in school anymore. He was becoming increasingly popular and receiving more attention from girls. His new body ignited a trend in school where other boys his age started working-out and lifting weights to become muscular like him. Charlie has described his work-out routine as being so extensive that he can barely breathe and often gets a headache afterwards.

To Charlie's mother, Helen, his new found obsession with his body is a complete departure from the shy 13-year old boy who was a self-professed 'Nuetella King'. She indicated the growing pressure of having to look good all time with the necessity to get approval from peers on social media as being the main drivers behind this new phenomenon.

Charlie's story is not an isolated incident but is one of many in which adolescent males are experiencing pressure and body image concerns brought about with the rise of social media (Morris 2018). Due to the interconnected and pervasive nature of social media, the epidemic appears to be growing in many areas of the world. In the US, a study published in the Journal of Adolescent Health found that nearly 30% of male highschool students attempted to gain weight as a way to increase muscle mass (Nagata et al. 2010). The study also found that adolescent males who are multiracial or pertaining to an ethnic community are twice as likely to engage in weight-gain habits. In the UK, one in twelve boys aged 10-15 expressed feelings of dissatisfaction with their bodies (Bellini 2019).

A study in Germany found that between 20-25% of adolescent males felt overweight and expressed feelings of sadness towards their physical shape (Schuck, Munsch and Schneider 2018). Research in Australia revealed that 17% of male children and adolescents experience feeling unhappy about their bodies (Mond et al. 2014). Moreover, body dysmorphic disorders among adolescent males in Australia have increased by 3% and 12% of adolescent males were diagnosed with eating disorders (Schneider et al. 2017; Mitchison et al. 2020). According to the Australian Psychological Society, body image dissatisfaction (BID) has tripled, from 15% to 45%, over the course of 25 years for all Western males (Gregor 2013).

A recent study investigating the pervasiveness of BID among youth in the U.A.E found interesting results (Alharballeh and Dodeen 2021). The study was performed on a sample of 728 male and female college-age participants. Results indicated that 36.7% of

participants demonstrated a level of BID. Moreover, male participants scored higher levels of BID when compared to females.

Due to the statistics mentioned above, researchers are highlighting a need for concern in regards to male body image and health, especially among adolescent males (Morris 2018; Alharballeh and Dodeen 2021). They have pointed to two main drivers behind this modern phenomenon which are traditional gender norms and social media (Morris 2018). This is not to suggest that social media is creating body image dissatisfaction. As we will expand on in later chapters, scholars suggest that social media is exacerbating the rate at which images, idealized male body images in particular, are exchanged (Hockin-Boyers, Pope and Jamie 2020; Chatzopoulou, Filieri, and Dogruyol 2020; Morais, Hemme and Reyes 2021).

From the 1980s onwards, mainstream media has worked to homogenize the ideal male figure (Ricciardelli, Clow and White 2010). While the ideal female figure uses thinness and slimness as indicators for attractiveness (Sánchez Hernández, Jiménez-Morales and Carrillo Durán 2014), the ideal male figure centers around muscularity, athleticism, and leanness (Frederick et al. 2007). In contrast to adolescent and adult females, the reasons some young and adult males feel shame towards their bodies are because they perceive themselves as being too thin and lacking the muscle-ideal (Mills 2018). The muscle-ideal is described as having the mesomorph shape which is exemplified through broad shoulders, muscular arms and chest, a small waist and a well-defined torso (Flynn et al. 2015).

Research has shown that the ideal male body is becoming increasingly muscular with every passing year. For example, an analysis that took measurements of children's action-figure toys found that the chest and shoulder area of the toys have become larger and more pronounced through a 30 year period (Pope et al. 1999). The study found that the children's action-figure toys were designed to resemble advanced bodybuilders. Moreover, it is suggested that the physical male ideal figure depicted in the action-toys would be just as unattainable and unrealistic for young males boys to adhere to as the Barbie doll is for young females.

An examination of 115 Playgirl Magazine centerfolds detected a gradual increase of 20% in muscle-mass density in male models (Leit et al. 2000). The study found that over the course of 25 years, male models on the cover of the Playgirl magazine have gained 25 pounds of muscle mass and lost 12 pounds of fat. Another study by Pope et al. (2001) found that the objectification of the male body in advertisements has been steadily increasing. The study indicated that the proportion of undressed men next to unrelated products has risen from 3% to 35% since the 1990s.

Analysis on media representation detected a codification activity which links high degrees of muscularity in the male body with signifiers of hegemonic masculinity such as aggression, dominance, power, social status, success in romantic relationships and sexual conquests (Burrill 2008; Panayiotou 2010; Tylka 2014; Matthews and Channon 2019). The connection between masculinity and muscularity is the reason gender norms have been linked to body dissatisfaction among males. The representation of the idealized muscular body can be seen in various forms of media content from print magazines, cinema, popular sitcoms, reality TV shows, video games, pornogrpahy and more recently on social media (Nabi et al. 2003; Burrill 2008; Ricciardelli, Clow and White 2010;

Norton 2017). As of this year, there are 116,201,139 posts under the #bodybuilding on Instagram (Instagram 2021).

The introduction of social media into our daily lives has revolutionized the way humans communicate, interact and present themselves (Boulianne 2017; Valkenburg 2017; Abrahamson 2017). It is particularly impactful on adolescents who are growing up using social media technology as it is fully integrated into their everyday lives. Reports suggest that adolescents in the US spend an average of 7 to 9 hours a day, nearly one-third of their day, consuming media through screen time (Tsukayama 2015; Jacobo 2019). Research in Spain suggest by the age of 10 to 15 years, 91.2% of children and adolescents become online users and from 12 to 17 years old years old, 90% become social media users (López de Ayala López, Sendín Gutiérrez and García Jiménez 2015). The highest concern for parents today is the negative impact spending too much time on social media may have on adolescents (Anderson 2018). Researchers consider adolescents to be "the age group that is most vulnerable to developing problematic use of the Internet as spaces of communication, as they are at a critical stage in defining their identities." (López de Ayala López, Sendín Gutiérrez and García Jiménez 2015, 2). In fact, the World Health organization has issued a health warning regarding excessive social media and screen time use among children and adolescents (World Health Organization 2019).

Research investigating the impact of this new form of communication is still in its preliminary stages. More significantly, the influence of social media on body image among the male demographic remains an under-researched topic and under-studied in the field of body image and communication (Adams, Turner, and Bucks 2005). In fact, only 3% of studies issued in a prominent body image journal discussed prevention techniques for harms created due to negative male body image (Jankowski 2019). Moreover, Harvard professor Bryn Austin describes the unethical nature of male body image program which directs blame on the individual as opposed to the socio-cultural environment (Jankowski 2019).

The primary reason for the disparity is because concerns with appearance and body image have been gendered as a predominantly female-oriented issue. As such, the majority of body image research sought to examine the influence of media exposure on eating disorders among adolescent and adult females (Adams, Turner, and Bucks 2005). Research on female body image, spanning decades, has yielded consistent results. It positively identified media exposure to idealized female body images as a determining factor in the construction of female body image and how they view and evaluate their bodies. Moreover, it conclusively correlated an increase to media exposure with an increase in body image dissatisfaction, a decrease in self-esteem and a proneness to develop unhealthy eating habits (Grabe,Ward, and Hyde 2008).

The findings enabled scholars to acutely theorize the impact of the mediation of idealized body images on media consumers. Cultivation theory, social comparison theory and media practice models are three models applied to explain this phenomenon. Cultivation theory describes the process by which media consumers cultivate meaning and understanding from the media presented to them (Gerbner and Gross 197). Upon long duration and repetitive exposure to idealized images, the media consumer accepts and internalizes the beauty and body ideals presented to them as a norm to which they must conform to. Social comparison theory describes the innate drive in humans to evaluate their standing and ability by comparing themselves to others (Festinger 1954). As such, media scholars have theorized that media consumers have a tendency to compare their

bodies with ideal body images they see in the media (Fardouly, Pinkus, and Vartanian 2017). Due to the pervasiveness of idealized body imagery, media consumers feel pressure to conform to the body ideals and experience dissatisfaction when they fail to reach the unrealistic standards.

In recent years, scholars have expressed concern about the implications of social media in perpetuating unrealistic beauty standards due to the prominence and accessibility of beauty and body applications (Elias and Gill 2017). They have argued that such applications introduced a monitoring and self-regulatory form of gendered technology, further exacerbating the scrutiny on and commodification of female bodies. However, as contemporary research on body image shifts to focus on social media, rather than traditional media, there remains a considerable disparity between the male and female demographic.

Considering the factors, detailed earlier in the introduction, which highlights the growth in body image dissatisfaction among males as well as the growth in social media images which perpetuate idealized male bodies with particular emphasis on muscularity, there is a present-day necessity to investigate and better understand the relationship between the variables. It is particularly significant due to the psychological and physical harms such mediation can potentially have. For example, male sufferers of negative body image may experience muscle dysmorphia (MD) , also known as bigorexia. It is often referred to as reverse anorexia and describes a distortion in body image when individuals, often males, perceive themselves as physically smaller than they actually are (Fanjul Peyró and González-Oñate 2011; McCreary 2007). As a way to remedy feelings of body dissatisfaction, individuals might engage in attempts to gain weight and excessive exercising as evidenced by Charlie's story. Statistics in the UK estimate that 1 in 10 males who frequent the gym may suffer from bigorexia (Ahmad, Rotherham and Talwar 2015). A study in Spain suggests that the percentage of MD in non-professional bodybuilders has increased from 1 to 11% in the span over 4 years (De La Poza, Jódar, and Alkasadi 2015)

Fanjul Peyró (2008) describes this somatic-type disorder as an obsession that seeks to achieve the perfect look and body at any cost. However, in some cases the intensity of the somatic disorder may distort the visual reality of the person suffering from bigorexia. If the individual experiencing bigorexia does not undergo treatment, symptoms may worsen to include social isolation where the individual withdraws from gatherings with friends and family as to avoid disturbing the food regime. The individual may engage in body surveillance and monitoring habits where they frequently assess their weight, do mirror checks and a constant preoccupation with how the body looks to others (Shafran et al. 2003; Alonso 2006). In some cases, individuals may resolve to take supplements and anabolic steroids as a way to increase muscles (Pope et al. 1999; Alonso 2006). Statistics from the UK shows that steroid use by 600% over a 10 years period (Howell 2015). Another study pointed towards a growing trend among adolescent male to use steroids to enhance their looks (Morris 2018).

Given the above, the purpose of the present study is to investigate the relationship between social media usage and body image related concerns among adolescent males between the ages of 15 to 19 years old. In specific, the research aim (RA) is to investigate the effects of exposure of varying Instagram uses on body image-related concerns in adolescent males using an in-between experimental method. The participants were divided into one of three groups: Appearance-Focused (AF) in which participants are

exposed to the muscle-ideal on Instagram, Appearance-Neutral (AN) in which the participants are exposed on neutral images, and Naturalistic Viewing (NV) in which participants have liberty to browse through Instagram as they normally do. Post-media exposure, the participants were blocked on Drive for muscularity, body esteem and appearance comparison.

The research has 3 main specific objectives (SO).

(SO1) Investigate the immediate effect of exposure to idealized images of Instagram on Drive for Muscularity, Body Esteem, and Appearance comparison on adolescent males.

(SO2) Investigate the effect of habitual usage of Instagram on Drive for Muscularity, Body Esteem, and Appearance comparison on adolescents males.

(SO3) Moderate any possible differences associated with exposure to neutral images found on Instagram on Drive for Muscularity, Body Esteem, and Appearance comparison on adolescent males

The research establishes three main hypotheses:

(H1) There will be an increase of Drive for Muscularity in the Naturalistic Viewing and Appearance Focus groups and there will not be an increase in the Appearance Neutral group.

(H2) Exposure to idealized male body images on Instagram in the Appearance Focused experimental group would lead to a decrease in Body Esteem than the exposure to the Appearance-Neutral control groups and the group of Naturalistic Viewing.

(H3) Upward appearance comparison tendency will increase the groups of Naturalistic Viewing and the Appearance-Focused experimental group than the Appearance-Neutral control group.

Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation consists of nine chapters which are divided into five parts: Literature review, state of the art, method, discussion and conclusion.

The dissertation begins with the literature review which consists of four chapters. Each of the chapters is designed to explore the theoretical aspect of the main topics of the dissertation.The first chapter 'The Alpha-man' begins by examining large social and economic structures such as patriarchy and capitalism. We find that dominant socio-economic structures merge to consolidate power in which white heterosexual male groups maintain, legitimize and institutionalize their supremacy in society under hegemonic masculinity (Walby 1989; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Kimmel 2006). We demonstrate a cyclical pattern that forms as a result of two issues: economic precarity due to neoliberal capitalism and progressive social movement which challenge the dominant social order (Faludi 1991; Hakim 2018). As a result, a perceived "crisis on masculinity" gives shape to a new form of male social interactions with the aim to restore dominance and hinder progressiveness movements from achieving their goals (Faludi 1991; Horrocks 1994). Today, this reactionary form of masculinity can be seen as the growing

emphasis on the male body as a site to abstract power, cultural and physical capital (Bourdieu 1986). In specific, muscularity has become the physical embodiment of hegemonic masculinity (Vito, Admire and Hughes 2017).

The second chapter 'Masculinity, muscularity and media' aims to demonstrate the relationship between masculinity and muscularity in various media expressions such as print magazines, cinema, pornography, reality TV shows, sports media, sitcoms, and video games. We recognize the role mainstream media plays in shaping public opinion especially in regard to gender roles (Chomsky and Herman 1988; Wood 1994). The pervasiveness of media imagery through various outlets, such as films and advertising, work to reinforce gender stereotypes and teach media consumers to behave in social situations (Wood 1994; Tylka 2014). There is a shift that occurred in the media's representation of traditional masculinity that happened during the 1980s. As feminist movements grew, scholars have detected an increasing emphasis on the male body which was not previously present in mainstream media. In particular, the sexualization and objectification of the male body was introduced as a new form of masculinity under which commodification and consumerism of the male body occurred (Gill, Henwood and McLean 2005; Ricciardelli, Clow and White 2010). Each section of the chapter is dedicated to demonstrating how mainstream media has worked together to homogenize the ideal male body as having the mesomorph ideal. Moreover, the chapter demonstrates a codification process, which occurs across media expressions, in which the male body is reduced to a machine-like object and linked to attributes such as aggression, domination, success and sexual conquests of female bodies (Ricciardelli, Clow and White 2010; Tylka 2014; Nabi et. al 2003; Burrill 2008)

The third and fourth chapters are dedicated to discussing the focal point of the dissertation which are social media, body image and adolescent males. Specifically, the chapters focus on Instagram because it is solely image-based and hence more likely to disseminate idealized body image. Instagram is a significant site for scholarly research due to the abundance of images, graphics, and animations that are uploaded daily (Moreau 2021). With an estimated 50 billion images posted, Instagram holds one of the largest databases for images online (Aslam 2021). Fitness and bodybuilding accounts on Instagram produce a pressure on users to conform to conventional idealized bodies. As a result of internalizing these standards, researchers are pointing to the emergence of body dysmorphic disorders among males known as muscle dysmorphia in which males perceive themselves as physically smaller than they are (Pope et al. 1999).

The fifth chapter aimed at examining related literature consisting of quantitative (correlational and experimental) as well as qualitative research related to media and body image. In specific, 22 studies were examined and coded in regards to their objective, method, sample, tools and results. We expand on each type of research method and the positives and negative aspects of their uses. Researchers have pointed out that there are some inconsistencies in experimental research that have investigated the influence of media exposure on male body image (Barlett, Vowels, and Saucier 2008). Some research demonstrated an increase in body dissatisfaction after exposure to idealized male body images (Fanjul Peyró and González-Oñate 2011). Other studies did not find a statistically significant relationship between media exposure to idealized male body images and body image-related concern (Brinder 2010; Henry 2006). Moreover, a meta-analysis suggested that such inconsistencies in experimental research need to be resolved (Barlett, Vowels,

and Saucier 2008). As such, the analysis from this chapter enabled us to locate the gap in literature and put forth the research aims.

The sixth and seventh chapters are dedicated explaining the development of the research design, method and results. The research design uses an experimental in-between study to investigate the effects of social media use on body image concerns in adolescent males. The participants (n=123) were randomly assigned to one of three conditions on Instagram for a period of 10 minutes: their own Instagram account, and an artistic control account, or a bodybuilding and fitness account. Following the social media exposure, the participants were blocked by completing measures on Drive for Muscularity (DM; McCreary 2013), Body Esteem Scale (BES-R; Frost et al. 2017), and Appearance Comparison Tendency (ACT; O'Brien et al. 2009). Results were established through the use of statistical and variance analysis.

The eighth and ninth chapters are dedicated to Discussion and Conclusion. In the Discussion chapter, we discuss the findings of the research in regards to the three main hypotheses that were established. Furthermore, we contextualize the findings of the research among the wider scope of body image research. In the final chapter, we establish the strength, limitation and conclusion of the research.

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Chapter 1

THE ALPHA-MAN

The first chapter is designed to outline the chronology in the construction of the Alpha-man. Alpha-man is a term, currently popularized in online discourse, that describes the personification of the modern male who is at the top of social hierarchy (Ging 2017). We use a deductive method to explore how social relations and power dynamics organize in social systems in which white heterosexual males have power and dominance in society. However, as we put forth in the chapter, we assume men to be victims of patriarchy as well. Gender roles force males into conformity, performativity and hegemonic masculinity (Butler 1988; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Being a *real man* in patriarchal society is constricted to heterosexuality, displays of aggression and dominance and the denial of emotional expression (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Young males are experiencing "*masculinity in crisi*s" which is defined as a loss in identity due to economic precarity and progressive social movements (Horrocks 1994; Lemon 2007; Kitzinger 2005).

Reactionary and compensatory forms of masculinity develop as a response to the changing environment (Babl 1979). In particular, violence against women is a reaction againsts feminist advancement (Faludi 1991). Similarly, increased attention on the physical body is seen as a substitute signifier to economic capital (Hakim 2018; Marshall, Chamberlain, and Hodgetts 2020). Hence, the male body as physical capital has become the site where power, dominance and power can be abstracted in society today (Bourdieu 1986; Weber 2006; Vito, Admire and Hughes 2017). The ideal male body is defined through high muscularity, leanness and low-body fat (Vito, Admire and Hughes 2017). The construction of the Alpha-man combines all the elements of being highly muscular, economically successful and socially dominant (Ging 2017). The first section covers the early beginnings in the development of patriarchy.

1.1 Patriarchy

"The system of patriarchy is a historic construct; it has a beginning; it will have an end, It's time seems to have nearly run its course—it no longer serves the needs of men or women and in its inextricable linkage to militarism, hierarchy, and racism it threatens the very existence of life on earth."(Lerner 1986, 228).

There have been many attempts to theorize the origins of patriarchy (Acker 1989). The most commonly-accepted theory is situated in anthropological discourse which traces patriarchal dynamics to hunter-gatherer societies. It proposes that men grew into positions of power and authority as a consequence of human reproduction. In early human history, high mortality rate meant females needed to reproduce more and attend to their offspring while males hunted, encountered other tribes, and gained possessions (Coontz and Henderson 1986). As tribes grew more advanced in civil society, the ability to exercise control and dominance was inherited through intergenerational male relations (Coontz and Henderson 2017). However, recent findings by archaeologist Randall Haas upended the overarching narrative of the hunter-gatherer societies when she found the remains of a prehistoric biological female beside a tool-kit, suggesting that prehistoric females were hunters as well (Wei-Haas 2020).

According to the Online Etymology Dictionary, origins of the word patriarchy dates back to the 1630s and is derived from the Greek term *patriarches* which describes a society where power was held by and passed down through the elder males. The structure in how power operates can be seen as the withholding of equality and conservation of privilege to the dominant group; males in society (Walby 1989). Male dominance can be seen in various forms of social organization in public and private spheres such as governments, workspaces, and the family unit. It became a self-perpetuating system where men assumed superiority because they were dominant in society (Walby 1989).

Much of male superiority in patriarchal society hinges on biological determinism where male dominance is seen as the natural development of society from its hunter-gatherer origins. Hence, restrictions on what females may or may not do and regulation for their body appears justified. In her book "The Creation of Patriarchy" (1986) Gerda Lerner argues that we need to view patriarchy in terms of the historical development of the human race as opposed to a natural one, and as such is subject to change. Moreover, that patriarchy has different origins in different places. From this perspective, we may view patriarchy as a socially constructed system and as such may be deconstructed.

Advancements in social movements have enabled the establishment of the critical analysis of patriarchy through feminist theory. In Theorising Patriarchy, Sylvia Walby (1989) describes patriarchy as a "system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women."(20). The pervasiveness of these practices in private and public spheres enables the widespread discrimination against women and dominance of the male gender. In her book, Walby provides a critique of various forms of feminist theory including Liberal feminism, Marxist-feminism, and radical feminism, and proposes her analysis.

According to Walby, patriarchy, as analyzed under radical feminism, is seen as a system of male domination where female bodies and sexuality are appropriated and policed. The female body becomes the site where male domination is exercised and where notions of femininity and sexuality are inscribed. Hence, we begin to notice how physical bodies are an integral element to power relations and consequently can become a site for liberation. As Silvia Federici writes in Caliban and the Witch (2004), "The body has been for women in a capitalist society what the factory has been for male waged workers: the primary ground of their exploitation and resistance"(16).

Including critiques of the systematic exploitation under capitalism in relation to gender is derivative of a Marxist-feminist analysis of patriarchy. This feminist theory argues the domination of women occurs under the logic of capital and its domination over labor. Hence, patriarchy is seen as a by-product of capitalism. Some Marxists-feminists argue that the site of male domination is the family in the form of domestic labor and the reproduction of the next generation of workers. From this perspective, women's contribution to the household is seen as unpaid labor in comparison to males who receive wages for their labor (Walby 1989).

Using the aforementioned concepts, Walby (1989) outlines six structures under which patriarchy operates. The first structure considers the inequality in paid work. Walby argues that women are restricted to certain areas of work mostly confined to low-level jobs and are generally underpaid when compared to their male counterparts. The second

structure known as the patriarchal mode of patriarchy considers housework where the labor produced by women such as maintaining the household is undervalued. Women here are seen as reproducing class while men expropriate class. Maria Mies (1998) has contributed to this notion by describing this act as *housewifization* where women are expected to play a subservient role to the male counterpart played as the *breadwinner*.

The third structure is the state where the institutionalization of patriarchy, racism, and capitalism is established as a dominant ideology under which the rest of society functions. This ideology is administered as a 'natural' and almost a 'biological' system in how humans should interact (Lerner 1986; Walby 1989). This sets the stage for the fourth structure known as patriarchal relations to sexuality where heterosexuality is mandated as the normative function. Under this structure, women's sexuality exists for male pleasure. The female body exists in two contradictory states; where the female body is hyper-sexualized and shamed for their sexuality simultaneously. The institutionalization of heterosexuality prompted the heteronormative way of life where heterosexuality is considered the default norm of sexual orientation.

While the institutionalization of heterosexuality has disparaged women, it has also marginalized men who do not conform to heteronormative standards such as homosexual and non-binary men (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). The fifth structure regards male violence against women, not as an isolated incident but as part of a mechanism that upholds patriarchy by subjugating female bodies. The sixth structure is culture itself. The decimation of media, language, and entertainment among other practices works to reinforce patriarchy as a set of practices directed from and to the male gaze (Walby 1989; Thompson 2017).

1.2 Heteronormativity

> *"The imperialism of heteronormativity is ubiquitous" (Johnson 2004, 251).*

In this section, we argue that while patriarchy discriminates against females through the process of policing their bodies and consequently restricting their physical autonomy, males are subjected to mechanisms of control and forces of conformity under patriarchy as well. Under patriarchy, males are expected to perform the traditional masculine gender role. Deviation from this norm may allude to ostracization from family and peers. For example, during the 2010 Olympics, the figure skater Johnny Weir wore a costume embellished with pink sequins and tassels. The reaction of commentators suggested that the athlete should take a gender test insinuating that Weir would be better off competing in the women's Olympics instead. Hence, if a man, at any moment, does not fully conform to the traditional ways of being a man, he will no longer be considered a fully recognized man among his peers in society (Bosson, Vandello, and Caswell 2014).

Similarly, under heteronormativity, males are expected to perform a heterosexualized role, an obligatory heterosexuality. A study titled "Going with the flow" (Ford 2017) found that some college men agree to engage in sexual activity, even though they are hesitant or do not want to, out of fear of being judged, perceived as gay, or a loser. In conclusion, Ford (2017) suggests that some men conduct their sex lives under the guise of gender roles and the necessity to perform masculinity to maintain status among peers. It is my assumption that in order for an oppressive system like patriarchy to self-perpetuate, it needs to breed oppressors and the oppressed. Hence, men as a social group

are not liberated but confined to dominant patriarchal social norms which pressures them to perform and act in a restricted manner. In her book "The Creation of Feminist Consciousness", Lerner (1993) argues that women were not consciously aware of their subordination under patriarchy and it is only after that consciousness grew that women were able to identify it and begin to challenge it. Similarly, when men become aware of their conformance and docility to patriarchal and heteronormative standards, they may begin to consciously work on changing it.

Perhaps the inability to address these issues accurately is due to the conflation that occurs with concepts such as sex, gender, and sexual orientation. In the article "Unpacking hetero-patriarchy", Valdes (1996) finds that this conflation aims to serve the few (heterosexual men) and marginalize the many including queer and non-binary communities. He further suggests that the system that uses "sex as the foundation of human identity and gender as the basis of social organization" to be particularly harbored in Euro-American society where constructs as gender and sexual orientation are treated as immutable, unchangeable and functioning under themes of "naturality," "normality," "morality," "necessity," and "utility" (162-163). Moreover, because different cultures do not pertain to this specific ideology , hetero-patriarchy is not universal nor is it natural.

To Valdes (1996), hetero-patriarchy is nothing more than an attempt to control the human experience and destiny by extension through the regulation of socio-sexual identities. Valdes combines feminist theory with queer theory to form his argument which finds the functionality of heteropatriarchy as the coercive enforcement of a regulatory apparatus on sex, gender and, sexual orientation. He argues that while the system claims to conduct itself under the guise of 'naturality' or 'normality', it is flawed on multiple accounts. If heterosexuality is what nature intended, then you wouldn't need to convince people otherwise because everyone would be heterosexual. But that is indeed not the case.

The ability for hetero-patriarchy to operate under an authoritarian-like doctrine is because it intentionally conflates sex, gender, and sexual orientation. Hence, to address the inequality mandated by hetero-patriarchy as a system that privileges heterosexual men and subordinates other non-conforming bodies, we need to untangle this conflation. Sex relates to the external genitalia of a human being. Gender is the socio-sexual role prescribed onto the sex; typically understood in society as masculine and feminine roles as gender roles. As referenced in the aforementioned example about the Olympics figure skater Johnny Weir. If a man does not fully subscribe to the gender instated by the sex, then speculation regarding his gender (or how well he is portraying his gender) and sexual orientation are inferred. Here, we denote a cross-section between sexual orientation and gender.

Valdes (1996) describes sexual orientation as being carved from gender and becomes the sexual component holding gender. In a patriarchal world, humans must be heterosexual and interact under heteronormative practices. To which socially gender a-typical persons will be marginalized from the rest of society hence creating a system of hierarchy and privileges. According to Valdes, hetero-patriarchy constructs its hierarchal mechanisms under four pillars. The first is the bifurcation of humans into males and females under gender roles. The second is the polarization of gender roles as being mutually exclusive, opposite, or even complementary to each other. The third is the penalization of persons who do not conform; "gender atypicality or transitivity; and the fourth entails the degradation and marginalization of persons who are perceived to be feminized"(170).

To conclude this section, we find that classical feminist texts define patriarchy as the dominance of heterosexual men over women in a given society. The power and authority of men as a social group and as individuals is practiced in the public and private spheres. Marxists-feminists argue for the concept of social reproduction in which women's contribution in the household is undervalued. Other feminist theorists regard the state as being complicit in upholding patriarchal dynamics. At large patriarchy exists as a system of conformity. It pressures humans to conform to an ideology based on heteronormativity. It does so by inscribing a social personality, known as a gender role, onto individuals based on their sex. The social personality, in turn, dictates their sexual orientation. Hence, sex, gender, and sexual orientation are policed under heteronormative and patriarchal standards. The institutionalization of these standards has enabled the penalization and marginalization of persons who do not conform such as non-binary persons. In the following section, we explore the intersection between the institutionalized dynamics of patriarchy, nationalism, and links to masculinity.

1.3 Nationalism and Gender

"The difference between men and women is like that between animals and plants. Men correspond to animals, while women correspond to plants because their development is more placid and the principle that underlines it is the rather vague unity of feeling. When women hold the helm of government, the state is at once in jeopardy, because women regulate their actions not by the demands of universality but by arbitrary inclinations and opinions. Women are educated – who knows how? – as it were by breathing in ideas, by living rather than acquiring knowledge. The status of manhood, on the other hand, is attained only by the stress of thought and much technical exertion" *(Hegel 1821, 166).*

In the previous section, we discussed the role of the state apparatus and the economic modality of capitalism, and its ability to abstract power within gender relations under patriarchy. We observed how different constructs of sex, gender, and sexual orientation intersect with hierarchal social ordering. In this section, we expand on how constructs like gender roles play into the formation of nationalist identity which in turn corresponds with the pervasive progression of capitalism.

As argued in the previous section, female bodies under capitalist patriarchy are seen as responsible for the reproduction of the next generation of workers (Walby 1989). Similarly, Yuval-Davis (1997) argues that women are seen as the biological reproducers of the nation. It is interesting to note how various constructs of the physical (bodies) and imaginary (nation) intersect to construct a cohesive ideology relating to power. That is to suggest that oppression occurs on the physical and the imaginary as well. Yuval-Davis (1997) offers a systematic analysis of the relation between gender and nationalism which relates to citizenship, culture and origin. She explains that the formation of the nation or nationalist identity is derived from the state of nature in orderly society.

Similar to the creation of patriarchy, the creation of the nation is seen as the extension of male's natural ability to rule. Such rudimentary understanding of human capabilities can be traced to Hegel's "Philosophy of the Right" (1821), as quoted in the beginning of this section, where he compares men to animals and women to plants. It is derived from this binary understanding of gender roles that men are more adequate to practice authority and

governance in political spaces. The exclusionary practices previously established in private spheres are then exercised in public spheres. The sphere of influence of male domination widened as state authority traditionally excluded women and ethnic minorities from citizenship among other human rights (Yuval-Davis 1997).

Such processes further solidify power through the institutionalization of gender and militarization of the nation-state. We begin to observe a lineage in the projection of ideas from the imaginary to the physical. Certain attributes are inscribed on to the human based on their physical bodies. Due to these attributes, hetersoexual men are deemed more fitting, more logical and rational to mandate control in law and society.

A fraternal kinship among men based on national identity is expressed where national collectives believe they share not only a similar past but future destiny (Yuval-Davis 1997). It becomes evident how a system based gender hierarchy in social organization is socially-constructed. A gender (men) is assumed superior to another gender (women). To which rationality is portrayed as superior to emotionality and hence justifies the subordination of women. The rationalization of discrimination widens to include the nationalist identity where some nationalities are believed to be superior to others. It is interesting to note that gender is not only assigned to physical bodies but to space as well. The nation for example is considered a masculinist project while the earth is considered feminine e.g. mother earth (Yuval-Davis 1997).

Feminist scholar Cynthia Enloe (2004) has observed that "that nationalist ideologies tend to stem "from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope." (44). Nagel (1998) describes the connection between manhood and nationhood as being premised on the construction of patriotic manhood and the sexualizatin of the military. There exists a symbiotic relationship where defeat of the nation-state is reflected as the emasculation of men as a social group. In 1987, Jeffords noted how America adopted a masculinized appeal towards aggression and violence, through iconizing Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegge, as a way to redeem its image as a nation-state after experiencing loss and defeat following the Vietnam War (Ricciardelli, Clow, and White 2010; Mishra 2018).

Similarly, a form of "reconstructive masculinity" took over during the transition from the Post-Francoist era to modern-day Spain (Ryan and Corbálan 2016). An analysis of several Spanish novels and films found that the performance of masculinity in media was reflected in the representation of the nation-state. For example during the Francoist era, notions of patriotism, familial patriarchy, homophobia, and xenophobia were paramount in the display of traditional masculinity. The readings detected a "transition culture" after the post-Franco era. Ryan and Corbálan (2016) describe Francoist-Catholicism masculinity as being highlighted by exclusionary practices evoking elements of nationhood, xenophobia, and homophobia. By the 1980s and onwards, neoliberalism, women's increased autonomy, and the fragmentation of the nuclear family resulted in the emergence of an "entrepreneurial ideal" in Spanish masculinity with a heavy emphasis on wage-earning. It begs the question of the fate of the working-class Spanish men, who are finding themselves lost in precarity in the globalized and neoliberal Spain. The authors suggest that emphasis on economic productivity eventually leads to depression and mental anxiety (Ryan and Corbálan 2016).

Hierarchy and the ranking of humans is at the heart of discrimination. It is used to justify the subordination of gender, race, class and nationality. The division in social class and race is elemental to our understanding of gender and nationalism because even though all men are privileged under the nation-state, not all men are privileged equally. The ability for some men to accumulate capital exacerbates how much power they can extract in a given society. We find capitalism to be at the cornerstone of various forms of oppressions and is similarly connected to nationalism due to its hierarchical structure.

Marxists theorists like Federici (2004) and Fanon (White 2020) have connected forms of discrimination, gender and racial, with capitalism. If capitalism and various forms of oppression are interconnected through the construct of hierarchy, then it seems logical that capitalism would be connected to nationalism as well. The connection was made evident when George Mosse linked nationalism with the rise of the bourgeois class (Yuval-Davis 1997). That is because the consolidation of power in smaller bodies occurs simultaneously and not separately.

A study by sociologist Mike Brake (1974) showed that individuals who hold extreme ethnocentric and nationalist views often have an inclination towards violence and macho-culture, worshiping muscles, and aggressive behavior. It begs the question: What is the link between gender, nationalism, machismo and violence? The struggle for power, fear of losing it and willingness to maintain it can be seen at the intersection of these constructs. In the following section, we will expand on the relationship between power and masculinity.

1.4 Power and Masculinity: Hegemonic Masculinity

"One can change himself, modify himself to the extent that he changes and modifies the complex relations of which he is the hub. In this sense the real philosopher cannot be other than the politician who modifies the ensemble of these relations...To create one's personality means to acquire consciousness of them...But this is not simple. To be conscious of them already modifies them. Even the necessary relations in so far as they are known to be necessary take on a different aspect. In that sense knowledge is power" *(Gramsci 1980, 352).*

In the previous section, we drew connections between nationalism and gender. We observed how the gendering of bodies and spaces is reflected in the power-struggle between wider political spheres such as states and nations (Yuval-Davis 1997). In this section, we will explore in greater detail how power structures are developed and the role masculinity plays in the dominion of some men as a social group over women and other non-conforming bodies (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). The term "power" has been ubiquitously used in literature especially in the field of social and political sciences. It is used to describe the element at the cross-section of politics. Hegemony, however, as penned in Greek literature by philosophers such as Aristotle and most-notably expanded on years later by Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci has only gained traction in recent years and is being used in various fields of cultural studies (Fontana 2008). To begin this section, we propose the question: what is hegemony and how does it differ from power?

According to Greek philosophers, hegemony is the supremacy that a state, social group or individual persons may exercise over others. An inter-state relationship is developed which gives one state greater power and control in subordinating other consenting states.

The reproduction of power and knowledge amongst those who dominate then becomes justified (Fontana 2008). Gramsci (1980) uses concepts from ancient Greek's understanding of hegemony and applies it through the lens of class-analysis. Hegemony, according to Gramsci, uncovers the power relations in advanced capitalist society. It functions through a dualistic apparatus where force and consent are used by the Bourgeois class to subordinate subaltern classes.

Hegemony is the configuration at which an entity can accumulate power and thereby practice domination (Fontana 2008). In this case, we may understand power as the material capabilities in this configuration. Barnett and Duvall (2005) describe various dimensions of power which constitute an actor's ability to determine their fate and destiny. Hence, when Gramsci describes hegemony as 'the withholding of power', it entails the formation of social groups which do not possess the ability to self-determinate. Power may take various forms such as institutionalized, constitutional, or material power such as a capita (Barnett and Duvall 2005). The greater the concentration of power in one body, the greater their ability to create a hegemonic force and inforce domination.

In Gramsci's work, he describes society as a complex mechanism built on the everyday human interaction negotiated through the relation of force. Power is everywhere and exists in everything we do. It is ideological and embedded in culture, economy and politics. The function of the state is to become an apparatus through which power is mandated. By intersecting with various institutions, it possesses the ability to set a standard and define the terms through which social dynamics are to be understood. Here, Gramsci develops the notion of consent among the oppressed.

The function of the state is to subdue the masses by creating a conformist attitude among civilians, making them docile and complacent against the inequality of the power struggle. Unlike coercion which uses forceful tactics, consent presents the dominance of bourgeois values and norms as standardized and justified (Daldal 2014). We observe how supremacy over class, gender and race is often presented as natural almost biological order, as was demonstrated in the previous section. Situated between consent and coercion, hegemony is mandated by the dominant class through ethico-political and economic activity over subordinate masses (Carlos de Orellana 2015).

There is a trace of Machiavellian influence in Grasmci's thoughts on power and hegemony (Daldal 2014). Between the duality of the dominated and those who dominate, Gramsci believed the working class can attain liberation through gaining hegemony just as in Machiavelli's The Prince. In line with Marxist theory, Gramsci noted that the working class can overturn power relations by becoming aware of them.

We note the similarity between this notion in overcoming oppression through awareness with Lerner's impressions in "The Creation of Feminist Consciousness" (1994) as she writes:

 "Women, ignorant of their own history do not know what women before them had thought and taught. So generation after generation, they struggled for insights others had already had before them"(13).

Similar to Gramsci, here Lerner argues that women are able to challenge patriarchal dynamics once they become conscious of their own subordination. It appears logical for

the rationality of power relations of the state and bourgeois class to intersect with gender and masculinity. Oppression functions as a superstructure and relies on the mico-aggressions, micro-marginalization, micro-levels of propaganda of everyday life to construct a coherent worldview in which the domination of some groups appears natural and normalized.

Connell's (1993) theory of hegemonic masculinity was heavily influenced by Gramsci's work on Hegemony. She argues that, similar to class relations, a struggle for dominance exists among gender complexities. Hegemonic Masculinity is the culturally idealized form of masculinity and functions by having domination over women and other marginalized ways of being a man (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Connell suggests that multiple and competing forms of masculinity exist simultaneously. Following the logic of the patriarchal gender system, a hierarchy among masculinities is established where the dominant group determines which is most culturally valued. Some attributes of hegemonic masculinity include appeals to aggression, toughness, hardness, ableness, competitiveness and control. It does not necessarily incite violence but could use violence to support it (Whitehead 2002). Moreover at its core, hegemonic masculinity is confined to hetrosexuality or "a gender role that is as much not gay as it is not female." (Jewkes et al. 2015, 113).

The ability to set the standards that define the terms in which masculinity is to be understood and frame social and gender dynamics is one of the ways hegemony in patriarchal society is maintained. Connell and Messerschmidt 2005 (2005) assert that even though this standard is not normal in the statistical sense, it is normative. Hegemonic masculinity, then, becomes the compass through which other masculinities are tested against. As a result, other forms of masculinity such as complicit, marginalized and subordinate masculinity come into formation. Complicit Masculinity recounts attributes that do not necessarily fit into the hegemonic model but don't challenge it and often admire it. They are men who might feel sympathetic towards women but do not challenge patriarchal policies and continue to benefit from it. Marginalized Masculinity cannot fit into the hegemonic model because of characteristics like race or class yet still subscribes to gender norms such as familial patriarchy and occupational success. Subordinate Masculinity opposes Hegemonic Masculinity by exhibiting qualities such such as emotional expressiveness or what is considered as effeminate behaviour (Connell and Messerschmidt 2015). (*See Table 1*).

Table 1. Hegemonic Masculinity

Hegemonic masculinity	Culturally dominant, appeals to whiteness, aggression and emotional restraint and ableism.
Complicit masculinity	Does not fully conform to hegemonic masculinity and benefits from patriarchal dynamics.
Marginalized masculinity	Can not achieve hegemonic status and societal privileges due to attributes such as race or disability. Exhibits attributes such as aggression.

Subordinate masculinity	Socially penalized from exhibiting traits that are in opposition to hegemonic masculinity such as homosexuality and effeminacy.

SOURCE: Connell and Messerschmidt 2015.

The struggle for dominance along the male hierarchy then becomes evident when accounting for the oppression experienced by men at the hands of other men. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) remark that one needs to understand hegemonic masculinity not only as a role to conform to but is distinguished by a set of actions carried through 'culture, institutions and persuasion' which allow men's dominance over women and some men to continue. Connell illuminates the possibility of change within gender hierarchies as old forms of masculinities disperse and new ones emerge. That is to suggest the possibility of a hegemonic masculinity that perhaps seeks to become less oppressive or even abolish gender hierarchies.

1.5 Gender Socialization and Gender Performativity

"With the blue color comes the toy-guns, trucks and soccer or basketballs. With the pink color comes the ballerina clothes, Barbie dolls and easy-bake oven. We assign the color 'pink' to 'girls' just like we assign the gender 'woman' to 'females'. A woman is almost persuaded to embody this nurturing and affectionate role while rationality and assertiveness are reserved for the masculine gender role" (El Kateb 2019,sec. 1,para. 1).

Gender socialization is defined as the "process whereby individuals develop, refine and learn to 'do' gender through internalizing gender norms and roles as they interact with key agents of socialization, such as their family, social networks and other social institutions"(John et al. 2017, 6). The process of gender socialization begins before birth and can be seen by the simple choice of the colour of balloons that are presented where blue balloons are given to boys and pink balloons given to girls. As trivial as this mundane interaction, there is a wider social identity that is being written on the infantal body.

Gender roles are the roles people in society are expected to perform based on their sex (Blackstone 2003). Traditional masculine roles often position men as natural leaders, risk-takers, and rational beings. A common gender stereotype regarding males is that they are not emotional while females are perceived as irrational and emotional. A sociological and feminist persepctive towards gender roles posits it as a social-construction where male and females acquire learned behaviour due to gender socialization (Blackstone 2003).

Gender socialization lies at the cyclical pattern in how hegemonic masculinity as well as patriarchy maintain the ability to self-perpetuate. *(See Figure 1)*. Stemming from a patriarchal society, hegemonic masculinity is seen as the set of practices that justifies the dominance of *some* men over women and other marginalized ways of being a man. The use of the word *some* is important to understand how hegemonic masculinity is successful in creating its hierarchical mechanism. In Western society, the culturally idealized way of being a man includes appeals to Whiteness, heterosexuality and high or middle class social status. The standards which define a "real man" according to hegemonic masculinity is a gender role that embodies aggression, emotional restraint, adventurous attitude, sexual prowess, toughness of body and mind, athleticism, competitiveness,

dominance and control (Donaldson 1993). The more a male can adhere to these roles, the more they are rewarded in society for being able to become closer to the status of hegemonic masculinity.

Figure 1. Pattern of a self-perpetuating patriarchal society
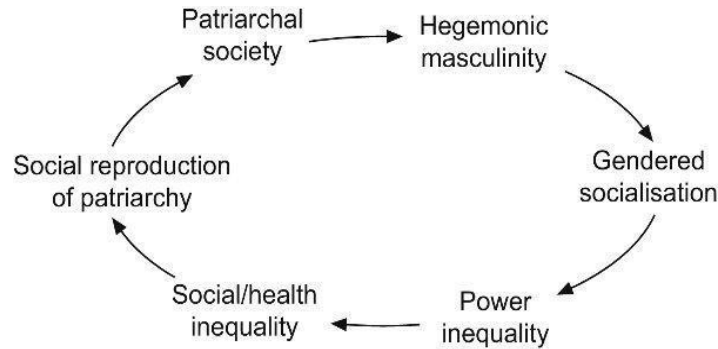
SOURCE: Alex Scott-Samuel 2009

Since boyhood, males are expected to regulate their actions and behaviours according to masculine gender roles. Judith Butler (1988) describes gender performativity as the ongoing repetition of these acts and behaviour under a system of regulation presents itself as stylized performance. For Butler, the subject is not at liberty to choose their own social identity. A natural way of being does not exist as cultural inscription pre-exists birth . In this sense, the subject has to follow a cultural script and choses from the limited "costumes" that have been ready-made. The cultural script is the conditions under which gender socialization occurs. Hence, gender is not what somebody is but what somebody 'does' (Butler 1988). For males, this entails an ongoing repetition of 'manly acts' to secure 'manhood status' (Bosson, Vandello and Caswell 2013).

There have been recent studies which investigated the impact of internalizing traditional gender roles on psychological well-being. Research examined the relationship between conforming to the traits such dominance, violence, anti-femininity, emotional control, and self reliance with negative outcomes like depression, aggression and hostility, and poorer overall psychological well-being. The authors suggest that fear-based learning and personality policing is intrinsic to traditional masculine norms (Rich 2018). Fear of being perceived "not masculine enough," male-gendered socialization often leads to avoidance or emotional suppression which in return is linked to emotional dysregulation in men, self harm or suicidal thoughts (Rich 2018; Jakupcak et al. 2006), Due to the pressure to conform to stoic male stereotypes and the negative consequences that permeate, we assume males to be victims of gender roles and patriarchy. Gender role strain is described as a form of distress experienced by men when they feel they don't live up to the traditional concept of 'manhood' (Frederick et al. 2007). Boys are expected to live up to this ideal even though it barricades them by being humanely unrealistic and intentionally unattainable (Vito, Admire and Hughes 2017).

In her book "XY: On Masculine Identity", Badinter (1995) identifies this traditional conception of what it means to be a 'real man' in society. She explains that such rigid and restrictive constructions of the image of masculinity are passed down through generations. She regards the role of traditional masculinity from the role of macho masculinity. Hence, the role of the 'real man' is drawn through lineages of strength, success and virility. Badinter describes three processes in which the construction of the

masculine identity is made which are differentiation, exclusion and denial. However, the most crucial aspect of masculinity that has been passed through male figure is the perception of femininity. To be a 'real man' translates into 'don't be a woman'.The masculine identity views femininity as something to be feared and consequently rejected. Hence, in order to maintain the privileges, power and hegemony associated with masculinity, the male has to reject expressions of vulnerability and disguises it through displays of aggression and violence. The author suggests that being a man under patriarchy is difficult. However, Badinter proposes that new role models for young males may introduce changes to the present social dynamics. Such role models may aim to be more inclusive, value women's contributions and reject homophobia.

While having to live up to this ideal, men and boys are simultaneously barricaded from seeking relief or an outlet for their anxieties, fear, and insecurities nor provide them with adequate means to communicate emotionally. A study by The British Journal of Developmental Psychology by Aznar and Tenenbaum (2014) on American and Spanish families found that mothers and fathers were less likely to use emotional words when communicating with their 4-year old boys and mothers are more likely to use emotional content and description when speaking to their 4-year-old daughters. Even though no difference in the children's understanding of emotions was detected, the study suggests that parents continue to perpetuate gender stereotypes by speaking to their children differently.

From the above, we define masculinity as a social construct of the male identity negotiated by power relations constituting dominance over class, gender, and race. In line with an ever evolving image of masculinity in Connell's insight, we put forward the assumption that new hybrid forms of masculinity are currently taking shape (Ging 2017). We consider the current neoliberal economy, political and social movements as well as the advent of social media as determining factors in how social and gender relations are formed. The decision to include social media is due to its revolutionizing property in how we as humans communicate and its pivotal role in administering transnational social movements such as the current fourth-wave feminism, and in turn challenging dominant social dynamics. In the next section, we will explore the relationship between masculinity and neoliberalism and what we consider to be the hegemonic form of masculinity today; the marketplace man.

1.6 Neoliberalism and the Marketplace man

"To be white, or straight, or male, or middle class is to be simultaneously ubiquitous and invisible. You're everywhere you look, you're the standard against which everyone else is measured. You're like water, like air" (Kimmel 2019, 1).

In this section, we aim to narrate the transformation of masculinity throughout the past decades. As highlighted by Connell in the previous section, the attributes that make up hegemonic masculinity are not stagnant but subject to change over time. The change is influenced by economic forces and social movements which present a threat to male dominance. Hence, masculinity reformulates itself in order to maintain hegemony in society.

In his critically acclaimed book Manhood in America: A Cultural History, American sociologist Michael Kimmel (2006) proposes that there are two male archetypes that

emerged during the eighteenth century. The Genteel Patriarch and Heroic Artisan are ideals of manhood that evolved from Europe and were later adopted in the United States. The Genteel Patriarch was mainly defined through means of land ownership and refined taste in food, clothing and the arts. Real life examples of this ideal include Thomas Jefferson and George Washington (Carrera 2006). The Genteel Patriarch exercised governance over his estate and authority over his family through which his lineage was carried out. He was recognized as a devoted father in charge of maintaining education, morality, ethics, and tradition. Even though land ownership is central to this ideal, the Genteel Patriarch does not work. He owned slaves and hired manual labor to work on his farm. Hence, we recognize the first distinction of dominant masculinity where race and class are paramount to its construction. In contrast to the image of the Genteel Patriarch is the Heroic Artisan. It was expressed through mastery of craftsmanship exemplifying success by being autonomous and self-reliant. The Heroic Artisan was independent and did not rely on outside influences to lead a stable life. Like the Genteel Patriarch, the Heroic Artisan held patriarchal authority and was considered a man of virtue and dignity among his peers (Carrera 2006).

By the turn of the nineteenth century, the Industrial Revolution introduced drastic changes in social and gender relations as new forms of economy and businesses took shape. The previously held beliefs of masculinity withered as increasing competition found itself in the marketplace. Thus emerged the image of the Self-made man (Kimmel 1996, 19). We stop to take note of the influence economic modalities, capitalism in this case, have on the makeup of the dominant male image at any given time. Ryan and Corbálan (2016, 4) contend that "masculinity is as much economic as social" and merges to form an interdependent bond. This makes the ideals evoked in masculinity vulnerable to the greater bodies of nation-state formation and consequently uneven distributions of wealth and property. Moreover, because capitalist economy is rooted in a rank-based system that succeeds through processes of marginalization, we find masculinity to adhere to a similar rank-based system that is mediated by homosocial relations (Ryan and Corbálan 2016).

The newly repacked image of masculinity in capitalistic economic life now relies heavily on its success in the marketplace. That is to say, being a "real man" is determined by one's ability to accumulate capital, social status and authority (Kimmel 2006). The "self-made man" does not depend on inherited wealth or material but is individualistic, self-controlled and determines his own fate (Carrera 2016, 64). The image of the self-made man is an ideal that is deeply rooted in the American Dream; where a man who is not is not born into privilege could by his own dedication, ambition and hard work become a great success in life. Successors, then, "enjoy increased social approval and a rise in social hierarchy as a reward of the man's efforts." (Diplom-Sozialwissenschaftlerin 2010, para. 5).

The ultimate realization of this ideal manifests in the Marketplace man which Kimmel (2009) describes as a "man in power, a man with power and a man of power" (62). It beholds the characteristics of aggression, competition and anxiety enacted in the public and market sphere. The overlapping between the public and marketsphere can be seen as the beginning of the neoliberalization of masculinity. By neoliberalization, we refer to the driving force in the last capitalist economy which seeks the unlimited expansion of the free market. It is a fundamentalist viewpoint of the world which places economic profit at the forefront. Neoliberalism collects power from the free market, the state, and patriarchy to produce a class of ultra-rich and powerful men.

The neoliberal economic system presiding over the twenty-first century may be distinguished by the global widening of the gap between social classes. Because neoliberal capitalism is situated in excessive competition, the concentrationation of wealth and capital comes as an inherent consequence; a consequence which disportionately affects women, people of colour and other marginalized groups (Dalingwater 2018). The competitive nature of neoliberalism creates a feedback loop with dominant forms of masculinity. Hence, neoliberal patriarchy becomes the embodiment of "aggression, competition and anxiety", and in order to maintain dominance and social hierarchy, men have to become "the Marketplace Man."

Gender specialist Lissa Lincoln describes 'The Marketplace Man' as "an ideal of a fraction of men in society who hold the political, economic and social power of influence in a capitalist economy."[1] Lincoln (2018) explains the Marketplace as an "exalted form of manhood that men and boys are not only expected to live up to but learn to admire and aspire to". This form of manhood is one that needs to be proven; meaning a boy transitioning into his adult phase has to through external or internal conditions prove his ability to instate his manhood (Kimmel 2006). In Precarious Manhood, Bosson, Vandello and Caswell (2013, 1036) attach two qualities to this form of manhood by describing it as "elusive and tenuous." By elusive, they mean achieving this level of manhood is not a developmental certainty for boys but it is an achievement a boy needs to unlock through his actions. This entails an ongoing repetition of 'manly' acts to secure the 'manhood' status (Butler 1988). By tenuous, they mean that once earned, the status of manhood could be revoked through a series of shortcomings. Males live in a world where they need to continuously perform gender, where becoming an adult does not necessitate becoming "a man", and where becoming a man needs to be proven. The manner in which manhood in patriarchal society is proven is through appeals to heterosexuality and distancing themselves from that which is perceived as feminime or homosexual.

We link the ability to prove male hetrosexuality by succeeding in sexual relations. Indeed, the notion of nonrelational sex is posited as a "rites of passage" for boys entering manhood. Nonrelational sex for men is conceptualized within the framework of success and achievement (Kimmel 2015). As Kimmel remares in "The Gender of Desire" (2015) how men stand to gain status from sexual experience while the reverse is applicable for women whose sexual inexperience is lauded as a virtue among girls, it is a cause of stigmatization among boys. Virgin-shaming is the act of bullying and ridicule towards boys (Fleming and Davis 2018). If we can spell it out in layman's term: having sex with a lot of women proves you're not gay, and not being gay brings you closer to hegemonic masculinity. This representation of sexual experiences not objectifies women and renders their bodies as sexual conquests but barricades men from developing healthy sexual relationships. A recent study on 1000 participants found that half of men have encounted unwanted or noncensual sexual relations (Rawlinson 2021). The study suggests that it might take decades for male participants to share their experiences of sexual abuse while some men don't at all. The hesitation to discuss these issues is because men are afraid of appearing weak in a social context where they are rewarded for being sexually dominant.

