A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS:
A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S BODY REPRESENTATIONS ON THE NORTH
FACE AND PATAGONIA'S INSTAGRAM PAGES

A thesis presented to the faculty of the Graduate School of Western Carolina University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Experiential Outdoor Education.

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I would like to dedicate this work to all of the women and girls who have struggled with the feeling of not being enough.

"You alone are enough. You have nothing to prove to anybody" – Maya Angelou

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Abstract

This thesis studies ways women's bodies are represented via The North Face and Patagonia's Instagram pages. As the outdoor world is becoming more diverse, the way it is shown (through advertising and marketing) has yet to diversify itself. Women, specifically, are used in image-based marketing as a way to sell objects or clothes rather than stories or experiences. These projections of women lead to an implication that the outdoors is only for women who look, dress or take pictures a certain way. This "certain way" is reinforced by major brands who (knowingly or not) use images that project gender normative habits. This thesis preforms a media content analysis of The North Face and Patagonia's Instagram pages, exploring themes that evolve from the results. These themes, including physical representations and poses embody the ideas from French philosopher Michel Foucault about discipline, power and self-surveillance. This thesis aims to bring body representation awareness to the content The North Face and Patagonia are sharing online. This content analysis is used to analyze the images from The North Face and

Patagonia which can create space for dialogue around the ways women's bodies are used to represent the outdoors.

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Patagonia and The North Face are two of the most visible and powerful outdoor clothing brands. Worth $800 million (Patagonia) and $13.6 billion (The North Face), they have a powerful economic stronghold that is accompanied by a powerful social stronghold, meaning both brands maintain a popular presence on social media and within communities via partnerships and collaborations, but also bring in more revenue than other outdoor brands, which allows them to maintain a high status within the economy (Statista, 2021; Outdoor Industry Report, 2020). With this combined economic and social power, these two outdoor brands can shape the popular imagination around who belongs in the outdoors, what "outdoorsy" looks like, and how one should behave in the outdoors. I assert that with this power should also come social responsibility; responsibility to understand how their advertising shapes the popular imagination, and perhaps the "outdoor culture" and responsibility to work toward equitable, diverse, and inclusive representations. We know that the outdoor industry continues to be a male dominated industry, 46% to 54% ratio of women to men (Outdoor Industry Report, 2020). As companies work to be more inclusive (adding more diverse models to branding, opening avenues to partner with black-owned community business and through adding diverse employees), there should also be a focus on what messages are sent to women through the images shared by both companies via social media (in particular, Instagram). Companies should include answers to questions like how are women represented? How are their bodies represented? What are they doing? How are they represented in relation to others? And, importantly, what meanings do women viewers of these images make? There should also be a focus on how might we then discipline ourselves to perform certain versions of outdoorswoman as a result?

Instagram is a site where I get to choose who I follow and with whom I interact. As an avid outdoorswoman, I chose to follow brands like The North Face, Patagonia, Merrill, and other brands who I know have a strong presence in the outdoor industry. Since I have the choice to follow these companies, it makes me feel as if I am choosing what I get to see. If that's the case, why do I feel inadequate when I see the images these brands post? When I look through my feed, I often find myself commenting or asking questions like, "Where are all the real women? There's no way this is an image of a "real outdoorswoman." These questions are prompted by the experiences I have as a woman in the outdoors as well as on Instagram. Instagram is a photo-based app that allows users to share and interact with images and videos on a user's "feed". As I scroll through my Instagram feed, I find that I have disciplined myself (knowingly or not) in ways these outdoor brands suggest. I am trying to wear clothes they advertise or pose in ways their models are posed. How are Patagonia and The North Face representing women through their Instagram pages? Representation matters. What do these representations tell us about what type of woman is *supposed* to be in the outdoors, what types of bodies, action and identities *belong* outside? As a young woman in the outdoor industry these images make me question if I *belong* in the outdoors. This leads to the purpose of this thesis which is to explore how women are represented in outdoor industry marketing through Instagram (as a marketing tool).

The Power of The Outdoor Industry

The outdoor industry is one of the highest grossing industries in the world (Outdoor Industry Report, 2020). Grossing $788 billion a year, it outperforms even the pharmaceutical and education industries (Outdoor Industry Report, 2020). Thus, it is a powerful and influential industry. The power has been amplified in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. The aggressive airborne virus forced people inside to quarantine, business and restaurants closed their doors and

many indoor recreational spaces became desolate (gyms, movie theaters, concert halls). However, one area that remained a place of peace and comfort for those some facing the hardships of the pandemic was the outdoors. As many places were forced to close, parks and green infrastructure saw a dramatic increase in use and visitation (Geng, et al., 2020; Ritchie et al. 2020b). Many campgrounds and National Parks globally initially saw a decrease of visitors when stay-at-home orders were first implemented. Soon after they experienced a sharp increase of visitors that reached numbers equal to or higher than previous year's numbers (Geng, et al., 2020; Ritchie et al., 2020b). For example, Yellowstone National Park saw 32,516 visitors in March 2020. In March 2021 they saw the most visitors ever recorded in a single month at just over 107,000 visitors (Deerwester, 2021; Rose, 2021). Along with the dramatic increase of people spending time in the outdoors came a dramatic increase in sales of outdoor gear and equipment. (Geng, et al., 2020; Ritchie et al., 2020b). With people having extra time due to COVID restrictions, they were trying new activities, which often included outdoor activities requiring additional gear to be purchased. As COVID-19 toiled with mental health, outdoor brands saw the influx of outdoor users as a way to integrate mental health awareness into advertisements and sales (Gansline, 2021; Geng, et al., 2020). Many people were trying new activities for the first time, turning toward big companies like The North Face and Patagonia for guidance and gear (Outdoor Industry Association, 2020). This evidence can be seen in the annual revenues The North Face and Patagonia made during 2021 where both companies saw an annual revenue of over 200 million, The North Face seeing a record peak of $360 million (Zippia, 2021). These companies play a powerful role in shaping our collective imaginations (what it means and looks like) in the outdoors. Who and what they post shape our ideas of who and what the outdoors should look like.

The Outdoor Industry: Shaping Diverse "Outdoorsy" Identities

Scholars have noted that it is in our leisure spaces and activities that we are free to develop and explore our identities, who we are and who it is possible to become (Geng et al., 2020b; McNiel, Harris, & Fondren, 2012). In addition to its economic importance, the outdoor industry has a major impact on our society individually and socially as well (Geng et al., 2020b; McNiel, Harris, & Fondren, 2012). With this in mind, it is important to understand how the industry sells the message of "who belongs in the outdoors" through advertising and media.

Recently, a major focus of the outdoor industry has been diversity, equity, and inclusion (National Recreation and Parks Association, 2021). Notably one of the three pillars of the National Recreation and Parks Association is Equity. The National Parks Service, for example has focused efforts into building the "Relevancy, Diversity and Inclusion Department." This department focuses on creating inclusive spaces, bringing awareness to the lack of diversity within parks and hosts partnering events to create allies between diverse communities and the parks (NPS, 2021). Some companies like REI, The North Face, Patagonia, and The Association of Outdoor Recreation are working to diversify the industry by changing marketing and hiring practices (Martin, 2018). However, despite these efforts, women as well as other minority groups are still underrepresented in outdoor advertising, as well as outdoor participation (Outdoor Industry Report, 2020). Women are still underrepresented in outdoor activities compared to men, at a 46% to 54% ratio (Outdoor Industry Report, 2020). According to the Outdoor Industry Report, in 2021 Black and Hispanic Americans continue to be underrepresented, specifically in outdoor participation, with only 11% of participants self-reporting as Hispanic and 9% self-reporting as Black (Outdoor Industry Report, 2021). While race is an important aspect of diversity within the outdoors, this thesis explores gendered representations, a lesser explored

topic within literature around the outdoor industry (Winship, 2000). Ava Holliday, a founding member of the Avarna Group, a consulting firm that advises outdoor companies on ways to create diverse and inclusive spaces notes that hiring people of color, and creating diverse spaces, is a "clear case for business" (Martin, 2018). Holliday goes on to express that without a diverse workforce, companies (including those in the outdoor industry) will fail at creating, marketing, and including a diverse community (Martin, 2018). While there are racial disparities within many workspaces, there are also gender discrepancies. For example, women within the outdoors have struggled to gain spots in outdoor advertising and within social media posts from outdoor brands (Costello, 2021; Martin 2018).

Women in Outdoor Industry Social Media Spaces

While there is a lack of women participation in the outdoor industry, there is also a deficiency of marketing materials depicting and relating to real women (imperfect, unedited, natural etc.) in the outdoors (Costello, 2021; McNiel, Harris, & Fondren, 2012). Today, women may experience lack of resources, intimidation, pressure to follow social norms and lack of time as reasons they do not participate in outdoor recreation (Costello, 2021; McNiel, Harris, & Fondren, 2012). Although we have moved past a construct that deemed the outdoors as "unladylike," there remains a nagging standard of feminine beauty to be upheld in many spaces, including the outdoors. These views of women and associated stereotypical notions of femininity often hinder women's willingness to participate or post on social media about any outdoor experience they have (Costello, 2021; McNiel, Harris, & Fondren, 2012). Even when women are represented doing outdoor activities on social media, only a specific type of woman is represented. That type of woman is generally thin, white, and feminine presenting (Costello 2021; Grey et al., 2018; Hoff & Hancock, 2021).

The rise of social media has led to an increase of image awareness problems that have swamped the modern generation of social media users. In 2019, the word "influencer" was added to the Merriam Webster dictionary, giving the word power, and meaning. An influencer is often described as one who has the power to persuade people, specifically through social media, using their lifestyle and content. (Freberg, Graham, McGaughey & Freberg, 2011, Merriam Webster, 2019). The power of an influencer can be astounding (Van Driel L & Dumitrica 2021; Toll & Norman, 2021). With one post, hundreds of thousands of people see the style of the influencer and immediately feel they need to look, dress, or act how that person or organization has presented themselves (Geyser, 2022; Tafesse & Wood, 2021). In order for a person or brand to be considered an influencer they must reach certain criteria (Geyser, 2022). The main one being that a person or brand has a powerful social relationship with their followers. This relationship then has the power to influence purchasing (or other) decisions based on how the influencer steers their audience (Geryser, 2022). This becomes a problem when brands like Patagonia or The North Face post images representing women in less than powerful ways. The North Face and Patagonia act as influencers, persuading an outdoor enthusiast that they should look, dress, or participate in the ways that are represented through their Instagram posts. They have created social relationships with their followers by posting attractive content promoting gear, which followers then buy. The gear is often well made and withstands the test of time, leading the follower to become committed to the success of relationship (buying gear, following on social media and supporting them in whatever ways they can) (Patagonia, 2021; The North Face, 2021).

