

## The influence of standard of thinness for woman in the contemporaneity

### A influência do padrão de magreza para a mulher na contemporaneidade

Beatriz Ribeiro Cortez Cardozo Barata de Almeida Hessel<sup>1</sup>,  
Izaura Maria Carvalho da Graça Furtado<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Corresponding author. Federal University of Bahia. Salvador, Bahia, Brazil. ORCID: 0000-0002-1629-3392. bia\_hessel@hotmail.com

<sup>2</sup>Social Faculty of Bahia. Salvador, Bahia, Brazil. ORCID: 0000-0001-5740-7010. igfurtado@faculdadesocial.edu.br

**RESUMO** | A presente investigação apresenta como tema central o padrão de magreza para a mulher na sociedade brasileira, sendo este o modelo de beleza hegemônico a ser seguido na contemporaneidade. Tem como objetivo compreender os fatores socioculturais contemporâneos que contribuem para que o padrão de magreza torne-se um instrumento de disciplinarização subjetiva sobre os corpos femininos. A metodologia empregada foi a revisão de literatura narrativa, de cunho qualitativo, com análise de conteúdo temática. Os resultados encontraram a maneira como o gênero feminino é construído e como este participa do processo sociocultural de submissão ao ideal de beleza pesquisado. Também foi encontrado que à mulher é reservado um lugar de inferioridade em relação ao homem e foi questionado o conceito de saúde relacionado ao corpo gordo. Além disso, foi investigado como as práticas discursivas são mantenedoras do lugar social atribuído ao feminino e o papel da mídia hegemônica na construção e naturalização do padrão de magreza, ao utilizar o *habitus* e as representações sociais para esta finalidade. Deste modo, concluiu-se que a mídia hegemônica contribui para a reafirmação do lugar de submissão da mulher e da imposição do padrão de magreza à ela, por meio do agenciamento dos desejos femininos. A alimentação, neste contexto, torna-se restritiva para que a mulher alcance este ideal de beleza e se purifique de seus pecados. Com este estudo, espera-se contribuir com os estudos de gênero, ampliando ainda mais esta área de pesquisa.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Controle do peso. Saúde da mulher. Representação social.

**ABSTRACT** | The present investigation introduces as central theme the standard of thinness for woman in the Brazilian society, what is the main model of beauty to be followed in contemporaneity. Has as aim to understand the social and cultural factors which contributes for the standard thinness become a instrument of subjective discipline on the female gender bodies. The methodology employed was the narrative literature review, of qualitative stamp and thematic content analysis. The results founded referred to the mode of construction of the female gender and how it participates in the social and cultural process of submission to the ideal of beauty researched. Also was founded that to the woman is reserved a place of inferiority compared to man and was questioned the health concept toward to the fat body. Besides that, was investigated how the discursive practices maintain the social place attributed to the feminine and the role of hegemonic media in the construction and naturalization of the standard of thinness, using the *habitus* and social representations for this purpose. In this way, it was concluded that the hegemonic media contributes to reaffirmation of the female place of submission and for the imposition of the thinness standard to her, by means of the agencyment of the feminine desires. The feeding act, in this context, becomes restrictive for the woman obtain this beauty ideal and for purify yourself of your sins. With this study, it is expected to contribute to gender studies, further expanding this area of research.

**KEYWORDS:** Weight control. Woman's health. Social representation.

## Introduction

The thematic of the work arises with the large frequency of news and images divulged by the hegemonic publicity in the present time, that value thinness as an ideal of beauty and the sacrifices exercised by women to fit this ideal body. The woman can feel impelled to follow him, which becomes a strong imposition in their daily lives. Thus, it is defined as a research problem which sociocultural factors in contemporaneity that contribute to the thinness pattern become an instrument of subjective control over women.

This study considers the context in which the woman is inserted and how this influences their subjectivity and behavior, placing focus on social and cultural formation of the pattern of thinness feminine and searching understand how the construction of the females occurs in this context.

It is proposed as a general objective to understand sociocultural factors in contemporary times that make the thinness pattern an instrument of subjective control over women, while the specific objectives seek to identify how machism objectifies the female body, analyze how the hegemonic media influences the woman to follow the lean body ideal, and understand how western culture contributes to the submission of women through the validation of the thinness pattern.