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[1]The 51%: What is the "incel" movement and how representative are they? (2018)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GnjJ2NUY3AA

Just as it did in the 19th century, we assume that the current economic modality is also affecting men and therefore the makeup of the dominant male image. When in the recent past, success in performing masculinity relied on success in the marketplace, many young men today are feeling slighted by society as they can not find their place in late capitalism. The concentration of wealth and power today leaves many young men without access to resources and therefore status which would have conventionally allowed them to instate their manhood. The failures of neoliberalism, conflicting messaging and constant self-policing has left men in a state of crisis. In the section, we expand more on masculinity in crisis.

1.7 Masculinity in Crisis

"This is the cryptic message of masculinity: don't be who you are. Conceal your weakness, your tears, your fear of death, your love for others. Conceal your impotence. Conceal your potency. Disparage women, since they remind you too much of your feminine side. Disparage gay men too since that's too near the bone as well. Fake your behaviour. Dominate others, then you can fool everyone, especially yourself that you feel power"(Horrocks 1994, 25).

Throughout this chapter, we have analyzed gender in terms of power relations which grants men dominance and privilege in society. When considering the policing attribute of masculinity as a gender role, we find males to be under constant pressure to prove and identify themselves. Old masculine notions of being the "breadwinner", the "man of the house", and the "leader of the pack", are no longer compatible with 21st century living. Under neoliberal capitalism, men are becoming disenfranchised as it becomes increasingly difficult to secure jobs due to a global rise in unemployment (King 2021). Social movements such as feminism, black lives matter gay liberation and transrights has created shifts in power dynamics and upended the traditional nuclear family (Lemon 2007; Kitzinger 2005). Men who have been brought up to be 'rational and violent' appear to be in a state of precariousness due to a loss of identity (Horrocks 1994). If they can not be economically, politically and socially dominant, then what does it mean to be a "real man"?

The loss of masculine identity is what authors call "masculinity in crisis". In the book "Marked Men: White masculinity in crisis", attention is paid to white men who have benefited and continue to benefit from supremacy of whiteness and masculinity. Robinson (2000) argues that white male dominance occurs in the dark and it is this opaqueness that allows it to continue. The inheritance of power and privilege through the unmarked bodies of white men. To be "unmarked" is the power of invisibility under which white male supremacy over class, gender and race functions as normative and naturalized. Historically then, bodies that are considered 'marked' are females, the colonized, the enslaved and the laborer (Haraway 1991).

Crisis in masculinity should not be understood as an isolated event but an ongoing repetition of crises. Everytime there is a significant social change, be it first-second wave feminism, civil rights and gay liberation, dominant masculinity encounters a 'crisis' as these movements brings visibilty to the injustices of white male dominance. Hence, the "unmarked bodies" are becoming visibilized. It is in my opinion that because young men today are experiencing a "loss of identity", and feminist theory has not been made accesible to them, they are vulnerable to messaging from reactionary movements. In the

following section, we will expand in further detail the compensatory form of masculinity that has emerged to fill in the "crisis in masculinity".

1.8 Reactionary and compensatory forms of masculinity

"The final solution to triumph over my enemies was to destroy them, to carry out my Day of Retribution, to exact my ultimate and devastating vengeance against all of the popular young people who never accepted me, and against all women for rejecting me and starving me of love and sex" (Rodger 2016, 112).

In 2014, 22-year old Elliot Rodger killed six people and injured 14 people before taking his own life in what is known as the Isla Vista massacre (Bratich and Banet-Weiser 2019). Rodger felt that the world, especially women, have wronged him and by targeting and killing women he would be restoring justice and balance to the world. His 140-page manifesto "My Twisted World" (2016) reveals misogynistic thoughts detailing the desire to lock women in cages and regulate "their breeding". For Rodger, all women are deemed unfit to choose a mate and hence must be placed under control. These violent thoughts were not present as intensely but grew over time. In his youtube videos, Rodger recalls efforts in an attempt to appeal to women. He displayed luxury items such as designer sunglasses and drove a BMW car.[2] He dressed well and articulated his thoughts as a "gentleman". Nevertheless, he felt that women rejected him in favor of tall, muscular and attractive men known online as "alpha-males" (Rodger 2016; Ging 2017). As his resentment and misogyny grew, Rodger sought to punish women in what he called a 'Day of Retribution'.

The story of Elliot Rodger is elemental in connecting the various themes of the research. We observe how accessibility to luxury items or wealth, female sexuality, the male physical body and violence are all converted to forms of capital. These forms of capital, in turn, are connected to hegemonic masculinity and the ability to perform masculinity successfully in a patriarchal world.

Rodger's manifesto "My Twisted World" (2016) reveals an emotionally charged strain between adhering to strict gender roles, anxiety about his masculinity, and wanting to be accepted by society. In his book Angry White Men (2015) Kimmel distinghes the sentiment as "aggrieved entitlement" where men direct their fear, anxiety and rage towards unsuspecting victims as part of a remasculinization process.

The case of Eliot Rodger is not an isolated incident but part of a larger social landscape where men are using violence to reassert their place in social hierarchy. The widespread use of violence against women can be seen as a "the restructuring of manhood" and functions as a compensatory mechanism (Türkoğlu 2013; Morris and Ratajczak 2019). Following the Isla Vista massacre, misogynistic pockets in online fringe communities held Elliot Rodger as a hero and devoted fan videos and blogs in his memory. They refer to him as "The supreme gentleman" or "Saint Elliot" (BBC 2018). (*See Image 1*).

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[2] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nBBUbZmcb5Y

Suspect behind the Toronto van attack which killed 10 people and injured 16 people, Alek Minassian claimed that he was radicalized through these online subculture spaces where "beta-males" (as they see themselves) called to overthrown feminist domination (Cecco 2019).

One reason why some men feel persecuted by feminism is because they do not feel like they have power. Carrera (2006) explains that men as a social group have power but men individually do not feel powerful. Moreover, men feel pressure to perform under a system of heteronormative and masculine conventions and when feminist movements challenge these conventions, it destabalizes current power dynamics. As a result, some men feel the need to counteract social progress in order to maintain their position in social hierarchy.

Image 1. Photoshopped images of Elliot Rodger
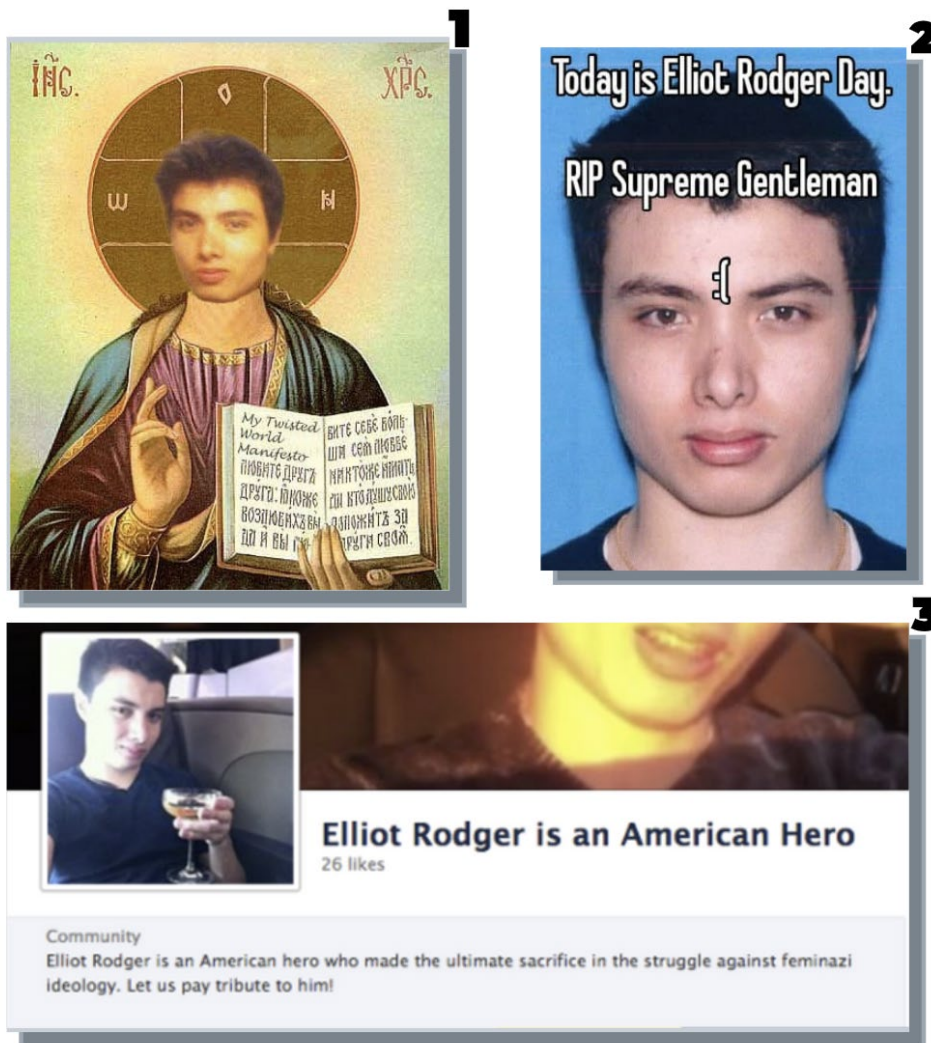
SOURCE: Google Images (2021)

Following his arrest, Minassian stated that there are many men online who feel the same way but are too much of cowards to act dangerously in their anger (Cecco 2019). We observe from both cases (Rodger & Minassian) that once measures of trying to achieve hegemonic masculine status were exhausted, violence becomes the acceptable means of reinstating masculinity and dominance. Moreover, the use of violence is perceived as an act of courage and compensates for feelings of inadequacy.

Compensatory masculinity hypothesis suggests that some "males engage in exaggerated masculinity and anti-social behaviour as a response to sex-role threat" (Babl 1979, 252). An experimental study found that men experienced a certain amount of anxiety found when asked to perform a traditionally female-oriented task such as braiding hair or a rope . Moreover, the male participants experienced relief and a form of remasculinization when they were asked to engage in a stereotypical male activity afterwards such as hitting a punching bag. The study found that the more anxiety men experienced about being perceived as less masculine from braiding the rope, the harder they would hit the punching bag (Bosson et al. 2009).

Susan Faludi (1991) has documented this counter-feminist movement in her book "Blacklash: The Undeclared War Against American Women. She uses political, economic and social analysis to demonstrate an almost invisible development in media spheres which redirects blame on to women and more particularly feminism for the injustices women experience under patriarchy. Faludi highlights a pattern which occurs every time socially progressive movements advance and achieve important institutional and personal milestones. Threatened by its potential success, reactionary movements implement a pre-emptive strike in attempt to hinder the feminist movemet from potentially achieving its goals. From this lense, we may view the violence perpetrated by Rodger and Minassian against women as the contemporary backlash against feminism.

Today, in the midst of globalization and communications revolution, fourth-wave feminism has surged across the world. Demonstrations in countries like Argentina, Iran, Palestine, and Spain have demanded the recognition of women's right to autonomous bodily control among other rights (Al Kateb et al. 2019; Cousens 2021). The most prominent demand articulated amongst feminists today is the Me Too campaign which addresses the epidemic nature of sexual violence against women. Within a few years, the movement became strong enough to bring down very powerful male figures in the media industry including Harvey Weinstein and Jeffery Episetin (Reilly 2019). Indeed, contemporary feminism has forced media and coroporate industries to change their language regarding women and even adopt feminist language.

Less than 10 years ago, a fast food burger company Carl's Jr. released a series of television advertisements featuring hyper-sexualized women consuming their product. The objectification of female bodies under a heterosexual male gaze to sell products has been a coarsely used technique in advertising during the past decades (McAllister and DeCarvalho 2014). *(See Image 2)*.

Image 2. Carl's Jr. television advertisement
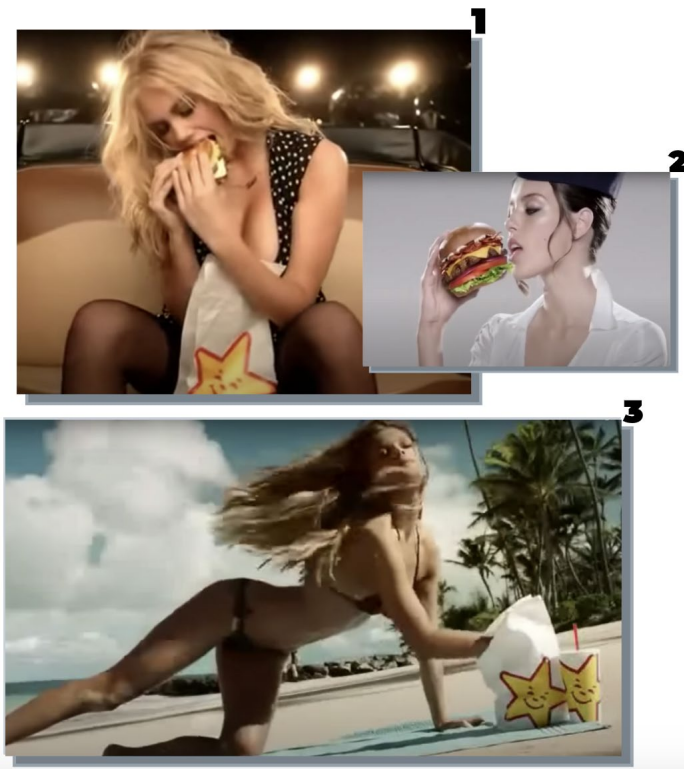
SOURCE: Youtube (2021)

However, given the discourse surrounding feminism today and the accessibility of social media, it is highly unlikely that corporate chains can promote such explicit images without receiving criticism from consumers. Rosalind Gill (2008) recounts that contemporary advertising has shifted from representations that portray women as passive objects and instead have adopted discourses of "agency" and "empowerment". In recent years, clothing brands such as H&M have incorporated socially progress discourse and feminist lanauage in their merch"andise. (*See Image 3).*

In 2019, Gillette, a shaving company, released a short film called We Believe: The best that men can be".[3] The advertisement echoed sentiments of the Me Too movement in and warned against the dangers of sexual harassment. While such changes in industries and corporations may be perceived as advancement, Gill (2008) argues that the co-optation of socially progressive discourse brings forth a new technology of discipline and regulation. We will discuss these concepts in further detail in the following chapters.

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[3] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=koPmuEyP3a0

Image 3. H&M feminist merchandise

SOURCE: Google Images (2021)

The dramatic and drastic shift in mainstream discourse, from images that hypersexualized and objectifed women to "feminism is for everyone", over the span of one decade has ignited reactionary sentiment among men. In response to the Gillette advertisement which has twices as much dislike to like ratio on Youtube, men took to online forums to express their anger and frustration of a world where 'feminism has gone too far' and 'men can't be men anymore'. In the following section, we will expand on another form of compensatory masculinity which centers on the male body (Wolf 2019).

1.9 Physical Capital and the Male Body

Body work provides men with a site -their bodies and a cultural practice- the disciplinary regimes and discourses of body-building- with which to redress personal anxieties through the pursuit of a muscular body image that embodies normative masculinity"(Wiegers 1998, 148)

In 2007, Russian president Vladimir Putin released a series of himself bare-chested in the wilderness. The staged-photographs displayed Putin engaging in various masculine activities such as riding a horse or playing judo. The aim of distributing these images is to send a global message that Putin is not only dominant in terms of political and economic power but in physical strength as well. In "Putin's Muscular Politics and the Power of Photography", Bjelica (2015) argues that Putin utilizes his physical body as an extension of male dominance and power.

In these photographs, Putin's body undergoes a form of objectification where he becomes a passive subject. However, unlike the sexual objectification of female bodies, Putin's

muscular physique aims to signify strong leadership and consequently stroke nationalist sentiment. The male body becomes the image that mirrors the strength of the nation-state.

In this theory of Capital, Bourdieu (1986) describes the existence of four types of capital: economic, symbolic, social, and cultural. Economic capital refers to material possessions such as property, land and money. Symbolic capital denotes the image a person constructs of themselves to present to society, their prestige. Social capital reflects a person's social status, network and standing in society. Cultural capital refers to education level, habits and cultural practices. The more an individual can accumulate these forms of capital, the greater the ability to exercise power and domination (Holroyd 2002). From cultural capital, Bourdie puts forth the notion of the habitus which is the physical embodiment of capital. It is the manner in which the physical body moves and interacts with its surroundings. Bourdieu states, "The body is in the social world but the social world is in the body" (Bourdieu 1990, 190).

Bourdieu's insight into corporeal sociology has enabled our understanding of the body as a form of physical capital in itself (Holroyd 1998). As the body becomes an object of social value, it becomes a symbol of self-esteem and status, and body features then become personality traits (Carrillo Durán, Jiménez Morales, Sánchez Hernández 2010). However, in order to assign meaning to body parts, first, the body must be stripped of human value. Anthropologists have argued that under capitalism the body and body parts undergo commodification through a process of fragmentation (Sharp 2000). The body is fragmented into body parts such as skin, eyes, lips, weight, and torso. These parts undergo fetishization and commodification. The body as a physical commodity transforms into physical capital and enables its usage as a product or goods for exchange (Sharp 2000). Mauss (1970) has argued that the exchange of the physical body as goods is entrenched in a wider socio-political framework and becomes symbolically charged by their links to power and hierarchy. Hence, this explains Putin putting his body on global display.

The fragmentation of the human body into 'fragments' is discussed extensively in Pérez Gauli's book "El cuerpo en venta. Relación entre arte y publicidad" (2000). The book entails a historical exploration of bodily representation and stereotypes in art and advertising. According to the author, the body presents itself in various forms such as an icon, a symbol and a language in itself. With the advancement of capitalism in the early beginnings of the 20th century, the advertising industry began adopting the body representation and images depicted in art within its own discourse. This resulted in the emergence of a new form of media which cross-sections between art and advertising. Pérez Gauli focuses on the aspect of the model in typical artistics photography and how that became a staple of advertising imagery. Similarly, the representation of the body as body parts including face, mouth, and sexual organs used by artists as symbols of liberation and self-expression has become a source of advertising incentive.

The emergence of the male body as a passive object and its commodification as physical capital in mainstream media has only been as recent as 30 years (Bordo 1999). The book "Media and Body Cult" (2010) describes the increased sexual objectification of the female body and emphasis on youth and beauty during the 1990s as a reaction to third-wave feminism. As we mentioned in the previous section, today mainstream media and advertising has shifted into a "love your body" discourse (Gill and Elias 2014). We propose that today, the increased attention, emphasis and pressure on the male body to be

big, strong and powerful can be seen as a form of reaction to the current fourth-wave feminism.

In his essay on the commodification of the male body in modern society, Juan Rey (2018) analyzes the depiction of the male image in advertising. He proposes three stages in the evolution of the commodification of the male body. The first occurs post Civil war in the 1950s in which the society in Spain is witnessing rapid changes to socio-political and economic life. Here, emerges the image of the 'man's man'. In advertising, this image is represented as the traditional macho man, the family protector. Upon the arrival of the 20th century and after the death of Franco, society in Spain began to experience a shift in its political scope as desires for more democatic ambitions were installed. The advancement of the neoliberalized economy and market persuades the public into increasing consumerist behaviour. As such, advertising introduces the image of meterosexual male, the male who looks after this appearance and maintains prominent grooming habits often evocative of an upscale lifestyle. Hence, the previous image of the macho man in media advertisements transforms into the image of the beautiful. The image of the male body seen in the third stage hinges off the beautiful and expands the emphasis on appearance to include the commodification of the entire male body.

In order to maintain power and hegemony, the marketplace today is targeting young males in the form of weight gain, muscle-building, cosmetic products and cellulite cream (Jankowski 2019). Today, the botulinum toxin procedure (botox) can be seen specifically targeted towards the male demographic. In an attempt to masculinize the procedure, which was traditionally associated with women, it is being referred to as "Brotox" (Botox for men) (Olya 2015). Infact, the American Society of Plastic Surgery has reported a 337% increase in males using botox in the past two decades (Ledbetter 2019). Protein powders and shakes, once exclusively used by athletes and professional body-builders, can today be seen everywhere in supermarkets and shops and the availability of these products makes it difficult to evade. (Jankowski 2019).

The growing pressure on men to be youthful, strong and muscular is gradually developing and becoming normalized. This changing narrative regarding male physical body demonstrates how social and market scripts can break through, with the use of media, from a traditionally "feminized" position of diet plans and pressure to look younger to place a similar pressure on men. Furthermore, this change exemplifies the malleability and manufacturing of beauty and body ideals.

Today, we find that the male body exists as an agent that reflects their ability to abstract power by recalling a set of cultural signifiers. As Weber (2006) notes "the male body itself is the text on which physical, and, increasingly, social power can be written"(291). Therefore, a man's physical traits such as strength, height and size come to represent his potency and masculinity (Vito, Admire and Hughes 2017). As such, the male body becomes an instrument of power (Bordo 1999) and muscularity becomes the utmost and precise measurement of hegemonic masculinity (Ricciardelli, Clow, and White, 2010).

With the rise of economic disparity and growing social movements, men today find themselves without access to traditional signifiers of power such as economic capital or social capital, and therefore turn to their bodies for physical capital (Vito, Admire and Hughes 2017). As a perceived "crisis on masculinity", the male body becomes the vehicle to reinstate dominance and compensatory display of masculinity is presented through

high-muscularity and low body-fat (Frederick et al. 2017). Those who are unable to conform to the masculine body ideals risk appearing less masculine or feminine (Vito, Admire and Hughes 2017).

Yvonne Wiegers (1998) has directly linked the growing popularity of bodybuilding with the "crisis in masculinity". Her essay discusses a homogenous feeling of powerlessness among males who are caught between the struggle of adhering to traditional gender norms and social changes that may strip them of their power. As such, males call on a set cultural signifiers through acts of bodybuilding which they may refer to as a form of compensatory display of masculinity and therefore are able to construct and validate a specific male identity.

It becomes evident that the physical body, be it male or female, is a site where the negotiation of power and social relations occurs. In the final section of this chapter, we combine concepts of the previous sections such as patriarchy, neoliberalism, feminism, White supremacy, violence and the male body to discuss a neo-masculinity forming in online spaces.

1.10 The Alpha-Man

"These guys believe something has been taken from them that they were entitled to, that they deserved, and it was given to people who don't deserve it, like immigrants and gay people and women. Joining a 'white nationalist organization' is a way to get it back, to restore your masculinity" (Kimmel 2018, para. 8)

In recent years, disenfranchised and alienated men have turned to the virtual world to occupy a space known as the "manosphere". The manosphere is a collection of websites, blogs and online forums which harbour subculture communities such as "incel" (involuntary celebate), Pick-Up artists, "Tradcons" (Traditional conservative) among others. The common theme which links these subgroups is the belief in the Red Pill philosophy. Referencing the Matrix, taking the Red Pill claims to show you the world for what it really is - the hard truth. The world for what it really is, according to the Red Pill philosophy, is a world, in particular Western Civilization, under the threat of feminism. Based in evolutionary psychology and genetic determinism, women, or 'femoids' as they are called, are hardwired to mate with attractive and wealthy men known online as Alpha-males.

We understand the Alpha-male to be the archetype epitomizing the traits of hegemonic masculinity. The Alpha male, online known as Chad, is rich, brave, intimidating, indomitable and also renders the quality of being physically attractive, big and genetically superior. And, because the Alpha-male is very attractive and muscular, he is more successful in romantic and sexual relationships. This renders the rest of the men in society as 'Beta-Males', who due to their inferior physical appearance are doomed to a life of loneliness, more importantly a life without sex. Hence, the manosphere becomes a space where 'beta-males' can reclaim power and restore social order. Similarly, restoration of the male identity is the reason why many of America's male youth are aligning with White supremacist organizations today. A shared misogyny, racism and homophobia is at the intersection of these groups.

There is a lot of cultural significance to unpack from this anti-feminist and anti-women reactionary movement. Ging (2017) argues that the creation of their own language using terms such as a "femoid" to describe women is a mechanism of barrier-building practiced under cult-like mentalities. The aim is to create distance by the group to the outside world. Calling women "femoids" makes it easier to dehumanize them and consequently enact violence against them. Moreover, members of these communities will discuss human relations in economic terms using words like "dating economy" and "sexual marketplace". They introduce Marxist language and Marxian analysis in their discourse which locates the source of exploitation in women and feminism. We find a capitalist interpretation of humanity where humans, especially female bodies and female sexuality, are commodified and transformed to currency.

We notice an intensified preoccupation with physical appearance, almost to a state of obsession, where millimeters of skull sizes and jaw angles among men are analyzed and scrutinized. According to the 'manosphere', a slight difference in height or bone structure can help a man "ascend" to Alpha-male status. In recent years, thousands of videos and blog posts have been shared online dedicated to helping "beta-men" transform into "alpha-men". Youtube videos range from "How to be an Alpha Man", "How to verbally conquer other men", and "How to stop being a nice guy" (Youtube 2021), introduce a gendered technology reminiscent of 1940's pamphlets that gave instruction on how women should behave in social settings. (*See Image 4)*

Image 4. Online content on how to be an Alpha man
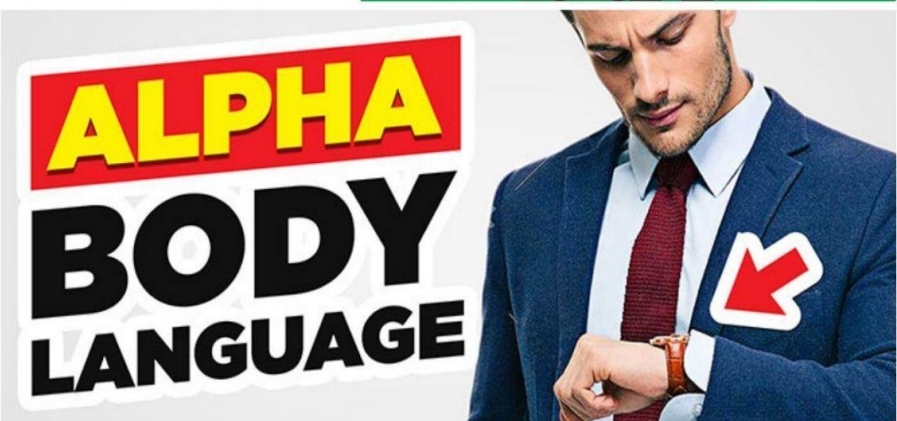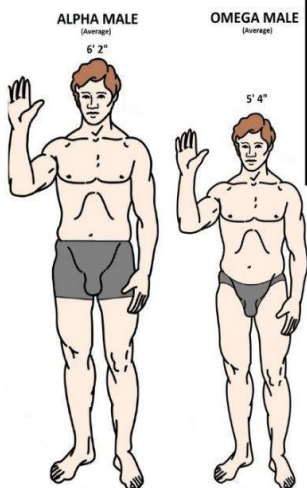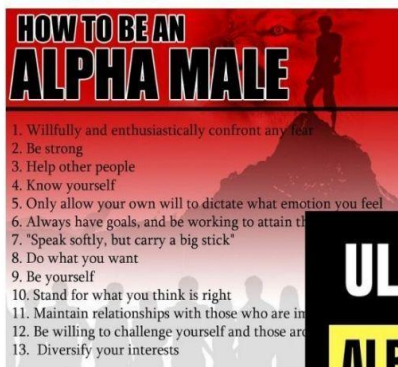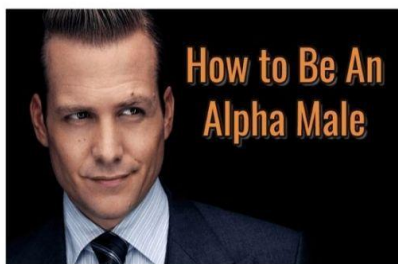
Source: Google Images (2021)

Tips such as standing tall, shoulders back, walking with purpose, maintaining eye contact, projecting your voice indicates a level of theatricality and gender performativity in which men have to present themselves as dominant at every moment. The male body, appearance and how it takes up space become central to projection of the image of dominance.

The first lines on a website called "Alpha Man Game: Winning at seduction, life and style" states "Looks are the single biggest factor in determining your attractiveness." Followed by "Probably one of the best things you can do for your looks is to lower your body fat and increase your musculature."[4] Under the Looksmaxing (a term used to describe enhancing physical appearance to the maximum) subsection, suggestions range from eyebrow botox, wrist enlargement, neck training, nostril shrinking, bodybuilding, steroid intake, penis stretching and chewing on hard food to augment the jawline are common (Cook 2018). Due to the extreme scrutiny and attention paid to physical appearance detailed in these online spaces, it is assumed that body dysmorphia is widely present (Cook 2018). Members attest to spending hours looking at themselves in the mirror scanning every facial and body feature searching for the reason behind their physical and cultural inferiority in society (Hines 2019).

The Red Pill philosophy has gained traction and popularized the seduction industry across the world. In Spain for example, authors of the book "Cómo ser un hombre de estatus", [5] Carlos Montoro and David Conde run a website called "Comunidad Red Pill" where they share blog posts on "seduction, travel and lifestyle for men who were not born alpha". In line with the manosphere, the content of the website contains extreme misogynistic views. The authors also hold workshops and give seminars on how to seduce and dominate women across Spain. The price of a weekend workshop costs up to 800 euros (Mas 2018). O'Neil (2018) has described the seduction industry as a result of the influence of neoliberalism on sex and sexual relation (Mas 2018).

What lurks behind this phenomenon that directs attention towards the male body, is the belief that male physical attractiveness grants access to female sexuality and success in romantic and sexual relations. Under this notion, male appearance and sex, transform in to capital linked to a heirarchy among masculinities. However, the underlying intention of wanting to acquire sex from females is to distance themselves from being perceived as gay, therefore gain rewards by conforming to heteronormative standards.

Ging (2017) argues that beta-males view themselves as belonging to marginalized or subordinate masculinity while alpha-males embody the attributes of hegemonic masculinity (Raewyn Connell 2005). However, Ging proposes the notion of hybrid masculinity where power is negotiated where males identify with certain types of masculinity whenever it is suitable to them. Hence, hegemonic masculinity can be seen not as a fixed set of attributes of masculinity but a relationship to power (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005).

"It is difficult to take beta male claims to subordinated and marginalized masculinity seriously. Their extreme expressions of misogyny and racism and frequent engagement

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in hacking and doxing are clearly indicative of a desire to establish male hegemony in the online spaces they inhabit, even if they may lack such claims to power in off-line contexts. It seems more accurate, therefore, to describe them as hybrid masculinities, whose self-positioning as victims of feminism and political correctness enables them to strategically distance themselves from hegemonic masculinity, while simultaneously compounding existing hierarchies of power and inequality online" (Ging 2017, 14)

1.11. Concluding thoughts

We began this chapter by examining dominant gender regimes such as patriarchy and heteronormativity and their connection to economic systems and masculinist projects such as neoliberalism and nationalism (Walby 1989; Mies 1998; Federici 2004; Valdes 1996; Yuval-Davis 1997). The connection between these systems results in the construction of a cohesive and coherent ideology based on hierarchy, biological determinism and gender conformity (Lerner 1986). The ideology itself is a form of power as it gives privilege to a specific social group who are white heterosexual males and justifies the subordination of women and sub-altern groups (Gramsci 1980; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Kimmel 2006). Due to economic disparity and growing social movements, a cyclical pattern forms where males are sensing a crisis in identity and placing their focus on their body as a way to compensate for their loss in power (Wiegers 1998). *(See Figure 2).*

Figure 2. Cyclical pattern between inequality, resistance and reactionary movements.
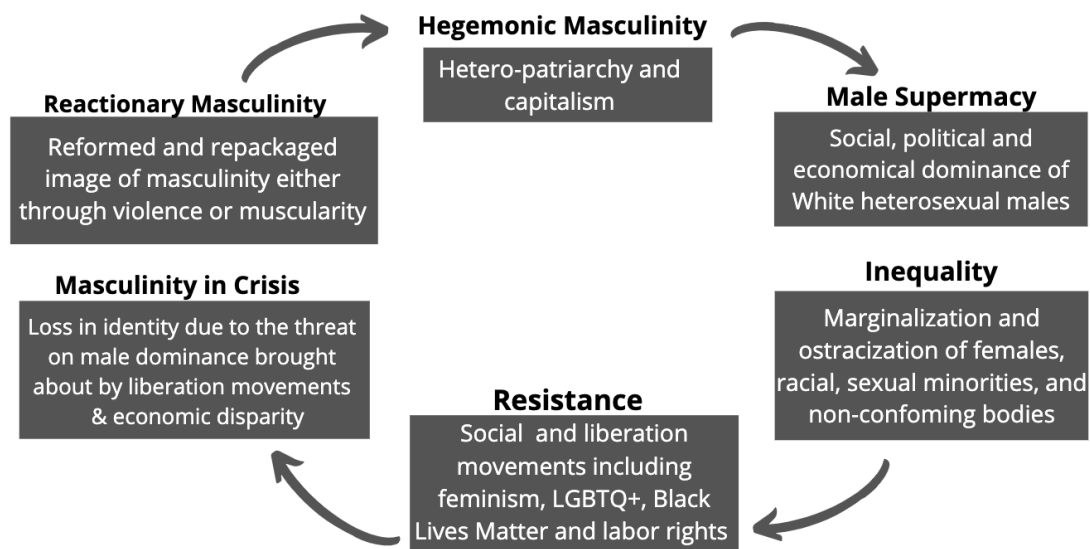
SOURCE: Author.

In the next chapter, we explore the role mainstream media plays in the construction of hegemonic masculinity and idealized male body.

Chapter 2

MASCULINITY, MUSCULARITY & MEDIA

The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate the influence media has in shaping public opinion and societal values towards gender. Through the use of icons and stereotypes, mass media messaging works to construct a vision of the world which legitizes, justifies and reinforces the domination of men over women and other marginalized bodies (Wood 1994; Clarkson 2005; Raewyn Connell 2005). Media analysis has demonstrated a recurring pattern in mainstream media in which hegemonic masculinity is reconstructed and repackaged when power and social dynamics are threatened or challenged. In particular, studies have detected a media reaction towards socially progressive movements such as feminism and gay liberation (Gill, Henwood and McLean 2005; Ricciardelli, Clow and White 2010). As these movements grew, a new image of hegemonic masculinity was constructed and mediated to the public in order to maintain power and social order (Tylka 2014; Alexander and Woods 2018; Segal 1990). It does so by manufacturing an image of hegemonic masculinity which is embodied through an 'Icon' or 'Hero' figure existing in media (Clarkson 2005). Hence, the role of mainstream media is to homogenize the image of masculinity. As a reaction to feminism, scholars have detected an increasing emphasis on metrosexuality, muscularity and laddism in the media (Ricciardelli, Clow and White 2010).

In American and European cinema, macho male characters are represented as having control over the economy, women and overall surroundings (Henri-Simon Blanc-Hoang 2014; Caballero Gálvez and Hernández 2016; Panayiotou 2010). Heterosexual and queer reality tv shows reinforce hegemonic masculinity by using the muscular male body as a site for commodification, sexualization and political negotiation (Jenkins 2013; Nabi et al. 2003; Alexander and Woods 2018). In sports and pornography, the muscular male body is depicted as a machine with an inherent capability to practice violence and aggression (Mathews and Channon 2019; Tylka 2014). The media narrative surrounding the male body has recently become increasingsexualized and objectified (Bordo 1999). The chapter covers various aspects of media creations such as lifestyle magazines, cinema, makeover shows, reality tv, pornograph, sports media, sitcoms and video games (Ricciardelli, Clow and White 2010; Tylka 2014; Nabi et al. 2003; Burrill 2008). Each section demonstrates the link media establishes between masculinity and muscularity. In specific, the chapter demonstrated how the media is constructing male body ideals with an emphasis on muscularity and has a reaction to political and social changes (Gill, Henwood and Carl McLean 2005; Tylka 2014;).

2.1 Mainstream media as a soft power

In their book "Manufacturing Consent", Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman propose a model in which mass media plays a pivotal role in communicating messages and symbols to the public thereby shaping societal values, beliefs, and codes of behavior (Chomsky and Herman 1988). Hence, the dissemination of media content through broadcasting agencies becomes an apparatus that defines standards, instills conformity and obedience to current power dynamics . Such influence on public opinion is recognized as a form of 'soft power' (Yukaruç 2017). Soft power is defined as an in-direct power, meaning it is not violent or forceful, that is mandated by the state or corporations through cultural sources. Examples of soft power include art, literature, education and popular culture (Nye 2004; Yukaruç 2017). What makes this form of power highlighly influential is

because, unlike military force, soft power is attractive (Yukaruç 2017). It co-opts human's basic interest and repurposes it to "get others to want what you want" (493). Its propagation is intangible yet its impact results in the coercive control over and shaping public opinion (Yukaruç 2017). It operates in ideology, as discussed in the previous chapter, and presents itself through the repetition of a cohesive set of images and ideals in mass media. Mass media refers to media technologies such as print (books, newspapers and magazines), broadcast (television and radio) and cinema (films) which a small group of people use to communicate messages to larger audiences (Hirst 2018). An unbalanced power dynamic is produced by which small bodies who maintain economic and political hegemony are able to generate and disseminate media messages that benefit its interests. Moreover, the messages produced are designed to gain a cultural form of hegemony by influencing public opinion.

Melvin DeFleur and Everette Dennis (1981) describe five stages in the reproduction of mass media messages. First, experts and professionals craft messages to present to the public. Secondly, the messages are propagated to the public through media technology for example street or digital advertisements. The messages are spread in a continuous and repetitive manner. Third, a large number of people become aware of the message being spread. In the United States, an individual is estimated to be exposed to 4000 to 10000 advertisements a day (Simpson 2017).

Fourth, people on the receiving end of the media technologies internalize the message and give it a personal meaning. Finally, the impact of the message is evidenced through societal change and the construction of a dominant public opinion. From this lens, we deduce that the representation of hegemonic masculinity in mainstream media is designed to legitimize the hegemony of some men. In particular, it reaffirms the dominion of some groups over others. That is, as Connell highlights in her book Masculinities (1993), the domination of *some* men over women and other marginalized groups.

Wood (1994) has described media as the most powerful and pervasive influence on how society views the roles of men and women. As media, in all of its forms, exists everywhere in our daily activities. By simply walking through a street, turning on the television, or using social media networks, we are bombarded by images that tell us not only how to behave but what to want from life. Since only an exclusively small group of people have the financial capacity to disseminate media messages at such large quantities, the media message aims to construct a false reality or as Wood describes "a distorted version of cultural life" (Wood 1994, 31).

In this alternative version of reality, white heterosexual males are depicted as the vast majority while women are underrepresented and minorities have even visibility (Wood 1994). While Wood describes the mediascape in America, we assume the hegemony of White hetersoexual men operates globally. Residue from decades of European colonialism has allocated proximity to Whiteness at the top of social order. "Whiteness is situated at the center; an ideal Whiteness occupies the core of the center while White ethnicities orbit the core" (Abdulle 2017, 23). In the following section, we expand on how the ideal White heterosexual male and hegemonic masculinity are constructed in mainstream media.

2.2. Hegemonic Masculinity and the male body in Media

In this section, we explore the ways in which hegemonic masculinity is represented in mainstream media. More specifically, we discuss the shift in the media narrative that redirected attention towards the muscular male body. The shift can be seen as a result of grander changes in power relations and social dynamics. It implicates rising economic inequality, growing feminists movements and even warfare. Potential threat to white male hegemony forces it to repackage itself and introduce a new formula by which their rule appears justified. The ability to recognifer due to changing times is the manner in which hegemonic masculinity manifests dominance. The reconfiguration occurs by segmenting specific attributes practiced in hegemonic masculinity to become a stand-alone form of masculinity. For example, geek masculinity, laddish masculinity, metrosexuality and muscularity can be seen as derivatives of hegemonic masculinity. We discuss the concepts in great detail in the following sections. Each of these derivatives positions itself in a way in which it can abstract power from the hegemonic model either through violent behaviour, consumerism or the physical body.

Following the defeat of the US in the Vietnam War (1975), American masculinity embraced an emphasis on physical strength and aggression as a way to compensate, rehabilitate and masculinze its nationalist image (Ricciardelli, Clow & White 2010). This occurred through the iconization of figures like Arnold Shwarzenegger and Sylvester Stalone. This, in turn, escalated the popularity of gym and fitness culture (Ricciardelli, Clow and White 2010). There are many postulations to unpack from this event which affirm the 5 stages of mass media communication developed by Melvin DeFleur and Everette Dennis (1981), detailed in the previous section. First, there is a connection between political warfare, national image, and hegemonic masculinity. Second, those in power were able to use soft power to communicate and establish a new image for hegemonic masculinity. Through the use of films, muscular and aggressive figures became the new face of masculinity (Vito, Admire and Hughes 2018). Finally, change in social behaviour is implemented as frequenting the gym to become muscular becomes normative (Ricciardelli, Clow and White 2010.

According to Trujillo (1991, 291-292), there are 5 main factors attributed to the construction of hegemonic masculinity in mainstream media:

1.   Power as defined in terms of the body or physical force and control.
2.   Occupational achievement in an industrial complex and the ability to achieve economic success by accumulating capital.
3.   Being the breadwinner and leader of a household i.e familial patriarchy.
4.   The ability to be adventurous and exude daring gestures as a romantic partner.
5.   Centering heterosexually through the representation of the phallus.

Kareithi (2013) notes a potential contradiction when considering the first two criteria. He offers the case of a manual laborer as an example (Trujillo 1991). The laborer, while exemplifying traditional masculinity through his physicality finds himself at the lower end of the class spectrum thus generating possible feelings of inadequacy. Harry Brod (1987) argues that because the laborer doesn't have access to capital and economic gains, the physical body and its potential for force and violence become the primary source to abstract power and display dominance (Trujillo 1991).

The identification of the physicality of the male body as a signifier for strength in social and media spheres is of recent emergence. In the past, physically fit male bodies were

often coded as belonging to the working class or 'of the earth' which stood in opposition to 'cultured' or upper-class bodies (Hunt 2007). As of the late 1980s, the male body underwent a symbolic reconstruction in society as well as mass media. Prior to that, attending public gyms, weight rooms and attention to fitness culture was relatively uncommon. During the 1990s, cinematic narratives surrounding the male body began to establish an ideal body image which, in return, was coded to hegemonic standards of masculinity (Susan Hunt 2007).

Today, the male body stands as a visual representation of masculinity which mirrors the hegemonic standard. The physical movement of the male body, that is how the body walks, moves, the clothes it wears and exists in a certain space contains gendered information and articulates its configuration within cultural notions of 'proper' masculinity. As noted in the International Encyclopedia of Men and Masculinity (2007), "because gender is often tested on the physical body, it has also been the instrument for re-negotiating hegemonic masculinity"(43).

The manner in which the muscular body transitioned from being considered "working class" to being coded with cultural power and strength is an example in how hegemonic masculinity adapts and reshapes with changing times. This interaction becomes particularly notable when examining notions surrounding gender dynamics in mass media content like films and advertisements. Throughout history, print media and magazines have been primarily marketed and consumed by women Movements growing in the late 1980s, such as feminism and gay liberation, which advocated for social change presented a threat to male dominance (Ricciardelli, Clow and White and 2010). This, in return, created a need to repackage a new image for dominant masculinity. It is through this format of renegotiating representation that hegemonic masculinity in media adjusts to support a patriarchal social structure.

2.3. Masculinity and Body Ideals in Lifestyle Magazines

In this section, we will discuss the evolution of different versions of masculinity and their implications on ideal male body images in print magazines. Moreover, we seek to demonstrate how the male body has become the epicenter in recalling cultural capital and the renegotiation of power dynamics.

By analyzing eight men's lifestyle magazines circulated in Canada, Ricciardelli, Clow and White (2010) recognized three versions of masculinity that have emerged as a reaction to the power and cultural shift prompted by social movements of the 1980s. According to their findings muscularity, metrosexuality, and laddism have become the frame in which hegemonic masculinity represents itself in print media. Each of these articulations of masculinity interjected with an element present in hegemonic masculinity to produce a subset. For example, muscularity is an articulation of hegemonic masculinity that validates itself through physical strength, aggression and potentiality for violence. Metrosexuality compounded elements of upper-class status, financial success, consumerist behaviour and introduced grooming and appearance regulation as an everyday male activity. Laddism is the articulation of a version of hegemonic masculinity that glorifies hedonist behaviour such as binge drinking, gambling and sexuality gratification.

As a result of this perceived threat on masculinity of 'crisis on men' (Connell 1993; Segal 1990), lifestyle magazines in the 1980s began targeting men by focusing on occupational roles and physical appearance. In print magazines that garnered female audiences, men are often portrayed in parental or spousal roles (Wood 1994). At first print media focused on men's facial features such as the presence of a prominent jawline as signifiers for attractiveness. This identifier gradually evolved to increase emphasis on the body, more specifically on muscles (Ricciardelli, Clow & White 2010). This was the starting point of constructing the image of an ideal male body by centering it around degrees of muscularity. Specifically, we will find the mesomorphic ideal to be coded with financial success, aggression, sexual desirability, attractiveness, and an overall positive outcome across media content such as print and film (Dill-Shackleford and Thill 2007). The cross-referencing of these symbols, which have been primarily constructed to signify masculinity, imposes the man's physicality as the "locus of his cultural power and sense of self-esteem" (Weber 2006, 291).

A research performed on Playgirl Magazine, a magazine that focuses on male beauty examined all of the centerfold released between 1973 and 1997. The height and weight of the male models were measured in 115 Playgirl magazines (38%) of the 300 issues. The study found growing evidence that the cultural norm for the ideal male body was shifting and becoming increasingly muscular and losing fat over the years starting from the 1990s (Leit et al. 1999). Similarly, by analyzing Men's Health Magazines, Alexander (2003) concluded that this new depiction of muscularity combined with financial success decreased men's self-esteem driving them into consumerist behavior.

It has only been as recently as 30 years that the male body entered mainstream media as an entity subjected to scrutiny and a host to sexualized desire. As Bordo (1999, 168) notes after seeing a Calvin Klein men's underwear ad in the New York Times: "it was the first time in my experience that I had encountered a commercial representation of the male body that seemed to deliberately invite me to linger over it". The representation of the male body, in this particular case, does not intend to signify dominance and aggression. By inviting the viewer to look at the male body through a sexualized gaze, masculinity segments to a softer form often associated with metrosexuality and consumerist behavior. Nixon (1996) found that advertising in print media such as GQ Magazines embraced metrosexuality by displaying models that are soft yet sexualized. This new image was found to be targeted towards a younger audience, emphasizing male aesthetics, grooming, beauty products, fashion, and an altogether upscale lifestyle. It made shopping, smelling good, and looking fashionable "safe" for straight men (Weber 2006).

We propose a distinction that needs to be made in relation to the media exposure of muscular male bodies in terms of objectification and sexualization. The images are both Calvin Klein advertisements used to promote their line of men's underwear *(See Image 5 & 6)*. Both Images 5 & 6 use the muscular body ideal to sell the product. Both images entail the objectification and sexualization of the male body, however, the body language of the models is indicative of varying forms of masculinity. The male body in Image 5 is depicted as relaxed, leaned back, eyes closed, and exhibiting an essence of sensuality. This image is centered around sexual objectification where the male body is represented in a subordinated position on the receiving end of the viewer's gaze and in alignment with soft masculinity (Bordo 1999). The male body in the second image is presented as erect, alert, standing tall with piercing eyesight directed towards the camera or media consumer in an almost confrontational manner (*See Image 6)*. The male body in this image is not

subordinate but designed to signify dominance. The sexual objectification of the male body in Image 2 is coded with sexual prowess and success in sexual relations. In the latter, physically fit men, while being an object of desire, are expected to maintain control over the sexual script.

Images 5 & 6 (left to right). Calvin Klein Advertisements
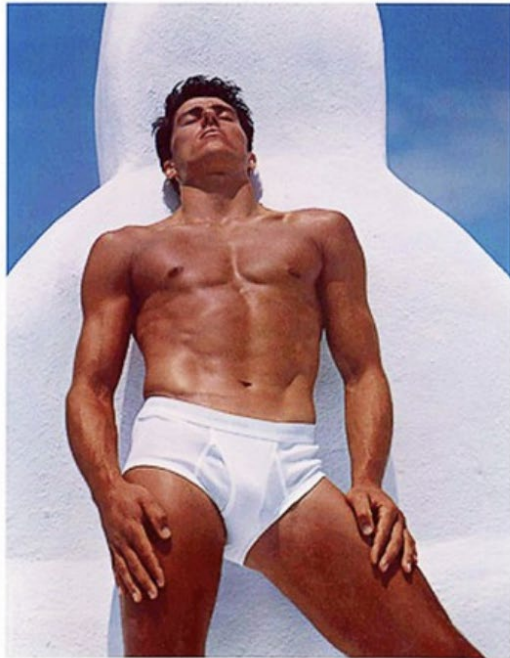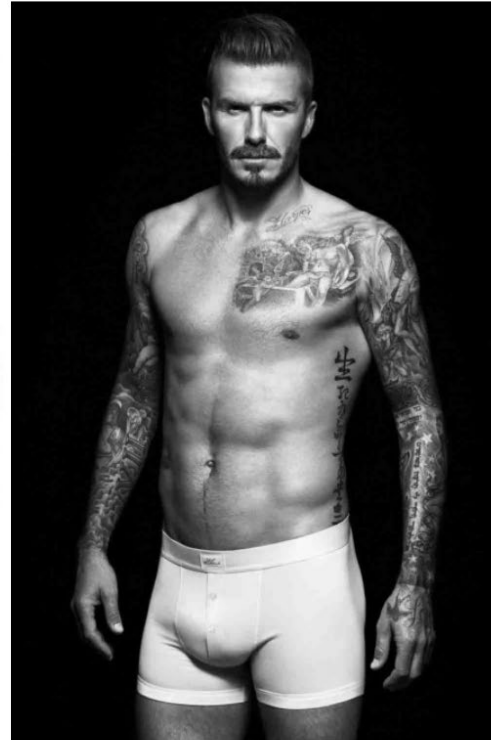
SOURCE: Google Images (2021)

The use of the muscle ideal in various articulations of masculinity is indicative of the malleability of body ideals. However, images depicting muscularity are often accompanied with other cultural signifiers such as wealth or sexual prowess (Ricciardelli, Clow & White 2010). Images of lean and toned male bodies are presented in Laddist magazines often accompanied by images of hypersexualized female bodies. Laddism is described as the rejection of feminism and metrosexuality and gears towards an articulation of hard masculinity (Ricciardelli, Clow & White 2010). It centers around women, sex, adventure, sports, cars, and video games, as well as more risky behaviors such as binge drinking and gambling (Attwood 2005). Content analysis was performed on two versions of laddist magazines, one of which was published in the United States and the other was circulated in the United Kingdom. Taylor (2005) found that promiscuity, sexual behavior and the optional use of enhancements such as alcohol and drugs were the main themes highlighted in the U.S laddist magazines. Attwood (2005) also found sex and women to be predominant themes with a distinct focus on hedonist behavior in UK magazines. In both cases, sexual gratification and images aching to softcore pornography were exposed.

2.4 Macho Masculinity in Cinema

Masculinity has been a focal point of many films in international and European cinema (Panayiotou 2010; Caballero Gálvez and Hernández 2016). In particular, masculinity is often accompanied by overarching themes of loss in identity and feelings of inadequacy brought about by financial anxiety. Financial anxiety, while often displayed as a result of intensified marketplace competition, is framed as men not being able to fulfill traditional masculine roles such as being the breadwinner (Henri-Simon Blanc-Hoang 2014; Caballero Gálvez and Hernández 2016; Panayiotou 2010). As such different elements of rage, violence against women, and the blame on ethnic minorities and immigrants emerge. In this section, we will expand on the construction of the Western male identity in cinema and its connection to neoliberalism and violence against women.

In her study, Panayiotou (2010) argues that finding, claiming or reclaiming manhood is a central theme repeated through many films dominating the 100 worldwide box office hits. She allocates three reasons as to why films and popular culture are a valid source for cultural analysis. First, images manufactured in popular culture mimic the flows of information reproduced in contemporary capitalist economies. McDowell (1998) explains how signs and symbols have come to represent material accumulation, economic force and the reproduction of power. From this standpoint, Panayiotou (2010, 661) argues that films "reproduce dominant discourses of capitalism, commercialism, and patriarchy". The exchange of images and symbolism has come to represent the "dominant ethos of contemporary capitalism" (Rhodes and Westwood 2008, 14). Second, cinematic films, as a globalized medium, have a wider reach in various countries when compared to other forms of popular culture. The distribution of films mimics the flow of media information in which power is mandated by centering the narrative from a Anglo-Saxon and Eurocentric perspectives. Finally, films offer a form of storytelling where the formula often includes a particular narrative containing a type of struggle that is easily accepted by audience members (Voytilla 1999).

Here, films position themselves as mentors to teach practices with strong plots that resonate with viewers which makes them more influential (Czarniawska and Rhodes 2006). Panayiotou's research on media focused on specific and significant criteria of hegemonic masculinity, occupational achievement or economic force, 'macho' managers, and competing masculinities. Through content analysis of films such as "Wall Street" (1987), "Big" (1988), The "Firm" (1993) and "The Devil's Advocate" (1997) among others, Panayiotou (2010) has detected the presence of heroes and anti-heroes as represented by 'those who have made it' and 'those who have not'. Panayiotou describes the male characters, those who have made it, as "macho managers". These male characters are often represented as more 'manly' and coded by expensive clothing, upper-class etiquette and manners, appearance, and language.

