# INFLUENCERS ON INSTAGRAM TURKEY: PERFORMING THE 'ICONIC MOTHER' AND THE 'ICONIC WOMAN'

by

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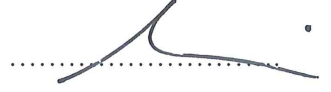
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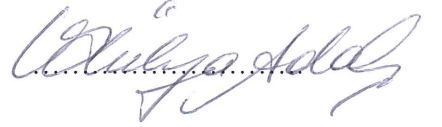
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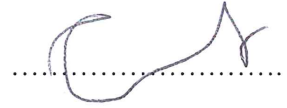
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# ABSTRACT

## INFLUENCERS ON INSTAGRAM TURKEY: PERFORMING THE 'ICONIC MOTHER' AND THE 'ICONIC WOMAN'

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Thesis Advisor: Prof. Leyla Neyzi

This thesis analyses popular and influential women on Instagram, whom I refer to as "iconic women". They are iconic in the sense of being a persuasive and effectual "brand" on Instagram. The aim of this study is to provide insights into how womanhood and motherhood are represented on Instagram by and through these iconic women. Based on digital ethnography on Instagram, and online interviews with iconic women and their followers, this research explores the motivations of iconic women, iconic mothers, and their followers for using Instagram. In this study, I argue that iconic women attain power and approval, together with financial gain, through practicing the ideal woman and/or ideal mother representations that society imposes on women. The followers of iconic women satisfy their curiosity, while benefiting from iconic women's experiences by perceiving them as "one-of-us" celebrities. This thesis makes a contribution to the existing literature on gender and social media in Turkey through the analysis of a new medium, Instagram. Furthermore this research raises important questions concerning ethics, children's rights and consumption.

# ÖZET

## INSTAGRAM TÜRKİYE'DE 'INFLUENCER'LAR: 'İKONİK KADINI' VE 'İKONİK ANNEYİ' SERGİLEMEK

SERVET BÜYÜKKUŞOĞLU

Kültürel Çalışmalar, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Temmuz 2017

Tez Danışmanı: Prof. Dr. Leyla Neyzi

Anahtar kelimeler: Instagram, annelik, toplumsal cinsiyet, aile, influencer, sosyal medya, Türkiye

Bu tez "ikonik kadınlar" olarak adlandırdığım, Instagram'daki popüler ve etkileyici kadınları analiz etmektedir. Bahsedilen kadınlar Instagram'da ikna edici ve etkili birer "marka" olmaları bakımından ikoniklerdir. Bu çalışmanın amacı ikonik kadınlar üzerinden ve ikonik kadınlar tarafından kadınlığın ve anneliğin Instagram'da nasıl sunulduğuna dair fikir vermektir. Instagram'da yapılan dijital etnografi ve ikonik kadınlar ile takipçileriyle yapılan online görüşmelere dayanan bu çalışma ikonik kadınların, ikonik annelerin ve takipçilerinin Instagram kullanımdaki motivasyonlarını araştırmaktadır. Bu çalışmada, ikonik kadınların ideal kadın ve ideal anne temsillerini uygulayarak güç, onaylanma ve finansal kazanç sağladıklarını iddia ediyorum. İkonik kadınların takipçileri ise onları takip ederek meraklarını giderirken aynı zamanda "bizden biri olan ünlü" olarak algıladıkları ikonik kadınların tecrübelerinden istifade ediyorlar. Bu tez yeni bir araç olan Instagram'ı inceleyerek Türkiye'de toplumsal cinsiyet ve sosyal medya literatürüne katkıda bulunuyor. Ayrıca bu araştırma etik, çocuk hakları ve tüketim konularında önemli sorular soruyor.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

> *"A woman must continually watch herself. She is almost continually accompanied by her own image of herself. Whilst she is walking across a room or whilst she is weeping at the death of her father, she can scarcely avoid envisaging herself walking or weeping. From earliest childhood she has been taught and persuaded to survey herself continually."*
>
> John Berger

This thesis is about popular and influential women on Instagram, whom I refer to as "iconic women". They are iconic in the sense of being a persuasive and effectual "brand" on Instagram. The aim of this study is to provide insights into how womanhood and motherhood are represented on Instagram by and through these iconic women. I aim to investigate whether concepts of womanhood and motherhood are perceived differently than before and to find answers to the question of the effects of Instagram on the representations of women.

Instagram is a widely-used online social networking site (SNS), a platform where signed in users can upload their photos & videos while seeing others' photos & videos. In addition to passive viewing, Instagram also allows users to interact with others by "following" each other's account and "liking" or commenting on each other's posts. Due to this viewing and online interaction features, Instagram functions as an extension of the basic daily lives of people. It is a place where people can shape and empower the identities that they perform. Goffman (1959) defines performance as "all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants". Acting while considering the impression on others is always the case with human beings. People always behave according to thought frames, to leave a certain previously thought out impression (Turkle, 1997). Owing to SNSs, in this case Instagram, this situation has gained new layers. Before when people were concerned about their impression upon meeting their acquaintances during face-to-face

interactions, now Instagram has extended this time and space not only for our performances but also the performance of others. The audience is more crowded now. Social media has integrated into the everyday lives of people (Miller, et.al, 2016), hence daily lives are not spent merely in physical spaces any longer. Similar to walking into a cafe in order to meet with a friend, signing in online platforms to meet others has become a possible medium as well. Similar to looking at strangers at the next table in a cafe and forming an idea about them, looking at online profiles of strangers on Instagram has become a fact of life. Moreover, now it is also possible to conduct these two activities at the same time, sitting at a cafe with a friend while checking out other's Instagram accounts on the smart phone. As Angela Cora Garcia points out; "The distinction between online and offline worlds is therefore becoming less useful as activities in these realms become increasingly merged in our society and the two spaces interact with and transform each other" (2009, 53).

Before the proliferation of SNSs, strangers who had their lives regularly monitored were the celebrities in the traditional sense; singers, actors, sportsmen, writers, etc., recently, the scope of the noun "celebrity" has enlarged. Now, it also involves popular accounts in the social media which are called influencers or micro-celebrities (Senft, 2008) or as I call them iconic people. As Hess (2017) points out; "Online influencers occupy the gap between celebrities and friends, and skate between mass cultural performances and moments of perceived accessibility." Consequently, iconic people in SNSs create a sense of closeness or accessibility. Since they did not gain reputation and fame due to their occupation or profession, the audience may feel more of a connection and therefore compare herself with the iconic person on Instagram.

In this case, since Instagram is an image-oriented social media platform, it intensifies the meaning and the effect of being seen and more importantly how it is seen. As Mitchell suggests "Vision is an important as language in mediating social relations and it is not reducible to language" (2005). Relaying information about self through images or scenes from actions can be more persuasive and brief compared to introducing and explaining oneself only through words. A photo in which a mother plays with her little child while wearing make-up and clean clothes may indicate many

features regarding that mother. A follower of that mother might think that this woman is a happy new mother, who spends quality time with her child and also for herself. Instead of verbalizing the features that the account owner desires to attach herself, she simply displays them. Iconic women and mothers also perform in the same way. There are various previously established expectations from and imposed discourses about women regarding the ideal womanhood or ideal motherhood, thus women either try to satisfy or criticize these expectations on and through Instagram.

These expectations did not emerge with Instagram for the first time, the media has always been a source of stereotypical representations of women. From printed media to visual media, women have been depicted in certain stereotypical portrayals which label them as good or bad women (Wood, 1994). The features of a good and affirmed woman in the media contain beauty, loyalty, nurturing and sacrifice. There are various academic studies that emphasize gendered stereotypes in television programs (Akınerdem, 2013, Lauzen, et.al. 2008, O'Neil, 2013, Sirman, 2016), on magazines & newspapers (Koçer, 2009, Demir & Yiğit, 2013, Kang, 1997), in advertisements on television (Özdemir, 2010). In addition to advertisements, soap operas, series and shows on television which represent women in specific roles either as a good wife, a good mother or a sexual object, a new medium Instagram has joined among them. As Jean Killbourne, the producer of documentary series *Killing Us Softly,* points out "the pressure on women to be young, thin, beautiful is more intense than ever before" (2014). According to my observation, this pressure has increased more because of social media, especially Instagram by showing women who are "perfect" in every field of their lives; from nurturing to career, from physical appearance to cooking. What Instagram has brought is that, instead of an advertising company or a director this time women are creating their profiles and displaying themselves as the ideal and "perfect" women.

Similar to printed and visual media, Instagram, and in this case iconic women and mothers, has its own audience. In consequence, the iconic women on Instagram might have stalkers who do not follow but still keep visiting their profiles, followers who receive iconic women's posts as she posts, admirers who like and write comments of love to many photos, dislikers who may or may not follow iconic women but still

write negative comments and fan pages in which the owner of the page frequently posts photos of the woman or her children. As I stated before, the audience they can reach is enormous now, hence iconic women and mothers may reach and influence masses. They start to act as role models or at least establish reference points for comparing the self.

Instagram, more generally each SNS, engender comparison and competition between its users. The feelings and actions regarding comparison and competition may not be consciously carried by users. The underlying cause for this could be the ubiquitous measuring and grading systems or indicators. For instance, the number of "likes" of a post or the number of "followers" on Instagram have gained a deeper meaning for people and become prized aspects of daily lives. The value regarded to the numbers and "points" has progressed and is still progressing day by day. A dystopian example about this progression was discussed in an episode of TV series *Black Mirror[1]*, which is described as "[A] television anthology series that shows the dark side of life and technology". In the episode "Nosedive", a young woman Lacie starts her day by rehearsing her smile in front of a mirror. She lives in a world of high technology where people earn grades from others based on their social media posts and also for their behaviors. With the help of special lenses in everyone's eyes, people are able to read each other's average grade on social media only by looking at each other's faces. They are treated according to their average rating and even their living and work spaces are classified based on this rating. Lacie gives points out of five to a barista right after buying a coffee and gets points out of five from a colleague right after a small talk in the elevator. The episode's name "Nosedive" follows Lacie's journey as she moves from a status of 4.2 out of 5 to prison within 24 hours. Each moment and each move has scorability. Therefore, in order to receive nice treatments from others and live a high standard life, people are required to present their bests in many ways. Nowadays, the signs of this dreadful dystopia could be observed in some Internet-based service providers. In *Yemeksepeti*, which is a website that serves as a pool of restaurants for customers who wants to order, or *getir*, which is a smart phone application that delivers everyday items to user's homes 24 /7, customers can rate and give "stars" for the performance of the restaurant or the delivery person even before he leaves the building.

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[1] Brooker, C. (Producer). "Nosedive" [Television series episode]. In Black Mirror.

Moreover, *YouTube*, a website that allows people to show videos they have made, offers a "dislike" button in addition to a "like" button under each video. Hence, if viewers wish, they can click "dislike" and instantly give a negative grade to the video owner.

Currently, we live in a world where ratings, measurements and competition play important roles in the flow of our lives. This has been associated with neoliberalism. Almost each item and feature has a value that can be measured and labeled. Wendy Brown states that "all conduct is economic conduct; all spheres of existence are framed and measured by economic terms and metrics, even when those spheres are not directly monetized" (2015, 10). An example for a sphere which does not directly monetize things can be Instagram. Its "regular" users do not sustain any financial gain, however their actions, "liking," "following," indirectly produce an income to micro-celebrities, in my case the iconic women. Iconic women derive a profit from posting advertisements and promotions embedded in the content of their posts. Iconic women that I have analyzed, who belong to the middle and upper-middle class, mostly generate an income by means of their hundreds of thousand followers and the excessive number of "likes". While I am referring to middle class, I am following Uner and Gungordu's description as "… households that have gained substantial disposable income and experienced significant lifestyle changes since 1980s, when the market liberalization reforms in Turkey commenced" (2016, 668).

Neoliberalism in Turkey, emerged during the Özal Decade and became intensified during the Erdoğan Decade (Karataşlı, 2015), created an atmosphere which celebrates competition, consumption and self-branding. Neoliberal individuals are consumers, since they become a subject of comparisons and struggles to find a place in the "attention economy" (boyd, 2010). After measuring the self with others, individuals are urged to possess items or features that they do not already possess by spending their time and money. The aim is to attain an appreciated and envied status in the society. This is also the situation with iconic women and their followers on Instagram. In addition to its communicative feature, Instagram also serves as a platform for consumption due to promoted posts that appear in user's timeline either directly by brands or through iconic women, or users who benefit from Instagram by selling products online. Instagram not only promotes material consumption but also increases

the image of consumption. The increase in the number of images circulated even altered the use and purpose of photography. As Schwarz summarizes this situation by saying; "Basically, we are witnessing a shift from photographing others for self-consumption to documentation of self for consumption by others, in a way that serves the economic interest of the internet and mobile communication industries that developed these platforms" (2010, 165). The term "documentation of self for consumption by others" describes Instagram's operation in a concise way and this consumption is presented as a desired situation, which in return gives fame and possible income. In order to achieve this desire, iconic women, who are neoliberal individuals, follow self-branding, thus "individuals benefit from having a unique selling point, or a public identity that is singularly charismatic and responsive to the needs and interests of target audiences" (Khamis, 2016, 194).

Iconic women's "success" requires self-branding and self-branding requires visibility for cultivating attention. Iconic women should evoke feelings of sincerity and closeness in their followers for the sake of self-branding. The more followers see, the more they can relate with iconic women. In his book *The Transparent Society*, Byung-Chul Han refers to the issue of visibility;

> "Şeffaflık neoliberal bir aygıttır. Enformasyona dönüştürmek amacıyla her şeyi içine girmeye zorlar. Günümüzün gayri maddi üretim ilişkileri koşullarında daha fazla enformasyon ve daha fazla iletişim, üretkenlik ve hızda artış demektir. Buna karşılık gizlilik, yabancılık ve ötekilik sınırsız iletişime engel oluşturur. Şeffaflık adına bunlardan kurtulmak gerekir." (12)[2]

As a result of this transparency that Byung- Chul Han mentions, the boundaries and definitions of the public and private have slightly changed in this age of stalking but did not completely fade away. Van Dijck states "…there is less need for articulating a "new" sphere or spherical concept but more need for theorizing how this communicative space is contested by public, private, state, and corporate actors fighting to dominate the rules for social interaction." (2012, 162). Social media "reshaped the contours of the public–private divide" (Boon & Pentney, 2015). In other words, even

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[2] "Transparency is a neoliberal tool. In order to turn everything into knowledge, transparency enforces them to be penetrated in itself. Under the conditions of today's relations of intangible production, more knowledge and more communication means increase in the productivity and speed. In return, secrecy, unfamiliarity and otherness prevent unlimited communication. For the sake of transparency, these should be eliminated." (My translation)

though the amount of scenes presented and the extent of audience reached has increased, the absence of the camera or the gaze in other words, people could act differently. People still manage to have a sense of public and private domains and continue to perform in Goffman's term.

## 1.1. Methodology

Since, this thesis is about women's representations on Instagram, the primary data source is Instagram itself. The research draws on an ethnographic study which includes online participant observation, online interviews and a focus group. The participant observation study was done by spending time on Instagram as a member of the platform and analyzing photos, videos, captions and comments of iconic women's posts. There are scholars (Boelstorff, et al. 2012), who argue that ethnography is still the same ethnography even though it is conducted on the Internet. There are also others who prefer "virtual ethnography" (Hine, 2000), "cyber ethnography" (Robinson & Schulz, 2009), or those who claim that ethnography on the Internet should possess a specific name such as "netnography" (Kozinets, 2010). I charactarize digital ethnography following Underberg and Zorn who define it as "a method for representing real-life cultures through combining the characteristic features of digital media with the elements of story" (Underberg & Zorn, 2013).

All the content that I have observed and made use of is content created by iconic women and iconic mothers on their non-private accounts. I did not 'like' or make any comment on the postings that I studied. So, my participant observation on social media may not be the same as a classical participant observation in a field. People on Instagram and I, did not experience face-to-face interaction but since their accounts are open to access by everyone, they should be aware of the possibility that I am allowed to see their posts.

At first, with the purpose of observing, following and sending direct messages to iconic women on Instagram, I have created a different account from my previously existing Instagram account. Then, I started to follow a few women's accounts. Meanwhile, Instagram's "explore page," which uses an algorithm for analyzing user's and her network's behavior on Instagram and is different for each user, also offered me

similar profiles. More effectively then the "explore page," my friends, who are all Instagram users have had much to say about my thesis and gave me suggestions of other iconic women and mothers on Instagram. Consequently, via my research dedicated account, I was following many women accounts including singles, married with no children and mothers.

Instagram's application provides its users to manage more than one accounts simultaneously, without the need for logging out from one of them. This was what I was doing, research dedicated account and my personal account were signed in at the same time. All I had to do was switch from one account to another from time to time. After a while, I have realized that I was spending more time in my personal account than the other. Furthermore, when I decided to send direct messages to iconic women and some of their followers via Instagram, I contemplated on whether sending messages from my personal profile would be more trustworthy. Since the research dedicated account follows 83 profiles but has only 8 followers, which are sales accounts, I changed my mind. I thought if people receive messages from my personal account, which has a good balance between the number of followers and following profiles, they might see me more as an "ordinary" Instagram user, who has a network in her own way.

Throughout the thesis, the Instagram user names of iconic women and mothers are declared for the reason that they all have public profiles. Moreover, they are aware of the fact that other users, whom they do not know in person, follow them, similar to "traditional" celebrities. Thus, I have treated iconic women as publicly known figures and I did not feel any drawbacks in ethical terms. In total, I studied ten iconic women and mothers for the purpose of this thesis. In addition to recent posts, which appear in my Instagram timeline, I have also looked at older posts in their profiles'. Even though, the main input of iconic women's posts are the images, the text they have typed in captions and comments from other users were also analyzed in detail. Especially, when reading hundreds of comments under almost each post, I have experienced the feeling of someone who overhears a conversation. People were complimenting, criticizing, referring and responding to one another, whereas I was merely observing. It is true that, people may see my user name in the iconic woman's follower list but they may not know whether I have read their comment or not. Consequently, I felt like a stalker and it

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is possible to say that, I was a stalker in the modern sense. Nowadays, people use the verb "stalk" for viewing others' posts from past to present. Hence, a modern stalker would be someone who views social media profiles of others in depth.

I have been conducting this research for a year. Throughout this year, I collected visual data on Instagram. In addition to photos and videos posted, I observed and witnessed conversations of iconic women and their followers through comments. Therefore, while obtaining the data, I take the entire post into consideration; including the image, "likes," comments. Whenever I was in the "field" and encountered a post worth to record, I took screenshots of the post. In order to keep track of these screenshots, I created a list with a designated number and date for each screenshot. Since these screenshots involve comments and likes from followers, their usernames appear on the screen. When I copied the screenshots to my thesis, I censored these usernames, because they might belong to "ordinary" users with private accounts.

In order to give information and arrange a meeting, I sent direct messages to three and sent an e-mail to another three out of ten iconic women and mothers that I have been following. I have tried to reach two of them through mutual friends. My initial attempt for the other two was face-to-face. I went to an autograph session for one of them and met her there. For the last one, I attended and met her at a school information day, where Instagram influencer were the guests. Out of ten iconic women, eventually only two women answered my questions via e-mail, three women declined my request, whereas others did not even respond. In the messages and e-mails that I sent, I declared that I was a master's student in Cultural Studies Program at Sabanci University and was writing a thesis about "popular and influential" women on Instagram. The request asked for a meeting at a place and time, which they may choose. In this sense, the way I studied the iconic women corresponds to Richard Rogers's idea about Internet-related research, which suggests that "we no longer need to go off-line or to digitize methods, in order to study the online" (2010, 243).

Not only iconic women and mothers but also their "ordinary" followers were also concerns of this research. Direct messages on Instagram were sent to twenty women users who have either written comments to the posts of iconic women or creators of fan pages of these iconic women. In order to protect their privacy, I used

pseudonyms for followers, even though some of them were fan accounts with no nick names. Only five of the followers replied to my message. I have indicated that I was more than willing to meet with them for a "chat" about Instagram and the iconic woman at issue but it was also possible to hold a video call. Since, I wanted to make them feel comfortable and gain their trust, I also declared that they could "follow" me on Instagram in order to check out my profile and then decide whether or not to hold an interview. Three of them sent me follow requests and I accepted.

One of the "regular" Instagram users, Senem, accepted my request for a video chat and we held an interview over WhatsApp for about an hour. The other four did not want a face-to-face meeting or a video chat, nevertheless they offered to write answers to my questions through Instagram direct messaging. This situation provided the ease of texting as a daily activity, however the chats were not long enough to carry out an in-depth interview. Three out of four users who accepted the chat, were the owners of fan accounts. While I started a conversation with one of them, who runs a fan account for an iconic mother's son, she suddenly wrote to me that the iconic mother did not allow her to write to me. Then she added that it was her own choice to ask for permission. As a result, I conducted interviews over Instagram direct messaging with two fan account owners and one "regular" user, and a video interview with another "regular" user. After we chatted, two of them "unfollowed" me immediately. I only sent a follow request to Senem when we ended our video chat. Since she expressed her pleasure for meeting me and gladness to talk, not "following" her back did not feel right to me at that moment.

The only meeting that I have conducted face-to-face was the focus group study that I arranged with four young mothers. I reached them through my older sister, who is also a young mother. Thus, I did not experience any difficulty in convincing them for a focus group discussion. All four of them are college graduates and have children between the ages of 3 to 8. We met in my sister's home, where we sat in the living room with a TV. I connected my cell phone to TV and displayed the iconic women's Instagram accounts to the screen with the aim of receiving mothers comments about the posts. After asking focus group mothers about their ideas regarding the changes caused by marriage and a child or how it is to be married, we discussed their impression about iconic women. Overall, the atmosphere of the focus group session was very friendly

towards me and one another. However, most of the time they could not relate to iconic women and did not find the posts of iconic women sincere.

Unfortunately, I could not conduct interviews with all of the iconic women that I studied. This study would have been more dialogic, if I could have accomplished more interviews, in order to have a deeper understanding of their motivations. At the beginning of my research, I started with the anticipation that iconic women would be willing to talk to me when I approached them. Since they are sharing instances of their lives frequently and in a reciprocal relationship with the followers due to given advices, recommendations, comments, etc; they could also respond to me as they respond to some of their followers. The seeming of their lives led me to believe they would be easily accessible but this was not the case.

## 1.2. Outline of the Thesis

The thesis consists of three main chapters. First, in Chapter Two, I present the changes in communication technology and how these changes have affected the everyday lives of people. I specifically focus on the development of smart phones and online social media platforms by presenting statistics. Since this thesis focuses on the cases in Turkey, I delve into the user behavior of people in Turkey in terms of smart phone and social media. I conclude the chapter with the effects of Instagram and how it is perceived by people in Turkey.

The third chapter explores the behavior of iconic women and their followers on Instagram. I focus on the photos, videos that iconic women have posted and the comments that they have received from followers along with other Instagram users. Moreover, quotations from the interviews that I conducted with iconic women and their followers are introduced. This chapter includes screenshots of iconic women's posts on Instagram. After nine months of participant observation that I have done on Instagram, I specifically chose these posts as examples amongst many others. With this chapter, I aim to describe to the reader, the content of these iconic women's posts, and their perceptions of womanhood and motherhood. The content of the screenshots involves ideal body representations, couple photos, children photos, scenes from houses and

reactions to social events or incidents. In addition to these, this chapter also investigates iconic women's relationship with other Instagram users; such as wannabes, fans, followers and ordinary users who do not follow but still write comments. Last but not least, examples of iconic women's effect on consumption and advertisements are presented.

In the fourth chapter, I analyze the content of posts in the light of the gender literature and I aim to find an answer for the motivations of iconic women and their followers for using Instagram. Starting with the analysis of the continuities and changes in motherhood and womanhood practices, I trace appearances of these continuities and changes on Instagram. While discussing that the Internet and SNSs boosted and slightly reshaped how women are seen and shown in the society, I also claim that in addition to proliferation of SNSs, specific developments in families in Turkey cleared the way for iconic women to use Instagram intensively. These leading changes are families becoming more child-oriented, changes in household population and expectations from mothers. Finally, in this chapter, I argue that iconic women attain power and approval, together with financial gain, through practicing the ideal woman and/or ideal mother representations that society imposes on women. The followers of iconic women satisfy their curiosity, while benefiting from iconic women's experiences by perceiving them as "one-of-us" celebrities.

**CHAPTER II**

**NEW COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES AND SOCIAL MEDIA: THE RISE OF INSTAGRAM**

## 2.1. Changes in Technology

1983 was the year when the first commercially available mobile phone was put onto market by Motorola. This was an important step for communication since it allowed individuals to stay connected while they were outside and away from a stationary telephone. Calling and receiving calls from a mobile phone was a luxurious way of communication. Over time, mobile phones spread to the world and we got used to ask for cell phone numbers when we needed a telephone number to call. Since we were in the Information Age, nothing new was able to keep its freshness so long, due to innovative researches something newer launched to the market. Therefore, smartphones followed the mobile phones. In 1999, the first smartphones were released by the Japanese firm NTT DoCoMo to achieve mass adoption within a country[3]. Afterwards, with the penetration of Apple and Windows into the smartphone market, this new technology spread quickly.

Smartphone is a mobile phone (also known as cell phones or mobiles) with an advanced mobile operating system that combines features of a personal computer operating system with other features useful for mobile or handheld use. Today the smart phones, which enable instant and easy communication, have become a prosthetic component of the modern individual. The person who forgets her phone at home usually feels the lack of a phone and has the idea that she will miss things as a result of its absence. This attachment to smart phones might even labeled as an addiction (Ahn & Jung, 2014). In addition to basic telecommunication features, the easy access of smartphones to the Internet has made smartphones more attractive to people. Due to developed Internet servers and speed, mobile web service has also developed and expanded its coverage in a short while. As of the end of January 2017, around 3,5

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[3] https://www.nttdocomo.co.jp/english/corporate/about/outline/history/

billion people are active mobile internet users which is the 46% of the global population. The need for a smartphone got ahead of the need for a computer. The device that people choose is the mobile phones with 50% share, which outranged laptops and desktops with 45% share in the study of the web traffic[4]. If the increase in the size of smart phone's screens are considered, it is also possible to argue that smartphones started to supersede computers by becoming more like computers. Apparently, there is a flow from computers to smartphones. The reason behind this might be that smartphones are more personal and generally more affordable when they are compared with computers.