Historically, women are used in marketing for promoting clothing, attracting attention, or creating the idea of "if a girl can do it so can I" (Fardouly & Vartanian, 2015; Gray et al., 2018;

McNiel, Harris, & Fondren, 2012). Despite the current movement in the outdoor industry to embrace diversity and become more inclusive and equitable (Martin, 2018), the majority of women represented in online advertisements are women who fit a mold: white, skinny, toned and "attractive" (Glotfelty, 1996). As inclusivity of varying races and ethnicities is promoted, the push for inclusion of body type and characteristics is falling short.

With the above in mind, the purpose of this thesis is to explore how women are represented by The North Face and Patagonia on Instagram (as a marketing tool). I chose Instagram, as it is one of the most popular social media sites with over one billion users (Statista, 2021) and is a popular platform for outdoor industry companies to advertise. In particular, I analyzed posts from two of the most prominent outdoor brand's Instagram account: The North Face and Patagonia. Using storying alongside a content analysis, I will explore the following research question:

How are women represented on Instagram within Patagonia and The North Face's pages?

The image of folded t-shirts in figure 1, a small business ad using heartwarming images just popped up on my Instagram feed, now I'm seven taps deep into the small business back story, about to buy items to support them. How did I get this far? Because image-based marketing works. It plays on our emotions (Panger, 2017). It creates ideas in our heads about the kind of life we could have if we had the items being sold in the image (Panger, 2017). I once read a quote on Twitter that said, "I keep buying bathing suits because I want the body that the bathing suit is on." We keep giving into the schema of marketing because those images give us an escape to a world that

Figure 1

[Green T-shirts] Instagram.com

does not exist. Marketers have determined a key system of how to target consumers in a way that keeps them wanting more (Matz, et.al. 2017). However, aside from the monetary purchases resulting from a successful advertising campaign, marketers are also selling something else: culture (Berger, 2021). The way we dress, what we eat and even how we pose (all aspects of culture) become a trend on social media. These trends (usually backed by influencers) then drive how we carry ourselves outside of social media (Berger, 2021).

Ecommerce is expected to be a $4.5 trillion dollar industry by 2021 (Hubspot, 2019). So, what makes marketing, specifically image-based advertising, so powerful? According to Sut Jhally, the author of *Image-Based Culture: Advertising and Popular Culture* (1990), the United

States uses a commodity-image marketing system. This system lies at the core of a person's

identity, using images to present materials, goods and services that line up with how a person

chooses to present themselves (1990). Advertisers use products to show worthiness, which leads

consumers to buy into the products, thinking the products will provide worth. The system

becomes a cycle of the consumer seeking worth and value through purchasing materials. When

the value is not found they try again on an item that seems better. This cycle keeps consumers

coming back for more, while companies observe the interactions, adjust what worked and keep

trying at the fleeting fulfillment a material item can produce. Companies use sites like Instagram

to surveil and discipline their interactions with consumers (Toffoletti et al., 2021). A company

will post an image, examine the interactions the post has then use that information to create the

next post that will bring in more interactions (reference needed). This discipline allows the

companies to continue to create content that is marketable, coercive, and importantly, tailored to

that specific individual (Panger, 2017).

     Companies maintain a hold on American consumers by feeding them a constant stream of

ideas, images, goods, and services with little to no effort needed by the consumer. This system

creates a power dynamic between businesses and consumers. Foucault (1975) writes about the

impacts of discipline, surveillance, and power. In this case, consumers are being disciplined by

businesses and their marketing strategies to feed into what the business is offering reinforcing

Foucault's ideas of discipline and power. For example, The North Face and Patagonia offer

outdoor clothing items. They post these items on Instagram in enticing ways, leading to a

consumer thinking "if I buy that jacket, I too will look like the adventurer that is wearing it".

This dynamic allows for consumers to practice self-surveillance, where they present themselves

in similar ways The North Face and Patagonia present their models on Instagram. The images

promote discipline (buying the gear) which leads to self-surveillance (making sure I am seen in this gear to be seen as the normal). This keeps the consumer at bay, not questioning the goods being attained, as long as there is something for them to feed on.

Instagram

Instagram was founded in 2010 by a Stanford Graduate, Kevin Systrom. Systrom created the photo sharing application which was then purchased by Facebook in 2012 (Antonelli, 2020). As of 2020, Instagram has just over 1 billion users worldwide, making it the second largest social media platform, after Facebook.

In 2020, Instagram was the sixth most used social media site, generating $20 billion in ad revenue (Search Engine Journal, 2020). Instagram became one of the fastest growing social media sites in the world. Within 11 years it has amassed 1.16 billion users (Antonelli, 2020). Anyone from teenagers to mega-corporations, to small businesses uses Instagram to share images and promote goods directly to consumers. Many large outdoor brands like REI, Patagonia, The North Face, and Columbia have turned to Instagram to directly reach consumers. As technology has developed, the complexity and usage of Instagram has also changed. The site can now allow video uploads and embedded links that permit consumers to shop for items directly on the page (Antonelli, 2020).

With the immense popularity comes some harsh critiques. Instagram has become known for being a site where consumers can share almost anything, amass a following and eventually, with a large enough following, become what is known as an influencer (Tafesse & Wood, 2021; van Driel & Dumitrica, 2020). The influencer culture has led to negative reviews of the purposes of Instagram, including the influencer culture itself. Influencers have become a mainstream way to direct followers' behaviors, purchasing decisions and content (Tafesse & Wood, 2021; van

Driel & Dumitrica, 2020). An influencer builds a dedicated relationship with their followers

which leads to the follower becoming obsessive over the influencers brand (Tafesse & Wood,

2021). This obsession can lead to dangerous actions committed by a follower (Tafesse & Wood,

2021). Consider for example, the infamous tide pod challenge, where people would eat a tide

detergent pod and post a video or image of the challenge. An influencer may post a video

promoting the "tide pod challenge" (a dangerous challenge where people would eat tide pods)

which leads fans and followers to attempt to recreate the happenings within the post, hoping to

gain similar fame and popularity as the influencer. Dangerous trends created or imitated by

popular influencers have many questioning the values Instagram upholds. Are likes and

followers or the safety of users and viewers more important? Instagram has implemented

community guidelines which do not allow for posts of nudity, but sparsely describe any other

forms that are not allowed. It is important for Instagram to be aware of the content being shared

because the site has a powerful influence over the users. If negative content is being shared, there

could be negative takeaways occurring.

Patagonia

Patagonia is an outdoor gear brand created by Yvon Chouinard in 1973. Chouinard got

his start as a rock climber in southern California, creating climbing gear from a junkyard forage

and an anvil. Word spread that the equipment he was making was affordable but reliable. He

soon began working out of a shop in his parent's back yard selling forged pitons for $1.50 each.

In 1965 Chouinard partnered with Tom Frost and Chouinard Equipment was born. Over the next

nine years Frost and Chouinard worked to create reliable, lightweight, safe equipment and by

1970 became the largest supplier of climbing gear in the United States. Eventually clothes,

gloves, bivouac sacks and mittens were introduced into the brand. It wasn't until 1991, when a

recession hit and Yvon took his crew to Patagonia to reflect on the recent setback, that the famous brand attained its name (Patagonia, 2021). Patagonia was created for the need of creating quality, eco-friendly climbing gear, and clothes for climbers across the world. Today, Patagonia still focuses on climbing gear and has initiatives like "1% for the Planet" which donates 1% of every sale to preservation and restoration around the globe. Patagonia has served as a reliable option for climbers' and outdoor enthusiasts across the world, deeming them as the most popular outdoor brand in North America. Patagonia was chosen for this study because they represent a "major outdoor brand" due to their popularity both in person and online. They have 4.6 million Instagram followers and made just over $350 million in sales in 2018 (Statsocial.com, 2019) and maintain a constant stream of images, video ads and storylines on their Instagram page.

The North Face

The North Face was founded in 1966 by two hiking enthusiasts. Named for the coldest, harshest side of the mountain, The North Face's design ironically unfolded on a beach in San Francisco (The North Face, 2021). The North Face prides itself on serving all who desire to explore while also conserving natural lands. The North Face began by selling backpacking and climbing gear known for its quality and comfort. In 1980 The North Face expanded their sales to include extreme ski wear and by the end of the decade became the only supplier of high-performance ski wear, sleeping bags and camping gear in the United States. The North Face is the U.S. market leader in outdoor gear sales, bringing in over $2 billion of the outdoor gear's $4 billion sales every year (Statsocial.com, 2019). Their mission is: "Provide the best gear for our athletes and the modern-day explorer, support the preservation of the outdoors, and inspire a global movement of exploration" (The North Face, 2021).

The North Face is also known for sponsoring athletes in many sports like snowboarding, mountain biking, climbing and more. Their mission includes "inspiring a global movement," and "providing gear for the modern-day explorer "showing that they are actively trying to market toward a diverse audience with the goal of getting everyone outside and exploring. The athletes they sponsor reside all over the world and work alongside The North Face to educate people on the importance of land conservation. The North Face was chosen as a comparable brand to Patagonia because they share similar Instagram followers and sales. The North Face has 5.1 million followers and made a total of $360 million in revenue in 2021 (Statista, 2021). The North Face is also a part of the parent company VF Corporation which had a revenue of $9.2 billion dollars in 2020 (Statista, 2021).

The North Face and Patagonia: The Leading Competitors in Outdoor Gear

The North Face and Patagonia are prominent outdoor brands that have amassed large followings on Instagram. These two brands were selected for a few reasons. The first is the similarity these brands share in terms of their gear, lifestyle representations and connection with outdoor recreation. Both brands have a focus in outdoor gear creation, with much of the gear being based on rock climbing, hiking and camping essentials, among other styles (The North Face, 2021; Patagonia, 2021). Each brand also employs partnerships with community organizations that promote climate change action, inclusion and diversity and accessibility to the outdoors (The North Face, 2021. Patagonia, 2021). The second was because the brands both have a similar number of interactions from their social media accounts. The North Face has 4.8 million followers and Patagonia has 4.6 million followers (as of April 5th, 2021). The third is that these brands are recognizable by the general public as "major" outdoor brands. These brands are

both "for profit" companies, which means a main goal is to make a profit off the sales, often advertised through social media.