'Macho managers', having acquired wealth, status and social dominance, are depicted as winners. They win at capitalism. All the props surrounding the macho manager in films exist to further highlight their level of elitism in society. For example, Panayiotou (2010) describes how macho managers are rarely seen consuming food as they are always occupied with business. However, the food presented in film scenes serve as a distinguishing feature between upper and working class. Working class men are shown consuming junk food while "macho managers", even though they do not consume the food, are surrounded by lavish and decadent meals. The macho manager exercises control not only over himself but his surroundings as well. The macho manager is "controlling staff, controlling money, controlling women, and also controlling one's own body"(669).

The ability to accumulate economic capital and consequently exercise control places the macho male character at the top of hierarchy among masculinities.

Increasing competition in the marketplace, due to globalization and neoliberalism, has left many men without access to economic capital (Kimmel 2015). This means the majority of men can not practice control using that method. As such cinema constructs another 'macho' male identity that uses another form of capital to sustain dominance. That form of capital is violence, in particular, violence against women.

A study on Spanish cinema discusses the prevalence of the "crisis of masculinity" that Spanish culture and Western society in general is experiencing in the twenty-first century (Henri-Simon Blanc-Hoang 2014). The study analyzed three Spanish motion pictures: Icíar Bollaín's "Te doy mis ojos" (2003), Fernando León de Aranoa's "Princesas" (2005) and Daniel Sánchez Arévalo's "Azuloscurocasinegro" (2006). Findings suggest that pressures from neoliberal globalization and postcolonial immigration have left males in a state of conflict. "Unless these men belong to the ruling elite of their country, their future is not very promising since some jobs that would allow working and middle class males to support their families have now been outsourced" (Henri-Simon Blanc-Hoang 2014, 63). As such themes of domestic violence arise and address the problem from the victimizer's point of view. Another study (Caballero Gálvez and Hernández 2016) which analyzed twenty feature films produced by Spanish film director Pedro Almodóvar, found that 65% of male characters fit the archetype of the male batterer. The study suggests that Almodóvar's cinema plays with different forms of masculinity where male characters are simultaneously depicted as being victims of the system and the State, yet systematically brutalize, beat and rape female characters. The use of violence against women by men, in cinema as well as real life, becomes a form of capital signifying control.

Feelings of inferiority and inadequacy of not being able to mandate control through economic accumulation is substituted by exercising control over female bodies through the use of violence. Experiences of state oppression and a Francoist past are consistently present throughout Almodóvar's filmography. For example, the film "Flesh" (1997) portrays the suppression of civil rights under the Franco dictatorship. Male characters are represented as living under a system of tension. The character of David is literally depicted as paralyzed. However, macho violence by male characters is treated as a response and a by-product of that system. The findings of the study suggest that macho violence is not depicted as a fixed pattern but segments in to three archetypes of the "1) manolo" type who systematically abuses women through physical aggression or domestic treatment; 2) the murderous psychopath whose ultimate goal is to end with the life of a woman, or one who suffers from psychological problems that drive him to mistreat women; and finally the most complex character 3) the innocent" man who suffers from a disability or a trauma that drives him, mainly, to harass or rape women." (Caballero Gálvez and Hernández 2016, 868-869).

2.5 Making Over the Male Body: Makeover Shows

In this section, we will discuss makeover shows and the use of the male body as a key tool as a way to rehabilitate masculinity and gender privilege (Weber 2006). In particular, we will focus on the overarching formulaic narrative which accompanies the individual going through the making over process.

Makeover shows are a media series, usually found under the subcategory of reality television, which focus on "making over" an individual. The makeover occurs through several inward and outward, emotional and physical labor. The anatomy of popular makeovers shows vital information in how men can, by working on themselves, their body and behavior, break through from being "unmade" to "making it". By following the proposed guidelines from a set of professionals which involve becoming more fit, buying expensive clothes and practicing confidence, "making it" becomes a formulaic procedure that is presented as accessible to every man. This position furthers responsibility on the individual to practice discipline towards his body, behaviour and performing gender. Moreover, it places blame on the individual for potential feelings of inadequacy, low confidence and "not having made it".

We find this image of 'failure of the self' and body and 'technology to act on the self and body 'to be on the continuum of neoliberal subjectivation which redirects attention away from the failures of neoliberalism on to consumer confidence or "confidence cult" (Gill and Orgad 2016). While the work of Gill and Orgad (2016) explores the technology of confidence culture on the genderization of female bodies, we believe their argument could be extended to male identities as well. In the space of this imaginary, the male body can apply for the job they desire, get the partner they desire, have the lifestyle they desire but first the body has to transition from its weak form (codified as thin or frail) to its confident state (codified as big and muscular).

In her article What Makes the Man? Television Makeovers, Made-Over Masculinity, and Male Body Image, Weber (2006) draws several observations from examining makeover shows where "manliness is constructed by the media and male identity and body image become implicated in gendered investments about masculinity". She explains that by relinquishing control to a panel of experts typically in the health and style department, the man is implicitly placed in a passive and feminized position. To counter this narrative of perceived subordination, the men in makeover shows are often shown initially resisting the changes suggested to him. This act of resistance showcases makeover shows, which predominated targeted women, as more manly. Weber (2006, 304) contends that "men have to learn a complicated dance where they can show that they care about their appearance but not too much that it makes them appear feminine thus "revealing the basic contradictory tensions at the heart of masculinity.".

Expert tips including standing tall, exposing the chest, showing decisiveness with an assertive handshake demonstrate how masculinity is written onto the male body but perhaps the most influential aspect of makeover shows is its ability to homogenize the "after" body - the confident body . The body becomes an 'object' of devotion and a project that can be worked on where heightened self-esteem , confidence and social acceptance are awarded to the man enduring the process (Duran et al. 2017, Attwood 2005).

According to 2014 (Sánchez Hernández, Jiménez-Morales and Carrillo Durán 2014), television programs that center around transforming the participant's body like "How to look good naked" have two marketing proposals. The first is from the inside-out that is enhancing self-esteem first then that would reflect on the external image. The second works from the outside in where participants would alter their appearance through beauty regimens in order to increase their self-esteem. "That suggests that the outside is a reflection of the inside, but also that the outside can influence the inside. Beautiful people

make for healthy bodies." (Weber 2006). According to Bourdieu (2003), the height, weight and the way we take care of our bodies signifies social status. In this line, we assume that the success of the body in makeover shows is intrinsically tied to success in social spheres through gaining social value and physical capital.

While makeover shows that focus on the overall look have increased in popularity, other makeover shows focus solely on body and body modifications. One of the rhetorics used in Body Cult is the "Winner: You will be happy!" narrative (Sánchez Hernández, Jiménez-Morales and Carrillo Durán 2014). This narrative is utilized by TV shows like The Biggest loser, Revenge Body and MTV's I Used to be Fat that hone in on the body as the main focal point. Upon reviewing several episodes, the narrative appears to unfold out in a 3-stage format. First, the body is out of shape, weak and tired. This is depicted as undesirable therefore the person is represented as unhappy and unfulfilled. In the second stage, the body undergoes transformation through rigorous exercise and strict diet plans instructed by fitness experts. This stage depicts levels of physical and mental suffering experienced by the participants as they transition from one phase to another. Participants here can be seen exercising in the gym for as much they might feel the urge to puke or faint (Greenleaf et al. 2018).

Finally, the body in its last form is fit and slim ready to be reintroduced into life, family, and friends through a big reveal. The final product is happiness, love, and acceptance. Media messages often equate an unfit body to feelings of misery and aimlessness in life. In order to attain a fit body, to transition from undesirable to desirable, from unhappy to happy, one must pass through stressful situations often recalling personal conflicts as well as mental and physical exertions. Many mottos such as "no pain, no gain" or "beauty is pain" attest to this relation. This stage highlights two main points. First, it suggests that one can not reach the final stage in the body makeover program without personal suffering but more importantly this suffering for the beautification of the body is central to the transformation. The message here is that being overweight or unfit is related to a lacking or deficiency in character and only through undergoing a mental transformation can the narrative be complete. Finally, having overcome this difficulty, the person receives the prize of wellbeing and self-esteem.

Body makeover shows are problematic for several reasons. Heavy emphasis is placed on appearance simple through the titles of the shows alone. As Maria Fisher (2017) explains the MTV show called "I Used To Be Fat", translated to "I was fat, which is bad. But now I'm not fat, which is good!".[6] Similarly, "The Biggest Loser" plays on a double meaning that is competing to lose the most weight and also the loser may be interpreted as being socially unsuccessful. It must be noted because these shows work so intensively, the participants often gain the weight they have lost during production (Fisher 2017). Finally, these shows normalize a harmful "Don't Stop Til You Drop" attitude towards the body. The body is pushed to the limit with excessive exercise and are forced to engage in long-term endurance exercise which have been linked with the pathologic structural remodeling of the heart, enlarged arteries and increases in anxiety and depression (Hausenblas and Fallon 2006). This might also explain the normalization of treating the body in possibly harmful ways such as stressing the body beyond its physical capitices and regulating the body with protein substances.

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[6] https://www.revelist.com/tv/mtv-used-to-be-fat/7954

2.6 Hypermasculinity and Queerness in Reality TV

In recent years, reality television has emerged as a dominant source of media entertainment especially among adolescent youth (Flynn et al. 2015; van Oosten 2017; Scharrer and Blackburn 2017). The allure of reality television is in its offering of the *fly on the wall* perspective of watching real people experiencing real life events and drama. The truth is that while some elements might indeed be real, such as the names of the characters and media settings such as filming in their house or a non-traditional set, the format of reality television depends largely on constructed and stylized narrative aimed solely for the purpose of entertainment (Flynn et al. 2015; Nabi et al. 2003). This blurring of lines between fantasy and reality makes reality television a viable source of media analysis. In this section we will explore themes of hypermasculinity, body ideals and the emergence of queer masculinity in reality television.

Because reality television is situated between being a documentary and a soap opera (docusoap), many of its regular viewers perceive its content as being highly realistic (Papacharissi and Mendelson 2007; Flynn et al. 2015). Researchers and scholars have considered this phenomenon problematic as adolescents, in their impressionable stage, tend to model their behaviours after the characters they idolize (Nabi et al. 2003; Stefanone, Lackaff, and Rosen 2010). Studies have demonstrated a correlation between watching reality television and adhering to traditional masculine and feminine gender roles among adolescent boys and girls (Scharrer and Blackburn 2017; van Oosten 2017). In fact, reality television was demonstrated to be the "most consistent type of television genre to predict hypergender orientations" (van Oosten 2017, 144).

Content analysis of reality TV shows found that male characters were presented as hypermasculine and performing risky behaviour such as excessive drinking, smoking and engaging in causal sexual relations (Flynn et a.l 2015). Moreover, the narrative in which the male identity is constructed in reality television signals the emergence of hyper-authentic masculinities where White male viewers are invited to imagine the recreation of a white male paradise where they can escape capitalism and feminism and maintain economic and cultural superiority (Alexander and Woods 2018). Themes of 'restoration of a dominant white male identity' appears to be a constant throughout varying media outlets in which doing masculinity is presented as a struggle worth fighting for.

Reality television, as a media source, is playing a significant role in promoting idealized male bodies (Flynn et al. 2015). Content analysis on US-based reality television found an overrepresentation of V-shaped men in reality TV shows such as "The Real World", "Laguna Beach" and "The Hills". The V-shape man describes the mesomorph male body shape identified as having wide shoulders, high levels of muscularity and low levels of body-fat. The paper describes the male body as undergoing a series of self-objectification through body exposure. The lens of the camera presents the male body, in scenes of partial nudity, under the gaze of viewers. Due to the overrepresentation of muscular male bodies in reality television, regular viewers begin to cultivate a perception of the world in which the muscular ideal is the norm.

Constructing a media reality in which unrealistic body ideals are the norm has resulted in a rise in body dissatisfaction in particular among male adolescents, not just in the United States but around the world. The UK-based Mental Health Foundation has recently condemned the reality TV show, "Love Island", for their negative impact on body image.

The report suggests that the lack of body diversity and marketing of unrealistic bodies has amplified feelings of anxiety, depression and shame among its young male viewers *(See Image 7)*. The report, which surveyed nearly 4500 male participants, found that nearly a quarter of males aged between 18-24 expressed suicidal thoughts and feelings of concern towards their body image. Another report by the UK-based Children's Society found that one in 12 boys, aged 10 to 15, expressed feelings of unhappiness and discomfort with their bodies (Bellini 2019). The report similarly pointed to "Love Island", and social media as the main drivers behind adolescent male's increased preoccupation with appearance.

Image 7. Reality-TV show Love Island

SOURCE: Google Image (2021)

In recent years, reality television has become a media space where non-traditional gender identities present themselves. Rupaul's Drag race (RDR) show is a reality television show which focuses on the lives of queer idenities as they compete to become America's next drag queen. Since its premiere, Rupaul's Drag race gained international success and has become a global phenomenon watched around the world. The show has enabled the wide commercialization and commodification of the drag art for queer and straight viewer. Drag (Dressed Resembling A Girl) is an art form in which individuals engage in "gender-bending" performances (Goodman 2011). Throughout the seasons, viewers were exposed to the hardships gay and non-comforing identities experience and significant moments in LGBTQ+ history such as the Stonewall Riots through intimate conversations expressed by the participants.

Intersectional feminist analysis of the RDR show found that while the show presents the queer community in to mainstream audiences, it reproduces hegemonic heternormative discourses and reinforces stereotypes regarding gender idenity and sexual orientation (Jenkins 2013). The objectification and sexual objectification of the Pit crew is consistent within all of the seasons of the reality TV show *(see Image 8)*. The Pit crew are a group of men who often accompany the participants on their challenges throughout the show. The pit crew are repeatedly shown dressed only in underwear which in return serve as

product placement where the boxers are consistently advertised for sale throughout the show. By this, the show "reinforces hegemonic notions of gay men as super fit and overtly sexualized" (Jenkins 2013, 43). Moreover, reinforces the commodification of physical bodies under capitalism. Schottmiller (2017) describes Rupaul's success at marketing queerness as "Camp capitalism" which combines economic and social capital resulting in a contradictory narrative of queer idenities.

Image 8. The Pit Crew from Rupaul's drag race.

SOURCE: Google Images (2021)

From the above, we observe how the current state of reality television places physically muscular male bodies under an objectifying lense and subjects them to a sexualized gaze while reinforcing social scripts about gender, even within typically marginalized communities.

We suggest that under neoliberalism, alternative expressions to masculinity including queer and gender-bending identities will be commodified as media images remodel and reposition according to the market economy. I offer the widely popular show Rupaul's drag race as a textbook example. Rupaul's drag race is a reality TV show centering around a competition of non-conforming men who perform as drag queens. Similar to K-pop, some scholars have argued that the popularity of the show Rupaul's drag race advances often marginalized men including homosexual and transexual bodies, classified as subordinate according to Connell's Hegemonic model (Valge and Hinsberg 2019).

However, upon further examination it becomes evident how the show combines typically progressive ideas about masculinity, with the objectification of male body and consumerist behaviour. The pit crew in Rupaul's drag are a group of physically fit men who often accompany the participants on their challenges throughout the show. The pit crew are repeatedly shown only wearing boxer briefs which in return serve as product placement where the boxers are consistently advertised for sale. Hence, while Rupaul's Drag Race appears to appeal to non-heteronormative sterotypes, it maintains the objectification of racialized and marginalized male bodies.

2.7 Hegemonic masculinity in Pornography

Pornography, as a media content, is of particular significance to the study of communication and masculinity because its content depicts humans in sexual activity for the exclusive purpose of inducing sexual arousal (Seltzer 2011). Whenever we discuss concepts surrounding sex, sexual activity or sexuality under patriarchy, we need to frame it in relation to heterosexuality which serves as the normative standard. However, mainstream pornography does more that administer heteronormativity, it teaches boys and men how they should look and behave and how they should treat women (Tylka 2014). In this section, we will discuss the connection between hegemonic masculinity, the male body and problems that may arise from internalizing ideals that are standardized in pornographic content.

The pornography industry creates a "fantasy world that reflects hegemonic masculinity" (Tylka 2014, 2). It constructs a male-centric illusion where social interaction between sexes becomes formulaic, with an underlying purpose of reinforcing patriarchal dynamics. It verifies the heternormative social script where the muscular male body is endowed with physical and sexual supremacy and everything or everyone that exists around it, is there solely to enhance that perspective. In pornography, the male body is "portrayed as a machine that functions with emotionless technical efficiency" (2). Women, while portrayed as 'always wanting it' are positioned as a utility, secondary to male desire and sexual needs.

There is a form of determinism that pornography idealizes where male and female bodies need to look a certain a way, often adhering to conventional standards of beauty. More importantly, pornography projects the notion that during sexual intercourse men and women need to behave a certain way following a sexual script. Sexual script theory propose that sex is subject to social-construction which, via social learning, men and women acquire information about the roles they need to perfrom during sex. Just like an actor with a script, pornography sets the the stage for the sexual script with detailed instructions on how the scene should be played out. It is one that reaffirms the position of "men as aggressors and women as targets of aggression" (Bridges et al. 2016, 3).

Research has found that frequent viewing of pornographic content was linked to objectification of women and increased aggression toward women (Tylka 2014; Wright and Tokunga 2013). The influence of pornography on sexual script is particularly damaging to adolescents viewers who have limited experience or are in the early stages of developing sexual relationships. Due to the ritual-like often accompanied while viewing porngraphy, pornography has the potential of becoming the main informer of sex and sexual behaviour to a predominantly adolescent male audience. This means that from a very young age, adolescent males are subjected to explicit imagery of aggressive sexual acts performed on women. Moreover, these images are administered from a lense where these acts are naturalized and presented as normal and real. A recent large database research found that 1 out of 8 titles in porn videos alluded to some form of violent, grope, molest, or forced interaction with women. The study suggested that sexual violence is an intergral aspect of the sexual script in presented in online mainstream pornography"(Vera-Gray et al. 2021). Internalizing such ideals is not just extremely harmful to women but barricades men from developing meaningful sexual relationships (Tylka 2014).

As mentioned in the previous section attributes codified with the mesomorph male body signals traditional masculine gender norms such as strong, confident, in control, dominant, successful and sometimes predatory. Internalization of such masuculine ideals that place constraints on self-expression and human interaction might result in adopting the centerfold syndrome. The centerfold syndrome is a 'a set of psychosexual attitudes and behaviors' that obstruct mens from developing emotional intimacy with their sexual partners (Brooks 1997). Men will attempt to recreate what they see in pornography in their real lives and as such construct that reality which depersonalizes women (Wright and Tokunga 2013). As a consequence, it produces an array of dysfunctional sexual relations such as the systematic objectification of women or voyeurism, which is the compulsion to look at images of women.

Trophysim might occur in which men view women, their sexuality and physical features as trophies, conquests that men have earned and hence can put on display to validate masculinity, dominance, and power. A study by Elder, Brooks and Morrow (2012) found that how highly men sexualized women's bodies predicted their discomfort with emotional intimacy and that in return affected their body dissatisfaction. Swami and Voracek (2013) also found that the more men objectified and internalized sexist attitudes towards women, the greater their drive for muscularity. Finally, a study (Tylka 2014) found that the frequency of exposure to pornography was positively linked to muscularity and body fat dissatisfaction indirectly through internalization of the mesomorphic ideal.

For most boys, the first time they view porn is around 11 years old (Steele 2018). It serves as an introduction to the socialization of sexual relationships in terms of power relations, what they are supposed to do, what they are entitled to and how they should treat women. According to Matt Morrissey (2021), pronographic imagery is so graphic and explicit that it may lead to traumatized and fragmented boys who are unaware of the changing biological anatomy. Morrissey (2021,para. 4) describes a "biochemical cocktail" mixed with shame, guilt and arousal that leads the boy to further confusion and problematic understandings of masculinity.[7] In conclusion, we find that exposure to mainstream hetersoexual pornogrpahy reinforces dynamics embedded in hegemonic masculinity and hetero-patriachy.

The dissemination of content that idealizes the male muscular body, normalizes sexual aggression against women and obstructs mutual intimacy. Cook (2005) argues that Western heterosexual masculinity is experiencing anxiety, due to its decreasing power in political and social sphere due to advances of feminism. As such pornography is framed as an expression on this anxiety with primary goals to amplify the otherness of female body and femininity in general. A study (Fritz et al. 2021) found that black women were depicted as targets of aggression more frequently when compared to white women. Similarly, black men are depicted as aggressors at a higher rate. Cook (2005) highlights technological advances such as the internet has made pornographic content much more accessible as free websites are available through smartphones, home computers or wireless tablets. Research has found that 87% of young men have been reported to consume pornographic material with half viewing it weekly (Carroll et al. 2008).

2.8 Male supremacy in Sports and media

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[7] https://www.covenanteyes.com/2014/02/03/brain-chemicals-and-porn-addiction/

From a scholarly perspective, sports is a significant source for sociological and communication analysis. Sports is a cultural arena where hegemonic masculinity is performed in relation to gender, sexual orientation and amongst heterosexual men themselves (Mathews and Channon 2019). Moreover, it is linked to grander operations of masculinized power relations such as nationalism, patriotism and glorification of warfare (Messner 2012).

Similarly, sports as a physical activity reinforces cultural scripts on the physical body. It reaffirms bodily gendered binaries elevating the male body by equating it with physical supremacy and subordinating females, homosexual and non-comforing idenities as being innately physically weaker (Wellard 2009; Mathews and Channon 2019). Finally, the reproduction of sports as a 'males only club' can be seen through news and media reporting. Sports reporting in the mainstream media has demonstrated favorability towards men's sport in terms of duration and attention. It has also consistently assisted in the trivialization of women's sports as "not real sports", the sexual objectification of the female athletes, 'sissification' of homosexual athletes and dispragraging transgender athletes from playing sports (Mathews and Channon 2019).

Sports as a cultural phenomenon grew into popularity post–World War II where its primary function was to serve as a 'male preserve' (Messner 2012). Against the backdrop of political and social changes, sports served as an enclave where White heterosexual men can continue to abstract power through exclusionary practices. Indeed, sports was "made by men and for men"; an isolatory experience where they can "do masculinity", excuse violent behaviour, and win symbolic victories away from the advances of feminism and gay liberation. By calling on a set of sexist, racist, homosphobic and transphobic stereotypes, an idolized mascluine identity was carefully constructed in which White heterosexual male supremacy appeared naturalized and justified (Mathews and Channon 2019).

The physical body is at the center of power struggle among gender relations in sports. The male body is represented as a weapon "as machine-like objects of ritualized violence" (Mathews and Channon 2019, 2). Patriarchal norms are reproduced in sports discourse where the male body is equated with physical strength, aggression, violence, competitiveness and power. The attributes are assigned on the male body as being innate, immutable and unchangeable. Not all male bodies, however, are presented as having these traits. Homosexual men, due to their proximity to femininity, are excluded from this masculine identity. Consequently, homosexual men (due to their sexual orientation) and women (due to their gender) are presented as physically weak and inferior. Such qualities render women's sports less interesting to watch and unimportant.

Hostility towards identities who do not conform to gender binaries such as transpersons is particular to sports. Matthews gives the example of mixed martial artists Fallon fox who was constructed as "a 'man in disguise" and any partaking in sports activities would amount to 'violence against women' (Mathews and Channon 2019, 6). Using the physical body as a segregationist mechanism in sports is a way in which patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity maintain the ability to self-perpetuate. Research has demonstrated that mixing men and women in sports games has led to decrease in upholding gender norms and sexual objectification of women (Mathews and Channon 2019,).

Coverage of sports in news and mainstream media worked as a reinforcer of the aforementioned tropes. Hence, we observe an overlap of tools intended to sustain the status quo. Sports as a cultural practice established a space where white heterosexual males can perserve their idenity and dominance. Media coverage functioned as a feedback loop to visibilize gender difference for audiences, in particular male audiences.

In mainstream media, coverage of women's sports was depicted as not newsworthy and administered the sexualization of female athletes. The representation of women and female athletes in sports journalism as well as the reality of their experiment remains dominantly driven from an androcentric perspective (Gómez-Colell, Medina-Bravo and Ramon 2017). To determine the extent of gender-bias in sports journalism, a study by Gómez-Colell, Medina-Bravo and Ramon (2017) used a qualitative method to examine the centerfold of four of the most popular Spanish sports journalists (Marca, As, Mundo Deportivo and Sport) published over the course of five years beginning from 2010.

According to the authors, women's involvement in sports activity grew simultaneously with their involvement in the economic, social and political spheres. Since then, the disparity in sport journalism has been considerably significant where 91.4% was dedicated to covering male athletes in comparison to only 8.6% reporting on female athletes. Hence, the study sought to examine the frequency of the appearance of female, athlete and non-athletes, on the centerfolds of Spanish sports magazines, along with the accompanying headlines. Results showed that out of 672 centerfolds, only 81 covers (12%) contained information about females in sports. In terms of headlines, 2.97% of the sports centerfolds do not have an accompanying headliner. Moreover, only 2 centerfolds celebrated female athletes as stars on the cover. The study also found an overwhelming tendency in sports coverage to minimize the presence of female athletes by omitting verbatim quotes or mentioning their names. The study concluded that such disparity reinforces gender-bias in which a female's place is not in sports.

Analysis involving race relations on media coverage in sports detected a favorability for White athletes while Black athletes were depicted in a negative light (Mathews and Channon 2019). In films, black athletes are depicted as violent, selfish and have limited mental capacities (Costantine Kawalya-Tendo 2018). While, white male athletes are represented as victorious champions and an emblem of white male perfection. There is so much sports-related media coverage that seeks to reproduce social and gender inequities under patriarchy (Messner 2012). For example, there was little to no media coverage when several prominent athletes were charged with domestic violence. Instead, the news media focused on the positive attributes, physique and sports wins of these men (Mathews and Channon 2019).

There have been considerable shifts in narrative regarding traditional gender roles in mainstream news reporting with women claiming ground in Olympic Sports and the acceptance of male athletes 'coming out'. However, it has only been as little as nine years since Ultimate Fighting Championship introduced female professional fighters. Today, sports on a wide scale remains a segrations cultural activity as the notion of female athletes winning against male athletes upends the very structure of patriarchy and its naturalized dialectics of male supremacy. While there have been advances, scholars have called for researchers on this topic to become attuned to "the subtle ways that the male preserve might be reinvented and recreated" (Mathews and Channon 2019, 8).

2.9 Geek Masculinity and Complicit Misogyny in SitComs

The emerging acceptance of Geek masculinity in popular culture, mostly through television sitcoms, is insightful. For media researchers, geek masculinity and their complicit behaviour in reproducing misogyny offers us an example of how atypical forms of masculinity, often considered subordinate, can reconfigure itself and reposition itself as a new dominant form. This further validates Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity, in that hegemonic masculinity is not a stagnate or fixed set of attributes but operates through its foundational relationship to power. In this section, we will explore why geek masculinity took to formation, what are its main attributes and how it relates to gender relations.

Geek masculinity is hypothesized to have emerged as a direct reaction to economic decline (Morgan 2014). The rise of 20th century neoliberal capitalism is resulting in a global economic crisis and a looming market crash. Following the market crash of the 2000s and again in 2008, many people, especially men, found themselves in a state of financial crisis (Kosakowski 2020). The idealized masculine image of the 18th century "transnational businessman as a man who 'has it all', financial success, sexual prowess, and social status, grew increasingly intangible with the reality of most. Projecting masculine ideals aching to hegemonic masculinity in popular culture no longer became accessible to the average White man. In times of financial despair, traits that glorified personal wealth, economic mastery and success became unrealistic (Morgan 2014). As such a new accessible male identity grew to fruition.

Geek masculinity was mostly popularized in sitcom shows. Sitcoms are television series that depict characters in situational comedy (Picone 2014) . One of the most notable sitcoms showcasing geek masculinity is the show the Big Bang Theory (Larsen 2020) (*See Image 9).*

Image 9. The Big Bang theory

SOURCE: Google Images (2021)

There are many ways in which geek masculinity contrasts the traditional archetype of hegemonic masculinity (Morgan 2014). Unlike the businessman, the "geek" doesn't rely on financial wealth to establish dominance, instead he uses his intelligence and proximity to science to elevate his status. What makes the "geek" popular is the fact that he is unpopular nor does he want to be popular.

The 'geek' does not engage in traditional social norms, as his level of intelligence and scientific expertise transcends conventional social behaviour. Geek masculinity grew from the site of mathematics and scientific elitism which was, and relatively still is, dominated by white males. Within geek masculinity, science is not something they do, but who they are and is intrinsically tied to their male identity. Unlike the average 9 to 5 job, being a scientist and pursuing scientific endeavors occurs throughout the day. Science is the lens through which 'geeks' perceive their world which and this attribute makes them susceptible to socially awkward situations and hence, becomes the locus of laughter and comedy in sitcoms (Morgan 2014).

Unlike the popular males, typically identified at the top of masculine hierarchy, who are socially dominant, have sexual prowess and easily 'get the girl', geeks are depicted as socially awkward, weird and tragically fail in romantic and sexual relationships. Unlike the typical 'macho' male characters who are represented as tall, muscular and attractive, geeks are short and have a slim almost gangly physique. Unlike the successful business man who dresses in designer suits, the geek dresses in unfashionable clothing and often has unflattering eyeglasses adorned on his face (Morgan 2007). So, how can a character often conceived as less masculine and usually depicted as the sidekick to the hero become the main driver of the narrative? How can a subordinated masculinity reconfigure to align with hegemonic masculinity and become a legitimate form of male identity itself?

While geeks are often represented as the nice guys or underdogs, they reinforce sexist, racist and homophobic sterotypes which often serve as the pun of the joke in sitcoms (Morgan 2007). In fact, the treatment of women by "geek" men ranges from harassment,

stalking and in somecases rape but because they are not masculine, in the traditional sense, these actions are seen as harmless, funny and almost endearing (McIntosh 2017).

It is through this complicity in misogynistic behavior that geek masculinity is capable of abstracting power from hegemonic masculinity. An video essay on Youtube has dubbed this trope as "adorkable misogyny" where geek character excuse each others misogynistic and sexist behavior because they are geeks[8]. Geek masculinity reporduces the viewpoint where social relations are interpreted from a binary heterosexual male perspective. It retains the ability of positioning themselves as a 'victimized outsider' yet lends support and actively reproduces a system that subordinates women, effeminate men and other non-conforming idenities (Jasper 2017; Salter 2017; Morgan 2007). In the following section, we continue to discuss geek masculinity, its relationship to the video game industry and Gamergate.

2.10 Gamergate and Video Games

From 2014 to 2015, female video game developers Zoe Quinn and Anita Sarkeesian were subjected to an orchestrated abuse campaign known as "Gamergate". Gamergate is described as an online harassment campaign in the video game industry that targeted many female video game developers and critics (Kidd and Turner 2016). The harassment was disseminated under #Gamergate, which went viral, can be seen as a reaction to the "growing presence and influence of women as both players and participants" in the gaming industry. But perhaps more pertinently, as a reaction to their feminist critque against the misgony of the video game industry and the content it produces.

As such young male gamers saw "themselves as crusaders in a war against feminists and other perceived enemies, often inflected with anti-Semitic, racist, homophobic and transphobic invective" (Salter 2017, 12). The abuse came in the form of doxing (releasing personal information such as home address and phone number to the public), misogynistic slurs, rape threats, and death threats *(See Image 10)*. An online game was developed in which the players can punch and assault an image of Anita Sarkeesian (Webber 2017). The harassment grew increasingly intense and Zoe Quinn and Anita Sarkeesian had to relocate houses and maintain high vigilance and security. The violence demonstrated online reflects the need for white male supremacy to maintain hegemony in the real world as well as the virtual one.

Image 10. Gamergate comments

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[8]The Adorkable Misogyny of The Big Bang Theory 2017. The Adorkable Misogyny of The Big Bang Theory

SOURCE: Youtube (2015)[9]

A study sought to examine this modern day phenomenon known as cyber violence which has emerged as a reaction to cyber feminism (Remón and Medina-Bravo 2019). Cyber feminism is best described as a collection of campaigns and projects orchestrated online through the use of social media to advance social equality. Quinn and Sarkeesian's use of their Youtube channel "Feminist Frequency" to dicuss sexist tropes in video games is an example of cyberfeminism. According to the authors, there exists a disparity in online users where 62% of users on Youtube are male in comparison to 38% female users. This disparity gives the illusion of a 'male preserve' in which male users are entitled to dominance in the virtual space. As such virtual platforms like Youtube become space when female users are targeted with hate speech and abusive language, otherwise known as cyber violence. Similar to aggressive behaviour offline, cyber violence against women is used by males to excersize control and power.

The study uses a qualitative content analysis to examine comments left Youtube video called "Why I'm...a feminist" by Laci Green (2014). In total, there were 29,357 comments left on the Youtube video making up the population of the study. The study took a sample 850 main comments left over the duration of approximately one month. The comments were then coded to 8 types of analysis categories which include "insult", "sarcasm", "imposition", "desire to harm", "sexual objectification", "ciminalizetion and defamation" and "sexual threat" (13).

The results indicated that out of 850 comments, more than half (56.2%) can be classified as cyberviolence. The most dominant form of cyberviolence from the comments came in the form of "insult" by calling women "stupid", "mentally ill" and "lunatics" (15). Other prejaoritive insults such as "whore", "slut" and "bitch" were also used (15). Other comments entailed a form of "sarcasm" used disparagingly targeted towards female body parts, in particular to face, armpits, and breasts. The study ends on a positive note as it describes a support system of men and women which has emerged to consolidate victims of cyberviolence such as Sarkeesian.

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[9] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6y8XgGhXkTQ&t=2s

In the following section, we consider a brief history in how white male supremacy came to dominate computing technology and how this dominance was reflected in the content produced in video games.

Commonly today, software, coding and computing technology are considered a male-oriented and dominated work field. As Salter (2017) argues that for decades Western culture has tied masculinity with scientific and technological endeavors constituting the contemporary conception of geek masculinity. The correlation between masculinity and computing presented itself as intrinsically bound to the extent that "femininity and computing were positioned as antithetical" (Salter 2017, 4). However, this has not always been the case. The origins of computational technology was premised on it being a simple and easy task and was consequently occupied by female workers and scientists. As computational technology grew more advanced and sophisticated, the term "software engineering" was introduced as a way to masculinize the field and place it under male domination (Abbate 2012).

Geek masculinity can be described as a form of masculinity that does not fully conform to hegemonic masculinity yet maintains some of its main practices such as valorizing rationality over emotions, individualism, competitiveness and aggressiveness (Slater 2017). According to Salter (2017) , the prototype 'geek' is white, heterosexual and middle class. As geek masculinity grew more dominant within computational technology and in particular the video game industry, they applied a capitalist rationality to the subjects they are creating. As such video games represented a world of objects and people, especially women, became utilities to be collected and transformed into status (Herbert Marcuse 1964; Salter 2017) .

Disalvo (2016) argues that just like other childhood games such as playing with barbies, video games teach its users a form of gender socialization. Moreover, Jenkins (1998) drew a comparison between video gaming interaction among other types of games as an area where male children can experience boyhood and learn how to define their gender. In his book "Die Tryin: Video Games, Masculinity, Culture", Derek Burrill (2008) makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of gender, socialization and video games. He posits that in video games exists the "digital boyhood" phenomena where boys and men live in fantasy with the ability to define what it means to be a man through narratives typically centered around high action such as war, fighting, sports, and hero stories. He proposes that video games offer the male player an escape from the presence of feminism, class struggle and daily responsibilities.

Over the years, content and character analysis have found that video games as media content appeal to Hegemonic Masculinity through inclusionary and exclusionary ways. The representation of the lead character in video games often corresponds to hegemonic masculinity through displays of aggression, material and economic success, power, and force via an extension of weaponry and a muscular physique (Peter Coker 2016). A study on video game content analysis found that (83%) male characters were portrayed as aggressive and about a third were portrayed as hypermasculine (Dill-Shackleford and Thill, 2007). According to the study, hypermasculine was coded as having exaggerated arm and chest muscles, pronounced masculine facial features and facial expressions of power and dominance . Exclusionary practices in video games include barring women or female figures and men from different races or sexual orientations from a profound and complex narrative in the game. A study on two hundred twenty-five video game covers

found women or female figures are overwhelmingly objectified and sexualized (Burgess, Stermer, and Burgess 2007). More recently, an analysis on gender representation in video gamers by Anita Sarkeesian (2015) argued that women and their sexuality are often utilized as tropes and treated as rewards to the male player.[10]

Apart from the stereotypical representation of women is the stereotypical representation of non-white characters in video games. In their paper, Dickerman, Christensen and Kerl-McClain (2008) suggest that female characters are often limited to a minor role while people of color are often portrayed as characters in video games in a stereotypical manner and typically includes derogatory connotations. Moreover, games have a history of employing racial stereotypes by limiting the roles and representations of non-white characters. Dietrich (2013) mirrored this finding and suggested that the majority of both online and offline games do not allow for the creation of avatars with a non-white facial appearance. The repetitive exposure of such content in video games is of significance due to its reach. Playing video gaming is dissimilar from other forms of childhood play. It is at the core of a growing mega-industry which is valued at over tens of billions of U.S. dollars. (Statistica 2019)[11]. In 2015, the video gaming industry had surpassed Hollywood into becoming the fourth largest entertainment market in the world.[12]

2.11 Concluding thoughts

To conclude this chapter, we find the flow of media messages from various entry points to form a coherent perspective of a world situated in capitalist patriarchy (Chomsky and Herman 1988; Wood 1994). That is a worldview shaped by an appeal to social status, accumulation of capital and the legitimization of male authority over subaltern identities such as women and homosexual men (Panayiotou 2010). Social movements advocating for equal rights among women and the LGBT+ community in the 1980s presented a threat to male dominance. This, in return, created the need to repackage a new image of hegemonic masculinity. According to some authors, spaces in mainstream media act as a 'preserve' where male can enjoy the privileges of patriarchy without accounting for the advances of feminism (Messner 2012). Since then, print magazines and media discourse pivoted towards metrosexuality, fashion and appearance. At first, media messages focused on the male face and facial features as signifiers for attractiveness. This gradually moved to focus on the body, torso and chest area in specific, and degrees of muscularity (Ricciardelli, Clow and White 2010).

Since then, the male body has emerged in media spheres as a focal point in re-negotiating masculinity (Bordo 1999; Vito, Admire and Hughes 2017). It is coded with sexual desirability, aggression, romantic and financial success and an overall dominance in the male and social hierarchy. With the rise of economic disparity and social movement, men today find themselves without access to traditional signifiers of power such as economic capital or social influence and turn to physical capital (Kimmel 2017; Blanc-Hoang 2014) . As a perceived "crisis on masculinity", the male body becomes the vehicle to reinstate masculinity where a compensatory display of masculinity is presented through high muscularity and low body-fat (Frederick et al. 2017). In the final chapter,we seek to demonstrate how such media and gender attitudes have funneled through the most popular

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[10] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QC6oxBLXtkU

[11] https://www.statista.com/statistics/232383/gender-split-of-us-computer-and-video-gamers/

[12] https://businesstech.co.za/news/lifestyle/88472/the-biggest-entertainment-markets-in-the-world/

form of communication today, social media, and its possible effects on body image in adolescents focusing on male youth and new ways masculinity are presented.

Chapter 3

SOCIAL MEDIA, BODY IMAGE AND MALE ADOLESCENTS

This chapter focuses on three main key concepts which are social media, body image and its relationship with adolescent males. We begin by defining the main attributes of social media as the new dominant form of communication. Social media has been called 'the new television', however, the manner in which it operates has revolutionized the way humans, across the globe, interact with each other (Abrahamson 2017; Boulianne 2017; Valkenburg 2017). Technological advancements such as the internet and smartphone made the exchange of media content accessible and pervasive (Michael Dewing 2010). Instagram is an image-based social media platform that enables users to upload and share images, videos, animation among other graphics (Moreau 2021).

It has recently become a site for academic research due to extreme emphasis on appearance (Reade 2020; Jong and Drummond 2016; Norton 2017; Hockin-Boyers, Pope and Jamie 2020; Tiggemann and Zaccardo 2016; Morais, Hemme and Reyes 2021; Chatzopoulou, Filieri, and Dogruyol 2020). Moreover, the use of beauty filters, beauty applications and body applications bring a new form of gendered technology, thereby, creating new unrealistic standards of physical attractiveness (Elias and Gill 2017). While most of the research has been focused on adolescent females, there appears to be a growing pressure on young men and adolescent males to achieve an ideal male body (Tiggemann and Zaccardo 2016). In particular, the muscle ideal has become proliferated through fitness culture and bodybuilding accounts on Instagram (Marshall, Chamberlain, and Hodgetts 2020). Hybrid masculinity has been used to describe how body builders position themselves in traditional feminized ways through posting self-objectifying images of themselves on Instagram, yet maintain proximity to hegemonic masculinity by promoting homophobic sterotypes (Marshall, Chamberlain, and Hodgetts 2020).

Scholars have attributed the rise of males conforming to the muscle ideal with the rise of economic precarity (Hakim 2018; Marshall, Chamberlain, and Hodgetts 2020). As a consequence of internalizing the muscle-ideal, body dysmorphic disorders such as muscle dysmorphia may develop among individuals (Marçal Pimenta et al. 2009). Media practice models, social comparison theory and cultivation theory explain the influence in which body image is shaped among individuals and adolescents in particular (Steel and Brown 1995; Festinger 1954; Gerbner and Gross 1975). While recent studies have been investigating the influence of social media on body image in adolescents, there remains a disparity when it comes to male adolescents (Tiggemann and Zaccardo 2016).

3.1. Social Media as a revolutionary technology

In this section, we will define what social media is and explore how it revolutionized communication technology. The introduction of social media into our daily lives has dramatically changed how we as humans interact and communicate with one another. Today social media technology is incorporated into our social behaviour, education and work life. The significant role social media has played in society has garnered the attention of many researchers who called it 'the new television' as it has become the

primary source of consuming information, news and entertainment (Abrahamson 2017; Boulianne 2017; Valkenburg 2017).

There is a large amount of skepticism and concern regarding social media and perhaps rightfully so. It has been linked to anti-social behaviour, narcissism, and addiction (Albrighton 2011; Amedie 2015; Seppälä 2016). However, when we contextualize social media as a communication tool throughout history, it appears to be in line with the normative progression of communication technologies. While it is easy to blame social media for the rise of influencer culture, self-objectification and unrealistic body and beauty standards (Bell, Cassarly and Dunbara 2018; Tang and Chan 2020; Henriques and Patnaik 2020), social media did not invent new ideals and values that were not previously established. Emphasis on luxurious lifestyles, Euro-centric beauty ideals and unrealistic body standards has existed ages ago in print media which was later amplified through television advertising (;Frith, Shaw, and Cheng 2005; Whiteloc and Jackson 1997). Social media inherited this mediascape and increased its broadcasting capabilities.

Each advent of communication technology beginning with the printing press (1440), electronic television (1927) and social media (1997) has drastically altered our way of life and communicating with one another (Aziz 2017). This change is brought about due to the rate of exchange of information, messages and symbols (Gerbner 1972). However, unlike previous communication tools that required intricate broadcasting technologies, social media is vastly more accessible to its user. The term social media "refers to the wide-range of internet-based and mobile services that allows the user to participate in online exchanges, contribute user-created content, or join online communities." (Dewing 2010, 1). It is most prominently known as social network sites (SNS) and media-sharing sites, yet encompasses other formats such as blogs, virtual world content (virtual gaming reality), and social bookmarking (Michael Dewing 2010).

The earliest form of social networking site appeared in 1999 known as SixDegrees.com (Dewing 2010; Aziz 2017). Since then, there have been many attempts to establish community-based online, however few were capable of garnering widespread popularity such as Facebook and Instagram (Dewing 2010). Both Facebook and Instagram have been established as recently as 10-15 years ago which is why research on their implication on society is still in its preliminary stage (Aziz 2017).

There were several technological advances that made networking on social media possible. The development of smartphone devices, advanced software tools and the internet web 2.0 all played a role in making social media available to the average consumer (Dewing 2010). The characteristic of being highly accessible is one of the reasons social media is considered revolutionary as it "can be used anywhere and anytime,where an internet connection is available." (2). Unlike the television set where on average one household would share a device, today there is a highlikely of multiple smartphones used in one household.[13] Infact, estimates predict that nearly half of the population today own a smartphone.[14] Moreover, nearly 83% Spanish children will have a smartphone by the age of 14 years old. (Sànhez-Mellado 2015).

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[13] https://www.statista.com/statistics/387184/number-of-mobile-phones-per-household-in-the-uk/

[14] https://www.bankmycell.com/blog/how-many-phones-are-in-the-world

Through the smartphone, one can download social media applications like Facebook, Instagram, Linkedin, Snapchat and TikTok. Once downloaded, users can immediately connect and share images, stories and updates with friends and family and wider network audiences.[15] While social media applications share basic operations such as creating a virtual identity, build relationships and share posts, some applications are geared towards a specific function. For example, Facebook is designed to connect family and friends, Linkedin is designed for professional networking and Instagram is image-based (Nations 2020; Aziz 2017).

Kietzmann et al. (2011) have coined the term the "honeycomb framework" of social media to describe its functionality *(See Figure 3)*. According to this model, there are 7 main functions of social media. At the centre is Identity and reveals the extent of which users offer information about themselves to their network. Orbiting around the periphery of Identity is Sharing. Sharing reveals the rate of distribution and exchange on media content. Conversations is the amount of conversations the user engages with on their social media platform. Groups define the community or assemblies the user joins or surround themselves with on social media. Reputation is the awareness of the social standing the user has of their surroundings and themselves on social media. Relationships are the bonds and relationships users form with one another on social media. Presence reveals the level of awareness the social media user has regarding the existence of other social media users. (Imed Boughzala 2016).

Figure 3. The honeycomb framework of social media. SOURCE: Kietzmann et al. 2011.
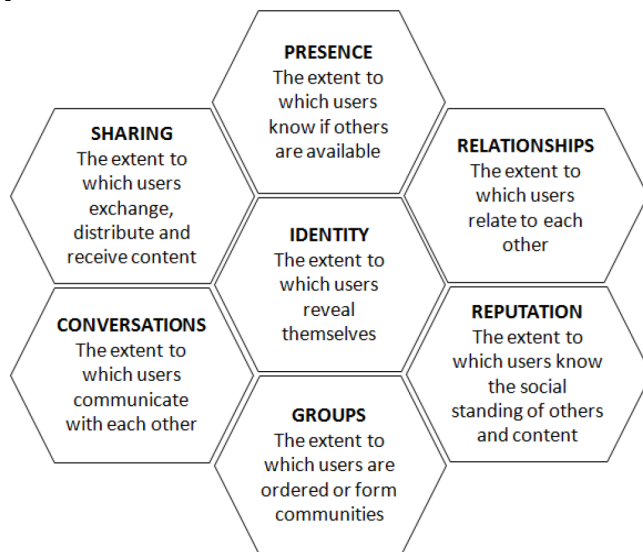
While the honeycomb model is generally employed for marketing research, strategy and direct advertising to social media users, it provides a basic framework for how social media users establish their virtual environment.

Today, we appear to inhabit two worlds simultaneously; the material world and the virtual world. Existing as an online identity means people from all over the world can connect instantaneously without the limit on international borders (Amedie 2015). Due to its decentralized characteristics, social movements such as the Me Too movement and Black Lives Matters are advocated through social media (Ohlheiser 2019; Maqbool 2020). On the other hand, the ability to upload information and images at an extremely rapid rate

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[15] https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/facebook101/what-is-facebook/1/

has generated some concerns as well such as anxiety, bullying and information warfare (Amedie 2015). In the following section, we examine the Instagram application and the implications of an image-based virtual reality.

3.2 Instagram application

In this section, we will expand more on the function of the image-based social media platform, Instagram. We will discuss its main features and delineation. In particular, we will expand on the filter features and its implication on adolescents.

Instagram is an image-based social networking application that allows users to create content, upload images, videos and livestream, through their mobile smartphones (Moreau 2021). The application was first launched, relatively recently, in 2010 (Blystone 2020). Since then, it has garnered global attention and widespread popularity with almost 1 billion people accessing the application monthly worldwide and half a million people accessing it daily (Dean 2021). Todate, 50 billion images have been uploaded to Instagram with an average of 995 images uploaded every second.[16] Some of the largest Instagram user population is located in the U.S and India with 140 million users each.[17] Spain is also considered to have a sizable Instagram user population of approximately 20 million users.[18] Spain's Instagram users have doubled since 2015 and are reported increasing each year. The use of Instagram is particularly relevant to Spain due to the popularity of football culture and the real Madrid soccer team who have millions of fans and followers online. On average, females tend to log in to the Instagram application more than males but only by a small margin. In Spain, the largest age demographic of Instagram users is reported to be between 25 to 34 years old. It is also finding increasing popularity among young adolescents.

The Instagram application provides its users with an array of online services. The user can create an online account, display their profile, share photos and videos, create a community-network and follow other accounts (Moreau 2021). On Instagram, users can follow friends and family accounts as well as celebrities, athletes, artists, and nature among many other accounts (Instagram 2021). The function of the hashtag on Instagram allows the user to categorize their posts and allows other people, not necessarily part of the following, to find the post based on similar and shared interests (MacDonald 2017). If used correctly, a hashtag can become viral and give immense exposure to an image or trend on social media platforms (MacDonald 2017). Examples of hashtags include #foodblogger, #travelvlog and #fitnessculture (Christina Newberry 2020). In the following section, we explore in greater details some of the main features of the Instagram application, focusing mainly on filters and appearance modification application

3.3 The Instagram Face and appearance modification applications

Instagram allows users to edit images they have taken and apply a range of varying filters. In recent years, Instagram has allowed users to make and share filters for others to use

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[16] https://www.omnicoreagency.com/instagram-statistics/

[17] https://www.statista.com/statistics/578364/countries-with-most-instagram-users/

[18] https://www.statista.com/statistics/1102142/spain-number-of-instagram-users/

(Blackmon 2019). Some Instagram filters mimic camera lenses and offer a vintage or polaroid aesthetic. Other filters are more sophisticated and can produce an augmented reality (AR) (Dooley 2019). Recently, there has been some criticism directed towards Instagram filters that are designed to mimic plastic surgery operations *(See Image 11).* These filters are promoted as being able to give the 'Instagram Face" by virtually applying cheek and lip fillers, a nose job, brow lifts, and skin-smoothing botox (Manavis 2019).

Image 11. Plastic surgery filter on Instagram.

Source: Sarah Manavis (2019)

Social media filters contain augment-reality (AR) technology. It uses face recognition technology where a mask-like outline of the user's face is made and virtual objects are added then added to the virtual mask (Herrington 2019). They are mostly popular on image-based social media platforms such as Instagram and Snapchat, but can also be used in real time through Facetime (Herrington 2019). As mentioned in the previous section AR on social media can be used in creative ways exploring various dimensions of surrealistic art (Dooley 2019; Herrington 2019). However, there is cause for concern when considering the impact of AR known as the 'Instagram Face' that is designed to mimic the effect of getting plastic surgery, lip fillers and botox. It must be noted that the configuration of these facial features as a beauty ideal has been geared towards White women which allows them to "manufacture a look of rootless exoticism" (Tolentino 2019, para. 5).

There is a direct rise of people undergoing plastic surgery as a consequence of using these Instagram filters (Manvais 2019). Plastic surgeons have reported that adolescents as young as 13 years old, are requesting cosmetic surgery inorder to look like the filtered versions of themselves, which includes lip augmentation, bigger eyes, and a sculpted nose, higher cheekbones and botox (Manvais 2019; Herrington 2019). In fact, some

cosmetic offices offer the "Instagram Face" or "Kylie Jenner" package where a person can purchase these aesthetic interventions at a discounted price (Kale 2019).

The reason AR plastic-surgery filters are having a profound impact on Instagram users is because it alters physical features and appearance in real time. Unlike using photo editing applications like FaceTune and BodyApp which require an image to be taken and then uploaded to the application, exposure to the "ideal" result through AR Instagram Face filters is made instant. After an extended duration of time using the AR Instagram Face filter, the social media user begins to cultivate a warped reality of how they look or should look. There is an inconsistency and distortion between the image they are seeing of themselves on their smartphones and the image they see of themselves in real life. Repetitive and instant exposure to such ideals increases the level of dissatisfaction with their appearance and magnifies the level of perceived flaws. It is my speculation that as AR technology becomes more sophisticated, and if social media applications continue to use them without regulation, the filters will expand to incorporate the physical body.

Elias and Gill (2017) have argued that beauty applications, such as Instaglam and Modiface, that allow users to alter physical appearance by whitening teeth, removing blemishes and sculpting facial features have introduced a new form of beauty politics. They describe such innovations as being the product of advanced neoliebral culture and post-feminist discourse. "Both postfeminism and neoliberalism are structured by a grammar of individualism that has almost entirely replaced notions of the social or political, or any idea of individuals as subject to pressures, constraints or even influence from the outside" (10).

In postfeminist culture, women are presented with the choice of being individual representatives with agency over how they chose to represent their body. Yet, bodily representation in neoliberal culture is still trapped under the regulation of aesthetic labour. Except now, aesthetic labour is mandated through discourse of empowerment, confidence, choice and agency. This "love your body" by "working on yourself" discourse can be seen as a form of self-capitalisation in which psycho-technology applications have found their place. Psycho-technology applications that teach people how to boost their self-esteem and confidence are promoted as being feminist and empowering for women. Yet, their functionality is based on the same premise as beauty applications. Insteading of representing the body as a project, it renders the self as a project and boosting confidence levels is a manner of self-capitalization in neoliberal society (Ian Sinclair 2017).

Beauty and body modification applications exacerbate self-surveillance and regulatory gaze on one's self by making alterations to physical appearance, based on conventional standards, widely accessible. The techniques offered to "enhance" one's features, by slimming the face or body, are designed to help the user maximize their visual capital. These apps are framed as "best friends" giving you a beauty make-over while your real life friends and family can give feedback on the job done (Elias and Gill 2017). As such, appearance modification applications compound "feminime subjectivity into the realm of 'economies of visibility" (21). Elias and Gill's analysis of the impact of beauty and body application mostly focuses on the female demographic.