Consequently, smartphone is not perceived as a luxury gadget anymore and has turned into a need of almost each individual. Smartphones come along with built-in applications such as weather report, stock market information, web browser, navigation, or email. In addition to these, users can also download whichever application they want from online stores for a small fee or even free of charge. In 2016, the top ten list of mostly downloaded applications by Apple Store contain four social media application, which are Snapchat, Facebook Messenger, Instagram and Facebook[5]. It is possible to say that SNSs grew into must have applications in smartphones. This situation, along with the expanding of mobile Internet providers has led to an increase in the amount of SNSs members and a rise in activity in SNSs. SNSs provide individuals to create their own web based profiles, in which they can control the visibility of their profile and form a list of connections, whom they can share the profile information. At the same time, they can reach to profile informations of other users (boyd, 2008). As expected, the scope and the target of these SNSs differ from each other. Most popular SNSs are WhatsApp, Messenger, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat and LinkedIn. WhatsApp is an internet-based message service for smartphones and has become almost a fundamental application in smartphones as an alternative for short message service. Messenger is similar to WhatsApp. It is an instant messaging service through Internet. Facebook and Instagram are the platforms where you can share your posts with the people you already know in your offline life. It is possible to post any thoughts,

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[4] from Digital in 2017 Global Overview by wearesocial

[5] http://mashable.com/2016/12/06/most-downloaded-apps-2016/#bW1QgPTUC5qx

comments, photos or links on Facebook, whereas Instagram is only a photo sharing application. As of the end of first half of 2017, Facebook has over 2 billion monthly active members from all around the world[6]. As for Instagram, there are over 700 million monthly active users throughout the world[7]. Another SNS, Twitter, which has about 328 million monthly active users worldwide, enables its members to share tweets only in less than 140 characters and follow other users tweets[8]. Being a different platform from many others, Snapchat contains over 166 million daily active users by the end of first half of 2017[9]. What makes Snapchat distinct is that individuals take pictures or videos, after sending them to recipients, the post will be automatically deleted in a while. Last but not least, LinkedIn, the world's greatest online professional network with more than 500 million users, is the social stage for meeting and creating a network of individuals from various field of interests[10].

Before the proliferation of smartphones, new firms used to focus on creating websites which were designated for computer use only. However, smartphones affected this progress and firms firstly enlarged their focus to include smartphones and sometimes even only focused on smartphones. The number of applications increased, which aimed an easier access to the service and provided a user friendly experience. SNSs could be good examples for this kind of applications. Most of them are designed to be used in smartphones at the first place. Even though users can log in to their accounts from computers, most of the time it is not possible to upload a file from their computers. These applications are free and very straightforward to download. According to studies, 37% of the global population is active social media users and 34% of them are having access to social media via their mobile devices[11].

In this study, my aim is to focus specifically on Instagram. Instagram was launched in October 2010 in U.S. as a free application and reached more than 600 million monthly active members as of the end of December 2016. Instagram succeeded

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[6] https://www.facebook.com/facebook

[7] https://instagram-press.com/our-story/

[8] https://about.twitter.com/company

[9] https://www.snapchat.com/ads

[10] https://news.linkedin.com/about-us#statistics

[11] from Digital in 2017 Global Overview by wearesocial

a great penetration to the SNS market, which raised the interest of Mark Zuckerberg, who is the founder and CEO of Facebook. In April 2012, Facebook acquired Instagram for one billion dollars. It is the one of the leading SNS applications in terms of allowing photo sharing. Created in 2014, Flickr[12] is an older platform than Instagram for photo sharing purpose, however Flickr is a website based platform whereas Instagram works properly only on smart phones. Moreover Flickr's aim focuses on sharing and observing good quality of photographs, whereas Instagram serves more as a communication tool via photographs. In addition to this, Instagram obviously differs from Facebook and Twitter with its visual obligation in postings. The co-founder and CEO of Instagram, Kevin Systrom, defines it on their website stating "…the home for visual storytelling for everyone from celebrities, newsrooms and brands, to teens, musicians and anyone with a creative passion."[13] After creating their accounts with a username and a password, whenever users want to post on Instagram, they should upload an image. Initially, the only option was to post a photo but since 2013 videos can also be shared on Instagram. While uploading, Instagram offers several photographic filters in order to edit the original photo or video. These filters vary from black and white to sepia tones and they are widely used with the goal of smoothing the flaws in the images. In addition to this, users are allowed to add a statement or explanation. The statement is shown under the image when it is posted. In the description, they can write whatever they want, use whichever emoji they wish and hashtag some of the words of choice. They put hashtag (#) before some generic or key words and then these become clickable. Whenever the users touch on a hash-tagged word, a list of posts appears, in which the same hashtag is used. The goal is to provide an opportunity to make posts more popular and bring users with similar interest together. If someone is interested in a specific theme and wants to find out what other people shared regarding to this theme, he/she types the hash-tagged word in the search engine and she is able to see each post with that hashtag, which are shared by non-private accounts. Up to the present, some of the most popular hashtags from Instagram are #Love #Instagood #Me #Cute #Follow

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[12] https://www.flickr.com/

[13] https://www.instagram.com/about/us/

#photooftheday[14]. These hashtags also help for keeping statistics. For instance as of the end of 2016 there were almost 283 million selfies which are posted with #selfie[15].

Each account has its follower accounts and following accounts. The photos that an Instagram user posts are displayed in the follower's timeline and the user can see the photos of people whom she follows in her timeline. Unlike Facebook, this relationship between follower accounts and following accounts on Instagram is not reciprocal. Instead of a "friendship request", there is only a follow request or follow button. If the account is private, people need to send a follow request and for it to be accepted by the account owner. Otherwise they can just tap "follow" and wait for the approval from account owner for taking place in the followers list. The followed users may choose not to follow back their followers and this is mostly the situation with "famous" accounts. The accounts of actors, artists, writers, singers, in short almost all accounts of famed people are public accounts. The other users are allowed to see their posts with or without being a follower. And if other users start to follow the famous account, they do not receive any follow back requests.

If the account is not private, users can like or leave comments under posts regardless of the fact that they are a follower of that related account or not. However, if the account is a private account, then they need to be an approved follower in order to like or make any comment. For liking posts, the users touch the white heart shaped button under the posts and then it turns from white to red. Furthermore, if they want to leave a comment, they touch the speech bubble then write their words on the screen. After that, their username appears on the "liked by" list and comments under the posts. Under each post, the number of likes and comments can be seen.

In addition to comments, since 2013 there has also been another way for communicating with other users, which is simply sending them a direct message (DM) through Instagram. Direct message is similar to built-in message services in cell phones, since it is only between the sender and the receiver. Hence, there are many cases where people do not want to share their comments or questions publicly under a post; instead

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[14] https://www.omnicoreagency.com/instagram-statistics/ Retrieved on April 6 2017

[15] https://websitebuilder.org/resources/139-facts-about-instagram-one-should-be-aware-of-in-2017/)

they leave a comment as "please check your DM" and then send a text message. In 2015, Instagram improved direct messaging by enabling users to send any posted photos or videos directly to another user. Moreover, direct messaging is no longer restricted with two people, today it also allows to create messaging groups which may involve more than two users.

During the time Instagram enabled DM, another application called Snapchat released "My Story" feature. Snapchat was launched in 2011 as a photo sharing application but what made Snapchat different from others was that the uploaded photos were automatically deleted after a while. Snapchat reached its popularity when it introduced "My Story" feature in 2013, where users could upload any photo or video so that each of their followers could see these posts for 24 hours, before they were automatically deleted. After Snapchat, Instagram also introduced its "story" feature in 2016. In addition, Instagram recently released a live video feature for its users. This feature allows Instagrammers to broadcast live videos to their followers. These videos end whenever the broadcast stops. They are not saved in users' profile pages in the application automatically, unless the user who does the broadcast wants to save it to her own smart phone.

As the technology advances, the forms of communication also advance and vary. In an interview (Kiss, 2015), Instagram's CEO Kevin Systrom describes his projection and opinion about Instagram;

> "Imagine a world where virtual reality exists and is ubiquitous, and we have whatever device we need to experience it. How cool would it be if you were at a concert in the countryside and I could be there with you - hearing, smelling, seeing it, too? …That's what Instagram is now, in a very low-fidelity way. I like to say we're working on time travel, but the difference is we're not sending you there - it's coming to you."

Systrom repeated his wish about this advancement in a recent interview. When it is considered that, personalized live broadcasts via smart phones sounded improbable before, Instagram may continue to alter the way people communicate in near future.

Obviously, all of these supplementary features are added to the application for a reason. Since Instagram is a profit-oriented company it must stay favored and to keep its position in the market. That's why, it tries to catch up with other popular SNS

applications like Snapchat, the one with disappeared stories, or Periscope, the one with live stream videos. As a result of these additions, Instagram becomes more and more instantaneous as its name refers.

As of the end of January 2017, Instagram has 600 million monthly active users all around the world and 68% of them are female users. On the other hand, female users' rate is only 44% in Facebook[16]. When we try to scale the interest for Instagram throughout the whole Internet users, 20% of them have Instagram accounts. The popularity of Instagram increases each year. When in 2012, teenagers valued Instagram as the most important social media site, this percentage of teenagers who hold this view reached to 17% in 2017 January[17]. Instagram received lots of young users who migrated from Facebook after Facebook was discovered by the older generation, which corresponds to their parent's generation. Younger individuals are in search for platforms where their parents or other relatives do not intervene. This idea is supported by a study which says that 53% of Instagram's daily users are between the ages of 18 and 29[18].

## 2.2. Changes in Everyday Life with New Technology

Now, the mobile applications of SNSs could be counted as must-have features in smart phones. Due to easier access to SNSs on smart phones, the way of communication has changed. In addition to voice calls and short message servicing, the act of sending instant images came into our lives. As a result of the proliferation of smart phones with built-in cameras, photographs have started to serve as a means of communication that we send to each other very "naturally" in our everyday lives.

Photography, as an image, is used for capturing the moments and creating memory in order to refer it at a later point in time. This confined space of photography was stemming from limited accessibility to cameras before the information age and the burst of smart phones. The amount of smart phones users in Turkey reached almost half of the population with 35 million in 2016, while the users worldwide was almost 2

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[16] from Digital in 2017 Global Overview by wearesocial

[17] https://www.omnicoreagency.com/instagram-statistics/ Retrieved on April 6 2017

[18] https://socialpilot.co/blog/125-amazing-social-media-statistics-know-2016/

billion. "Photography always also survey as an act of communication and as a means to share experience" as Van Dijck (2007) points out but especially after the increasing number of smart phones changed the social use of photographs. The ability of sending instantaneous photos extended the boundaries of photography practice and "images that have a place in everyday life have become less bound up with memory or commemoration but with forms of practice that are happening now." (Harrison, 2002) There is a difference between generations' perception and utilization of photography. For instance, today the youth can produce and consume images faster and easier than their grandparents, who use images in order to remember certain things. While grandparents look at a photograph with longing, their grandchildren start to use Instagram's new story application, which allows users to share about their current, daily activities for only several seconds long videos, which deletes itself automatically after one day. With this new feature, it would be possible to state that fast consumption of images is increasing.

The change in the frequency of using photographs, which is a result of social media platforms and smart phones, has caused a change in people's attitude towards photographs. Photographs turned into some kind of proofs of individuals' sociability. When an activity in the "real" physical world collects "likes" in the virtual world, then people feel that their sociability is approved. Today, people think that they should post in SNSs in a specific, certain way in order to attract many "likes" and feel approved. Thus, choosing the right photo to post for presenting the lives and activities is an important aspect of Instagram.

SNSs users choose Instagram for creating a visual self-presentation of themselves. Their "profiles" may include variety of images, from family photos to friend gatherings, from landscape pictures to quotes they like. SNSs enable its users to share whatever they want to share, or decide which part of their life to be seen or not. Every post on Instagram is a choice made between possible photos that could have been posted instead. Andreas Kaplan (2010) explains that "…the concept of self-presentation states that in any type of social interaction people have the desire to control the impressions other people form of them." In addition, the famous term of Erving

Goffman's "impression management" in his book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (*1959) is used to describe the effort to control the perceptions that people have for each other. This could be achieved by controlling and deciding in which information about the self to give out. These two statements are appropriate and highly valid for the case of Instagram profiles of users. What Van Dijck (2007) commented on memories by saying "[t]he camera allows more control over our memories, handing us tools to brush up and reinvigorate remembrances of things past" can be adapted and adjusted to Instagram profile pages. Having total control over what you share about yourself on your social media platform provides control over your self-presentation. The camera and what it captures can "brush up" the profile pages and make it possible to shape how users present themselves in others' eyes. As Van Dijck (2007) continues to state; "[d]igital cameras are moving away from their prime functions as memory tools, instead becoming tools for identity formation." Therefore, what Goffman argues about face-to-face relations on creating impression intensified with appearances on web, which has led the way for identity formation.

The "profiles" in the virtual world influence, even partly constitute identities as perceived by people themselves and others. According to a recent study, self-expression is one of the five primary motives for using Instagram (Lee, Lee, Moon, & Sung, 2015). Schwartz and Halegoua (2015) also support the argument that the idea of the need of self-expression in SNSs by stating that individuals create identities and try to control their impact on other individuals by taking pictures of their selves. Users can control their appearance, their online persona exactly the way they want it to appear. At this point, there is quite an interesting relation between exhibitionism and secrecy in the case of SNSs. That is to say, sharing many photos on Instagram does not make a person totally transparent. What matters is what is shared and how that is shared. Even though there is an over-sharing of photos, majority of photos are related to the scenes, in which the user wants to be present and remembered. About this issue, the hiding of "realities", Sonia Livingstone (2008) suggests that "deciding what not to say about oneself online is, for many teenagers, an agentic act to protect their identity and their spaces of intimacy."

It is possible to shape an appearance on web with performative posts. When I use the term performance, I refer it similarly as Goffman (1959) defines it as "all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants". Performativity enables people to act and behave according to the expectation of their constructed selves. Nowadays, Instagram provides space to its users where they can display scenes from their apparent lives. Each display/ post is a choice of the user. Since there is a performance, there should also be an audience as Katie Davis (2012) supports; "the self is a 'collaborative manufacture' between a performer and his or her audience." Thus, each display aims to meet an audience for shaping the possessed life style in the eyes of the audience and this is the same approach for the followers of Instagram. Albeit, I do not think that presenting the self in such a way for obtaining approval and liking is a new concept, as a result of the intensification of appearances on web, we have become totally a "society of the spectacle" (Debord, 1994).

## 2.3. The Case of Turkey

According to a recent study, 60% of Turkey's population are monthly active users in SNSs and 52% of them log in via their mobile devices. This 52% in Turkey spends 3 hours per day on average on the Internet through mobile device[19].

The relation between the follower and the followed can be found throughout the world, although it is important to investigate the case of Turkey since Turkey is a source of a large proportion of Instagram activity. According to statistics, Turkey stands in the share of traffic list on Instagram in fourth position following United States, Russia and Brazil, respectively. However, Turkey stands in tenth place in Facebook usage rates in 2016, and it does not even take place in the top ten for Twitter use. Among the 600 million people of Instagram, more than 22 million are from Turkey. Furthermore as we moved from 2016 to 2017, the interest for Facebook and Twitter has been decreased

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[19] from Digital in 2017 Global Overview by wearesocial

whereas Instagram's usage rate has almost doubled in Turkey[20]. This data clearly suggests that the case of Instagram in Turkey should be investigated.

## 2.4. Effects on Turkey

The brand new technology of smartphones has penetrated Turkey quickly and effectively. Even though smartphones are considered as luxury consumer goods and heavily taxed, majority of people do not experience any trouble affording one. Moreover, if they do not have enough cash to afford it, they usually consent to buying it with credit card debt without any hesitation. Based on my observations, owning a cellphone in Turkey, in this case a smartphone, bears a deeper meaning more than just owning one. It can be associated with the capability to buy a luxury goods, which can be seen by others very easily, just like an expensive automobile. Occasionally, the brand of the smartphone also matters and brands like Apple or Samsung create more positive impact on others. Furthermore, smartphones are effective tools for obtaining and maintaining sociability by providing easy and instant access to SNSs.

In this study, I only focus on Instagram because I believe that the interest for Instagram by people from Turkey is also similar to the urge of buying a smartphone for receiving approval and admiration from others. For instance, Elisabeth Costa (2016) found out in her ethnographic study in Southeast Turkey that people in Mardin prefer to possess a luxurious automobile over a self-owned home. This shows these people care more about how they are seen in other's eyes even though it may cause financial difficulty for these people.

Instagram is the perfectly suited platform for representing yourself to others through visuals. The effect of images and visuals is very powerful. Instagram provides the possibility to express the things that you want to tell with only with an image instead of many sentences. This easiness and simplicity is reciprocal; since the "sender" can express herself effortlessly and "receivers" can also reach information comfortably, only by looking. It is also possible to say that the similarity between Instagram and television might be a factor for Instagram's popularity in Turkey, because the television is also

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[20] https://www.statista.com/statistics/570098/distribution-of-social-media-used-turkey/

image-oriented. In addition to television, newspapers which are rich by means of colorful images are more preferred in Turkey (Ergül, et.al. 2012). Observing images is easier than reading lines for many people. This is also the point that Kevin Systrom touches upon in his interview; he concludes the success of popularity of Instagram to its focus on images. Images address every person by removing the obstacle of illiteracy.

As I stated earlier, presenting oneself through "valuable" tools is not a new concept in Turkey. This society has traditions such as dowry display, hammam sessions for future brides or older women that serve the duty of showing off girls eligible for marriage. What happened is that, new technology along with the proliferation of SNSs cultivated and shaped the way people present themselves and perceive others.

# CHAPTER III

## THE EMERGENCE OF ICONIC WOMEN ON INSTAGRAM

### 3.1. Who Are The Iconic Women?

In this chapter, I will present information and my own observations about the iconic women on Instagram Turkey. First of all, to whom am I referring as "iconic" and why? Iconic women on Instagram are the ones with a systematic way of sharing posts with their hundreds of thousand followers and create a certain effect on their followers. I borrow the term "icon" as "one who is the object of great attention and devotion; an idol"[21]. More specifically, Holt defines an icon as "compelling symbol of a set of ideas or values that a society deems important" (2004, p.1). The reason why I have chosen the "iconic" prefix for these famous women is their association with wifehood and motherhood concepts, which are accepted as important concepts by society as Holt mentions. The main focus of these accounts is an ideal representation of woman in marriage or motherhood. There are also some other terms for a popular and effective Instagram user, for instance "the influencer". Crystal Abidin describes influencers as "…everyday, ordinary Internet users who accumulate a relatively large following on blogs and social media through the textual and visual narration of their personal lives and lifestyles, engage with their following in digital and physical spaces, and monetize their following by integrating "advertorials" into their blog or social media posts" (2014). Although, Abidin's definition is convenient for women that I have analyzed, since Instagram is an image-oriented SNS and the word icon or iconic also evokes and reminds imagery, I think the term iconic is more appropriate and befitting to be used in this case.

Before SNSs, the traditional media was the sole power. We were exposed to whatever and whoever the television or printed publications presented. The words fame and celebrity were related to specific jobs; such as actors, singers, football players, comedians, etc. The emergence of social media has affected the traditional media.
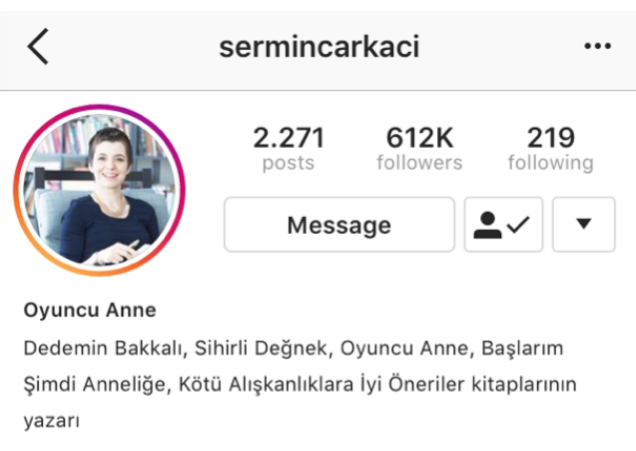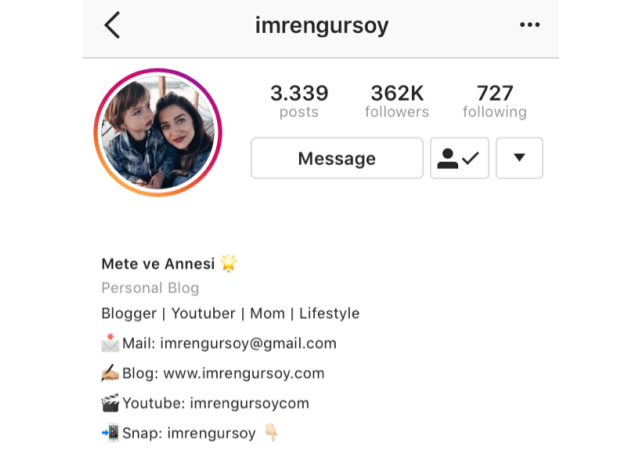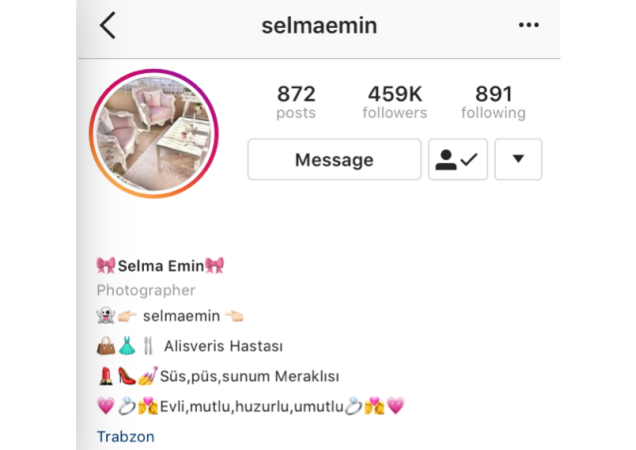
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[21] http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Iconify

Today, with the sufficient infrastructure, everyone is able to broadcast live through several SNSs; such as Facebook, Instagram, Youtube[22] or Periscope[23]. Especially owing to Instagram, ordinary people have gained the chance to be in the public eye. Access to popularity and fame is not bounded with certain types of professions anymore. Accordingly, iconic women do not have to be among famous people in the traditional sense. Some have become popular and famous solely due to their Instagram account. On the other hand, some of them have started their "Internet career" by writing blogs and then got popular by launching the Instagram account. They do not have to have any profession. What matters is their ability to keep their follower's attention with the scenes from their daily lives. The key to manage to maintain the interest of followers alive is posting regularly on a daily basis. Most of the time, they share more than one photo or video per day.
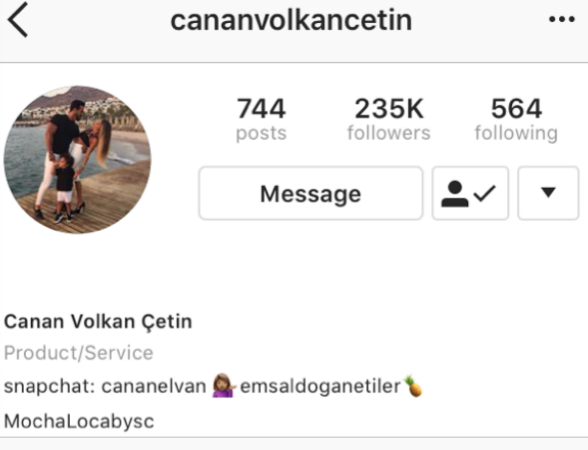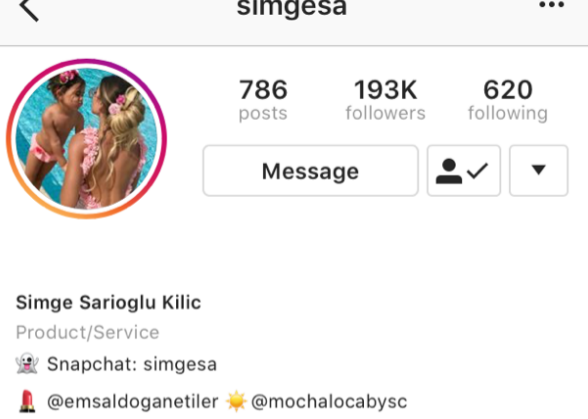
In this research, I focus on married women and/or mothers on Instagram and I limited my scope with ten women from Turkey. My main criteria for choosing these ten women includes their popularity, marital status, motherhood status. I preferred women who possessed around or over hundred thousand followers and those who had been married at least one time. Along the road, I have also discovered other women who might also be suitable for my research however I did not favor them because I had not been observing them for a long time. Here is the list of iconic women with their account name, marital status, number of children and number of followers by the time this thesis was written.