The study will focus on images from each page during the time frame of March 2020-March 2021. This period was chosen to reflect on the wide change that the COVID-19 Pandemic has caused. The time period chosen also reflects the slowing of the pandemic in America, when numbers began to drop and many places opening back up, eventually, to full capacity. March 2020 reflects the first of many months of quarantine, which created an influx of people turning toward the outdoors. Novice outdoor enthusiast flocked toward The North Face and Patagonia to attain the sought after "outdoorsy style" gear (Morency, 2021; Outdoor Industry Report, 2021). Activities like hiking, running, walking, and biking saw the largest increase of users, as these activities were deemed the safest during the pandemic (Outdoor Industry Report, 2020).

The North Face and Patagonia brands project an image of who they feel most commonly represents *their* outdoor brands. But with both having such an influence over the outdoor industry (Burton, 2021), *their* outdoors eventually becomes *the* outdoors. Both have the power to project the outdoors as a space to be diverse and inclusive, yet both brands choose to keep their marketing profiles limited in terms of who they use to represent themselves and the outdoors.

Previous Research on Women's Representations in Media

Researchers have begun to study how women are represented on (and how they use) Instagram and related social media sites. For example, Instagram has affected the way women specifically, view the outdoors and present themselves in it. (Gray et al., 2018). Women are more likely to post images of themselves performing gender affirming activities or ideals (Gray et al., 2018; McNeil, 2012). Women, in comparison to men, post more selfie shots with their chests in the image, more poses of their backsides and even more images of them in swimwear (Fardouly

& Vartanian, 2015; Gray et al., 2018). Additionally, women post these images within outdoor settings, giving the connotation that women can only be in outdoor settings if they are upholding feminine ideas or actions (Gray et al., 2018). Women are also used in more advertisement images than story images, meaning women are used more for selling an object than telling a story or being relatable (Gray et al., 2018). Social media is also cited for creating body dissatisfaction in both women and men who actively use social media, with 41% of women and 17% of men reporting being very concerned about their body image (Tamplin, McLean, Paxton, 2018; Toffoletti et al., 2021; Mission Australia, 2016; Perloff, 2014). These studies have found that women, while being represented in outdoor advertisements, are often represented in ways that reinforce traditional subjugated gender roles or create

Figure 2

negative (overly sexual, hyper feminine and passive) connotations toward a woman's body, creating a negative view of how women see themselves in any outdoor setting (Gray et al., 2018; Mission Australia, 2016; Perloff, 2014; Tamplin, McLean, Paxton, 2018). While there is research on women in advertising, there are less studies on women in outdoor advertising, especially on social media. A study by McNiel and colleagues (2012) focused on media post like Instagram to determine the meanings behind why some images may be interacted with more and what the images mean. The sample size in this study was 424 ads. Gray et al, (2018) analyzed posts from Instagram and Facebook,

[Collage of Outdoor Images]
Instagram.com
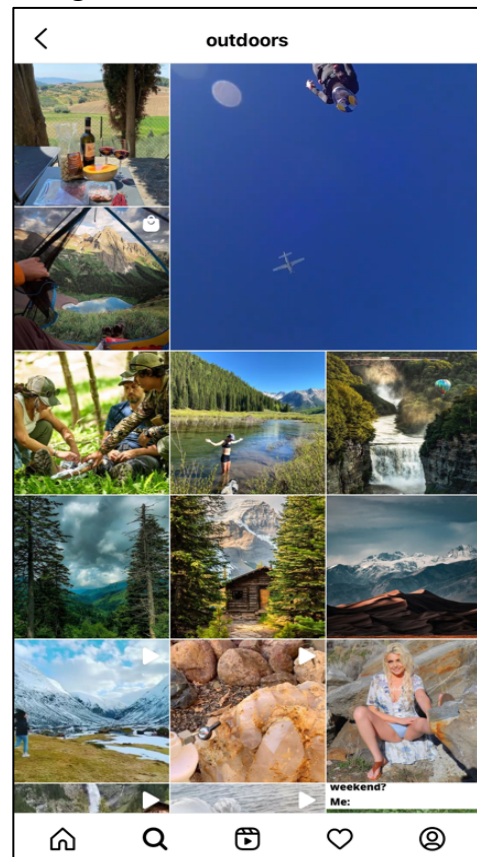
focusing on texts emerging from hashtags and what those texts implied. Their study analyzed 63

images. Plessis (2017) performed a content analysis of social documents to analyze the role of

marketing in social media, analyzing 51 full text documents. Toffoletti and colleagues (2021)

preformed a study on women's vulnerability and visibility within Instagram using interview data.

These select studies help provide insight to the data collection and analysis structure behind this

thesis but do not encompass the entire library of research and sources used throughout this paper.

This study aims to provide more research on women's body representations within outdoor

advertising, specifically on Instagram.

Instagram and The Outdoors

Images have always been used to represent cultural, social, and ideological contexts

within a society (Ibrahim, 2015), so, having entire applications dedicated to sharing images

shows the value and importance images hold in our society. Instagram began simply as an app to

share photos with friends and family but has since evolved into a massive platform dedicated to

showing off trends, material items, experiences and looks.

When "outdoors' is searched on Instagram, there are many different images that are

shown (see figure 2). These images represent the different interpretations humans make of the

outdoors. Instagram has changed the way people use and interact with the outdoors. For

example, through the use of geotagging on Instagram images, the numbers of visitors to many

outdoor places have increased, which certainly has both pros (tourism, and getting more folks

outside) and cons (damage, overuse and even closure of historic sites and trails) (Hale, 2018;

Mags, 2018). Instagram remains one of the most used social media sites (Antonelli, 2020),

influencing millions of users from the images and advertisements placed on a person's feed. The

images we see subconsciously discipline us to act, buy or pose in ways the images promote. As

we view images over and over, consistently being exposed to similar patterns and themes, we begin to perform these patterns and themes as part of social norms. Social norms then become standards one is expected to uphold within society. When one does or does not uphold an expectation, a cycle of approval ensues. Approval means one may continue to practice the norms and expectations and disapproval leads to a change in action. This process can have broad effects on how a society decides what and who belong in certain spaces. For example, images on Instagram could have the power to change and shape our collective culture and view of what types of bodies (fat, thin, white, black, woman, man, or non-binary etc.) *belong* outside.

Framework

This study used a feminist theoretical framework with a focus on gender and body type inequality. Feminist theory is an extension of feminism where the idea that gender and gendered racial (among other identity intersections) inequality shape all aspects of economic, social, and political life (Bell et al., 2018). It focuses on the roles of gender and gendered race within society and allows for dialogue around societal norms that create inequality for women and those who identify as women. Feminist theory allows for social norms like gender roles and stigmas to be explored through research on qualitative and quantitative spectrums (Bell et al., 2018). Feminism takes a deeper look into the ways women, and those presenting as women, have been molded by society into forms that serve minute, narrow purposes. Feminist theory pushes back against those purposes and examines the power structures involved within our society. Feminist theory is related to critical theory, which explores the lived experiences of people in context, interpreting the acts and symbols of a society (Parry & Fullger, 2013), and critiquing the society those experiences have created. In the same way critical theory focuses on understanding a society, which can then be critiqued, feminist theory critiques the power resulting from of patriarchal

systems in place within the society. "Feminism is fundamentally about transforming patriarchal culture and society" (Parry & Fullger, 2013; Snyder-Hall, 2010, p. 256). Using feminist theory will allow me to analyze the data through a lens that critiques the ways our society's patriarchal discipline has penetrated all elements of society (including the outdoor industry).

The aim of this study was to create dialogue around representations of women in the outdoors. Surveillance, discipline, and power play a major role in dissecting the why's and how's of social media influence on American culture. Michele Foucault was a French theorist known for his interpretations of power, surveillance, and discipline. He focused on the way power, surveillance and discipline play a role in individuals and in a society. Foucault suggested power is held by those in control and maintained by the subjects who do not have power, through discipline and surveillance. Foucault's main ideas of power revolve around the setup and impact of the panopticon.

The panopticon is the French prison system described by Foucault in his book *Discipline and Punish* (1975). The guards stay in a central tower, the panopticon, where they can see all prisoners, but the prisoners cannot see into the tower. Thus, implying the idea that a guard could be watching the prisoners at all times. This system enforces the idea that the prisoners are always being watched, even if they cannot see their watcher, therefore the prisoners *behave* as if they are always being watched even if no one is watching them (Foucault, 1975). They have internalized their own subjugation, disciplining themselves without the need for an overt external apparatus to discipline them (Foucault, 1975). This system can be seen in many areas within our society. One popular example includes the "shopping cart" idea, which implies that even though no one enforces returning the shopping cart, one may still do so. This imagined surveillance creates discipline within the cart returner, making them feel as if they should return the cart to remain a

decent member of the community. Another example is the surveillance of the police speed traps. Although we only see police checking speed every so often, we don't drive around speeding all the time (thus disciplining ourselves) because there "might" be a police car around the next bend. Because we know we may be surveilled (even if there is no one on the other side of the cameras) in stores, we don't shoplift. It is the presence of the surveillance (or possibility of it) that disciplines our actions.

Similarly, when we post images on Instagram, we don't *know* 100% who will view our posts (or even that anyone will), but as we post, we discipline our content with the idea that someone might see it and even if they don't, we upheld our end of posting something that would be accepted if it were seen. This notion is exemplified by the idea that someone posts to Instagram with no guarantee of anyone seeing or interacting with the post. You create content while directly thinking and hoping someone else notices it, that noticing brings praise in the form of likes, comments, or interactions. While is beneficial, it does not always imply approval. If it does not get noticed, you know that your post was still what society would approve of (because you posted something reinforcing the social norms you have been disciplined to follow). This is the same way a prisoner "creates" or acts in ways that would bring praise if they were to be noticed but still assures they are an acceptable member of the prison system within the panopticon.

Foucault's theories of surveillance also play a central role to image-based marketing. Consumer's practice "modern trends" like how we dress, shape eyebrows, wear make-up and what our bodies should look like even though there is no one-person dictating those trends. The trends become ways, we as a society and as individuals surveil ourselves to maintain order and likeness to one another. Instagram could be a modern-day panopticon, and we (Instagram users)

could be its prisoners, disciplining and surveilling ourselves based on the influences of what we see.

Foucault has been used by other scholars to show the power dynamics between surveillance, discipline, and social media. Olszanowski (2014) and Godoy-Presland (2015) both base their work around the Foucault ideologies of the power social media creates through discipline and surveillance. Olszanowski (2014) focuses on the rules and codes Instagram employs to control the content being posted, and then examining posts of three women engaging in self imaging policies to bypass the strict guidelines of Instagram. Godoy-Presland (2015) focuses on the surveillance techniques are employed by a British Newspaper as a function of power to discipling and influence sports and displays of women's bodies. These studies, amongst others, help convey the ways Foucault can be seen and used in today's society. Instagram is a large photo sharing platform that embodies the cultural importance of pictures (and sharing them) in our society.