There has been a recent emergence of body modification applications targeted towards the male demographic. The *Manly* photo-editing application allows users to digitally

insert six-pack abs, enhance muscle mass in the shoulder, add a beard, change eye- colour, smooth skin and place tattoos *(See Image 12)*. We can assume that, similar to female-oriented beauty apps, a gendered-technology is placed on the male user where the ideal physical appearance is homogenized.

Image 12. Manly application
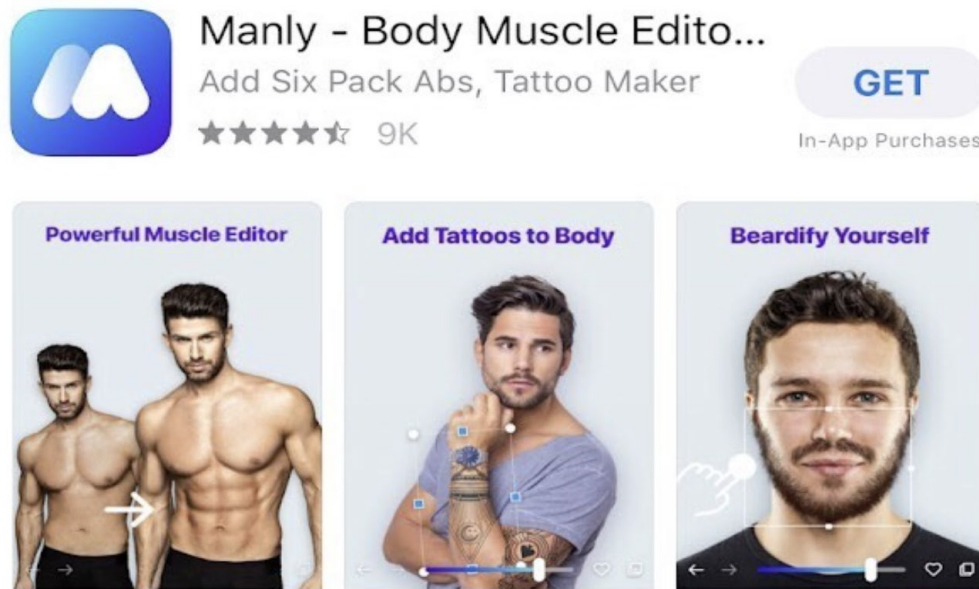
Source: Google app store (2021)

Moreover, the name of the application, *Manly*, indicates the compounding of cis-gender performativity with gendered aesthetics. According to the application, to look manly is to be muscular, have a beard and tattoos. Perhaps male-oriented body modification applications are not as widely used but their presence is indicative of a growing emphasis on the ideal male body and its place in the digital world. In the following section, we will discuss the proliferation of fitness culture, prominent body-building accounts and research studies that investigated its influence on body image.

3.4 Fitness Culture and body-building on Instagram

Instagram as an image-based platform is an elemental online site to study the mediation of ideal body images. The feature of hashtags such as #bodybuilding, #instabod #fitsperation, #fitfam, #gainingweightiscool among others makes exposure to idealized male and female body images accessible and abundant (Norton 2017; Hockin-Boyer, Chatzopoulou Filieri and Dogruyol 2020; Morais, Hemme and Reyes 2021). (*See Image 13)*. The Instagram platform has also enabled the growth and popularity of many bodybuilding figures and fitness influencers in achieving a micro-celebrity status (Morais, Hemme and Reyes 2021).

Male fitness influencer Simeon Panda (@simeonpanda) has an estimate of nearly 8 million followers on Instagram and is recognized as a leading figure in male bodybuilding.[19] Many famous Instagram personalities used Instagram as a branding tool to market their workout and eating plans as well as fitness related products like protein

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[19] https://www.hyprbrands.com/blog/top-8-male-fitness-influencers-of-2019

shakes to millions of followers. For example, famous fitness influencer Lazar Angelov capitalized on his Instagram popularity by publishing a book called "ABS: The Secret Revealed" and marketing the 'Lazar Angelov Diet'[20]. As an Instagram fitness influence, Angelov has garnered 5.7 million followers on his handle (Instagram 2020). In a recent post shared on Instagram, Angelov described the conditions of not being able to practice bodybuilding in the gym (due to COVID-19) as depressing, something that he can not live without and aching to being a 'junkie'. (Instagram 2020). In one of his Instagram posts, Angelov asks his followers to guess how much his body fat percentage is. The post received more than 300,000 likes and hundreds of comments. Communication research has yet to investigate the effects of this form of media which includes a deeper act of engagement and admiration by the social media towards the celebrity through posting comments and likes.

Image 13. #bodybuilding on Instagram
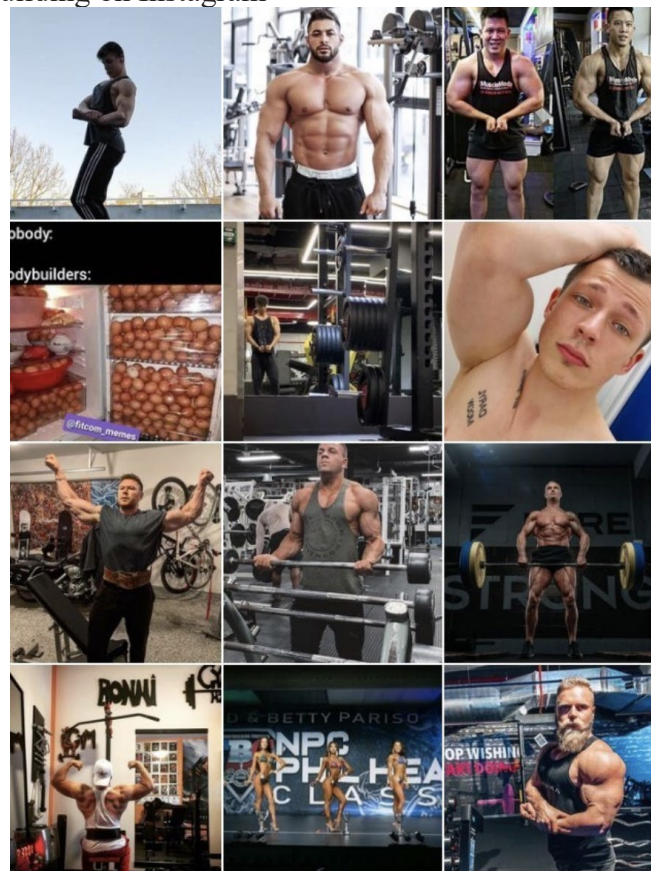
SOURCE: Instagram (2021)

In general, research on the influence of social media and society is still in its primitive stages, considering the recentness of its development (Tiggemann and Anderberg 2020). There have been some studies that investigate the relationship between fitness culture on Instagram on body image (Jong and Drummond 2016; Norton 2017; Reade 2020; Hockin-Boyers, Pope, and Jamie 2020; Morais, Hemme and Reyes 2021; Chatzopoulou Filieri and Dogruyol 2020); however the majority predominantly focuses on the female demographic (Tiggemann and Anderberg 2020).

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[20] https://www.amazon.com/ABS-Revealed-Complete-Bodybuilding-Exercises-ebook/dp/B06XJ7JJ7C

A content analysis on fitspiration images found that the majority of images shared depicted toned, thin and objectifying images of women (Tiggemann and Zaccardo 2016). One study suggests that fitness accounts on Instagram may be helpful and useful as it promotes a healthy lifestyle through the use of images and texts (Jong and Drummond 2016). A different study found contradictory results and suggests that exposure to fitspiration images increased negative mood, body dissatisfaction and increased desire to exercise among women (Prichard et al. 2020).

There have been recent studies which explored the relationship between fitness culture on Instagram and male body image (Tiggemann and Anderberg 2020; Paulson 2020; Chatzopoulou Filieri and Dogruyol 2020; Morais, Hemme and Reyes 2021). As evidenced by the date, all of the mentioned studies were published as recent as 2020. In an experimental study (Paulson 2020), male participants were divided into two groups. One group was exposed to fitness accounts on Instagram and the other group viewed neutral images. The participants were then tested for measures of drive for muscularity and social comparison . Results found that exposure to the muscle and fitness accounts on Instagram decreased appearance satisfaction, weight satisfaction, and increased social comparison than participants who viewed neutral images.

In another similar experimental study (Tiggemann and Anderberg 2020), 300 male participants were randomly assigned into one of three groups in viewing men's fashion (clothed), fit-speration (bare-chested) and neutral accounts on Instagram. Results found that exposure to muscular bodies increases muscular satisfaction however social comparison and muscle-ideal internalization. There was no significant difference in the men's fashion (clothed) and fitspiration group (bare chested) when measuring for appearance-based social comparison and inspiration to exercise or eat healthily. Scholars (Tiggemann and Anderberg 2020) suggested that while fitness culture on social media impacts male body image, influence and effects for women's and men's body image can not be generalized.

From this viewpoint, we put forward three assumptions to explain the rising media emphasis on fitness culture. Frst, we assume extreme measures are taken by fitness influencers to attain a conventionally fit body. Body modification behaviour, which include excessive exercise, powerlifting, protein intake and in some cases steroid use (Vanderboush and Eggermont, 2013; Schneider et. al 2017; Pope et al. 1997), serve as mechanisms to conform to the socio-cultural norm implicated in body cult and body image (Sánchez Hernández, Jiménez-Morales and Carrillo Durán 2014). That is not to suggest that anyone who practices a balanced diet and exercises regularly is trying to conform to body standards. However, we assume some cases where intensive measures are taken to further the image of a fit body beyond the use-value of the exercises.

The second assumption finds efforts in projecting the image of a fit body onto social media creates an environment which normalizes acts of transgression against the body itself. The body, in this case is seen and the object or vehicle subject to alteration in order to achieve that image (Sánchez Hernández, Jiménez-Morales and Carrillo Durán 2014). Steroid use can also be seen as acts of transgression where the body is pushed to expand beyond its physical limit by injection (Pope, Kanayama, and Hudson 2012). Finally, the mediation of fitness culture and the muscle ideal on social media results, in some cases, in increased body dissatisfaction (Paulson 2020). Future research is needed to obtain consistent results. In the following section, we explore the notion of self-objection that

occurs when male social users post images of their bodies on Instagram (Marshall, Chamberlain, and Hodgetts 2020).

3.5 Hybrid masculinity and self-objectification

Just like the physical realm, the digital realm is a "space where gendered identities, including hegemonic masculinity, are produced and reproduced." (Rodriguez and Hernandez 2018, 2). In chapter I, we covered how online spaces foster reactionary and compensatory forms of masculinity on platforms such as reddit, Twitter and Youtube (Rodriguez and Hernandez 2018). Similarly, Instagram serves as an online space where certain gender norms and stereotypes are generated. Interestingly enough, we find hybrid forms of masculinity emerging in these online spaces. In this section, we will describe a hybrid form of masculinity and male self-objection.

Ging (2017) describes hybrid masculinity as a form of masculinity which can not be specifically categorized as hegemonic nor subordinate masculinity. They are somewhere in between where online male identities, who identify as beta males, are able to place themselves in a victimized position yet maintain practice dominance and aggression over women and other marginalized groups. Similarly, a study by Marshall, Chamberlain, and Hodgetts (2020) detected a hybrid form of masculinity among bodybuilders on Instagram. The study analyzed the content shared on Instagram by prominent and semi-prominent male bodybuilders. It found several recurring themes throughout their Instagram handle where they do not necessarily fit in hegemonic masculinity yet seek to maintain a dominant male image.

For example, some of the content generated by bodybuilders on Instagram depicted a 'bromance' relationship that they have developed among other bodybuilders and trainers. Bromance is described as a relationship that differs from regular heterosexual male friendships by being based on a deep level of trust and demonstrations of physical intimacy and affection (Robinson, Anderson, and White 2017; Marshall, Chamberlain, and Hodgetts 2020). Such affirmation of emotional bonds have been traditionally feminized and depicted as less masculine, consequently justifying its exclusion from hegemonic masculinity. Past studies have showed a tendency among men to distance themselves from bromance-oriented displays of affections among male friendships out of fear of being ostracized for being 'gay' or 'effeminate' (Bank and Hansford 2000; Robinson, Anderson, and White 2017). The authors "propose that this acceptance can ultimately be attributed to the cultural decrease in the stigmatization of male femininity, which has led to the emergence of softer and more inclusive masculine ideals"(Marshall, Chamberlain, and Hodgetts 2020, 578).

Another traditionally feminized position, that was determined in the study, is the manner in which body-builders engage in high self-objectification on Instagram (Marshall, Chamberlain, and Hodgetts 2020). Analysis found that the images bodybuilders share on Instagram often are displayed as body parts by either focusing on the biceps, chest or abs area. In line with objectification theory, the body as a whole becomes fragmented and displayed as body parts to be placed under the viewer's gaze (Nussbaum 1995). It has been argued that by focusing on degrees of muscularity, strength and dedication to the athleticism of the body, men have found a way to masculinize self-objectification. In particular, muscularity stands as a symbol of their dominance among the male hierarchy. Hence, displaying high degrees of muscularity through their physical body grants them a

form of "insurance" against attempts of subordination by other males (Marshall, Chamberlain, and Hodgetts 2020). As such hybrid masculinities that are formed on social media platforms are able to assimilate to their environment depending on what the situation calls for. It is able to configure different matrices of social dynamics which makes it possible to occupy feminized positions yet maintains a closeness to hegemonic masculinity and practices male power.

On Instagram, the male body becomes a site where the negotiation of power occurs. Initially, male bodybuilders devote time, physical exertion and specialized diets to develop high muscularity, low-fat and lean bodies. Then they craftly create and curate images on online identity on Instagram to present the product of their labour which is their physical bodies. By doing this, they are subjecting their bodies to the external viewer's gaze, to which the viewer can choose to appraise or scrutinize the body. The study (Marshall, Chamberlain, and Hodgetts 2020) found that male bodybuilders on Instagram receive compliments from followers praising them for being their "beast-like" body. Here, the presence of muscularity in the male body functions as a signifier for physical and mental strength (Marshall, Chamberlain, and Hodgetts 2020). The compliments function as a form of affirmation and surveillance encourages the male bodybuilders to further develop degrees of muscularity. Moreover, the compliments work to reinforce a digital social space where adherence to hegemonic masculinity is maintained through the agreement of what is to be considered masculine and dominant as both are fundemal to the construction of hegemonic masculinity. Being physically muscular is a commonly established norm by "which men have been shown to evoke dominance"(579).

Muscularity represents power; strength of mind, strength of body and potentially for violence. Such attributes make muscularity a direct "symbol of male dominance" (Marshall, Chamberlain, and Hodgetts 2020, 571). Consequently behaviour such as extreme self-objectification, self and body-surveillance are overlooked. Moreover, muscularity is serving as a substitute signifier for economic success. Scholars (Hakim 2018; Marshall, Chamberlain, and Hodgetts 2020) have found a correlation with the rise of male fitness culture and rising neoliberal austerity. In the post-financial crisis austerity economy, men are seeking alternative forms of validation along male hierarchy (Hakim 2018). Due to the competitive nature of neoliberalism, more men today do not have access to economic capital because they can not find work. Hence, body-work, that is the time, effort and dedication required to develop muscular strength serves as a status symbol to fill in the space of economic precariousness (Hakim 2018; Marshall, Chamberlain, and Hodgetts 2020).

Results from content analysis of the images shared by male bodybuilders found the use of memes appealed to hegemonic masculinity by evoking homophobic jokes towards effeminate males or males who are not muscular (Marshall, Chamberlain, and Hodgetts 2020). There is a fine line and a specialized place that males can occupy in hybrid masculinity where they can show and share feelings towards other males yet not too much that they appear gay. That is an area where males may compliment another male on their physical body as long as they are both muscular.

3.6 Male body Image and Muscle Dysmorphia

Through the previous chapters, we have discussed the increasing pressure to achieve an ideal body among males. The ideal male body is defined as having the mesomorph shape, wide shoulders, muscular arms and a protruding chest. We have also pointed out the direct connection between degrees of muscularity and hegemonic masculinity. As many authors have observed that muscularity is the physical representation of masculinity. We also have demonstrated the overrepresentation of the mesomorph muscular ideal and hegemonic masculinity in mass media; print, reality TV, sports media and pornography. In this chapter, we have demonstrated the rising impact social media has on culture thus making it a relevant space for study. In this section, we will explore the relationship between social media and adolescents and its impact on body image related concerns.

Body image is an umbrella term used to describe a set of attitudes and beliefs one pertains to one's own body (Cash, Melnyk, and Hrabosky 2004). Body image describes evaluation of body features including height, weight, shape, facial features, skin, hair and overall physical appearance. It also extends to the cultural experience of the body, how it moves in a space, what it can do and how it should look like. Body image serves as a multidimensional construct that encompasses two specific aspects of *evaluation* which is how a person perceives and feels about their bodies and *investment* which covers certain actions and treatments taken towards the body. Similar to body image, body esteem describes the self-conceptualization an individual appraises towards their own body in relation to weight, height and shape (Williams et al. 2012).

Similar to self-esteem, having high body-esteem means having a healthy approach and narrative to one's body. As constructs of self conceptualization, body-esteem and self-esteem are usually developed in conjunction with one another. If an individual is experiencing low body-esteem or body image then that would impact how they determine their overall self-worth (Davison and McCabe 2010). A study (Davison and McCabe 2010) that examined the relationship between body image and psychological functioning in adolescent girls and boys found that girls tended to experience higher levels of body dissatisfaction. The connection between body image and self-esteem was found to be similar among boys and girls.

There are several terms that are derived from body image that explain unfavorable experiences and behaviour related to the body such as body image dissatisfaction (BID), negative body image, body image disturbances and body image issues (Melching et al. 2016; Cash et al. 2004; Pimenta et al. 2009). The terms are sometimes used interchangeably due to an overlap in their meanings. Body Image dissatisfaction (BID) is described as levels of discontent due to a discrepancy between actual body and desired body. An individual with BID holds an ideal image of how bodies should look and because their body does not conform they experience levels of body dissatisfaction (Melching et al. 2016). Similarly, negative body image describes experiences of dissatisfaction with the body. A person with a negative body image might feel embarrassed or ashamed of their body especially in situations where the body is exposed such as the beach. Hence, the person feels awkward, uncomfortable and generally tends to engage in comparison tendencies. We will expand more on social and appearance comparison in the following section.

Body image disturbance places body image under clinical terms and is described as a distortion of perception, behavior, or cognition related to weight or shape (Pimenta et al. 2009). There are a plethora of researches published in Psychology Journals dedicated to

studying the causes and implications of body image among the female demographic (Tolman and Debold 1994; Paxton et al. 1999; Stice et al. 2000; Maltby et al. 2004; Clay, Vignoles and Dittmar 2005; Woertman and Brink 2012; Tiggemann and Slater 2013). Previous work focused on the influence of television watching and celebrity worship (Botta 2006; Maltby et al. 2004).

Contemporary research on body image among the female is studying the effects of using social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and Pinterest (Brown and Tiggemann 2016; Fardouly et al 2015; Lewallen and Behm-Morawitz 2016). In general, there is considerably less research on male body image (Tiggemann 2004). However, results from the studies performed indicate the adolescent males and young men internalized ideal body standards and experience body dysmorphic disorders. A study has found that some male adolescents and young men feel dissatisfied with their muscle mass, often perceiving themselves as less muscular than they actually are (Morris and Katzman 2003). Very recently, researchers have begun to incorporate social media into their study on male body image (Tiggemann and Anderberg 2020). The advancement of body image disturbance may lead to the development of a body image disorder or body dysmorphia which is described as an over preoccupation and concern with physical appearance and development of behavior attitudes such as frequent mirror checks, body surveillance, weight assessment, and increased attention on a specific body part or feature (Pimenta et al. 2009).

Muscle dysmorphia is a subtype disorder deriving from body dysmorphia which describes the distortion in cognition where individuals, often males, perceive themselves as physically smaller and less muscular than they are (Pope et al. 1997). Often referred to as reverse anorexia, a person with muscle dysmorphia perceive themselves as being very skinny, not muscular enough, or not lean enough. To remedy feelings of dissatisfaction with the body, people suffering from muscle dysmorphia may engage in behaviours such as excessive exercise, caloric surplus (overeating), taking protein supplements and in some severe cases anabolic steroids (Pope et al. 1997).

Fanjul Peyró (2008) identifies some key elements in disorders that originate and are focused on somatic-driven features. Firstly, he points out that triggers for eating and somatic disorders are widespread in society. The presence of images that focus on appearance and looks are all around on the street, on billboard advertisements, and currently today on the mobile. Hence, a person suffering from a somatic disorder may feel the need to indulge in unhealthy eating behaviours or diets more frequently. Secondly, because somatic disorders operate on the visual level, people experiencing high symptoms may not recognize how the disorder has warped their judgment regarding their body, further exacerbating the need to obtain the perfect body. The greater the ideal of perfection has been constructed in the individual's mind, the greater the dissatisfaction they feel towards their body. In some cases, a person suffering from a somatic-driven disorder feels they will never achieve that level of perfection no matter how hard they try and exercise.

A study in the UK suggests that 1 in 10 male gym goers suffer from muscle dysmorphia (Ahmad, Rotherham and Talwar 2015). Muscle dysmorphia is considered a gendered issue because it typically affects males (McCreary 2007). As much, body-related dysmorphia, in alignment with mental illnesses that impact males, tends to go underrecognized, undiagnosed and untreated (Pope et al. 1997). People affected by

muscle dysmorphia may experience isolation and withdrawal from their social surroundings in order to maintain a strict food intake (Pope et al. 1997). They may spend long hours exercising and working out at the gym (Schneider et al. 2017; Pope et al, 1997). They may also engage in an array of body monitoring behaviours such as weigh-ins and obsessive mirror checks. Personal relationships and occupation may deteriorate as well (Cafri and Thompson 2004; Schneider et al. 2017; Pope et al 1997).

Extensive research on body image has recognized anorexia nervosa, which is an eating disorder driven by the fear of gaining weight, as one of the most common illnesses among adolescent females. Even though there has been a rise in recent mainstream discourse regarding body positivity and unrealistic body standards, cases of anorexia nervosa are still increasing. Statistics show that reported cases of anorexia nervosa in Spain have doubled from 2014 to 2017. Moreover, consequences of pressure to attain ideal body standards means in 1 out of 2 adolescents females have dieted. Similarly, experts in body dysmorphic disorders believe that muscle dysmorphia is a growing problem in society with many cases going undiagnosed and unrecognized (Ahmad, Rotherham and Talwar 2015).

Authors Harrison Pope, Katharine Phillips and Roberto Olivardia (2002) have documented the quest to achieve the perfect male body, muscles, skin, and hair in their book "The Adonis Complex: The Secret Crisis of Male Body Obsession". The book stresses on society's growing obsession with male physical appearance and how it may generate an array of disorders and compulsions such as muscle dysphoria. In the book, steroids and feminism are pointed out to be the main drivers behind the increased pressure and attention on male physical appearance. Bryson (2003) argues that by failing to incorporate class analysis in their approach, the authors maintain a reductionist and superficial breakdown of factors that influence male body image. Bryson (2003) finds that while the book lacks sociocultural and historical analysis, the book may provide mental health professionals with sufficient knowledge to expand discourse on eating disorders among men which remains low and insufficient.

Studies in the UK have shown the use of anabolic steroids has increased fourfold in the twelve months, from 0.1% of the population to 0.4%. In specific, an extra 19,000 young people, aged between 16 and 24-years-old have adopted the performance-enhancing substance in their workout routine (Turner 2017). A study (Asier Martínez Segura et al. 2015) conducted in the province of Alicante (Spain) found that out of 141 men who frequented gyms, 45 men displayed signs of muscle dysmorphia (MD). The study concluded that while individuals with MD maintained a balanced carbohydrate and fat diet, they exceeded protein intake beyond the recommended take. A study of male and female individuals who are experiencing muscle dysmorphia in Spain found that 50% of participants take the steroid drug (González-Mart et al. 2018).

Cross-cultural research examining men's body image perception, concerns and behaviour are needed. Lecturer at the University of York Ian Hamilton has pointed out that access to anabolic steroids is particularly easy as it can be ordered online. He also attributes our growing muscle conscious society to masculinity and social media. In an interview with the Telegraph, Hamilton says, "In some ways young men have been catching up with young women over the last few years, they are more sensitive and vigilant about how they

should look and this is becoming more acute. I think it is to do with appearance and masculinity, and the messages we absorb through social media."[21]

It is my assertion that as economic precarity intensifies along with the growing rise of social media technologies including body modification applications and filters, there will be an increase in body image concerns related to muscle dysmorphia among the male youth (Ahmad, Rotherham and Talwar 2015; Hakim 2018; Elias and Gill 2017). Firstly, the homogenization of the ideal male body occurs in popular culture (Pope et al. 1999). As demonstrated in the previous chapter, media narratives towards the male body have shifted within the past two decades with a growing emphasis on muscularity (Ricciardelli, Clow and White 2010). The reproduction of images exemplifying the muscle ideal in mainstream media, through films, advertisements, video games and social media, is accompanied with a shift in the marketplace (Ricciardelli, Clow & White 2010; Bordo 1999; Tylka 2014; Tiggemann and Anderberg 2020). In particular the cosmetic industry, gym facilities and manufacturers of protein supplements are now targeting the young male demographic (Olya 2015). Jankowski (2019) makes an astute observation denoting how open protein powders and shakes are sold in supermarkets. Protein powders are powdered forms of protein often containing soybeans, peas, rice, potatoes and added toxins which are advertised to increase muscle mass. [22] Previously, industries predominantly targeted the female demographic through weight loss products such as fat burners. Today, industries are targeting the male demographic through weight gain products such as protein powders (Jankowski 2019). The inclusion of males under the body cult occurs gradually and subtly so the shift is not detectable.

In the following sections, we discuss the factors that influence the construction of body image. In particular, we discuss the theories that have contributed to our understanding of body image among adolescents namely media practice model (Steel and Brown 1995), social comparison theory (Festinger 1954), and cultivation theory (Gerbner and Gross 1975).

3.7 Media Practice Model

The media practice model is a structural framework that analyzes media influence in mass communication to understand and predict what motivates adolescents and young adults in choosing the preference of using one media platform over another (Steele and Brown 1995). Steel and Brown (1995) designed an investigative extrospective method which relies on a 'practice perspective' analysis. The media practice model examines the dialectical exchange between media and consumers and the various aspects of their lives and environment. The model suggests that it is these daily habits and routines that determine the strength or weakness of the impact media consumption has. In particular, the model explains the difference in media usage between adolescents as developmental changes such as puberty growth, changing social relationship and cognitive skills occur (Steele and Brown 1995). The media practice model is relevant to this study because it focuses on the effects of media consumption among the adolescent demographic. In order to understand the relationship between adolescents and the media, Steele and Brown (1995) spent several years investigating the bedrooms of the adolescents themselves.

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[21] https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/07/27/steroids-see-four-fold-increase-data-shows-fuelled-rise-muscle/
[22] https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/the-hidden-dangers-of-protein-powders

They sought to examine which media platform played an important role in their daily routine. Below are a few questions proposed in their text:

"Why are the media such an essential part of so many adolescents' everyday routines?
What do they take from the media, and why?
Are some teens more susceptible to media influence than others?
What mediates the impact of media choices and effects?" (Steele and Brown 1995, 3)

The purpose for this enquiry concerns the unhealthy behaviours that may be developed by adolescents as a result of excessive media consumption. Steele and Brown (1995) provide three reasons concerning the media's effectiveness of adolescents.

(1) Children and adolescents are spending more time consuming media messages than the duration spent in school or with their parents (Steele and Brown 1995).
(2) Media promotes unrealistic standards and unhealthy ideals such as unrealistic body portrayals, hypersexualization of women, excessive drinking and gambling (Ricciardelli, Clow and White 2010; Burgess, Stermer, and Burgess 2007; Steele and Brown 1995).
(3) Parents and other socializing agents have shirked their responsibilities to direct youth toward less risky behavior (Steele and Brown 1995).

3.8 Adolescent room culture: Selfie, "likes" and attention economy

The media practice model was developed after extensive research was conducted on adolescent room culture (Steele and Brown 1995). Adolescent room culture takes into account the ongoing relationship between adolescents, media and identity formation. It suggests that from their own personal bedrooms, adolescents interact with and consume various forms of media such as music listening, television watching and reading magazines (Steele and Brown 1995). Steel and Brown's analysis was written in 1995, therefore, doesn't include nor investigate smartphones and social media which grew into popularity during the 2000s (Dewing 2010).

The accessibility and availability of new media technologies, such as the smartphone, internet and social media, has become instrumental in adolescent room culture where young users spend hours crafting an online identity. The presence of social media features such as 'likes', 'comments', and 'shares' creates a numerical method of assessing the success and popularity of a post shared on social media. There is a tendency among young users to further their accumulating 'likes' by curating their online identity through obsessively posting selfies, fashionable outfits, luxury cars, vacations, and exotic landscapes along with perfect bodies (Marwick 2015).

In the digital age of mass communication, attention has become a form of currency (Marwick 2015). A pattern forms on social media where attention and financial economy create a cyclical reproduction. Social media users carefully construct an online identity through the use of cultural signifiers that signify economic and social capital such as luxury goods. Images depicting luxury goods receive a greater amount of social media engagement and attention. The attention currency is then converted to finance through the use of sponsors and advertising. Hence, the reproduction of status is made through statuses (Marwick 2015).

3.9 Concluding thoughts

Social media today is the most dominant form of communication. It has revolutionized the way we communicate, interact and present ourselves (Abrahamson 2017). It is particularly popular among the young demographic who are growing up using social media.Understanding this form of mediation is still in its preliminary stages. More significantly, understanding the ways in which it promotes body cult and advertises idealized body images remains unknown. Scholars have noted a hybrid form of masculinity emerging in bodybuilding accounts on social media applications such as Instagram (Marshall, Chamberlain, and Hodgetts 2020).

The hybrid masculinity allows bodybuilders to position themselves in traditionally feminized positions where they engage in self-objectification by posting images of their muscular body and compliment others on their physique . However, the hybridity aspect of this form of masculinity allows bodybuilders to maintain a closeness to hegemonic masculinity. To which the degree of muscularity in their physical appearance acts as a form of insurance against being considered subordinate.

Researchers are detecting a gradual increase in body dysmorphic disorders in males (Pope et al. 1997). Muscle Dysmorphia (MD), often referred to as reverse anorexia, describes the condition in which the individual perceives themselves to be physically smaller than they actually are (McCreary 2007; Ahmad, Rotherham and Talwar 2015). Learning from previous research on female body image and the pervasiveness of anorexia highlights the urgent need to investigate male body image and its relationship with social media.

In the following section, we will elaborate on the social studies and theoretical aspect of body image literature.

Chapter 4

SOCIAL STUDIES AND BODY IMAGE

This chapter will focus on the theories existing in the field of psychology and communication and their relevance to study of body image. It focuses on two main theories which are social comparison theory (Festinger 1954) and cultivation theory (Gerber and Gross 1975).

For social comparison theory, we discuss the hypotheses that were implemented to theorize the method in which individuals construct a form of validation. The theory suggests that individuals obtain a sense of their social standing by comparing their abilities and opinions with others (Festinger 1954). There are two forms of social comparisons which are upward and downward comparison. Body image literature has used upward comparison to describe the increase of body dissatisfaction that happens when individuals compare their bodies with idealized body images ((Brown and Tiggemann 2016).

For cultivation theory, we describe the process in which media consumers cultivate their understanding of reality from the media presented to them. The theorists hypothesize that mainstream media works as a set of images that implement cohesive and coherent messages. It works as a system of values. (Gerbner 2000) The role idealized body images play in mainstream media is to create unrealistic and unattainable standards. The 'unattainability' aspect of idealized bodies is designed to signify an elite and exclusive status of social status and popularity (Reischer and Koo 2004). However, because idealized body images are unrealistic, many individuals fail to achieve them and hence increasing levels of body dissatisfaction in a given population (Soulliere and Blair 2004).

4.1 Social Comparison Theory

Social Comparison theory is a theory, in the field of psychology, penned by Leon Festinger to explain influence processes in social groups (Festinger 1954). He suggests that within every person resides the drive to evaluate self-worth through individual comparison. There are two forms of comparisons: Upward Comparison and Downward comparison. Social Comparison Theory is used in numerous body image research studies as it explains the phenomenon of negative body image perception from a psychological perspective (Lewallen and Behm-Morawitz 2016; Fardouly et al. 2015). In the following segment, we will first expand on the hypotheses of the theory, forms of social comparisons (Upwards & Dowards) and how it is relevant to body image research.

Festinger (1954) bases his theory on nine hypotheses which are supported by a variety of data analysis. Social Comparison theory was developed out of research examining opinion formation. Comparisons, in that area, were found to be a strong base from which opinion was generated. Social Comparison theory was then expanded on in terms of appraisal and evaluation of abilities (Festinger 1954).

● **Hypothesis I:** "*There exists, in the human organism, a drive to evaluate his opinions and his abilities.*" (117)

The first hypothesis suggests that humans have an internal drive to evaluate themselves, their ability and self worth by comparing themselves with other people surrounding them. Festinger (1954) builds a relationship built on mutual reciprocity between opinions and abilities as both play a significant role in an individual's overall behaviour. He suggests maintaining an incorrect opinion or appraisal would result in negative or "punishing" conditions. Festinger draws a distinction between opinion and evaluation of ability. He suggests a person's evaluation of their ability to accomplish something depends on how they perceive others' abilities of accomplishing the same things. In the absence of an objective reality, such self-induced evaluation can be subjected to distortion.

● **Hypothesis II: "**ateur*To the extent that objective, non-social means are not available, people evaluate their opinions and abilities by comparison respectively with the opinions and abilities of others* "(118).

Using the physical world as a reference is a way to estimate the accuracy of an opinion. The lack of an objective physical base would then make it difficult to produce correct assumptions. Therefore, the individual refers to the access of subjective assessments of their ability through social comparisons between another person's abilities. Festinger (1954) continues to explain in a corollary argument that in the absence of the ability to access social comparisons the individual's assessment capabilities fluctuates and leads to greater discrepancy.

● **Hypothesis III:** "*The tendency to compare oneself with some other specific person decreases as the difference between his opinion or ability and one's own increases*" (120).

The likelihood and frequency of a person to engage in social comparison diminishes if they perceive the other person to be extremely different. Festinger (1954) gives an example of a person who is just beginning to learn the game of chess. The beginner will be less engaged in comparisons with recognized masters of the game.

● **Hypothesis IV**: "*There is a unidirectional drive upward in the case of abilities which is largely absent in opinions*"(124).

A clear distinction is reaffirmed between abilities and opinions. Abilities are attributed as skill development where specific performances connote specific values. The higher the score or skill equates to a higher value.

Unlike opinions or beliefs where the absence of comparisons would result in a continuum like paradigm when no opinion is of greater or lesser value than another.

● **Hypothesis V:** *"There are non-social restraints which make it difficult or even impossible to change one's ability. These non-social restraints are largely absent for opinions"*(125).

An individual's conviction to their opinions has to do with their consistency of reasoning and thoughts or personality characteristics. It may be difficult for a person to change their mind but once a change is accepted, future resistance to a change in opinion will diminish. Opinions and evaluations of abilities are subject to change especially when confined in a social grouping. Members will attempt to influence each other in order to achieve some form of "uniformity". Opinions in that circumstance will become unsecured, destabilized and following that change will occur. When it comes to ability, change is enforced on the environment. For example, A person who is falling behind in a running group would have to train harder and run faster (1954). In this hypothesis, Festinger introduces the potency of an opinion to have on a person's willingness or tendency to push or pull upwards.

● **Hypothesis VI:** *"The cessation of comparison with others is accompanied by hostility or derogation to the extent that continued comparison with those persons implies unpleasant consequences"* (129).

If a person's opinion was found to be inconsistent within a social grouping that would often lead to the rejection of that individual from the group. The same logic may and may not be applied to abilities. Social stratification and stragmented levels of class superiority and inferiority are an example of this phenomenon (Hoffman, Festinger, and Lawrence 1954)

● **Hypothesis VII:** *"Any factors which increase the importance of some particular group as a comparison group for some particular opinion or ability will increase the pressure toward uniformity concerning that ability or opinion within that group"*(130).

Festinger focuses on the factors that drive opinion formation. In this hypothesis, he points towards the value or importance of an opinion or ability in a specific setting or situation. If an ability appears to be of higher value, individuals will engage in behavior that would decrease the discrepancy between themselves, the opinion and drive for evaluation. Conversely, if an opinion or ability is perceived as having lesser value, the likelihood to pursue its proximity is diminished. For example, a person's drive to evaluate their intelligence or occupational ability will become prominent when they are applying for a job. From this standpoint, measures of superiority or inferiority are taken to test the standing of an individual within a social group (Festinger 1954).

● **Hypothesis VIII:** *"If persons who are very divergent from one's own opinion or ability are perceived as different from oneself on attributes consistent with the divergence, the tendency to narrow the range of comparability becomes stronger"* (133).

In an experiment involving three students, one of whom was a paid actor, the participants were asked to complete a series of tests and evaluations (Festinger 1954). It was made clear to the participants that the paid actor was scoring considerably higher thus was of higher intelligence. Following that assessment, it was noted that the remaining participants began competing and comparing abilities with each other.

- **Hypothesis IX**: *"When there is a range of opinion or ability in a group, the relative strength of the three manifestations of pressures toward uniformity will be different for those who are close to the mode of the group than for those who are distant from the mode. Specifically, those close to the mode of the group will have stronger tendencies to change the positions of others, relatively weaker tendencies to narrow the range of comparison and much weaker tendencies to change their own position compared to those who are distant from the mode of the group"* (134).

Festinger (1954) locates the factors that generate dominant influences in a social group. In another experiment, members of a group who were closest to the ´mode of ability' were told that a few members disagreed with them while the larger majority of the group agreed with them. Thus, the tendency of members who were closest to the mode of ability to influence the minority group increased as there is a presence of pressure to achieve a form of uniformity within social groups.

4.2 Upwards and Downwards Social Comparison

Humans have a need to better know themselves and their standing in a social environment through a stable and consistent testing method (Festinger 1954). Social comparison is a psychological mechanism which enables individuals to engage in comparisons in a methodological way (Festinger 1954; Corcoran, Crusius and Mussweiler 2011). In return, the comparative method results in the overall shaping of behavior, attitude and opinions (Festinger 1954). When people are met with information about other people's aptitude and ability, they feel the need to relate it to themselves (Dunning and Hayes 1996). From that point, two forms of social comparisons are drawn out: Upward comparison and Downwards comparison (Festinger 1954). Depending on the person's willingness and motivation, each form of comparison serves a purposeful and varying functionality with different outcomes.

Upward Social Comparison is the process in which the individual engages in comparison of opinion and abilities with another person who they believe that person is in advanced standing (Festinger 1954). This process can have two effects depending on the individual mental state. It can either motivate them and provide information on how to progress (Bandura 1997) or result in an ego-deflating attitude that decreases the individuals self-esteem and increases negative mood tendencies (Tesser, Millar, and Moore 1988; Wheeler and Miyake 1992).

Upward social comparisons are most impactful when performed between intimate or close relationships than when administered towards strangers or acquaintances (Tesser 1988). For example, a person who frequently tests their position in the occupational field by comparing their success with their better-suited partner might experience one of the two outcomes. Positive responses to social comparison will enhance both the relationship and the individual's motivation. Similarly, negative responses will lead to strenuous imposition on the person's identity and relationship (Collins 1996). The method in which a person decides to perform a social comparison is imposed in relation to a set of standards. The set of standards requires an almost routine practice of evaluation (Corcoran, Crusius and Mussweiler 2011). While some studies have found that social comparison may increase well-being, many have found that routine and frequent social comparisons results in a decrease in well-being (White et al. 2006)

Downward Social Comparison is the process where a person draws comparisons of opinions and ability with another person who they perceive to be in a lower standing. This often results in higher feelings of self-worth and satisfaction (White et al. 2006). In a series of tests performed by Lyubomirsky and Ross (1997), they found that generally sad people felt better when paired with individuals that were perceived as being worse off or less competent. People tend to perform social comparisons when they need to reaffirm stability or assurance about their performance (White et al. 2006). People who are unsure of their self-worth do not possess an internal standard for measure which is why they seek external standards to compare themselves. People who frequently engage in social comparison have been found to be more unhappy and more affected by a comparison. Gibbons and Buunk (1999) explain that these people experience a more positive effect when performing downward comparisons.

4.3 Appearance Comparison and Body Image

Now that we outlined the basics of social comparison from a psychological perspective, we proceed by applying it to body image and see how it affects self-actualization and opinion formation regarding an individual's perception of their body.

Numerous research studies have investigated the connection between social comparison and body image. The majority of studies have concluded that individuals who frequently engage in social comparison experience body image dissatisfaction or distortion (Botta 1999). Previous research has focused on traditional forms of media such as print media and television (Botta 1999; Maltby et al. 2004). It is only very recent that scholars are introducing social media as a moderating factor in body image research.

New studies are examining the influence of different social media platforms such as Pinterest, Facebook and Instagram (Brown and Tiggemann 2016; Fardouly et al. 2015; Lewallen and Behm-Morawitz 2016). An analysis on Pinterest imagery and social comparison found women who are more active online and collect more mood boards on the Pinterest platform are more likely to engage in extreme weight-loss behaviour (Lewallen and Behm-Morawtiz 2016). A study examined social comparison on social media by testing the effect of Facebook on women's mood and body image (Fardouly et al. 2015). It found that exposure to Facebook and engaging in appearance comparison increase negative mood. Another study examined the effect of viewing celebrity images on Instagram (Brown and Tiggemann 2016). Consistent with previous studies, it found that negative mood and body dissatisfaction was mediated by social comparison.

The generalized consensus among the aforementioned studies posits that an increase in body dissatisfaction occurs when individuals engage in appearance comparison with an ideal body figure. While social comparison theory explains the social-psychological aspect in the development of eating disorders and body dissatisfaction, it does not address the role media and celebrity influence play in the construction and dissemination of ideal body images. Hence, prior to social comparison exists the act of internalizing body image ideals where individuals cultivate their understanding of what is physically attractive and what is not. Mainstream media plays a substantial, albeit somewhat aggressive role, in setting the conventional standards of beauty and appearance. The body in mainstream media exists among a larger set of conventions inconifying the norm. In mainstream, ideal male and female bodies are represented as realistic and common while other body form

variations are marginalized. In the following section, we discuss Cultivation theory and its ability to shape public dominant opinion.

When examining the reproduction of the symbolic environment, we note the transformation of media consumption from books to television. Television, which has been referred to as a third parent in various media literature, is believed to have the ability to reorganize cultural structure including beliefs about class, religion, and education. Gerber further explains that the production of symbols changes the way we produce symbols. It has the ability to organize cultural life, mental life, and social life. Moreover, it coerces individuals into a collective sense of identity by determining 'what kind of people are portrayed and in what kind of role"(Gerbner 1972, 2). Applying this convention of media theory to modern forms of communication will allow us to create a few assumptions about social media consumption. Technological advancements have led to the development of the internet, personal mobile devices, i-pads, laptops. These advancements have once again revolutionized means of communication, accelerating the exchange of symbols and once again altering the dynamics of human communication.

Contemporary culture today, across all ages, is becoming growingly invested in forming an ideal online identity mediated by a collective stream of social networking sites. Studies have reported on the rise of 'bedroom culture' that relates to social media use and identity formation among teenagers (Rogan 2008). Bedroom culture is best described as the exchange of media content that is linked to identity and privacy as practiced from the domestic space of a bedroom. The concept recognizes a gradual shift from street culture or leisure time typically spent in outdoor spaces to domestic rooms where access to the media environment reflects and shapes cultural conceptions of childhood (Gonzales and Hancock 2011). Devereux (2007) marks the movement of youth and media consumption within domestic space from family television to bedroom where young people, millennials, who are in the early stages of exploring their identity and developing their individuality develop habits regarding their online presentation.

The success and popularity of an online identity can be quantifiably measured in the form of engagement through numbers of followers, likes, reposts, and views, the exchange of which can be considered as a form of modern currency or status symbol. The concept of "like" may be recognized as a new form in the exchange of symbols in modern communication standing in for levels of social acceptance and popularity. Its significance has penetrated online spaces in such high demand that it created new businesses where one can purchase "likes" and followers. Such exchange has generated a new lexicon where information management meets neoliberalism to posit human attention as a new form of currency in the attention economy of the online world (Berkeman 2019).

4.4 Cultivation Theory

Cultivation Theory is a theory developed to explain the effects of long term exposure of television on viewers penned by Geroge Gerbner and Larry Gross in 1975 (Mosharafa 2015). Gerbner and Gross (1975) describe a gradual change that occurs in a viewer's attitude, beliefs, and ideals when exposed to media messages over a certain period of time. The theory proposes that television viewing has the ability to shape not only a particular viewpoint about a specific issue but condition the public's perception of moral values and manufacture opinion about world issues. In that line, general opinions about

social issues that impact gender, class and race can be seen as part of a larger landscape and system of beliefs (George Gerbner 1976).

Gerber and Gross (1975) propose several key concepts to explain how the media consumer cultivates and accepts the reality present to them such as the symbolic environment, storytelling, the symbolic function of television, the cultivation of value systems, the multi-directional process, and the cultural indicators. Since it was penned, 125 studies regarding mass media communication have examined and endorsed Cultivation theory signifying its ability to adapt to evolving media technologies thus demonstrating sustainability and consistency within the field of communication (Mosharafa 2015). As the present research focuses on the influence of social media, we seek to expand on concepts implied in Cultivation theory to social media.

4.5 Symbolic environment: body as a symbol

In 'The New Media Environment', Gerbner (1972) proposes the notion that the formation and communication of symbols and images play an important role in shaping our reality. He suggests that the way humans reflect and interact with symbols shapes their beliefs and values regarding their environment. He attributes the Industrial revolution, which mechanized the printing press, to the mass production of symbols as books were being manufactured at a higher rate. Similarly, the invention of the television accelerated the exchange of symbols, images and information. Gerbner (1972) described the television as forming its own religion; with an ability to reorganize cultural structure including beliefs about class, religion and education. He further explains that the mass production of symbols changes the way we, as humans, interact. It has the ability to establish a collective sense of identity by determining 'what kind of people are portrayed and in what kind of role"(3).

Applying this convention of analysis to modern forms of communication will allow us to create a few assumptions about social media consumption. Technological advancements have led to the development of the internet, personal mobile devices and subsequently social network sites (Moreau 2021) These advancements have once again revolutionized means of communication. If we conceive of social media as the dominant form of communication as television was according to Gerber, then it may be considered the dominant manufacturer of symbols today. However, unlike television, social media is much more accessible and pervasive due to smartphones (Moreau 2021). Social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagraw allow for the immediate exchange of information, images and symbols (Moreau 2021). Hence, we can assume according to Gerber, that the fabric of human interaction is changing as well.

Contemporary culture, especially adolescent youth, are becoming increasingly invested in not only forming an ideal online identity but becoming famous and making a profit from it (Marwick 2015). The success of this online identity depends on several factors. These factors include most notably the popularity of the account. In the case of Instagram, it would be the amount of followers, likes, comments and shares. As social media users share posts with their face, bodies and everyday life, there is an exchange of symbols between the image uploaded and 'likes' occurring. In this context, the 'like' features represent a symbol of acceptance or admiration by followers (Marwick 2015). The accumulation of many 'likes' symbols of grand popularity. Hence, Instagram becomes a

platform where meta-textual exchange occurs. In a world mediated by images, the body is simultaneously a subject and an object, reflecting both oneself and society at large (Synnott 1993).

In his paper on body image and body scheme, Castillo (2009) describes the dual experience of the body as object and the body as subject. He gives the example of a person touching themselves. In this moment, the individual is performing an act on the body as object as it is being touched and the body as a subject which experiences the sensations of being touched. Castillo draws on elements from neuroscience and psychology-analysis to introduce the concept of body image as a multidimensional conception where a person constructs their perception of their body and experiences how they feel and interact with their environment from that perception. It involves a complex mechanism of exchange in signals with neural pathways in which the image of the body is evaluated as whole and as body parts. It may be viewed as a screen on which feelings and attitudes towards the body are projected. The greater the dissonance between the way the body looks, the way it is perceived and the way the person wants to look dictates the extent to which the person desires to change or modify certain body parts.

As noted by Reischer and Koo (2004), the expression of 'body as a symbol' and 'body as an object' has emerged. Our ability to modify or 'enhance' it signals the ability to abstract power and display social status. On social media, body ideals are further iconized and epitomized through the use of body modification application. Hence, on social media, a particular exchange of symbols occurs. It is the exchange of an electronically modified image of an idealized body (body as a symbol) with the other symbols such as likes, comments and shares (attention economy).

4.6 System of values : body as an object

Cultivation Theory proposes that the television is profoundly responsible for the construction of a system of values (Gerbner and Gross 1975). It is a system of moral beliefs, codes of conduct, ideologies and perceptions (Gerbner and Gross (1975). Within this construction, formats of identity and self worth are messages administered in an invisible manner. The body, in mainstream media, is an object that exists as part of a larger system of values (Carrillo Durán, Jiménez Morales, Sánchez Hernández 2010; Mathews and Channon 2019; Tylka 2014).

The system of values in mainstream means direct viewers on how to form their identities, how to interact with others, how to look, behave and where to place cultural significance (Gerbner 2000; Wood 1994; Tylka 2014). Because the media is situated within the dynamics of neoliberal ideology, emphasis on individualism and consumerism advances the commodification of self-identity (McDonald et al. 2017). Similar to expensive cars, luxury items, vacation spots, the self becomes commodified signifying cultural capital and the body becomes the vehicle to visualize that representation of social status (Marwick 2015). It is for this reason that we suggest body positive messages will not be as effective without deconstructing the system of value that places emphasis on capital in all of its forms. It is not that media or social media are inherently negative but it is because it exists within capitalism; an economic system which advocates for the commodification of human society and the neoliberalization of all things (Cowden 2014). Hence, the body,

in social media, becomes an object interchangeable with other objects such as an expensive car, designed to signify social status. *(See Image 14).*

Image 14. Images taken from public domains on Instagram
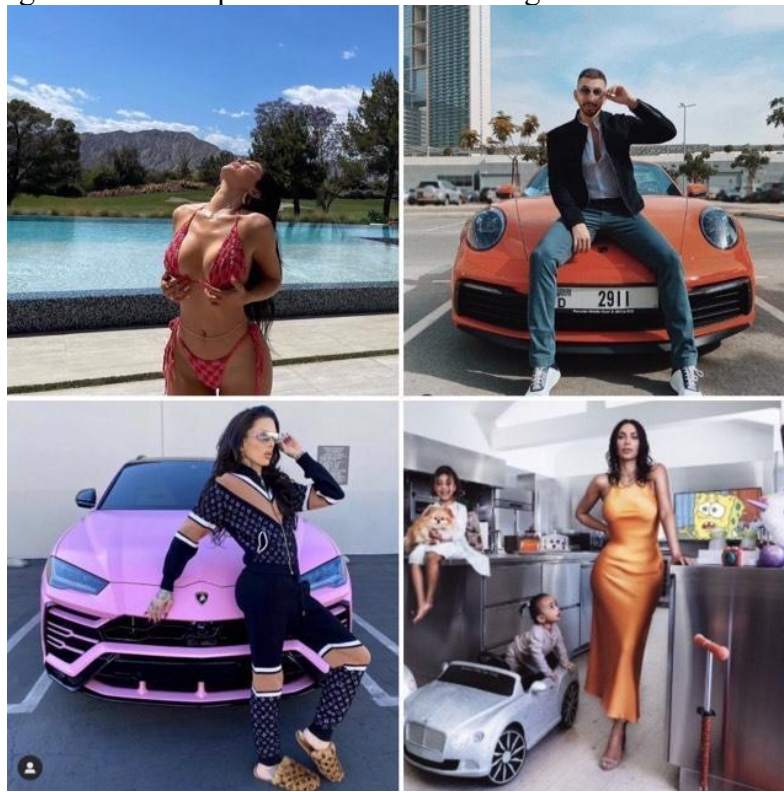
SOURCE (from left to right): @KylieJenner (2021); @Mrmoodz (2019); @JeffreeStar (2019); @Kimkardashian (2019)

Cultivation theory emphasises on the aspect of repetition of media messaging (Gerbner and Gross 1975). When a certain message is repeated for a long duration of time, the receipt of the message adopts and accepts it. The 'Mean World Syndrome' is an example of how media cultivation happens among viewers. It describes a process where the viewer cultivates the belief that the world is more violent or dangerous than it really is (Gerbner and Gross 1975). Similarly, when ideal male and female body images are disseminated in a repetitive and continuous fashion through various media outlets such as television, advertisements and magazines, the media consumer cultivates the understanding of the ideal body presented as the norm, as attractive and a standard they have to conform to.

Alternatively, average bodies become marginalized from media representation. Gerbner (2000) describes this process as "mainstreaming" by which the media adopts an overarching narrative. "It is the mainstream of the common symbolic environment into which our children are born and in which we all live out our lives (2). Children, from a young age, cultivate body image perceptions from the media and accept the homogenized publicity presented to them (Sánchez 2019).

4.7 Story-telling & parasocial relations

Gerbner and Gross (1975) describe storytelling as a method of humanizing relationships. It is a device that has served many functions which can advance human connection and

bond. Yet, Gerbner critiques story-telling under the frame of television watching. In this next segment, I will extend that criticism towards social media consumption.

Stories are a way of presenting complicated human structure or culture (George Gerbner 1976). According to the theorists, there are 3 different kinds of stories which are how things work, how things are and a story of action. They can cover the dynamics of everyday life, be factual or based on value or choice. Storytelling through television watching is more like a ritual. Sometimes, it merely serves as background noise even if nobody is watching George Gerbner 1976). The television is highly institutionalized, is an assembly location for advertisers and maintains a grasp of a mass audience (George Gerbner 1976). Similarly, using social media has become a ritual-like activity where it can be accessed anytime throughout the day (Ehmke 2021). Social media has become utilized by the advertisers industry as the new space for advertising which may be particularly harmful (Leetaru 2019). An analysis on eMarketer (2015) found that advertisers worldwide placed an estimate of $23.68 billion to reach consumers on social networks. That is because social media has been developed to become a domain where the users themselves are the consumer and commodity. Social network platforms gather information about the user and sell that to advertisers for better targeting (Leetaru 2019).