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[22] YouTube is a video-sharing website

[23] Periscope is a live video streaming application

| name of the Instagram account | marital status | # of children | screenshot of Instagram account |
|---|---|---|---|
| nihankayalioglu | in the process of divorcing | 2 | |
| melinasmom | married | 1 |  |
| socialmomm | married | 2 |  |

| name of the Instagram account | marital status | # of children | screenshot of Instagram account |
|---|---|---|---|
| oyuncuanne | divorced | 3 | **sermincarkaci** 2.271 posts 612K followers 219 following Message Oyuncu Anne Dedemin Bakkalı, Sihirli Değnek, Oyuncu Anne, Başlarım Şimdi Anneliğe, Kötü Alışkanlıklara İyi Öneriler kitaplarının yazarı |
| imrengursoy | married | 1 | **imrengursoy** 3.339 posts 362K followers 727 following Message Mete ve Annesi 🦋 Personal Blog Blogger \| Youtuber \| Mom \| Lifestyle Mail: imrengursoy@gmail.com Blog: www.imrengursoy.com Youtube: imrengursoycom Snap: imrengursoy |
| selmaemin | married | - | **selmaemin** 872 posts 459K followers 891 following Message 🎀Selma Emin🎀 Photographer 👰👉 selmaemin 👈 👜👗👠 Alisveris Hastası 👜👠💅Süs,püs,sunum Meraklısı 💜👏💒Evli,mutlu,huzurlu,umutlu👏💒💜 Trabzon |

| name of the Instagram account | marital status | # of children | screenshot of Instagram account |
|---|---|---|---|
| zey_zor | married | pregnant | zey_zor<br>893 posts · 345K followers · 412 following · Message<br>Zeynep Zor<br>Public Figure<br>🎞 Hürriyet Seyahat Yazarı<br>🎞 Hürriyet Aile Yazarı<br>✒ Travel & Family Writer<br>🔍 Guide to Luxury<br>👶 #MamaZor<br>👻 : zey_zor |
| cananvolkancetin | married | 1 | cananvolkancetin<br>744 posts · 235K followers · 564 following · Message<br>Canan Volkan Çetin<br>Product/Service<br>snapchat: cananelvan 💁 emsaldoganetiler 🎋<br>MochaLocabysc |
| simgesa | married | 1 | simgesa<br>786 posts · 193K followers · 620 following · Message<br>Simge Sarioglu Kilic<br>Product/Service<br>👻 Snapchat: simgesa<br>💄 @emsaldoganetiler ☀ @mochalocabysc |

| name of the Instagram account | marital status | # of children | screenshot of Instagram account |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| hihieved | married | 1 | hihieved<br><br>273 posts  86,2K followers  916 following<br><br>Message<br><br>Büyük konuştum, başıma geldi<br>Personal Blog<br>facebook.com/hihieved |

The digital activity of these iconic women is not limited with Instagram. For instance, nihankayalioglu has a personal blog where she actively writes about various themes, from advice to mothers to the promotion of products. During the time this thesis is being written, she is in the process of divorce. Her on-going divorce case has attracted the attention of many female Instagram users, iconic mothers and has also occupied the mass media. The interesting thing about her divorce case is that for the first time in Turkey, a judge made a verdict against a parent who lost the custody of a child because of her posts and photos on social media. Hence nihankayalioglu has gained more popularity due to this verdict and she receives both supportive and attacking comments for this. Even before she lost the custody of her children, I tried to arrange an interview with her four times and each time she cancelled at the last minute. I approached her through a mutual friend, so she could not decline my offer but rather tried to avoid the interview with excuses.

Melinasmom is another blog writer but what makes her special and popular is her experience while trying to have a baby. First, she started to write a blog, where she tells her 'in vitro fertilization' trials. According to her blog article, the purpose of the blog was to give hope to women who could not get pregnant in the traditional way. After starting to use Instagram, she became more popular and famous which led her to publish a book called "Seni Beklerken" (While Waiting For You), in which she wrote about her challenges while trying to have a baby. On the back cover of the book, she

describes her book as follows; "Elinde tuttuğun bu kitap benim hikayemdir. Belki de yalnızca sahip olduklarının kıymetini bilmeyi öğrenmek için okuyacaksın onu. Belki geçtiğin benzer yolda sana yarenlik edecek anlattıklarım. Belki de bambaşka bir hayale ulaşman için sana yol gösterecek."[24] Most recently, melinasmom started a career in daytime television. She hosts several guests as the presenter in Saturday afternoons for discussing issues related with mothers and children. I met melinasmom at a school information day in a hotel, where melinasmom was a guest speaker. My purpose for attending this event was to meet with nihankayalioglu since she had invited me there to conduct an interview afterwards, which did not happen. After the event, I introduced myself to melinasmom and requested an interview which she accepted and directed me to her assistant by giving her telephone number. Eventually, she only agreed to an e-mail interview so I sent her my questions. After a reminder e-mail, her assistant replied by stating that she and melinasmom wrote down the answers and melinasmom would probably send it after a last check upon her return from vacation. However, even though melinasmom returned home according to her posts, I still have not received any other e-mail yet.

Socialmomm is another iconic woman who has two little children. She writes on her blog and posts videos on YouTube while still managing Instagram. At the end of 2016, socialmomm was lynched by many users on Instagram. The reason for this lynch was a lie that socialmomm told for several years. She introduced herself as a psychologist on the social media and appereantly she acted as a consultant for young mothers and charged them for this service. When an anonymous Instagram user brought out the truth, socialmomm received very harsh comments under her photos. Interestingly enough, after this incident she accepted that she was not a psychologist but she also did not delete her account or stop posting on Instagram. Still, socialmomm has hundreds of thousand of followers, who like her posts and ask her questions regarding her maternal experience. This lynching followed by the continued admiration and seeking of advice made her a special case for me. I sent an e-mail to socialmomm to request an interview however she replied within two hours and declined this request.

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[24] "The book that you are holding in your hands is my story. Maybe you will read it only for learning to know the worth of what you have got. Maybe, things that I have told will accompany you in a similar road you are passing by. Or maybe it will guide you to reach a totally different dream." (My translation)

Her reply included the following: "Takip ediyorsan bilgin vardır, 1,5 ay önce doğum yaptım, bir kızımız oldu. Bu sebeple işe ara verdim. Alya ve Kıvançla daha fazla ilgilenmek adına. Üzülerek görüşme talebini geri çevirmek durumundayım. Birsüre hiçbirşeyde yer almak istemiyorum."[25] When I was asking for this interview, I was also aware of the high probability of rejection, because it has been only three months since people found out that she was not honest about her educational background.

sermincarkaci or oyuncuanne is the woman who has the highest number of followers in this research. After graduating from department of Turkish literature, she worked for a while. Then she gave birth and launched a Facebook page called Oyuncu Anne (Player Mother). Oyuncu Anne is now on Instagram and has almost six hundred thousand people are following her. sermincarkaci highlights the importance of parents playing games with their little children. She also published six books, which are either stories for children or guide books for mothers. In her Instagram account, she shares creative play ideas which can be played with materials that can be found easily or she announces autograph sessions for her books. I went to one of her autograph sessions in Istanbul at a book store in order to meet her. sermincarkaci lives in Ankara, thus she offered to answer my questions via e-mail and gave her personal e-mail address. During our small talk at the book store, she seemed interested in my thesis topic and promised to reply sooner or later and she kept her promise. sermincarkaci is one of the two iconic women that I sent me the interview answers. As an answer to my question regarding the change that Instagram made about her life, sermincarkaci wrote;

> "Kariyerimi etkiledi tabi. Kitapların tanıtımında ve yazımında etkili oldu. Annelik ile ilgili kitaplarımı oraya gelen sorulardan yola çıkarak yazdım. Ben evde çok oyun oynardım çocuklarla ve bu benim için onların üstünü değiştirmek, yemeğini yedirmek gibi normal bir şeydi. Sanıyordum ki herkes oyun oynuyor. Sayfayı açınca yorumlardan anladım ki, herkes oynamıyor, oynamak istese de nasıl değişik oyunlar üretebileceğini bilmiyor. Buradan hareketle Oyuncu Anne kitabını yazdım."[26]

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[25] "If you are following me, you must know that I gave birth 1,5 months ago, we had a daughter. That's why I gave a break to work. In order to take care of Alya and Kıvanç more. Sadly, I must decline your meeting request. I do not want to take part in anything for a while." (My translation)

[26] "It affected my career, of course. It has influenced the promotion of books and the writing process. I have written my books on motherhood based on the questions that I received on Instagram. I used to play games with kids very much and for me playing games was as normal as changing children's clothes or feeding them. I thought that everyone plays with their children like this. After launching the Instagram account, I realized that not everyone is playing and even though they want to play, they do not know how to create varied games for children. From this point of view, I wrote the book Oyuncu Anne (Player Mother)." (My translation)

Another iconic woman imrengursoy used to have a blog about cooking and recipes and she entered on Instagram with an account called "pisirenanneler" (cooking mothers). After a while, her use of Instagram changed and she started to post her son's pictures. In a short span of time, her son Mete gained fans and imrengursoy's Instagram account became one of the iconic ones. I also sent e-mail twice to imrengursoy to ask for a meeting and an interview but she did not respond at all. Even though she ignored my e-mail and thesis topic, she responded to one of her fan page owner's call, with I started conducting an online interview. I was texting this fan page owner via Instagram direct message (DM), after a couple of messages she wrote to me "Yalnız imren abla izin vermedi o yüzden üzgünüm. Projenize katılamam."[27] Apparently, while we were texting, the fan page owner communicated with imrengursoy and was warned to not continue to talk to me. As far as I understand, imrengursoy does not prefer to hold interviews about her Instagram activity.

selmaemin differs from other iconic women due to her life style and the way she uses Instagram. She is a conservative woman who does not have a child yet and in her Instagram profile she shares details of decoration of her home and her outfits. selmaemin has drawn my attention since she has lot more followers than many iconic women. She has the account which has second most followers after sermincarkaci. In addition to this account, she also has another personal Instagram account called selmaemin61, in which she shares more personal photos with family members and friends. However she declares that selmaemin61 can be followed only by women users.

Among iconic women, there is also one who writes in a newspaper. zey_zor writes in Hurriyet Seyahat Gazetesi about her travels around the world. She and her husband travel many cities from various countries and post photos from their luxurious vacations. These kind of trips were something that couple Zor was already engaging in. Now, zey_zor started to share her experiences in another platform other than Instagram. At the beginning of my research as I was telling my friends the topic of my research and some of the iconic women that I will focus on, a friend of mine told me that she knows zey_zor. At that point, I had already sent a direct message to zey_zor via Instagram and was waiting for a response. Then, my friend sent another direct message to her and

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[27] "But İmren Abla did not allow me, so I'm sorry. I can't take part in your project." (My translation)

mentioned my request for an interview. As a response my friend received "O tarz işlere hiç girmiyorum canım"[28] and I did not receive any response again. During the process of writing this thesis, zey_zor became pregnant and she is expecting her baby boy now. While waiting for her baby boy, she does not give a break to her Instagram posts, on the contrary she accelerated the frequency of sharing. Becoming a pregnant woman provided zey_zor the opportunity to give advice and share her pregnancy experience with her followers.

Two iconic women who resemble each other are cananvolkancetin and simgesa. They are friends and business partners at the same time. They have launched a beauty salon together. Moreover, their common features are not only limited to co-owning but also bear a physical resemblance as their Instagram accounts have similar flow of photos. Both of them are married and have one child each. Therefore, the followers see photos of a dressed up nuclear family in their luxurious life in both of the Instagram accounts. Their posts carry the characteristics of ideal body representations and harmony. Husband, wife and child lead a coherent and happy life with their matching outfits. Both cananvolkancetin and simgesa write captions which could be labeled as wise sayings under their posts. In order to arrange interviews, I sent them direct messages via Instagram. After getting no response, I sent them again because after interviewing their fans who admire them, my curiosity has increased more. As a reply to my second message cananvolkancetin wrote to me "maalesef  20 günlük bir tatile çıkıyorum yoksa seve seve yardımcı olurdum."[29] Whereas, simgesa did not return any message at all.

Even though I could not conduct an interview with cananvolkancetin by myself, she gave an interview to a blogger that I found online. In this interview, she explains how she and her husband initiated their "influencer" journey:

> "Herhangi bir strateji ile yola çıkmadık. İlk başlarda ailece kendinden gelen uyumumuzun olduğunu fark ettik sonrasında bu uyumu ön plana çıkararak ve eğlenceli bir hale getirerek fotoğraflar, videolar paylaşmaya başladık. Daha sonra insanların ilgisini çekmeye başladığını anladık ve

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[28] "I don't get involved with these kind of things, dear." (My translation)

[29] "Unfortunately, I am going away on 20 days holiday otherwise I would help you with pleasure." (My translation)

doğallığın sınırlarını aşmadan, kendi tarzımızın da dışına çıkmadan, ailemizin ve aşkımızın fotoğraflarını paylaşmaya devam ettik."[30]

And she points out that after becoming an influencer, iconic woman in my own words, there was no change in their lives, they continue to live the way that they used to live.

The last iconic woman hihieved differs from all previous iconic women that I have mentioned. hihieved has a two-year old son and she wants to reflect the hard and demanding sides of motherhood. Thus, she has her own style of posts which are sarcastically written and make people smile while reading. I have reached hihieved via e-mail. She replied back to me in hours and stated that she would be glad to help me with my thesis. She also mentioned that it would be no problem to use her real name since she is also in the process of writing a book about it. Instead of sending her my own questions, hihieved sent me her two very recent interview transcripts and in this thesis her quotations are based on these interviews. hihieved, in other words Hande Birsay, who has a sociology degree, explains the reason why she launched this Instagram account:

> "Mükemmel annelik diye bir şey yok. doğurdum, 3 kilo verdim sonra 7 kilo daha verdim, ilişkimiz eskisinden iyi diye bir şey genel olarak yok. Ama bize sunulan örnekler ne yazık ki hep bunlar. Medya da bunu pompalıyor, bakkaldaki amca da. sütünüz, memeleriniz hakkında hepsi hak sahibi, söz sahibi ve sizden iyi biliyorlar her şeyi. İnsanları motive etmeye çalışır gibi görünüp aslında kendi şahane anneliğini ve kadınlığını övenlerden sıkıldım, sıkıldık. Normal, gerçek, berbat hallerimizle varız ve bu anlar da hayatımızın bir parçası. Sosyal medya platformları şahaneliğin aynası gibi sunuluyor; ben öbür yüzünü göstermek istedim ve "ben de buradayım, bakın memelerim çatladı" demek için yazmaya başladım… hem kendimle hem de farklı normlarda kadınalrın ve özellikle annelerin üzerinde oluşturulan baskı hedefim oldu ve hala bunlarla dalga geçiyorum."[31]

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[30] "We didn't started with a certain strategy. At first, we realized that we have a harmony which stems naturally from our family, then we started to share photos and videos by bringing this harmony to forefront and making it enjoyable. After that, we understood that these photos and videos arouse people's interest, so without crossing the borders of naturality and our own style we continued to share photos of our family and love." (My translation)

[31] "There is no such thing as perfect motherhood. I have gave birth and lost 3 kilograms, then I lost 7 more kilograms. There is no such thing as our relationship is better than before. But unfortunately the examples which are presented to us are like these. Media is also pumping this, same as the man in the grocery store. They all have right to comment on your milk, breasts and they know everything better than you. I am bored, we are bored of women who seem like they are trying to motivate you but actually they are praising their own perfect motherhood and womanhood. We exist with our normal, real, terrible features and these features are parts of our lives. Social media platforms are presented as a fantastical mirror, whereas I wanted to show the other side of this mirror and I started to write in order to say "I am also here and look, my breasts have also cracks." I have targeted the pressure on me and also other women from different norms, especially the mothers. And I still joke about this." (My translation)

It is really interesting that in a platform where iconic women that present the "perfect" woman, are followed by many, hihieved also gained popularity and followers. At this point, it is possible to say that while hihieved gains popularity due to her realistic posts about everyday life, the other iconic women gain popularity since they function as object of desire and fantasy. Hence they make their followers dream about this desired and fantasised life.

Most of these iconic women know each other in daily life. The reason for this acquaintance mostly arises from the events, which invite many "famous" women from social media. From time to time, they like each other's posts and even leave comments.

## 3.2. #photooftheday: Content of Iconic Women's Posts on Instagram

The content of the posts varies from the pictures of their children to recommendations of a novel product. Based on my observations, selfies are the most shared type of photo among their posted photos. A selfie provides a space where you can write any sort of description under it, e.g. something which caused anger or pleasure in oneself. It might be due to this wide range of expression opportunities, a selfie might be the type of post that iconic women use more often. After selfies, the photos of iconic women's children are also very dominant in the profiles of these iconic women. Photos and videos of their children are taken while children are playing, sleeping, talking, etc. and followers tend to like these kind of "cute" children photos. In addition to portrait photos, iconic women share posts regarding some specific days or occasions. These days could be a national or religious holiday, or they can be related to a sad incident, like a terrorist attack in Turkey or in other countries. Since they have reached a level of fame and popularity, they might feel the responsibility to react to social events and incidents.

## 3.2.1. #neednofilter: Ideal Body of Iconic Women

Similar to the traditional media, in the social media people also care about and value the "beautiful" physical appearance greatly. The definition of "beautiful" is

Figure.1

mostly shaped by stereotypes about gender. Over the years, little girls grow up by getting exposed to images and discourses about how an ideal female body should look like. Therefore, a platform like Instagram, which has images and visuals as its focal point, can be a place where "ideal bodies" of women and men are applauded. Among the profiles that I have studied, we come across photos of the beautiful iconic woman, in which they present themselves by bringing their body and sexuality to the forefront. For instance, simgesa, who has 193 thousand followers on Instagram, shared a photo (Figure.1) with her daughter and she talks to her daughter in the caption by addressing her "My Daughter!" Very similar photo is also in Figure.2. While the follower reads the love of simgesa to her daughter, the follower also sees simgesa from the back with a revealing shirt. Despite the fact that her daughter will not be able to read these lines in near future, simgesa still wants to share this post. In Figure.1, simgesa addresses her daughter by saying that since she is leaving for work, she will not be able to be with her daughter when she wakes up. For me, it is not clear whether simgesa wanted to share this photo specifically and therefore thought of a suitable description or perhaps she wanted to share these sentences regarding to her daughter and then looked for a suitable photo in her phone library.

In Figure.3, another iconic woman, socialmomm, is taking a mirror selfie, in which the follower can almost see her whole body. This is shot a month after her second baby was born. As it is written in the description, the purpose of this photo is to show followers that she can fit into her jeans that she used to wear before her pregnancy. She specifically highlights the size of her jeans as 26, which is categorized as "small" size in

simgesa

❤ 11.091 beğenme

simgesa Dün cok guzel duygularla kizima bir not yazarak cok da begendigim bir fotografi paylasmistim sonra silmek durumunda kalmistim uzulerek..yazik oldu hem fotografima hem yazima hem duygularima..ayni kombin baska bir fotograf buldum onu paylasayim bari dedim icimde kalmasin..kalbi guzel tum takipcilerimize o degerli yorumlari icin tesekkurler ve sevgiler 💞 bu arada canim kizim senden tek ricam buyuyunce kalbi temiz vicdanli ve merhametli bir insan olman...hayat o sekilde cok daha huzurlu 🙏 #tuanask

214 yorumun tümünü gör

saimkilic @_____ gizli hesaplardan baskasına atıp tutanlar cennete mi gidiyormus😊 @simgesa

cananvolkancetin @simgesa cook özledim minitolarımı ben❤ kim üzdü sizi ben yokken bakem hiyeyyt sen sallamazsın ki👊👊👊

18 HAZIRAN

Figure.2

clothing standards. Losing weight after giving birth and being a small size are presented as a success story. The use of the word "happiness" is related to being a small sized woman or mother.

Being fit and thin continues to be perceived as an accomplishment. nihankayalioglu reveals her abdominal muscles in Figure.4. She points out that "recently, me myself is my new hobby." As a mother of two, along with a slim body, having a flat and muscular belly has received complimentary comments. In order to tell that she herself is her new hobby, she could have posted a photo from gym while practicing. Instead, she preferred to show the result of the practices because she is certain that this would be more impressive and admired.

cananvolkancetin also choses to post an image of herself (Figure.5) in the gym but what makes this pose special is that it is taken for a sports magazine called "Women's Fitness". In addition to this one, there are also a couple of more photos from the same photo shoot in her profile. She sends her gratitude to her gym instructor by saying "the one who made me get into this form."

Apparently, physical appearance for cananvolkancetin has always been a part of her Instagram profile. Figure.6 belongs to 2015 summer, where cananvolkancetin appears in her swimsuit. What is interesting is that she quotes a poem of William Shakespeare under her photo. As it is similar to Figure.1, the description is not associated with the image directly.

zey_zor is another iconic woman who is pregnant at the moment and will give birth soon. Her popularity stems from the photos with her husband, which are taken at
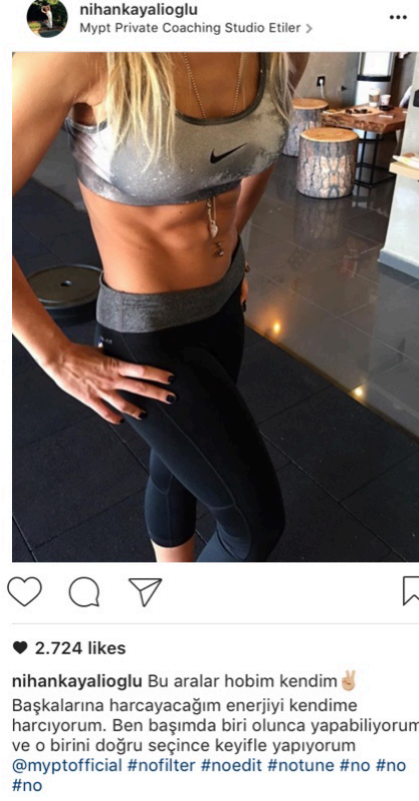
**socialmomm**

❤ 4.070 likes

**socialmomm** Doğumdan sonra henüz 1 ay dolmadan eski 26 beden kotlarıma girmenin mutluluğu 😍😍😍 #postpartum #emzirmeningücü #bolsu #bolsebze #bolprotein

14 ŞUBAT · SEE TRANSLATION

Figure.3



**nihankayalioglu**
Mypt Private Coaching Studio Etiler >

❤ 2.724 likes

**nihankayalioglu** Bu aralar hobim kendim ✌
Başkalarına harcayacağım enerjiyi kendime harcıyorum. Ben başımda biri olunca yapabiliyorum ve o birini doğru seçince keyifle yapıyorum @myptofficial #nofilter #noedit #notune #no #no #no

Figure.4



**cananvolkancetin**
Colesium Acarkent >

nihankayalioglu, ██████████ ve **7.193 diğer kişi** beğendi

**cananvolkancetin** Sağlam kafa saglam vücutta bulunur 💪 ama bence  her seyden önemli olan saglam bir Kalbe❤ sahip olmak gerekir🙏 Beni bu forma getiren hocam @dila.ulas 🙏 I'm in love with the shape of you
We push and pull like a magnet do
Although my heart is falling too
I'm in love with your body😍
@womensfitnesstr @womensfitnesstr @ugurutkusezer 📷

74 yorumun tümünü gör

██████ ❤❤❤❤ nefis

██████ Analar neler doguruyor be😍 benim her seyi mükemmel kızım❤

17 MAYIS

Figure.5



**cananvolkancetin**

simgesa, burcucanuysal ve **3.287 diğer kişi** beğendi

**cananvolkancetin** Kendimi her zaman mutlu hissederim...
Neden biliyor musunuz?
Çünkü kimseden bir şey ummam.
Beklentiler daima yaralar.
Hayat kısadır.
Öyleyse hayatınızı sevin.
Mutlu olun ve gülümsemeye devam edin.
Sadece kendiniz için yaşayın ve;
Konuşmadan önce dinleyin,
Yazmadan önce düşünün,
Harcamadan önce kazanın,
Dua etmeden önce bağışlayın,
İncitmeden önce hissedin,
Nefret etmeden önce sevin,
Vazgeçmeden önce çabalayın,
Ölmeden önce yaşayın.
Hayat budur.
Onu hissedin, onu yaşayın ve ondan hoşnut olun.....W.Shakespeare

93 yorumun tümünü gör

Figure.6

18 AĞUSTOS 2015

39

various places around the world. It is possible to say that she is aware of her "ideal" physical appearance, because she makes public how she remains thin in her Instagram profile (Figure.7). Moreover, she continues to maintain the ideal woman look, which is completed with high heels even when she is seven months pregnant. Figure.8 displays zey_zor's baby shower party photographs.



Figure.7



Figure.8

### 3.2.2 #couplegoals: Beloved Woman and Perfect Couple



Figure.9

Some iconic women emphasise that they are the wife of their husband and make use of words such as, "kocacım" or "kocişim"[32], in their posts. cananvolkancetin in Figure.9 created a username which is a the combination of the wife and husband name; cananvolkancetin. Although the name of the account indicates mutual use of this Instagram account, as far as I observed most of time captions are written by Canan, like this example. Also, her husband Volkan has his separate Instagram account, so this situation supports my idea that the account cananvolkancetin is in her control. In caption part, when she states "Her mutlu kadının arkasında Dağ gibi eşi vardır. Benim everestim"[33]. The following hashtags are also worth noticing. She writes a whole sentence by placing a hashtag (#) right before each word of the sentence and she says "#masallah #nazar #etme #ne #olur #dile #seninde #olur.[34]" Then caption continues as "Kaş&Kirpik için @emsaldoganetiler[35]". What is striking here is; when the follower thinks that she is associating her husband with Mount Everest in order to underline her trust for him, the following sentence shifts the center to her physical appearance and the beauty salon that she co-owns.

In Figure.10 and Figure.11, zey_zor complains about the difficulty of carrying gifts from her husband, in order to underline her husband's interest in her. The idea that big and expensive gifts are an indicator of a greater love can be seen here. Also, when in

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[32] similar meaning as "hubby"

[33] "Behind every happy woman, there is her husband just like a mountain. My Everest." (My translation)

[34] These hashtags build a sentence together, which means "Don't look with an evil eye, wish for it so that you can also have it"

[35] "For eyebrows & eyelash @emsaldoganetiler" (My translation)

Figure.10



Figure.11

the caption she refers to her female followers by saying "Sevgililerinizi etiketleyin örnek alsınlar"[36], it made me think that she perceives herself and her husband as the role models. In addition, in the majority of posts which emphasize the husband's love towards his wife, pictures have the perfect body and made-up face of beloved woman in the foreground. The reason behind that could be the perception that the condition of having a perfect desirable body is associated with being a perfect wife.

When the woman with the "ideal" body and features comes together with the man who is in love with the woman, the "perfect" couple comes into the scene. The private life of celebrities have always been a theme of curiosity. Magazine programmes, which are filled with information regarding the personal activities of celebrity's daily life, still maintain their place in the broadcast stream. The fact that magazine programs are still on air indicates that there is still an audience that shows an interest in them. Similar to magazine programs, Instagram also provides a glance into stranger's lives. However this time, celebrities are not filmed by paparazzi, instead micro-celebrities

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[36] "Tag your lovers so that they hold up as an example" (My translation)

reveal themselves and their relationship. They might even communicate by commenting under a photo of one of them.