Important concepts for knowledge of the thematic is addressed, as gender at the sociocultural perspective; habitus, elaborated by Pierre Bourdieu (2012), and how it participates in the constitution of the Social Representations (Jodelet, 2001; Moscovici, 2003) about the social place of the woman in the contemporaneity. This is formed by patriarchal, sexist and misogynist bases (Spivak, 2010). Also are brought the studies of Joan Scott (1995), Simone de Beauvoir (1967) and Judith Butler (2016) and how social places of discourse are constructed, according to Foucault (2008). Consider, more, about how the mainstream media uses the social representations in order to maintain the woman's place of submission and the thinness pattern reserved for her (Freitas, 2002; Memória, 2012; Almeida, 2015).

The term Gender is analyzed by Joan Scott (1995) as a category that is imposed socially on a body, as well as being the primary place where power is articulated and meaning, strengthening the power relations of the masculine gender over the feminine. It is also a category of analysis and social research which does not imply a threat to the masculine gender, since it includes the feminine but does not give way entirely to the term "women". The constitution of the masculine and feminine genders occurs in a relational way, where one interferes in the construction of the other. In this work, therefore, gender is conceptualized as a social, historical, cultural, political and discursive construction.

Complementing Scott, Judith Butler (2010 as quoted in Sene, 2017) proposes that the masculine gender is considered universal and, therefore, exalted before the feminine gender, which is defined based on the regulations and norms imposed by the men. For this reason, the genders are constituted within the relations of power and are caused by them (Sene, 2017).

Social representations also influence the constitution of genders. As stated by Lauretis (1994 as quoted in Mourão, 2012), gender is defined as representation and self-representation, resulting from social technologies such as cinema and advertising, and from institutionalized discourses and practices and from common sense.

Thereby, social representations are conceptualized in the present study according to the definitions of Serge Moscovici (1961/1976 as quoted in Moscovici, 2003; 1976 as quoted in Moscovici, 2003; 1981 as quoted in Oliveira & Werba, 2013) and Denise Jodelet (2001), as the set of concepts, practices, ideas and values that arise in everyday life. It is knowledge of the common sense that circulates and crystallizes through all types of human relations, through existing discourses, gestures and practices, being present in all areas of life. They originate in social relations and influence them through their organization and orientation, contributing to the construction of social reality, individual and social identities, the development of people, collectives and the transformations of society.

The relevance of this study is justified by the research carried out in the databases, which showed that the social composition of the thinness pattern and its relationship with the control of the female body is not yet an issue explored in considerable quantity, having an incipient academic production. In addition, a large part of the studies found presented a greater bias for diseases related to thinness, such as anorexia and bulimia. The present research treats the ideal of thinness as a normalization on the body of the woman, seeking to elucidate the main sociocultural factors that contribute to this process. It intends to contribute with a critical reflection on the control of the bodies of the female population, as well as their suffering in this process.

Thus, the work can strengthen the feminist aspects, the feminine empowerment and the self-valorization of the women on their bodies, accepting them in the way they are and questioning this beauty pattern that can generate damages to their subjectivity and quality of life.

## Methodology

For the construction of the research, a descriptive, qualitative and narrative bibliographic analysis was carried out. The narrative literature review (Rother, 2007) allows the constitution of relations with researches already constructed, the formulation of new perspectives on the theme and, consequently, the strengthening of the area of knowledge to which it belongs, according to the Universidade Estadual Paulista [Unesp] (2015).

It presents a qualitative approach because was considered the relationship of the social environment with the research subject, that is, the woman in relation to the ideal body pattern. It focused on qualitative aspects of the literature, making a qualitative analysis of the content and synthesizing the results found without a statistical analysis (Shaughnessy, Zechmeister & Zechmeister, 2012).

The data were collected in articles, books, videos, journals and master's dissertations through the thesis and dissertations bank of Capes and the electronic portals BVS-Psi, SciELO and Institutional Repository of Ufba (NEIM), using the keywords following: women, construction of female gender, thinness standard, beauty ideal of female body, machism, hegemonic media, place of the feminine and objectification of the woman, each term separately and together.