Finally, an extension of Gerber's storytelling can be applied to social media which manifests a growing intensity in the formation of parasocial relations on social media platforms. Para-social relations are defined as a one-sided relationship, where one person extends emotional energy, interest and time into another party, while the other person is completely unaware of the other's existence. With the advent of social media, we assume an increase in para-social relations among adolescents as they are "invited" to the homes and lives of their favorite celebrity idol through the proliferation of stories shared on SNSs like Instagram (Gleason, Theran and Newberg 2017).

Celebrities today like never before have direct access to millions of their adoring fans. Cristiano Ronaldo, for example, has the highest following on Instagram with 207 million followers where he shares intimate moments of home life with his family and children, fitness and workout exercises, football practices, medals and trophies, trips on private jets, and vacation spots (Instagram 2020). A study found that gender plays a role in developing parasocial relationships where boys usually follow and idolize athletes while girls follow celebrities (Gleason, Theran and Newberg 2017). Moreover, boys are more likely to create hierarchical parasocial relationships which impacts their identity formation as they look to athletes as mentors (Gleason, Theran and Newberg 2017). Another study (Mulaysousef 2018) found a relationship between celebrity self-disclosure on SNSs and an increase in parasocial relations among users. The study did not find a link between celebrity self-disclosure and trustworthiness.

Previous research (Maltby et al. 2004) has demonstrated a link between celebrity worship and body image among female adolescents aged 14 to 16 years old with evidence suggesting the relationship disintegrates between the ages of 17 to 20 years old. The authors stress on the importance of the formation of parasocial relationships with media figures, and suggest that parasocial relationships with celebrities perceived as having a good body shape may lead to a poor body image in female adolescents. In 2018, Kim Kardashian received criticism for sharing a post on Instagram that received over 1.5 million likes promoting a lollipop appetite suppressant, a candy produced by Flat Tummy Co-designed to be taken when people experience food cravings (Mahdawi 2018). In an

attempt to remedy this problem, Instagram has made it mandatory for influencers to put a disclaimer caption when promoting a product (Zialcita 2019). However, a recent study in Body Image Journal found celebrity images on Instagram led to a poorer image among women than travel images on Instagram. It also found that disclaimer captions and body-positive captions did not have any effect (Brown and Tiggemann 2020).

Possible reasoning for this phenomenon, as suggested in the earlier, is because the internalization of ideal body standards exists as part of a larger cultural landscape where media flows decimate and uphold a system of standards and values (Gerbner 2000). It is an arena where people are celebrated for being beautiful, young, fit, and rich while others who can not conform are marginalized (Sánchez Hernández, Jiménez-Morales and Carrillo Durán 2014). In Society of the Spectacle (1967), Debord finds our fascination with celebrity lives, their homes, and bodies as a form of escapism from the mundanity of our lives under capitalism. In the following section, we discuss research on male body image that used cultivation theory as its theoretical framework.

4.8 Muscle-Ideal and Cultivation Theory

According to Cultivation theory, constant repetition of media messages would coerce the viewers to adopt and accept the body standards being administered (Gerbner and Gross 1975). The ideal male model is becoming increasingly more muscular in contemporary culture (Pope et al. 1999). A study which analyzed children's action-figure toys found that the chest and shoulder area of the toys have become larger throughout a 30 year period (Pope et al. 1999). Moreover, the toys were designed to resemble advanced bodybuilders (Pope et al. 1999). Examination of Playgirl Magazine centerfolds noted a gradual increase of 20% in muscle density in male models as well as significant weight loss (Leit, Pope and Gray 2001). A study on the impact of muscle ideals in professional wrestling used Cultivation Theory to explain the internalization of the male ideal. It proposed that media images and messages that promote the male body ideal as big, strong, and muscular may have serious implications on self-objectification (Soulliere and Blair 2004).

4.9 Body Image, male adolescents and social media

A recent article on the Guardian documented the daily routine of 13-year old Charlie as he navigated school-life during the coronavirus quarantine in the UK. According to his parents, Charlie spends his hours working on two things: his homework and his body (Williams 2020).

Since the minimum age of gym membership is 16 years old, Charlie developed his own regime focusing on his biceps and shoulders and working out his muscles can not take it anymore (Williams 2020). According to Charlie's mother, these developments came after being bullied in school for being skinny and frail (Williams 2020). She points out the pressure of him spending most of his time through social media apps like Instagram where he poses in front of the mirror and sends photos of himself to his friends. Charlies has said that gaining muscles has made him feel more powerful and popular in high school (Williams 2020).

A study on body image among male adolescents found that "the way in which the boys expressed their thoughts about an ideal male body revealed that they had not only already internalized a cognitive male body ideal by early adolescence, but additionally, that they

had internalized behavioral strategies to achieve this ideal." (Raufelder et al. 2014, 215). Another study investigated body image and eating pathologies among nearly 15,000 highschool students between the ages of 13 to 18 year old in the U.S (Nagata et. al 2019). Results indicated a commonality among adolescent male to engage in 'bulking up' and attempting to gain weight. The study suggests boys perceive greater rewards from muscularity than from thinness..

The transformation that occurs from pre-adolescence to adolescence is a critical stage in any child's life and development (Croll 2005; Aziz 2017). Going through puberty, for most adolescent males, brings about many physical changes to the body such as height, weight, broadness of shoulders and change in voice (Croll 2005; Aziz 2017). For this reason, adolescents may experience various changes in their body image as their own body changes. Similarly, going through puberty before or after their peers, e.g. late development, may affect how an individual views themselves and their bodies when compared to the rest (Croll 2005).

At the stage of adolescent development, young individuals are growing more aware of their surroundings, attempting to form their identity and establish their individuality, which makes them particularly vulnerable to media messages especially when accepted and internalized uncritically (Aziz 2017). Toys, computer video games, family and peers, music videos, all contribute to how adolescents shape their body image. In recent years, scholars have attempted to bridge the gap between social-psychology and communication research terrains by integrating theoretical areas, such as norms, social comparisons, and social media influences (Croll 2005; Pope et al.1997; Williams 2020).

There have been recent attempts by researchers particularly dedicated to further our understanding of the effects of social media use on appearance and body concerns (Perloff 2014; Choukas-Bradley et al. 2020). A cross cultural study spanning three European countries (Spain, Italy, and UK) studied the way children aged 11-16 presented their online identity and interacted with their peers in virtual space (Mascheroni, Vincent, and Jimenez 2015). The findings suggest the presence of double standards where girls feel pressure to conform to dominant beauty standards and share provocative photos of their bodies and boys engage in behavior that polices girls suggesting this behavior related to a "certain type" of girl to get likes and increase their online popularity. Perloff (2014) suggests that the introduction of social media into our daily lives means we need to recalibrate our tools when measuring the effects of media use on the body. In Broadening the Scope of Social Media Effect Research on Body Image Concerns , the author provides some insights that encourage researchers to broaden the scope of research on body image concerns.

First, Perloff (2014) distinguishes social media from other communication tools through its unique nature which offers interactivity, self-expression, interpersonal nature, rich modalities, and communities of like-minded individuals. Unlike traditional forms of media communication, interactivity on social media makes the user a source of media content as well as a consumer. Similarly, social media has digitized the self as individuals used social media to self-disclosure, upload and share personal content. The world of social media is filled with rich multimedia modalities of technological expression of apps, graphics, images, animations video when combined with interpersonal communication affects opinion formations and behavioural attitude. All the aforementioned attributes have the potential to influence body image, especially when considering the availability

of body editing tools. Perloff (2014) developed a transaction model to better explain how social media use influences body image concerns. The model indicates the internalization of body image ideals and other factors such as depression and perfectionism in a vulnerable state. Using social media such as Instagram, Pinterest and Facebook increases the potential of being exposed to ideal body image. Mediating processes such as social comparison and identification may lead to an increase in body dissatisfaction and eating disorders.

A study recently published aimed to construct a tool that measures the influence of social media use on appearance-related consciousness in adolescents (Choukas-Bradley et al. 2020). The study recognizes social media sites as becoming central to adolescents' lives and identity formation especially photo-based apps like Instagram and Snapchat which today act as the main source of information regarding beauty and body standards (Choukas-Bradley et al. 2020). The study also considers the nature of "social media's availability, publicness, and permanence" responsible for creating a new interpersonal reality that is mediated by images (171). In agreement with the study, we find adolescence a crucial developmental period in which they are acutely observant of their social standing among peers and vulnerable to an abundance of ideal body images circulated on social media. The research uses objectification theory to explain the phenomenon where young women internalize an observer's perspective towards their own body and learn to use their looks in favor of a positive outcome (Choukas-Bradley et al. 2020).

The research, however, barely touches on how objectification may harm young men. That is a general theme carried out throughout the study which overwhelmingly focuses on girls and young women in designing the Appearance-Related Social Media Consciousness Scale (ASMC) (Choukas-Bradley et al. 2020). It should come as no surprise then that adolescent girls report higher mean levels of ASMC than boys. Being able to accurately identify causational or correlational factors triggering body-image dissatisfaction among boys and men is important. Given the data showing the growing use of steroid, caloric surplus and body modification habits, we proclaim that body-image among boys will become more severe in the next decade as marketing products and cosmetic industry pivot towards men and boys as a new demographic for potential consumers.

Body image research should aim to extend beyond the study of the effects of media exposure to the thin ideal by white adolescent girls in Anglophone countries. While contemporary research aims to address some overlooked factors when considering the emergence of social media as a new element in the construction of appearance-related attitudes and body-image concerns, there appears to be an overarching narrative that still paints body-image concern as a gendered issue impacting women and girls. That could possibly be the case and previous research has demonstrated that girls and women often report higher levels of body or appearance dissatisfaction. However, we would like to raise some concerns about the gendering of body image as a female-oriented concern may cause.

According to the World Health Organization (2020) "Gender bias occurs in the treatment of psychological disorders. Doctors are more likely to diagnose depression in women compared with men, even when they have similar scores on standardized measures of

depression or present with identical symptoms."[23] We suggest that this is in part due to culture and media messages which do not encourage boys and young men to come forward with feelings of vulnerability as it would jeopardize their 'performing masculinity'. According to the National Institute of Mental Health (2020), men are much less likely to acknowledge, report possible symptoms of depression or seek treatment. Men are also more likely to judge symptoms of depression as less severe than it actually is. Men are also more likely to engage in "masked depression" or acting out, often highlighted by misuse of alcohol and drugs, poor impulse control and increased anger and irritability (Whitley 2017). Finally, there is a disconnect between low rates of depression diagnosis and high rates of suicide in men where men make up around 75% of completed suicides (Affleck, Carmichael, and Whitley 2018). This is evidence that conventional methods of measuring mental illnesses may possibly be inaccurate when attempting to detect male cases of depression (Whitley 2017).

In a podcast on Bigorexia (Brett 2019), an expert on body image among males Roberto Olivardi , suggests that having a sense of identity during the age of adolescence can be very difficult and for some it becomes defined by their body-image. He discusses one of his patients whose inability to exercise due to an injury, leading to loss of muscle mass, has left him nearly suicidal. Olivardi recognizes the validation brought about by social media to be a contributing factor to appearance-related distress. He says that as a father of a 14-year-old boy and a 12-year-old girl, his goal is for neither of them to have social media until they are in college.

Many young people want to exist on social media today and the harms of body image messages have been made apparent. However, we don't believe prohibiting its usage is the answer as they will still receive body image messages from other factors such as toys, outdoor advertising and peers. A viable solution, in our opinion, is to educate the youth, boys and girls, on media literacy and teach them how to be intelligently critical of the media they are consuming.

Finally, there is nothing inherently detrimental about social media. In fact, if used correctly social media could be a great tool of communication used for the advancement of human connection. Placing the blame entirely on social media blinds us from recognizing a network of systems and messages that thrives on pushing people towards conformity, consumerism, and profits from chronic dissatisfaction. It is because social media exists within neoliberal capitalism that it has inherited past media and cultural messages on body image (Aziz 2017).

4.10 Concluding thoughts

The introduction of social media into our daily lives has revolutionized the way humans communicate and exchange information (Abrahamson 2017; Boulianne 2017). There is a growing concern regarding the impact social media has on adolescents, especially considering the intensified attention on appearance (Elias and Gill 2017). The use and availability of editing applications has made body image standards more unrealistic and unattainable (Perloff 2014). This might prove detrimental to adolescents, who during the stage of adolescence, are particularly vulnerable to media messaging especially when consumed in extensivity (Croll 2005; Aziz 2017). While new research is investigating the

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[23] https://www.who.int/teams/mental-health-and-substance-use/gender-and-women-s-mental-health

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possible influences of social media on body image among individuals, effects of social media on adolescents males remains an under researched area especially among the Spanish youth. In the following chapter, we discuss the aim of the present research which aims to bridge the gap by conducting an experimental investigation.

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Chapter 5

STATE OF THE ART

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This chapter is dedicated to the state of the art of the present research. In this chapter, we will discuss the literature that is related to the areas concerning the topic of the research. As such we will discuss research studies that have investigated the impact of media influence on body image. A collection of twenty-two research studies were examined taking into account the theoretical framework, method, tools, sample, and results. The aim of reviewing previous and related research is to identify the gap in the literature. In the final section of the chapter, we put forth the main aim and specific objectives of the present study. In further detail, the present research aims to bridge the gap in the literature by investigating the influence of social media use on body image-related concerns in adolescent males. The following section of the chapter discusses related literature.

5.1 Related literature

Upon completing the first stage of the research which involves reading bodies of work and literature related to the key concepts, the next stage entails creating an outline for the aims of the present study. Most body image research is situated in the field of psychology. The method used in body image literature was divided into three methods: correlational, experimental and qualitative. *(See Fig 3).* In order to create the outline for the general and specific aims of the study, we had to identify the gap in the literature. To identify the gap, we surveyed an extensive amount of research studies where the main aim was to investigate the relationship between media and body image among the male demographic. The reading period was completed prior to 2019. Since then, new emerging male-oriented body image that analyzed the influence of social media use. Hence, the initial selection included women-oriented body image research that analyzes the effects of social media. In the following section, we share the process, findings, and conclusions of the work done in the pre-production phase of the research design.

Figure 3. Types of body image research
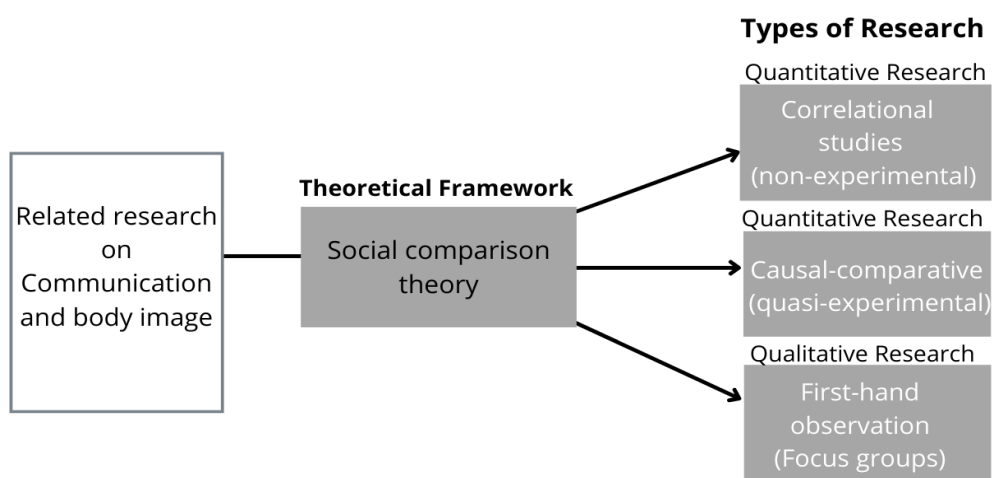
SOURCE: Author.

We examined several journals from Body Image, meta-analysis, and independent studies. A spreadsheet was made documenting the details of each research with a focus on the objective, theoretical framework, methodology, tools used, sample, and results. (*See Table 2)*. In total, 20 studies were examined including one meta-analysis. Once the information was visibly organized in a spreadsheet, a recurring pattern among the research studies was visualized and identified. The first commonality identified among the research studies in the field of Communication and Body Image lies in the theoretical framework. Almost half of the research studies survey used Social Comparison Theory (Festinger 1974) to explain the influence of media messages on body image (Hargreaves and Tiggemann 2006; Henry 2006; Hobza et al. 2007; Barlett et al. 2008; Brinder 2010; Krawiec 2015; Fardouly et al. 2015; Lewallen and Behm-Morawitz 2016; Easton et al. 2018).

Table 2. Sample of related literature

	Title	Year	Author
1	Fitspiration on social media: a qualitative study exploring young people's experiences of following healthy lifestyle material	2018	Easton et al.
2	Pinterest or Thinterest?: Social Comparison and Body Image on Social Media	2016	Lewallen, & Behm-Morawitz
3	The Impact of Facebook on Young Women's Body Image Concerns and Mood	2015	Fardouly et al.
4	Men's construction of Media Impact on Male Body Image in the Context of Heterosexual Romantic Relationships	2015	Baker, Allen, and Qiao
5	La influencia de modelos somáticos publicitarios en la vigorexia masculina : un estudio experimental en adolescentes	2011	Fanjul Peyró and González-Oñate
6	Body Image Perceptions: Do Gender Differences Exist?	2010	Brennan, Lalonde and Bain
7	The drive for muscularity in men: Media influences and objectification theory	2010	Daniel & Bridges
8	The Influence of Exposure to Media Images on Body Satisfaction of Males and Females	2010	Jessica Binder
9	Muscular ideal media images and men's body image: Social comparison processing and individual vulnerability	2009	Hargreaves & Tiggemann
10	The Impact of Media Exposure on Self-Esteem and Body Satisfaction in Men and Women	2009	Salenna Russello
11	The Influence of Men's Self-Objectification on the Drive for Muscularity	2008	Grieve & Helmick
12	Meta-Analyses of the Effects of Media Images on Men's Body-image Concerns	2008	Barlett et al.
13	What About Men? Social Comparison and the Effects of Media Images on Body and Self-Esteem	2007	Hobza et al.
14	Muscle-Mania: The Male Body Ideal in Professional Wrestling	2006	Soulliere & Blair
15	'Body Image is for Girls': A Qualitative Study of Boys' Body Image	2006	Hargreaves & Tiggemann
16	The Media's Portrayal of the Exceptionally-Fit Body and the Increase of Body Image Concerns within College Age Individuals	2006	Levi Henry
17	The impact of media exposure on male's body image	2004	Agliata & Tantleff-Dunn
18	Body Image: Focus Groups with Boys and Men	2002	Grogan and Richards
19	For Your Health? The Relationship Between Magazine Reading and Adolescents' Body Image and Eating Disturbances	2003	Renée A. Botta
20	Sociocultural Influences on Body Image and Body Changes Among Adolescent Boys and Girls	2003	McCabe & Ricciardelli
21	Media influences on male and female non-eating-disordered college students: A significant issue	1997	Cynthia R. Kalodner

22 Men and Body Image: Are Males Satisfied with Their Body Weight?	1987	Drewnowski & Yee

SOURCE: Author.

As expanded on in the previous chapter, a decrease in body dissatisfaction occurs when individuals engage in an upwards social comparison upon being exposed to ideal body images. Individuals on the receiving end of ideal body image compare and evaluate their bodies with the bodies represented in the mainstream media. Because physical bodies represented in mainstream media are held to unrealistic standards, often a result of photoshop editing, individuals feel a sense of dissatisfaction with their own bodies To remedy feelings of dissatisfaction, participants may engage in acts of physical enhancement through dieting and exercise. However, because such standards are unrealistic, individuals often fail to reach them, therefore, feelings of dissatisfaction increase. The intensification of dissatisfaction might escalate to a decrease in self-esteem and body dysmorphia, sometimes, leading to depression among other body-image disturbances.

While the social comparison explains the psychology in the development of body image, it does not address the internalization of conventional beauty and body standards that occurs when media consumers are continuously exposed to ideal body images. There are relatively fewer research studies that use cultivation theory to explain this phenomenon (Krawiec 2015; Soulliere and Blair 2006). Finally, a common theory employed in body image studies is sociocultural theory (Tanteleff-Dunn 2004; Henry 2006; Brennan, Lalonde and Bain 2010; Baker, Allen and Qiao 2015; Krawiec 2015). Similar to social comparison theory, sociocultural theory is a theory developed by Lev Vygotsky in the field of psychology that explains the influence of sociocultural factors on the construction of a person's individual identity (McLeod 2020). The theory suggests that children learn to adapt their cognitive behavior not only from their parents and peers but also from their surrounding environment. When applied to body image research, sociocultural theory serves a similar function as the tripartite influence model of body image. Both theories consider parent, peers, and media consumption as "mediational links in the internalization of societal appearance standards, social appearance comparison processes" (Shroff and Thompson 2006, 17).

As Sánchez Reina (2019) has observed that much of body image research is situated in the field of psychology. Furthermore, Sànchez Reina (2019) suggests that there is a gap in body image research that considers sociocultural perspectives. In particular, understanding the mediating effects of social media use on body image and other varying aspects in the construction of identity requires news and innovative theories and methods of testing. Considering the multi-faceted nature of social media through which a virtual identity is created, exists online, and interacts with various forms of multimedia content (images, graphics, animation, video, and live stream) as well as the instantaneous aspect of media exchange media and the numerical accumulation of feedback responses through likes, comments, and share perhaps calls for new and sophisticated technologies that could be applied to communication research such as eye-tracking devices.

Communication is a peculiar field that situates itself between social sciences and humanities (Priest 2009). As Susanna Priest postulates in her book Doing Media Research (2009), the historical separation between these two fields (social sciences and humanities) is becoming less noticeable. Moreover, this separation is further blurred when considering

the topic of our research which combines elements of psychology with media studies. We may boldly put forward the assumption that disciplines of the future will be a result of merging varying fields such as philosophy and sociology, especially now with the introduction of social media as a new form of communication. This new form of digital technology has built a virtual world that over maps the material one. It may be seen as an extension to the material world, however, the mechanisms of communication operate differently. Therefore, it seems logical to assume that new fields will emerge to better understand this new mediation.

In our quest, as researchers, to understand the relationship between social media and society in an objective way, we may rely on Comte's positive philosophy (1830). It is a manner of applying empirical research to observe a phenomenon. It is a manner to investigate social media communication, in a systemic and direct method be it through quantitative research which gathers numerical data, or qualitative which is expressed through language. In the following sections, we discuss the method applied in the studies we have sampled in the related literature which cover correlational, experimental, and qualitative methods.

5.2 Correlational studies

Within the 20 studies that were examined, the most dominant approach of research was applying a quantitative method approach which relied on correlational tests (Drewnowski and Yee 1987; Grieve and Helmick 2008; Barlett et al. 2008; Russello 2009; Brinder 2010 Brennan, Lalonde and Bain 2010; Daniel and Bridges 2010; Lewallen and Behm-Morawitz 2016). The quantitative method uses correlational tests to assess the relationship between two or more variables using statistical analysis.

In the aforementioned studies, correlational tests are used to measure the association between duration of time spent exposed to media with levels of various dimensions of body image. As we will expand in the next chapter, body image is a multifaceted dimension of self-evaluation that pertains to one's own physical body. Many tools have been developed to measure specialized areas in body image research. The most prominent tools and scales used among correlational studies were Body Areas Satisfaction Scale (BAS), Appearance, Evaluation scale (AES), and Social Attitude towards Appearance Questionnaire (SATAQ). The overall consensus among researchers found a positive correlation between long durations of media viewing and increased body image dissatisfaction (Drewnowski & Yee 1987; Grieve and Helmick 2008; Russello 2009;; Brennan, Lalonde and Bain 2010; Lewallen and Behm-Morawitz 2016).

Research studies that investigate the influence of media on body image among the female and male demographic suggests that when compared to males, females are more likely to experience an increase in body dissatisfaction and engage dieting among other body monitoring habits (Drewnowski & Yee 1987; Botta 2003; Brennan, Lalonde and Bain 2010). On the other hand, men expressed less concern for body image and would use exercise as opposed to diet for weight control (Drewnowski and Yee 1987).

There are two studies that use correlational tests to examine body image-related gender differences among males and female participants which yield similar results (Drewnowski and Yee 1987, Botta 2003). In the first study, 226 male and female college-aged participants filled in questionnaires examining the desire for thinness and desire for

weight gain (Drewnowski and Yee 1987). The study indicates an increasing pressure to gain weight among specific male-oreinted sub-cultures such as wrestlers and swimmers (Drewnowski and Yee 1987). In particular, attempts to gain weight by males are linked to a desire to increase muscle mass. The study applied correlational tests by calculating the means of score of the participants. Results from the study "found that gender is a significant predictor of perceived overweight and dissatisfaction with body shape".(628). Female participants score significantly higher in the desire for thinness while the desire for weight gain was less prominent among the male participants. The results were in line with previous research on body image which found that women are more likely than men to see themselves as overweight and experience body dissatisfaction. The findings also suggest that there was no satisfaction significance between women who wanted to lose weight and men who wanted to lose weight. This means that women as a social demographic are far more likely to engage in dieting behaviour than men (Drewnowski and Yee 1987). The study concluded that "a key difference between the sexes with respect to the etiology of eating disorders is not dissatisfaction with body weight but rather actual behaviors related to diet and exercise" (Drewnowski and Yee 1987, 633).

The second study (Botta 2003) conducted an extensive survey of 400 male and female participants to examine the link between reading magazines (fashion, sports and fitness) and body image, eating disturbances and muscularity. Fashion magazines have been recognized as promoting images of unrealistic female body ideals that adhere to the thin-ideal and are often subjected to digital manipulation and photoshop. More recently, sports , fitness and men's magazines have been recognized for their portrayal of idealized male body images with an emphasis on high degrees of muscularity. The author suggests that fitness magazines may serve as a primary arena for adolescents to learn the significance of muscularity and receive advice on how to attain the 'perfect sports body'. The author points to the increasing pressure on "males to achieve the muscular body as being as harmful to adolescent boys as the desire for thinness is to adolescent girls" (Botta 2003, 390). It was predicted that exposure to fashion and fitness magazines would lead to a great amount of desire for thinness and desire for muscularity among adolescents (BIED) girls and boys respectively. Furthermore, it was expected that social comparison would moderate the relationship between magazine reading and BIED .

The data was collected from 196 adolescent boys and 201 adolescent girls. The majority of the sample identified as European Americans, to a lesser extent were African Americans and a minimal sample size accounted for Asian American, Latin American and Arab Americans. The data was analyzed using correlational tests that measure the mean and standard deviation of the self-report questionnaires. The results revealed that reading sports magazines was less likely to prompt body monitoring behaviour among boys and girls (Botta 2003). Similar to the previous aforementioned study (Drewnowski and Yee 1987), the results indicated that adolescent girls are more likely to experience body dissatisfaction and engage in social comparison. The authors suggest that partial support of the hypothesis was provided where "social comparison was not the main effect of body dissatisfaction for boys." (Botta 2003, 397). Moreover, it was only boys who engaged in social comparison and frequently read sports magazines who experienced body dissatisfaction. The author concluded that future research should investigate the stimuli which prompts adolescent boys and girls to engage in social comparison. Moreover, media literacy programs and interventions can help promote healthy body ideals among adolescents (Botta 2003).

In the following section, we will expand on the body image studies that used the experimental method in their research.

5.3 Experimental studies

Another method used in the selected sample is the experimental method (Agliata and Tanteleff-Dunn 2004; Hargreaves and Tiggemann 2006; Henry 2006; Hobza et al. 2007; Brinder 2010; Fardouly et al. 2015). In the area of research that investigates the influence of media on body image, the experimental method consists of dividing a large sample of participants into smaller sub-sects. Typically, participants are divided into two or three groups and one group functions as the control group. The groups are exposed to a varying set of pre-selected images for a duration of time and blocked for body image measurements afterward.

Unlike quantitative research that uses correlational tests, using an experimental method allows researchers to gather empirical data through testing control and experimental groups, having control over the media stimuli, and comparing the outcome variables (Ramasubramanian and Murphy 2014). While there are advantages to the experimental approach, there are some limitations such as the inability to replicate the same experiment, thereby, subjecting the research to extraneous variables that may bias the results (McLeod 2012). For example, the gender of the researcher conducting the experiment may have an effect on the performance of the participant during the research study (Yager et al. 2013). Women have reported feeling more comfortable among female researchers in body image research settings and interventions, while men reported feeling comfortable with either male or female researchers. However, men who are experiencing body image dissatisfaction are more likely to tend to a gender preference when being interviewed (Yager et al. 2013).

A study used the experimental method to investigate the influence of exposure to idealized male bodies on perception and physical assessment of adolescent males in Spain (Peyró Fanjul and González-Oñate 2011). The study directs attention to the use of idealized male body images in advertising as a form of non-verbal communication and its implication on a new social pathology in body image known as bigorexia. Moreover, the authors discuss the intersection occurring in the advertising industry and body cult to create a new meaning for the ideal muscular male body by relating to attributes of strength, vigor, power and success. (Fanjul Peyró and González-Oñate 2011). As a result, greater emphasis is placed on the physical body and physical attractiveness as a source of cultural value. According to the authors, adolescents are particularly vulnerable to media messages especially when considering the physical and psychological changes they experience during this time. The study aims to investigate the possible effects of this form of meditation by conducting an experimental study on a sample of adolescent males between the ages of 15 to 17 years old.

The method consisted of dividing the sample into two groups: Block C was exposed to a preselected set of 20 images containing ideal body images obtained from magazines and Block N, served as the control group, was exposed to neutral images. After introducing the media stimuli and setting exposure time, the participants were blocked on social demographic questions and a set of somatic scales detailing the relation to model images masculine. The data was analyzed using statistical analysis with the SPSS software. The results show that both blocks positively associated physical appearance and success,

however, the Block C (group that was exposed to ideal body image) displayed greater percentage than Block N (group that was exposed to neutral images). Moreover, the results indicated that both blocks (Block C and Block N) have internalized aspects of body cult in which it is necessary to be physically fit. The study contributes to body image literature by examining the harmful effects advertising images may have on adolescent males and the growing pervasiveness of body cult in targeting the youth. Moreover, the authors suggest that the influence of advertising imagery, film, and other forms of media may place young and vulnerable audiences in the development of pathologies such as bigorexia (Fanjul Peyró and González-Oñate 2011).

The overall consensus in experimental studies suggests that exposure to ideal male body images increases body dissatisfaction among men, however, some results from previous experimental studies on media and body images have been relatively inconsistent (Barlett, Vowels and Saucier 2008; Russello 2009). Some findings in experimental research suggest that brief exposure to idealized body images was significantly associated with body image-related disturbance. For example, the study done by Agliata and Tantleff-Dunn (2004) found that after exposure to the muscle ideal in advertisements male participants expressed higher levels of depression and muscle dissatisfaction. Another experimental study suggests that exposure to ideal male body ideals resulted in a small but statistically significant negative impact on men's body dissatisfaction (Bond 2008). A meta-analysis on media effects on male body image found that while research reports on a decrease in body image upon viewing muscular body ideals, some research has found "that pressure from the mass media has not influenced every negative self–image construct (e.g., McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2003; Ricciardelli, McCabe, & Banfield, 2000)" (Barlett, Vowels and Saucier 2008, 283).

An experimental study that investigated the impact of socio-cultural body ideals on men and women found that "exposure to images of thin attractive women and muscular men did not have a significant effect on men and women" (Russello 2009, 10). Moreover, men were less likely to internalize media ideals and expressed greater body satisfaction. The study did not find a relationship between social comparison and the internalization of body ideals. Similarly, a study by Kalodner (1997) did not find a significant difference between men who were exposed to idealized body images and men who viewed images of older men (not models). A study that investigated body image behavior among children found that exposure to media did not make boys want to increase muscle mass (McCabe and Ricciardelli 2003).

Another experimental study, that did not find statistical significance, attempted to investigate the impact of media on males using the thin-ideal (Drewnowski and Yee 1987; Henry 2006; Brinder 2010). The thin-ideal is a concept in body image discourse that describes an idealized slim female physique typically promoted by mainstream media, the fashion industry, and celebrity culture. Applying the thin ideal to investigate body image disturbances among males would lead to inaccuracies because the idealized male body is not thin but muscular. In fact, general males' self-perception is that they are either ' too thin or too heavy" to conform to the male ideal" (Doyle and Engeln 2014, 279). The meta-analyses conclude that inconsistencies in the literature on male body image research exist and need to be resolved (Barlett, Vowels, and Saucier 2008).

5.4 Qualitative studies

Qualitative research is a method of collecting data about a specific topic through the use of open-ended questions either through focus groups, in-depth interviews, or both (Smithson 2007). It has recently emerged as a popular method of collecting data. The use of focus groups by social scientists began during the early 1920s. It is used as an alternative method to the traditional in-depth interviews in which the researcher plays a dominant and direct role and thereby jeopardizes the accuracy of data collection. Focus groups, in qualitative research, provide a less intimidating setting where participants can participate in a discussion in a more active way. This makes focus groups a valuable site to explore "group norms and social values." (Colucci 2007, 1423). Focus groups as an exploratory method of research have been used in a "wide variety of fields, such as education, communication studies, political sciences, and public health."(1423).

Among the selected sample of the studies, there were a few research studies that utilized the quantitative method (Grogan and Richards 2002; Soulliere and Blair 2006; Hargreaves & Tiggemann 2009; Baker, Allen, and Qiao 2015; Easton et al. 2018). A study used the qualitative method to examine "men's Construction of Media Impact on Male Body Image in the Context of Heterosexual Romantic Relationships" (Baker, Allen, and Qiao 2015, 8). The study suggests that while media messaging of idealized muscular bodies may negatively impact the body, being in a relationship may act as a buffer due to recurrent reassurance from partners. The decision to limit the study to heterosexual men is due to previous findings that suggest homosexual men experience greater body dissatisfaction than heterosexual men. The study used 3 interviews and a focus group among five males between the ages of 21 to 28 years old. The majority were the participants were caucasian and have been in committed relationships for 2 or more years. The focus of the conversation centered around three main areas: the media influence of the idealized body on male body image, the importance of body image in attracting potential partners, and the role of body image in the context of a relationship. Three topics were highlighted in the focus groups: body image in society, body image in media, and body image in relationships. Videos depicting idealized male bodies such as WWE wrestlers and a short clip from the Magic Mike movie were played to stimulate the conversation. The study applied "Edley's (2001) three analytical concepts of discourse analysis" to codify repetitive themes and phrases from collected data (Baker, Allen, and Qiao 2015, 10).

The results suggest that the construction of the participants' ideal male figure is consistent with the idealized male body image represented in the media with emphasis on the upper-body (muscular chest, arms, and shoulders) (Baker, Allen, and Qiao 2015). Mover, the participants discussed the physicality of the upper-body as being in tangent with conflict and aggression. Another result, from the focus group, found that men position themselves in contradictory positions. Participants made light of idealized male body images in media by calling them 'ridiculous' and go further to suggest that they are outside the sphere of media influence yet at the same time spoke: "about body image concerns that are directly related to the media, indicating that even sufficiently coping men are impacted by media idealizations."(10).

The study found that the male participants described the ideal male body in terms that mirrored traits found in traditional masculine gender roles such as aggressive, hyperviolent, hypermasculine. Moreover, terms such as "cutting and trimming" are

demonstrative of the impersonal and aggressive approach towards body image. The authors suggest that this approach to achieve a muscular body is similar to dominant masculinist societal norms in which achievements are earned through power and force .

Authors detected repetitive themes of violence and conflict when participants were discussing body image in the media Words such as blasts and under fire describe a form of battle when the media and participants, where the media is seen as the aggressor by portraying unrealistic body standards and men are defending themselves from conforming to them. One of the participants suggested that a man 'loses the battle' when they succumb to hypermasculinity and pursue an over muscular body. The authors suggest that while the participants are critiquing idealized body images in media as being hypermasculinity, they are reproducing elements of traditional masculinity by describing the person who conforms as too weak to resist.

In terms of body image in relationships, participants, in the focus group, placed a lot of emphasis on maintaining a fit physique in order to get attention in the dating scene (Baker, Allen, and Qiao 2015). The participants described the dating scene as "superficial" and "based purely on looks" (12). However, the participants describe a loss in the importance of physical appearance and body image when involved in a committed relationship as personality characteristics take precedence over physical attractiveness.

Another qualitative study used explorative research to investigate the relationship between viewing Fitspiration messaging on social media and patterns of thoughts and behaviors among male and female participants (aged 18 to 25). Similar to the previous study, the participants were given a sample of images that adhere to Fitspiration. Fitspiration is a term that emerged from fitness culture and is used to describe motivational messages depicting a healthy approach towards exercise and fitness. Fitspiration images are often women, "partaking in exercise or dressed in sportswear." (Easton et al. 2018, 2). The study uses thematic analysis to score recurrent themes and codify the data that has been collected. According to the study, four key themes were detected: "(1) a tool with some potential to support behavior change; (2) unrealistic, untrustworthy content; (3) negative effects on emotional well-being; and (4) vulnerability and protective factors." (Easton et al. 2018, 5).

Some participants contend that exposure to fitspiration on social media provided them with motivation to have healthier eating behaviors and attend the gym as well as having health targets and inspirational models to follow (Easton et al. 2018). Other participants described a reluctance in trusting fitspiration models on social media. In particular, participants addressed the deceptive nature of social media by which users can edit and digitally modify an image. Moreover, participants were aware of the economical endorsement some fitspiration model receives to promote a product or brand. However, several participants maintained the desire to achieve the level of fitness and body ideals posted by fitspiration on social media, keeping in mind that they may be unrealistic and unattainable.

A qualitative study that explored body image, body esteem, and exercises among males between the ages of 8 to 25 years old (Grogan and Richards 2002). It suggested that while research is demonstrating a growing concern among males to achieve an ideal body, it does not explain why and thus used a focus group to create interactive data. In particular, the authors suggest that "although there is a notable lack of research on body satisfaction

in young boys, there has been a lot of interest in body satisfaction in adolescence, particularly in the light of suggestions that anabolic steroid use may be on the increase in male adolescents"(222).

The decision to use a focus group was because young and adult male participants engaged in self-disclosure and in the discussion during the pilot. During the pilot, adult males were reluctant to discuss body issues. Consequently, the topic was flagged as sensitive. The pilot showed that boys were more likely to talk freely when amongst a group of individuals they can identify with as opposed to in depth-interviews. The researchers took into consideration the sex of the facilitator in the focus groups and concluded that boys and men felt at ease to disclose body image-related concerns to female research.

The researcher conducted interviews upon grouping male participants by age starting from 8 years old to adults to test for age-related changes and discussed issues relating to weight, appearance, and food (Grogan and Richards 2002). The discussion was recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for recurring themes. A homogenized vision of what an ideal male body looks like was detected among all ages of the male participants. Similar to the previous study mentioned above (Baker, Allen, and Qiao 2015), the ideal male body has a mesomorphic shape, that is a muscular upper-body (chest, arms, and shoulders) and a small waist. Moreover, muscularity, male physical attractiveness were discussed as being inter-linked (Grogan and Richards 2002) Interestingly enough, the degree of muscularity was an area of contention among participants. In general, participants stated a desire to gain more muscle mass. However, not too many muscles would make them look like bodybuilders. According to the participants, bodybuilding and spending hours at the gym elicited elements of narcissism.

Similar to the previous study (Baker, Allen, and Qiao 2015), the participants positioned themselves in a contradictory state where they would describe a desire to have a more muscular body, however, not enough to elicit change in behavior such as dieting (Grogan and Richards 2002). This is partly due to the perception of dieting and concern with appearance as a feminized behavior and consequently, some participants may feel the need to distance themselves from it (Grogan and Richards 2002). Furthermore, the study found that adolescents males, as well as adult males, equated muscularity with traditional masculine norms such as maintaining power and control in social situations. Conversely, being fat was linked to weakness and inadequacy by all age groups. Moreover, failure in maintaining a healthy weight or being overweight was placed on the individual.

Another qualitative study used focus groups to explore the relationship between media and body image among 28 males from Australia aged 14 to 16 years (Hargreaves and Tiggemann 2006). The authors suggest that while studies on boy's body image are advancing, the literature remains heavily oriented by the previous theorization of female's body image Furthermore, the authors recount the extensive literature on female body image which has cohesively demonstrated a strong link between exposure to idealize thin bodies and an increase in body dissatisfaction. While literature concerning male body image has been less conclusive. As demonstrated earlier, correlational studies demonstrate a weak link between exposure to media messages and body dissatisfaction among boys.

Some experimental studies demonstrated a decrease in body esteem in adult males upon viewing muscular ideal body image, while other experimental studies did not (Hargreaves

and Tiggemann 2006). The authors propose that the reason previous literature on male body image has been inconclusive is due to a form of gender socialization which prohibits males from discussing body image concerns freely and openly. That is, expressions of bodily dissatisfaction or concern have been feminized and gendered as normative for women. Hence, while males are experiencing pressure to conform to the ideal muscular body, "men's body image is a hidden problem that men are not supposed to talk about" (569).

As such, the qualitative research aimed to bridge the gap in literature by exploring how boy's develop their own terminology when discussing media and body image. The themes of discussion were highlighted underbody investment and evaluation, boys' appearance ideal, influence of the mass media on boys' body image, and appearance and body image as a 'social taboo' (Hargreaves and Tiggemann 2006). Similar to the previous aforementioned study on heterosexual males (Baker, Allen, and Qiao 2015), adolescent males hold the same belief as adults males that physical appearance is the dominant criterion of attractiveness in terms of attracting partners (Hargreaves and Tiggemann 2006). The study found that some boys generally do not tend to their appearance except when attempting to "impress girls"(570). Some boys confessed to a level of preoccupation with their looks but are hesitant to admit it to others and instead adopt an attitude of not caring. Other boys extended the attitude of 'not showing that you care' to all emotions and feelings. Such attitudes of emotional suppression can be traced by the internalization of traditional masculine norms which valorizes rationality over emotion expression (Lomas et al. 2012).

In terms of appearance ideals, adolescent male echoed sentiments portrayed in aforementioned qualitative studies (Baker, Allen, and Qiao 2015; Grogan and Richards 2002) in two ways. First, adolescent males held the image of the mesomorphic muscular physique as the ideal male body. Secondly, adolescent males expressed intentions to achieve the ideal by 'buffing up'. Among the reasons that adolescent males want to increase muscle are to attract girls, earn respect from friends and enhance performance in sports activities (Hargreaves and Tiggemann 2006). Again, we trace attempts to conform to the ideal male body with traditional masculine norms by which the body serves as the vehicle to receiving concessions awarded within hegemonic masculinity. As such, the ability to attain the muscular male body will be rewarded with greater social privileges.

Similar to the qualitative study on adult heterosexual males (Baker, Allen, and Qiao 2015), adolescent males did not believe they were impacted by mass media messages and while they might reserve a desire to have a muscular body, they would not take action in pursuit of the ideal (Hargreaves and Tiggemann 2006). Finally, the participants of the study were in agreement that concerns with physical appearance is not an appropriate topic that should be discussed openly out of fear of being perceived as less masculine. Moreover, that concern with body image is a feminine and gay issue.

5.5 Concluding thoughts

To summarize, we surveyed a sample of twenty-two studies related to body image literature. To achieve a well-grounded perspective and due to a lack of male-oriented body image research, we included studies that investigated the relationship between social media and female body image. We reported on the objective, theoretical framework, method, tools and sample used. That literature ubiquitously shared a similar objective of investigating the influence of media on body image. Theories rooted in psychology such as social comparison theory were predominantly used to explain the phenomenon resulting in a decrease in body image dissatisfaction.

Upon examining related literature, we were able to identify some gaps and attend to some elementary conclusions. Primarily, we observed that quantitative methodology (correlational studies) is the dominant research methodology used in the studies in the field of Communication and Body Image. Sanjay and Sanjay Kumar (2015) describe an overreliance and overdependence on quantitative methodology in this field. While quantitative research may be used to explain a correlational relationship between media and body esteem, it does not establish a causal connection. Furthermore, exposure to media exposure and negative body esteem may correlate, however, that does not mean that media exposure causes negative body image.

Secondly, experimental research in the field of body image shares a similar procedure of dividing a large sample of participants into smaller groups to test for variance against different types of media exposure. Some research studies report a significant difference in body dissatisfaction among participants upon being exposed to ideal body images (Barlett, Vowels, and Saucier 2008). Other research studies report a small to minimal significance, while others did not find exposure to ideal body images to have an effect on the male participant. Scholars suggest future research is needed to fill in the gap in the literature (Barlett, Vowels, and Saucier 2008).

Finally, qualitative research is important to understand the concept and gather deeper insights from participants themselves, we fear a form of male gender socialization may act as an inhibiting and limiting factor. For example, in two separate qualitative studies, male participants (men and boys) considered themselves to be out of the sphere of media influence (Hargreaves and Tiggemann 2006; Baker, Allen, and Qiao 2015;). Moreover, male participants believed that media messages don't impact them (Baker, Allen, and Qiao 2015; Hargreaves and Tiggemann 2006). While on a conscious level, we as humans may be aware that media messages produce unrealistic ideals, the manner in which we internalize and act on them may not be apparent. As described in a report on male depression, men have a tendency to underreport emotional disturbances and believe symptoms to be less severe than they actually are (National Institute of Mental Health 2020).

We trace such habits that undermine emotional responses to traditional gender role socialization which emphasizes a stoic form of masculinity that might make men and adolescent boys reluctant to publicly or privately discuss particular vulnerabilities or esteem issues that might be reserved regarding their bodies. It is a reality that men are less likely to go to the doctor or seek medical help and more likely to engage in risk-taking behavior (Banks 2001). Hence, qualitative research regarding male body image needs to crossover with the sociological aspect taking into consideration gender role conflict. The manner in which adolescent males experience and express negative body image may differ from the experiences adolescent females have. As future research can

approach body image with the framework of gender socialization. In particular, preoccupation with appearance has been presented as a female-oriented social problem. In fact, due to the gendered nature in which body image has been presented and perceived, adolescent males have been reported to believe that body image is only a feminine or gay issue (Hargreaves and Tiggemann 2006). Such stances present a dilemma for researchers. How do researchers approach the research when the participants of the subject matter are likely to hold a preconceived bias? In the following section, we discuss the way in which the present research aims to fill the gap in the literature.

5.6 Research Gap

There are three main areas in which the current study aims to bridge the gap in the literature in the field of Communication and Body Image:

The first area takes into account the form of media exposure. An extensive amount of research has typically focused on traditional media such as television or print (Tiggemann and Anderberg 2020). The research which has predominantly focused on the female demographic demonstrated the link between exposure to fashion magazines or television advertisements and an increase in body dissatisfaction due to the presence of idealized thin body images (Grabe, Ward, and Hyde, 2008). As demonstrated in the previous section, a smaller amount of research suggests similar results in regards to the male demographic. With the rise of social media, research on body image has introduced social networking sites (SNS) as a potential mediating factor. As Tiggemann and Anderberg (2020) point out in their new study that "again, most of the work has focussed on women's body image"(237). However, unlike fashion magazines which are predominantly consumed by women, men make up for a good portion of social media users. Hence, the relationship between **social media and body image** among the male demographic remains an under-researched area in body image research.

Secondly, the present research aims to bridge the gap by focusing the demographic on **adolescent males in Spain.** A relatively small amount of research has attended to the influence of social media on adolescents, in particular, adolescent males. As demonstrated in the literature, there is growing pressure on adolescent males to attain an ideal male body (Vito, Admire, and Hughes 2018). In particular, there is a growing emphasis on high degrees of muscularity, leanness, and low body. Researchers have pointed to social media and traditional gender roles as being the main drivers behind this modern phenomenon (Morris 2018). Scholars have also linked the rise of fitness culture and bodybuilding with the increase in economic precarity and feminism (Pope, Phillips and Olivardia 2002; Hakim 2018; Marshall, Chamberlain, and Hodgetts 2020;. In particular, muscularity in the male physical body has become the symbol of power and hegemonic masculinity (Vito, Admire and Hughes 2017). Changes in the market and beauty industry are observed as weight gain products such as protein powders, facial masculinization treatment, and make-up for males are becoming normalized (Olya 2015). It is plausible to assume that as such male-oriented beauty and body ideals become standardized, there would be an increase in the likelihood of internalizing such ideals among younger individuals.

Finally, the present study aims to bridge the gap using an **experimental method** to investigate the influence of social media on body image. As indicated by the meta-analyses on the influence of media on male body image, inconsistencies in experimental research exist which need to be resolved (Barlett, Vowels, and Saucier 2008). Some

experimental studies demonstrated that brief exposure to ideal body images has increased levels of body dissatisfaction among males (Barlett, Vowels, and Saucier 2008). Other studies found a small but significant effect of media on male body image while other studies found the exposure to muscular male bodies did not impact body image state measures. In the following section, we will discuss the main aim and specific objectives of the research.

5.7 The present research

The present study aims to conduct a research investigating the relationship between social media use and body image-related concerns. In specific, an experimental design will be used to investigate the influence of exposure to varying social media use on the drive for muscularity, body esteem, and appearance comparison tendency among adolescent males between the ages of 15 to 19 years old in Catalonia, Spain.

Establishing variance in the type of social media exposure consists of dividing the social media stimuli into three variations. The three variations of social media exposure are established by dividing the participants into three groups and exposing them to idealized male body images (Appearance-Focused), neutral images (Neutral Group), and user-based interaction (Naturalistic Viewing). The experimental aspects of the design used in the research will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

In concurrence with results from previous research (Fardouly et al. 2015), we predict that there will be an increase in the level of drive for muscularity in the group that is exposed to the idealized male body (Appearance-Focused) and the group that maintains a user-based social media interaction (Naturalistic Viewing). Conversely, there will not be an increase in the level of drive for muscularity in the group that is exposed to neutral images (Neutral group). Similarly, we expect that exposure to idealized male body images in the Appearance Focused group would lead to a decrease in Body Esteem when compared to the Appearance-Neutral group.

Previous research has demonstrated a tendency among social media users to engage in behaviors of comparison (Fardouly et al. 2015). Similarly, research has shown that exposure to idealized body image evokes upwards comparison tendencies (Fardouly et al. 2015). Hence, we expect an increase in upward appearance comparison tendency in the Naturalistic Viewing group and the Appearance-Focused group when compared to the appearance-neutral group.

In the following section, we will describe the main aim and specific objectives of the research.

5.8 Research aims

As mentioned previously, the present research aims to experimentally investigate the influence of social media on body-image-related concerns in adolescent males. Specifically, the research aim (RA) is to investigate the effects of exposure of varying Instagram uses on body image-related concerns in adolescent males using control and experimental groups *(See Table 3).*

The decision to investigate the Instagram application as the site of social media study is due to three main reasons. Firstly, due to recency, Instagram as a digital media space is less represented in the field of Body Image and Communication (Fardouly and Vartanian 2016). Prior research has tended to study Facebook and Pinterest. Hence, there is a need for research to investigate the effects of the mediation of the Instagram application. Secondly, Instagram as a social media platform has been reported to be most popular among adolescents (Thomas et al. 2020). Therefore, it is of significance for research to investigate the relationship between Instagram uses on body image among adolescent males. Finally, unlike Facebook, Instagram as a social media platform is designed to be solely an image-based network. According to recent statistics, there are almost 8.5 million images uploaded daily and have a total of 50 billion images uploaded to date (Aslam 2021). Moreover, unlike fashion magazines which are primarily consumed by women, Instagram is widely used by men and boys.

Given the above framework, the current study puts forward one main research aim and three specific objectives:

Table 3. Research aim and specific objectives

RA	Investigate the effects of exposure of varying Instagram uses on body image-related concerns in adolescent males using control and experimental groups.
SO1	Investigate the immediate effect of exposure to idealized images of Instagram on Drive for Muscularity, Body Esteem, and Appearance comparison on adolescent males.
SO2	Investigate the effect of habitual usage of Instagram on Drive for Muscularity, Body Esteem, and Appearance comparison on adolescents males.
SO3	Moderate any possible differences associated with exposure to neutral images found on Instagram on Drive for Muscularity, Body Esteem, and Appearance comparison on adolescent males

Source: Author.

In the following chapter, we will expand on the research design, method, and procedure of the research.

Chapter 6

METHOD

This chapter will cover the method applied in the research study. It accounts for the design, materials, procedure and results. The method of the study utilized a posttest experimental design to investigate the relationship between social media use and body image-related concerns among adolescents males. A larger sample of male participants was divided into three experimental and control groups. The groups were subjected to variant social media exposure and blocked for body image measurements afterwards.

Statistical analysis was then used to test for variance following the data collection. The following section of the introduction discusses the experimental design in further detail.

6.1 Introduction

In the literature review, we covered how quantitative (correlational) and qualitative methods have been applied to research in the field of Communication and Body Image. In their review on Psychology and Body image, Tiwari and Kumar (2015) describe the dominance and over-dependence on correlational studies in this field and the need for explanatory research. While correlational studies may be used to demonstrate an inverse relationship between media exposure and body image, they do not establish a causal connection (Fardouly and Vartanian 2016). This means that the correlation between high media exposure and negative body image does not imply the causation of media exposure to negative body image. For this reason, our study sought to contribute to the research gap by using explanatory research set by an experimental method.

Explanatory research can be seen as a form of investigative research that seeks to explain the nature of a phenomenon and predict possible outcomes (Vogt 2011). It uses a general hypothesis to assume the casual relationship between the variables being studied (Vogt 2011). The causal relationship between the variables is inferred by applying an experimental method. In the field of Communication and Body Image, the experimental method consists of testing the effects of variant media exposure on two or three experimental and control groups. The overall consensus in media studies suggests that exposure to ideal body images negatively impacts body satisfaction among men and women alike, however, results from previous experimental studies on media and body image have been relatively inconsistent (Barlet, Vowels and Saucier, 2008; Grabe, Ward and Hyde 2008).