The kissing pose (Figure.12), which turned into a signature pose of zey_zor and her husband, comes with the description of "Love Everywhere." As a response, zey_zor's husband alkanzor leaves a comment with a heart emoji and a baby emoji which implies their baby on the way. During her pregnancy, zey_zor created herself a hashtag called "#MamaZor" and she is attaching this hashtag to her recent photos. MamaZor did not take a break on traveling during her pregnancy and Figure.13 is a photo that she shares from Thailand. She describes MamaZor as in good spirits and thanks her husband for making her laugh a lot. One more time, alkanzor comments and explains why he makes her wife laugh a lot. It is because he has the chance to see the best laughter in the world, when zey_zor laughs. As a result, followers see a husband a wife who are sitting together but sending gratitude to one another on social media.
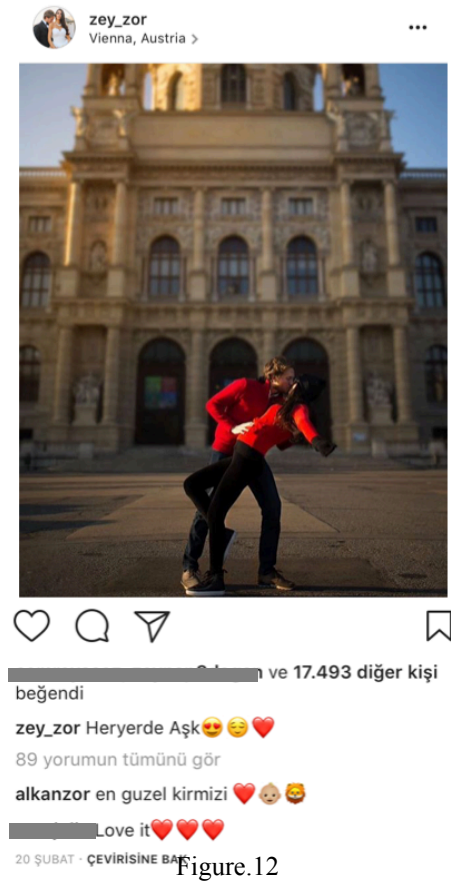


Figure.12



Figure.13

Along with zey_zor and her husband, cananvolkancetin and her husband are the couple most envied by followers. I came to this conclusion after comparing the comments under their photos and I will discuss it more in the next heading. cananvolkancetin and her Mountain Everest appear as a fit and perfect couple in Figure14. cananvolkancetin shares this photo from gym and states that "I believe that the ones who spent their childhood by knowing that they are loved are the happiest and most easy-going people in the world (heart emoji)." It seems to me that just like zey_zor couple, cananvolkancetin and her husband also represent themselves as an ideal couple. Their outfit in Figure.15 points to the same outcome. The whole family is wearing sweatshirts which have writings on them. While Canan's one says "the QUEEN", Volkan's says "the KING" and their son's sweatshirt says "the HALF".



Figure.14



Figure.15

Unlike other profiles that I have studied, hihieved's Instagram profile is full of unusual photos and descriptions which are ironically related to those photos. What I mean with unusual photos is photos that capture moments which are generally avoided

to show others. Thus, social media users are not accustomed to see these unusual photos. A couple of examples of these moments could be when the home is untidy, when someone is very sick, when the baby cries, etc. hihieved created an Instagram account in 2015 after giving birth to her son. In her sarcastic profile, she criticizes what new mothers experience by making fun.



Figure.16



Figure.17

Being parents with little children is an exhaustive duty and most of the time parents are complaining about this issue. Yet, it is not very common to see tired photos of parents on Instagram. hihieved touches upon this issue in Figure.16 and Figure.17. Although, the photo reflects the followers the image of a tired mother and a sleeping father on the couch, hihieved describes an exact opposite situation. She states "If children are asleep, let the parent time begin (heart emoji) What are you doing
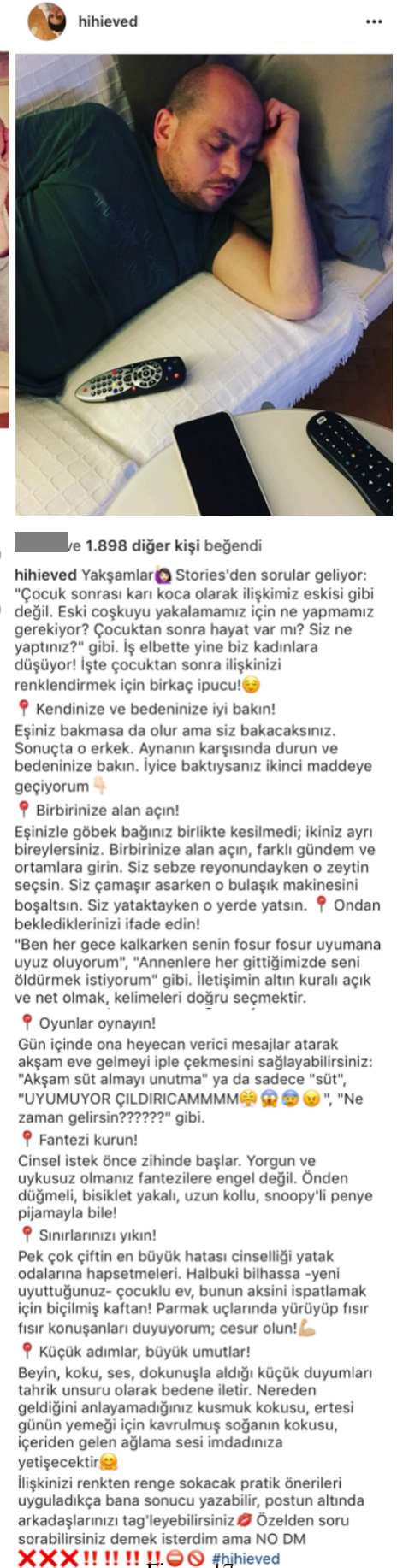
to boost your relationship after having kids?" In another evening, when her husband fell asleep on the couch again, hihieved shares his photo and underneath she writes some tips to revive the relationship. Then she continues to use sarcasm for each tip she recommends. What is most striking are the comments. As far as I have observed, she does not receive any negative comments like some other iconic mother may receive. Her followers mention how she makes them laugh with her posts. hihieved has been liked by followers because I think she breaks the perfect series of images on Instagram and when people come across her posts, they see a familiar situation with their lives.

### 3.2.3 #momgoals: Photos of Children

Nine of ten iconic women that I have studied do have children or are pregnant. Thus, in this headline I will present iconic mothers and their posts regarding their children. Firstly, melinasmom could be the mother who shares most photos or videos of her daughter Melina. Melina's mother Merve Öztürk has experienced a challenging and difficult process of having a baby. According to an article in her blog, after five failed medical operations, she finally got pregnant to her daughter Melina. Therefore, if the story of Merve Öztürk is considered, then her putting Melina right in the center of her life would make more sense. She created an Instagram account, which defines Merve over her daughter and the content of her posts are somehow about Melina.

melinasmom's profile includes scenes from daily activities. For instance, while they are on their way to Melina's doctor, melinasmom takes a picture and posts it by saying "We are going for doctor control" (Figure.18) Furthermore, there are times when melinasmom picks a photo of Melina and writes a caption as if Melina herself is writing. Figure.19 exhibits an example for this situation. The follower sees Melina making some kind of gestures and the description goes as "They say that you miss me [kissing emoji]" Presumably, melinasmom chooses to post this kind of content because she finds it funny and cute.

The iconic mother socialmomm, who deceitfully introduced herself as a psychologist did not cease to post contents regarding her children and continued to give

melinasmom

nihankayalioglu, [redacted] ve **21.477 diğer kişi** beğendi

**melinasmom** Doktor kotrolüne gidiyoruz 💁 Bakalım zatürre miz ne aşamada 🙏 Gitmişlerdir umarım 💁

150 yorumun tümünü gör

z[redacted] @melinasmom Hayırlı haberlerinizi bekliyorum güzellerim benim🙏💕💕💕💕💕🙏

b[redacted] "Ne demek hala zatüresin" bakisi uzerinde calismali bir foto olmus 😂

22 MAYIS

Figure.18



melinasmom

**20.875 beğenme**

**melinasmom** Beni özlemişsiniz diyolla 🙄 ??? #opucuks

Figure.19



socialmomm

ve **11.168 diğer kişi** beğendi

**socialmomm** Ayaklar rahat durmasa da çektimmmmmm 😍😍 Alyakuş 3 aylık 💗 💗 denizkızı kostümü: @zopikids

172 yorumun tümünü gör

[redacted] Kiyamam🙂 yamaccim onemli olan aileler anlassin biliyosunki cocuklarin anlasmasi onemli degil😂 bunlarin 7 kusagi gulcin&yadigar ölümüne kanka🙈 @[redacted]

Figure.20



socialmomm

**19.651 beğenme**

**socialmomm** Benim küçük kelebeğim 🦋 Alya bu ay geçirdiği idrar yolu enfeksiyonu sebebiyle sadece 500 gram almış ben baya kafama taktım 😔 hemen sütümün değerini arttırmak için Lactamil (toz) içmeye başladım. Sanırım biraz işe yaradı biraz toparladı sanki... Bu arada elbisemiz nasıl? Alya'ya hayalimdeki desendeki elbiseyi diken arkadaşım @tualababy ye teşekkür ederim 🦋❤️ Doğumgünü ve özel günler için birbirinden güzel bebeğin ölçülerine göre özel dikim elbiseler var, mutlaka sayfayı ziyaret edin 💋 👗

308 yorumun tümünü gör

**tualababy** Caglacım, dunyalar guzeli kızının ustunde zaten birseyin kotu durması imkansız, masallah Alya kuşa, tam bir yemelik lokum olmuş 🦋🦋🦋🦋

**tualababy** Destegin ve bu guzel foto için çok tesekkur ederim 🙏🙏😘😘😘 @socialmomm

3 GÜN ÖNCE

Figure.21

47

suggestions to follower mothers. Lately, socialmomm shares her second baby and her experiences about having a new born baby for the second time. The little mermaid baby greets socialmomm's followers in their timeline (Figure.20). socialmomm dresses her baby daughter up as a mermaid and takes this picture to announce the baby's third month. She does not forget to state the brand of the costume. There are also other times, when mothers give information about their children's health conditions and give opinions to followers or ask opinions from followers. Figure.21 is an example for this. socialmomm states that "my little butterfly (butterfly emoji) Alya just gain 500 grams due to bladder infection this month I have became obsessed about it (sad emoji)." Then the description changes direction and continues as "By the way, how do you like our dress? Thank you to my friend … who stitched the dress in my dream pattern for Alya."


Figure.22


Figure.23

Business partners cananvolkancetin and simgesa have identical Instagram profiles. Therefore, this resemblance also involves also photos in which their children are present. The child making a facial gesture like kissing and bending towards are poses that can be found in both accounts (Figure.22 and Figure.23). Furthermore, both photos have a kind of wise sayings as a description. While simgesa emphasizes the inner beauty's importance, cananvolkancetin writes a sentence referring to her son as "You are just anybody to all the people in the world but you worth the world for someone (heart emoji)" After this sentence, she mentions her son's Instagram account name. Apparently, his parents have already generated an Instagram account for cananvolkancetin's son. Even though he is not an active user and does not have any post in his profile, he has over one thousand followers already among the followers of cananvolkancetin.

Wearing matchy clothes as mother and daughter/son is another feature of business partner's accounts. In Figure.24, simgesa and her daughter are both wearing a flower necklace and hawaiian skirts by the swimming pool. The photo also includes a a


Figure.24


Figure.25

49

hashtag as #tuanask, because of the fact that her daughter name is Tuana. Therefore, simgesa made up a new word for her daughter by combining the words Tuana and Aşk. The description goes "A person should have a daughter, really." Her husband saimkilic responses to this description in the comments section by saying "Yes, he should have but from you (heart emoji)." In a similar post, cananvolkancetin uses a related hashtag called #matchymatchy about this feature (Figure.25). In this photo, she and her son are both wearing a top with Mickey Mouse figures. Even though they put on matching outfits and even though she mentions her love towards her son, the photo does not totally reflect a mother and son relationship. From my point of view, cananvolkancetin's presence dominates the whole picture.
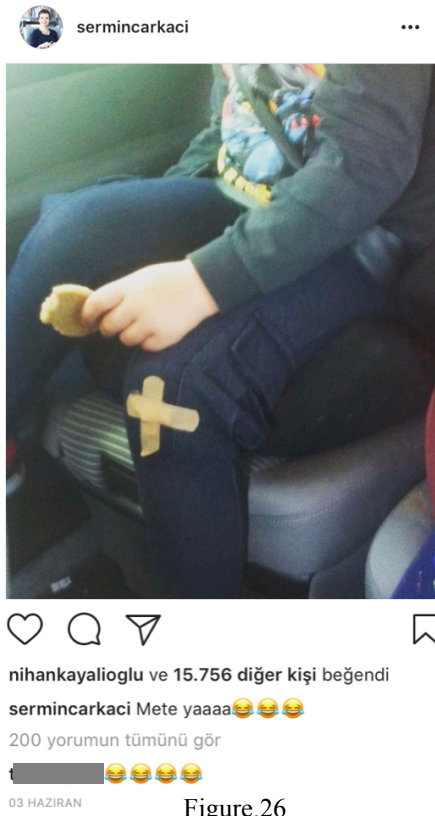


Figure.26

Not all iconic mothers generously share pictures of their children. The most popular iconic woman among ten women in this study is sermincarkaci and she has a critical approach to children's photos. Her children are not totally in the frame but can only partly be seen in her photos. sermincarkaci also shares moments from her daily routine with her children. Figure.26 shows her son applying an adhesive bandage on his pants and sermincarkaci posts this scene with laughter emojis. As in Figure.27, sermincarkaci and her three children are holding each other's hands but again none of the faces of the children are displayed. Figure.31 exhibits the kind of content that sermincarkaci share most of the time, which shows ideas for children's games and

activities. Her name in the info part in her Instagram profile is oyuncuanne and it refers to her creative play ideas. In Figure.28 she describes a painting activity which includes ice packs, finger paint and paper. As she usually points out under her posts, she gives out game ideas or experiences that she has for her own children. Her aim is to reach mother with these game ideas and the feature of these games is that unlike paid toys

Figure.27



Figure.28

they require only basic materials which can be found in almost every home. In my opinion, since the goal of her Instagram account is to release game ideas, she does not feel the need to display her children. It is sufficient to have children's hands and arms in the frame so that they can provide an insight about the game or activity.

When I asked sermincarkaci about her sensitivity for sharing her children's photos and her general idea about this issue, she wrote this long answer;

"Çocuklarımın fotoğraflarını niçin paylaşmıyorum. İzah edeyim. İlk başlarda durumun farkında değilim, ne kadar her şeyi ince eleyip sık dokusan da gaflette bulunabiliyorsun. Ara ara yavrularda fotoğraf çekip paylaşıyordum. Fakat o dönemde de mahremiyetine gayret gösteriyor, fiziki güzelliklerinin ön plana çıkartılacağı fotoğrafları asla paylaşmıyordum. Sonra tabi takipçi sayısı arttı, bir gün okul gezisine gittiklerinde bir hanım botlarından ve montlarından tanıyıp sevmek istemiş. Bir art niyet olmasa da çocukların özel alanlarını korumam gerektiğini düşündüm ve fotoğraflarını bir yıla yakın zamandır paylaşmıyorum. Hatta bilmenizi isterim ki, onların instagramdan ve facebooktan haberleri yok, sadece kitapları biliyorlar. Burada çocuklarla ilgili oyunlar paylaşıyorum ve o zaman da oyuna odaklanılsın istiyorum. Diğer yandan çocukların anne ve babalarının zevkleri için tütülerle, kombin kıyafetlerle, papyonlarla, çocuk gibi değil de çocuk manken gibi yaşamalarını da doğru bulmuyorum. Çocuk istismarının

cayır cayır can yaktığı bir ülkede çocuğun süslü püslü ve kimilerinde çıplak vaziyette afişe edilmesini çocuklar açısından tehlikeli görüyorum. Bu tamamen benim kişisel bakış açım, yapan yapar, bir şey diyemem ama ben bu yolu tercih ediyorum. Sonuçta bir şekilde insanlara örnek oluyorsunuz, eğitimli, meslek sahibi, itibar sahibi bir kadın çocuğunun kıçını açıp fotoğrafını paylaşırsa o fotoğrafı beğenen yüzbin kişi de doğal olarak bunun normal olduğunu düşünür. Normal kabul etmeye başladığımız anda da beraberinde başka belalar gelir. İstismarın artışı gibi… Bir gün kendileri derlerse ki "anne çek bi fotoğraf paylaşalım sayfada, bizi de etiketle":) o zaman bakarız. O zamana kadar elleriyle ayaklarıyla oyunlara eşlik edecekler."[37]

This statement also contains an iconic mother's criticism to other iconic women's posts.

Not as strict as sermincarkaci but the sarcastic mother hihieved also carries a similar opinion regarding sharing children's photos. She writes down her concerns as;

"Dijital medyada çocuk istismarı son yıllarda konuşulmaya başlanan bir mesele; bundan dolayı da mutluyum. Dir-li dur-lu cümleler benden çıkmaz; şu doğru/şu yanlış da diyemem ama bana yakın/uzak gelen olarak niteleyebileceğim şeyler var. Çocuğun metalaştırıldığı bir düzenin karşısındayım ama çocuğumu asla paylaşmam tarafında değilim. Bir marka hediye kıyafet yolladı veya bütçeli iş yapıyorum diye çocuğumu giydirip konu mankeni yapmam; yapanlar kendi geleceklerinden sorumludur beni de ilgilendirmez. Hihieved'de Kerem'i çok az göstermeye çalışıyorum; olduğu fotoğraflarda yüzünü vs. tam göstermemeye çalışıyorum ama tamamen başarılı olamıyorum. Yolda çevirenler oluyor ama Kerem'i değil beni tanıyorlar; o zaman bir nebze rahatlıyorum. Bir keresinde onu tanıyıp, bir parkta fotoğrafını çekip bana yollayan biri vardı; "Kerem bu mu?" diye. Kötü bir niyeti yoktur muhtemelen ama çok rahatsız hissetmiş ve açıkçası korkmuştum da. Çocuklar adına hayran sayfaları açılıyor; takipçiler satın alınıyor; oraya yorumlar yağdırılıyor; annenin paylaştığı fotoğraflar bir tur

da "Aşkımız ece'miz" vs. diyerek orada paylaşılıyor. Bunlar bana çok ürkütücü geliyor."[38]

hihieved's photos with her two-year old child reveal the hard and unpleasant times. She does not post her child while he is dressed up or smiling, instead she picks the moments when he cries or misbehaves. Figure.29 shows her child crying and the caption goes like this "Kerem is a kind of kid who can play by himself in his bed when he wakes up, he is a self-sufficient kid. Sometimes, he does not make any sound for almost half an hour, I go to him because I miss him… Some kids are crying for calling parents as soon as he wakes up… to be honest I am surprised…" Furthermore, a moment of a misbehavior (Figure.30) is told by hihieved as "Always hug me with love like this, let me look at you always with love like this."


Figure.29


Figure.30

---

[38] "Child abuse in the digital media is a hot topic in recent years, I am glad about this. I don't build clear-cut sentences, I can't say this is right or wrong but there are things that I can describe as feeling drawn to or not. I am against an order which commodifies children but I also don't support the idea of "I would never share (photo of) my child". I wouldn't dress my child and use my kid as a wall flower just because a brand sent a gift or just because I am planning a budget. The ones who do this are responsible for their own futures and it's none of my business. On hihieved, I try to show Kerem least and when he is in the picture I try not to show his whole face but I don't succeed everytime. There are people who come accross in the street but they know me instead of Kerem, then I relieve a little. Once, there was someone who took (Kerem's) photo and sent it to me asking "Is this Kerem?". I am sure that she didn't have any bad intention but I felt uncomfortable and scared to be honest. There are fan pages of children, followers are purchasing, there are flow of comments there, the photos that the mother has shared are shared again in these fan pages again by saying "Our love, our Ece". I find this things too scary." (My translation)

There are also times when discourses about motherhood are encountered in iconic mother's Instagram posts. As an example, imrengursoy defines motherhood in her own terms in Figure.31. She defines it as "Motherhood is a constant missing. Always longing!… Motherhood is sacrifice. Motherhood is power, motherhood is weakness. Motherhood is reaching a satisfaction as well as the feeling of lacking… Motherhood is insanity, motherhood is abnormality." nihankayalioglu likes this post and leaves a comment repeating "Motherhood is insanity." I think imrengursoy aims to underscore the complexity of the role of motherhood. Questions of how to define motherhood or how to become a mother occupy young women's mind. hihieved also questions herself about when and how she felt being a mother (Figure.32). She alines



Figure.31

several questions about the starting point of motherhood and then concludes by saying "I don't know (smiley emoji) All I know is that what I feel doesn't have to do anything with food processor, teflon pan and solitaire ring." Among many other sarcastic posts of hihieved, this feels more sentimental. She might tried to tell that motherhood is not a concept which is easy to tell.

sermincarkaci also challenges to find answer to what makes a good mother however she comes to a conclusion in her own way. She states "Am I good mother, I really don't know. The only truth that I know is that I make so much effort…Your are a perfect mother, I am a perfect mother… This things are discussed all the time. There is no such thing. No one should say that I am a good mother. Because children will tell us how good we were." (Figure.33)

In Figure.34, another iconic mother nihankayalioglu criticises herself while telling memories from a vacation she took with her three years old and three months old

nihankayalioglu, ve 11.084 diğer kişi beğendi

**hihieved** Kerem'e hamile olduğum haberini alınca mı anne oldum? Onu apar topar dünyaya getirmek zorunda kalınca mı? Onu saatler sonra ilk kez kablolar arasında gördüğüm zaman mı? Kaldığım doğum katında her odadan bebek ağlama sesleri gelirken, hep iyiyi hayal ederek elimdeki peluş hayvana sarılınca mı? Onu hastanede arkamızda bıraktığımızda mı? Her gün evde ağlayarak süt sağarken mi? Her akşam elimizde içi birkaç mililitre süt dolu buzlu çantalarla yoğun bakım katında kapıyı açsınlar ve 1 dakika görebilelim diye beklerken mi? Birkaç hafta sonra "Artık nüfus cüzdanını çıkarabilirsiniz"i duyduğumda mı? Ona haftalar sonra ilk kez dokunabildiğim zaman mı? Onu emzirebildiğim zaman mı? Hastaneden taburcu olduğunda mı? Bana ilk kez anne dediğinde mi? Bu sabah "Anne bana koorabiye yap" diye beni uyandırdığında mı? "Anne sen çok komiksin" deyip sarıldığında mı? Bilmem 😔

Tek bildiğim, hissettiğim şu şeyin rondoyla, teflon tencereyle, tek taşla filan bir ilgisi olmadığı. Anneleri uzakta olan, yanlarında olamayan, yanlarında olan, küs olan, didişip duran, çok seven, ölüp biten, öpüşüp duran, isyan eden, yardım eden, anlayan, anlamayan, bir canlıya hayat veren, onu koruyan, sahiplenen, anne olan, olmayan, olamayan, olmak istemeyen her çocuğu gözlerinden öperim. Hepiniz ölene kadar çocuk kalacaksınız. Çünkü bir anne yavrususunuz 🎈
#hihieved

Figure.32
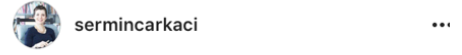
14.418 likes

**sermincarkaci** İyi bir anne miyim, gerçekten bilmiyorum. Bildiğim tek gerçek; çok gayret ettiğim. Yapamadığım, atladığım, dikkatimden kaçan o kadar çok şey var ki, günümün belli bir kısmını bu açıkları fark edip kapatmaya çalışarak geçiriyorum. Öyle diyorum, anneliğim sanki bir yorgan ve ne kadar çekersem çekeyim asla bütünüyle hepsini kapatamıyorum. Birinin bir yeri hep açıkta kalıyor, sonra dönüp biraz onu ısıtıyorum, sonra dönüp diğerini.

Gerçekleşmesi mümkün olmayacak bir şey hayal et deseler, üç elimin olmasını hayal ederdim. Çünkü ellerinden tutup yürümek istediğimde, çok basit, sadece el ele tutuşup yürümek istediğimde birinin eli açıkta kalıyor. Çünkü iki elim, üç çocuğum var. Mükemmel annesin, anneyim... Bunlar konuşuluyor ya hep. Yok öyle bir şey. Kimse ben iyi bir anneyim bile demesin. Çünkü ne kadar iyi olduğumuzu bile ilerde çocuklar söyleyecek. Kendimizi illa rahatlatmamız gerekirse, söyleyebileceğimiz tek nokta: Gayret eden bir anne olup olmadığımız.

Kendi hesabıma söylüyorum. Çok gayret ediyorum. Tek başıma, bakmaya, ilgilenmeye, oynamaya, öğretmeye, göstermeye, dinlemeye çalışıyorum. Yoksa ne zoruma, 7 yaşında çocuk kostümünün içine girmeye çalışıp evin içinde deli deli koşturayım. Niye bütün günümü ve hatta gecelerimi çalışarak geçireyim? Kombiyi biraz daha açıp sıcacık yatmak varken, çocukları her hafta sobalı eve götürüp onlara soba tutuşturmayı niye öğreteyim? Ne ki yıllar sonra, annelerini eğlenceli, gayretli, mutlu, neşeli hatırlasınlar...
Amma dertliymişim, nerden girdim nerden çıktım.:-)

Figure.33

Figure.34

children four years ago. She describes herself from four years ago by saying that she was obsessed about taking care of her children all by herself without getting any help from others. However at the end of the vacation, she called her uncle and desperately asked for help. nihankayalioglu finishes her post by saying "What makes the idea of 'I am the most super ultra mega mother' to a person."