Companies like The North Face and Patagonia have more recently relied on social media apps like Instagram to reach followers and spread marketing materials. These companies have been using image-based marketing for years, but with the inception of Instagram, their media has reached new followers and had unforeseen impacts. These impacts include discipline and self-surveillance of a follower's ideas and image of themselves.

CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY

Methodological Theory

For this research project I used a qualitative media content analysis. A content analysis is described as a method of research where content is pulled, analyzed, and interpreted to help find patterns, reasonings, and meanings within a society (Bengtsson, 2016; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Stemler, 2001). "Content analyses are used to illicit meaning from data collected and draw realistic conclusions about patterns in that data" (Bengtsson, 2016, p.10). A media content analysis is the practice of using technological media like images, videos, or audio transcripts as data. A media content analysis is a beneficial method for analyzing content like images because it allows images to be translated into text and then coded (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Many researchers have provided guides for performing content analysis (e.g., Bengtsson, 2016), and for this research project Krippendorff's (2018) six data alignment questions will be used. These six questions help to narrow the scope of the data and decide how the research should be conducted. Using these questions allows for the collection of data in a streamlined way which will help maintain consistency. Krippendorff's questions are as follows:

1). Which data are analyzed?

2). How are they defined?

3). What is the population from which they are drawn?

4). What is the context relative to which the data are analyzed?

 5). What are the boundaries of the analysis?

 6). What is the target of the inferences?

Content analysis has been used in similar media studies research to analyze images (Gray et al., 2018; McNeil, 2012; Fardouly & Vartanian, 2015). For example, Fardouly and Vartanian

(2015) measured how young women who used Facebook compared their bodies to images of their peers and celebrities and found that those who spent more time on the site felt more concerned about their bodies. Gray et al., (2018) studied the content of images on Instagram, and the interactions with those images, and found that many images of women were posed and filtered. McNeil (2012) studied 42 issues of an *Outside* magazine, comparing the presentation of women in wilderness advertising. These media content analysis studies demonstrate the use of this methodology and maintain that women and women's bodies in varying forms of advertising and social media could be more appropriately managed.

Content (Image) Selection Criteria

The data for this study were images from The North Face and Patagonia's Instagram pages. The following questions should be used in any content analysis and act as a format to determine what the data should be. Selected images were collected and narrowed down using Krippendorf's (2018) questions:

1). Which data are analyzed?

> The images used are from The North Face and Patagonia. These images were collected in a 12-month time-period (March 2020-March 2021). This time-frame was chosen because it was the first full year of the COVID-19 pandemic and where we saw record numbers of new recreators getting outside. Outdoor companies were especially focused on promoting their outdoor clothing, gear, and lifestyle (Outdoor Report, 2021). The data set is limited to images that contain at least one female presenting person with a viewable face (i.e., images that are not zoomed out so far that the person is unidentifiable as male or female).

2). How are they defined?

These images are defined by a short list of criteria developed in the initial stages of this thesis. The first criteria are that the images must contain at least one person presenting as a woman. The second is the images should only be images and not videos or short clips. Instagram has evolved from photo sharing to now photo and video sharing which is why this distinction was made.

3). What is the population from which they are drawn?

The images are drawn from the complete photo collection from both The North Face and Patagonia's Instagram pages from the timeline selected above. These brands were chosen as the brands to be studied because of their similarities in follower number, brand missions and influence in the outdoor community (Burton, 2021).

4). What is the context relative to which the data are analyzed?

The context includes but is not limited to the way women in the outdoors are represented on Instagram, the Instagram culture in 2020-2021 and the way women's bodies are disciplined through self-surveillance. All images are analyzed within the context of being images used for brand promotion and representation.

5). What are the boundaries of the analysis?

Some boundaries of the data are the definitions of the images, being one female presenting person and that the images cannot be videos or short clips.

6). What is the target of the inferences?

The target of these inferences is to open dialogue around women and women's representations in the outdoors from social media posts, like what can be seen on Instagram.

Due to the nature of Instagram, being a technological platform open to faults, outages, and deletions of content, I chose to collect the images at the time of the proposal (October 6th, 2021) to capture the Instagram activity of these companies at a certain time in history.

Method

There was a total of 194 images collected (147 from The North Face and 47 from Patagonia) for the time frame of March 2020-March 2021. To narrow down the number of images to a sample size of 50, a random number generator was used. The number generator gave out 25 numbers for The North Face and 25 for Patagonia. The final 50 images were then put into an excel spread sheet based on their Instagram page. The 50 images were chosen based on previous studies that had successfully preformed research on similar sample sizes (Gray et al., 2018; McNeil, 2012; Toll, & Norman, 2021). Each page had 25 images as well as four columns, each for the four steps of analysis. The excel spreadsheet was used to organize the images and each step of the analysis per the image. Once analysis was completed, the images were then moved into storyboards which is explained further in this thesis.

Analysis

To analyze the images, I used guided questions. These questions were developed as a way to focus the rich description within the analysis. The rich description is an in-depth text description of the content, so I wanted to be sure the images were each described in a similar manner, leading to the development of these questions. These guiding questions came from the early steps of the design process of this thesis and assisted in compiling and organizing the textual data. The data was analyzed with these questions in mind but was not limited to descriptions resulting from only these questions. They included:

(1) What is the number of people presenting as women in the image?

(2) What are women doing in the image?

(3) Who are women with?

(4) What types of femininity are represented?

(5) What body types of women are represented? and

(6) What representation of race is in the image?

Translating the images to text took place in the rich description, storying and decontextualization phases of the research.

My content analysis used a four-step approach adapted from (Bengtesson, 2016). The four steps I used were 1) rich description (Geertz, 1973), 2) storying, 3) decontextualization and then 4) recontextualization. The first two steps allow for reflexive and qualitative elements to be introduced into the analysis portion of a content analysis (Rose & Johnson, 2020). This method gives room for researcher interpretation and shows "what the content implies" vs what it might mean. The researcher "decodes" the message "encoded" in the image (Hall, 1980; Rose & Johnson, 2020). I describe the process of analysis in each of the four steps below.

Step 1: rich description. The first step is the rich description. Rich description is described as explaining in detail as much as possible the reasons behind human actions (Geertz, 1973). Rich description helped provide detail from within the images which helped explain the happenings in the image. This step is where I familiarized myself with the data and wrote a thorough description which was later analyzed. In this step I looked over each image closely and wrote down as complete a description as I could. It is important to make sure every part of the image has been accounted for, so that I can include all parts of the image in the analysis. This means going into detail about anything in the image, since this description will lay down the path for the rest of the analysis (see figure 3).

Figure 3

[Patagonia posted 8/30/2020]. Screenshot of data collection. 1/30/2022.

ages	Step 1
(Instagram post screenshot)	8/30/2020. A group of people laying in long grass afront a large lake. There a mountains in the background and it looks like a clear, warm day. Some of the people are sitting and watching while three of them play with a ball. It appears that at least one of the people playing is a woman wearing blue shorts and a red shirt with their hair down. Two of the people sitting down appear to be women. One is laying on their back with a hand blocking the sun. They are wearing orange shorts and a darker orange top with a light blue hat. The male in the gorup is playing with the ball, shirtless with his abs directly facing the camera. He is also in the center of the whole shot. All of the people in the image appear to be thin, white and active.

Step 2: storying. The second step is storying. This is where I, as the researcher, added my subjectivity and reflexiveness into the analysis (Rose & Johnson, 2020). I asked the questions, 1) What story does this image tell? 2) How does it make me, an avid outdoorsperson and white woman in her 20's, feel? 3) What is the story telling me about American culture?; and, 4) What messages are being sent? This aspect of my content analysis allowed for dialogue about gender, positionality, and representation in the images. In this step some theories from Foucault were applied to help further examine subtleties within the images (see figure 4).

Figure 4

[Patagonia posted 8/30/2020]. Screenshot of data collection. 1/30/2022.

ges	Step 1	Step 2 Storying
	8/30/2020. A group of people laying in long grass afront a large lake. There a mountains in the background and it looks like a clear, warm day. Some of the people are sitting and watching while three of them play with a ball. It appears that at least one of the people playing is a woman wearing blue shorts and a red shirt with their hair down. Two of the people sitting down appear to be women. One is laying on their back with a hand blocking the sun. They are wearing orange shorts and a darker orange top with a light blue hat. The male in the gorup is playing with the ball, shirtless with his abs directly facing the camera. He is also in the center of the whole shot. All of the people in the image appear to be thin, white and active.	This image makes me feel happy. Its spring time, people are playing and they look relaxed. As a woman it is interesting to see a man centered in the Image with no shirt on while the women lay down and are sort of the background. The caption is talking about public lands but this image doesnt seem to make me interested in public lands, I'm more interested in what the people are doing. This image tells me that our society wants men to be active and women to watch. Also to be on national lands is a white person activity.

Step 3: decontextualization. The third step in the analysis was the decontextualization phase. In this step, I aimed to look at the more subtle messages from the image. Decontextualization is the action of taking content and pulling the contextual meaning out (Bengtsson, 2016). In this step I analyzed the images as if they were directly on my personal Instagram feed. The context of analyzing these images was for the purpose of this study. I spent far longer looking and thinking about the images with Foucault's theories in mind than I would If I were scrolling in my bed. This nuance is important to note, however these images can and do have if I were simply scrolling aside from this research. With this in mind the first step was to

write down what immediately came to mind when viewing the image to get the raw impression of what was being presented (see figure 5).

Figure 5

[Patagonia posted 8/30/2020]. Screenshot of data collection. 1/30/2022.

	Step 1	Step 2 Storying	Step 3- Subtle Messages
	8/30/2020. A group of people laying in long grass afront a large lake. There a mountains in the background and it looks like a clear, warm day. Some of the people are sitting and watching while three of them play with a ball. It appears that at least one of the people playing is a woman wearing blue shorts and a red shirt with their hair down. Two of the people sitting down appear to be women. One is laying on their back with a hand blocking the sun. They are wearing orange shorts and a darker orange top with a light blue hat. The male in the gorup is playing with the ball, shirtless with his abs directly facing the camera. He is also in the center of the whole shot. All of the people in the image appear to be thin, white and active.	This image makes me feel happy. Its spring time, people are playing and they look relaxed. As a woman it is interesting to see a man centered in the Image with no shirt on while the women lay down and are sort of the background. The caption is talking about public lands but this image doesnt seem to make me interested in public lands, I'm more interested in what the people are doing. This image tells me that our society wants men to be active and women to watch. Also to be on national lands is a white person activity.	Quite the backdrop. Why are the women laying down watching the men? They are choosing to not epxlore a place this grand?? This is sending a message that women should be lazy or relaxing while men are active. This makes me want to quit my job and travel to beautiful places.