A study by Agliata and Tantleff-Dunn (2004) found that after exposure to images that contain the muscle-ideal in advertisements male participants expressed higher levels of depression and muscle dissatisfaction. Another study suggests that exposure to images of the muscle-ideal has a small but statistically significant negative impact on men's body dissatisfaction (Bond 2008). An experimental study that aimed to examine the impact of media exposure on self-esteem and body satisfaction in men and women (Russello 2009) found that men were less likely to internalize media ideals and expressed greater body satisfaction. Similarly, a study by Kaloder (1997) did not find a significant difference between men who were exposed to idealized body images and men who viewed images of older men (not models). In short, previous experimental studies found a high or minimal significance between media exposure and body dissatisfaction while other studies reported a null-hypothesis. Therefore, more experimental investigations are needed in this particular field that takes into account the effects of media exposure on a young male demographic.

The present study investigates the effects of social media use on body image concerns in adolescent males using a between-groups experimental design. The participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions on Instagram for a period of 10 minutes: their own Instagram account (Naturalistic Viewing; n=44), an artistic control account (Appearance-Neutral; n=30), or a bodybuilding and fitness account (Appearance-Focused; n=49). Following the social media exposure, the participants were blocked by

completing measures on Drive for Muscularity (DM), Body Esteem Scale (BES), and Appearance Comparison Tendency (ACT).

The participants were divided into one of three conditions. The conditions for **Naturalistic Viewing** aims to sustain habitual usage by asking the participants to use their Instagram in the manner they normally do in everyday life. They are at liberty to visit their profile, friends, and family as well as commercial accounts. Similarly, they are free to post images and leave comments. By enabling participants to use Instagram without restriction, we aim to back the research study with ecological validity. The conditions of **Appearance-Neutral** required participants to engage with images on Instagram that do not contain or glorify the muscle-ideal. The aim of this is to ensure that the participants of this group are not exposed to idealized body images, therefore creating a measure where we can test the subjects against. A list of 10 artistic Instagram accounts that were based on photography, graphic design, and street graffiti was presented to the group of participants of this group. After careful consideration, we assumed that the content of street graffiti would be dynamic and entertaining enough to sustain the attention of adolescent males for the required period. The conditions of the **Appearance-Focused** required participants to be exposed to idealized male body images with a focus on the muscle-ideal. A list of 10 men's health fitness accounts on Instagram was presented to the participants. The accounts were chosen based on their social media following and relevance to Spanish society. The list included Spanish male models and health and fitness Instagram accounts.

We deduce that using an experimental method will allow us to cover crucial elements of the research. Because social media is a relatively new phenomenon in the field of communication, there is considerably less research investigating the influence of Instagram use. Moreover, there are fewer experimental studies that test for ecological validity (Fardouly and Vartanian 2016). The growing popularity of social media and new applications that emerge from it like Instagram and Tik Tok among adolescents makes it imperative for research to understand the way habitually using them affects social behavior. Finally, due to the simultaneous rise of fitness culture on social media, fitspiration images, and the growing pressure on becoming more muscular, we find it necessary to concentrate our study on adolescent males (Alberga, Withnell and M. von Ranson 2018; Pope et al. 1999). In the next section, we will discuss in further detail the characteristics of the participants of our study.

6.2 Participants

This section will cover the process in determining the central characteristics of the participants. We will describe the process of determining the population and sample size requirements needed for an experimental research to reach validation. The process of identifying the participants of the study includes determining the age bracket of the participants, and protocol established during the recruitment process.

In 'An Overview Research of Gender in Spanish Society', Valiente (2002) suggests that the study of men's health is in its "embryonic stage"(13). This has created a health literacy disparity where men are less likely to access and apply information regarding their health, be it mental or physical (Marcos et al. 2013). This disparity becomes further amplified when considering adolescent males and body image which is why our study has chosen to hone in on this demographic, who in their stage of adolescence are still forming their identity and particularly vulnerable to media messaging especially social media (Hogan 2005; Crone and Konijn 2018)

A sample is described as a subgroup of the population (Sekaran and Bougie 2010). In the case of our study, the population is adolescent males and the sample is n=123 participants. There are several methods to determine the sample size. The first considers the nature of the research which is experimental. Unlike correlational studies, experimental studies do not require an extensive sample size to reach validation. A minimum of 15 participants is required for each experimental and control group (Gall, Borg and Gall 1996). Upon reviewing previous studies and the sample size used in experimental design, it was concluded to set the sample size of our study at a minimum of 100 participants (Hobza et al. 2007; Hargreaves and Tiggemann 2009; Fardouly, Pinkus and Vartanian 2016).

The age bracket of the participants was initially designed for adolescent males between the ages of 14 to 17 years old to reach the youth demographic. The age bracket was later adjusted after consulting with the Institutional Commission for the Ethical Review of Projects (CIREP-UPF) because it stated that participants at the age of 14 years old and under require parental authorization.[24] Given the restraint on time and resources, the age bracket was redesigned to include adolescent male participants between the ages of 15 to 19 years old. This age bracket does not require parental authorization.

According to the Spanish education system, the age bracket of the participants would be located in the Educación Secundaria (ESO) which translates to 7th — 10th grade. The first step of recruiting participants for the study required establishing contacts with high schools across Barcelona, Spain. This was accomplished by sending emails that introduced the researcher, their affiliation with the University of Pompeu Fabra, and a letter detailing the nature of the research. (*See Appendix A)*. The research was introduced as a subset of the project SOMA. SOMA, which stands for SOcial Media and Adolescence, is a project founded under MediaCorp's 'Mi cuerpo mi gusta' that seeks to explore and advance healthy media diets among adolescents.[25]

A procedure was followed throughout the recruitment process:
1. Create a contact list with details of high schools located in Barcelona, Spain.
2. Send an email and letter attachment introducing the nature of the research.
3. Arrange a meeting with the school coordinator to discuss further details.
4. Set up a date, time, and location for a session of the experiment.
5. Conduct the experiment.
6. Close by giving a presentation on "Celebrity Culture and Social Media".[26]

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[24] https://www.upf.edu/es/web/cirep

[25] https://www.upf.edu/web/micuerpomegusta/imagen-corporal

[26] https://prezi.com/p/scfgpm91ipbw/celebrity-culture-and-social-media/

In total, two high schools in Barcelona have agreed to work with our research. Following the above procedure, the lead researcher was able to establish contact with the Institut Públic XXV Olimpiada. The procedure continued as planned where the lead researcher agreed with the school coordinator on a specific date to conduct the experiment at the location of the school during school hours. Two dates were scheduled for the research which consisted of one or two experimental sessions each date. In total, we conducted the experiment on a sample size of n=29 male participants.

Another contact with Col·legi Maristes Sants-Les Corts was established during Research Week at the Pompeu Fabra University. An affiliate approached the lead researcher after she gave her presentation on the research and offered assistance to direct contact information of schools around Barcelona, Spain. Similar to the agreement with the Institut Públic XXV Olimpiada, the lead researcher and program coordinator of the Col·legi Maristes Sants-Les Corts set two dates for the research with two experimental sessions each date. In total, the experiment was conducted on n=88 male participants. *(See Table 4)*.

Table 4. Experiment conditions and participants.

Group	School	Experiment Condition	Sample size	Performed on
Group 1	Institut Públic XXV Olimpiada	Naturalistic Viewing	N=16	2/4/2019
Group 2	Institut Públic XXV Olimpiada	Appearance Neutral	N=14	2/11/2019
Group 3	Col·legi Maristes Sants-Les Corts	Appearance Focused	N=23	3/11/2019
Group 4	Col·legi Maristes Sants-Les Corts	Appearance Neutral	N=16	3/11/2019
Group 5	Col·legi Maristes Sants-Les Corts	Naturalistic Viewing	N=28	3/19/2019
Group 6	Col·legi Maristes Sants-Les Corts	Appearance Focused	N=26	3/19/2019

SOURCE: Author.

The experiment was conducted on a sample of n=123 participants. (*See Table 5*). The participants are adolescent males and have a mean age of 16.59 years old. The mean Body Mass Index (BMI) is 21.49 and lies within the normal weight according to the World Health Organization (WHO).[27] From the sample collected, 61.8% said they live with both

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[27] https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/disease-prevention/nutrition/a-healthy-lifestyle/body-mass-index-bmi

parents and 36.6% of the tutors have obtained a university degree education. A small portion (4.1) of the participants revealed that they did not receive a degree.

Table 5. Description of the sample (n = 123)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Dev. typ.
Age	112*	16	19	16.59	679
Height	120	130	203	175.62	8,714
Weight	120	47	100	66.41	10,141
BMI	119	17.26	35.50	21.49	2,899

*There was some data that was lost because participants did not enter the information.

6.3 Materials

In the following section, we will describe the materials used in the study. It will cover the use of the three dominant measurement instruments: Drive for Muscularity (DM; McCreary 2013), Body Esteem Scale-Revised (BES-R; Frost et al. 2017) and Appearance comparison tendency (ACT; O'Brien et al. 2009).

6.3.1 Drive for Muscularity

The book "The Adonis Complex: How to Identify, Treat and Prevent Body Obsession in Men and Boys" identifies a growing health crisis among males of all ages. In pursuit of the ideal body and increasing body dissatisfaction, males are engaging in habits of excessive exercising, weight lifting and taking performance-enhancing substances. The ideal male body is presented as having a muscular mesomorphic shape with sculpted arms and chest upper body and a slim waist. High degrees of muscularity and low degrees of body fat are central to this ideal (Pope et al. 1999). (*See Image 15).*

Image 15. Stages in the development of high degrees of muscularity in a mesomorphic male body.
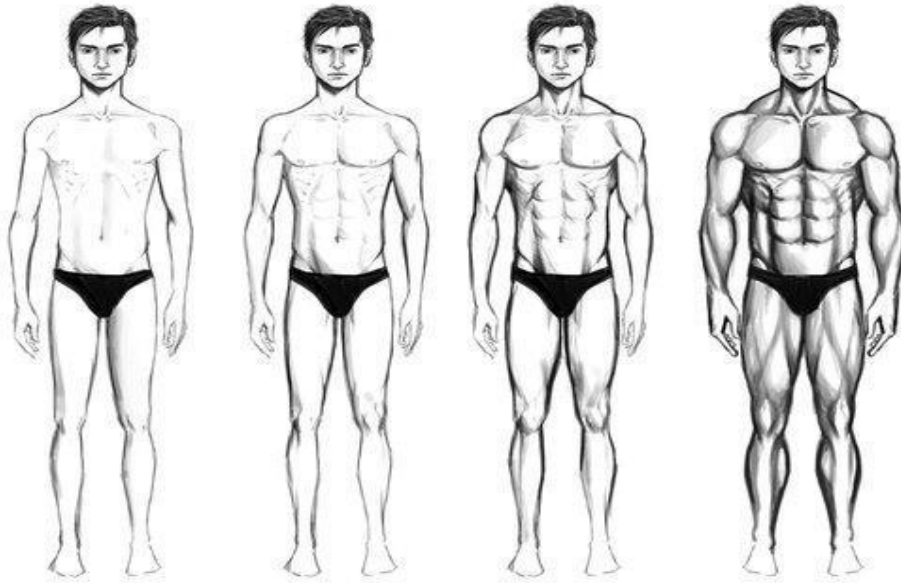
Source: Men and Body Image[28]

As expanded on in the literature review, evidence points to a growing emphasis on the muscle ideal in socio-cultural spheres. Two separate studies have found male bodies to become increasingly more muscular and decreasing in body fat in print media as well as action toys intended for children (Pope et al. 1999; Leit et al. 2000). Over-representation of the muscle ideal and margonization of average male body types has created an increasing pressure on boys and men to become more muscular. As such an instrument that measures the Drive for Muscularity has been selected for this study.

The Drive for Muscularity Scale (DMS) is a 15-item questionnaire used to measure personal attitudes and behaviours towards muscularity (McCreary 2013). It exists on a low to high continuum where low levels of drive for muscularity are associated with better health and higher levels reveal a preoccupation with attaining a muscular body (Tod and Lavallee 2011, 149). The instrument requires participants to self-evaluate their attitudes and behaviour regardless of body frame and degree of muscularity. The participants are provided with a list of statements and are asked to score on a 6-point likert scale (1=Always, 6=Never). Samples of the items in the questionnaire include "I think that I would feel stronger if I gained a little more muscle mass." and "I think that my arms are not muscular enough."

During the construction of the instrument, the authors did not over-sample the list of items to narrow down and assumed the 15-item scale was sufficient to be administered. Upon primary testing on n=197 male and female highschool students, score reliability coefficient was significant and and s predicated, lower levels of self-esteem and higher levels of depression was correlated with higher levels of DM (Molnar, Tod and Morison 2010, 150). The scale is designed to measure one major scale and two subscales. The major scale examines the level participants feel the need to add more muscle mass to their body frame. It may be applied to both male and female participants. The two subscales

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[28] https://bodyimagehealth.weebly.com/men-and-body-image.html

may only be tested for males and they measure the Development Behaviors and Muscularity-Oriented Body Image Attitudes *(See Table 6)*.

The Drive for Muscularity scale has been used in numerous studies (Morrison et al. 2004; Mccreary, Saucier and Courtenay 2005; McPherson et al. 2010; Nerini et al. 2016) and is considered one of the most common instruments used in body image research (Tod and Lavallee 2012). It has demonstrated higher prominence among men, however, new studies suggest that drive for muscularity has been increasing among women possibly due to the rising popularity of fitness culture. It has demonstrated a good construct validity, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (McCreary and Sasse 2000, 2002). According to McCreary (2007), the psychometrics of DMS has had alpha reliability ranging from .85 to .91 and reliability estimates have been above .80. A study providing a psychometric evaluation tested the DMS on n=594 Scottish men (McPherson et al. 2010). It demonstrated the presence of the two subscales and test-retest validity and construct validity. Another study testing the psychometric property evaluated the scale of a n=355 Italian male participants, of whom 212 were heterosexual and 143 were gay men (Nerini et al. 2016). According to the study, gay men reported higher levels of Drive for Muscualrity. Similar to the previous results, a good reliability and construct validity of the DMS were demonstrated.

The creator of the scale presents Drive for Muscularity as being the opposite of Drive for thinness and as such discriminant validity can not be correlated. It has been tested against various social dimensions. It was found to be positively correlated with participants who engage in weight training among males and females and negatively correlated with self-esteem. Studies have found DMS to be positively associated with neuroticism, self-oriented perfectionism, appearance orientation, and fitness orientation. It can be tested with masculine gender socialization (McCreary 2013).

There has been some criticism regarding the psychometric soundness of the DMS. In their book "The Psychology of Strength and Conditioning", Tod and Lavallee (2012) highlight some key limitations of the scale. The authors suggest that the items on the scale are not exhaustive and verge on measuring muscle dysmorphia as opposed to drive for muscularity. Moreover, the overlapping between items that measure attitudes and behavior is problematic and may deflate correlation due to redundancy. Similarly, Morrison et al. (2004) question the accuracy of the scale in measuring the drive for muscularity among female participants. The mean has been relatively low as 11 out of 15 items have been scored between "never and rarely". Finally, the authors suggest that drive for muscularity can be tested with drive for thinness and other eating disorders considering a significant correlation (r .37, p <.01) was found between male participants' scores on the DMS and the Eating Attitudes Test.

There are three main reasons behind the decision to include the Drive for Muscularity scale as a tool of measurement instrument in this study. There is a shortage of measurement instruments that test for body image related concerns among men and in particular ones that are constructed to specifically target male adolescents. Some scholars suggest that the entire paradigm of what shapes and impacts male body image has been historically neglected (Cafri and Thompson 2004). In fact by the year 2000 only two scales have been published that measure muscularity driven behaviours: Drive for Muscularity Scale (DMS) and the Swansea Muscularity Attitudes Questionnaire (SMAQ; Edwards and Launder 2000). Both scales have been subjected to similar criticism of

diluting accuracy and redundancy (Morrison et al. 2004). The first reason DMS was selected for this study is because it has been labeled the most effective measure of male body (Cafri and Thompson 2004) and has maintained a high prominence in body image literature. As of 2017 an estimate of 200 publications have cited the Drive for Muscularity Scale (DeBlaere and Brewster 2017).

The second reason has to do with the theoretical framework of the scale which is backed by Festinger's theory of social comparison (1954). As expanded on in the literature review, social comparison theory describes the tendency among human beings to evaluate their abilities and standings by comparing themselves to others. Such comparisons extend to body image and degrees of muscularity (Tod and Lavallee 2012). Though technically not a drive, drive for muscularity explains the aroused state of psychological tension from being perceived as not muscular enough. In an attempt to decrease that tension, individuals might engage in behaviour and attitude to increase muscle mass. The hypothesis of this study is backed by the theory of social comparison; that upon viewing an idealized body image we anticipate greater levels of drive for muscularity. Hence, maintaining a form of cohesion and consistency from the literature review throughout the experimental method and instruments used proved to be an important element.

Finally, the third reason is centered around the characteristics of the participants who are male adolescents. According to the description of the instrument, DMS has been successfully tested among 'boys and girls' (McCreary 2013). Given that the main focus of our study seeks to examine the relationship between social media and body image concerns among adolescent males, it was imperative to select an instrument specific to them. In the same vein, we are conscious that the schedule of the experiment sessions requires participants to complete the measurement instrument during school hours; hence the scale needed to be short and not too time-consuming for the students. When compared with other instruments such as the 29-item Male Body Attitudes Scale (MBAS; Tylka et al 2005) which examines disassifaction in muscularity and body weight, we found the DMS to be a more reasonable and feasible choice. The DMS can be administered as a 14-item instrument or an optional 15-item which tests for the use of anabolic steroids. Throughout the decision-making process, we have considered the possibility of removing the 15th item however, recent studies have shown a dramatic spike in young males taking performance-enhancing substances such as anabolic steroids and protein shakes and therefore the final decision was to maintain the 15-item instrument (Howell 2015).

Subscale	Items
Muscle Development Behaviors	Measures tendency to engage in behaviour that increase muscles mass: I lift weights to build up muscle. I use protein or energy supplements.

Muscularity-Oriented Body Image Attitude	Measure attitudes towards the physical body regarding degrees of muscularity: I wish that I were more muscular. I think that my chest is not muscular enough.

Table 6. Drive for Muscularity

6.3.2 Body Esteem Scale-Revised

Body esteem is an important dimension of general self-esteem (Franzoi and Shields 1984). On its most basic level, self-esteem is described as "the summary judgment of everything a person can assess about himself/herself." (Bailey 2003, 389). In a similar vein, body esteem pertains to all the assessments that one can make about their body parts. It is defined to be gender-specific and multi-directional, as it relates to the way one feels about his or her body's physical appearance, including weight, hair, eyes, fingernails, and other features that comprise the way he/she looks. When engaging in body evaluation, men and women do not evaluate their body as a whole way. Instead individuals will think of body parts of being independent from them and serve as distinct and separate objects. Such dissociation might explain why individuals express dissatisfaction in more than one body feature (Christiansen 2020).

Since its early construction, the Body Esteem Scale has served as a primary research tool in the field of Body Image. It has been used to advance our understanding on the relationship between body esteem and several constructs of behavioral science including aspects of social comparison tendencies (Franzoi and Klaiber 2007; Frost et al. 2017), media influences (Henderson-King and Henderson-King 1997), anabolic steroid use and abuse (Schwerin et al. 1997) and the development of mental illnesses such as depression (Davis and Katzman 1997). The original Body Esteem Scale (BES) was developed in 1984 in association with the Body Cathexis scale (Secord and Jourard 1953) which was designed to measure body esteem as a unidimensional structure. Central to the development of the Body Esteem Scale as an instrument was the notion that body esteem is gender-specific and multidimensional and is influenced by internal and external factors (Franzoi and Shields 1984). Following a study on 366 female participants and 257 male participants, adjustments were made to the Body Cathexis scale by removing items that scored low. Sixteen new items were added constituting the new 1984 Body Esteem Scale which consisted of a total 35-item questionnaire. A study conducted on a sample of 255 adolescent females and 436 adolescent males demonstrated the psychometric soundness of the instrument.

Beauty and body ideals are culturally-sensitive constructs and susceptible to generational change over time due to new trends and fashion. As such, authors Frost et al. (2017) anticipated the need to revise and update the Body Esteem Scale inorder to be considered valid in contemporary society. Two studies were conducted on a sample of n=798 and n=1237 male and female participants. The results from the first study showed that changes were needed to improve the accuracy of the scale. The results from the second study, which tested the BES-revised scale on among young adults in contemporary society, demonstrated strong internal consistency and good convergent and discriminant validity Moreover, BES-R can be used to better understand the link between this construct and

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mental health. The scale can be used in prevention and treatment programs for body-image issues as well. The Body Esteem-R is a 28-item questionnaire where participants are asked to rate how they feel about certain body parts and functions e.g body scent and skin condition on a 5 point likert scale (1 = Have strong negative feelings, 5 = Have strong positive feelings).

Authors (Frost et al. 2017) highlight the importance of using the BES-R as a gender-specific instrument meaning that only subscales relating to the gender can be calculated; moreover that male and female results can not be compared. There were three primary and interlinked factors that accounted for dimensions of body esteem among males and females. Females' factors (subscales) were associated with sexual attractiveness, weight control, and general physical condition. For women, sexual attractiveness was related to areas in body esteem that could be altered through cosmetics, habits of dieting or portion control and stamina which could be evaluated under public scrutiny. Because our study is primarily concerned with male body image, a greater portion of the BES-R description will be dedicated to male factor association.

Body esteem factors associated with males are upper sexual attractiveness, upper body strength and general physical condition. *(See Table 7)*. For men, physical attractiveness is constructed in terms of body parts and not body functions i.e what constitutes a 'good looking man' are facial features and physique. Moreover, sex organs and not sexual functions (drive and activities) accounted for physcial attractiveness. Unlike women who scored higher-orders on the subscale, sexuality for men is not determinant for physical attractiveness (Frost et al. 2017).

Another body-esteem aspect for men concerns upper-body strength. According to the authors (Frost et al. 2017; Franzoi and Shields 1984), the manner to enhance upper body strength is by making them broad, prominent and more muscular. When placed in a cultural context, broad muscular chest and shoulders become a symbolic status associated with virility and vigor. As such greater social value can be extracted by conforming to this bodily physique. The book " Gym Culture, Identity and Performance-Enhancing Drugs" (Christiansen 2020) describes a general tendency among men to frequent the gym to increase muscle mass with precision directed towards the upper body: shoulders, chest and arms. Christiansen (2020) highlights that the upper body is the part of the human physique with the highest muscle difference in male and female strength and the area most responsive to anabolic steroids. Hence, when young males want to enhance their upper body strength and make it more muscular, they actually want to exaggerate the areas of the body where gender differences can be most observed. This makes it a necessity to frame body image and consequently body image concerns in terms of social construction and its various associations with cultural power.

In terms of the third factor constituting of male body esteem according to the instructment, physical conditions are related to bodily function. Unlike for females where physical condition is associated with body parts, for male's the physicality of the body and its ability to perform and likewise circumstances that may hinder its performance shapes the physical condition.

Table 7. Body Esteem factors

Subscale	Item
Sexual attractiveness	Body scent, appearance of eyes, sex drive, sex organs, sex activities, face, head hair, and skin condition.
Upper body strength	Muscular strength, biceps, body build, arms, chest, or breasts.
Physical Condition	Physical stamina, reflexes, energy level, physical coordination, agility, figure or physique, appearance of stomach, health, physical condition, and weight.

The current study will focus on the aforementioned three factors of the BES-R.

6.3.4 Appearance Comparison Tendency

During the 1950s, social psychologist Leon Festinger put forward two theories that revolutionized the field; Social Comparison theory (1954) and Cognitive Dissonance (1957). Social Comparison theory describes the drive in humans and animal behaviour to engage in comparisons with others surrounding them in order to evaluate their abilities and standing. Outcomes of social comparison extend beyond self-evaluation as it might serve for self-enhancement processes. According to Festinger, there are two forms of comparison: Upwards Comparison and Downwards Comparison. Upward comparisons describe the tendency to compare with others perceived to be in a higher status while downward comparison describes the process of comparing oneself to others believed to be in a lower position.

Using social comparison theory O'Brien et al. (2009) developed an instrument designed to measure the tendency to engage in appearance-oriented social comparison. Up until then there hasn't been an instrument designed to specifically target this construct. Upward comparison in terms of appearance describes the tendency to compare oneself with individuals perceived to be more physically attractive targets such as models, movie stars and athletes. According to the authors, such behaviour results in an increase in self and body dissatisfaction. In an attempt to rectify feelings of dissatisfaction, individuals might adopt unhealthy eating habits or use body modification tactics such as undergoing cosmetic surgery and taking anabolic steroids (Calogero and Thompson 2010). In contrast, downwards comparison describes the tendency among people with low self-esteem or cognition to experience heightened levels of body satisfaction and psychological functioning when they compare themselves to targets they perceive as being less attractive than themselves. *(See Figure 4)*.

Figure 4. Representation of Appearance Comparison Tendency (ACT).

SOURCE: Adapted from O'Brien et al. (2009).

Previous studies on the effect of exposure to idealized images on body image disturbances have yielded mixed findings. Small to moderate effect sizes have been found in a meta-analysis examining the impact of media images on body dissatisfaction, internalization of the thin ideal, and eating behaviors (Grabe, Hyde, and Ward 2008; Groesz, Levine and and Murnen 2001). As such we consider that "the mere presentation of idealized images does not guarantee the initiation of comparison processes." (O'Brien et al. 2009, 202). To fill this gap, the Appearance Comparison Tendency scale was constructed to deepen our understanding of the relationship between appearance comparisons in media images and body image related constructs.

The Appearance comparison tendency instrument is divided into two measures: Upward Physical Appearance Comparison Scale (UPACS) and Downwards Appearance Comparison Scale. The UPACS is a 10-item scale which requires participants to rate the tendency to engage in physical comparison with attractive persons on a 5 point licket (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree). Sample items included in the scale are "I compare myself to those who are better looking than me rather than those who are not." and "I compare my body to people who have a better body than me". Using the same likert scale, the Downwards Appearance Comparison Scale (DACS) is an 8-items scale which tests individuals' tendency to engage in physical comparisons with targets perceived to be less attractive. Samples of the items included "When I see a person who is physically unattractive I think about how my body compares to theirs." and "I tend to compare my body to those who have below average bodies."(204).

To test the psychometric soundness of the scale, it was tested on n=224 participants and investigated with accompanying body image related measures. The results demonstrated good internal consistency and construct validity. UPAS and DACS was correlated with Appearance Evaluation, eating disorder and anti-fat attitudes. The findings indicated that greater levels of UPAS correlated with low levels of Appearance evaluation, and conversely lower levels of DACS scored high levels of Appearance evaluation. Creators of the scale suggest that "the measure may help clarify the often mixed findings for the impact of idealized media images on appearance dissatisfaction and eating pathology by allowing to factor in upward and downward comparison tendencies" (O'Brien et al. 2009). The study found that BMI was not significantly associated with either UPAS and

DACS. Results from male participants indicated lower tendencies to engage in physical comparison.

A study (Fardouly, Willburger and Vartanian 2017) on the influence of social media found that increased Instagram use was correlated with high levels of general appearance comparison tendency and greater self-objectification. Another study on the influence of Instagram use found that using the application was correlated to internalization of beauty ideals, increase in upwards appearance comparison and links to self-objectification and body surveillance (Feltman and Szymanski 2018). The study, which was tested on n=492 female participants, also found that having high feminist views served as a buffering roles against these body-image related concerns. A study on social media and social comparison (Fardouly et al. 2015) suggests that appearance comparison may play a significant role in self-objectification among women who frequented Facebook.

When considering body image among adolescents, sociocultural theory and social comparison theory support the claim that exposure to idealized body image is related to internalization of unrealistic body standards and tendencies to engage in appearance comparison. A study on 595 males and female adolescents found that after exposure to television advertisements containing thin female models and muscular male models, participants expressed increased negative mood and appearance comparison (Hargreaves and Tiggemann 2004, 351-361). Results suggest that while media messages affect body image among girls to a greater extent, it might have an effect on some boys. Another study conducted on n = 1,543 male and female adolescents found that exposure to idealized body images was significantly linked to social comparison for both males and female participants. Results indicated that great social comparison was related with the "Muscle is Good" views and was an indicator for body-enhancement strategies such as caloric surplus, use of pathogenic weight control practices, and use of steroids to increase muscle mass (Morrison, Kalin, and Morrison 2004).

There are three main measurement instruments used in the study. (*See Table 8*). The decision behind choosing the instruments was based on its adequacy to test for body image related concerns among adolescent males. Each of the instruments uses a self-assessment Lickert scale.

Table 8. Measurement instruments used in the study.

Measurement Instrument	Objective
Drive for Muscularity	Measures behaviour and attitude towards increasing muscle mass.
Body Esteem Scale	Determines the degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with specific body features such as sexual attractiveness and physical condition.
Appearance Comparison	Measures the tendency to engage in upwards or downwards physical appearance comparison.

6.4 Procedure

In this section, we will chronicle the stages in the development of the experiment taking into consideration the various aspects of the procedure. The first segment details the pilot study that was conducted prior to the experimental procedure. In the experimental procedure, we explain the protocol followed through each experimental session, and details relating to the social media stimuli, and the control and experimental groups.

The design of the research is largely inspired by a study made on Social comparison on Social Media (Fardouly et al. 2015). The study investigated the impact of Facebook usage on social comparison on n=112 female participants. Using an experimental design, the participants were randomly assigned to one of three Facebook conditions where they were asked to browse their own Facebook account, a fashion website, or an appearance-neutral website. Participants were blocked for state measures afterwards.[29]

6.4.1 Pilot Study

According to Polit and Beck (2017), the purpose of a pilot study is not to accumulate data or retrieve answers to research questions (Lowe 2019). The purpose of a pilot study is to alert researchers of overlooked flaws and possible miscalculations before launching into a large-scale study. It is a fundamental stage of any research that is used to examine the feasibility of the research approach by testing it on a small sample (Leon, Davis and Kraemer 2011).

Prior to conducting the pilot study, researchers translated the material including the measurement instruments, which are originally written in English, to Catalan and Spanish as to better accommodate the participants (*See Appendix B & C*). A pilot study was performed on a sample of n=5 male participants. The participants were randomly selected and assigned to one of the three Instagram conditions. The participants were then asked to complete standard socio-demographic questions and measures of Drive for Muscularity (DM), Body Esteem Scale-Revised (BES-R) and Appearance Comparison Tendency (ACT).

As an outcome of the pilot study, two amendments were made to the material. Feedback from participants regarding one of the questions in the stand-demographic section elicited the need to remove that question. The question at hand required the participants to identify their sexual orientation. Participants noted a level of discomfort in divulging personal information regarding their sexuality. While there is a lack of research that accounts for sexual orientation in relation to body image concerns (Moreno-Domínguez, Raposo, and Elipe 2019) and the LGBT Health and Development program has recognized sexual minorities and noncisgender individuals to be at risk of body dissatisfaction, our decision to remove the question considers the age and mental development of the participants

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[29] A contact was established with the lead researcher of the study Jasmine Fardouly requesting details on the appearance-neutral control condition. Fardouly suggested exposing participants to images that do not contain full bodies or idealized body images e.g. an accessories website.

during the stage of adolescence.[30] Hence, priority was given to ensuring a comfortable environment for the participants throughout the research process.

The second amendment was made to a measurement instrument. The Body Esteem Scale (BES) requires participants to specify the degree of satisfaction with physical appearance and specific body parts such as appearance of eyes and hair. Following the completion of the measurements, one of the participants noted that "Feet" as a body part was not included in the Body Esteem Scale (BES). Therefore, a new item was created and added in the final questionnaire. By including the item "Feet", participants can now evaluate their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction in relation to the body part.

Within regard to both amendments, we consider to have established a successful pilot study. In the following segment, we will explain in further details the measurement instruments used in the study. In the following section, we will elaborate on the experiment.

6.4.2 Experiment

Prior to the day of the experiment, the highschools (Institut Públic XXV Olimpiada and Col·legi Maristes Sants-Le) notified the parents or tutors of the student of their participation in the research headlined under SOMA. The notification came in the form of an email describing the research as a study aimed to further our understanding of the relationship between social media use and its implication on adolescents. The email also informed that the students will attend a presentation on "Celebrity Culture and Social Media."

To ensure the study can be replicated without subjecting the experiment to extraneous and unpredictable variables, we have established a protocol to be followed through each experimental session.

The protocol of the experiment is as follows:
1.   Greet the students (male participants) into a study hall or computer lab at the respected high school.
2.   Lead researcher introduces themselves and their affiliation with the Pompeu Fabra University.
3.   Researcher explains the nature of the research as a two-step procedure.[31]
4.   Reaffirm that data collected will remain anonymous and for research purposes only.
5.   Reaffirm that participants have the right of withdrawing from the study at any moment if they felt uncomfortable.
6.   Encourage participants to ask questions in the case they do not understand any specific concept or word.
7.   Ask the participants to answer the questions as honestly as possible.
8.   Thank the students for their participation.

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[30] https://www.impactprogram.org/research-blog/research-blog-body-image-differences-gender-sexual-orientation/

[31] Researcher does not disclose full information of the study as investigating male body image as to not influence the participants and skew results.

In sum, six experimental sessions were conducted across two high schools. The first two experimental sessions took place in the Institut Públic XXV Olimpíada. Four experimental sessions took place in Col·legi Maristes Sants-Les Corts. Each session of the experiment contained one of the three Instagram conditions: Naturalistic Viewing (NV), Appearance-Neutral (AN) and Appearance-Focused (AF). (*See Figure 5).* Each Instagram condition serves to complete an experimental function of the procedure. The condition of **NV** aims to sustain ecological validity by asking participants to login in their personal Instagram account and browse through the platform as they habitually would. The condition of **AN** serves as the control group in order to isolate the effects of variant social media exposure and consequently determine the effects by comparing results. Participants in the control group are asked to browse through artistic accounts on Instagram. The condition of **AF** serves as the experimental group which requires participants to browse through Instagram accounts containing idealized male body images. Participants are asked to browse through bodybuilding, and male health fitness accounts.

Figure 5. Division of the Instagram Conditions.
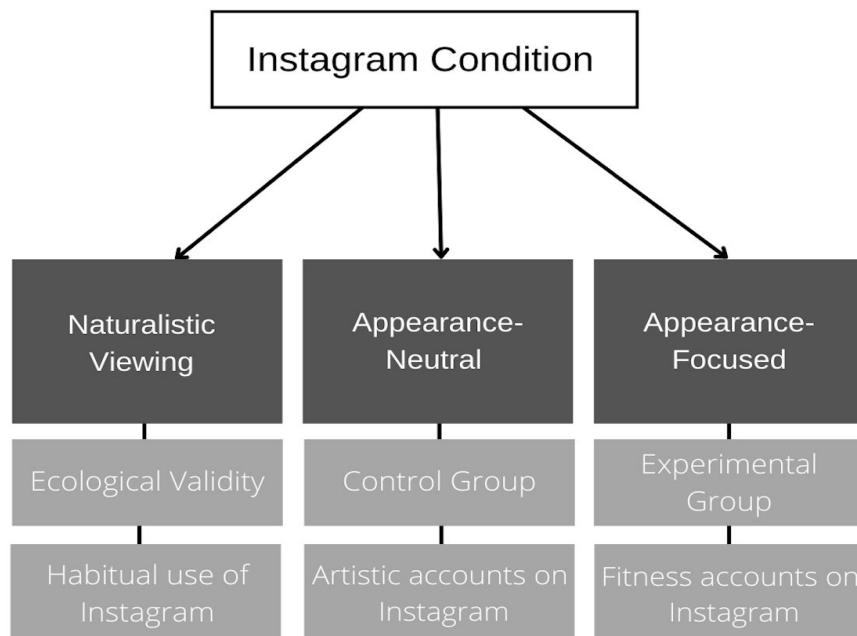
SOURCE: Author.

On the first day of the experiment, 15 male participants were welcomed in a computer laboratory at the Institut Públic XXV Olimpiada.[32] The participants were seated one chair apart to reduce variable influence such as talking. It was not possible to establish an independent experiment for each participant or produce further randomization of Instagram conditions. Following the established protocol, the lead researcher gave an introduction of herself, information on the research and the rights of anonymity and withdrawal. As a cover story, participants were told they were taking part in a study on "Social Media Usage". Upon receiving informed consent, the participants were asked to browse through their assigned Instagram condition which was Naturalistic Viewing. The participants used the computers to log in to their Instagram account which can be accessed

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[32] Researcher made note that female students felt excluded and wanted to participate in the study.

through the website.[33] Throughout the time of exposure to the social media stimuli, the participants were reminded that they can explore and engage with the media how they chose as long as they stay on the assigned platform. Participants are at liberty to check their profile, leave comments and publish stories. A stop-watch timer application on a smartphone was used to determine the duration of social media exposure which was set after 10 minutes. The duration was set for 10 minutes to reduce the possibility of participants losing interest (Farloudy et al. 2015). Following the period of social media exposure, participants were asked to complete measures on Drive for Muscularity, Body Esteem[34] and Appearance Comparison Tendency.[35] The participants were able to access the form through Google Forms on their computer. The link to the Google Form website was first abbreviated through a tool used to shorten urls and reduce links.[36] The link was then made visible to the participants by writing the link on a whiteboard in the computer laboratory. It took an estimated 7 to 10 minutes to complete the form.

On the second day of the experiment, 14 male participants were welcomed to a classroom at the Público XXV Olimpiada. The leader researcher followed the established protocol and received informed consent. Keeping in mind the events of the previou experimental session, the researcher kindly reminded participants not to engage participants in conversation until after the session has been completed. On this day, participants were assigned to the **AN** control Instagram condition.

A list of 10 accounts on Instagram dedicated to art, photography, and street graffiti were displayed on a whiteboard in front of the participants. (*See Image 16).* To maintain the validity of the control group, the accounts were first thoroughly reviewed by the researcher to verify that they do not contain male idealized body images. To achieve this, we used the following keywords: art, photography, street art, graffiti, and street graffiti in the Instagram search engine. From the results, we eliminated artistics accounts that contained idealized physical bodies and chose 10 Instagram accounts that are dedicated to adolescent-friendly artistic content. Participants were asked to use their smartphone to access the list of Instagram accounts.

Throughout the duration of the control condition, participants were asked to refrain from exploring their own profile or other accounts that were not included in the list. Upon completing the duration of social media exposure, participants were blocked on measures of DM, BES-R and ACT. Participants were able to access the form through Google Form website using their smartphone.

Image 16. Sample of social media stimuli used in the AN control Instagram condition.

SOURCE (from left to right): @graffitistreet on Instagram (2019), @graffittiartmagazine on Instagram (2018).

On the third day of the experiment, 22 male participants were welcomed to a study hall at the Col·legi Maristes Sants-Les Corts. The researcher followed the above protocol and introduced the research along with the cover story. Participants were assigned to the **AF** experimental Instagram condition. The participants were provided with a list of 10 accounts of bodybuilders, male fitness models and male health and fitness magazines on Instagram. (*See Image 17)*. As a prerequisite of the selection, the accounts needed to relate to Spanish audiences. We used Instagram search engines to look for Spanish male models and Spanish male health fitness magazines. The accounts also needed to have a wide range of Instagram following and images posted need to contain a substantial amount of likes and comments to ensure online popularity and engagement. Participants used their smartphone to access the list of Instagram accounts which was made available on a whiteboard in front of them.[37] After 10 minutes of being exposed to idealized images on social media, participants completed body-image related measurements: DM, BES-R, ACT.

Image 17. Sample of social media stimuli used in the AF experimental condition.

SOURCE (from left to right): @JeefSaid on Instagram (2019), @menshealthesp on Instagram (2019)

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[37] Participants could not access Instagram through the internet connection provided by the school as it was blocked. Participants used their personal mobile network to connect to Instagram.

The remaining 3 experimental sessions were conducted in a similar fashion. The fourth experimental session was assigned to the AN control group. It was tested on a sample of N=14 participants. The fifth experiment session was assigned the Naturalistic Viewing Instagram condition. It was tested on a sample of n=27 participants. The final experiment was assigned to the AF experimental group. It was tested on a sample of n=25 participants.[38]

The study investigated the influence of social media use, Instagram, on body image related concerns on a sample of n=123 adolescent males. It used a posttest between-groups experimental design by dividing the participants into 3 groups; NV (42), AN (28), AF (27). It was not possible to establish an independent experimental session for each participant. The experiment was conducted under a group-setting in the educational institution i.e. the highschool. A protocol was established and carried out through every experimental session. In total, six experimental sessions took place over the course of one month across two separate high schools. There were two experimental sessions for each Instagram condition. *(See Table 9).*

Table 9. Arrangement of experimental session according to Instagram Condition.

Instagram Condition	Sample (n=123)	Σ	Date
Naturalistic Viewing	n=16	n=44	2/4/2019
	n=28		3/19/2019
Appearance-Neutral	n=14	n=30	2/11/2019
	n=16		3/11/2019
Appearance-Focused	n=23	n=49	3/11/2019
	n=26		3/19/2019

Source: Author.

Participants were assigned to one of three Instagram conditions: **Naturalistic Viewing ,** where they browse through their personal feed, **Appearance-Neutral,** which serves as the control group or **Appearance-Focused,** where participants are exposed to idealized male body images on Instagram. Participants were blocked on body image related measures which are Drive for Muscularity, Body Esteem and Appearance Comparison Tendency.

The procedure took place in 6 steps:
1.   Participants are greeted in a computer laboratory or study hall at the high school.

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[38] Researcher made note that participant began to giggle when answering the Body Esteem Scale in particular to questions the related to sex organs and sexual apetitie.

2.   Researcher follows established protocols.
3.   Participants are asked to browse through their assigned Instagram condition; NV, AN, or AF.
4.   A timer is used to set the duration of social media exposure for 10 minutes.
5.   Upon completion of the social media exposure, participants are asked to complete measures on Drive for Muscularity, Body Esteem Scale, and Appearance Comparison tendency.
6.   Participants are thanked for their contribution.

Figure 6. shows the process of the experimental procedure. It begins by dividing a larger sample of participants (n=123) into three sub-groups. The three sub-groups make up from the control and experimental process. This is followed by subjecting the sub-groups to an assigned Instagram condition consisting of a specific form of social media use or exposure . Participants are then blocked in body image related measures of Drive for Muscularity, Body Esteem Scale and Appearance Comparison Tendency. Having completed the data collection, the next step is to compare results through statistical analysis which will be discussed in the next section.

Figure 6. Process of the experimental procedure.
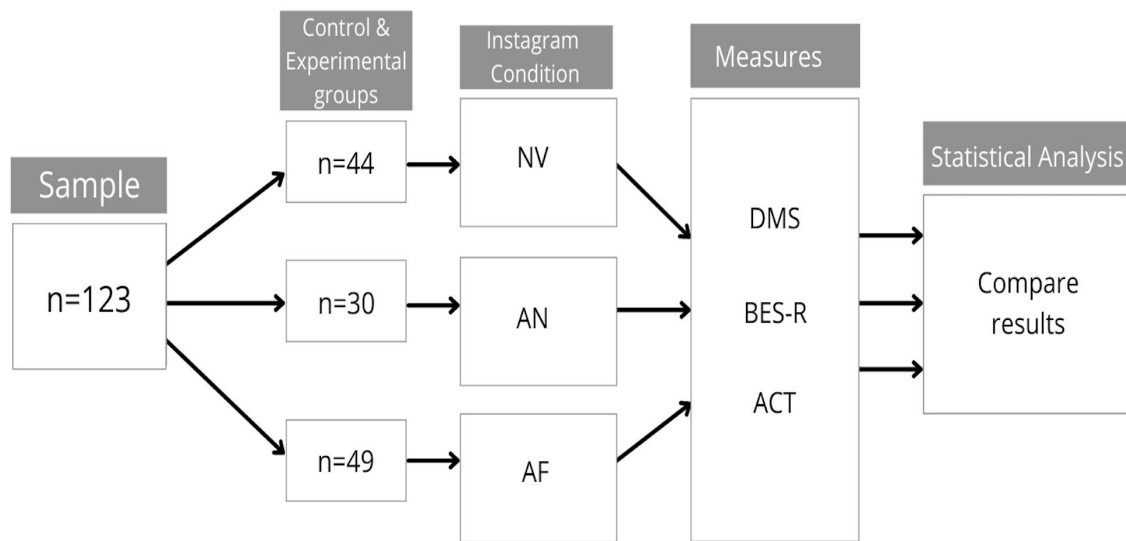
SOURCE: Author.

Chapter 7

RESULTS

In the following section, we will report on the results. The results were found using descriptive and statistical analysis of the data collected using SPSS software. We will begin by providing a general description of the participants including physical factors such as age, height, weight, and BMI and socio-economic factors such as education degree obtained by parents or tutor. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the participant's social media habits and engagement including duration spent on Instagram and activities performed. Finally, we present the findings on the hypotheses which aimed to predict the effects of variant social media exposure (Naturalistic Viewing; NV, Appearance-Neutral; AN, and Appearance-Focused; AF) on Body Image related concerns (Drive for Muscularity, Body Esteem, and Appearance Comparison) in adolescent males.

7.1 General Description of participants

As expanded on previously in the chapter, the data was collected from a sample of n=123 male participants between the ages of 15 to 19 years old. The general description of the sample is divided into 3 groups: NV (n=44) , AN (n= 30) and, AF (n= 49). We used descriptive statistics through the statistics software SPSS to analyze the data and retrieve results.

The **NV** group has a mean age of 16.23 (SD=0.48; range 16-18). The mean height is 174.89 (SD=10,5; range 130-203). The mean weight is 65.41 (SD=9.15; range 48-86). The mean BMI is 21.44 (SD=3.04).

The **AN** group has a mean age of 16.93 (SD=0.60; range 16-19). The mean height is 175.68 (SD=8.49; range 150-190). The mean weight is 70.70 (SD=10.16; range 55-100). The mean BMI is 22.77 (SD=2.59).

The **AF** group has a mean age of 16.71 (SD=0.74; range 16-19). The mean height is 176.27 (SD=6.95; range 160-190). The mean weight is 64.92 (SD=10.52; range 47-94). The mean BMI is 20.82 (SD=2.74). *(See Table 10).*

Table 10. Minimum, Maximum, and Mean of the age, weight, height, and BMI among the three groups: NV, AN, and AF.

Group		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Stand. Dev
NV	Age	42	16	18	16.24	.484
	Height	44	130	203	174.89	10.535
	Weight	44	48	86	65.41	9,151
	BMI	44	17.63	35.50	21.4482	3.04470
	N valid (as listed)	42				
AN	Age	28	16	19	16.93	.604
	Height	28	150	190	175.68	8,494
	Weight	27	55	100	70.70	10,156
	BMI	26	18.79	28.41	22.7654	2.58897
	N valid (as listed)	26				
AF	Age	42	16	19	16.71	.742
	Height	48	160	190	176.27	6.952
	Weight	48	47	94	64.92	10.522
	BMI	48	17.26	29.34	20.8290	2.74243
	N valid (as listed)	42	44			

Figure 6. Graph represents the means of Age (years old), Height (cm), Weight (kg), and BMI (kg/m²) of the three groups (NV, AN, and AF).
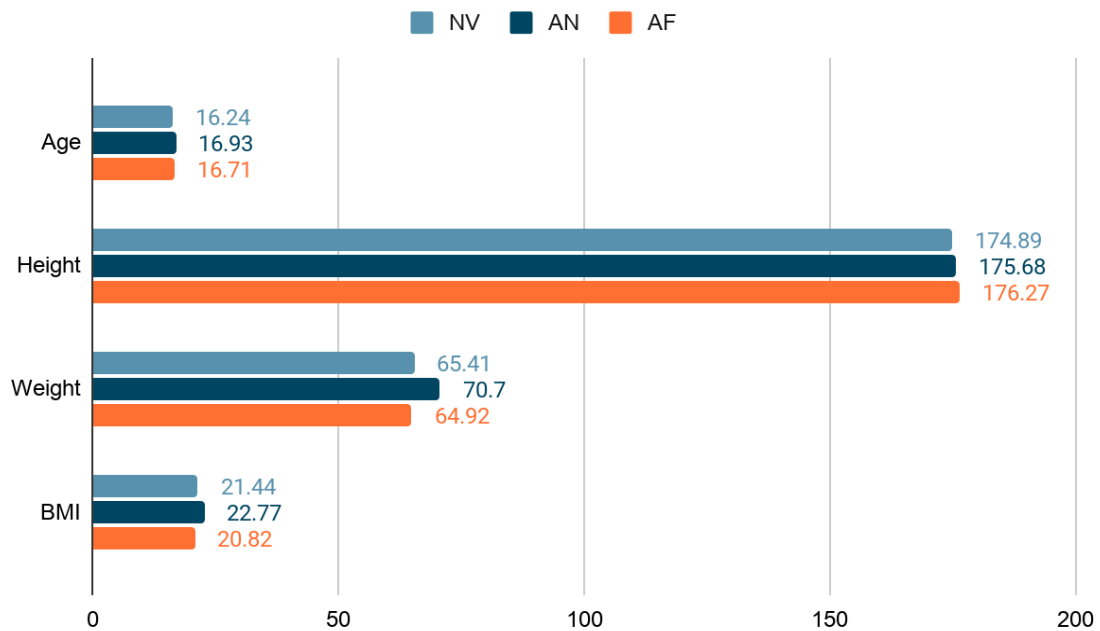
SOURCE: Author.

According to the data analysis, a large percentage of the male parent or tutor of the participants have obtained a university degree (36.6%), followed by a smaller percentage obtaining a high degree 22.8. There are 16.8% of male parents having obtained a secondary education and 1.6% having received primary education. From the sample of participants, a small number of the male parents hold a doctorate (4.9%) and few do not hold a degree (4.1%). (*See Figure 7).*

Figure 7. Graph representing the percentage of education level held of participant's male parent or tutor.
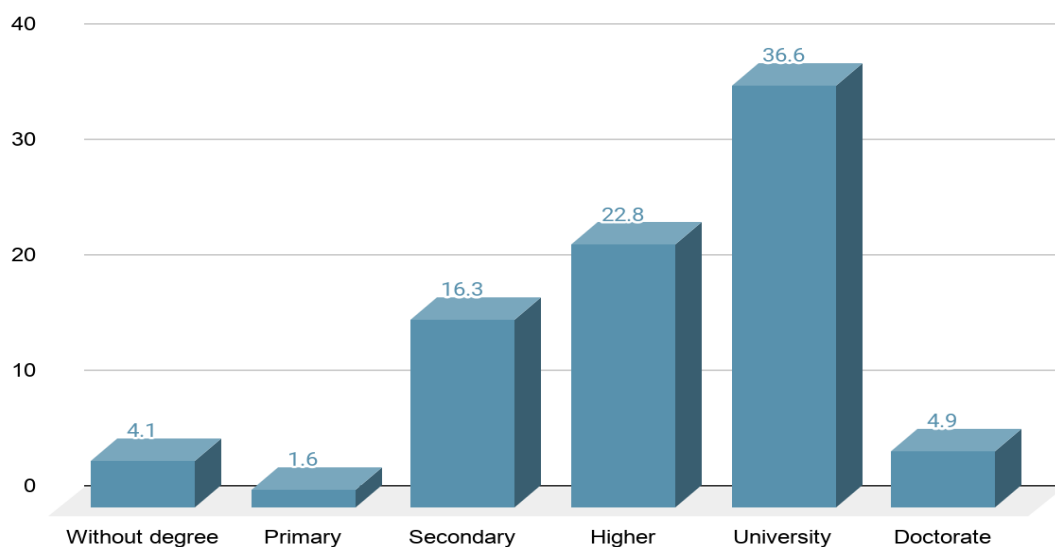
From the sample of participants, the descriptive analysis showed a large percentage of the female parent or tutor have obtained a university degree (41.7%), followed by a smaller percentage having a higher degree (22.0%). Participants' reported that 18.7% of the female parents or tutos have received a secondary education and 3.3% have received primary education. A small portion has received a doctoral degree (5.7%) or without a degree (0.8%). (*See Figure 8).*

Figure 8. Graph representing the percentage of education level held of participants' female parent or tutors.
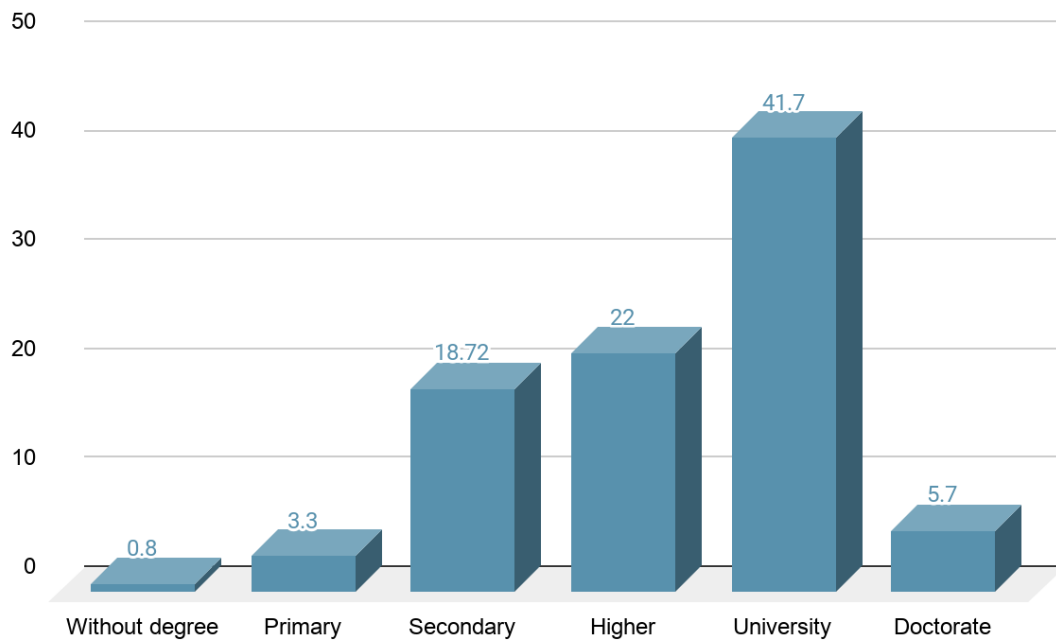
The majority of participants live with both parents (61.8%) while a smaller percentage live with the mother (17.9%). To a lesser degree, only a small portion of the participants live with their father (3.3%). (*See Figure 9).*

Figure 9. Graph representing the percentage of the participants' living situation.