Another mother who criticizes herself is hihieved. In her interview, she responds the question about her perception of motherhood before becoming a mother as follows;

"Anne olmadan önce "anne olmak" çok kol ay! İddialı , disiplinli, kuralları belirlenmiş, çok okunmuş, çok öğrenilmiş, çok gözlemlenmiş, "hangi çılgın bana zincir vuracakmış şaşarım!" tadında bir meydan okuma hali. Çocuksuz zamanlarım etrafımdaki çocukları ve ailelerini kınayarak geçti. Bir gün çocuğum olursa asla yerlerde tepinmeyecekti; ben hep bakımlı olacaktım, her şeye pekala yetişecektim, uzayıp giden bir "asla"lar listesi."[39]

cananvolkancetin gets more into detail by stating features of being a mother to a son. According to her, "I am a boy's mother and the sweetest side of this is being the first love of a man even though he is small [emojis] My future bride, I am sorry honey [devil emoji]" (Figure. 35).

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[39] ""Becoming a mother" before becoming a mother is so easy! Assertive, self disciplined, established rules, read so many, learned so much, observed so much, challenging like "which would fetter me crazy?"… I spent my childless times by reprimanding kids and parents around me. If I had a child one day, he wouldn't cavort around, I would always be well-groomed, I would easily catch eveything on time, a long list of "ever!" (My translation)

56

cananvolkancetin

simgesa ve 10.005 diğer kişi beğendi
cananvolkancetin Ben bir erkek annesiyim ve
bunun en tatlı yanlarından biri; Küçük de olsa bir
erkeğin ilk Aşkı olmak😌😍 Gelecekte ki gelinim
üzgünüm tatlımmm😈
Love at first sight💓
#momgoals#mothersday#momlife#family#fashion
71 yorumun tümünü gör
zey_zor O gelinler yandi yandiiiii😂👏👏
cananvolkancetin_____lu 🙏💙
08 MAYIS

Figure.35



selmaemin

3.842 beğenme
selmaemin Balkonda oturuyorum çünkü balkon
sıcak içeriler soğuk artık kaloriferde yanmıyor evde
polarla duruyorum🤓 ama en güzel balkon 🙆
azıcık güneş gösteriyor kendini sonra yeter
bukadar diyip kaçıyor 😅 mutlu akşamlar herkese
😘😘💕👩 #goodday#goodevening
#ikea#instagram#balcony#balkon#divan#sedir
69 yorumun tümünü gör
_____ Nasıl güzel 😍
_____i Keyifli akşamlar canım
💕😊👌
08 MAYIS

Figure.36

## 3.2.4. #homesweethome: Domestic Photos

Instagram contains various kinds of contents and themes; from sports to cooking, from child care to fashion. Another type of themes is about the homes of recently married women. Facebook was the first platform to host photos of furniture, dinner table preparations, decorative objects and small home appliance, etc posted by new brides. There is even a Facebook page called "Gelinlerin Tatlı Telaşı" (Sweet Rush of Brides) where tens of thousand of people share photos anonymously and ask for the other members opinions regarding their home. This popularity leaped into Instagram and women started to create accounts where they show details of their clean home. Therefore, it is possible to label these kind of photos as domestic photos.

One of the Instagram's most popular domestic photo account is selmaemin from Trabzon. selmaemin shares photos of furniture in her home, a breakfast or a dinner table that she prepared with a great care, some apparel that she wants to introduce and occasionally herself (Figures 36, 37, 38).



Figure.37



Figure.38

### 3.2.5. #prayfor: Social Sensitive Photos

As a kind of celebrity, iconic women are accepted as a public figures and they are expected to perform according to the expectations of the society. Even an ordinary and insignificant behavior of an iconic woman is attributed to higher meanings. A posted selfie of an iconic woman on a day that a soldier is martyred, might cause the iconic woman to be accused of insensitivity by some Instagram users. That user pretends as a controller on Instagram, who measures other user's level of sensitivity. As one of the interview questions, I have asked sermincarkaci's feelings and opinion about followers' anticipation for her posts; she replied;

> "…herhangi bir terör olayında hemen tepki vermenizi bekliyorlar. Kandili illa kutlayacaksın, dini-milli bayramı illa kutlayacaksın, her toplumsal olayda illa tepki vereceksin. Böyle alışmışlar, yapmadığında saldırıyorlar. Çok garip bir psikoloji bu. İnsanlar gündemi sosyal medyayı takip ettikleri gibi, yorumları da oradan okuyorlar. Bir nevi köşe yazarı görevi görüyorsunuz, fikirlerini oradan besliyorlar sanırım. Okuduğum en enteresan mesajlardan birini almıştım bir terör patlamadan sonra. Yorum yapmamış, paylaşım yapmamıştım. Tamamen başka bir sebeple. Hastanedeydim ve gerçekten mecalim yoktu. Bir takipçi mesajında beni duyarsızlıkla suçlamış, sizin gibiler yüzünden bu haldeyiz falan demiş. 500.000 takipçin varsa, elbette çıkıp açıklama yapmak zorundasın, belediye başkanlarında bile bu kadar takipçi yok! demiş☺ Kafaya bak☺ Takipçin varsa kral sensin."[40]

Therefore, most of the iconic women try to share a post, which is related to that day's agenda. Most recent examples for these kind of posts are from cananvolkancetin and simgesa, and their posts are about the first anniversary of July 15, 2016 coup attempt in Turkey. On July 15, 2017, simgesa shared the image in Figure.39 with the caption of "We remember martyrs of July 15 with mercy". Similarly, cananvolkancetin posted the flag of Republic of Turkey, which is decorated with small pictures of martyrs (Figure. 40). One day later, both simgesa and cananvolkancetin deleted these memorial posts

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[40] "… they expect you to react immediately at a terrorist attack. You should celebrate kandil (holy nights in Islam), you should celebrate religious-national holidays, you will react each social incident. They (her followers) got used to it, when you don't do this, they attack. It is a strange psychology. People follow the comments, just as they follow the agenda from social media. You function as a sort of columnist, i think they feed their opinions from there.. I received one of the most interesting comments after a bombing attack. I didn't share anything at that time. Totally for another reason. I was at the hospital and I was really tired. A follower accused me by insensitivity and said things like "we are in this situation because of people like you. If you have 500.000 followers, then of course you should make a statement, even mayors don't have this number of followers!" Look at this! :) If you have the followers, you are the king." (My translation)

simgesa

2.230 likes

simgesa 🇹🇷 🇹🇷 #15temmuz sehitlerini rahmetle

Figure.39


cananvolkancetin

Figure.40

from their profiles. This act of deleting convinced me more about the idea that iconic women share some specific posts merely for satisfying the expectation of followers and preventing possible reactions. Their posts regarding July 15 may be welcomed by some of their followers but it might not be welcomed by some others. Hence sharing it only for a short amount of time could be seen as a balancing solution to satisfy the expectations of both sides.

On October 29 Republic Day, imrengursoy put a picture of her son wearing a hat made of a flag while sleeping Figure.41. The caption goes "Açtığın yolda, gösterdiğin hedefe, durmadan yürüyeceğime ant içerim." 29 ekim cumhuriyet bayramımız kutlu olsun."[41] In addition to national holidays, religious holidays are also times when iconic women emphasize. For instance, on the last day of Ramadan month, zey_zor shared a picture of herself and her husband, while he is hugging and looking at her with love as always. She


imrengursoy

❤ 12.468 beğenme

imrengursoy Açtığın yolda, gösterdiğin hedefe, durmadan yürüyeceğime ant içerim..

29 ekim cumhuriyet bayramımız kutlu olsun 🇹🇷 #29ekim #29ekimcumhuriyetbayramımızkutluolsun #29ekimcumhuriyetbayramı

23 yorumun tümünü gör

Figure.41

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[41] "I swear that I will walk non stop on the path you have opened, on the target you pointed out. May October 29  The Republic Day be blessed" (My translation)

celebrates her followers' Ramadan Holiday in the caption; "Bu yıl son kez iftarımızı yaptık. Herkesin gönlünden geçen güzel dualar kabul olsun. Şimdiden iyi bayramlar dileriz."[42]

### 3.2.6. Consumption: Recommendations or Advertising

Social media touched and changed various fields which are effective in people's lives. The daily habits are reshaped according to social media and the tools which serve as access points to social media. It also reshaped the way people buy and sell products. Thus, the marketing sector tries to string along with all of these developments. Today, influencer marketing is a new and a popular concept as well. Influencers on Instagram have a huge and powerful role in the marketing sector.

Instagram users who have a certain life style and a great number of followers, which are called "influencers", aroused companies' and brands' interest, which are aiming to increase number of their customers. For this purpose, popular Instagram users started to serve as means of advertisement for products, hotels, services etc. This situation generates an economical motivation for popular users since it creates an income for them. The interesting point is that most of the time iconic women do not clearly state whether their posts are a recommendation or an advertisement. This could be the powerful part of the influencer market; as the advertisement is embedded within posts. According to a study in 2015, the worth of influencer market was around five hundred million dollars in 2015 and this number is expected to reach more than five billion dollars by 2020[43].

In Figure.42, zey_zor pins her location at a hotel, where she stays with her husband in their trip to Prague. In the caption part, she refers to a surprise that her husband made and her love for him then she adds "Prag'a gelirseniz eğer şehrin ruhunu doyasıya hissettiren bu harika otelde konaklamınızı öneririm."[44] Another example reveals simgesa with her husband and daughter in matchy outfits. After stating warm

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[42] "We break fast last time this year. May everyone's prayers come true. We wish you a happy holiday already" (My translation)

[43] http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/04/24/vanlife-the-bohemian-social-media-movement

[44] "If you come to Prague, I suggest you to stay in this great hotel, which makes you feel the soul of the city totally" (My translation)

Figure.42



Figure.43

sentences regarding her family, she recommends her followers to check out the Instagram account of the bracelet that they wear in this picture as a couple.

socialmomm, who recently gave birth, promotes a stroller by saying "2 hafta deneme süresinden sonra çok çok çok memnun kaldığımı ve gönül rahatlığı ile tavsiye edebileceğimi paylaşmak isterim"[45] (Figure.43). Even though she uses the word "recommend", in addition to mentioning Instagram account of stroller's brand, at the end of the caption she notes down the website of stroller's brand. Thus this post feels more like an advertisement than a recommendation.

Furthermore, nihankayalioglu and melinasmom share photos of boxes of supplementary nutrient tablets in their profiles (Figure.44 & 45). The names are clearly seen and the brands' Instagram usernames are mentioned in the captions. melinasmom promotes the product while showing her daughter holding a box of tablets. According to

[45] "I would like to share that I am very pleased after two-week trial period and that I recommend this sincerely" (My translation)

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Figure.44

Figure.45

melinasmom's post, her daughter's appetite was in good condition due to this supplementary nutrient when she was ill. These examples demonstrate the fact that accounts of iconic Instagram users enhanced their "adviser" role by inserting direct references to products or places in their posts.

Not all iconic women are posting to promote brands. Some of the iconic women do not even approve the way others recommend some products. sermincarkaci is one of them and she responded my question regarding advertisement as follows;

"Evet, bugüne kadar sayfamda hiç reklam yapmadım. Para kazanmak bu kadar kolay olmamalı diye düşünüyorum. Takipçiniz var ve birileri size ürün gönderiyor. Ürün zaten ücretsiz geliyor. Siz onu kullanıyor ya da kullanmıyorsunuz, sonra şöyle güzel böyle iyi diye yorumlarınızı belirtip sizi takip eden insanları yönlendiriyorsunuz. Onlar da hesabınıza para yatırıyorlar. Bana çok ahlaki gelmiyor. Markalarla iş birliğine eğer içinde toplumsal bir fayda varsa açığım diyorum. Bugüne kadar kimse bu teklifime

olumlu dönüş yapmadı.:-) Bu iş güvenilirliğini zaten kaybetmiş durumda. İlaç tavsiye eden anneler var. Bu kadar da olmaması lazım."[46]

## 3.3. Audience

Iconic women gained the adjective of "iconic" due to their vast amount of followers. The effect of followers on the "success" of iconic women can not be denied. After all, Instagram is a virtual stage and like any other stage, it needs and includes a relationship between the performer and the audience. Iconic women on Instagram have various kinds of relationships with other iconic women, wannabes, fans, followers and ordinary users who do not follow but still write comments.



Figure.46

Iconic women, especially iconic mothers, generally follow one another and like or write positive comments each other's posts. Wannabes are the ones, who have the goal of becoming an iconic woman and this effort can be understood by the consistency of their posts. Wannabes inspired by iconic women who want to achieve, obtain and maintain hundred thousand of followers, therefore create Instagram profiles that resemble some of the iconic women's content. For instance, burcucanuysal, who might be the future's iconic woman, owns an Instagram profile, which is full with scenes with romantic scenes with her husband or his gifts and luxurious consumption goods (Figure.46, 47, 48). burcucanuysal follows accounts such as "couplegoals". "couplefeelings",

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[46] "Yes, until today I didn't make any advertisement in my own account. I think earning money should not be that simple. You have followers and some people are sending you a product. This product is already out of any charge. You either use it or don't, then stating your comments such as saying this is so good, you are directing people who follow you. Then they (ones who send product) pay to you. I don't perceive this ethical. I am saying that I am open to collaborate with brands if there is a social responsibility. Until today, no one has accepted my offer positively :-) This job has already lost its reliability. There are mothers who recommend medication. It shouldn't be like this." (My translation)

Figure.47

Figure.48

"luxury.ladies" , and "thelovedrugs". These are accounts with hundred of thousand followers, which collects photos and videos from various Instagram users through the hashtags they type under posts. If a photo of a user is posted in one of these accounts, numerous followers of these accounts see that photo on their Instagram, therefore this is a good opportunity for someone who aims to gain followers. burcucanuysal's interest to these accounts can be related to her desire to get posted by one of these accounts.

In addition to wannabes, iconic women also inspire their fans who admire iconic women or their children. These fans, especially teenagers, tend to create a fan account which focuses on the iconic woman or her child. Iconic mothers are dichotomized about their opinion about fan pages regarding their children; the ones who approve and the others who does not approve the launch of fan pages, such as hihieved and nihankayalioglu.

melinasmom is one of the iconic mothers who does not perceive fan page as a problem or trouble. Even though mothers in focus group that I have conducted with four

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mothers in their 30's, and hihieved find fan pages as "scary", melinasmom explains her contentment about fan pages in her blog as "Bir çocuğa fan sayfası açmak kadar saf ve temiz bir şey olabilir mi dünyada? Onca kötülük içinde, internet ortamındaki onca pis niyet içinde, bir çocuğa sevgi besleyen küçük bir kız çocuğundan korkmuyorum. Siz de korkmayın."[47]

One of the fan pages of Melina has accepted to talk to me via Instagram direct message service (DM). The editor of the fan page, Aslı, is only 17 years old girl, who dreams about becoming a teacher at kindergarden since seventh grade. Firstly, she got permission from her parents to launch the fan page account and then she received melinasmom approval to do it. She explains the reason why she specifically chose Melina by saying;

> "Neden melina; Çünkü ben hayatım boyunca sosyal medya hesabından hiç kimseyi sevmem elin çocuklarından banane, tanımıyorum etmiyorum banane ya derdim sevmiyorum işte. Ama @melinasmom hesabına rastladığım da çok büyük konuştuğumu fark ettim. Dedim ki kendime; "Melina çok farklı bir çocuk, sevecen, tatlı, güzel ve sayamadığım bir sürü güzel sözler.. Vee en önemlisi o bir tüp bebek mücizesi. Tüm zorluklara ramen dünyaya merhaba dedi" Melina ve Merve abla hayatıma girdiğinden beri bana çok şey kattılar, kazandırdılar. Ümitsizliğe kapıldığım, mutsuz olduğumda, hayallerimden vazgeçmeye kalktığım da hep onlar geldi aklıma ve onların sayesinde hayatım düzene girdi benim.. İnanın size birsürü şey yazarım buraya ama yani yaza yaza bitiremem…."[48]

During our talk, I have learned that melinasmom has a WhatsApp group with editors of Melina's and her fan pages. Hence, even though she does not meet them in person, she knows each of the editors and their names. By this means, the editors of fan pages also know each other and this situation creates a unity around a common point of interest. Even one time, a few fan account owners organized a video shoot in order to send it to melinasmom to cheer her up when she was feeling sad. The fan page owners

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[47] "Could there be something pure and clean as launching a fan page for a kid? Among all these evil, among all these bad intentions on Internet, I am not afraid of a little girl who loves a kid. Don't be afraid, too." (My translation)

[48] "Why Melina, because during my whole life, I used to say that "I would not like stranger's kids on social media, I don't care". But when I came across to @melinasmom account, I realized that I was talking big. I said to myself "Melina is a very different child, loving, sweet, beautiful and other things that I can't not list. And most importantly she is a miracle of test-tube baby. Despite all these challanges, she said hello to the world." Since Melina and Merve Abla (Abla means 'older sister' and is a sign of respect) came into my life, they gained me so much. When I give way to despair, become unhappy, when I attempted to let go my dreams, I always remembered them (Melina and Merve) and thanks to them my life fell into place. Believe me, I would write you lots of things here but I couldn't be able to finish to write." (My translation)

have the ability to sense the mood of melinasmom. According to Aslı "paylaşımlarından zaten bir insanı çok seversen iyi olmadığını seziyorsunuz. Biz sezdik yani :)"[49]

Mothers in the focus group do not perceive simgesa as a role model but she has several fan pages on Instagram. I made an interview with the editor of most popular fan page account of simgesa. Firstly, I reached her through Instagram DM and instead of meeting or video calling, she wanted to continue to talk via DM. 16 years old editor Ceren was very talkative throughout our long messaging. She discovered simgesa through a fun account on Instagram, in which she saw a video of Tuana, daughter of simgesa. After watching the video of Tuana, she did some research and came across the account of simgesa. Before creating the fan account, she did not ask for permission from simgesa. However, simgesa corresponds in a very positive way to this fan page. Then she continues to tell:

> "Simge ablamda kimsede görmediğim samimiyeti gördüm. Simge ablamı tanımayanlar hakkında tuhaf tuhaf konuşuyorlar ama daha sonra ben onlara tanıtınca sevmeye başlıyorlar,zaten her fotoğrafımın altında bahsediyorum Simge ablamın samimiyetinden ailesinin samimiyetinden.Öyle yani💓 Ya şimdi şöyle bir şey var. Bu hayatı negatif yorum yapanlara göre yaşamamak gerek. Bu Simge ablamın hayatı,kızı Tuana ve eşi Saim abimle istediği her şeyi yapabilme özgürlüğüne sahipler yani. Ben çok sevimli buluyorum matchy giyinmelerine ben ileri de aile kurduğum da örnek aldığım aile KILIÇ ailesi olacak. Bende öyle giyinirim seviyorum baya şirin duruyor 😊… Simge ablam o negatif kişileri önemsemiyor en çokta kimseyi takmayıp kendi hayatını yaşaması çok hoşuma gidiyor benim:)"[50]

Since she is another teenage fan, I have asked her whether her parents are aware of this fan page or not and she stated that "Evet var onlarda çok seviyor Simge ablamları😊Saygılı birini örnek alıyorum sonuçta ailem de takip ediyor 💜"[51] Just like

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[49] "If you love someone so much, you can sense from her posts that she is not doing well. I mean, we sensed it :)" (My translation)

[50] "I saw sincerity in Simge Abla (Abla means 'older sister' and is a sign of respect) which I don't see in anyone. People who don't know my Simge Abla tell odds things about her but after when I introduced and tell them about her, they start to like her. I already mention under each of my photo about sincerity of my Simge Abla and her family. It's like that (heart emoji) Look, there is this thing. The life should not be lived by listening the ones who make negative ███████ It's my Simge Abla's life and her daughter Tuana and her husband Saim Abi (Abi means 'older brother' and is a sign of respect), they have the right to do whatever they want. I find it very cute them wearing matchy clothes. The family KILIÇ will be my role model when I build a family in future. I would also wear like that, I like it, it looks adorable… My Simge Abla doesn't care about these negative people. What I like most about her is that she doesn't care about anyone and she lives her owne life :)" (My translation)

[51] "Yes, they also like my Simge Abla so much (smiley emoji) After all, I take someone respectful as an example, my family also follows her (heart emoji)" (My translation)

melinasmom's fan page editors, simgesa's fan page editors also know each other from a WhatsApp group. At first, simgesa was also in the group but later on she left the group as she tries to justify it by blaming her busy schedule. She and simgesa never met face-to-face, however simgesa sends her videos from time to time.

Almost every utterance of simgesa is followed closely and kept in mind by Ceren. In addition to posts, stories and broadcasting of simgesa supply additional information to Ceren. For instance, during our interview, Ceren moved to another topic by saying; "Bu arada Simge ablam bazı giymediği kıyafetleri ihtiyacı olanlara veriyor… Kendisi söylemişti. Canlı yayındaydı sanırım."[52]

As a fan and admirer of simgesa, Ceren also follows cananvolkancetin and zey_zor. It is possible to conclude that Ceren has a certain type of iconic women that draws her attention and interest. cananvolkancetin and zey_zor are also young women with the "perfect" body and have a "perfect" love. 16 year-old Ceren loves and gets inspired by these "perfect" women, hence the attitude and behaviors of these women set an example for Ceren and other followers like her.



Figure.49

Iconic women possess power over their fans. Since fans perceive iconic women as role models and they are open to be influenced by their role models. As an example, imrengursoy discouraged the fan account owner from texting with me, even though the fan had already been accepted and started to respond to my questions.

Maybe not as strong as fan pages but regular followers express their admiration in their comments to iconic women, too.

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[52] "By the way, my Simge Abla gives away some of her clothes to needy people… She told it. It was during a live broadcast, I guess." (My translation)

An example can be seen in Figure.49. simgesa declares that she is not a jealous person and in return she receives comments full of heart emojis and words like "my queen" or "my angel".



Figure.50

Business partners are loved by many Instagram users. Just as simgesa, cananvolkancetin's photos also collect positive comments. Under a photo (Figure.50), in which cananvolkancetin's nuclear family is seen in sportive clothing gets complimented in return. Even one of the comments refers to cananvolkancetin as "my idol".

In order to get flattering returns, the iconic woman is not required to place aesthetically beautiful or cheerful moments in her Instagram account. hihieved's fun post (Figure.29) regarding her crying baby provided her with the label for "En gerçekçi Instagram hesabı".[53]

At the focus group, almost always all four of the mothers were on the same page

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[53] "most realistic Instagram account" (My translation)

when we were discussing about the iconic women. For instance, when I showed them a photo of cananvolkancetin (Figure.51) none of them found the photo sincere. Bilge, 35 year-old mother from the focus group indicated that she finds her photos repellent and said that "Ben mesela keşfet sayfasında gördüğümde bunları girip bakıyorum napmış bunlar diye ama neyine takip edeyim abuk sabuk. Ben bu tarz kendinin şovunu yapan insanları takip etmiyorum."[54] When I asked why she finds these Instagram account as a show, she replied "Durup dururken evde üçlü kombin giyinmek şovdur. Bunu sosyal medyaya koymasan da şovdur, sokakta yürümek için. Fotoğraflar hep kurgulu."[55]



Figure.51

In her interview cananvolkancetin complains about the wrong perception of some people about cananvolkancetin's posts. She explains herself as follows;

"Aslında insanlara gerçekten kusursuz bir hayat yaşamadığımızı anlatmak inanılmaz zor bir şey. Bütün herkes sanki biz çalışmadan akan bir para çeşmesinin altında durup zevk-i sefa yaptığımızı sanıyor. Bunu düşünmemizin sebebi, devamlı borç para verir misin, burs veriyor musunuz, hayat size güzel, bu kadar parayı nasıl bulurum, kusursuz bir hayat yaşamak nasıl bir şey gibi gelen binlerce mesaj. Ancak burası görsellik olarak işin show kısmı. Tabii ki bir resim çekerken iyi olmasını istiyoruz ama gerçekten onun için özel olarak hazırlanmıyoruz. Gerçekten dışarı çıkarken giydiklerimizle resim çekip çıkıyoruz."[56]

Her last sentence denies what Bilge from focus group told before.

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[54] "For instance, when I saw (cananvolkancetin) in the explore page, I click her profile and look to see what have they been doing but why would I follow her? Nonsense! I don't follow these kind of people who make their own show." (My translation)

[55] "Wearing triple combined clothes at home for no reason is a show. It's still a show even though you don't post it on the social media, only for walking in the street. These photos are all fictional." (My translation)

[56] "It's extremely hard to explain people that actually we don't live in a perfect life. Everyone thinks that we derive pleasure by standing under a money fountain without working at all. We concluded this because we always receive messages such as, would you land me some money, do you give scholarship, life is good for you, how can I find this amount of money, how does it feel to live a perfect life, etc. However, this is the show part. Of course, we want good pictures but we really don't get prepared especially for pictures. We take pictures with clothes that we wear when we actually go outside." (My translation)

On the other hand Senem, who is 31 years old single woman thinks that cananvolkancetin's photos are honest and sincere and she leaves warm-hearted comments under almost every post of cananvolkancetin. I got the chance to conduct an interview with Senem over WhatsApp video call. She explains how she started to follow cananvolkancetin and to write comments;

> "Instagram'da denk geldi cok hoşuma gitti yani eşiyle çocuk… O zaman daha çok fenomen değildi galiba sanırsam ve o zaman yazıyordum. Nasıl diyeyim ünlü şu bu bilmem ne takip etmiyorum ben yani hiç. Tanımadığım insandı, güzel hoş buldum. İnsan hani imrenir ya böyle kötü kıskançlık değil de güzel kıskançlık. İçimden geldi öyle güzel şeyler yazıyordum ondan sonra bana karşılık verdi. O günden bugüne yani bir karşılık var."[57]

For Senem, receiving a response from cananvolkancetin is very important. Once, when Senem was busy and did not log in to Instagram for a long time, cananvolkancetin sent her a message and asked whether she was okay or if she needed anything. This curiosity by cananvolkancetin made Senem feel special and good. cananvolkancetin follows Senem, too and also likes her posts. Therefore, some of the other followers of cananvolkancetin get curious about this relationship and send messages to Senem and ask "Canan Hanım senin neyin oluyor hayırdır?"[58]

cananvolkancetin's projection about the reason why people prefer to follow her account is that "Bizce bizi takip etmelerinin sebebi uyumlu, mutlu ve gerçekten sevgi dolu olmamız. Bu durum karşıdaki insana da geçiyor ve onların hayallerindeki görselliği, doğallığı, uyumu ve mutluluğu yaşadığımızı ve onun da böyle bir hayat yaşama ihtimali olduğunu düşünüyor." [59]

When I asked Senem about people's thoughts, like Bilge, who does not believe in the honesty of cananvolkancetin she replies;

> "Ben samimi buluyorum. Samimi bulmayanlar bence aslında içlerinden hani istiyorlar, geçiriyorlar bence. Her şekilde uyum içinde bakımlı bir bayan kendisi, eşi de öyle bi de çocuk var, o yuvanın aşkın meyvesi. Ben

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[57] "I came across on Instagram, I liked it so much, I mean with her husband, her child… At that time, she was not such a phenomenon I think and I was writing to her. How should I put it? I never follow celebrities and so on. She (cananvolkancetin) was a stranger to me, I found her beautiful and nice. You can envy someone, you know, but it's not bad jealousy, it's good jealousy. I felt like it, I wrote nice things to her and then she responded me. Since then, there is this response." (My translation)

[58] "How do you know Canan Hanim?" (My translation)

[59] "I think, the reason for them to follow us is that we are really coherent, happy and full of love. This situation passes through other people and make them think that we live the images, naturality, harmony and happiness in their dreams that she also has the chance to live." (My translation)

inanıyorum yani gerçek ortada bir aşk var ve yansıyor o yüzden hani dua ediyorum olmayanlara da versin, onlar bozulmasın diye. Belki onun haberi yok ama dualarımda geçer yani."[60]

Moreover, Senem posted a photo of cananvolkancetin and her family with good wishes in her own Instagram profile. Figure.52 shows this screenshotted post that I took at a time when Senem's Instagram account was not private. Under this post, cananvolkancetin wrote a comment with appreciation and compliment.