Step 4: recontextualization. The final step is the recontextualization phase. This phase is where the messages were compiled into patterns and similar meanings (Bengtsson, 2016). Compiling the data allows for patterns to emerge and allows for group analysis of all the images together. This step focused on questions like what do these images tell us about our society and the images projected by outdoor brands? How are these images being perceived versus the possible intention? In this step used the image captions from the original posts to compare how intention and perception play a role (if at all) in the images used. This step served as a culmination for the first three steps, combining all information gathered to paint the entire picture of how women's bodies are represented via The North Face and Patagonia's Instagram.

The data compilation happened in the storyboarding process, a stem from the recontextualization step. After the first three steps, the images and data were then looked over and added to themes. The themes emerged throughout all four steps. The themes were created as images and data were looked at and patterns began to emerge. These patterns were then written down, refined and grouped together as the process continued on. Eventually, seven major themes were decided on based on occurrence, influence on myself as the researcher and the stories they told. These seven themes became the themes for the storyboarding process. This process formalized the recontextualization step into a word document with the themes, corresponding images and an explanation of that theme.

Researcher Entrance and Ethical Considerations

Instagram is a public website that allows anyone to make an account using a name, phone number, and email.

The images used were solely from the verified The North Face and Patagonia Instagram accounts. Instagram is a public platform, so with a valid log in images that are on public pages are accessible through a simple search of the page or brand name.

I must consider the identities of the models in the images and be sure to not assume specifics. I used "people presenting as" language, and I used previous research and social platforms to identify and describe skin tone and body types of the people in the images. Literature points toward using gender-fair language (GFL) to aid neutralizations and assumptions within academic research, as well as other areas where language is prevalent (Sczesny et al., 2016). Since I did not know the gender of the people in the images, I used descriptive language during the analysis (The Writing Center, 2021). Rather than saying "the woman in the photo" I used "the person in the center of the photo wearing the teal shirt." I also used the captions of the photos and the items

being sold (if there are any) to help assume gender in the images. For example, the photo may show a person wearing shorts and a shirt, but the caption may say "Woman's T-shirt for sale." Using the captions, I assumed the model wearing the T-shirt is a woman. Using descriptive language, captions, and clues within the image, I concluded, for the purpose of this research, if the people being represented are a woman or a man.

CHAPTER IV RESULTS

While the bulk of the results of this research project are qualitative descriptions of the

image content and context, I also gathered image meta data; I counted descriptive indicators of

image content. The descriptive indicators are the same as the six guided questions, which are

spoken on in the previous sections and are as follows; (1) What is the number of people

presenting as women in the image? (2) What are women doing in the image? (3) Who are

women with? (4) What types of femininity are represented? (5) What body types of women are

represented? and (6) What representation of race is in the image? These more quantitative

descriptions of the image in combination with the qualitative descriptions helped form a well-

rounded meaning making process (Bengtsson, 2016). I begin this section by first presenting the

descriptive quantitative data of the images. These statistics were used to help categorize images

based on demographic factors like body type and skin tone and content factors like poses. The

information presented in this section is based on the 50 images reviewed for this study, 25

images from each of the Patagonia and The North Face Instagram feeds. There were 27 images

(54%) that showed women with white skin color. After race, I looked at body type, then poses,

followed by landscapes. I chose to classify the images as thin, average and plus size based on

my interpretations and perceptions of what of those bodies looked like to me. While this

classification is certainly subjective, above I have provided three figures that help denote my

classification system (See images 6 (thin), 7 (plus size) and 8 (average). Of the 50 total images,

72% (36 images) used models with a thin body type (see figure 6), leaving only 28% (14) of

images showing an average to plus sized woman. The classification of average to plus sized body

types was grouped together, as there were too few images to create varying distinction. Four

styles of poses represented women in 96% of the photos. The poses were broken down to 40%

(20 images) of women shot in a profile style (this means side of the face or body, see image 10 below), 26% (13 images) were women shot zoomed out (this means their whole body was in the shot with ample background, see image 11, 12 or 13 below), 26% (13 images) showed women in a seated position (see figure 8). Figure 8 in particular, demonstrates a thin woman in a seated pose whereas 6 and 7 denote women in standing poses. The final 4% (two images) showed women with their back side (see image 15). In sum, some ideas drawn from the image metadata shows us that the most predominate image is a thin woman, in an extravagant location shot in a

Figure 6

[Patagonia posted 7/17/2020].

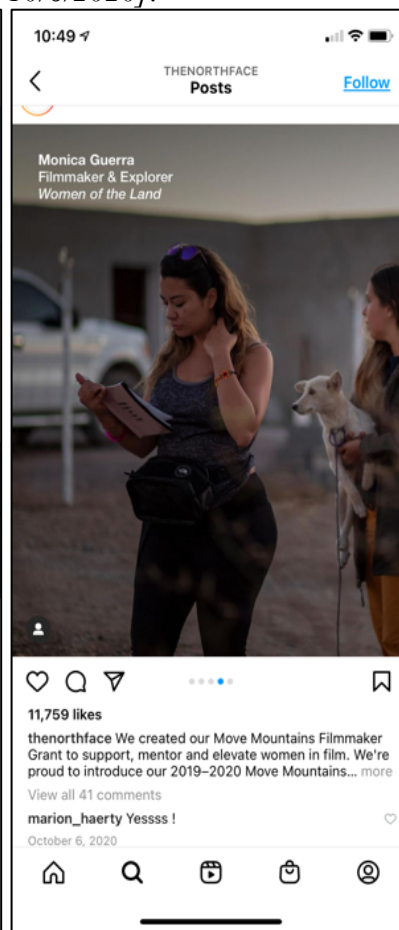**Figure 7**

[The North Face posted 10/6/2020].

Figure 8

[The North Face posted 6/30/2020]

passive style. Notably, the images were just as likely to show a white woman as a woman of color.

Qualitative Data Analysis

After I gathered the 50 images, I organized them in an excel spreadsheet, along with headers that correlated with the three levels of the data analysis. These levels were rich description, storying and decontextualization. The methodology chapter describes the details of these steps (see figures 3-5). I thoroughly examined each of the images I collected and at the end of this process, I decided to theme the data using storyboarding. The idea here was to connect themes by pulling images that correlated to the transcribed data. This step allowed me to collect the themes while also organizing images that correlated, which opened the space for patterns and trends to emerge. Please note that all images following this section were images pulled from storyboards within the data.

Storyboarding

Part of the process of analysis was storyboarding the themes along with the images. I grouped the images together based on how they represented the theme (figure nine and 10 for physical representation images). The story-boarding process allowed for the themes to be organized with images that correlated to each theme. This helped me narrow down the themes that had the most impact to me. The storyboarding process happened at the end of the analysis, after all data had been examined through the four initial methodological steps (rich description, storying, decontextualization and recontextualization). After performing data analysis, the initial storyboards that came to mind were these seven, each representing a theme from the data:

1) sexualization of women,

2) poses of women,

3) women not directing attention to the scenery,

4) homogeneous posing or women being posed in close relation to other women

5) zoomed out images of women being active,

6) inadequate or jealous feelings and

7) clothing representations.

The theme titles were typed in a word document. I then revisited my images and copied images that best highlighted the theme itself. After rereading my data analysis, two story

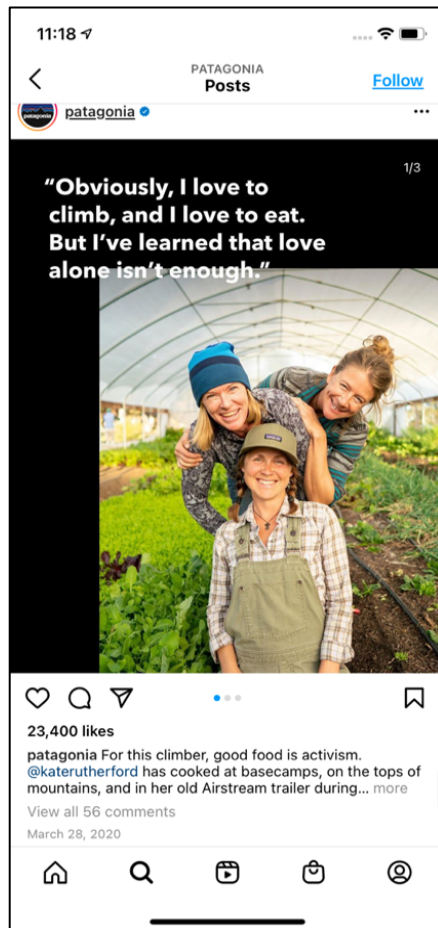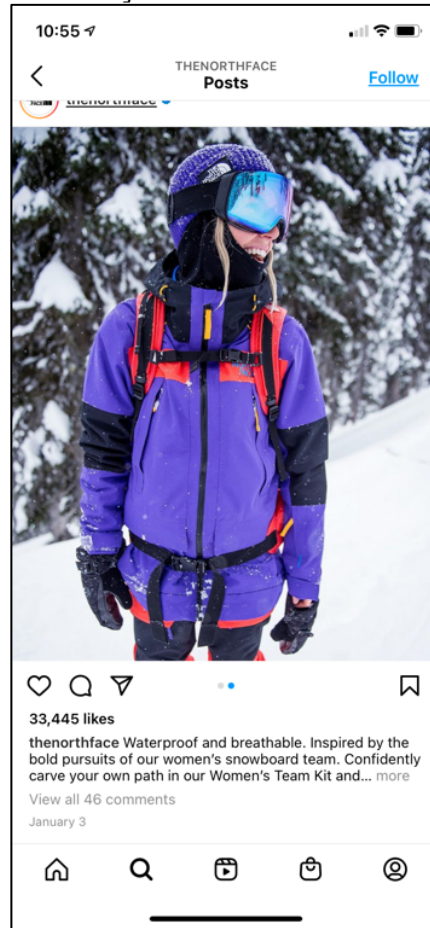**Figure 9**

[Patagonia. Posted 3/28/2020]

Figure 10

[The North Face. Posted 1/3/2022]

boarded themes in particular rose to the top as those that were the most prevalent. The first is the way women are presented physically (looks, clothes etc.). The second is poses of the women in the images (sitting, standing, doing an activity). These themes were the most prevalent because they represented the majority of the images.