Sixteen works related to the subject in question were found and used. The selection criterion of the materials prioritized works that were more related to the research objectives, as well as to emphasize works and texts of authors with a fundamental role in the studies of Gender. In addition, preference was given to the reflexive reading of works by female authors as a way of valuing their place of speech on the subject in question. Wherefore, it was sought to establish a relationship between these readings and the current body pattern, relating them to the social construction of the female gender.

In the content analysis (Shaughnessy et al., 2012), the thematic categories were delimited in discussions of the literature on the thinness pattern for young women, the socio-cultural construction of the female gender, machism as a contributor to the follow-up of this pattern of beauty, as well as the role of the hegemonic media and capitalism to encourage this follow-up. The analysis of the material prioritized to get answers about the objectives and research problem.

## Results and Discussion

From the reading of selected texts, it is possible to reflect on the construction of the women's self-image and their subjectivation processes, with respect to social and cultural influence in the ideals of beauty. On this, Pierre Bourdieu (2012) affirms that the androcentric perspective is the world view through which the division and the social classification of the bodies of the feminine and masculine gender occurs. This division and symbolic classification occurs from diffuse theories, practices and socializations but permanent in social groups and in daily life, instituting a differential use of the bodies of

genders considered as opposites. This influences the constitution of the habitus, which incarnates in the bodies and acts of the individuals and helps them to assume the vision of the androcentric world, coming from the sexist and patriarchal culture. Thus, the domination social relations of male gender over the female gender are constituted.

The habitus was found as one of the sociocultural factors that contribute to the construction of the woman's body. It manifests in the body and acts automatically, without a specific agent because is diffuse and is subject to the social norms already imposed and limited according to the androcentric principle, establishing places, spaces and activities distinct from the women, inferior in relation to the delimited aspects for the men.

The author states that social representation of the female body generates influences on the other's gaze and on the woman's self-image, becoming social reactions to feminine and masculine binarism. The individual introjects the representation, which is socially constructed, and this will influence your body and behaviors, which are particular. As the habitus is built in the sociocultural scope, as well as social representations, it is perceived that the former participates in the construction of the latter, both of which are influenced by the presuppositions of machism, patriarchy and androcentrism that constitute society at present.

Thereby, the two phenomena participate in the construction of individuals' self-image, especially of women who follow the pattern of thinness. Bourdieu (2012) still elucidates the aspects associated with each gender of the heteronormative binary model, where the masculine are associated with aspects of agility, aggressiveness, virility, rigidity, activity and public life; however, the feminine are related of passivity, care, lightness, private life, sympathy, availability, receptivity, submission, discretion, annulment, and beauty. Subsequently, the ideal of beauty is included.

As genders are built relationally (Scott, 1995), Bourdieu (2012) states that woman is seen as a being of lack, a negative existence because she is all that man is not, that is, it is attributed to her

opposite and absent characteristics in men, while he is a universal model for the elaboration of these aspects that are associated with each gender, as Butler (2016) affirmed.

Women remain in a perspective of bodily insecurity, since they "exist first by and for the eyes of others" (Bourdieu, 2012, p. 82). It is possible that women introject this truth through social representations and habitus, and reproduce it in their behaviors and beliefs and in the relation with other women, influencing them negatively. They may believe that they are inferior and submissive to the wills and desires of men and that their bodies are not or will be beautiful enough to please them (Beauvoir, 1967; Bourdieu, 2012).

Another relevant issue present in the literature was the construction of femininity. Simone de Beauvoir (1967) reports that it built on social expectations, is intrinsically associated with impotence, docility, and futility, to embellish the body and repress spontaneity to act with grace, subtlety, and charm. Being self-confident and empowered diminishes the woman's femininity and, thereby, her seductive power directed toward men. As for spontaneity, it is perceived that this characteristic refers to several sectors of daily life of women, both behavioral and their clothes as well as food itself, where many of them begin to control and manage their desires, even calculating the quantity of calories from each meal consumed in order to achieve the ideal of leanness.

Complementing Beauvoir (1967), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (2010), Indian philosopher and feminist, states that woman has the place of object in the present society and not of the subject, which is attributed to men.

Keeping her in this place, as through the encouragement and appreciation of her submission to the ideal body pattern, maintains also the model of patriarchal and sexist society, with the power relations of the masculine gender over the feminine prevailing. It is possible that one of the great social annoyances generated by the Feminist movement be this: to enable women to occupy a place of social questioning, putting at risk the relations of domination of men over women.