Figure.52

In addition to Senem, I also texted another Instagram user who wrote a loving comment to cananvolkancetin. Since she did not accept my invitation to meet or have a video call, we sent messages through Instagram direct messaging. Pelin, who is a single young woman agreed with Senem and stated that "Onları ayrı seviyorum. İçten birisi ve sempatik ailesini de çok seviyorum severek takip ediyorum. Sürekli sayfalarına girip bakıyorum. Gerçekten farklı bir bağ kurulu içimde nedenini bilmiyorum. Ama çok iyi

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[60] "I find them sincere. The ones who don't find them sincerely are wishing deep inside, I think. They are in harmony in all way, she is a well-groomed woman, so is her husband, and there is a child who is the fruit of this love and this home. I mean, I believe that there is a real love and it reflects and that's why I pray that (God) to give love also to the ones who don't have it and also to protect them (cananvolkancetin and her husband). Maybe she is not aware of it but she is in my prayers." (My translation)

bir aile"[61]. One difference between Senem and Pelin is that, Pelin does not follow cananvolkancetin but still gets into her profile to look for photos from time to time.

I was surprised after interviewing Senem and talking to Pelin, since it was very different than the talk that I had with the focus group. For instance, mothers in the focus group were critical towards simgesa's posts. They approached doubted the honesty of her photos. Damla, one of the mothers in the focus group, who has two little children said; "Çocuğu düşünsene sürekli süslü bir anneyle beraber. Herhalde o çocuğuna diyordur dur dokunma yok bozulur her yeri kayar. Oğlum bana dalıyor mesela. Atıyorum İstinye Park'a gidiyor bunlarla (she makes hand gestures to describe high heel shoes) sen bu çocuğu hiç mi kucağına almıyorsun? Peşinden koşmuyorsun?… Bunların hiç birinin çocuğuyla ilgilendiği yok.[62]" 34 years old Esra and Nehir from the focus group felt sorry for simgesa's daughter. When I showed them Figure.1, Esra was doubtful whether this post was really about simgesa's daughter or not. She commented; "Bu şey, herkese mesaj yani bizlere mesaj. İşe gidiyor, çalışıyor, para kazanıyor da böyle hani bu lükse o da çalışıyor, kızını bırakıyor. Biz onun hayatını çok muhteşem sanmayalım."[63]

Mothers in the focus group reacted to simgesa's appearance too, they were not convinced that a mother could wear outfits like this all the time. Bilge put her thought into words while laughing as "Giydiği kıyafetler… yani Jennifer Lopez misin ne gerek var böyle?"[64] Moreover, they compared their husbands with simgesa's husband and stated that they wonder how simgesa's husband is okay with his wife's appearance on the social media wearing revealing clothes. Nevertheless, I think despite all the negative thoughts that I received the focus group's, I decided to continue looking at cananvolkancetin's and simgesa's accounts to do some more research.

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[61] "I also love them. She is openhearted and sympathetic, I also love her family, I follow them. I always visit their profiles and look around. There is an interesting bond inside me to her, I really don't know why. But it's a very good family." (My translation)

[62] "Imagine the child, he is always with a fancy, dressy mother. I suppose that she would tell to her child that don't touch, don't mess, otherwise she would be a mess. For instance, my son jump onto me. Let's say, they are going to İstinye Park (a shopping mall) with these (she makes hand gestures to describe high heel shoes) don't you ever carry this child?… They really don't take care with their children." (My translation)

[63] "It's like a message to everyone. She's going to her work, working, earning money, you know, she works for this luxury, she leaves her daughter. We shouldn't suppose that her life is too perfect." (My translation)

[64] "The clothes she's wearing… I mean are you Jennifer Lopez? Why would you need this?" (My translation)

hihieved is the iconic woman, that is described as being funny and smart by mothers from the focus group. As far as I have observed, hihieved does not receive as many negative comments as other iconic women due to her obvious aim which is to make fun of herself. In interview answers, she states her opinion about the reason why Instagram users like her and what makes her different than others;

> "Kimseyi zan altında bırakmak, hedef göstermek, "Ben doğrusunu yapıyorum; senin ki yanlış" demek istemem; haddime de değil. Ben kendi büyük konuştuklarım üzerinden, çevrelendiğimiz mükemmellik baskısıyla dalga geçiyorum. Takip edenler bazen hihieved'i birileriyle karşı karşıya getirmeye çalışıyor; uzak duruyorum bundan… Postların heme her biri 400'ü aşkın yorum alıyor; 700'ü geçenler var. Bir foruma dönüştü, kadınlar orada içlerini döküyor; birbirlerine ve kendilerine gülüp biraz rahatlıyorlar. Ben de hepsine yanıt vermeye çalışıyorum; kendilerini iyi hissediyorlar. "Sadece sizin memeniz sarkmadı, çatlamadı; sadece sizin çocuğunuz patates kızartması yemiyor ne yazık ki benimki de, sadece siz telefon tablet vermiyorsunuz ne yazık ki ben de" diyorum. Sesimiz gür çıkıyor ve kendimizi bazı şeyler için suçlu hissetmeyi bırakıyoruz. "Sizinle birlikte kendimi zorlamayı bıraktım; hihieved deyip geçiyorum" diyorlar. Bu büyük mutluluk!"[65]

During the focus group discussion, I have also brought about other iconic mothers who bring their children to forefront. Mothers in the focus group stated that they follow some of these mothers in order to catch some recommendations regarding child-care or activities. Esra shared her texting experience with melinasmom over Instagram direct messaging. After seeing melinasmom's post from a seaside hotel, Esra sent her a direct message to ask for information about the hotel. Then melinasmom wrote her back with detailed information about the hotel, transportation and road, etc. While Esra finds melinasmom fine, Nehir is not hundred percent sure about her and she says: "Bu mesela hani melinasmom da hani çok doğal, çok doğal şeyler de yapıyor ama yine de onun bana bi yapaylığı, bi şey var gibi bilmiyorum."[66]

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[65] "I wouldn't want to bring someone under suspicion, target someone or say that "I'm doing it right, your's wrong" and I know my place. I'm joking about my own big talks and the flow of perfection that we are surrounded with. Sometimes the followers try to encounter hihieved with some others, I try to avoid that…Almost each post receives over 400 comments, there are also ones which has over 700 comments. It turned into a forum, women confide there, they laught to each other and also themselves and relieve a little. I try to write answer to each of them, so they feel better. I say; "It is not only your breast that are droopy or cracked. It's not only your kid who eats fried potatoes unfortunately mine is also eating, it's not you who gives smartphone or tablet to your kid unfortunately me, too." Our sound is loud and we stop feeling guilt about somethings. They say "With you, I stopped pushing myself; now I say hihieved and continue." This is a great happiness!" (My translation)

[66] "This, for instance, melinasmom is natural and she is doing natural things but still she seems to me unnatural, I don't know" (My translation)

Fan pages, loving followers and passive followers, such as mothers in the focus group, are present on Instagram, as well as some Instagram users who want to express their disagreements. Iconic women on Instagram draw many comments in a scale ranging from admiration to hate. In order to be able to leave a comment, users do not have to be a follower of that account. If the Instagram profile is a non-private, open profile, then every user has the chance to comment. Although, Nehir from focus group states: "Ben kötü bir yorum yazma hakkını kendimde görmüyorum çünkü o onun kendi tercihi bana yap demiyor ki zorla yani. Böyle bir mecra varsa o da onu öyle kullanabilir. Ben kullanmayabilirim. Hepimiz aynı şeyi giymiyoruz falan bunun gibi bi şey bu sonuçta beni zorlayıcı bi şey yok. Bakma! Seçeneğim o"[67], there are people who do not think like Nehir.

In Figure.53, melinasmom gets a disrespectful and insulting comment. Simply because she posted a smiling a photo during the on-going conflict in Syria caused an Instagram user to become angry and as a result he decided to swear and send bad wishes to melinasmom and her family. Supportive and harmful comments may meet under the same post at times. This is the case with this post. Another follower replies back the insulter and criticizes his rude comments.



Figure.53

[67] "I don't think that I have the right to write a negative comment because it's her own choice, she doesn't tell me to do it by force. If there is such a platform, then she can use it like that. I may not. We are not wearing in the same way, this is also similar. In the end, there is nothing that pushes me. Don't look! That's my option" (My translation)
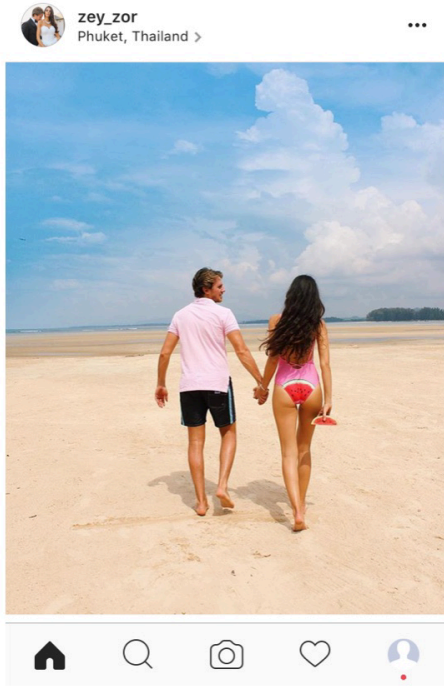
## Figure 54

Figure.54

## Figure 55

Figure.55

Similar instances occur in other iconic women's accounts, too. zey_zor also receives critical remarks for her photo in swimsuits (Figure.54). While a follower writes "Para insanı bukadar simartabiliyor iste artik takibide birakiyorum bizden yeter kazandiklariniz :D[68]" as if she has known zey_zor for many years, on the other hand another follower defends zey_zor and her freedom to wear whatever she wants. As a result, zey_zor posts a comment for thanking the second follower for her support.

The next example is from sermincarkaci. This time the follower can not directly see the insulting comment that she received. Rather, sermincarkaci express her feelings and ideas in regard to the insulting comment at issue (Figure.55). An Instagram user wrote her that her hands being so neglected. sermincarkaci quotes this comment to her followers by labeling it as "the most surprising criticism". Then she writes in a polite way and explains the reasons why she did not have the opportunity to keep her manicure done all the time. After apologizing for not having "beautiful" hands, she finishes her post with this sentence "Maybe we can look at what each other's hands produce instead of looking directly to hands."

There are also times when sermincarkaci blocks some of the Instagram users. She touches upon this issue in the interview;

> "Bazılarını engelliyorum. Şu oturduğun yerden para kazanmaya ne dersin, diye yorum yapıp insanları kendi sayfalarına davet edenleri engelliyorum. Takma tırnakçılar var, her paylaşımın altına yorum yazıp kendi sayfalarına davet ediyorlar, görürsem onları engelliyorum. Kavgacılar var. Milli bayramlarda Atatürk'e küfreden, dini bayramlarda insanların inançlarıyla dalga geçenler var. İnanılır gibi değil ama var bunlar. Denk gelirsem onları engelliyorum."[69]

Fights and debates may occur under a post that an iconic woman has shared. hihieved thinks that the inclination towards fights is related with unhappiness of people in Turkey. She states; "Gerilim ve kavgaya çok teşne bir yapımız var millet olarak;

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[68] "That's how money can spoil a person, now I also stop following you, it's enough that you have earned from us" (My translation)

[69] "I block some of them. The ones who offers to make money while remaining sitting, the ones who invite people to their own profiles.There are fake nail accounts, they write comments under each of my posts, if I see them, I block them. There are aggressives. The ones who swear to Atatürk on national holidays, the ones who mock with people's belives on religious holidays. It's really unbelievable but these people exist. If I come across to them, I block them." (My translation)

mutsuzuz çünkü. Hemen her şey aleve dönüşüp yangın çıkabilir.[70]" Sometimes, Instagram users react to other users if they write a comment that others do not agree with. nihankayalioglu's posts witness such situations very often due to her divorce case and her ban from posting her children's photos. There are users who support nihankayalioglu and others who think that nihankayalioglu must have done something wrong to deserve this. For instance, nihankayalioglu mentions her prohibition regarding the photos of her children in one of her posts and this post attracts almost two hundred comments. An Instagram user, whose identity can not be revealed from the username or the profile picture, asks nihankayalioglu "Is it true that you have cheated your husband with your trainer?" This user felt the courage to get involved with nihankayalioglu's divorce case with a such a personal question. After receiving a reaction from another user, the one who asked the question begins to defend themselves. Their debate continue and even other users become involved as they also respond  (Figure.56)

Figure.56

Andrea O'Reilly (2004) quotes from Sara Ruddick (1989) in her book; "Teachers, grandparents, mates, friends, employers, even an anonymous passerby, can judge a mother by her child's behavior and find her wanting." The "anonymous passerby" in the case of Instagram would be the anonymous followers who feel the right to judge iconic women harshly.

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[70] "We are prone to tension and fight as a whole nation because we are unhappy. Everything might turn into a flame and fire might outbreak" (My translation)

**CHAPTER IV**

**DISCUSSION**

**4.1. Continuities and Changes in Gendered Performances**

Since this research focuses on women in Turkey as its subject, theories and studies about gender contribute to a better understanding of attitudes of women on Instagram. The Instagram accounts of women that I have focused on, are competing with each other in order to be the "best" mother or the "best" wife. Individuals desire to be "the more" or "the most" in their relationships that we witness in SNSs (Pembecioğlu, 2016). While pursuing this desire, they exhibit themselves to their followers, whom they mostly do not even know in person. Having an audience shapes individual's behaviors and makes them more careful while acting in order to preserve the impression that they created. From a gender perspective, in the case of women this state of carefulness might be more dense. John Berger makes the following observation about women in his influential book *Ways of Seeing*;

> "A woman must continually watch herself. She is almost continually accompanied by her own image of herself. Whilst she is walking across a room or whilst she is weeping at the death of her father, she can scarcely avoid envisaging herself walking or weeping. From earliest childhood she has been taught and persuaded to survey herself continually." (1972, 46)

His last sentences clear up and save his perspective by stating a reality about the raising of female children. This situation is still valid in Turkey.

Children, whether girl or boy, are raised according to socially constructed gender roles and discourses. Diversities have been constructed between women and men, and even today these diversities lead people to display behaviors of "essential female and male natures" (West & Zimmerman, 1987). The person, who grows up with binary gender discourses, internalizes these behavioral norms by repeating the norms and transmits these norms, to their children while raising them (Yakalı-Çamoğlu, 2017). The troubling thing is that, once a person is accustomed to constructed gender rules and limits himself/herself automatically, that person no longer needs any other control from the outside (Foucault, 1979). As West and Zimmerman (1987) point out "…new

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members of society come to be involved in a self-regulating process as they begin to monitor their own and other's conduct with regard to its gender implications."

These self-regulating processes are results of an awareness of being observed and being targeted by other's gaze. Especially young women are accustomed to be the target of the gaze. For instance, in some regions in Turkey, the tradition of showing trousseau of bride or bringing the bride to hammam continue to be practiced. The most powerful example for this could be the "görücü" concept. Görücü refers to people, mostly women, who go or who are sent, to meet girls for an intended arranged marriage. It can be translated into English as "gazer" or "sighted" because words like "visitor" underwhelm to describe the concept. In the greater part of Turkey, still today young women are raised while being aware of a possible "görücü" in the future and after a certain age they personally experience it. These kind of traditions entail the position of women as being the observed one.

Moreover, what women experience is not a simple sighting; it is more than that. The gaze is there because it seeks for features to approve or disapprove. Young women, who are the candidates for a presumptive marriage, are expected to possess fundamental features in order to fulfill the successful role of a bride, a wife and a mother. These features include physical characteristics as well as personality.

### 4.1.1. Motherhood

In terms of personality, generally, women are expected to carry characteristics such as sensitivity, emotionality, vulnerability, etc. (Okdie, et.al, 2011). Sensitivity and emotionality are mostly associated with motherhood. A woman is supposed to carry these features in order to succeed in becoming a caring mother career. Sevi Bayraktar touches upon this issue in her book *Makbul Anneler Müstakbel Vatandaşlar* (2011)*;*

> "Kadının doğal ve öncelikli işi olarak görülen annelik, bütün maddeselliği bir kenara bırakılarak bir 'his' olarak görülme eğilimindedir. Ailenin dışında başka arzu alanları olması beklenmeyen kadın bir de anne olunca 24 saat kendini adamaya, öfkesini, hayal

kırıklığını ve kinini bastırmaya hazır olmalıdır, çünkü bu tarz negatif duyguların kadını daha az anne yaptığı varsayılır.[71]" (84)

It means that, after a woman has given birth, the motherhood identity gets ahead of any other possible identities of this woman. The society expects mothers to be fully engaged with their children by placing them at the center of their lives. Consequently, full engagement brings along the self-sacrifice. For the sake of the child's needs, the mother should devote herself to "achieve" these needs, even though it requires her to be exhausted. imrengursoy's photo (Figure.37) reflects upon this point about giving herself totally to the child. While she defines the motherhood concept, imrengursoy embraces the words such as; union, sacrifice, power, weakness, satisfaction, insanity, abnormality and so on. The words "insanity" and "abnormality" can be interpreted as referring to/in relation to states of exhaustion and sacrifice. Whereas the words "union" and "satisfaction" refer to love and affection between mother and child. Unconditional love of a mother to her children should overcome all of the challenges of childrearing practices.

Such devotion to a child renders the child as a mother's massive and long-termed "work" or "project". Since she should accomplish to raise the "perfect" child, she carries great responsibilities, As Bayraktar (2011) mentions "… çocuğun başarısı annenin başarısı olarak görülür.[72]" If the baby gains weight properly or if the child sings correctly at a show in the preschool, it is because her mother has pulled her weight. The mother is responsible for buying the nonhazardous toys, playing mind developing games, choosing the most helpful sports branch and activities for child development, finding the best school for child's future, etc. Since these decisions are considered very crucial, majority of the iconic mothers on Instagram give recommendations regarding school selections, play ideas or baby products. For instance, I have met nihankayalioglu and melinasmom at a recently established school presentation, which was an event organized for parents of potential students. After the presentation of the school director, melinasmom made a speech about why they consider that school as a good education

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[71] "The motherhood which is perceived as woman's natural and primary duty is prone to be seen as a "feeling" by leaving all of its materiality. The woman, who should not possess any other desires other than her family, should be ready to devote herself 24 hours, suppress her anger, her disappointment and grudge when she becomes a mother, because it is assumed that these kind of negative feelings makes a woman of a less mother." (My translation)

[72] "Child's success is seen as mother's success" (My translation)

center. During the event, I was checking their Instagram posts and they were sharing posts related to this event just like they have shared and mentioned the day before the event.



melinasmom

Liked by imrengursoy and 10.269 others

melinasmom Hamileliğimi hep araştırarak geçirdim. Her şeyin en iyisini istiyordum kızım için. Bebek alışverişi listemde ihtiyaçlar uzun araştırmalarım sonucunda karar verdiğim markaların ismiyle yazıyordu hep. '5 paket Prima, bir müddet evden çıkamayabilirsin.Stokla.' Listemin en başındaydı bu cümle. O günden bıraktığımız güne kadar, tek güvendiğim marka olarak hep yanımdaydı. Benim bebeğim bir taneydi, tıpkı tüm bebekler gibi. #onuniçin her zaman, gönül rahatlığıyla #Prima #İşbirliği

View all 42 comments

Yaaa seni yerim Melina kus

Bebeğim için en iyisi , en kurusu, en hassası o , primayı seviyoruz iyi ki var

12 HAZİRAN · SEE TRANSLATION

Figure.57

At another event, melinasmom shares a photo in which her daughter is smiling next to a giant logo of a globally known diaper brand (Figure.57). In the caption part, melinasmom writes "Hamileliğimi hep araştırarak geçirdim. Her şeyin en iyisini istiyordum kızım için.[73]" Then she ends it by promoting this diaper brand, which she refers as "the only brand that I trust". It is worth to pay attention how she correlates the product with concepts of trust, research and wishing the best for the child.

In addition to education and product preferences, mothers are also liable for the diet of their children. İrem Soysal Al touched upon this issue in her master's thesis about organic food and mothers. She says; "…providing organic food for their children is considered by mothers as a maternal responsibility of protecting child's purity and health, and a distinctive standard for good mothering even though their perception of organic food, their preferences and capability of accomplishing their related choices and their practices vary" (2015,12). Another example could be the mothers in Japan, who are judged by the presentation and the display of the lunch boxes called obentos, that they prepare for their little children. As Allison (1996) suggests "The obento is filled with the meaning of mother and home in a number of ways." This means, according to Allison, a game is not just a simple game to spend time and have fun, a product is not just a simple tool which has a function or a food is not just a simple food. All of these are indicators which are used in the

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[73] "I spent my pregnancy by researching. I wanted the best of everything for my daughter" (My translation)

evaluation of maternal proficiency and the result of this evaluation is expected to be perfect mother who loves her children and do the best for them.

The representation of the "perfect and ideal mother" can be observed in some of the iconic women's Instagram accounts. For instance, cananvolkancetin put a picture of herself and her son as she bends over as if to kiss her son (Figure.23). The purpose of using the hashtags #mom and #momgoals in this picture is to draw attention to the combination of two things. She is an affectionate mother who spends time with her smiling son but at the same time she wears feminine high heel shoes and has her hair done, which indicates that she has the energy and the time to manage all of these. I came to this conclusion because this photograph is not the only post in her profile which indicates perfect motherhood, rather her entire profile is full of these kind of posts.

While cananvolkancetin performs the ideal mother who has affection and also spare time, hihieved's photos and videos reveal another kind of motherhood, which is the mother figure who gets tired and has the crying baby. (Figure.17, 32, 33) hihieved's pictures reflect the scenes which do not correspond to ideal motherhood that has been mentioned. Instagram users are not accustomed to come across moments of a crying baby, a messy home or an exhausted mother. hihieved aims to criticize imposed maternal identity with her posts.

At this point, it would be suitable to quote from Badinter, who says "Her kültüre, dönemine göre değişebilen ideal bir annelik modeli hâkimdir. Bilerek ya da bilmeyerek bütün kadınlar bu modelden etkilenir. Onu olduğu gibi kabul edebilir ya da etrafında dolanabilirsiniz, müzakere edebilir ya da reddedebilirsiniz, ama son kertede kendinizi hep bu modele göre belirlersiniz[74]" (2011, 119). Eventually, it is possible to say that hihieved's profile has originated from self-criticism and comparison with other ideal mother representations. According to her, she herself used to have some prejudice against mothers who could not handle their babies. This means that even though hihieved stands as a critical mother, she is also a woman who was affected by the ideal motherhood model.

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[74] "Each culture is dominated by an ideal motherhood model which may change according to time period. Consciously or unconsciously, every women is affected from this model. You may accept it as it is or you may walk around it, negoitate it or reject it but in the last sentece you define yourselves in the light of this model." (My translation)

## 4.1.2. Womanhood

Even though the expectance for being a caring mother and a wife does not differ much in different time periods, the physical expectations may change over time. The concept of "beauty" is dependent on the culture and the period, therefore I will also use the term "beauty" in quotation marks just as Yakalı-Çamoğlu (2017) did so in her book.

Today, the dominant body norms for women include slimness and fitness, in order to achieve a beautiful body. The ambition to be slimmer have became denser as time goes by and three successive studies support this claim. According to body size measurements of models in Playboy magazine and pageant contestants of Miss America, there was a decrease in sizes between 1959 and 1978 (Garner, et-al, 1980). This decrease persisted to go down between the years 1979 and 1988 (Wiseman, et-al, 1992). As the third study shows, by the end of 1990s, decrease in body measurements of pageant contestants continued (Spitzer, et-al, 1999). While images similar to Miss America's and Playboy's models circulate the television and printed media, gender stereotypical Barbie dolls can be bought in toy stores around the world. Shick (2011) refers to the similarities between body shapes of the Barbie dolls and Playboy Magazine models and their "portrayal of female sexuality". As Harrison & Cantor (1997) point out in their research, constant exposure to images of idealized body causes the aspiration to get thinner in female audience. Harrison's survey (2003) indicates that instead of a solely thinness women prefer to obtain thinner hips and waist, while possessing larger bust. I think, this detail reveals the power of media on shaping people's minds and perceptions so specifically.