In this section, I will describe the results from each of these story-boarded themes, both from the image metadata and the qualitative aspects. In the discussion I will describe more about how these themes can discipline women (me in particular) into thinking or feeling they/we are "not enough." Subconsciously, when someone sees these images, the natural thing to do is to compare themselves. This comparison instills the feeling of not being good enough because we

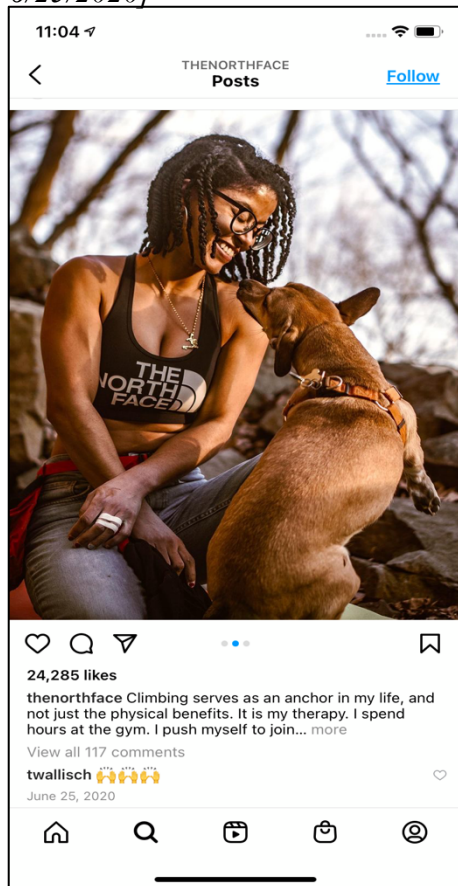**Figure 11**

[The North Face. Posted 6/25/2020]

Figure 12

[Patagonia. Posted 8/26/2020]

do not look like the images, nor are we in a unique location doing these activities. The way the images are presented reaches just over the line of achievable, creating an idea of "if I do exactly how they do, I will be just enough." I will discuss these findings in the discussion chapter. The following are breakdowns of each story board topic.

Storyboard 1: The Way You Look Is Not Enough; Physical Representations

Figure 13

[Megan Stevens Data Collection]

1. My looks – anyone who doesn't know me probably wouldn't know the image of me is that different than those of these models but somehow, I feel I look at it and I see myself sticking out like a sore thumb. All I think about is how red my ear is or how my teeth look protruding. Can we also talk about the fact that I can barely tell myself apart from pictures 1 and 2 (I am picture 2) but somehow, I know I look worse?? If the back of some one's head could prove beauty, she would def win. Popular modern beauty- just enough "everyday woman" showing standard beauty in a modern way. - Not putting plus size/ sweaty but will put standard forms of beauty like thin and white. Women can't be too aggressive- not ready for that but ready for a woman to be athletic as long as she still seems like she would be too pretty. Are not overtly sexualized (puma, Adidas, JC) in contrast.
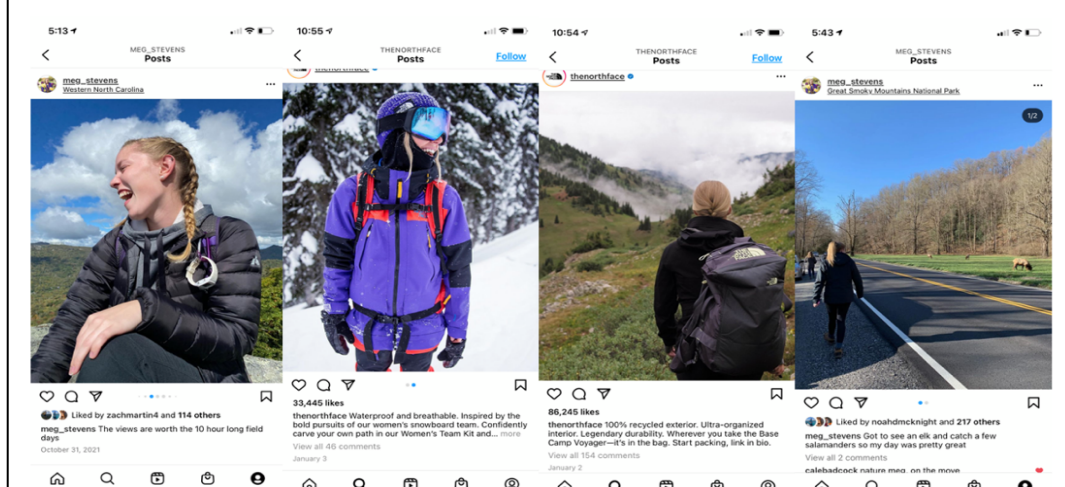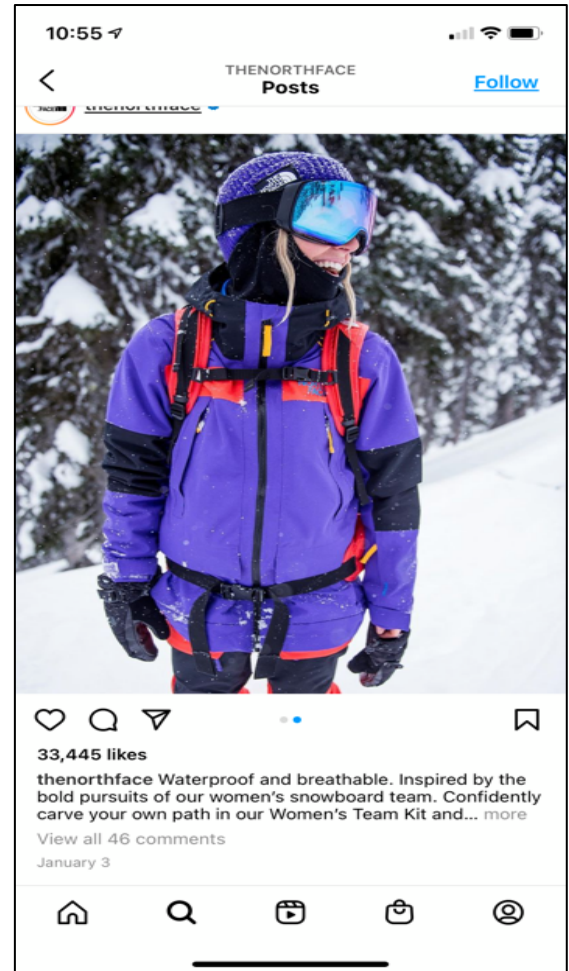
I begin this section by posting the entire story board of physical representations (see figure 13). I will comment on some specific images following the description of the whole storyboard. In figure 13, I gathered images that represented how I felt about the physical representations of this data, along with a brief description of how this theme makes me feel. Some of the images are taken from my personal Instagram, while some are what The North Face and Patagonia posted. The images chosen were images that stuck out to me, primarily because of how they were so similar to images I have posted of myself, but also because of the cookie cutter idea of physical representations they promote.

The subsequent paragraphs will walk through how I assembled the storyboards and themes from within the data itself. The following excerpt is from the rich descriptions (stage one of analysis) portion for figure 13:

Figure 14

[The North Face. Posted 1/3/2022]

> Advertisement. There is one woman in this image wearing a ski outfit (see figure 14). She has on a purple, red and black outfit with a black helmet. She has on big goggles, and you can only see her mouth and nose. She is smiling wide and looking to the side. It looks like she is wearing a bookbag on her shoulders and she is wearing gloves. She looks like a thin white woman, who is presumably athletic, given the setting and outfit. The images in in front of snowy trees. (Data collection, 2021).

The quote shows the objective happenings within the image and described the image when I initially captured it. This portion of the analysis allowed me to gain insight about what the image is portraying, who is in the image, the actions happening within the image and the location. The next quote shows the storying portion for this image. The storying section is where I told the story of what the images is presenting and the messages it could be sending. The following is from figure 13's storying analysis step:

> So artsy and cute. Snowboarding is hard and exhausting. I would want to see my gear I'm buying holding up with that activity. This makes me think I all I can do in snow is take cute pictures. This image is showing more of the outfit and less of the activity. (Data Collection, 2021).

The story being told by this image is that appearance and gear is prioritized over the activity or enjoying the moment. The decontextualization phase is where I applied how the image made me feel. In this analysis step I analyzed the images based on how it would make me feel if I were seeing the image in my daily Instagram scroll. What would I feel off the top of my head, with no critical inspection of the image? The following is how this image made me feel:

> I wish I looked that good when only my nose and teeth were showing. You know she's a baddie and you can only see the bottom half of her face. How does she look like that? (Data Collection, 2021).

The physical representation theme is one of the main ways self-surveillances plays a role in how women view themselves when thinking of what it looks like (or means) to be "outdoorsy." I cannot tell you how many times I have tried to achieve the "candid look to the side and laugh" pose that the woman in the purple snow suit (figure 14) is pulling off. While she is posed and pretty, I can't help but notice that I (pulling off the same pose to the left in figure

13) look like I'm trying too hard or that I am not as pretty as she is. I look the same as both girls via my poses and my physical self, but somehow, I feel as if I am not as good, which makes me feel less deserving of the right to call myself an outdoor enthusiast. Self-surveillance is at work in this storyboard particularly in the ways I pose but also in the ways I view myself (see figures 15 and 16). While the poses are an obvious form that I am intentionally disciplining myself to follow, the impacts on myself view are deeper. I view myself as "sticking out like a sore thumb (figure 13) or "having protruding teeth" simply because the woman on the left of me "looks"
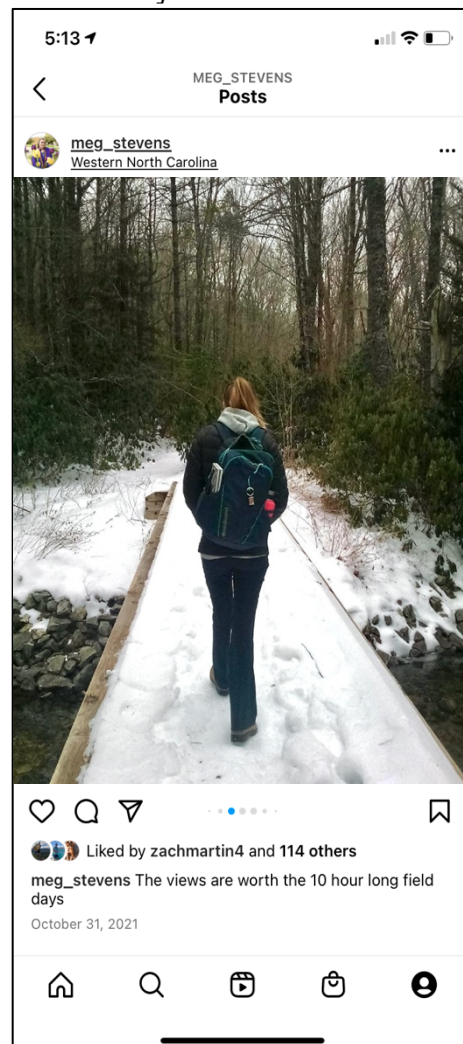
Figure 15