Father
4.0%

Mother
21.6%

Mother

Both parents

Both parents
74.5%
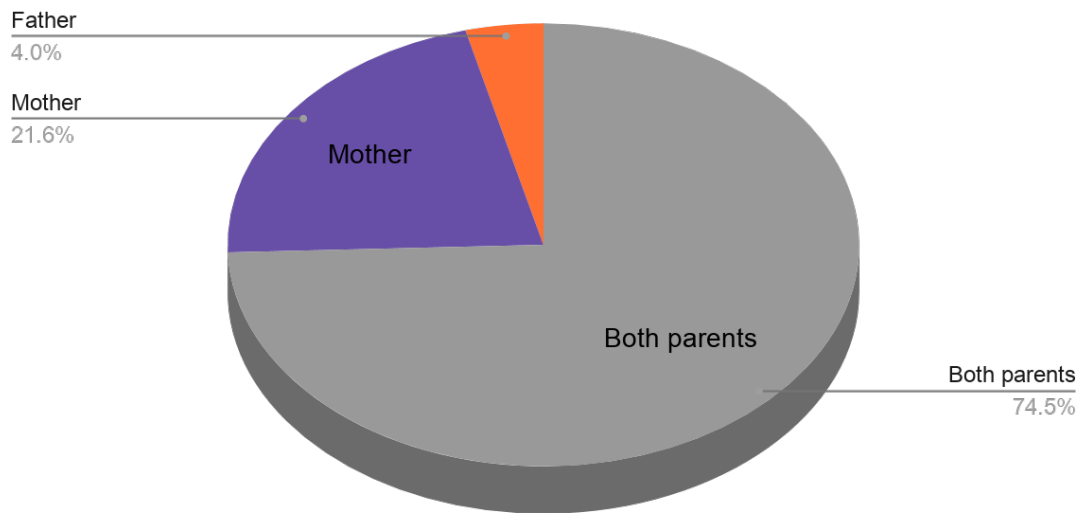
SOURCE. Author.

7.2 Descriptive analysis of participants' social media behavior and engagement

In this section, we will present participant's user-based social media approach. It takes into account how much time is spent on Instagram and at what time participants frequent the platform. It also considers specific behaviours established with the platform such activities performed and content that is followed by participants.

Participants' social media habits revealed that the majority (31.7%) frequent the Instagram application for a duration of 1 to 2 hours a day. Participants are more likely to spend 11 to 30 mins (23.6%) than spending 31 to 60 mins (18.7%) on Instagram. To a lesser extent, participants will connect to Instagram for a duration of 10 minutes or less (14.6%). A few participants will connect to the platform for more than 2 hours (8.9%). (*See Figure 10).*

Figure 10. Duration of time spent on Instagram by the participants.
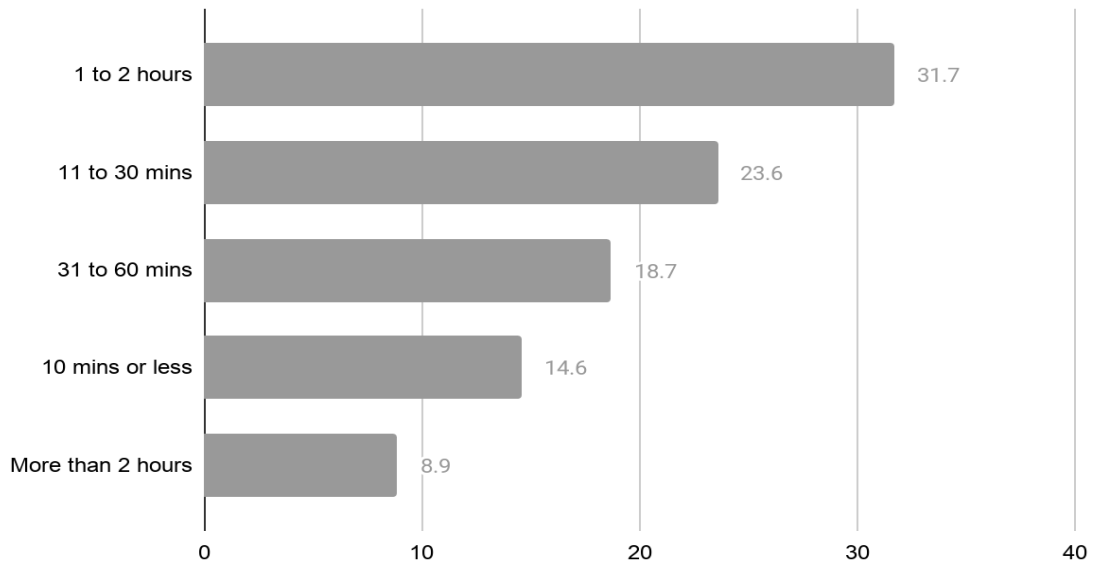
SOURCE: Author.

More than half (52.8) connect to Instagram during the afternoon, possibly after school hours. Almost a quarter of the participants engage with the platform at night (24.4). Participants are less likely to open Instagram at noon (12.2) or during morning hours (10.6). *(See Figure 11).*

Figure 11. Time of day participants frequent Instagram.
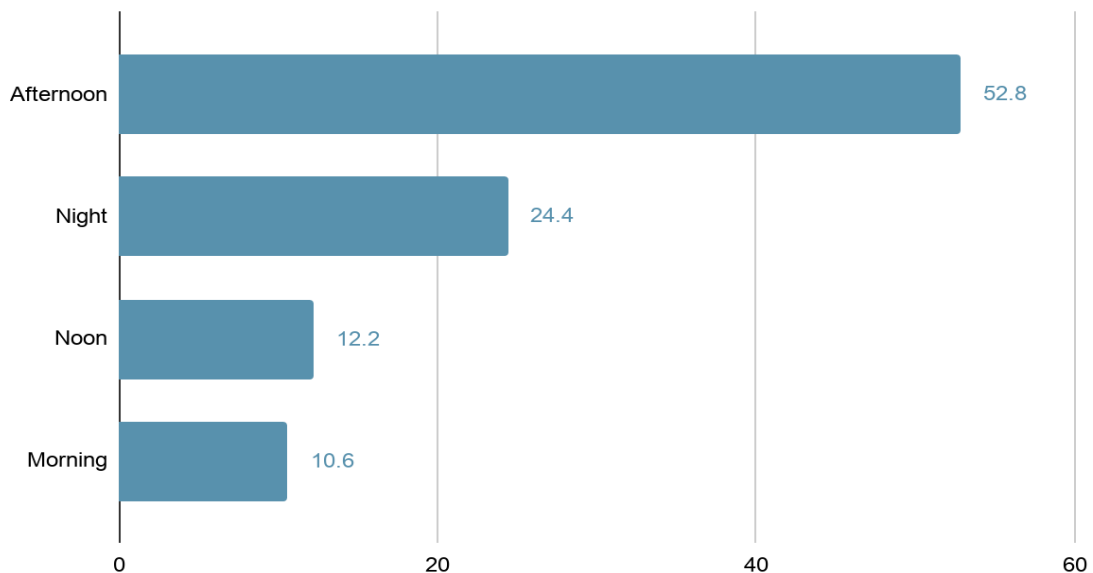
SOURCE: Author.

In terms of engagement with the Instagram application, participants are least likely to post content on Instagram, either publish photos (16.3) or share stories (26). The majority of the participants connect to Instagram to 'see what appears' (79.7) and 'look at photos'

(65). Less than half of the participants will give 'likes' (40.7) and a small portion of the participants will leave comments on posts (21.3). *(See Figure 12).*

Figure 12. Participants' social media habits on Instagram.
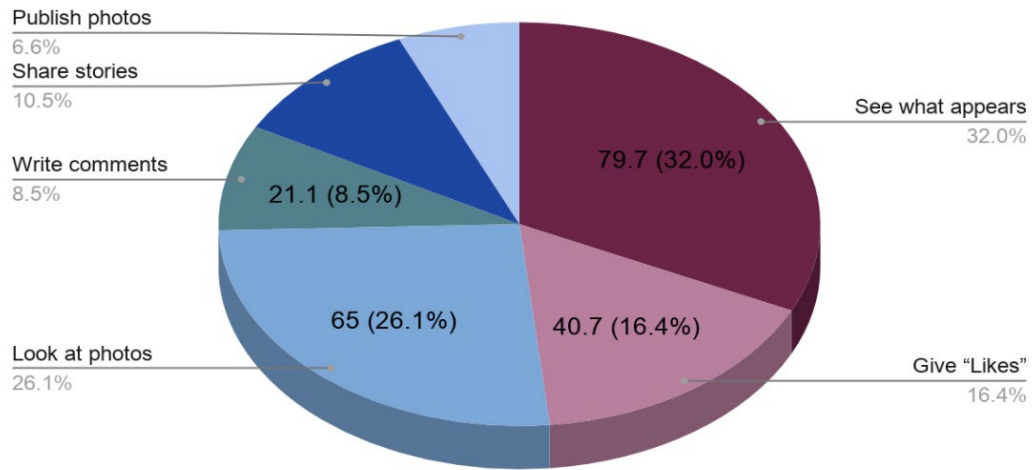
Source: Author.

Regarding the type of Instagram accounts followed by the participants, the dominant type was Humor and Memes (75.6), followed by Sports (67.5) and Family & friends (67.5). A large portion of the participants followed Celebrities (43.1) and Influencers & models (43.1). To a lesser extent, Instagram accounts of Athletes (35.8), Music (33.3), Animals (22), Food (22), Art (21.1), Travel (17.9), and Nature (16.3) were followed. The least type of Instagram account followed was Bodybuilding (6.5). *(See Figure 13).*

Figure 13. Type of Instagram accounts followed by participants.
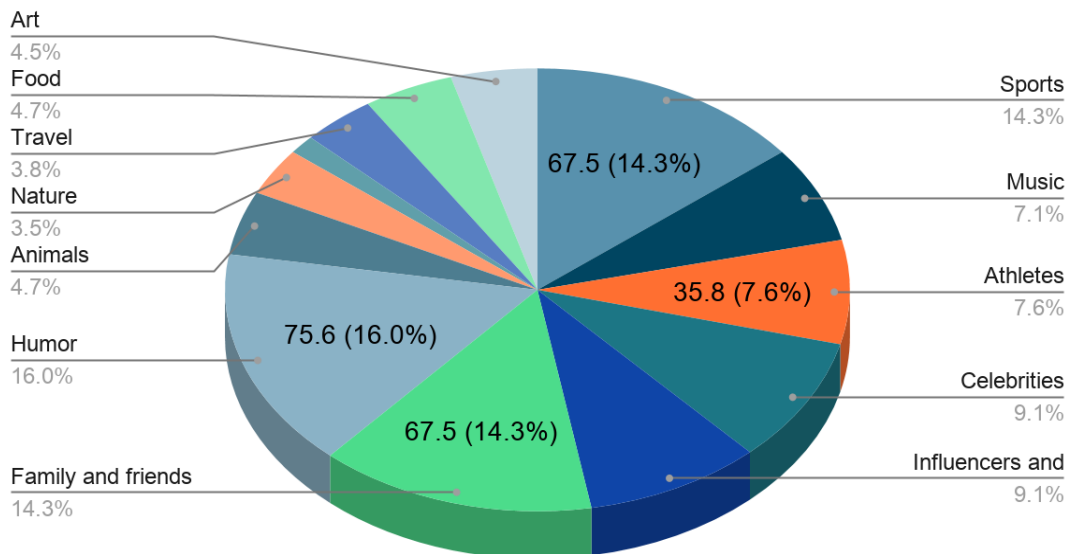
SOURCE: Author

7.3 Findings on hypotheses

In this section, we will report on the findings of the hypothesis. In order to test the hypothesis that variant social media exposure (Naturalistic Viewing; NV, Appearance-Neutral; AN, and Appearance-Focused; AF) had an effect on Body Image related concerns; Drive for Muscularity, Body Esteem, and Appearance Comparison, a between-group univariate analyses of variance (ANOVA) test on SPSS was conducted.

It was hypothesized that (**H1**) brief exposure to Instagram in Naturalistic Viewing would lead to an increase in Drive for Muscularity and a decrease in Body Esteem than exposure to an Appearance-Neutral control account.

Secondly, it was hypothesized (**H2**) that exposure to idealized male bodies on Instagram in Appearance Focused experimental groups would lead to an increase in Drive for Muscularity and a decrease in Esteem that would lead to exposure to an Appearance-Neutral control group.

Finally, it was hypothesized that Upward appearance comparison tendency will increase the groups of Naturalistic Viewing and the Appearance-Focused experimental group than the Appearance-Neutral control group (**H3**).

The data obtained from participants among the three control and experimental groups were entered into the SPSS software. Values for the Likert scale of each scale (Drive for Muscularity scale. Body Esteem Scale-R and Appearance Comparison) were coded accordingly. E.g. 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate the mean of each group. ANOVA test was used to calculate the within-group variation and between-group variation and the standard deviation. F-ratio, degrees of freedom, and significance were calculated for each hypothesis. The null hypothesis suggests that there will not be a statistical significance in the means among the three groups (NV;$\mu 1$, AN; $\mu 2$, and AF; $\mu 3$). If H0=$\mu 1 = \mu 2 = \mu 3$ and $p > 0.05$ then we fail to reject the null hypothesis. If we reject the null hypothesis then results must indicate H= at least one of the means is different.

H1	There will be an increase of Drive for Muscularity in the Naturalistic Viewing and Appearance Focus groups and there will not be an increase in the Appearance Neutral group.

Following the instructions of the measurement instrument, the scales were recorded with reverse-direction scoring (1=6,2=5,3=4,4=3,5=2,6=1). The mean and standard deviation of the total score of the Drive for Muscularity. *See Table 2.* The subscales which are Muscle Development Behaviors and Muscularity-Oriented Body Image Attitude were calculated according to the items listed in the instruction of the measurement instrument. *(See Table 11).*

Table 11. Mean (SD) rating for post-exposure measures by groups

	Naturalistic Viewing	Appearance Neutral	Appearance Focused
Total Score	2.29(.79)	2.4(.97)	2.44(.96)
DMS Behavior	2.05(.95)	2.15(.98)	2.06(1.08)
DMS Attitude	2.69(1.08)	2.78(1.29)	2.97(1.23)

Statistical significance for the Drive for Muscularity scale among the three groups (NV, AN, and AF) was not found. There was no statistical significance calculated among the participants of the three groups in the total of Drive for Muscularity scale $F(2,120)=0.32$, $p=0.73$ (*See Table 12*).

Statistical significance was not found among the participants in the DM subscale Muscularity-related Attitudes, $F(2,120)=0.14$, $p=0.87$. Statistical significance was not found in the second subscale, Muscularity-Oriented Behaviour, $F(2,120)= 0.66$, $p=0.52$.

We observe that statistical significance was not found ($p < .05$) among the groups. Therefore, contrary to H1, brief exposure to Naturalistic Viewing or Appearance-Focused did not impact Drive for Muscularity. *(See Figure 15).*

Table 12. ANOVA test for variance among three control and experimental groups for DMS.

		Sum of squares	df	Square Mean	F	Sig.
DMS TOTAL	Intergroup	524	2	262	.319	**,727**
	Intragroup	98.360	120	820		
	Total	98.884	122			
Subscale 1	Intergroup	, 248	2	,124	.136	**,873**
	Intragroup	109.167	120	910		
	Total	109.415	122			
Subscale 2	Intergroup	1,880	2	940	.661	**,518**
	Intragroup	170.787	120	1,423		
	Total	172.667	122			

Subscale 1: Muscle Development Behaviour
Subscale 2: Muscularity Oriented Body Image Attitude.
Figure 14. Mean (SD) of DMS and subscales for groups: NV, AN, and AF.
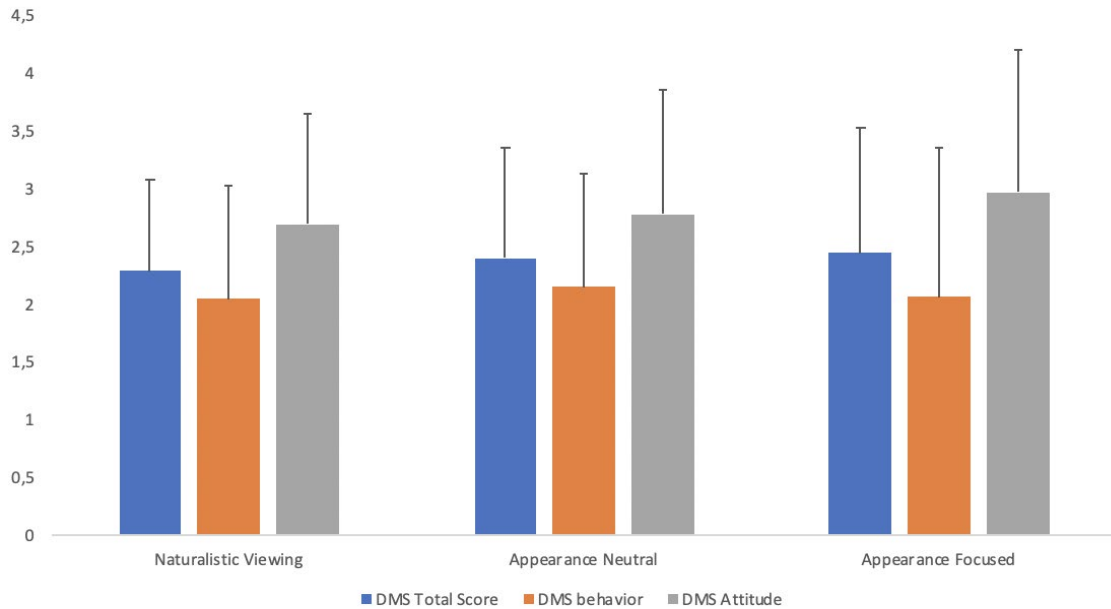
SOURCE: Author.

Result (1)(1
Statistical significance in the Drive for Muscularity Scale and subscales (Behaviour & Attitude) among the three groups (NV, AN, and AF) was not found. There was no difference detected among the groups who were subjected to idealized body images or neutral images in the DMS. The Appearance-Focused group did not report on an increase in Drive for Muscularity when compared with the appearance-neutral group.

H2	Exposure to idealized male body images on Instagram in the Appearance Focused experimental group would lead to a decrease in Body Esteem than the exposure to the Appearance-Neutral control groups and the group of Naturalistic Viewing.

According to the measurement instrument of the Body Esteem Scale, only the subscales can be calculated according to the gender of the participants. Based on the items listed in the instructions, the mean and standard deviation of the subscales (Sexual Attractiveness, Upper-strength, and Physical condition) were calculated. (*See Table 13*).

Table 13. Mean (SD) rating for post-exposure measures by groups

	Naturalistic Viewing	Appearance-Neutral	Appearance-Focused
Sexual attractiveness	3.92(.63)	3.53(.60)	3.74(.81)
Upper-body strength	3.66(.78)	3.43(.79)	3.51(.83)
Physical condition	3.87(.63)	3.59(.61)	3.61(.85)

Contrary to **H2**, statistical significance among the three groups (NV, AN, and AF) was not found F(2,120)=2.62, p=0.08. Participants among the three groups did not differ in the first subscale; Sexual Attractiveness F(2,120)=2.75, p=0.07. Statistical significance was not found in the second subscale; Muscle Strength F(2,120)=2.5, p=0.09. Statistical significance was not found in the third subscale; Physical condition F(2,120)=1.97, p=0.14. We observe that statistical variance was not found ($p < .05$) among the groups. Therefore, we accept the null-hypothesis. Brief exposure to Instagram (NV) or idealized body images on Instagram (AF) did not impact Body-Esteem among adolescent males in comparison to Appearance-Neutral images (AN). *(See Table 14 & Figure 14).*

Table 14. ANOVA test for variance among three control and experimental groups-BES.

		Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
BES-R TOTAL	Between Groups	1675.539	2	837.769	2.618	**.077**
	Within Groups	38397.648	120	319.980		
	Total	40073.187	122			
Subscale 1	Between Groups	174.202	2,	87.101	2.744	**.068**
	Within Groups	3809.278	120	31.744		
	Total	3983.480	122			
Subscale 2	Between Groups	87.030	2	43.515	2.500,	**.086**
	Within Groups	2088.645	120	17.405		
	Total	2175.675	122			
Subscale 3	Between Groups	203.268	2	101.634	1.967	**.144**
	Within Groups	6200.699	120	51.672		

| | Total | 6403.967 | 122 |

Subscale 1: Sexual Attractiveness; Subscale 2: Upper-body Strength; Subscale 3: Physical condition

Figure 15. Mean (SD) of Body Esteem subscales for groups: NV, AN, and AF.
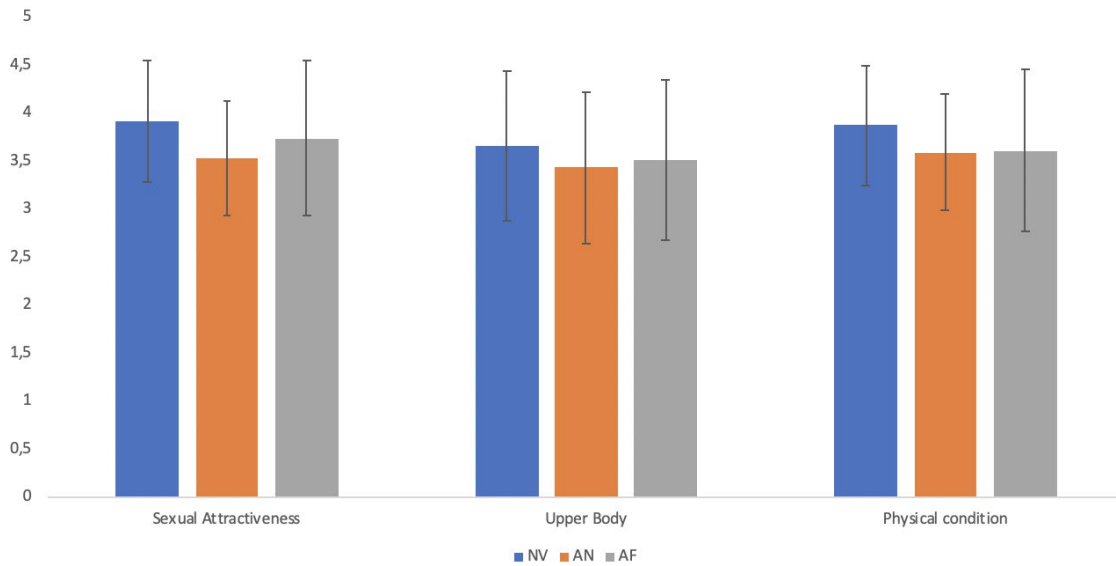
Result (1)(1

Statistical significance in the Body Esteem subscales (Sexual Attractiveness, Upper-body, and Physical Condition) among the three groups (NV, AN, and AF) was not found. Being subjected to idealized body images did not decrease body esteem in the Appearance Focused when compared with the group who used Instagram habitually (Naturalistic Viewing) or participants who were subjected to neutral images.

| **H3** | Upward appearance comparison tendency will increase the groups of Naturalistic Viewing and the Appearance-Focused experimental group than the Appearance-Neutral control group. |

The mean and standard deviation of Upwards appearance comparison and Downwards appearance comparison was separately calculated for each group. (*See Table 15*)

Table 15. Mean (SD) rating for post-exposure measures by groups

	Naturalistic Viewing	Appearance-Neutral	Appearance-Focused
Upward Comparison	2.47(1.05)	2.4(.94)	2.76(1.02)

Downward Comparison	2.32(1.23)	2.11(.9)	2.47(1.11)

Contrary to **H3**, participants in each group containing variant exposure to Instagram (NV, AN, and AF) did not differ in Upwards appearance comparison, $F(2,120)=1.61$, $p=0.20$. The difference among the three groups in the Downwards appearance comparison was not significant, $F(2,120)=0.89$, $p=0.41$. In total, we observe that statistical significance across the three groups was not found ($p < .05$) and accept the null hypothesis. *(See Table 16).*

Table 16. ANOVA test for variance among three control and experimental groups for ACS.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
ACS_UPWARD	Between Groups	3.224	2	1.612	1.612	**.204**
	Within Groups	120.031	120	1.000		
	Total	123.255	122			
ACS_DOWN-WARD	Between Groups	2.161	2	1.081	.893	**.412**
	Within Groups	145.121	120	1.209		
	Total	147.282	122			

Upward: Comparing "up" (with more attractive people)
Downward: Comparing "down" (with people less attractive)

Figure 16. Mean (SD) of Upwards and Downward Appearance comparison for groups; NV, AN, and AF.
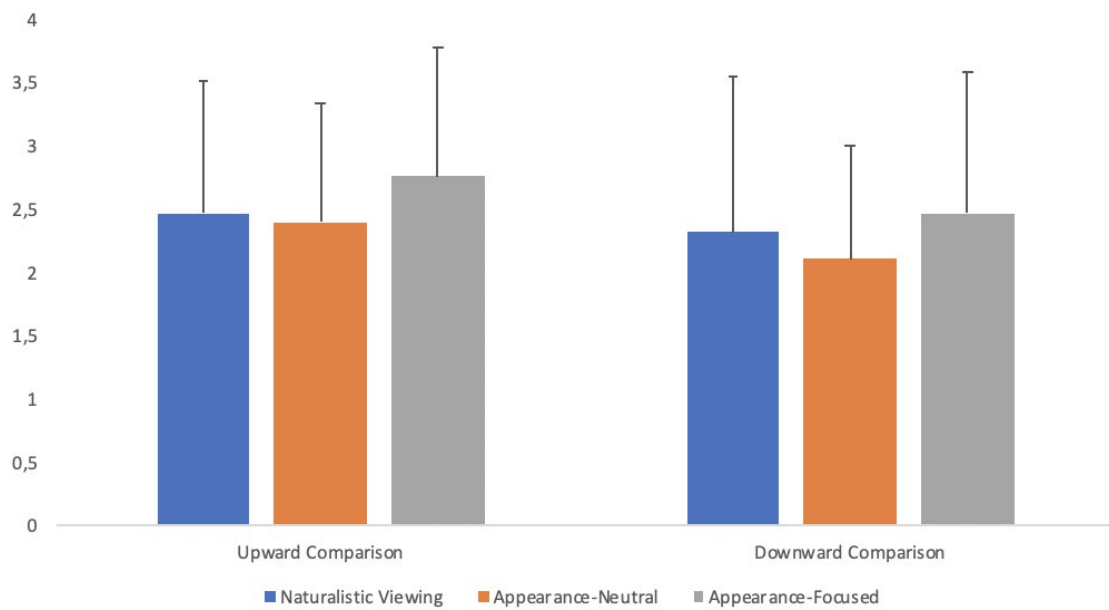
SOURCE: Author.

Result (1)(1
There was no difference among the three groups (NV, AN, and AF). Being subjected to idealized body images did not increase Upwards Appearance Comparison in the Appearance Focused when compared with the group who used Instagram habitually (Naturalistic Viewing) or participants who were subjected to neutral images (Appearance Neutral).

Chapter 8

DISCUSSION

This chapter of the dissertation aims to provide the reader with a discussion on findings. The discussion on the findings is based on the results of the research in relation to the hypotheses that were established. In total, there were three main hypotheses that were established. We will elaborate on the hypothesis and findings in greater detail in the first section of the chapter. Furthermore, we aim to contextualize the significance of the finding in terms of the large scope of body image research. The second section elaborates on propositions and recommendations for the future research on male body image. The propositions are based on analysis made from the readings done for the literature review as well as the procedure and findings from the empirical side of the research.

In the following section, we will provide an interpretation of the findings of the research. We will contextualize the findings and describe the significance of their meanings in terms of a larger scheme of research on body image. Prior to the discussion of findings, we provide a short overview of the main aim of the research, specific objective, and method.

Throughout the literature review, we have established three main points:
(1)   There is an increase in media imagery that perpetuate the idealized male body, in particular the muscle-ideal.
(2)   Adolescent males are feeling pressure to become more muscular and consequently experiencing higher levels of body image dissatisfaction.
(3)   Social media is playing an integral role in mediating this ideal.

In the state of the art, we examined related empirical and qualitative and identified a gap in body image research which consisted of:

(1)	Lack of body image research investigates the male demographic, in particular adolescent males.
(2)	Lack of experimental research identifying the causal relationship between media and body image.
(3)	Lack of contemporary research investigating the effects of social media.

As such, we establish the main aim of the research (RA) which is to investigate the effects of exposure of varying Instagram uses on body image-related concerns in adolescent males using an in-between experimental method. There were three specific objectives (SO):

(1) to investigate the immediate effect of exposure to idealized images of Instagram on Drive for Muscularity, Body Esteem, and Appearance comparison on adolescent males,
(2) to investigate the effect of habitual usage of Instagram on Drive for Muscularity (DM), Body Esteem scale (BES), and Appearance comparison tendency (ACT) on adolescents males.
(3) Moderate any possible differences associated with exposure to neutral images found on Instagram on **Drive for Muscularity, Body Esteem, and Appearance comparison** on adolescent males.

8.1 Discussion on findings

The research design was largely inspired by the research performed on social media and social comparison by Fardouly et al. (2015). Using an in-between experimental method, n=123 male participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions on Instagram for a period of 10 minutes: their own Instagram account (Naturalistic Viewing, NV; n=44), an artistic control account (Appearance-Neutral, AN ; n=30), or a bodybuilding and fitness account (Appearance-Focused, AF; n=49). Following the social media exposure which was set at 10 minutes, the participants were blocked by completing measures on Drive for Muscularity (DM), Body Esteem Scale (BES), and Appearance Comparison Tendency (ACT).

From the data collected, we find there is a homogeneous distribution of the 4 variables (age, height, weight and BMI) among the 3 groups (NV, AN and AF). The even distribution of the variables across the control and experimental groups serve as an adequate base to conduct the experiment and test the hypothesis. The general description of the sample of the participants revealed a mean age of 16.6 years old. The mean height across the sample is reported at 175.6 cm and mean weight at 67 kg. The mean BMI across the three groups is reported at 21.67 kg/m2. We find the above characteristics from the participants of the sample to be in-line with the estimated average height and weight of a 16-year old male according to the Disable world Journal (2017).

Results from socio-demographic questions revealed that a large percentage of the male parent or tutor of the participants have received a university degree and a small percentage have either a primary degree or do not have a degree. Similarly, the results revealed a significantly larger percentage of the female parent or tutor have received a university education while a minimal percentage of less than 1% of the sample do not hold a degree. O'Dea and Caputi (2001) performed a large scale study on over 1000 participants to investigate the relationship between socio-economic status and body image and weight control habits for children and adolescents between the age of 6 to 19-years-old. In this

case, we understand socioeconomic status (SES) encompasses a set of quality characteristics which may define a particular lifestyle. It includes educational, financial income among other factors. The study found that participants who pertain to a low SES are more likely to skip breakfast, be too thin or weight, engage in weight-gain behaviour. They are also less likely to receive advice regarding a healthy approach to food intake.

Another study on young adolescents in primary school found there was no significant relationship between education level of parents and levels of body dissatisfaction (Lartiff, Muhamad and Rahman 2018). In reference to results of the study, the authors suggest that socioeconomic status did not have an influence on body image distortion. Hence, it could be possible that the education level of the parents or tutor participants, who on average is a university graduate, may act as a barrier against negative body image for the adolescent. Another possibility is that the socioeconomic status of the participants may not have an influence on body image. More research is needed to assess the relationship between educational level, socio-economic status and body image.

In terms of participants' social media diet and behaviour, we found a greater tendency among participants to connect to Instagram for 1 to 2. This is consistent with statistics suggesting that social media consumers spend an average of 2 hours on social media (Statistics 2021). Our findings suggest that the majority of participants, over 50%, login to Instagram in the afternoon. In reference to this finding, we postulate a probability where participants connect to social media after school hours.

In terms of social media behaviour, participants are more likely to engage in low-engagement or passive behaviour on social media where the majority of participants give 'likes', look at images or check for updates. A small percentage of participants in high-engagement behaviour which includes sharing stories, upload images and posting comments. A qualitative research has demonstrated that male participants whose social media behaviour pertains to low-engagement such as simply viewing images are more resistant to internalizing body image ideals when compared to male participants who engage in high-engagement behaviour such as posting images and sharing comments (Chatzopoulou, Shannon, and Dogruyol 2020). The study found that high-engagement social media users are more likely to experience pressure to conform to the ideal male body.

As Figure 17. demonstrates, nearly three quarters of the participants pertain to low-engagement social media behaviour. This may serve as a justification for why exposure to idealized male bodies on Instagram did not have a significant impact on the participants. In the following section, we will discuss the results and interpretation of the findings.

Figure 17. Social media habits on Instagram.
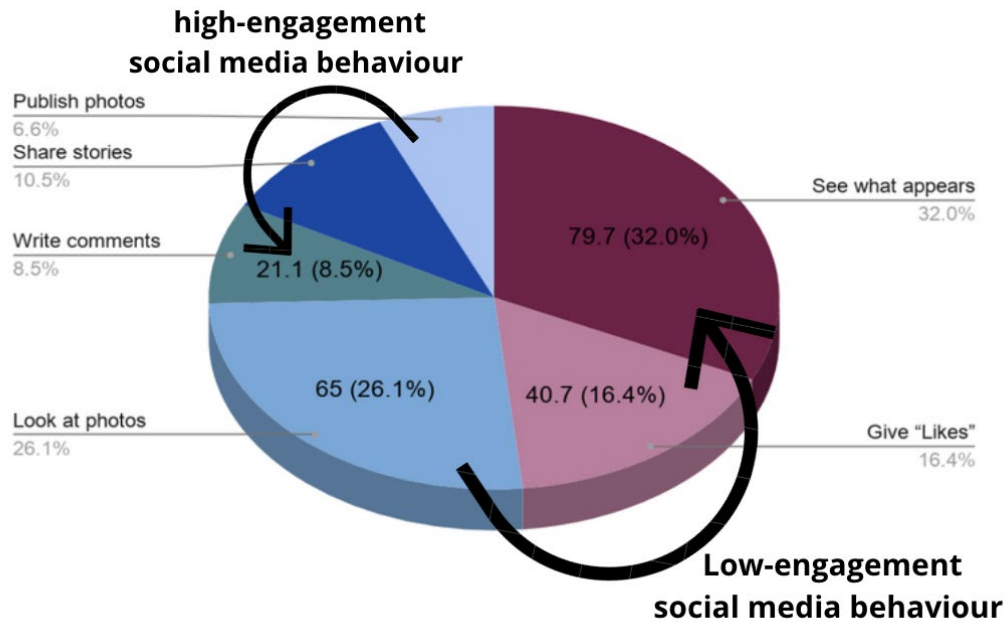
SOURCE: Author.

8.2 Findings on Hypothesis

In the Methods chapter, we described experimental research as a method in research which seeks to explain the causal relationship between two or more variables using control and experimental groups (Mcleod 2012). The causal relationship between the variables is speculated through the establishment of a hypothesis or hypotheses.

Based on the data analysis upon the completion of the experiment, the researcher may reject the null hypothesis and accept an alternative hypothesis or fail to reject the null hypothesis. Null hypothesis testing is a formal method in statistics in which the researcher first accepts the null hypothesis to be true and based on the results of the experiment determines to reject or fail to reject it. Rejecting the null hypothesis suggests that the results indicate a significant difference in at least one of the means between the control and experimental groups. Failing to reject the null hypothesis indicates that a statistically significant difference was not found among the groups.

As reported in the Results section, we have not detected a statistically significant difference among the three control and experiment groups (AF, AN, and NV). Hence, in reference to the findings from the research, we fail to reject the null-hypothesis on the three accounts of the hypotheses. According to standard scientific approaches, failure to reject the null-hypothesis does not imply that the experiment itself has failed (Pechenik 1987) . Therefore, this section will aim to provide a discussion of the findings of the hypotheses, relevant and related results from different studies, possible flaws and explanations in experimental research and suggestions for future research.

8.2.1 Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis predicted that there will be an increase of Drive for Muscularity in the Naturalistic Viewing (NV) and Appearance Focus (AF) groups and there will not be an increase in the Appearance Neutral (AN) group.

The results were calculated using statistical variance through the software SPSS. They indicated that statistical significance for the drive for muscularity scale in the first hypothesis was not found. Similarly, statistical significance for the two subscales which measure DMS Behavior and DMS attitude was not found. We are able to contextualize these findings by drawing comparisons with previous research. The result from the first finding is different and similar to previous research. An experimental study by Fanjul Peyró and González-Oñate (2011) found that post-exposure, adolescent male participants who viewed idealized body images expressed greater internalization of body cult ideals and the association of success with the male body when contrasted with the control. Even though the state measures used in the study are not similar to tools used in the present study, it provides evidence that exposure to media has an effect in areas associated with body images among males.

A recent study used an experimental method to examine the effects of Instagram on (adult) male participants on body satisfaction, muscular ideal internalization, and social comparison (Tiggemann and Anderberg 2020). The study hypothesized that exposure to male models in fashion imagery as well as bare-chested imagery would lead to greater levels of body dissatisfaction. The results indicated that only exposure to bare-chested male models led to greater body dissatisfaction. Furthermore, it found that the effects were not moderated by muscular-ideal internalization. In this case, we report that our findings are in line with similar research i.e. investigating the effects of Instagram on males as well as similar tools which measure attitudes towards muscularity. The study was suggested to be one of the first experimental studies to examine the relationship between Instagram and body image among adolescent males. The research design of this study which divides a sample into three control and experimental groups in which the participants are exposed to idealized images and then blocked on state measure is very similar to the research design and method used in this study.

A study published this year examined the influence of appearance focused images on Instagram on both males and females (Casale et al. 2021). The study used an experimental method of exposing 54 young non-Instagram users to either appearance focused real images on Images or neutral images over the duration of one week. The results indicated that exposure to appearance focused images in the experiment led to a greater decrease in body dissatisfaction among women. Among the male participants, the study did not find a significant impact upon exposure to appearance focused image on muscular dissatisfaction, fat dissatisfaction, and body image investment. In this sense, we report that the first finding from the present study is consistent with contemporary research .

Similarly, we report that our findings are similar to another experimental research (Russello 2009). In concurrence with previous studies, the research suggests that gender plays a significant role in terms of body image where males experience greater body satisfaction and are less likely to internalize media ideals. The results, from the research, found that exposure to conventional standards of male physical attractiveness, the muscular ideal, did not lead to a decrease in body dissatisfaction, self-esteem, or the internalization of societal body standards. In the discussion, the author suggests that

"media was not as important an influence on men as it was on women" and that "men did not internalize socio-cultural ideals as much as women." (Russello 2009, 10).

We disagree with the above proposition and offer an alternative possibility as to why male participants consistently score lower than females in experimental body image research. We suggest that a possible justification for why there have been inconsistent findings within experimental body image research is not because media is not as impactful on males as it is on females, nor that males have a tendency to not internalize socio-cultural ideals. We propose that males do experience media pressure and have reported on the homogenized nature of the male ideal as it is depicted in media. In several qualitative studies, males participants, both adolescents and adults, have described the ideal male body as having the mesomorph shape with a highly muscular chest and torso (Baker, Allen, and Qiao 2015; (Grogan and Richards 2002; Hargreaves and Tiggemann 2006).

This description by regular male individuals shows that they are able to identify socio-cultural standards of male physical attractiveness. Moreover, qualitative studies have shown that males believe physical attractiveness is essential in attracting a potential partner, and gaining muscle is a signifier for success and achievement (Baker, Allen, and Qiao 2015). Hence, we deduce that a) males as media consumers are able to identify the image media presents as the ideal muscular male body and b) to an extent have internalized the codification of the muscular male body with romantic and sexual success, power, and aggression often portrayed in media. However, where the discrepancy lies is in the reporting of the internalization of such ideas through the state measure. As such, we propose that the tools and scales used to measure emotional disturbances as well as body image disturbances need to be modified. Further explanation will be provided in the following section on propositions for future research.

Much of body image research relies on tools that use self-reported data, in particular, because body image is situated within the field of psychology. Self-reported data describing the tool, test, measurement, or questionnaire depends on the individual's own assessment of their behavior and attitudes (Salters-Pedneault 2020). In body image research, self-reported data is organized through a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree) and participants are required to answer statements in response to their body image-related behavior and attitude. Another example of a scale used in the present study is the Appearance comparison tendency scale (ACTS) where participants score the frequency at which they engage in physical and appearance comparison.

There are some advantages and disadvantages to self-report questionnaires. One of the main advantages of self-report questionnaires is its feasibility as it is inexpensive and data can be collected in a relatively quick manner. Moreover, self-reported data allows participants to retrain anonymity and discretion through the research process in regards to sensitive information (Salters-Pedneault 2020). One major disadvantage of self-report questionnaires is that they are based on people reporting on their own experiences, behaviors, and attitudes. This may produce inaccurate results due to the proximity and subjectivity of the participants. As such self-report questionnaires are subject to bias in terms of the ability to be honest and introspective (Salters-Pedneault 2020).

We find this potentially problematic when considering the age bracket of the participants of the research. The participants, being adolescents, perhaps not adequately developed

tools and mechanisms to process emotions and levels of introspectivity at a fully matured level, especially considering the physical changes they are going through during this time. Moreover, inaccuracy in self-reporting on issues regarding body image is more probable given the likelihood in males underestimating the severity of their symptoms. As indicated in the above section, adult males are reluctant to seek treatment when in physical pain.

Moreover, adult males are particularly hesitant to seek mental help. According to the National Institute of Mental Health (2020), men are much less likely to acknowledge, report possible symptoms of depression or seek treatment and judge symptoms of depression as less severe than it actually is. Men are also more likely to engage in "masked depression" or acting out, often highlighted by abuse of alcohol and drugs, impulsivity, irritability and aggression (Whitley 2007). Finally, there is a disconnect between low rates of depression diagnosis and high rates of suicide in men where men make up around 75% of completed suicides (Simon-Davies 2019). This is evidence that "conventional measures of depression may be missing the mark when it comes to identifying male cases of depression" (Whitley 2017, para. 12.)

In the same line, we propose that conventional means used to measure body image disturbances among the male demographic, which as previous research has suggested earlier may lead to depression, may similarly be missing the mark. Scholars have pointed to the "existence of a social prohibition" among boys against admitting to body dissatisfaction. (Hargreaves and Tiggemann 2006, 569). As articulated previously, extensive research on female body image has made it possible for its discussion to become prevalent in mainstream society by which women's expression of bodily dissatisfaction has become normative (Hargreaves and Tiggemann 2006). Male body image or concerns with physical appearance remains a 'social taboo' and an issue by adult and adolescent males should not be discussed (Hargreaves and Tiggemann 2006). Moreover, qualitative research on both adult and adolescent males showed that they held the belief that media messages do not impact them. As if to suggest that media messages only impact women and girls (Grogan and Richards 2002; Hargreaves and Tiggemann 2006).

When it comes to mental and physical disturbance or disturbances with body image, in many cases those issues overlap, there remains a societal bias against males. The societal bias is created out of patriarchal norms which emphasizes strength, power and toughness. Any expression of emotional weakness or concerns with appearance is perceived as 'feminized'. As such, some males will attempt to distance themselves from such stances. Hence, we deduce that disadvantages in self-reported data are particularly highlighted with the field of male body image as research has shown that males are reluctant to discuss these issues, might underreport the system or believe they are outside the sphere of media influence. Among adolescent males, we question the ability to engage in high levels of introspection that may bypass this form of gender socialization.

8.2.2 Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis predicted that exposure to idealized male body images on Instagram in the Appearance Focused experimental group would lead to a decrease in Body Esteem than the exposure to the Appearance-Neutral control groups and the group of Naturalistic Viewing.

The results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences among the groups post-exposure. This was an unexpected finding as an amenable sum of previous research among the female demographic as demonstrated a decrease in levels of body esteem and body dissatisfaction upon viewing idealized body images. Similarly, some previous experimental studies have found that viewing the muscular ideal has an negative effect on body image. For example, the study mentioned earlier found a decrease in body dissatisfaction among the experimental group that was exposed to bare-chest male models (Tiggemann and Anderberg 2020).

Another study found that exposure to male idealized body image results in a small but significant decrease in body dissatisfaction when compared to the control group (Bond 2008). Other experimental studies did not find statistical significant difference between the groups upon testing for body-image related constructs post-exposure to media (Kalodner 1997; Brinder 2010). However, the media stimuli used in these studies did not adhere to the muscle ideal. The idealized male body images used depicted thin male bodies which may explain the lack of statistical significance when testing for statistical variance among the control and experimental groups. A meta-analysis on male body images suggested that while images containing any level of muscularity may stimulate body image disturbance and appearance comparisons, the impact of media exposure may not impact negatively on all self image constructs (Barlett, Vowels and Saucier 2008). This may serve as the reason as to why exposure to idealized image did not image body-esteem level among the control and experimental groups in the present study. For example, a study performed an in-between experimental method testing the impact of exposure to ideal physical images and neutral images. It found a significant difference when testing for Body Esteem Scale (BES), which is the tool used in the present study. However the study did not find a significant difference when testing for State Self-Esteem Scale (SSES; Heatherton & Polivy, 1991) (Hobza et al 2007).

To contextualize the findings on hypothesis 2 in terms of the larger scope of body image, we propose two possible postulations. As inferred to previous, the first postulation suggests the possibility that idealized male body image may not have a significant impact on all body image constructs such as body esteem which was the measurement used in the study (Barlett, Vowels and Saucier 2008). The second postulation lies in the theoretical construction of male body image which is highly dependent on previous literature that has theorized female body image (Hargreaves and Tiggemann 2006). Experimental research uses the same logic and method to investigate on male body image as the method implored to investigate female body image which uses exposure to idealized images as media stimuli. As mentioned in the earlier paragraph, some previous experimental researches have used images of thin-male models as a form of media stimuli to text for its effect on male body image. This is an example of copying the exact method used to investigate female body image on the male demographic. It is then expected that the experiment did not find a significant difference in the results because the idealized male body is not thin but in fact muscular.

Similarly we propose the possibility that contemporary forms of media stimuli, which are idealized male body images, used in experimental research in male body image may need reconsideration. Hence, in order to identify the causal relationship between media exposure and body image among males, there needs to be an alternative approach to the media stimuli. In specific, we suggest including various versions of the idealized male body in reference to different forms of capital identified in hegemonic masculinity. It is

a manner to apply experimental research by incorporating findings identified from previous qualitative studies.

From qualitative studies, researchers have identified that male participants identified the muscular male bodies with a set of cultural signifiers of hegemonic masculinity such as aggression and violence, sexual success, romantic success, and financial status. A homogeneous consensus among male participants in qualitative studies linked physical attractiveness with the possibility of attracting potential romantic partners. The cultural signifiers of male physical attractiveness are explicitly expressed through the muscular physique. Hence, we suggest future research on male body image can apply such variations of the muscular physique within experimental groups.

We propose that by applying the proposed experimental method which includes diversifying images and creating more experimental groups, researchers will be able to accurately detect the specific signifiers in media imagery that creates an impact on male body image. In specific, we propose this method may assist future research in detecting the causation behind body image dissatisfaction among males. As mentioned previously, body image research has relied heavily on correlational studies which may explain the correlation between two variables, however correlation does not imply causation. Hence, it is necessary to explore male body image within experimental research. In the final section which contains suggestions for future research, we will expand in greater detail on this notion.

8.2.3 Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis predicted that upward appearance comparison tendency will increase the groups of Naturalistic Viewing and the Appearance-Focused experimental group than the Appearance-Neutral control group.

The results of this study indicate that there was no statistically significant relationship between the group post-exposure to social media content. Similar to the first hypothesis, we position the finding as being consistent and variant with previous studies. This finding, however unexpected, was similar to the study on the impact of Instagram on male body image which found that social comparison was not moderated among the control and experimental groups (Tiggemann and Anderberg 2020; Fardouly et al. 2015).

As mentioned earlier, the method used in the study by Tiggemann and Anderberg (2020) which investigated the relationship between Instagram and male body image is similar to the method used in the present. The results from their research found that social comparison was not moderated upon exposure to fashion male models and bare-chested models. The study by Fardouly et al. (2015) has been discussed extensively previously as it has served as the main inspiration for the research design of this study. Another experimental study which investigated the effects of Facebook usage or appearance-neutral images after 20 minutes of exposure on female participants. It did not find an increase in body-image related concerns such as preoccupation with weight and shape among the experimental group that used Facebook. More surprisingly, preoccupation with weight and shape appeared to decrease upon exposure in both the control and experimental group (Mabe, Forney, and Keel 2014). Therefore, we may conclude that this finding is in line with previous and contemporary research.

In a paper analyzing current research and possible future directions of research on social media and body image, co-author of the aforementioned study Fardouly and Vartanian (2016) explain that while appearance comparison may serves as an integral connector between social media and body image, it appears that brief exposure to social media does not have an overall impact on body image. As a conclusion, they suggested that future research needs to continue using experimental methods in order to determine the causal relationship between social media exposure and its most detrimental aspects on body image. They also suggested that future research may examine different social media platforms such as Instagram as well as diversifying the sample to include the male demographic or younger audiences.

Our study has taken these recommendations in consideration while designing the research as it aims to examine the influence of Instagram on body-image related concerns in adolescents males. We found the results of our research inline with previous experimental studies (Kaloder 1997; Barlett, Vowels and Saucier 2008; Fardouly et al 2015; Tiggemann and Anderberg 2020; Casale et al. 2021) where the results did not imply a significant difference between the control group and experimental upon testing for body image state measure after exposure to media stimuli.

According to the paper, experimental research in the field of body image faces challenges as it is particularly difficult to establish a causal relationship in a setting especially where social media is being used as the media stimuli (Fardouly and Vartanian 2016). This is due to the likelihood of subjecting the experiment to extraneous variables a researcher may expect when testing for ecological validity. While the overall findings from the present study suggest that exposure to idealized muscular image did not have an impact on drive for muscularity, body esteem and appearance comparison tendency among adolescent male participants, we do not assume that males are less immune to media pressure when compared to females nor that they do not internalize cultural ideals of beauty and body standards.

In generality scholars and researchers agree that exposure to media images impacts body image among males and females, adolescents and adults in various ways (Fardouly and Vartanian 2016). Media consumers receive information and messages from media in which value, popularity, and status are associated with an ideal body. A wide array of quantitative studies have been able to establish a correlational relationship between media exposure and body image concerns (Barlett, Vowels and Saucier 2008; Grabe, Ward, and Hyde 2008). It appears, however, that experimental studies particularly ones that investigate the role of social media are finding difficulty in identifying the particularity of the social media usage and exposure which makes it detrimental. In the following sections , we provide some concluding thoughts and suggestions for future research.

8.3 Concluding thoughts

In the introduction of this dissertation, we highlighted the necessity for research to investigate the relationship between social media and body image concerns among adolescent males. We demonstrated a rise in media imagery which focuses on the muscle-ideal in idealized male body image. Moreover, the muscle-ideal is becoming increasingly more muscular over the years (Pope et al. 1999). Statistics from across the world show that children and adolescent males are feeling unhappy about their bodies. Moreover, the effects of this dissatisfaction is driving them to engage in habits of overeating and over

exercising (Mond et al. 2014; Schuck, Munsch and Schneider 2018; Nagata et al. 2018; Mitchison et al. 2020).

Results from previous studies have varied, when testing for the effects of this meditation. Some experimental research has detected an increase in preoccupation with physical appearance upon being exposed to idealized media images (Fanjul Peyró and González-Oñate 2011). Some contemporary research on social media, Instagram, have either found partial support for their hypothesis or did not detect a significant impact on male participants (Russello 2009; Tiggemann and Anderberg 2020; Casale et al. 2021). This has led some researchers to conclude that males are less impacted by media imagery than females. Hence, males experience less concerns with physical appearance and consequently body image dissatisfaction (Russello 2009). Such conclusions may not be entirely accurate especially when accounting for experimental studies which did not find a significant relationship between social media exposure and body image.

We propose that males are not immune to pressure from the media. There isn't something innate about being born male that makes them resistant to media messages and just as females, males internalize and cultivate understanding and value from the media presented to them. As an extension of patriarchal standards, males in society have held women who conform to conventional standards of beauty such as the thin-ideal as more attractive (Noone 2016). Moreover, males as a social group have expressed entitlement in policing women's bodies online and in the material world (Mascheroni, Vincent, and Jimenez 2015). Hence, we propose that there are a range of variables which may be adding to the disparity in body image literature by influencing the results among the male demographic.

We point to two main factors which may be influencing male body image research *(See Figure 18)*. The first factor refers to male gender socialization which comprimes the ability to effectively assess the effects of negative body image, among a wider scope of emotional, mental and physical disturbances, in two ways (*see Figure 1*). First, research has demonstrated that males tend to underestimate and under-report a set of emotional and physical symptoms. In fact, statistics have shown that females are 50% more likely to report symptoms of emotional disturbances than males (Kroenke and Spitzer 1998). Such disparity in reporting has led researchers to inaccurately conclude that mental disturbances such as depression are more prevalent in the female demographic when compared to males (Kroenke and Spitzer 1998).

We pertain that such conclusion is inaccurate due to the fact that males are 3.5 times more likely than females to commit suicide (Kennard 2020). In fact, as of 2019 suicide has been reported as the number one cause of death among males under the age of 45 (Schumacher 2019). Males are also more likely to self-medicate and externalize symptoms by being violent or using drugs and alcohol (Dallas 2015; Smith, Mouzon and Elliot 2016). In a similar manner, we propose that disparity in gender difference in body image literature which has led researchers to conclude that females experience higher rates of body dissatisfaction can be attributed to male gender socialization which teaches males to underestimate emotional and physical disturbances.