Furthermore, the concept of beauty is considered to be one of the crucial elements for getting married. Yakalı-Çamoğlu indicates her arguments about the society in Turkey by saying "Beauty seems to be the first reason that causes a woman to enter a new family. In other words, beauty guarantees that a woman will be able to get married" Yakalı-Çamoğlu (2007). She continues in a more recent study "Aileler, "Bütün gelinlerimiz çok güzel" konulu bir anlatıyı severler… o güzel genç kızı bulup aileye sokmak ise erkek annelerinin görevi sayılıyordu.[75]" (p.89) These mothers of boys are

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[75] "Families like a narrative of "All of our brides are beautiful"… finding that beautiful young woman and to join her into the family is considered as men's mothers' duty" (My translation)

the "görücü" women that I have mentioned before, and they are judging bride candidates after observing them.

Thus, being subjected to gaze is not a new situation and it did not stem from technological era. It is only restructured. Gender stereotypes persist to exist and even according to a study, posts on Instagram are even more gender stereotypical than the advertisements in magazines (Döring, Reif & Poeschl, 2015). According to my observation, maybe as a result of globalization, the sexuality of women have became more visible and noticeable, or in other words it has became more visible and noticeable. Moreover, I think the interesting point is that the stereotypical representation of women is not practiced merely by advertisement companies or consumerism, but also women themselves practice it with their own will.

Among the iconic women that I have studied, simgesa, cananvolkancetin, and zey_zor are the ones who mostly perform the representations of ideal sexuality for women. In Figure.2, simgesa is seen with her daughter in front a wall, while wearing an outfit, which can be classified as feminine. She stands facing her back and holds her daughter's hand, who might not even be aware of what the camera is shooting at. cananvolkancetin's look in Figure.6 is also matching with the ideal female body. These two photos do not just enclose ideal female body but they contain posing for cameras as well. This posing activity supports the claim that women are willingly and partly consciously contributing to the idealized representations of female body. In Figure.7, zey_zor announces the "secret" formula which provides her slimness, just as cananvolkancetin does in Figure.5. The fitness trainers and drinks for detox are presented as "miraculous" and "secret" formulas for reaching the perfect body.

The pressure on women does not know any boundaries. Gaining weight during and after childbirth would not be perceived as a huge problem before. However, today Instagram presents images of women who do not lose their fitness despite having a baby. For instance, zey_zor continued to do pilates during her pregnancy. Furthermore, socialmomm celebrated her "success" in being able to fit in her small size jeans almost one month after giving birth (Figure.3). Thus, no matter what a woman's body should maintain its fitness in order to preserve her "womanliness".

As I stated before, photos and videos on Instagram could be labeled as performative posts. I want to suggest that, the performative act in iconic women's Instagram accounts might be caused by self-objectification theory of Fredrickson and Roberts (1997). Self-objectification theory is almost parallel with Goffman's (1959) term of impression management. Fredrickson and Roberts describe self-objectification as viewing oneself from an outsider's perspective, as if there is a constant gaze on that person. As Oberst, Renau, Chamarro, and Carbonell (2016) suggest; "Due to the possibility of impression management and selective self-presentation in online communication and social networking sites, these applications may even encourage greater conformity to these gender norms." Because Instagram is an image-oriented SNS, it might be one of the most effective platforms for observing and imposing certain gender norms about physical appearances. Regular Instagram users observe and are influenced by such gendered appearances by witnessing the posts of iconic women, who are the micro-celebrities of twenty first century. Fardouly, Willburger and Vartanian propose the same idea in their research about Instagram. They say "…this study found that Instagram usage was positively associated with self-objectification among young women and that this relationship was mediated by internalization of the societal beauty ideal and appearance comparisons to celebrities on Instagram" (2017, 12). Being exposed to ideal feminine body visuals on Instagram causes women to get used to and accept the expectations regarding their body (Vandenbosch and Eggermont, 2012). Because of this fact, studying the motivations of iconic women along with their followers, including all kinds of fans, likers, commenters, gazers and haters, is important.

## 4.2. Motivations of Iconic Women For Using Instagram

### 4.2.1. Causes of Change in the Family

As I tried to explain in the previous sections, what happened merely is that, the Internet and SNSs boosted and slightly reshaped how women are seen and shown. So, what are the recent developments which have produced this slight boost and reshape of representation?

When I was investigating the Instagram profiles of the iconic mothers, even before I decided to write my thesis about them, I could not help but wonder "did my mother also care and love me this much when I was little?" This question did not involve any envy or heartache but I was just surprised by their efforts they put into being a mother. Accounts of iconic mothers are intensely filled with posts with or about their children. This situation should require immense amount of time and care, so that the mother can know this much information about maternal duties and children's needs. Uner and Gundordu concluded in their study about Turkey's middle class that "Turkish new middle class is 'children oriented'. Being children oriented means giving priority to spending on children's entire well-being to prepare them for a better future." (2016, 676). Today, children are at the core of families in both economical and psychological ways. The research conducted by Kağıtçıbaşı and Ataca (2015) also indicates that the values attributed to children have changed. Their research involves a comparison between the ideas of mothers from 1975 and from 2003. According to this comparison, mothers' expectations from their children regarding help for finance and housework decreased to a large extent. Whereas the rates of gaining pleasure and fun for having children around and also having someone to love and care for, almost doubled in the range of 28 years. It seems to me that the values attached to children are still progressing in the same way. Families, especially mothers are so involved with their children and anything about their children, as if they are the only individual responsible for children's well-being. In her master's thesis Seçkin Kazak (2009) quotes from Badinter about the alteration of maternal role and image;

> "18. yüzyılın sonunda annelik sevgisi yeni bir kavram olarak ele alınıyordu. Bu duygunun bütün zamanlarda mevcut olduğu ileri sürüldü. Daha önceki 2 yüzyıla nazaran yeni olan, annelik sevgisinin türe ve topluma yararlı; aynı zamanda doğal ve toplumsal bir değer olarak yüceltilmesidir. 1760'dan sonra, annelere çocuklarıyla bizzat ilgilenmelerini öğütleyip emzirmelerini "emreden" yayınlar artıyordu. Kadınların bir bölümü bu yeni talebe duyarlılık gösterdi. Bu görev onlara mutluluk ve eşitlik vaat ediyordu: "iyi anne olunuz ve tüm mutluluk ve saygınlık sizin olacaktır". "Kendinizi aile içinde vazgeçilmez yapınız ki, size de vatandaşlık hakkı verilsin". Kadının her şeyden önce anne olması yükümlülüğü getirilirken 2 yüzyıl

sonra hala canlılığını koruyabilen bir efsane yaratıldı: annelik içgüdüsü ya da her annenin kendiliğinden çocuğunu sevmesi efsanesi[76].” (1992, 115)

This change might have affected the pressure on mothers and have led them to present their maternal actions, in order to receive approval from the society.

The iconic mother sermincarkaci also agrees that the way that motherhood is practiced in Turkey has changed. She underscores some core utterances of mothers from two different generations;

“Arada uçurum var. Bizim annelerimiz için:
- Yavrum beniiim
- Sofrada yedin yedin, bi daha aç kalırsın
- Geliyor şimdi terlik
- Bak valla babana söylerim
- Çabuk eve gel.

Şimdiki anneler:
- Aşkım/prensesim/paşam
- Yemeğini ye, yemeğine ye, yemeğini ye.
- Sen çok özel ve önemli bir çocuksun.
- Her şey organik ve hijyenik
- Şurda kurs var, gidelim mi?”[77]

According to sermincarkaci, the way today's mothers has been raise their children differs a lot from the way they were raised.

Another change in the case of Turkey could be the transformation of the household population. In some parts of the Turkey, the majority of people used to live in

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[76] “At the end of 18th century, mother love is embraced as a new concept. It is argued that this feeling was existed in all times. The new mother love, when it is compared to two centuries before, is glorified as being beneficial to the species and society, and also as being natural social value. After 1760, the number of publications which advises women to breastfeeding their own children, was increasing. Some of the women showed awareness to this call. This duty was promising them happiness and equality: “be a good mother and all happiness and dignity will be yours”. “Make yourselves irreplaceable in the family so that you can also earn citizenship rights”. When the liability of woman to be a mother before anything else, a legend has been created which still maintain its freshness after 2 centuries: mother instinct or the legend of each mother loving her children naturally” (My translation)

[77] “There is a huge gap in between. For our mothers:
- My child
- you eat on the table or you starve
- here comes the slipper
- look I will tell you to your father
- come home quick

Contemporary mothers:
- my love/my princess/my pasha
- eat your meal. eat your meal, eat your meal
- you are a special and important child
- everything is organic and hygienic
- there is a workshop there, shall we go?” (My translation)

big houses which host many members of the family under the same roof. Instead of moving to a separate home, newly married couples would continue to live in one of their parent's home. Since there would also be other siblings and their spouses, the family would increase in number. After births of children, three generations used to live together. This might be the case still in some parts of Turkey, however it is for sure that number of crowded families under same roof has been decreasing radically. This type of household means the constant presence of grandparents during the child rearing process. A traditional country like Turkey also sustains the respectful manners to elderly people. For instance, as far as I have been thought by my own parents, in the course of a beverage or food serving process, you should present the treat to the eldest person in the room first. Then the turn would follow the age line. I also know that parents used to be shy, and hesitate to show love to their children in the presence of their own parents. Considering these behaviours, the only focus of interest was not the children at home, the grandparents were also treated with attention and respect. Today, most of the household do not include grandmothers, who could be labeled as the most caring relative after parents. The children spend their entire time with their mothers and fathers at home. The time spent at home with the children has increased with the lack of grandparents or cousins. When grandparents left the homes, nannies came in. Especially in big cities, mothers with little children tend to hire a nanny in order to receive support for needs of children. The nanny helps mother by spending time with children; such as playing, giving a bath, trying to make baby sleep, etc. In addition to child care, the nanny may also handle homework; such as cleaning or cooking. Hence, the mother gains extra time to rest. After that, the rested and happier mother spends more time with her children. By eliminating some work at home, the mother could lean on more to activities that can increase her children's happiness and well-being. The children turning into the only focus of mother's interest might have been a factor for children becoming the source of context for posts.

### 4.2.2. Motivations of Iconic Women's Posts

Van Dijck (2007) attributes cameras the ability to "control over our memories". Apart from camera's power on memory creation and control, I think, its ability enhanced through smartphones and Web 2.0 technology. Now, cameras not only make it possible to control memories but they also provide easiness for the creation of self-presentation. After detailed considerations, what the camera captures goes to Instagram and enables users to control their image freely. As a matter of fact, there is a reciprocal relationship between camera and Instagram. The more people take pictures via cameras, the more they want to post them on Instagram and the more they want to post on Instagram, the more they continue to shoot pictures of their lives. Sanderson and Smith support this idea in their work by saying; "…with the advent of the internet and online communication, people were afforded more control over their self-presentation, with the ability to engage in impression management virtually, without an audience being physically present to counteract self-presentation claims." (2015) Thus, handling the way someone is seen by others becomes more manageable, if the others are not physically there at the moment. Instagram provides its users the time for shooting and editing the "best" photograph. Nevertheless, it is for sure that Instagram acts as a scene that hosts performances from numerous types of people and in this case, these people are iconic wives and mothers.

As another reason for the desire to become an iconic woman, I argue that the way that they present themselves results in women to gain power. All of the analyzed iconic women's accounts in this study are related with the representation of the ideal woman, ideal wife or ideal mother. The woman may or may not be the "perfect" mother or the "perfect" wife but definitely getting married and having a child enriches the status of a woman in the society. In Turkey, a woman starts to gain power when she gets married. Giving birth to a child, especially if the child is a boy, strengthens her status in the society. Being a mother is accepted as sacred. The woman, who has given birth is recognized as having accomplished a huge part of her duties in her life. Moreover, if the woman is a mother of a baby boy, this birth is applauded even more and seen as a "success". This situation, attaching more value to male children, can still be observed

even in big cities of Turkey. Becoming a father of a son enables men to transfer their lineage and surnames, which men care a lot in Turkey. Thus, sustaining this kind of "happiness" to her husband, the woman may receive more love and respect from her husband and she might start to feel herself more sufficient. Having a child provides woman more control over the flow of the house. This control also covers the child and the husband and it reaches its top level when the woman becomes a mother-in-law. Each of these steps attribute power the woman (Yakalı-Çamoğlu 2017).

Having a single child does not prevent people from asking "when is the second one?", and therefore having no children is perceived as a status that requires intervention. Therefore, as an occasional practice in Turkey, if parents have more than one child, whereas another couple from their close relatives could not become biological parents, then parents give away one of their children to their relatives. The aim is to fulfill the need of parenting, especially the maternal need and to substitute a child who is seen as an essential member of a household. Adrienne Rich argues in her influential book *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (1976); "Woman's status as child-bearer has been made into a major fact of her life. Terms like "barren" or "childless" have been used to negate any further identity. The term "non-father" does not exist in any realm of social categories." Becoming a mother intensifies woman's status and provides her power since she performed what society asks from her; similar to a man, who gathers power among other men if he owns a remunerative job as society expects from him.

Nevertheless, giving birth to a child surpasses other activities of women as Bailey's study on thirty middle class mothers (2001) suggests. According to Bailey; "Women perceive fertility as an important part of being a woman. Women have felt their "womanliness" when they have got pregnant and felt successful after having a child." simgesa also underlines the necessity of having a child, in this case having a daughter. In Figure.25, she posts a photo of herself and her daughter wearing matchy outfits and the caption goes "A person should have a daughter, really." The word "should" in her post matches up with points that I have tried to emphasized about the advantages of being a mother. Pregnancy provides a woman to feel her "womanliness" because she has fulfilled what society imposes to her and she satisfied both her

surroundings and herself. Moreover, the pregnant woman is treated with pride and respect among society due to the belief that pregnancy is a blessing. This belief is still valid today and traces of it might also be found in the social media. For instance, Instagram users harshly criticized socialmomm after finding out that she had deceived her followers and gave illegal consultation to them by saying that she had a psychology degree even though she did not have one. At that time, socialmomm was expecting her second child. The striking thing is that, instead of socialmomm, ordinary followers tried to protect socialmomm by stating that she is a pregnant woman and people should not give her a hard time during this delicate time in her life. Pregnancy is such a divine phase of womanhood that it may even create a shield against outcomes of illegal activities.

In this journey from being a bachelor to mother-in-law, woman acquires power as she moves on. I am referring the term "power" as Foucault defines it as "…power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization." (1978, 92). Obtaining a high number of followers, having the most beautiful home decoration, living in the perfect female body, being a loving mother, getting the greatest bouquet of flowers from your husband are all related with the issue of power. Yakalı-Çamoğlu studied women in Turkey about their relationships with their mother-in-laws and husbands and she indicates in this study that "gelinlerin mikro düzeydeki güçleri yabana atılır gibi değildir, ama görüşülen kadınlar çoğu zaman bu güçlerinin farkında değillerdi. Oysa "karşılaştırma", "kıskançlık" gibi kavramları söze döktüklerinde, bu günlük, küçük şeylerle ortaya çıkan güçten de bahsetmiş oluyorlardı[78]" (2007, 60). However, I believe that in the case of iconic women on Instagram, they are fully aware of the power they possess. It is true that iconic women are imposed and judged by the roles that society approves and they even provide continuance for these imposed roles. For instance, the internalized ideal female body representation or ideal mother characteristics are presented and enforced to others by the very same women, who are

[78] "The power of brides in the micro sense cannot be disregarded however most of the time the interviewed women were not aware of their power. Although when they utter concepts like "comparing", "jealousy", they have been already talking about the power that comes from small things." (My translation)

imposed with these representations. Nonetheless iconic women realize the benefits and gains from the situation, thus they continue to manage their Instagram accounts.

Being someone, who is admired by others, gives that person power and authority over others and being an admired woman is what iconic women experience on Instagram. This admiration from followers and fans towards the iconic woman might be related to iconic woman's beauty, her relationship with her husband, her wealth, good maternal activities with her children or even having a good sense of humor. In addition to these, if the iconic woman is also enthused by her husband or her children, the power of the woman becomes more dense. For instance, even though the mothers in the focus group wonder about and could not understand why zey_zor or cananvolkancetin post photos as they do, these iconic women perform their posts consciously. They become a known person about a specific issue or in other words, they become the wise-women of Instagram. The power which stems from being a great mother and/or a great wife enables iconic women to gain a better status in their lives. Wherever there is a power relation, there is also a competition for power. In this sense, it is possible to state that iconic women compete with each other and also other women on Instagram in order to achieve the title of being the "most" of woman.

The initial motivation of iconic women may or may not differ as the time goes by. Examples for the shift in motivation are imrengursoy's and zey_zor's profiles. Initially, imrengursoy was posting food recipes especially for little children. Then she realized the attention that her son draws and rearranged the focus of her profile. Now, she shares posts about her son and her motherhood experiences frequently. As for zey_zor, the shift did not emerge from the presence of a child. In her first posts, zey_zor used to share captions with her former fiancé at that moment and her friends. Together with photos of save-the-date shootings, which were shot a couple of months ago before the wedding with the purpose of an announcement, increased zey_zor's popularity. At that point, ikihayatbirkare, which is a famous photographer on Instagram for marital event shootings played an important role in gaining a celebrity status, because ikihayatbirkare also shares photos of the couples in their own Instagram account, which has tens of thousand of followers. Then zey_zor has become the woman who experiences a luxury life with her husband, who is in love with her and organizes

surprises for her all the time, as we can see from Instagram. After a while, zey_zor started to introduce herself as a traveller and to post photos from around the world.

There are also examples who have preserved the consistency of their sharing, such as sermincarkaci and hihieved. sermincarkaci launched her Instagram account in order to share game advices for mothers, so that they can spend quality time with their children. Over time, her account has been so loved, eventually she published a book called *Oyuncu Anne* along with four other books. She still posts ideas for play, advices for childrearing and sometimes announcements of her talks or autograph sessions. In addition to sermincarkaci, hihieved also keeps her stability in posting photos with ironic captions with the pursuit of highlighting the challenges that mothers suffer while raising a baby. Still today, she follows the same style and purpose of posting.

As it is seen, there are several reasons why iconic women initiate posts in their Instagram accounts, however they all have one motivation in common, which is the aim of attracting people's attention. People are in an "attention economy" both as being consumers as well as producers (boyd, 2010, p. 13). As expected, the number of women who try to achieve the level of Instagram influencer or icon is quite high. The ones that I have studied are only a limited fraction of the succeeded group. In my opinion, what made these iconic women come into prominence in terms of popularity were the timing and persistency in their postings. The birth of their children corresponds along with the same time that Instagram started to gain fame. Women who launched their Instagram accounts earlier than others as being early adopters of Instagram, have caught the attention at the right moment. Being a pioneer of "instamoms" in Turkey has gained them many followers. They were young mothers who had recently given birth. As far as I have observed, I did not encounter any iconic woman who has teenager or older children. The other young "ordinary" mothers, who are accustomed to use search engines in the Internet, realized these women who are sharing directly their experience of motherhood on Instagram. Finding other women with the recent experience of new motherhood superseded the know-how information of elder mothers in the family.

Once the number of followers reaches a certain level, iconic women need to post photographs and videos in a certain frequency, in order to maintain expectation of the followers and keep them as followers, while gaining new ones. Marwick comments this

issue by saying that iconic women "know their fans, respond to them, and often feel an obligation to continue this interaction to boost their popularity, breaking down the traditional audience/performer spectator/spectacle dichotomy" (2016, p. 345). This situation may generate a kind of loop, which requires iconic women to produce images for followers and procure followers for images. Thus, every day at least one photo or video from their daily lives is uploaded to Instagram by iconic women. As a result, they become a crucial part of the society of exhibitionism (Byung-Chul Han, 2017). In his book *The Transparent Society*, Byung-Chul Han refers to the society of exhibitionism as follows; "Teşhircilik toplumunda her özne kendi reklam nesnesidir. Her şey sergi değeriyle ölçülür. Teşhircilik toplumu pornografik bir toplumdur. Her şey dışa çevrilmiş, ifşa edilmiş, çıplaklaştırılmış, soyulmuş, ortaya serilmiş durumdadır."[79] The act of exposure has been altered to a part of act of experiencing. In order to strengthen the experience, it has to be showed to others. The phrase of "pics or it didn't happen", which people use in their comments on the Internet, meaning that they need to see a picture as a proof of something happened, also underlines the same alteration. The iconic women are known and gain fame as much as they show. As Gürbilek points out "Birçok şeyin gösterildiği için ve göründüğü kadarıyla varolduğu, sergilendiği için ve seyredildiği kadarıyla değer kazandığı bir toplum çıktı ortaya. Epeydir vitrinde yaşıyoruz hepimiz.[80]" (1992, 29)

### 4.2.2. Outcomes of Iconic Women's Posts

I argue that living in a "show window" through Instagram must have consequences. Displaying images of oneself or especially others brings along responsibility. Similar to giving reference to a scholar's work while writing an academic paper, social media users should also notify people who are in the image which is planned to be posted online or at least these people should be aware of the possibility of going online. This could be counted as an unwritten rule dictated in social media user

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[79] "In the society of exhibitionism, each subject is the object of its own advertisement. Everything is measured by its exhibition value. The society of exhibitionism is a pornographic society. Everything is externalized, disclosed, denuded, striped off and revealed." (My translation)

[80] "A society came in sight in which many things exist just because they are shown and as much as they are shown, displayed and gain value as much as they are viewed. We all are living in a show window for a long time." (My translation)

manual. The goal in this notification is to receive approval from everyone in the picture who will be seen by the account owner's network. This is the case if the person in the photo or video has reached enough maturity in order to conclude an opinion about approval or disapproval. That is to say, sharing images of babies and little children, who would not even know the concept of taking a photo or sharing a photo, seems problematic in this regard. Majority of the iconic mothers publish photos and videos and even live broadcast of their children without getting their consent. Aside from the consent, children may not have any knowledge about a platform called Instagram and hundreds of thousand followers who are waiting to see, like or comment moments of their lives. Usually there is this situation when someone's friend visits, their parents would likely show them the photos belonging to that person's childhood. This may have the possibility to create a kind of embarrassment for that person, let alone the hundreds of photos which are showed to a large number of Instagram users. Many mothers, fathers, grandparents post scenes online, since they enjoy the memory or the moment with the child and want to share it with the loved ones. However, their accounts might be private accounts with a limited network. It should be recognized that this is not the same situation as displaying pictures in frames in the living room. The guests of the house cannot take the pictures with them, whereas on Instagram there is no opportunity to control or even monitor who would save or download the photos from profiles.

A feminist lawyer, who is followed by

ÇOCUĞUNU TEŞHİR ETME!

Liked by ████████ and **10.931 others**

████████ uğun bir mesaj geldi. Bir anne, hesabını görmedim artık ne paylaşıyorsa, ilgilenmedim de; fakat bir yazmış: " O**spu, çocuğun çirkin g*t,mal, bilmem ne bilmem ne" 😳 #cocugunuteshiretme ilk başladığında da gidip bir anneye p*zevenk demişlerdi. Olay öyle bir noktaya gelmişti ki benim sözüme insanlara hakaretler yağmaya başlamıştı. Sonra daha anlaşılır hale geldi.Aralıklarla hatırlatayım:
1-Bebekler ve çocukların her anlarının internete koyulması kesinlikle çocuğun özel hayatını ihlal
⚫ Bu konuda çocuklar ailelerine dava açacaklar bunu göreceğiz
2-Boşanma davalarında velayet tartışmasında sosyal medya paylaşımları gündeme gelecek
⚫ Anna ya da baba çocukların teşhir edildiği ve bunu istemediğini belirterek karşılıklı sınırlamalar koyduracaklar
⚫ Baz alacağımız konu şu; çekildiğini idrak edemeyen bebeklerin, 0-3 yaş grubu (bu iş çocuk hekim ve psikologlarına kalıyor tabi) çocuklar ne oldupunu anlamıyor. Örneğin 7 yaşında bir çocuk size "Çek, çekme, bunu beğenmedim bir daha çek, bunu koY bunu koyma" diyebilir; objektife bakar, poz verir vs vs.Kaldı ki bu yaştaki çocuk yanlış bir şeye özenirse de doğruyugöatermek ebeveynin sorumluluğunda.
3-Çocuklarınızı fenomen olma uğruna bana göre "harcarsanız" (burada psikologlar konuşsun) büyüdükçe kaybolan ilgiden mutsuz olmasına neden olacaksınız (tabi zorunlu olarak değil)
4- Bence tanıtımlar için sürekli fotoğraf çektirilen hatta bazıları profesyonelce ışıklarda stüdyolarda çekilen fotoğraflarda çocuk çalıştırılmış oluyor ve SİGORTALANMALARI gerekiyor
5-ELde edilen gelirin vergilendirilmesi gerekiyor.
6-Son olarak o bebek videoları altında gezinen pedofilileri de şahsınızın hayalgücüne bırakıyorum.
#cocugunuteshiretme
20 HAZIRAN · SEE TRANSLATION

Figure.58

96

hundreds of thousand users on Instagram, was warning parents, especially iconic mothers via her posts for over a year. (Figure.58) She uses the hashtag #cocugunuteshiretme and underlines the importance of children rights as well as the possible danger for children. According to her, sharing children photos violates children rights and is a kind of child abuse. She alerts users for pedophilia and the way Instagram serves as a source to pedophilia if the users do not participate with awareness and responsibility. For instance, in a post the lawyer accused iconic mothers for employing their children as an uninsured worker for the sake of receiving popularity and advertisement requests. In another premonitory post, the lawyer mentioned that in near future the children will make a plea against their mothers by accusing them with the violation of private life. Some iconic mothers from Instagram even reacted to her warnings and left negative/defensive comments. About this issue, a journalist (Kurt, 2017) held an interview by asking short questions to some iconic mothers. When melinasmom is asked "How do you take precautions against child abuse?", she responded;



Figure.59

"[P]aylaşırken Blogger olmayan bir anne gibi çok özel olmayan, okula giderken koştuğu ya da dondurma yerken sevimli olduğu anlarını paylaşıyorum. örneğin paylaştığımda çok fazla kişinin güleceğini ve eğleneceğini bildiğim halde paylaşmadığım yüzlerce anımız var. Mahremiyetine, özel alanlarına saygı duyarak, beyin süzgecimden geçirerek anlık paylaşımlar yapıyorum. Bikinili fotoğraflarını, gittiği okulu paylaşmayı tercih etmiyorum artık."[81]

The interesting thing is that a couple of weeks after this interview, melinasmom posted a photo with her daughter who wears a bikini (Figure.59).