Spivak (2010) affirms that the place of *différend*, that is, the place of the discourse inaccessibility and of the feminine perspective devaluation on social and individual questions, is given to the feminine existence. Subsequently, women are expected to occupy the place of submission to social and gender norms, established by the male-centered androcentric world view. Through social representations and habitus, woman once again learns that her place should be that of inferiority, that of non-voice and non-listening. The place of object, as the philosopher affirms.

The precariousness concept, of Judith Butler (2016), can be related to the inferiority place mentioned. Precarity elucidates the place of women in today's society, being defined as a social and political condition which certain populations suffer more as a result of social and economic support networks that are weakened and insufficient, consequently subjecting women more frequently than men, to various forms of violence, injustice, and even death.

Butler (2016) questions why some bodies are more recognized than others in the sphere of appearance, explaining the fact that sexual and gender norms delimit which bodies will be readable in this context. These norms are built within the patriarchal, sexist and misogynist perspective and delimited by the social, historical and cultural context. They are expressed in bodies, in their gender's practices and sexuality experiences, and people who do not fit into them, such as those who do not belong to the lean body ideal, are more susceptible to suffering social violence. There is, for example, the phenomenon of fatphobia which is configured as an intense generator of psychological and physical suffering in the fat people's lives.

Another aspect worth mentioning, relates to the construction of the female body and was exposed in the literature, is the discussion of the Enunciation Modalities of discourse (Foucault, 2008). These delimit the places of individuals who speak in the network of power, being: who speaks, where does speak, why speaks and to who speaks. The discourse, for the sociologist, is always constituted in social relations and, wherefore, relates to the social places of women and the current hegemonic media, which values the lean body ideal.

The discourse is shaped by different instances such as speech, acts, writing, images, individual and social practices, and even everyday conversations (Almeida, 2015; USP, 2017). Thereby, the images of the hegemonic media participate in the network of discourses. For Almeida (2015), the discourse should be thought so that people reflect on how the social representations of individuals are constituted.

What are relevant in the discourse practices are their form and not their content. The most important is the speaker's place and not the meaning of his speech. This place is the forerunner of power relations among individuals and generates hierarchies between them. The discourse also produces truths and these participate in the quality of life or the absence of this for the subjects (Foucault, 2008).

From this perspective, is possible to think about the place of medical discourse in relation to the fat person, where, in most cases, she is pathologized and medicalized in the name of health. While this, the doctor occupies the place of the truth's holder about the other's body in the social context of power relations (Foucault, 2008). These factors can contribute to enhancement of the thinness ideal at present, context in which fat body is related to diseases and to be undesirably, what is confirmed by the medical discourse and the common sense. The form of the discourse can also be understood as the way of being, of dressing and the social representation that each subject possesses. Individuals who have bodies that fit in the ideal of beauty probably have their discourses and truths frequently more validated by their social environment than people who differ from this model.

It has also been found as a result that the hegemonic media is one of the main means of discourse production with the goal of maintain women in the agency of their desires and in control of their bodies to remain within the valued body ideal and to be possible to naturalize this model of beauty. In addition, to preserve the cosmetic industry profits. This occurs because attempts to remain thin are surrounded by rituals such as diets, plastic surgery, excess to went at gym to maintain physical exercises, among other methods.

The author Memória (2012), analyzing the role of the mainstream media in the relationship of women with the ideal of prevailing beauty, states that the hegemonic advertising in contemporary shows the social values and those that will emerge in the near future, presenting women ways to feel happy, loved, recognized and fulfilled. This is justified because the media associates the acquisition of certain cosmetic products with the fulfillment of women's desires, happiness, joy and personal fulfillment, as if products could bring these qualities into their lives. It also seeks to favor the consumption of the products divulged in advertising images through the identification of women with the models, since the hegemonic media brings the cultural values in these images and associates them with the models. In this way, the behaviors of women are influenced by the acts of the models due to the social representations, that hold the cultural values divulged. This, consequently, participates in the process of female socialization and, therefore, identification is facilitated.