The second way in which male gender socialization may influence body image research is the 'suffer in silence' trope. The culturally idealized form of masculinity, i.e. hegemonic masculinity, valorizes rationality over emotional expression. The valorization

can be traced to a binary representation of the rational as masculine and the emotional as femine (Mumby and Putnam 1992). Hence, males are socialized and will be given more privileges in society when they distance themselves from that which is feminine. As such, hegemonic masculinity allocates power and strength to males who do not express emotion, weakness or vulnerability. It is the same reason males are generally less likely to ask for directions when lost (Dallas 2015). There is a fear that by appearing to not have control or needing to depend on others is a sign of weakness that others may perceive. More importantly, this sign of weakness may place the male in a subordinated position. As such males distance themselves from any displays of weakness including revealing concerns with physical appearance which has traditionally been feminized. In a qualitative study, adolescent males have attested to this, suggesting that males are just not supposed to talk about 'these issues' (Hargreaves and Tiggemann 2006).

As a continuation of the 'suffer in silence' trope, male are less likely to seek treatment for mental health, negative body image and physical pain (Winerman 2005; Doward 2016). A large-scale study in Australia found that males suffering from body image distortion are four times less likely than females to be diagnosed (AAP 2016). Moreover, the study suggests that as more males become more muscular, so is the development of bigorexia. Finally, it was suggested that males are suffering psychologically as they fear stigmatization if they discuss body image and appearance concerns openly.

Figure 18. Ways gender socialization impacts male body image.
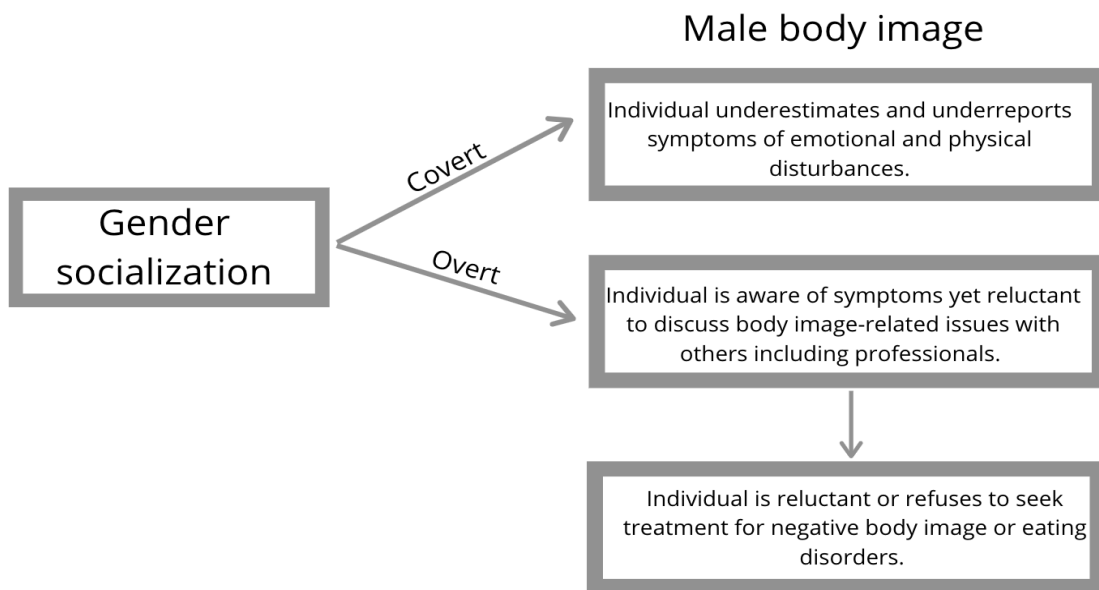
SOURCE: Author.

The second factor which may influence body image is because much of male-oreinted body image has been theoretically driven by results found from research performed on the female demographic (Hargreaves and Tiggemann 2006). In layman's terms, we are applying the same method and tools conventionally used to investigate the impact of media exposure on body image among females on to the male demographic.

As expanded on earlier, due gender socialization males and females experience emotional disturbances differently. Females tend to internalize symptoms of depression and anxiety,

have a higher tendency to report and seek treatment. While males externalize symptoms by acting out, are less likely to recognize and report symptoms as well as seek treatment (Dallas 2015; Smith, Mouzon and Elliot 2016). Therefore, we can not apply the same method used to analyze emotionally-driven disturbances accurately without accounting for gender socialization. Hence, the first proposition for future research on body image involves the re-evaluation and inclusion of scales.

In the following section, we expand on some more propositions for future research. The propositions are a product of the exploration of the research topics through the extensive readings for the literature review as well as the contextualization of the findings from the empirical work done for the research.

8.4 Future research

Generally speaking, there is a lack of empirical research diving into the psycho-social and communication influences that affect men as a male demographic. In fact, the study of men within regards to health issues is still considered in its preliminary stages (Marcos et al. 2013). Even moreso, there is less research dedicated towards minority groups within the male bracket including men of colour and sexual minorities (Brennan et al. 2013). Similarly, there is a disproportion in research documenting the effects of exposure to ideal body image on male adolescents when compared with the female demographic (Raufelder et al. 2014). Future research on male body may consider the implications of idealized body imagery on ethnic and sexual minorities.

In 2016, Fardouly and Vartanian published a paper called "Social Media and Body Image Concerns: Current Research And Future Directions". The authors offer an overall re-evaluation of types of methodologies used in previous research on media and body image. In particular, they focused on social media as a new platform as its impact as a new form of digital technology on body image concerns. In the paper, the authors include various dimensions to the definition of body image such as drive for thinness/muscularity, body satisfaction and social comparison. They divide their analysis of body image research into three dominant methodologies. The first is correlational studies which is the most common methodology used in communication and body image research. Correlational studies have been able to ubiquitously produce similar results when performed on the male and female demographic. The results often aligned with the hypothesis using a direct relationship between media exposure and body-image related concerns.

In specific, the more time an individual is exposed to media content on social media platforms, the higher likelihood of developing problems associated with appearance and body image concerns. Other correlational studies have expanded to include user-based social media activities where commenting and sharing posts on social media was associated with weight monitoring behavior among male and female participants. While correlational studies provide some evidence linking social media behavior to body image disturbances, it does not provide a causal connection. That is, from correlational studies we are not able to determine "whether people who spend more time on social media are more concerned about their appearance, or whether people who are more concerned with their appearance spend more time on social media." (Fardouly and Vartanian 2016, 2).

The authors called for longitudinal and experimental studies to examine the influence of social media on body image.

Longitudinal studies in the field of communication and body image are relatively few because they require the involvement of the participants in the research for long durations for months or possibly years. Often such research requires financial resources and an extensive research team. The results of longitudinal studies have not been consistent. For example, one study on male and female students over 18 months suggested that social media use negatively affects body-image concerns as opposed to individuals with predisposition to body-image concerns seeking out social media content. In contrast, another study of female high school students that took place over 6 months failed to find a relationship between various forms of social media usage and negative body image (Fardouly and Vartanian 2016).

Scales

Body image literature regarding concerns and preoccupation with physical appearance has been gendered. Previous research has suggested that females are highly more likely to experience pressure and negative body image than males (Russello 2009). Such conclusions have made it difficult for males to discuss body image due to the feminization of body image (Hargreaves and Tiggemann 2006). Similarly, the scales and tools used to measure such concerns have been gendered as well. For example, a new scale called Appearance-Related Social Media Consciousness (ASMC) was constructed last year in 2020 (Choukas-Bradley, Nesi and Widman 2020). It is designed to measure social media specific behaviors and cognitions regarding concerns with physical appearance. While the research takes into account new perspectives such as the online audience and the uses of editing and appearance-enhancement tools, the questions of the scale were more oriented towards a female demographic which may explain why adolescent girls reported higher scores than adolescent boys.

Questions of the ASMC scale include:

"3. Even when I'm alone, I imagine how my body would look in a social media picture. 10. I zoom into social media pictures to see what specific parts of my body look like.

11. If someone takes a picture of me that might be posted on social media, I ask to look at it first to make sure I look good." (Choukas-Bradley et al. 2020, 3).

The aforementioned questions are typical in how females internalize and experience objectification which may not resemble the male experience particularly when using self-reported data. The discrepancy might make detecting body image related concerns, such as body surveillance and over exercising, among adolescents more difficult. In return, body image distortion among males might remain underdiagnosed and consequently might hinder developing adequate solutions to body image disturbances.

To remedy the disparity, future research on body image and social media among male participants may consider using the Gender-Conflict Scale (O'Neil et al. 1986). Originally developed in 1986, the scale measures 7 measurements including health care problems, obsession with achievement and success, restructured sexual and affectionate behaviour, socialized control and competition for power, homophobia and restricted emotionality. The Gender-Conflict Scale in short form has been recently tested

(Komlenac et al. 2018). It demonstrated good internal consistency and reliability as a tool to measure gender conflict among males. The Gender-role Conflict scale takes into account the limitation gender roles might have and the actualization of their human potential. For males, the conflict may arise as deviation from anything socially perceived as feminine such as body image, appearance and health concerns.

Furthermore, we propose the possibility of testing male body image with other masculine constructs and ideals. Some studies suggest that participants who hold traditional attitudes about men and women want to be more muscular (McCreary, Saucier, and Courtenay 2005). Other studies indicated a link between the drive for muscularity and a favouring social dominance and hierarchy (Swami et al. 2013). Similarly, a recent study found a correlation between fit men who frequent the gym and an affiliation for right-wing socio-political ideology (Price et al. 2017). The results add to previous insight which linked muscle worship with adhering to elements of facism, militarism and support for war (Brake 1974; Johansson, Andreasson and Mattsson 2017). Future research may consider testing for the correlation between political affiliation and drive for muscularity.

In particular, we propose investigating links for muscularity and adherence to the Red Pill Philosophy (Filosofía de la píldora roja) among adolescent males. As discussed in the first chapter, the Red Pill philosophy is an online movement which is particularly popular among teenage boys as it was founded through blogs and online forums. It can be described as a cross-section of incel and pick-up culture exemplifying traits of far-right, anti-women, racist and anti-semetic sentiment. On these collections of websites, members will push each other to go to the gym and lift weights (Ging 2017).

There is an increasing emphasis and attention on male physical appearance today. In the past, Wolf (1991) described feminine beauty standards as a sociopolitical weapon against feminism where the female body is used to hinder women's progress. Today, however, the language used by beauty industries has changed and marketing strategies have geared to adopt corporate feminism. As Gill and Elias (2014) point out that the seemingly post-feminist "Love your Body" discourse is not about liberation but a new form of regulation; the regulation of phsyche. Hence, we identify a form of politics that uses the body in its negotiation of power. Testing for a correlation between political affiliation and muscularity among males may provide researchers with deeper insight into the driver of male body image.

We propose the possibility for future research to consider using the Swansea Muscularity Attitudes Questionnaire scale (SMAQ). The psychometric soundness of the Swansea Muscularity Attitudes Questionnaire was tested on two independent samples and has demonstrated reality and also as well as the ability to develop 3 construct which are intention to become more muscular (eight-items), positive attributes of muscularity (nine-items), and engagement in muscle-building activities (Morrison and Morrison 2006). While the questionnaire in the scale asks direct questions regarding attitude towards muscularity, it also includes third-person assessment such as questions 3 and 12.

Question 3) *Men with small muscles are less masculine than men with larger muscle*s.
Question 14) *Being larger, stronger and more muscular than other men makes men more attractive to prospective partners.*

We assume that such attempts to gather data about attitudes towards male in an indirect way may make it easier for the male participants to answer without fear of judgment. It is possible that by using an in-direct third-person assessment, male participants who might have been reluctant before will feel more at ease to answer questions relating to body and emotional disturbances. Additionally, we find some questions in the SMAQ scale that aim to connect the body with larger social structures such as masculinity. For example, question 14 which connects high levels of muscularity to higher likelihood of attracting prospective partners could be traced back to hegemonic masculinity in particular succeeding in performing heterosexuality.

To better understand, we propose viewing certain elements such as attracting prospective partners or potentiality for violence as a form of resource or capital placed on a matrix of masculinity where the degree of muscularity serves as a link. In this matrix of hegemonic masculinity, sexual capital, economic capital, aggression and violence overlap through the male body which becomes its own form of physical capital. For example, a man's ability to succeed in hetrosexual sexual relations proves he is not gay and not being precieved as gay gets him closer to hegemonic masuclinity where he is able to abstract more power in patriachal society. However, in order to attract more prospective partners, the male physical body needs to resemble the mesomorph or muscular ideal. Hence the question is not whether more muscular men are attractive to prospective partners but why it is important for men to have prospective partners.

Projection Method

Taking into consideration some reservations male participants might have towards discussing sensitive issues in particular body-image and personal vulnerabilities as well as the potential inefficiency of self-reported data, future research could bypass this obstacle of using various projection methods instead of self-assessment scales.

The projection method involves using third-person scales and visual narratives to collect data from participants in regards to a specific issue. For example one form of projection method uses media imagery to draw visual narratives through in-depth interviews as a way to stimulate the discussion. A recent study pointed towards this particular phenomenon where male social media users are consistently engaging in behaviors that place the male body under "display and scrutiny" (Chatzopoulou, Shannon, and Dogruyol 2020, 1271). The study identifies two forms of social media engagement, one which is passive and involves just reading captions and viewing images while the other is active engagement and involves sharing content and making comments. Passive engagement is considered to have low-level engagement with social while active denotes a high-level engagement in social media usage. used this

As mentioned previously, the study finds that the majority of body image uses quantitative correlational tests (Chatzopoulou, Shannon, and Dogruyol 2020). Moreover, it describes a stereotype regarding body image, concerns with physical appearance, and eating have been 'feminized' and only impacted on the female demographic. As such, it suggests that male social media users may underestimate the media's influence on them or may feel reluctant to discuss these issues out of fear of appearing weak, sensitive, and exposed. Hence, the research aim was to conduct qualitative research using "in-depth interviews with Instagram male fitness hashtag users aiming to explore their motivations

for body image transformation and the consequences on their behavior and wellbeing" (1272).

The study, while using in-depth interviews, has integrated an innovative method to gather data about the relationship between fitness hashtags on Instagram and body esteem among the participants. Keeping in mind that gender socialization may unknowingly influence the male participants by being unaware of internalized body ideals or unwilling to discuss sensitive topics, the study uses the projective method in which visual imagery and narrative are used to stimulate the conversation and reveal information that would not otherwise be in a traditional interviewing setting. It suggests that using visual methods triggers spontaneity in the participants which allows them to reveal sensitive data about male body image. Moreover, this technique allows the researcher to investigate real emotions and perceptions regarding the subjective experiences of males dealing with the issues of body image in general.

The sample of the study was 25 male participants between the ages of 18 to 25 years old from the United Kingdom. A pre-selected collection of images under #fitfam was projected to the participants. The participants were asked to narrate the story in which they describe the method they engage with the Instagram application and their relationship with the hashtags and images used under #fitfam. According to the study, many of the participants initially described a low engagement with Instagram and gradually discussed higher levels of engagement in which they revealed posting images of their body using the #fitfam. Some participants revealed feelings of dissatisfaction with their bodies, low self-esteem, and feeling either too fat or too thin. One social media user suggested that viewing images of male athletes he admires or even friends of his made him feel unhappy because he was too thin and consequently can not compare when measured against them. Other social media users with higher levels of body esteem were more critical towards the #fitfam, suggesting they are fake and have been digitally altered.

Some interesting findings by the study included the formation of community-like behavior by #fitfam members. Fitness culture has grown increasingly popular that members who subscribe to the ideal created an online community where they bond on like-minded thinking and exchange advice on how to achieve a high level of fitness. Participants describe a physical norm i.e. the Instabod, in which they have to be highly muscular, well-tone, and have a six-pack torso in order to be accepted to the community. Males on Instagram who have attained the mesomorph muscular ideal will receive praise and high social media engagement from followers. Whereas, males who do not physically conform to the ideal because they are not muscular will be ostracized, talked to negatively, or stalked. Some participants revealed that they will have the confidence to post images of themselves, their bodies in particular, but are worried about some negative feedback they might get.

Another significant finding of the study was the appeal of Insta-famous-y. Today many young social media users, in particular adolescents, want to become Instagram-famous where they are able to make a living through sharing content on Instagram. The Insta-famous title is highly lucrative for adolescents as it is an easy path to popularity, success, and wealth. However, an individual, be it male or female, can not become Insta-famous without conforming to the conventional standards of physical attractiveness in society. Hence, participants discussed the need to gain muscle mass prior to becoming Instagram influencers or Instagram famous.

The study also detected symptoms of muscle dysmorphia among high-engagement social media from the sample of participants. In specific, the study detected three forms of the expression of muscle dysmorphia which are social isolation, use of steroids, and excessive exercise. Participants described a willingness to disengage from social events such as family gatherings as not to deter from the workout plan or restricted eating habits. Participants revealed that they were taking anabolic steroids as a way to increase their muscle mass and create a more defined muscular look. Participants also revealed that they were aware of the harmful effects of using steroids yet negated them by comparing them to the harmful effects of using sunbeds. Another participant revealed that because he was incapable of frequenting the gym due to COVID restrictions, he opted to use a legal drug called Dianabol which mimics the effects of steroids. Finally, high-engagement male social media users discussed experiencing pain due to excessive exercise. Participants described a process of re-masculinization of pushing through the pain while indulging in excessive exercise.

It is our proposition that using imagery and visual narratives to stimulate discussion is a method in which researchers can bypass traditional gender socialization around sensitive-topics. The aforementioned study was successful in retrieving insightful perspectives from participants using this qualitative approach which may not have been provided through quantitative correlational studies.

Experimental research: Filters and diversifying images

The general consensus experimental research on body image, male or female, the results have been inconsistent. A possible explanation for this is because experimental research is relatively few when compared to correlational studies. One possible explanation as proposed by Fardouly et al. (2015) is that the duration of media exposure during the experiment ranges between 10-20 minutes whereas our data and statistics have shown that the average duration of time spent on social media is between 1-2 hours. The results of our study fall in line with previous research which did not find a difference between participants who viewed idealized body image and those who did not. In our last section, we put forward 3 possibilities that future experimental studies could consider.

Filters

We recommend that future experimental research can investigate the impact of using digital filters on body esteems in particular on facial attractiveness. There is reason to believe that viewing digital enhanced images of oneself in real time may be more impactful than latent photoshop editing. In the literature review, we have noted the rise of cosmetic surgery as a direct result of augmented-reality (AR) filters.

Appearance-enhancing applications have become fully integrated in image-based social media platforms like Instagram and Snapchat. Digital technologies like face-mapping make it possible to alter facial features in real time. Some of the most popular filters of instagram fabricate plastic surgery-like features including cheek and lip fillers, a nose job, brow lifts, and skin-smoothing botox (Manavis 2019). Future experimental research can examine the effects of using such filters that are currently available on Instagram. We assume that, distinctive to editing images after they have been taken, real-time

manipulation to physical features through Instagram filters creates a different, perhaps more pervasive form of distortion and appearance dissatisfaction.

Future research may conduct a two-step in-between group experimental study using AR filters on Instagram as a media stimuli. In concurrence with previous experimental study in body image literature, a sample of participants can be divided into two sub-groups, one of which will serve as the control group and the other group will be the experimental group. The control group can be exposed to neutral AR-filters images on Instagram such as artistic filters. The experimental group can be asked to view AR-filters on Instagram which include appearance-enhancements such as skin smoothing, eye colour change, higher cheekbones and fuller lips. After the duration of exposure to Instagram filters, participants can be blocked on appearance-related state measures of mood and satisfaction. We assume the demographics for the study will be geared towards females.

As articulated in the book Communication and Body Image (Sánchez Hernández, Jiménez-Morales and Carrillo Durán 2014) and put forth by philosophers such as Debord (1967) and Baudrillard (1970), we are increasingly moving towards a society that is being mediated and consumed by media imagery especially now considering the advent of social media and virtual communication. We need to look at online images as meta-textual forms of visual communication that link to various forms of capital; physical, economic and cultural. A muscular man standing next to a luxury car amidst vacationing on an Island as a background is one image yet upholds varying connections to capital.

From the literature review, we gather that the mesomorph male body is not only more visible in mainstream media but has been codified with sexal relations, aggression, economic success and an overall positive outcome (Dill-Shackleford and Thill 2007). For this reason, we suggest that future research on body image and social media can diversify pre-selected images to include the mesomorph ideal in different settings that reference said capital. For example, the mesomorph ideal in a luxurious setting and the mesomorph ideal in a working training session. We assume that diversifying images amongst the control groups in an experimental research will yield engaging results that will allow us as researchers to understand the causal relationship of media on body image.

We understand from previous research and theories on body image and communication (advertising, print and film) that mainstream media acts as a system of messages that construct a coherent set of values and ideals (Gerbner and Gross 1975). The underlying purpose some individuals pursue unrealistic body standards is not simply because they are ubiquitously represented in media but because they also connect to a deeper social value. As such the answer to solving body image disturbances is not limiting or restricting the presence of the thin or muscular ideal because these standards are subject to change. As we can see today, to be extremely thin is no longer desired amongst female adolescents. Instead, young girls are undergoing surgery and body make-overs to become curvaceous and Kardisan-asque. Hence, the problem is simply not the image itself but what the image means. The task of future research is to uncover the root cause of such drives by deconstructing the multi-dimensional aspects of the body and holding media literacy and intervention about social media and the body as well as making information accessible and available for the general public.

Diversifying images

From the extensive readings done in the literature review and given the findings from the experimental research conducted in the present dissertation, we propose that future research can apply a 'diversifying images' strategy in experimental research investigating the influences of media on male participants.

A typical experimental body image research-setting includes dividing a large sample of participants into subgroups which will form the control group and experimental group. The control group will be exposed to neutral images that do not contain elements of body idealization such as artistic images or images of nature. The experimental group will be exposed to idealized body images. In the case for the male demographic, the media's idealized body is the mesomorph muscular ideal, identified through a V or triangle shape, and consists of broad muscular shoulders, prominent chest, a defined torso and a small waist. The results of the effects of exposure to the two variant media types on body image are measured through statistical analysis and variance tests.

Some body image research applied the experimental method by dividing the sample into three sub-groups. For example, in the experimental research by Fardouly et al. (2015), the groups were divided into a group that were exposed to neutral image through an accessories website, a group that viewed female idolized body images and a group which were at liberty to explore their Facebook account as they normally would. Another experimental study on male body image divided the sample into a group which viewed fashion male models, a group which viewed bare-chested male models and a group which was exposed to neutral content.

Future research can, instead of using images of muscular male bodies as the media stimuli, use diversified images of the muscular male body next to accompany hegemonic masculinity status symbols. For example, the pre-selection of images to be viewed in the experimental group may included a) the muscular male body next to a status symbol signifying wealth such as an expensive car, b) the muscular male body in an act of aggression such as a boxer during a fighting match, c) the muscular male body next to a romantic interest (male or female), and d) the muscular male body next to female bodies signifying sexual conquests.

The experimental in-between method would entail dividing a large sample of male participants into 5 subgroups. Four groups from the sample will be exposed to one of each of the aforementioned conditions containing the idealized male body with an accompanying status symbol. One of the five groups will serve as the control group and be exposed to neutral images. After the duration of exposure to the media stimuli, participants will be blocked on body image-related measures. The traits measure tests may also include self-esteem and confidence measures. Statistical analysis will be performed to measure the statistical variance across all groups.

The proposed method involves the diversification of idealized muscular male body images to include accompanying status symbols (wealth, aggression, and sexual conquests) in hegemonic masculinity is a manner in which communication studies can combine elements of psychology and sociology. This merging places the body at the center of power relations and consequently the negotiation of power through the subjectification of the body under neoliberalim. As discussed in the literature review, the intensification of neoliberal policies means less men have access to economic capital. Similarly, growing feminist movements means less men have acess to cultural and social

power. Hence, given recent history and the current state of the world, we anticipate a continuous rise in social movements such as feminism, LGBTQ+ liberation and Black Lives Matter as well an increase in economic disparity between social classes. Along with technological advancements such as social media and AR filters (augmented reality), we anticipate the pressure of males to conform to an idealized body and facial physical attractiveness will increase. We raise the possibility that in the future AR filters on social media, which are currently predominantly used by the female demographic, may reorient and target the male demographic and include the possibility of body modification. We propose that incorporating sociologically-driven power analysis in experimental research will assist researchers in identifying causal relationships between media exposure and body image. In specific, it may assist in identifying the root cause and drivers to achieve the idealized muscular physique among males.

Chapter 9

CONCLUSION

In the final chapter of the dissertation, we provide the reader with a conclusion of the research. In the conclusion, we reflect on the research, its strengths and limitations, and some key elements of the main topic.

One of the strengths of the present research is in its ability to clearly identify the gap in the literature Throughout the opening chapters, we identified three specific areas of research which are (1) abundance of idealized male bodies on Instagram, (2) increasing pressure on adolescent males to become muscular and (3) lack of explanatory research i.e. experimental research. As such, the research aim is clear. The research aim is to investigate the influence of social media use on body image-related concerns among adolescent males using an in-between group experimental method.

Another strength of the dissertation was in the development of the research design and method. Through the consultation of previous research, we implemented a research design that relied on a complex and well-constructed experimental method. It investigated the effects of social media use on body image concerns in adolescent males using a between-group experimental design. The participants (n=123) were randomly assigned to one of three conditions on Instagram for a period of 10 minutes: their own Instagram account, and an artistic control account, or a bodybuilding and fitness account. Following the social media exposure, the participants were blocked by completing measures on Drive for Muscularity (DM), Body Esteem Scale (BES), and Appearance Comparison Tendency (ACT).

We have implemented a thorough protocol to be applied throughout the procedure of data collection ensuring the interests and dignity of the participants and the research as well. We consider the research design to have succeeded in collecting data from a sufficient sample size of n=123 male participants to establish statistical variance and measurement. Moreover, we consider the materials, which are the scales and socio-demographic questions, used in the research study to be a product of a studious and sensible reading of the needs of the participants and research, distinctly in terms of refraining from reproducing heteronormative standards traditionally used in questionnaires.

Finally, the strength of the study is in its attempt to investigate the effects of social media using tests for ecological validity. To the best of our knowledge, there has been a significantly limited amount of research that tests for the influence of ecological validity on body image-related concerns among adolescent males. As expanded on in the method chapter of the dissertation, ecological validity examines the influence of user-based interaction in how they consume and perform exchanges on social media. As such, we

consider the research to have contributed to existing literature with an innovative approach to investigative experimental study. In the following section, we will discuss some of the limitations of the research.

9.1 Limitations

The limitations of a study are defined as a certain set of characteristics or variables that may have influenced the research study, in particular the "interpretation of the findings" (Price and Murnan 2004, 66). The limitations are the "constraints on generalizability, applications to practice, and/or utility of findings that are the result of the ways" the research design and method of the research study have been conducted (Price and Murnan 2004, 66). Possible limitations of research may appear as a product of methodological limitations or limitations from the side of the researcher. In the following section, we will discuss in greater detail both aspects that are related to the present research study:

(1) Lack of prior research studies on the topic

The first limitation of the research study is the lack of prior research studies on the topic which concerns the influence of social media on body image in adolescent males. Since the term body image was coined, there has been extensive research investigating the relationship between media exposure and negative body image among the female demographic. The extensive amount of research has enabled scholars and researchers to reach a general consensus that reveals how media exposure to idealized body images negatively impacts body image, self-esteem, and mood among the female demographic. Consequently, researchers and scientists have been able to pathologize body dysmorphic disorder as well as eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia and developed tools and treatments for patients suffering from such disorders.

In fact, discussion around the negative influence of female idealized body image has been so extensively studied that the knowledge and information seeped into the mainstream and popular culture. Today, people are more aware of the harmful meditation of unrealistic beauty and body standards especially when it comes to adolescent females and social media. Moreover, there has recently been a discourse aimed at countering the dominant narrative of ideal beauty standards. In fact, discussion around body positivity has become significant enough that we are witnessing the co-optation of this initiative through neoliberal pursuit.

The same can not be said regarding male mental health, physical health, and body image. In 'An Overview Research of Gender in Spanish Society', Valiente (2002) suggests that the study of men's health is still in its earliest stages of development, an 'embryonic stage', and there is still much for researchers and scientists to discover. Men's health journals indicate that men while caring for their health tend to seek treatment only after a disease has progressed. Due to a macho male culture within the medical field, there is a certain strength that is glorified when men suffer in silence also known as "strength in silence". It is the assumption that men who seek treatment are weak so instead, they need to cope and overcome the pain alone. Moreover, these actions of suffering in silence make them more of a man. We trace such attributes that valorize strength over showing

vulnerability (physical, mental, and emotional) to be one of the main conditions in performing traditional masculinity and is concurrent with hegemonic masculinity.

Therefore, it is not surprising that results from qualitative studies on body image found that adolescent males refrain from discussing body image-related concerns out of fear of appearing less masculine, feminine, or gay. Some adolescent males suggested that they need to put up a performance of an attitude that they do not care about physical appearance even if they do. While the theoretical information all point to a growing emphasis on male physical appearance, in particular pressure to be muscular and readings in the literature review demonstrated the ubiquitous overrepresentation of idealized male bodies in various media expression, there is still a small amount of research dedicated to investigating the effects of this mediation on the male demographic.

In specific, there is a lack of previous research that uses the experimental method that investigates the impact of media exposure on body image among adolescent males. In 2006, Hargreaves and Tiggemann reported that "to our knowledge, only two studies have examined the impact of exposure to muscular-ideal media images on boys' body image." (569). Moreover, results from experimental studies on body image among adult males have yielded mixed findings (Hargreaves and Tiggemann 2006). Some studies found that exposure to the muscle-ideal increased body dissatisfaction and resulted in a "slightly decreased body esteem among adult men (Agliata & Tantleff-Dunn, 2004; Grogan, Williams, and Connor, 1996; Lavine, Sweeney, & Wagner, 1999; Leit, Pope, & Gray, 2001), others have not (Kalodner, 1997; Thornton & Moore, 1993)." (Hargreaves and Tiggemann 2006, 569). Similarly, a meta-analysis on male body image suggested that results from experimental studies have been inconclusive and more research is needed (Barlett, Vowels and Saucier 2008).

The disparity between literature is further amplified in body image research when considering social media as the meditating factor. In fact, research examining the negative effects of the muscle ideal on Instagram was published last year in 2020 and was recognized as the study "to use the first experimental demonstration of such Instagram effects in men." (Tiggemann and AnderbergSchool 2020, 241).

(2) Media stimuli
We propose another limiting factor, which may have acted as a variable that interjected with the outcome of the research study, may lie in the media stimuli in terms of content and duration.

Media stimuli content: As expanded on in the Method chapter, the media stimuli consisted of dividing the large sample of participants into sub-groups to constitute the experimental groups and control groups. Each one of the groups was exposed to a particular variation of social media interaction. The group **Naturalistic Viewing** (**NV**) aimed to generate a user-based interaction by asking the participants to use their Instagram account in the manner they typically do in everyday life, as such sustaining ecological validity within the experiment. The group **Appearance-Neutral** (**AN**) served as the control group. Participants in the AN group were asked to browse Instagram in a manner that exposed them to neutral images which do not contain idealized body images such as artistic accounts on Instagram. The **Appearance-Focused** group (**AF**) consisted of asking the participants to engage with images on Instagram that contained male idealized body images.

The **AF** group will be the main area of focus for this section. On par with previous literature which established male idealized body images as having the mesomorphic body or V-shaped body consisting of broad shoulders, muscular chest and arms, and a small waist. Furthermore, the ideal male body is identified as having high degrees of muscularity and leanness, and low degrees of body fat. The pre-selection of social media in the AF group consisted of identifying popular body-building and male fitness accounts of Instagram in general, and in Spain in specific.

We propose that a potential limitation of this research was using idealized male body images that were *too* muscular as media stimuli. It is possible that the extremely high degree of muscularity in the idealized male body images that the AF group was exposed to, may have initiated a distance between the stimuli and among the participants due to how unrealistic and unattainable the ideal is. A meta-analysis of male body image suggests that for experimental research any type of muscular stimuli (extreme or athletic) may provoke social and appearance comparison tendencies (Barlett, Vowels and Saucier 2008). Similarly, the paper suggests that any muscular stimuli, in the form of media content, may provoke the internalization of "society's standards of muscularity" and consequently lead to a negative impact on body image (Barlett, Vowels, and Saucier 2008, 303). However, other qualitative studies found that some males view extremely high levels of muscularity presented in bodybuilders and bodybuilding imagery as 'ridiculous', suggesting that spending long periods of time working out at the gym and looking after the body is narcissistic. (Grogan and Richards 2002).

(3) Gender of the researcher
General socio-demographic characteristics of the researcher such as race, age, and physical appearance may have an influence on the research, in particular during the stage of data collection (Davis et al. 2010). Moreover, understanding the role the gender of the researcher plays in gender-sensitive research is pivotal in understanding the limitation it may cause. Hence, the gender of the research is of particular relevance to this study which centers around body image. It should be noted that the characteristics of the lead researcher of this present study are a cis-women, aged 29 (at the time of data collection) and from a Syrian nationality background.

However limited, there is research aimed at investigating the influence of researcher characteristics in specific body image studies (Yager, Diedrichs, and Drummond 2013). One study suggested that men are more likely to disclose personal information to female researchers (Davis et al. 2010). Another study found that when given the option, men were divided into two halves: half of the male participants requested a male researcher while the other half requested a female researcher (Catania et al. 1996).

Potential reasoning as to why some male participants might prefer female researchers and interviewers lies in a gendered form of socialization in which society teaches and perceives females as being more nurturing and caring in comparison to males. As such, female researchers are perceived as more sympathetic and create conditions that may lead to self-disclosure from participants (Yager, Diedrichs, and Drummond 2013). However, conclusive results as to whether female researchers should conduct gender-sensitive research have not yet been established. Similarly, a consensus on how the gender of the research impacts body image-sensitive topics has not been yet established. Scholars have highlighted the importance of consulting the participants in regards to their preference of

the gender of the researcher prior to data collection. The scholars suggest that even though it may not be possible to accommodate the participants under specific circumstances, it is still important to take it into consideration (Yager, Diedrichs, and Drummond 2013).

In terms of body image research, some research has found that male participants prefer and request a female researcher as they perceive the female researcher to be less threatening (Yager, Diedrichs, and Drummond 2013). Moreover, some men suggested that discussing body image and appearance concerns with a male researcher or interviewer would be 'de-masculinizing' in a qualitative research setting (Bottamini and Ste-Marie 2006). A study aimed at examining the impact of the gender of the research in a body-image setting found that some men felt more comfortable with a same-sex researcher suggesting that discussing sensitive topics would be less embarrassing and the researcher would be familiar with understanding body image issues. "There was an underlying assumption that a researcher of the same gender would have experienced the same body image concerns of the participant." (Yager, Diedrichs, and Drummond 2013, 21). Some participants reported that gender does not matter as much as professionalism to which female researchers and interventionist were perceived as more adequate in discussing body image-related issues. Finally, the study concluded that most males did not indicate a gender preference for the researcher, however, males who are experiencing high levels of body dissatisfaction preferred same-sex research. (Yager, Diedrichs, and Drummond 2013).

In terms of body image treatment, gender a topic played a significant role among male participants undergoing treatment for eating disorders. In the past, eating disorders were perceived as exclusively female-oriented disorders. Consequently, clinical treatment which includes "recognizing symptoms presentations, diagnosis, and treatment models, have been developed using research predominantly based on female samples." (Kinnaird et al. 2019, 845).

A study that examined the clinical spaces where males can seek treatment in regard to body image and eating disorders found that males felt like the odd one out as most of the discussion and treatment was geared towards females (Kinnaird et al. 2019). Some males in the study said they felt like a 'freak', being the only male among an all-female staff. Such sensations added to feelings of self-consciousness, separation, and atypicality. Moreover, male participants suggested that inclusionary practices may enhance the treatment of male body image concerns. For example, it was suggested that male-oriented body image concerns can be highlighted throughout the course of the treatment and not only limited to a chapter or pamphlet. Similar to previous results on the gender of the practitioner in body-image settings, some males suggested feeling more comfortable with a same-sex practitioner while other males suggested that gender does not matter as long the practitioner is open and responsive. In summary, males experiencing negative body image proposed making treatment facilities more inclusive and a mixed-staff of male and female practitioners would make them more comfortable (Kinnaird et al. 2019).

9.2 Final Words

Recent research performed by Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM) in the UK examined 2000 male participants and found that nearly 50% of males between the ages of 16-40 years old experience negative feelings towards their body (Baggs 2021). Moreover, 58% of the participants described feelings towards their body becoming worse

during the pandemic. A significant portion of the participants mentioned that they would not feel comfortable discussing body image issues with anyone. The CEO of CALM, Simon Gunning directed the blame towards Instagram, specifically, as being the main driver in creating the pressure among adolescent males to be more muscular and big. The campaign which was designed to examine body image and Instagram reported that while there is growing pressure on males, there is no space for them to discuss these feelings (Baggs 2021). If there is anything to take away from this dissertation, it is this last statement.

Due to patriarchal standards, males are not provided with space nor are they allowed to discuss feelings of vulnerability. They live under a system of tension where they constantly feel the need to perform 'masculinity'. Masculinity, which in itself, is a policing mechanism designed to subdue all that which is considered traditionally feminine. As such, young males, in a patriarchal society, grow up learning to distance themselves from an emotional expression and valorize rationality and toughness. However, as we discussed in the literature review, due to late capitalism young men today are feeling lost, precarious and disenfranchised. They can not find jobs and those who do not earn a sustainable income. Growing feminist and liberation movements are creating serious disturbances in the power dynamics of the current social order. As such, there is a *crisis in masculinity* today.

In an attempt to sustain order in an increasingly destabilizing world, hegemonic masculinity is finding an outlet by repacking itself in the form of the muscular male. As evidenced by media analysis, the muscular male is successful, strong, and dominant. He is a winner, popular, and '*gets what he wants*. Young males today are receiving these media messages, in particular from social media. They are engaging in harmful habits of overeating and over-exercising to achieve this muscular male ideal.

Previous research on the female demographic has demonstrated just how harmful and ubiquitous the implications of negative body image can be if left untreated and uncontracted. Hence, it becomes incumbent on researchers to prevent the spread of negative male body image and develop adequate prevention programs. The present study aimed to contribute to the field of research by applying an experimental investigation examining the relationship between social media and body image concerns. The in-between experimental method allows us to test for ecological validity and exposure to idealized male bodies. The findings from the results, in line with previous research, suggest the need for more experimental research in order to determine the causal connection between using social media and its detrimental effects on body image, in particular on adolescent males.

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Appendix A

A la atención de la Dirección del Centro.

Barcelona, 19 de octubre de 2018

Le escribimos para solicitar su colaboración en el proyecto **SOMA** (SOcial Media and Adolescence), impulsado desde el Departamento de Comunicación de la Universidad Pompeu Fabra.

El uso de las redes sociales es ya una rutina en nuestra vida cotidiana, especialmente entre los jóvenes que llegan a pasar hasta 2 horas diarias navegando por Facebook e Instagram. Por otra parte, investigaciones recientes alertan de la creciente presión entre los adolescentes varones por responder al cuerpo musculado que ven en las redes. De hecho, un estudio descubrió que niños de tan solo trece años toman esteroides, batidos de proteínas y van al gimnasio para lograr parecerse a este ideal corporal.

SOMA tiene como objetivo principal contribuir a que los adolescentes desarrollen una capacidad más reflexiva y crítica en su manejo de las redes sociales, y es por esta razón que agradeceremos su participación en el proyecto. Para conseguirlo, hemos diseñado un cuestionario que evalúa diferentes factores relacionados con la imagen corporal adolescente. Su participación consistiría en dejarnos pasar el cuestionario a alumnos varones de las clases de 4º de ESO y 1º de bachillerato. El cuestionario se responde en unos 15 minutos y los resultados obtenidos nos permitirán, en una segunda fase, la elaboración de materiales de sensibilización.

El equipo de investigación se ofrece a colaborar con la revista de la escuela, dar charlas a los estudiantes de ESO y Bachillerato sobre las redes sociales, y/o asesorar en proyectos y trabajos de investigación relacionados con el tema.

Por último, queremos recordar que los datos obtenidos en este estudio serán tratados de manera confidencial y siguiendo la normativa de protección de datos.

Para cualquier duda puede enviarnos un mensaje a pilar.medina@upf.edu

Gracias por su atención,

Dra. Pilar Medina Bravo y Jwana Aziz
Departamento de Comunicación, Universitat Pompeu Fabra.
Roc Boronat, 138 - Barcelona 08018

Appendix B

El següent qüestionari forma part d'una investigació per la Universitat Pompeu Fabra. Ens agradaria fer-te algunes preguntes sobre el que penses de tu mateix, del teu cos i l'ús de xarxes socials. La investigació serà utilitzada només per a fins científics.

T'agraïm de autemas la teva participació.

Si us plau indica si continuació si entens aquesta informació:
O Sí
O No

1. Algunes preguntes sobre tu mateix

1.1. Si us plau, indica:	
Data d'avui	Dia .... Mes .... Any ....
Quina és la teva data de naixement?	Dia .... Mes .... Any ....
1.2 Quin és el teu país de naixement? □ España □ Un altre país:.................	
1.3 Alçada		**Pes**	

1.3. Nivell educatiu del teu pare / mare / tutor (subratlla qui)
□ Sense titulació   □ Educació superior
□ Escola primària   □ Titulació universitària
□ Educació secundària   □ Doctorat
□ No ho sé però la seva professió és ....

1.4. Nivell educatiu del teu pare / mare / tutor (subratlla qui)
 □ Sense titulació   □ Educació superior
 □ Escola primària   □ Titulació universitària
 □ Educació secundària   □ Doctorat
 □ No ho sé però la seva professió és ....

1.5. Ocupació pare		**Ocupació Mare**	

1.6. Viu amb:

2. Algunes preguntes sobre Instagram

2.1.Cuánto temps passes al dia a Instagram?

☐ 10 minuts o menys ☐ 11-30 minuts ☐ 31-60 minuts ☐ 1-2 hores ☐ 2-3 hores

2.2. Quin tipus de comptes segueixes a Instagram?

☐ Animals
☐ DIY
☐ Naturalesa
☐ Viatges
☐ Art
☐ Menjar
☐ Esports
☐ Música
☐ Athletes
☐ Celebrities, influencers i models
☐ Família i amics
☐ Culturistes
☐ Humor
☐ Altra

2.3. Quina activitat realitzes usualment a Instagram?

☐ Fer una ullada al que va apareixent
☐ Poner "M'agrada"
☐ Publica fotosfotos
☐ Escriure comentaris
☐ **Compartir històries**

2.4. Quan mires Instagram?

☐ Al matí
☐ A l'migdia
☐ A la tarda
☐ A la nit

3. Algunes preguntes sobre el teu cos

3.1. Llegeix cada enunciat atentament i marca amb un cercle el número que més s'ajusta al teu cas

1	2	3	4	5	6
Sempre	Molt sovint	Sovint	De vegades	Rarament	Mai

1.	Tant de bo fos més musculat.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	Aixecar peses per incrementar la musculatura.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	Faig servir proteïnes o suplements esportius.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	Bec batuts proteics o per guanyar massa muscular.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	Intento consumir el màxim de calories possibles al dia.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	Em sento culpable si em perdo una sessió d'entrenament .	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	Crec que em sentiria més segur de mi mateix si tingués més massa muscular.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	La resta pensa que treballo massa amb les peses.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	Crec que em veuria millor si guanyés 4 o 5 quilos de múscul.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10.	Estic pensant en prendre esteroides anabòlics.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11.	Crec que em sentiria més fort si guanyés una mica més de massa muscular.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12.	Crec que la meva rutina d'entrenament amb peses interfereix en altres aspectes de la meva vida.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13.	Crec que els meus braços no són prou musculats	1	2	3	4	5	6
14.	Crec que el meu tors no és prou musculat	1	2	3	4	5	6
15.	Crec que les meves cames no són prou musculades	1	2	3	4	5	6

3.2. A continuació indica com et sents respecte a aquesta part o funció del seu propi cos, usant l'escala:

1	2	3	4	5

No m'agrada gens	M'agrada una mica	Ni m'agrada, ni em disgusta	M'agrada bastant	M'agrada molt

1.	Olor corporal		1	2	3	4	5
2.	Cabell		1	2	3	4	5
3.	Malucs		1	2	3	4	5
4.	Resistència física		1	2	3	4	5
5.	Reflexos		1	2	3	4	5
6.	Braços		1	2	3	4	5
7.	Força muscular		1	2	3	4	5
8.	Cintura		1	2	3	4	5
9.	Nivell d'energia		1	2	3	4	5
10.	Cuixes		1	2	3	4	5
11.	Pell		1	2	3	4	5

12.	Bíceps		1	2	3	4	5
13.	Pes		1	2	3	4	5
14.	Estructura corporal		1	2	3	4	5
15.	Figura/físic		1	2	3	4	5
16.	Natges		1	2	3	4	5
17.	Agilitat		1	2	3	4	5
18.	Salut		1	2	3	4	5
19.	Activitat sexual		1	2	3	4	5

20.	Pit	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Ulls	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Cara	1	2	3	4	5

23.	Condició física	1	2	3	4	5
24.	Cames	1	2	3	4	5
25.	Desig sexual	1	2	3	4	5
26.	Aspecte de l'abdomen	1	2	3	4	5
27.	Òrgans sexuals	1	2	3	4	5
28.	Motricitat	1	2	3	4	5

3.3 Finalment, indiqui quant està d'acord amb les declaracions usant l'escala següent:

1	2	3	4	5
Molt en desacord	Discrepar	Neutral	D'acord	Totalment d'acord

1.	Em comparo més amb aquells que són guapos que amb aquells que no ho són	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Tendeixo a comparar el meu atractiu físic amb el dels /de les models de revista.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	No deixo de pensar en si el meu aspecte és comparable al dels / de les models i estrelles de cinema.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	A la platja o en esdeveniments esportius (competicions, gimnàs, etc.) em pregunto si el meu físic és tan atractiu com el de les persones més atractives que hi trobo allà	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Tendeixo a comprar-me amb les persones que penso que són més guapes que jo	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Quan veig una persona amb un cos genial, tendeixo a preguntar-me si jo "encaixo" amb ell/ella.	1	2	3	4	5

7.	Quan veig persones guapes em pregunto com sóc en comparació amb elles.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	A les festes o en altres esdeveniments socials comparo el meu aspecte físic amb el de persones molt atractives.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	No deixo de comprar el meu aspecte amb el de persones que són més guapes que jo.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Comparo el meu cos amb el de persones que tenen un cos millor que jo.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Quan veig una persona sense atractiu físic penso en com és el meu cos en comparació amb el seu.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Tendeixo a comparar el meu cos amb el d'aquells que estan per sota de la mitjana.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	A la platja, al gimnàs o en esdeveniments esportius comparo el meu cos amb el d'aquells que tenen cossos menys atlètics.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Em comparo amb persones que són menys guapes que jo.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Penso com d'atractiu és el meu cos comparat amb el de gent amb sobrepès.	1	2	3	4	5
16	A les festes sovint comparo la meva aparença amb la de gent poc atractiva.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Em comparo sovint amb altres persones que tenen menys atractiu físic.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Tendeixo a comprar el meu aspecte físic amb el de gent el cos de la qual no és atractiu físicament.	1	2	3	4	5

Ja hem acabat! Moltes gràcies per la teva col·laboració!

Appendix C

El siguiente cuestionario forma parte de una investigación para la Universidad Pompeu Fabra. Nos gustaría hacerte algunas preguntas acerca de lo que piensas de ti mismo, de tu cuerpo y el uso de redes sociales. La investigación será utilizada solamente para fines científicos.

Te agradecemos de antemano tu participación.

Por favor indica a continuación si entiendes esta información:
O Sí
O No

1. Algunas preguntas sobre ti mismo

1.1. Por favor, indica:	
Fecha de hoy	Día................. Mes................. Año.................
¿Cuál es tu fecha de nacimiento?	Día................. Mes................. Año.................
1.2 ¿Cuál es tu país de nacimiento? □ España. □ Otro país:…………………………..	

1.3 Altura			Peso	

1.3. Nivel educativo de tu padre/madre/tutor (subraya quién)
□ Sin titulación   □ Educación superior
□ Escuela primaria   □ Titulación universitaria
□ Educación secundaria   □ Doctorado
□ No lo sé pero su profesión es ……………………

1.4. Nivel educativo de tu padre/madre/tutor (subraya quién)
□ Sin titulación   □ Educación superior
□ Escuela primaria   □ Titulación universitaria
□ Educación secundaria   □ Doctorado
□ No lo sé pero su profesión es ……………………

1.5. Ocupación padre		Ocupación madre	

1.6. Con quién vives?

2. Algunas preguntas sobre Instagram

2.1.Cuánto tiempo pasas al día en Instagram?

☐ 10 minutos o menos	☐ 11-30 minutos	☐ 31-60 min	☐ 1-2 horas	☐ 2-3 horas

2.12.3. ¿Qué actividad realizas usualmente en Instagram?

☐ Poner "Likes"	☐ Publicar fotos	☐ Mirar las fotos	☐ Escribir comentarios	☐ Compartir historias

2.4. ¿Cuándo miras Instagram?

☐ Por la mañana	☐ Al mediodía	☐ Por la tarde	☐ Por la noche	☐ Otra

2.2 Qué tipo de cuentas sigues en Instagram?

☐ Animales

☐	DIY
☐	Naturaleza
☐	Viajes
☐	Arte
☐	Comida
☐	Deporte
☐	Música
☐	Atletas
☐	Celebrities, influencers y modelos
☐	Familia y amigos
☐	Culturistas
☐	Humor
☐	Otra

3. Algunas preguntas sobre tu cuerpo

3.1. Lee cada enunciado atentamente y marca con un círculo el número que más se ajusta a tu caso

1	2	3	4	5	6
Siempre	Muy a menudo	A menudo	A veces	Rara vez	Nunca

1.	Ojalá fuera más musculoso.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	Levanto pesas para aumentar la musculatura	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	Uso proteínas o suplementos deportivos	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	Bebo batidos proteicos para ganar masa muscular	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	Trato de consumir el máximo de calorías posibles al día	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	Me siento culpable si me pierdo una sesión de entrenamiento	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	Creo que me sentiría más seguro de mí mismo si tuviera más masa muscular	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	Los demás piensan que trabajo demasiado con las pesas	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	Creo que me vería mejor si ganara 4 ó 5 kilos de masa muscular	1	2	3	4	5	6
10.	Me estoy planteando tomar anabolizantes	1	2	3	4	5	6
11.	Creo que me sentiría físicamente más fuerte si ganara un poco más de masa muscular	1	2	3	4	5	6
12.	Creo que mi rutina de entrenamiento interfiere en otros aspectos de mi vida	1	2	3	4	5	6

13.	Creo que mis brazos no son suficientemente musculosos	1	2	3	4	5	6
14.	Creo que mi torso no es suficientemente musculoso	1	2	3	4	5	6
15.	Creo que mis piernas no son suficientemente musculosas	1	2	3	4	5	6

3.2. A continuación indica cómo te sientes respecto a esa parte o función de su propio cuerpo, usando la siguiente escala

1	2	3	4	5
No me gusta nada	Me gusta un poco	Ni me gusta, ni me disgusta	Me gusta bastante	Me gusta mucho

1.	Olor corporal	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Cabello	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Caderas	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Resistencia física	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Reflejos	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Brazos	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Fuerza muscular	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Cintura	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Nivel de energía	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Muslos	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Piel	1	2	3	4	5

12.	Bíceps	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Peso	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Estructura corporal	1	2	3	4	5

15.	Figura/físico	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Nalgas	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Agilidad	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Salud	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Actividad sexual	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Torso	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Ojos	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Cara	1	2	3	4	5

23.	Condición física	1	2	3	4	5
24.	Piernas	1	2	3	4	5
25.	Apetito sexual	1	2	3	4	5
26.	Aspecto del abdomen	1	2	3	4	5
27.	Órganos sexuales	1	2	3	4	5
28.	Motricidad	1	2	3	4	5

3.3 Finalmente, indique cuánto está de acuerdo con las declaraciones usando la siguienteescala:

1	2	3	4	5
Muy en desacuerdo	Desacuerdo	Neutral	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo

1.	Me comparo más con aquellos que son más guapos que yo que con aquellos que no lo son.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Tiendo a comparar mi atractivo físico con el de los/las modelos de revista.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	No dejo de pensar en si mi aspecto es comparable al de los/las modelos y las estrellas de cine.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	En la playa o en eventos deportivos (competiciones, gimnasio, etc.) me pregunto si mi cuerpo es tan atractivo como el de las personas más atractivas que allí encuentro.	1	2	3	4	5

5.	Tiendo a compararme con las personas que creo que tienen mejor aspecto que yo.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Cuando veo una persona con un cuerpo estupendo, tiendo a preguntarme si "pego" con él/ella.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Cuando veo a gente guapa me pregunto cómo soy en comparación a ella.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	En las fiestas o en otros eventos sociales comparo mi aspecto físico con el de personas muy atractivas.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	No dejo de comparar mi apariencia con la de personas que son más guapas que yo.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Comparo mi cuerpo con el de personas que tienen mejor cuerpo que yo.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Cuando veo a una persona sin atractivo físico pienso cómo es mi cuerpo en comparación con el suyo	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Tiendo a comparar mi cuerpo con aquellos que están por debajo de la media.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	En la playa, el gimnasio o en eventos deportivos, comparo mi cuerpo con el de aquellos que tienen cuerpos menos atléticos.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Me comparo con gente que es menos guapa que yo.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Pienso cuán atractivo es mi cuerpo comparado con el de gente con sobrepeso.	1	2	3	4	5
16	En las fiestas a menudo comparo mi aspecto con el de gente poco atractiva.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Me comparo a menudo con aquellos que son menos atractivos físicamente.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Tiendo a comparar mi aspecto físico con el de gente cuyo cuerpo no es atractivo físicamente.	1	2	3	4	5

¡Ya hemos acabado! ¡Muchas gracias por tu colaboració