[The North Face Posted 1/2/2021]

Figure 16

[Megan Stevens. Posted 10/31/2021]

better than I do. In figure 15, the image is a North Face advertisement about a bookbag, while the one on the far right is an image of myself (see figure 16). Both images do not show faces, yet when I compare myself to the North Face image, I immediately feel inadequate. Is this because she has a prettier back-of -the-head than I do? While that question seems meaningless, it's what goes through my head when I am deciding what to post. By posting an image of myself that I feel negative about, but one that is seemingly identical to The North Face, I am actively embodying the discipline and self-surveillance imposed through The North Face and Patagonia. The ideas from Foucault (1975) about self-surveillance state that many of the ideas from self-surveillance are ideas that have been reinforced over long periods of time. I was not impacted from seeing these images for a few days, I was impacted because these are the majority of images, I've seen representing the outdoors. This constant promotion of images similar to these, create the idea that women should only post or even participate in the outdoors if we look or pose the way these models do.

Story Board 2: Climb A Mountain and Pose Like A Ballerina; Poses.

The second theme represents the poses or shot styles the women are shot in. Four poses or shot styles represent 96% of the data collected (48 images). These four poses are 1) a profile shot of the woman, 2) a shot of her backside, 3) her sitting or 4) the image zoomed far out (shot style). In figure 14 there are four images that represent some of the previously stated poses. The three images on the left are from The North Face and Patagonia, while the fourth image on the right is an image of myself. While these poses may seem unintentional or unimportant, they are subtly sending the message that women should experience the outdoors in anonymous (not

showing the face), passive (seated, leaning, or inactive) or secretive (profile, partial face or zoomed out) ways (see figures 14 - 17).

The rich description phase was the first step in the data analysis. This step allows for the objective data to be transcribed for future analysis. The rich description data for figure 17 is as follows:

There is one woman in this photo sitting on a rock with a rocky background. She has a bookbag between her legs and is holding a coffee thermos. She has on an orange shirt and

Figure 17

[Megan Stevens Data Collection]
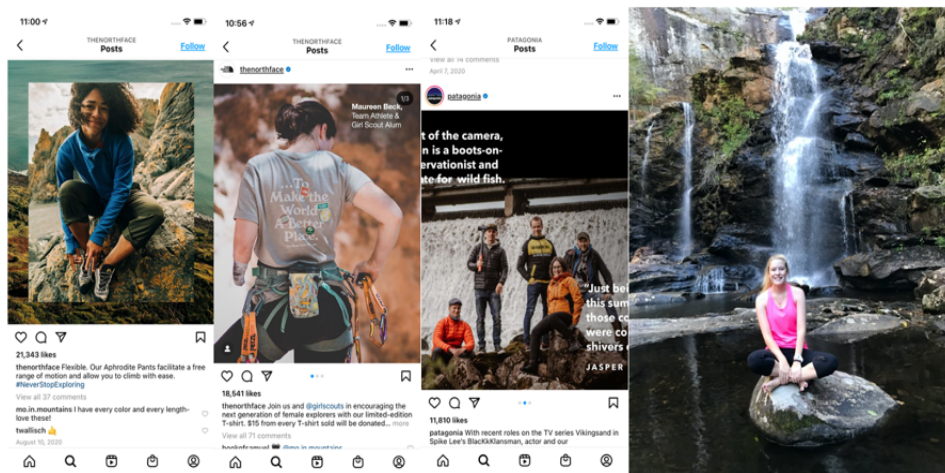
black pants and hiking shoes. She is a black, thin woman with her hair natural and she is

smiling. (Data Collection, 2021).

The rich description aspect of this analysis gave me the idea of everything happening

within the image, whereas the storying portion involves more analysis with a critical lens. The

storying lens helped analyzed the image through the aspect of cultural messages. The storying

data for figure 17 is:

Sitting and posed. The caption is selling the pack the woman is using but the image

doesn't say that. I wish I could see more details of the pack or see it in action. I feel like

Figure 18

[The North Face posted 6/30/2020].

Figure 19

[The North Face posted 7/5/2020].

Figure 20

[*The North Face. Posted 11/20/2020]*

the use of a woman here defeats the purpose of the pack being the center of attention. I am more focused on how she looks than the pack. (Data Collection, 2021).

The storying portion for this image gives off the idea that a woman should be used to help sell items rather than selling the item by itself. The decontextualization portion allowed for the image to be analyzed through my personal lens. This lens helped me see the image as raw and unfiltered, like I would if I interacted with it on my personal Instagram. The decontextualization analysis for figure 17, focused on image 18 is:

Who sits on a rock like that? Also, if the backpack is lightweight, like the caption says, I'd want to see her carrying it or using it. Anything is lightweight when it's on the ground. (Data Collection, 2021).

The decontextualization analysis reaffirmed the data from the storying portion about the image being more about the woman and the misuse of the pack rather than the pack itself. The storyboard for this theme shows how the images provoke feelings of confusion about why one would choose to share images that don't represent the force of the journey. I vividly remember hiking to this waterfall and it being one of the most difficult hikes I had done. It was steep, long, and very slippery. When I got to the bottom my immediate thought was "don't look like you just died on the hike, look cute". Why was this something I thought? Why did I feel the need to subdue the exertion of energy I had just put out? I felt this way because that's how I thought women (or myself) should look after a long hike. I had only ever been exposed to strong women but so zoomed out (figure 19) or to pretty, posed women in the outdoors, looking quaint and fragile (see figure 20). Images such as these create ideas that I should not show off force, sweat and grit, I should rather show composure, pretty and graceful. Along with leading me to feel

"bad" for looking winded after a long hike, the images also make me feel like my body should

not be the focus of the image. If I post an image of a grand place I should pose in a way where

my body is small (zoomed out) or where my face does not distract (backside shots). The

messages these images send tell me that my body is unimportant, or only useful for garnering a

look or like rather than being the focus of the image. The constant exposure to images of women

Figure 21

[Patagonia. Posted 4/11/2020]

Figure 22

[Patagonia. Posted 4/7/2020]
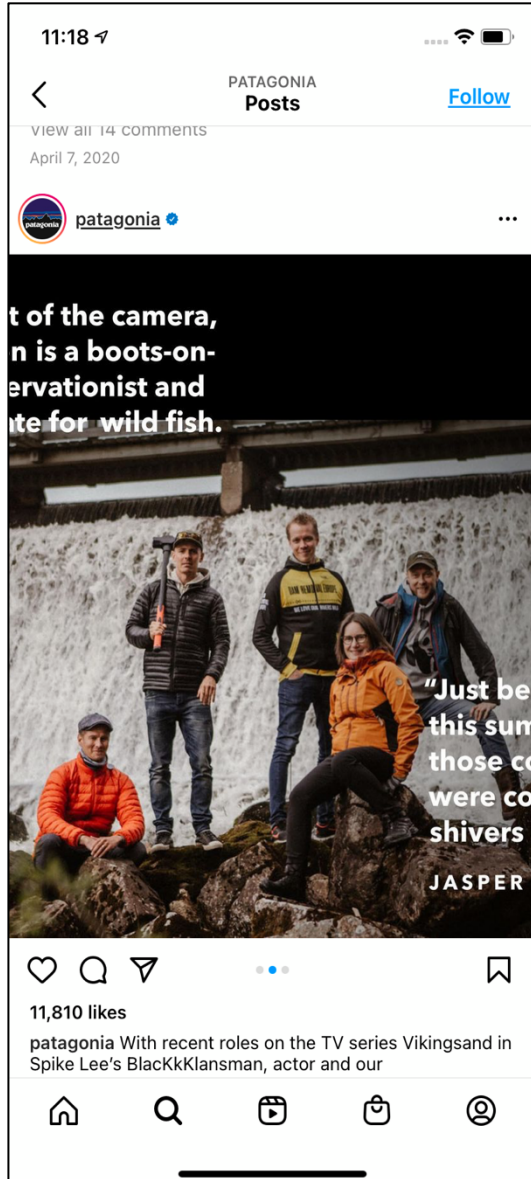
in passive, posed ways instills discipline on how one should present themselves while in the outdoors. The discipline, described by Foucault (1975), leads to subtle ideas which then leads to conscious actions. These actions can look like self-surveilling to ensure what is posted fits the "normal" that is being pushed via constant postings of manicured images.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

As an avid user of Instagram, following outdoor brands' pages, I see images of women in the outdoors every day. Seeing these images so often has led to a subconscious desire to look "just like them" (whether in real life or from what I post). I identify with so many women who feel similar (expressed feelings in various blogs and on comments to images such as these (Elizabeth, 2020; Sanford, 2018) about the images being posted. I feel frustrated that no matter how hard I try, I don't look like the models do. While I cannot say how these images make a plus-sized queer black woman feel, I can speak to how these images made *me* feel and think about myself. In this discussion section, I focus in particular on the fourth layer of data analysis (recontextualization) and I tie in theory. Overall, in looking and studying these images, I had two feelings that arose on repeat: not being pretty enough and that I should act/pose passive in the outdoors.

The two themes (physical representation and poses), when combined create the idea of – "if I look and pose and go to these places, I will be what has been normalized.". The discipline around normalizations allows for me to think I am doing everything right, when in fact, everything right is self-surveillance at its finest. Foucault described normalization as the construct of an idealized norm of conduct, which are defined through the power of self-surveillance and discipline (1975). This can look like reinforcements of normalized standards through image-based marketing, which is why these images have such a strong impact. Women are exposed to these images, which over time can create subtle urges to attempt to fit into the social normalizations. When these feelings of normalizations aren't attained, it leaves us feeling like we are not enough. In these instances, women are acting as both the prisoner and the guard

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in the panopticon. Both surveilling themselves through what they post and disciplining themselves to look, pose or act in similar ways to what is posted. As the guard, we are influenced by what The North Face or Patagonia post, using those images as a way to determine how we could act, influencing the prisoner on how we think we should act.