The author affirms that the bodies photographed by hegemonic advertising make possible the transmission of cultural codes, habitus of contemporary society, becoming mechanisms of social interaction and favoring the emergence of behavior in the women audience, such as consumption. The image represents something that is absent in the present. It promotes and circulates social representations, conditioning modes of being and live in the world, enabling the emergence of new social representations and crystallizing habitus in social conducts. The hegemonic media can, then, encourage women to follow the pattern of beauty, since their models have, in large part, bodies that fit the lean body ideal of the present.

In the socio-historical context of the hegemonic media emergence, until the 1950s women sought to achieve the most of the beauty ideal of the period, with the intention of acquiring status and weddings, being included in a patriarchal, sexist and misogynist society that influenced their way of living. During this epoch, the hegemonic media advertising appropriated image and social representations female, disclosing the apron and dirty due to housework. Already in the 1960s, with the rise of the feminist movement, the hegemonic

media began to spread the feminine image always clean with the purpose of showing the potential of the products marketed that could leave it with more convenience and practicality in their daily life.

The Feminist movement emerged with the aim of closing the power relations of the masculine gender over the feminine and of promoting equality between them, emerging in the western world in a period of several denunciations of daily oppression experienced by libertarian movements (Mourão, 2012). It questioned, among other things, the social construction of gender roles and the female submission to patriarchy and sexism. The woman is no longer interested in meeting the demands and expectations of the masculine gaze, but in meeting her own expectations, including her body image (Memória, 2012).

Wherefore, the hegemonic advertising renews the release of the female image, relating to the completion and pleasure that originated in self-care, with the use of cosmetics on a recurring basis and the imposition of beauty products that follows her everywhere and anywhere, promoting cult and continuous care to the body, according to the author.

While the Feminist movement questions the disciplinary mechanisms on sexuality and the female body, favoring women's autonomy over their own bodies (Amaral, 2008), simultaneously the capitalist market appropriates this discourse to profit from the increase of the beauty industry consumption, which is related to the body self-care by the hegemonic media. There is a need for female submission to the standard of beauty imposed by society, reiterated by the habitus and by the social representations divulged by this type of advertising. The woman experiences a new way of managing her desires, being exercised on her own, and begins to feel the need to be and to remain lean to belong to the capitalist market ideals (Memória, 2012).

This agency is a fluid power but damaging and controlling in its day to day, and the tormentor does not have a specific face, like that of the husband (at the period before the Feminism emergence). The tormentor is constituted by the hegemonic media that appears everywhere, in a diffuse way.



At present, the real body is denied and the lean body is idealized, becoming a model to be followed. According to Memória (2012), the images of hegemonic advertising show similarities between the bodies of the models, always lean, with faces whose skin transmits the sensation of being plastic, without any type of stain, and with bodily poses and clothes also similar to each other. This denotes the search for the stereotype of thinness and to fit the women audience and the models at the ideals of corporal standard, generating standardization and disciplinarization of the female bodies.

Following the stereotype of thinness results in the erasure of the singularities of women's appearance, already discussed by Bourdieu (2012), and in the control of the female body. This control is expressed in the incentive of the restrictive diets consumption, in the surplus of aesthetic surgeries, of physical activities and in the use of the beauty industry cosmetics, generating submission and obedience to the presuppositions of the capitalist market, that is interested in profits and, every day, elaborates methods like these to meet its market demand (Memória, 2012). Wherefore, there are several effects on women's lives, which implies in their quality of life and well-being, and, above all, in their perception of self-worth as a single person and a social subject.

Charges for women's ideal body remain and are becoming higher, and technology acts to its favor. To maintain the body and feminine subjectivities' control and power relations, hegemonic media manipulates advertising images by means of currently available technologies, such as computer programs that alter the physical appearance of bodies and faces of models to include them in expectation of the beauty ideal. They also contribute to make the bodies of the models similar to each other and to exclude any characteristic that differentiates them or which is considered a defect. The hegemonic media can, then, display perfect, clean and undefined female bodies (Memória, 2012).

Another result found regarding the thinness pattern is female control over feeding. Freitas (2002) states that the overvaluation of the ideal body,

by society as a whole and by individuals, relates body weight to social achievements, imposing that the individuality of the body needs to be cared for the world. Wherefore, the subjective experience of living in a physical body returns to the expectations of the universal gaze of society, having as an imposition the satisfaction of the social gaze and not of the woman herself. It is socially induced, through the social representations and habitus transmitted by the hegemonic media, to meet established social norms regarding its appearance, detaching itself from the possibilities of its real and unique body, in an attempt to respond to a social demand.