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[81] "When I share, I share not so special moments, while running to school or eating an ice cream, like a non-blogger mother. For instance, we have so many memories that I didn't share even though I'm sure that lots of people would laugh and have fun if I have shared. I share posts while respecting her privacy, special fields and after straining them from my brain. I don't prefer to post her in bikinis or her school anymore." (My translation)

Even though iconic mothers were not giving credit to this lawyer's cautions and predictions, the court given a verdict to a preceding judgment regarding the divorce case of nihankayalioglu. According to the judgment, the custody of nihankayalioglu's two children were given to their father temporarily and she has been banned from posting her children's photos on Internet. The justification for this verdict was that nihankayalioglu shared excessive amount of photos and videos of her two children and also generated an income through these posts. This case is the first one about a social media restriction of a parent and it would act as a precedent case regarding social media discussions. As I stated before, sharing posts on Instagram requires consideration and responsibility and it has several consequences. In the example of nihankayalioglu, in addition to displaying children without consent, the financial gain obtained from the posts increased the seriousness of the case.



nihankayalioglu Uzunca bir zamandır bana dayatılana değil kendi seçtiklerime bakıyorum çünkü biliyorum ne yersen, ne dersen, ne izlersen o'sun..

358 yorumun tümünü gör

nihankayalioglu @_____ seçim sayesinde bugün böyle hislerimi yazabiliyor anlayabiliyor ve dünyayı tanımlayabiliyorum 🙏

melinasmom NİHAN SEN ÇOK İYİ BİR ANNESİN BEN buna yakından şahit olmus biriyim. Seni birebir tanımayanların boş konusmalarına kafayı takma. HER KOŞULDA YANINDAYIZ !

Figure.60

nihankayalioglu mentioned this verdict in one of her posts. After that, she has started to receive many comments from many Instagram users who write comments regarding her divorce case. For instance, in the comments of Figure.60, many women users, including melinasmom and some other iconic mothers, supported nihankayalioglu and stated their opinions against the verdict (Figure 61). As a response to this judicial decision, the lawyer, who has been warning Instagram users with the hashtag #cocugunuteshiretme[82], mentioned this case in one of her posts and said "This judicial decision was the first one. It will undergo a change in order to be adopted and settled but after that it will be fixed."

Sharing many images of children on SNSs is still a new issue, therefore it's borders and rules are still not defined juridically. In a near

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[82] "Do not exposure your child" (My translation)

Aynen @nihankayalioglu kadın anne olarak sonuna kadar yanınızdayı inşallah en kısa zamanda SULAR durulsun kuzular mutlu olsun engelleyecek adam başta engelleyebilirdi

34d   Yanıtla

@b........ Çocuğun fiziksel veya ruhsal gelişimine zarar verecek şekilde paylaşımlar yapılırsa (örneğin çıplak veya uygunsuz halde) o zaman istismar olabilir. Ama burada çocuklara verilen herhangi bir zarar olduğu görünmüyor.

32d   1 beğenme   Yanıtla

Bir anneyi cocugundan ayırmak korkunc @nihankayalioglu 😔

31d   Yanıtla

Aliye'yi izler gibi... Ama en acı tarafı gerçek oluşu herhalde. Bir annenin yavrularından ayrı bırakılış zulmü dayanılır gibi deil.

31d   Yanıtla

Ya ne kadar komiksiniz bir çocuğu annesinden daha fazla düşünebilir misiniz? Annesinden daha fazla iyiliğini istiyor olabilir misiniz? Kendinize gelin.Tamamen özel olan bir şeyi böyle tartışmaya açan o adama da yazık cidden yazık @nihankayalioglu @

5s   Yanıtla

Allahım yaa. Aynı yetenek ve imkan kendilerinde olsa balıklama atlayacak kişiler gelmiş burada çıcığını kıllınırık riklim yıpıyırsın diyor. Sanane? Çocuk onun sana ne? Gidin vakıflarda tacize uğrayan çocukların haklarını arayın. Yerse! Ya hu burada bir anne var anne. Çocuklar mesele. Biraz insan olun insan! Yeliz ulan dedi diye  ulan mı? diye soracağınıza  önce bir annenin çektiği üzüntüyü düşünün. Bu kadar zor mu sizin için iyi insan olmak? Hiç mi sevgi görmediniz. Bu kadar mı sevgisiz büyüdünüz. Kötüsünüz kötü!

5s   2 beğenme   Yanıtla

Figure.61



2.191 likes

Geçenlerde , bir aile mahkemesinden, ülkemizde devrim olarak nitelediğim bir karar çıkmıştı: Boşanma davası süresince çocukların yüzünü sosyal medyada paylaşmama kararı.Ben, daha önce de bu tür paylaşımların boşanma davasında velayet konularında ortaya sürülebileceğini söylemiştim. Bu kararla birlikte geçici velayetin babaya verilmesinin ise salt bu nedene bağlanmayacağını, dosyayı bilmemekle birlikte, başka deliller de incelenerek verilmiş olabileceğini belirtmiştim. Tabi bu konu teknik oluşundan dolayı kocalarda şöyle algı yaratmış: Karım çocuk fotoğrafı paylaşıyor, benden boşanmak isterse velayeti alırım. Yok canım öyle değil:) Evlilik birliği içerisinde paylaşılan bu fotoğrafların benzerini sen de paylaştın, gelir elde edildiğinde sen de nemalandın ise "Çocuğun Fotoğrafını Paylaşmama" kararı her iki taraf için verilmelidir. Velayet hem anne hem babaya hak tanır ve sorumluluk verir. Birininki daha az birininki daha fazla değildir. Velayet konusunda mahkemeler anne ve babayı özel,sosyal,iş ve aile hayatında değerlendirir ve tüm unsurları gözönüne alarak karar verir.Yani, sevgili kocalar, şuan sizi sosyal medyada çocuğunuz ile ilgili böylesine rahatsız eden paylaşım varsa, itiraz zamanı şimdi.Hem pastam dursun hem karnım doysun olmaz. Her dosyanın farklı olduğunu ve bir yerden çıkan kararın sizin için de geçerli olacağını zannetmeyin. Üstelik "fotoğraf paylaşımı" konusu muallakta kalmaktadır. Ben #cocugunuteshiretme kapsamında çıplak, özel anları, tuvalet eğitimi, bilimsel eğitim aldığı süreçteki hatalarının çocuğu rencide edecek biçimde paylaşılması, çocuğun her anın paylaşılması gibi daha önce bahsettiğimiz konuları baz alıyorum. Unutulmamalı ki bu karar bir ilkti; yerleşmesi ve benimsenmesi için daha çok değişecek farklı biçimlere girecektir ancak ondan sonra sabit bir uygulama alanı bulacaktır. @cocugunsesi
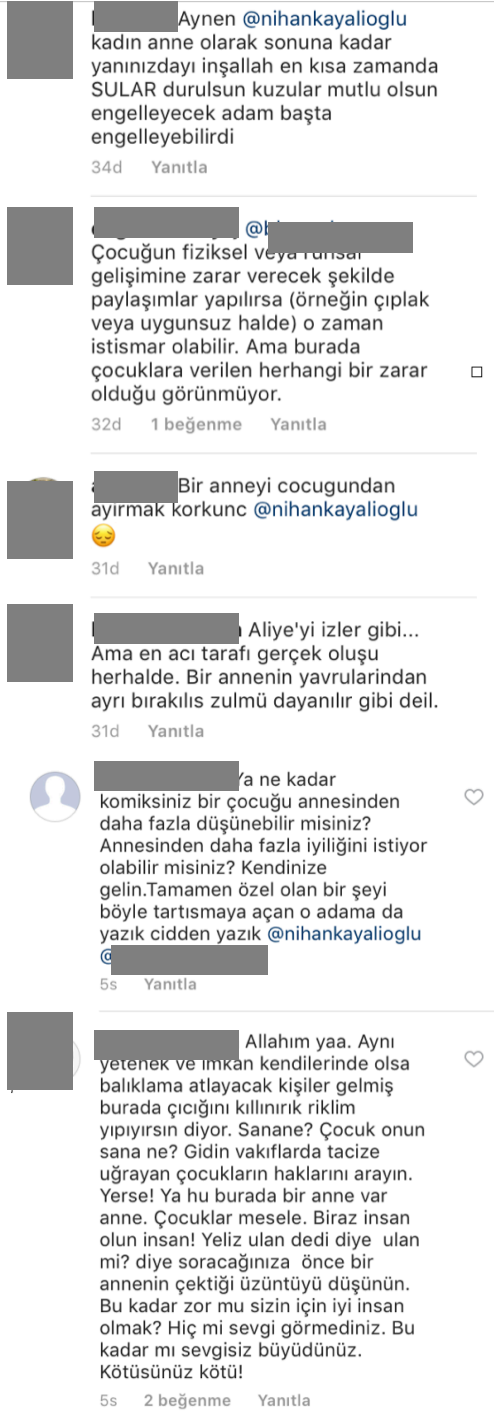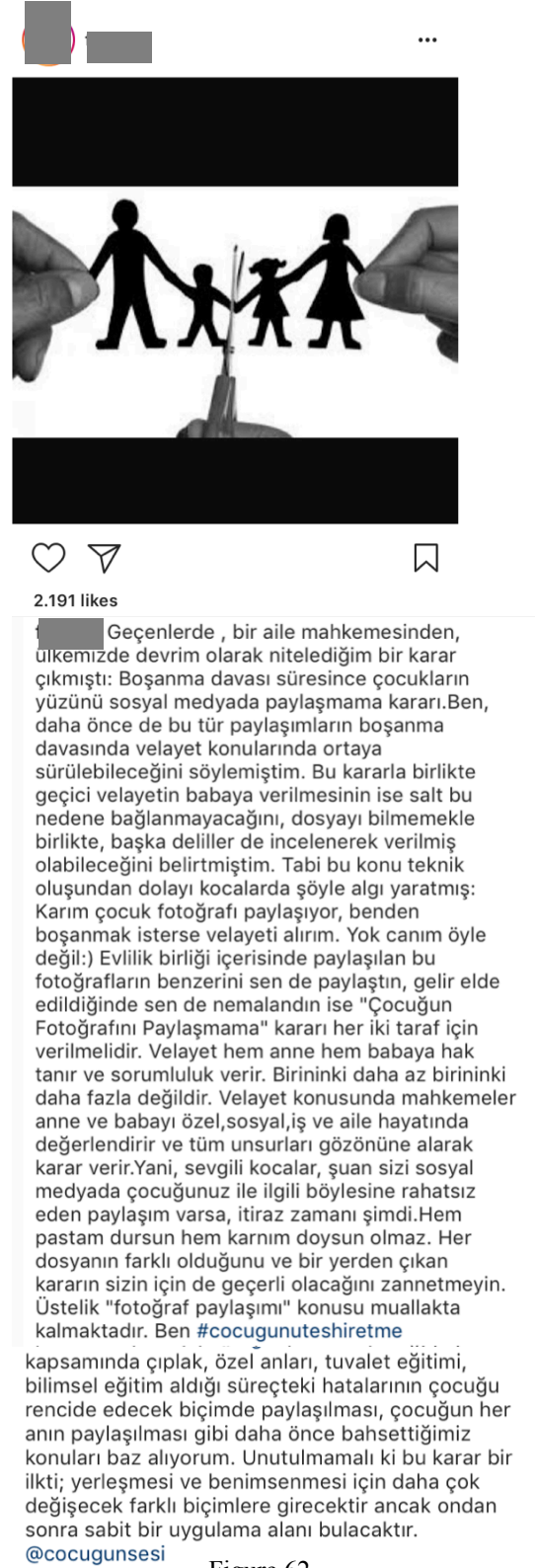
Figure.62

future, the laws regarding posts about children must be shaped. The missing thing in this debate about whether parents may use their children photos freely or not, is that the child's own opinion and feelings are not involved. People who discuss this issue are

iconic women or the ones who support them or the ones who disagree with them. The information about how children experience the process of shootings and other related moments are not known yet. Since Instagram is a slightly new platform, which is established 2010, the children in these posts are still children. Hence the parents did not face the reaction of their children about this. There is one thing for sure that the agency of child and child's consent for these photos and videos are missing at this moment.

Instagram also has the characteristic of a platform, in which popular accounts may earn money or benefits by means of their sharing. After achieving the level of an iconic woman, women start to receive offers from brands, firms and organizations regarding advertisement issue. Based on my observation, this operation is valid and preferred on Instagram and YouTube for now; the other SNSs may not be suitable for this due to their lack of visuals. Moreover, this operation is not called or talked as "advertisement" but instead it is referred as "cooperation". Trying to avoid the word "advertisement" might be because of it's relation to a legal business transaction. Since, iconic women do not oblige brands for payments, they also receive free samples, gifts or services in return.

In recent years, brands have preferred influencers on social media as a powerful and effective channel for advertising. Due to the popular influencers and iconic people the influencer marketing has emerged and it yields very good results. The grounds for favoring influencers is that "social media allows "average people" to reach the broad audiences once available only to those with access to broadcast media" (Marwick, 2015). Here by using the term "average people", Marwick wants to emphasize the situation that people perceive and feel closeness to influencers. The influencer or in this case, the iconic woman already has her followers, who have been following her since she first attracted their attention. Most of the time, they like her and due to this fact there is an emotional tie between the follower and the iconic woman. If the brands choose the most appropriate iconic woman for their product, then they target the niche community, which will care more about the product. Thus, brands either pay or send free products to iconic women and in return they expect either advising the benefits of the product or announcing attendance to brand's organization or simply posing while using the product in their sharing. Another possible way is to host the iconic woman and

her family in the hotel or the restaurant free of charge so that she posts photos from the place and praise it. These kind of advertisements could be problematic since they lack the liability for recommending and unclarity about taxes, however advertisements and promotions from influencer continue to be posted everyday very fast and effectively.

The power of influencer marketing stems from both the reliability due to emotional tie and also extended period of advertising time. The post regarding the product or service will stay in iconic woman's profile as long as the profile stays open and public. Another powerful aspect of using iconic women for brand promotion is that the way they promote does not feel like traditional advertisements make people feel. Respondents do not experience it very consciously since advertisements on Instagram are interwoven within routine posts iconic women. If a regular young mother sees a feeding bottle which an iconic mother uses for her baby, when she goes out for shopping the brand that iconic mother has used catches her eye. Moreover, she may feel more inclined to buy this brand, since she thinks that another woman also trusts this brand. As an alternative, a regular woman might also buy a dress that she has seen in an iconic woman's profile because of the impression of this iconic woman, who has the ideal feminine body.

## 4.3. Motivations of Regular Users For Following Iconic Women

In her book *Glamour,* Carol Dyhouse writes;

"The Internet, and the development of the World Wide Web, gave the illusion of delivering celebrity right into people's homes, effectively licensing voyeurism on an unprecedented scale. Celebrities – and details of their private lives and day-to-day goings-on –could be scrutinised and pored over by an ever-widening public, and demand for gossip and images of the famous rocketed, providing employment for armies of investigative journalists and photographers." (2010, 144)

Since the scope of the noun "celebrity" has become enlarged recently, when reading Dyhouse's quotation today, we should also keep social media celebrities in our minds. The daily lives of micro-celebrities, in my case iconic women, are centre of interest. Regular users of Instagram, who are mostly women, monitor activities of iconic women and also get involved with their lives by leaving comments and stating opinions. Reachability to celebrities is no longer impossible. Social media users can leave a

comment or send a message to celebrities' accounts, which are mostly not private. This ability to access a celebrity, whether she replies or not, may cause the feeling of intimacy. The effect of the phrase "Halkın arasına karışmak[83]" which is predominantly used for famous people if they do communicate with public, is not so strong as it used to be, because nowadays the public may type the celebrity's name on Instagram and reach her. In my opinion, this feeling of intimacy is more intensive with the case of iconic women. The reason for this closeness could be the blurriness of the main reason why iconic women became famous. In the written interview that I have made with sermincarkaci, she touched upon this issue nicely, she said;

> "Yaptığınız işle anılmalısınız diye düşünüyorum. Fenomen tabir edilen pek çok kişinin yaptığı bir iş yok. Şarkıcı, kebapçı, yazar, turşucu olabilirsiniz. Bunun yanında ünlü şarkıcı, ünlü kebapçı, ünlü yazar, ünlü turşucu olabilirsiniz. Her ikisinde de yaptığınız işle anılıyorsunuz. Ama sadece ünlü olduğunuzda, ortada bir eksik kalıyor. Ünlü ama neden ünlü? Ne yapıyor? Bu yüzden instagram üzerinden konuşacak olursak eğer o profilin açıklamalar kısmında yazanlar benim için önemli. Kim bu kadın ya da adam? Neden ünlü? Bunu bilmek isterim."[84]

The fame of iconic women does not arise from any profession or any related education that they have received. When we compare with actors, singers, activists or politicians, iconic women's fame derives from daily activities; dressing up, feeding a baby, playing with children, etc. Thus, these activities are also the ones that regular Instagram users are engaged with. It looks like they are more like "us". Due to this connection, people may be more likely to create attachments to them and feel like they are more "allowed" to judge these women in their own way.

Supporting an iconic woman may even reach to the level of creating a fan page, which might focus on the woman or her child. During this study, I have held three interviews with three fan page owners of simgesa, melinasmom and imrengursoy. All three of them were teenagers under the age of eighteen. Since the fan page owner for

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[83] "mingle freely with the crowd" (My translation)

[84] "I think you should be mentioned with the job you are engaging with. People who are describes as phenomenon are not doing anything or any job. You might be a singer, kebab shop owner, writer, or pickle shop owner. In addition to this, you might be famous singer, famous kebab shop owner, famous writer, or famous pickle shop owner. In both cases, you are mentioned and remembered with the job you are doing. But when you are only famous, there is something missing there. She is famous but why is she famous? What does she do? That's why, if we speculate about Instagram, the explanations in the profiles are important for me. Who is she or he? Why is s/he famous? I would like to know that" (My translation)

imrengursoy's son did not want me to share her interview due to imrengursoy's request, I can only make an assumption in the light of other two interviews.

When I was a secondary school student, a salesman used to open a small booth in front of the school gate and sell stickers of popular singers and bands. I remember among these stickers there were bands such as Spice Girls, 'NSync and Backstreet Boys and me and my classmates used to spend our pocket money on these stickers. With no or very limited access to Internet, these stickers were an alternative way we could look at these singers we admire them in addition to their music videos on television channels like MTV or NumberOne. Whereas today, people have access to all sorts of information, images or videos via Internet. Teenagers are not dependent on little stickers instead they have Instagram, where they can follow traditional celebrities along with micro-celebrities. Due to very easy access to images, and adolescence period, which causes not so reasonable choices or likings - like my choice of Backstreet Boys stickers - teenagers are also influenced by iconic women and admire them. Thus, they would also wish to communicate with the iconic woman they admire, and creating a fan page is a way of to do it. The iconic woman would correspond to a fan profile either with a like, a command or sending a direct message or maybe following back.

Maybe not as strong as a fan page but there are also permanent and loyal followers of iconic women, who like each post and write lovely comments and maybe even defend the iconic woman if someone attacks through comments. In my opinion, similar to traditional celebrities, iconic women also act as role models to people, especially teenagers and young women. In her study about SNSs and micro-celebrities, Susie Khamis and her colleagues refer to the same issue; "Young people in particular appear convinced that good looks, good living and conspicuous consumption (through artfully composed images of outfits, make-up, meals, holiday resorts, etc.) warrant adoration and emulation" (2016, 199).

Another group of people who follow iconic women are the other young women, especially young mothers. Hereinbefore, regular young mothers prefer iconic women's fresh experiences over their mother's aged know-how. Thus, they follow almost each post of iconic mothers whom they feel a stronger connection. Their aim is to improve their own maternal beliefs and quality of their own maternal activities. Each gaze into

an iconic mother's profile carries the goal of learning something for self-improvement. Nevertheless, the mothers in my focus group state that when they look into iconic mother's posts they feel worse. The reason why the self-improvement fails is the comparison they do with themselves and the iconic mother. They indicate that they were obsessed with various questions: How is she be able to go out for a coffee with a little baby? How does she manage to look so fresh with a little baby? Why has my baby not learned to use a spoon when her baby has already has?

This situation made me recall Berlant's concept of cruel optimism. According to Berlant, optimism is the force that moves one towards the desire that will make them satisfied, and cruel optimism is the situation that one's attachment is working against the fulfillment of their desire. If the focus group mothers' optimism is to have some free time and get inspired on Instagram, each time they see a post of an iconic woman, they start to question themselves. Thus, the journey for self-improvement turns into a self-doubt. Moreover, they do not stop looking at iconic mother's accounts or unfollow them and this becomes their cruel optimism. A more general example for optimism could be the desire for having a high number of friends in SNSs, collecting a high number of "likes" for a photo, posting a photo with a popular purchased product. Most of the time, what brings people into social media is generally to stay informed with acquaintances and also share information about themselves. Curiosity about other's lives is what makes this optimism cruel. It is possible for young women to emulate and desire life styles, possessions, even sometimes the physical appearance of the contacts in their friend list. Or as an alternative to the motivations mentioned above, it is also possible to agree with Nurdan Gürbilek who says "Yabancısı olduğu şeylere bakmanın, zamanla büyük şehir insanının can sıkıntısını gideren bir oyuna dönüştüğünü söylemek de mümkün[85]" (1992)

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[85] "It is also possible to state that looking at the things that you are stranger to is turned into a game of individual in the big city that eliminates their boredom" (My translation)

# CHAPTER V

## CONCLUSION

The main reason why I choose to study iconic women and mothers on Instagram was to understand the motivation of iconic women for posting these photos and also the motivation of other users for following and liking these photos. In this research, I argue that iconic women attain power and approval, together with financial gain, through practicing the ideal woman and/or ideal mother representations that society imposes on women. Whereas the followers of iconic women satisfy their curiosity, while benefiting from iconic women's experiences by perceiving them as "one-of-us" celebrities.

I believe that iconic women's starting points of their Instagram journeys are originated from the imposed roles for and the expectations from the ideal woman model by the society. Most of the iconic women shape their persona on Instagram in accordance with these expectations. cananvolkancetin's and simgesa's posts which display their "perfectly" thin and fit bodies with their matchy-matchy dressed family members or imrengursoy's post which concerns about her son's sufficient amount of water drinking, stem from the desire to display oneself as the best within the norms and values of the society. When this desire is succeeded, it leads to approval gaining. Iconic women attain approval from the society, since they play the role of a caring mother and a devoted wife. The concepts of motherhood and wifehood are considered as the main and natural responsibilities which are attributed to women. Hence, the woman is accepted as an ideal woman in Turkey as long as she gets married and gives birth to a child. This approval brings along power, especially if the woman possess "beauty" which is admired by her husband, if she shows affection and nurturing towards her children and if her mother identity remains in the forefront under any circumstances. Accordingly, I claim that these iconic women are aware of this relation between the ideal woman role and power, therefore they benefit Instagram as a platform to perform in that way. I would like to emphasize that my goal is not to question iconic women's sincerity or honesty about their love towards their family or their happiness, rather I

argue that their behavior on Instagram is a kind of performance which aims to display themselves as a great mother and a great woman.

This research is based on participant observation, and visual and discourse analysis of iconic women's posts through my personal Instagram account. In addition to these, interviews with iconic women and their followers generate also substantial data for this thesis. I initially had aimed to conduct in-depth interviews with all of the iconic women that I have observed, and my initial assumption was that they would accept my interview requests, however it proved to be wrong. Only two of ten iconic women that I approached responded positively to my interview requests and replied my interview questions via e-mail. Trying to arrange interviews was a challenging process for me during this research. When most of the iconic women declined to meet me, I perceived these rejections as a failure at first, however after a consideration I recognized that it was not a total failure. Rather, iconic women's unwillingness to meet with me corresponds to my argument on performed representation of iconic women on Instagram. Furthermore, these two iconic women who answered my questions are sermincarkaci and hihieved, who criticize ideal women representations in their own way. Among ten of iconic women, receiving replies by only these two is worthy of consideration.

As a result of this research, I concluded that as much as iconic women's posts require attention and study, the behavior of their audience requires analyzing at least as much as iconic women's. As a platform of over 700 million active users with over 400 million daily activities, Instagram is the place where iconic women and mothers possess the power to influence other regular Instagram users, especially female ones. The iconic women act as reference points for the audience; they might be role models as it is for fan page owners or they might be the opposite as it is for the mother in my focus group discussion and sometimes they might relieve the followers by experiencing same problems as it is in the example of the ironic mother hihieved. In all cases, the audience is ready to consume the posts of iconic women, whether for praising or dispraising. Moreover, it would be possible to point that the audience might be spending remarkable time on Instagram, similar to iconic women, with the purpose of seeing and interpreting iconic women's posts.

This thesis makes a contribution to the existing literature on motherhood and womanhood in Turkey through the analysis of a new medium, Instagram. Instagram Turkey is an unstudied platform in the academic sense and it requires more attention. While being aware of the limitations of this study, I hope that it would help following social media studies of Turkey in academia. Furthermore this research raises important questions concerning ethics, children's rights, consumption and surveillance. Using children on Instagram posts, whether for gaining more followers or for advertising products over children is surely a problematic issue that demands detailed study which should include both moral and legal point of views. Today, we did not face any child who has grown up as a child of an iconic mother, yet. The effects and results of iconic mothers' behavior will be able to seen in a few years, when their children become mature. In addition to children's rights, generating income through Instagram posts stands as another issue that needs to be approached more comprehensive. The fading boundaries between a sincere recommendation and a profit-oriented advertisement in iconic women's posts have become a debatable fact of Instagram. Last but not least, surveillance is another subject which maintains its importance in Turkey. When creating an Instagram account, like any other SNS, users automatically accept the "Privacy Policy" and "Terms of Service" of Instagram, otherwise the application does not allow users to finalize the process. This process is usually done without reading and understanding the terms and conditions. As Losh (2015) quotes from Manovich "…our spontaneous online actions become sources of behavioral and cognitive data used for commercial and surveillance purposes—improving results of search engines, customizing recommendations, determining what are the best images to be used in online ads, etc." (2014, para. 6). As a result, each of these concepts require a deeper research which might be focus of other dissertations.

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