How You Look Is Not Enough; Physical Representations

The North Face and Patagonia did a well thought out job of representing the women in the images in a way that I feel represented in terms of physical representation (story board 1). The North Face and Patagonia are not overtly sexualized the way ROXY is (see figure 23), nor are they body size diverse like Eddie Bauer (see figure 24). The brands represent an everyday woman by using models who are not famous (i.e., not using name brand models like Adriana
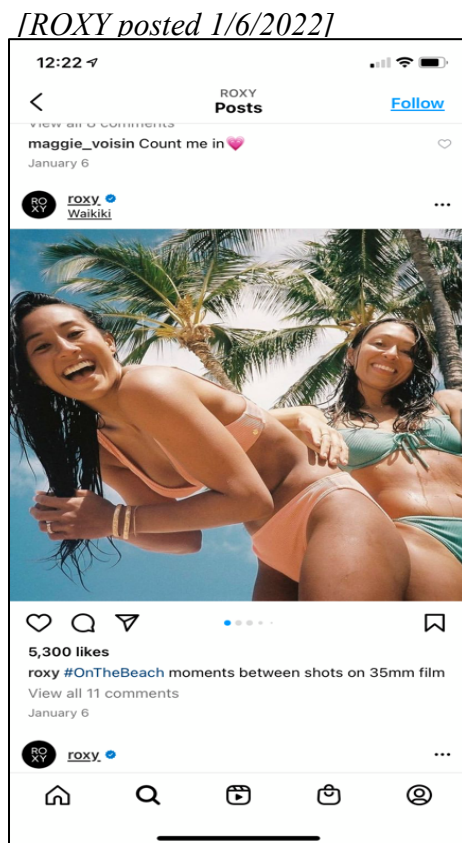
Figure 23

Figure 24

[ROXY posted 1/6/2022]

[Eddie Bauer posted 12/2/2021]

Lima or Kendall Jenner), and models who are not overly made up (i.e., using natural make up and very minimal hair styles). Each model was just average enough to connect with an everyday person, but just "beautiful" enough (using stereotypical standards, often white, cisgender, upper to middle class representations of beauty) to make me jealous. The North Face and Patagonia use standard beauty ideals (long hair, skinny, bright smiles (Hoff, 2021)) along with modern aspirations (strength, power, independence) to present a model that both relates to and evokes desire. The images present a "just enough" quality that pulls in the viewers (or in this case, me). These images allowed me to identify with the models while simultaneously prompting feelings of inadequacy due to the narrow lane these brands span. The feelings of inadequacy then drive the urge to be "…enough," which could prompt a variety of behaviors: editing photos or not posting them at all; self-conscious posing when taking photos; or even buying the product(s) promoted. With Instagram pages like ROXY, it is easy to notice the blatant use of overly sexualized women. Skinny models in skimpy bikinis, shot from angles that accentuate hips, boobs, buts and tones abs show women in a way that is more *model* than "everyday". What is not blatant is the intentional choice for Patagonia and The North Face to not include many plus size models within their pages. These brands recognize that leaving out plus size models feeds into the "just enough" attainability of their images. By using images that are so closely related to the average target market of these brands, they are disciplining women into thinking that if they were to "attain" the branded look they would then be "enough". Rather than diversifying their images, they maintain a streamline of constant similarities within every image of a woman.

Climb A Mountain, Pose Like A Ballerina; Poses

The final theme explored is the way women are posed in the images (story board 3). While this may seem unintentional, the poses do send a message (see figures 25 and 26). Of the

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four poses, seated, zoomed out, backside or profile, all of these poses show women in passive or

limiting positions. The seated position implies that women should be inactive while outside. The

women had to hike to whatever location the image is in (usually atop a mountain or in a valley)

but the image selected was one of her sitting- despite the fact that she just hiked all that way. As

Figure 25

[The North Face. Posted 7/18/2020]

Figure 26

[Patagonia. Posted 4/11/2020]

one who has hiked to many mountain tops or steep valleys, it's hard to want to post an image that

shows me sitting, when I want to be showing off the grit and strength it took to get to where I

was. The profile, zoomed out and backside shots represent women in hidden ways. These poses

show that women should not show their faces or bodies full on, but rather show only a part of

them. This idea implies that rather than be head on and intense, women should be anonymous,

hidden, or secretive. While these poses do not always indicate that a woman is passive in the outdoors (i.e., sitting is good for taking rest) there could be more poses of women in other positions. Foucault's (1975) idea around discipline is that it reinforces societal norms that have been put in place by those with power. When large brands like The North Face and Patagonia use poses that represent women in passive ways, it creates the normal standard of women being passive. The constant exposure to these images enforces the discipling, eventually leading to the perception that being passive in the outdoors is normal. The normal is then looked at as something that one must achieve to receive praise, or acceptance into society. The only problem is that this new "normal" (passive posing) is not attainable, leaving one feeling just short of enough. Posing in passive ways disciplines women into thinking the only way to capture the outdoors is to capture it while also remaining docile.

Examining Being "Just Enough"

These brands rode the fine line of "just enough," thereby capturing a broad and faithful audience. However, without deeper analysis, it is unlikely that women realized this subtle effect. This subtle effect being the idea of "just enough", pretty but not gorgeous, strong but not muscular, adventurous but not too risky. The images used by these brands are just edited enough that they border on the line of achievable. A woman can see herself in the images, but not quite. The resulting feeling is "Maybe if I had this (bathing suit, fleece, SUP board, etc.) I could be perceived as (or feel myself as being) more beautiful. Therefore, I'm going to buy the bathing suit/fleece/SUP board to feel (or look) similar to the images.

To remain "just enough," one must actively try to embody what society deems "normal," while also trying to retain authenticity. The result of this tension is a near constant self-surveillance. Foucault (1975) used the concept of self-surveillance to explain how societal

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norms are reinforced in our thinking and behavior. Foucault (1975) was quick to note, however, that not all reinforcement is negative. For example, the notion of holding a door open, or putting the shopping cart back are things that usually have positive benefits on both the giver and the receiver. Self-surveillance becomes a problem when normalized things become so sought after that it begins to effect mental, physical, and emotional well-being. As an avid outdoorsperson, a user of Instagram and an average looking woman, I have found that through self-surveillance, these brands have instilled a nagging urge for me to look or appear as *enough* (posting from unique locations, wearing expensive gear, looking pretty outside or doing adventurous activities). Whether the looking and being *enough* are genuine or just what I fabricate to post, it has become a large part of my leisure time outdoors. By way of personal example, figure 22 contains an image I posted before I began this project, but somehow it is so similar to The North Face's (see figure 23) some may not be able to tell many differences. The power of self-surveillance is at work here! Note the way The North Face's values have affected my compositional decisions. By constantly posting images like this, brands, over time, define what it means to be "outdoorsy." Their definition then becomes the "normal". Unaware of this influence, I too began to model the aesthetic the brands were promoting. They posted images with styles that have been so ingrained, I began to think it was normal, therefor trying to dress or pose similarly. It's not standard to be pretty or sexy or flawless when you're outside. Its challenging. However, these brands' influence coupled with the power of self-surveillance, left me stuck in an endless cycle seeking "just enough". In the same way the guard in the Panopticon disciplines the prisoners, The North Face and Patagonia discipline their followers, who eventually become the guards in the tower. This then allows for women to serve as both the guard and the prisoner within the "Instagram Panopticon". As the guard, women are influenced by The North Face and Patagonia's posts to

create norms (posing, physical representations, clothes etc.). As the prisoner, women are

disciplined into acting in ways that enforce the norms created by the guards. While their content

may allow for more people to buy their goods, it also is changing the way people view the

outdoors. The North Face and Patagonia have normalized thin women in passive poses which is

not a full representation of the outdoors. "The panopticon, on the other hand must be understood

as a generalizable model of functioning; a way of defining power relations in terms of the

Figure 27

[Megan Stevens Posted 4/11/2019]

Figure 28

[The North Face Posted 1/2/2021]

everyday life of men" (Foucault, p. 205. 1975).

Within my own Instagram I find that I discipline myself in how I should look or how my photos should look compiled on my page. I spend time making sure my outfits and hair will give off the effortless adventurer I aspire to look like. I am a guard to my own creations, enforcing rules and promoting ideas that I have found from The North Face and Patagonia. I only post images that share a resemblance to what Patagonia, or The North Face might post, making sure everything I post looks like the normalized ideas they post. I am a prisoner on my own page, creating content that I hope will be enough, surveilling myself to pose, look or post content that will garner praise and acceptance into the normalized ideas.

Recommendations and Limitations

This research provides insight into how everyday women may be perceiving the messages sent to us by The North Face and Patagonia via Instagram. These messages, delivered through self-surveillance, push women to attempt to create images that reflect the "outdoorsy" idea created by The North Face and Patagonia. This research only involved two of the major outdoor brands, therefore there is room for future research to be conducted within the social media world concerning other outdoor brands. It is my recommendation that future research involves more variety within brands, social media applications and content focuses (comparative analysis with men and women, skin color representations etc.). This study was limited to the number of images collected. This being that only 50 images were used, but each page contains over 500 images each. The images could also be analyzed in different ways to offer more variety in the findings. For example, images of just men, or of both one man and one woman could be analyzed to determine the gendered relation between the images. The researchers bias of being a young, white female with avid Instagram use acts as a limitation because of the targeted perception. I am the target market of what The North Face and Patagonia post, so I am often

influenced in ways I may not realize about the context of these images. There is a lack of previous studies on this focus which creates holes in the literature.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the ways women's bodies are represented via The North Face and Patagonia's Instagram pages. This study was conducted to help shed light on the gap of previous research lacking in outdoor brands, Instagram, and representations of women. This study focused on the theological framework of French theorist Michele Foucault (1975). Foucault's work *Discipline and Punish* (1975) provided the baseline of self-surveillance and discipline that plays a critical role in how modern society perceives content on social media, including Instagram. Through the four steps of the content analysis, the findings produced themes, which were then organized and explored to present the final message of being "just enough". The images used are fabricated in a way that makes the content seem achievable, even though they are just beyond that. Many of the images contain models in exotic locations posed in certain ways to send the message of "this is what women should act, look or be like in the outdoors". This message is then seen by women who begin to self-surveil, or discipline themselves into only sharing about (or participating in) outdoor experiences if they look similar to the fabricated images from The North Face and Patagonia. Further research should be conducted on this topic, to allow for more exposure of the subtle messages being shared. Whether intentional or not, the messages could hinder a woman's ability to experience (or share) the outdoors in an authentic way.

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