Freitas (2002) states that the control exerted by the restrictive diets in the contemporaneity, even being a sacrificial practice, becomes a necessity to reach the ideal body. The woman goes on neglecting the introduction of healthy foods into the daily diet and depriving herself of food in general to consume shakes sold easily in pharmacies and advertised in advertisements, or to use appetite suppressants. Often, they can become anorexic and/or bulimic, among many other eating disorders, in the name of the ideal of thinness. In this perspective, considering that the medical discourse affirms fat as being pathogenic, and the media discourse reiterates that thinness brings happiness, how can women feel in this context? It is possible to understand how their well-being and quality of life are hampered.

The hegemonic media sell this truth and claim that participating in the capitalist market through the extremely lean body provides a seductive and attractive identity to the woman. For the social interpretation, the thinness conveys a message of lightness, cleanliness and purity in relation to the woman's subjectivity, as if she were absent from sins. In contemporary times, being light means having a light and healthy existence, in regard to the physical body, food and daily lifestyle. To achieve an image of innocence and fragility, distancing themselves from the tension of contemporary life, women seek physical lightness as a way to obtain the subjective lightness, cleanliness and absence of the weight of any sin, as the author affirms.

This social representation influences the meaning of bodies, where thinness corresponds to a beautiful and angelic, pure existence, indicating kindness and soft feelings, while the fat body receives an opposite meaning for social interpretation. Subsequently, the thinner the body expresses, the more it will be related to the positive qualities.

The self-control of women's bodies is expressed in the fear of gaining weight and in the re-identification and conformity of women with the world that segregates and standardizes it. This disciplinarization of bodies indicates that the lean body participates in the capitalist market, while the fat body does not. Being part of the capitalist market is related not only to the products consumption of the beauty industry, but also to the self-worth of women, which is shaped and influenced by the values and beliefs that constitute the social representations of the media images, which serve to the capitalist profits potencialization.

Wherefore, the light woman satisfy daily the social norms that discipline and standardize her body, at the cost of repressing her own willingness about her food, her way of dressing, her way of behaving and her spontaneity. Subsequently, its way of being and existing in the world that surrounds it. In this context, the feminine reflection on the subject is extremely necessary: to follow the lean lifestyle is really worth the sacrifices?

For Freitas (2002), this way of experiencing life is repressive and damaging to women. Fitting in it puts the woman in the place of prisoner, and the most aggravating thing is that she becomes prisoner of herself. Thereby, it is necessary to question the extent to which being thin today corresponds to being healthy or having a feminine subjectivity strengthened.

In this way, the agency of desires exercised by women are strengthened by the cosmetic industry, which now has greater power of influence nowadays, organizing mandatory rituals of care for beauty to be fulfilled with the justification of the woman can be providing herself more love, valuation and esteem.

Perfection works as one of the pillars of the beauty industry, employed subliminally in the advertisements and images released by the hegemonic media. However, as perfection is achieved in advertising through the use of technologies, such as computer programs, it can never be achieved in the women's reality without these devices. The hegemonic media, thereby, sells a habitus impossible to achieve in concreteness, since the consumption of the products of the beauty industry is not enough to reach the perfection of these digitally manipulated images (Memória, 2012).

This process contributes even more to women's bodily insecurity, and consequently to the establishment of self-devaluation, since self-love is related to the amount of perfection that the female body can obtain and perform.

In addition, the risks of aesthetic procedures are ignored socially. Its discomfort, pain, adverse effects and possible deformations are neglected. The postoperative of aesthetic surgeries, as well as any other type of surgical intervention, is extremely painful and may cause future problems if they do not occur properly or if there are health complications. Even so, cosmetic surgery is greatly encouraged socially and by medical discourse, once again demonstrating the fragility of the truths these discourses produce. This denotes the power relations of medicine (Foucault, 2008), of the hegemonic media (Memória, 2012) and of capitalism towards individuals.

in this way, the imposition of the perfect body is placed mostly on women (Freitas, 2002; Almeida, 2015). Almeida (2015) reports that the values of social representations are transmitted to them in moments when less is expected, moments of leisure, as in reading a novel and in contact with music and television programs. Thus, women find themselves devoid of criticism when encounter the social values that employ and the repetition of norms are internalized as truths. This hegemonic media strategy makes it difficult to confront women in these situations, contributing to the naturalization and assimilation of these values.



## Final Considerations

Through literature, it was found that the habitus is influenced by the patriarchal and sexist culture, participating in the constitution aspects of the feminine and masculine genders. Masculinity is associated with characteristics such as stiffness, activity and strength, while the feminine are reserved for passivity, sympathy, discretion, submission and erasure. The woman is a subject of lack in front of the man, because she presents the characteristics that he does not possess, in a context in which the man is considered the universal model of parameter for the feminine aspects' delimitation.

In addition, the habitus participates in social representations and strengthens the power relations of men over women. Consequently, the woman is reserved the social place of submission, in comparison to the social place of man.

The thinness pattern emerges in a context of changing social perspective, in which the woman previously submitted to the expectations of the male gaze, after the emergence of the Feminist movement in the 1960s, no longer acts in this way. However, there arises a fluid power of agency of her desires, encouraged by the capitalist market. A power exercised over herself and her bodily feeding practices, which becomes restrictive and light, and encourages excessive physical activities and plastic surgeries, neglecting the postoperative risks of these.

Therefore, self-control over her own body becomes clear and the disciplining and standardization of the female bodies as well. Distancing herself from the slim beauty ideal receives the social and medical interpretation of being ill if you become fat or out of the consumer market and can make a woman feel insecure about her body image.

It has also been found that the place of socially instituted female submission maintains sexist and patriarchal modes of socialization, preventing women from producing validated discourses. Social discourse naturalizes the pattern of thinness. The common sense discourse, transmitted by the

hegemonic media, and the medical discourse can medicalize and pathologize the bodies that are out of the thinness ideal, and it is important to question what place health occupies in this perspective and if the definition of health as absence of fat corresponds to reality.

An important finding was that the beauty industry, which profits from excessive consumption of cosmetics, restrictive diets, physical fitness centers and aesthetic surgeries, transmits social representations and habitus through advertisements and images disseminated by the hegemonic media. Therefore, these phenomena contribute to the follow-up of the thinness pattern by women, which is even more compromised since the hegemonic media acts in the female moments of leisure. This makes it difficult for a woman to use her critical sense, because they are times when she is not expected to need to do it.

The hegemonic media uses social representations to create an identification of the models shown with women audience. Women, then, become potentially the biggest consumers of the products advertised in this type of media. The capitalist market profits from the manipulation of feminine subjectivity, associating self-esteem and self-valorization with the quantity of the beauty industry products' consumption.

Wherefore, the problem and objectives of the present research were satisfactorily answered. Health becomes a concept here questioned, because pathologizing the fat body just by comparing it with the lean body ends up being unfair. The importance of the fat body depathologization and the valuation of the bodies are considered, regardless of the form they have, since a healthy body is what allows the freedom to choose and experience personal and social experiences with quality.

It was evidenced how much hegemonic media uses the place socially attributed to women in order to produce profits, since the beauty industry directs its products to the female audience because it knows that women will feel the need to buy them to fit in the beauty ideal, which is part of the agency of desires.

The limitations found were that it was not possible to investigate, due to the methodological clipping, questions found in the researched literature such as the concepts of symbolic violence, by Pierre Bourdieu, and biopower and biopolitics, brought by Michel Foucault. Future research may use them relating to the thinness pattern. As the study was limited to an analysis of the literature, it is suggested that future researches carry out a field work with the women on this subject, since the research's contributions on this theme should not end here.

The present research intends to contribute with the feminine reflection on the theme, contributing to the women's quality of life and with the scientific gap found, enriching the studies of gender and psychology.

#### Contributions of authors

Hessel, BRCCBA participated in the conception, design, search and analysis of research data, interpretation of results and writing of the scientific article. Furtado, IMCG participated in the conception, design and search of the research data.

#### Conflicts of interest

No financial, legal or political conflict involving third parties (government, private companies and foundations, etc.) was declared for any aspect of the work submitted (including, but not limited, to grants and funding, advisory board, study design, manuscript preparation, statistical analysis, etc.).

## References

- Almeida, A. (2015). Velhas Histórias, Novas Leituras: a bela do século XXI. In: A. Almeida, & I. Alves. (Org.). *Mulheres em Seriados: configurações*. Salvador: EDUFBA/NEIM/CNPq.
- Amaral, M. (2008). O Fenômeno do Culto ao Corpo Moderno e a Magreza como Símbolo de Beleza: estudo sobre o movimento "Pró-Ana" no Brasil. *Congresso Português de Sociologia*, Lisboa, Portugal. 6. Recuperado de <http://historico.aps.pt/vicongresso/pdfs/242.pdf>
- Beauvoir, S. (1967). *O Segundo Sexo II: a experiência vivida* (2a ed.). São Paulo: Difusão Européia do Livro.
- Bourdieu, P. (2012). *A dominação masculina* (11a ed.). Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand Brasil.
- Butler, J. (2016). Corpos que ainda importam. In: L. Colling (Org.). *Dissidências Sexuais e de Gênero*. Salvador: EDUFBA.
- Foucault, M. (2008). *A Arqueologia do Saber* (7a ed.). Rio de Janeiro: Forense Universitária.
- Freitas, M. C. S. (2002). Mulher Light: Corpo, Dieta e Repressão. In: S. L. Ferreira, & E. R. Nascimento (Org.). *Imagens da Mulher na Cultura Contemporânea*. Salvador: NEIM/UFBA.
- Jodelet, D. (2001). *As Representações Sociais*. Rio de Janeiro: Ed. UERJ.
- Memória, P. R. F. (2012). *A Imagem da Mulher na Moda: uma análise das representações dos corpos femininos nas fotografias publicitárias da marca Dolce & Gabbana* (Dissertação de mestrado). Universidade Federal do Ceará, Instituto de Cultura e Arte, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação, Fortaleza, CE, Brasil. Recuperado de <http://www.repositorio.ufc.br/bitstream/riufc/7865/1/2012-DIS-PRFMEMORIA.pdf>
- Moscovici, S. (2003). *Representações Sociais: investigações em psicologia social* (4a ed.). Petrópolis: Vozes.
- Mourão, J. S. (2012). *Antinomias do feminino: gênero e ficção em Ressuscitados e Ô de casa!* (Dissertação de mestrado). Universidade Federal do Acre, Departamento de Letras: Linguagem e Identidade, Centro de Educação, Letras e Artes, Rio Branco, AC, Brasil. Recuperado de <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B7JFZNJF-Pw0WHIBMzBzby1RQS10QVQ10WtqTy0xQQ/view>
- Oliveira, F. O., & Werba, G. C. (2013). Representações Sociais. In: Strey, M. N. et al. (Org.). *Psicologia Social Contemporânea*. Petrópolis: Vozes.
- Rother, E. T. (2007). Revisão Sistemática X Revisão Narrativa. *Acta Paul Enferm.* 20(2),1-2. doi: [10.1590/S0103-21002007000200001](https://doi.org/10.1590/S0103-21002007000200001)
- Scott, J. (1995). Gênero: Uma categoria útil de análise histórica. *Educação & Realidade*, 20(2), 71-99.
- Sene, R. A. R. (2017). *Identidades de Raça, de Gênero e de Sexualidade nas Aulas de Língua Inglesa na Visão das/os Estudantes* (Dissertação de mestrado). Universidade Estadual de Ponta Grossa, Programa de Pós Graduação em Letras, Estudos da Linguagem, Ponta Grossa, PR, Brasil. Recuperado de <http://tede2.uepg.br/jspui/bitstream/prefix/1488/1/Rosana%20Aparecida%20Ribeiro%20Sene.pdf>
- Spivak, G. C. (2010). *Pode o Subalterno Falar?* Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG.

Shaughnessy, J. J., Zechmeister, E. B., & Zechmeister, J. S. (2012). *Metodologia de pesquisa em psicologia* (9a ed.). Porto Alegre: AMGH.

Teixeira, J. M. (2017). Aula 01: Arqueologia do Saber/ Michel Foucault [YouTube]. Recuperado de <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qxPmOJW9AmQ>

Universidade Estadual Paulista, Biblioteca Prof Paulo de Carvalho Mattos (2015). Manual Tipos de Revisão de Literatura [Internet]. Recuperado de <http://www.fca.unesp.br/Home/Biblioteca/tipos-de-evisao-de-literatura.pdf>