

**From Food Hacks to Healthy Snacks:**  
The Relationship between Women and Food  
in Contemporary American Women's Magazines

Master's Thesis  
Jenna Haimakainen

University of Jyväskylä  
Department of Language and Communication Studies  
English  
May 2019

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

Tiedekunta – Faculty Humanistis-yhteiskuntatieteellinen tiedekunta	Laitos – Department Kieli- ja viestintätieteiden laitos
Tekijä – Author Jenna Haimakainen	
Työn nimi – Title From Food Hacks to Healthy Snacks: The Relationship between Women and Food in Contemporary American Women’s Magazines	
Oppiaine – Subject Englannin kieli	Työn laji – Level Pro Gradu
Aika – Month and year Toukokuu 2019	Sivumäärä – Number of pages 103
<p><b>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</b></p> <p>Naisten ja ruoan välistä suhdetta on tutkittu vuosikymmenien ajan monesta näkökulmasta. Osa näistä tutkimuksista on keskittynyt siihen, mielletäänkö ruoanlaitto naisellisena vastuutehtävänä ja jopa yhtenä feminiinisyyden ilmentymänä, sekä millaisia tunteita tässä tehtävässä onnistuminen tai epäonnistuminen on naisissa herättänyt. Toisaalta moni tutkimus on myös kartoittanut naisten syömiseen liittyvää ajatusmaailmaa ja sen vaikutusta kehonkuvaan, yleensä syventyen naisten taipumuksiin tarkkailla jatkuvasti ruokansa laatua ja rajoittaa sen määrää laihtumisen tavoittelemiseksi.</p> <p>Tämän tutkimuksen kohteena ovat erityisesti amerikkalaiset naisten aikakauslehdet ja niissä esitetyt representaatiot ruoasta osana nykynaisen elämää sekä ruoanlaiton että syömisen näkökulmasta. Tutkimusaineistoksi valittiin yhteensä 100 artikkelia neljän suosittujen naistenlehden verkkosivuilta, 25 jokaisesta lehdestä. Nämä lehdet ovat Cosmopolitan, Marie Claire, Glamour and Good Housekeeping. Tutkimuksen teoreettinen viitekehys muodostuu kahden tutkimusmenetelmän systemaattisesta sovellutuksesta; analyysin ensimmäisessä vaiheessa aineisto käsiteltiin hyödyntäen Grounded Theory –metodia, jonka jälkeen syvällisemmän pohdinnan tukena käytettiin feminististä kriittistä diskurssianalyysia ja Faircloughin metodia.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että ruoanlaittoa kotioloissa kuvataan hyvin vähän. Tämän perusteella voidaan päätellä, että ruoanlaitto aiheena ei kiinnosta lehtien lukijakuntaa kenties sen liiallisen arkipäiväisyyden tai arjesta katoamisen vuoksi. Ne artikkelit, jotka kuvailevat naisten kotiruoanlaittoa esittävät sen osana erityisesti perheellisten naisten elämää tai harrastuksenomaisena kiinnostuksen kohteena. Työelämässä puolestaan naisia kuvataan joko ruoka-alan yrittäjinä tai huippukokkeina. Näille yhteinen ominaisuus on sekoittaa Williamsin (2012) määrittelemän resistentin ja traditionaalisen naiseuden piirteitä, luoden vaikutelman vahvoista ja kilpailukyvuisistä, mutta pehmeistä arvoja korostavista naisista ruokateollisuudessa. Ura- ja elämäntyyliin ruoanlaittoa kuvataan myös itsensä toteuttamisen kanavana ja yhtenä mahdollisena reittinä <i>amerikkalaisen unelman</i> saavuttamiseksi.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen perusteella naisten syömistä puolestaan ohjaa huoli terveellisyydestä ja elämäntyylin viestiminen ruokatuotemerkkien kuluttamisen avulla. Terveellisyyden alle nivoutuvat mm. käsitteet terveestä ja kauniista kehosta, kehon sisäisestä hyvinvoinnista sekä kohtuullisuudesta. Tiedot ruokatuotteista ja -brändit esitetään myös nonverbaalisina viestiminä, joiden avulla kuluttaja voi ilmaista elämäntyyliään ja statustaan. Monet tuotemerkit kannustavatkin kuluttajia esittelemään tuotteita sosiaalisessa mediassa, näin ollen tuoden hyötyä kuluttajalle kasvaneen imagon muodossa, samalla tukien tuotemerkkien tunnettuuden kasvua.</p>	
<p><b>Asiasanat – Keywords In English</b> women’s magazines, Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, Cosmopolitan, Marie Claire, Glamour, Good Housekeeping, femininity, food, cooking, eating, representations</p>	
Säilytyspaikka – Depository JYX	
Muita tietoja – Additional information	

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>FEMININITY AND FEMININE STEREOTYPES .....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1	In the vortex of sex and gender .....	5
2.2	Defining femininity and masculinity .....	8
2.3	Traditional and resistant femininity .....	11
2.4	Manifestations of femininity in the United States .....	14
<b>3</b>	<b>WOMEN’S COOKING AND EATING .....</b>	<b>18</b>
3.1	Women’s role in the kitchen .....	18
3.2	Women, eating and body-control.....	24
<b>4</b>	<b>MAGAZINES CONSTRUCTING WOMEN.....</b>	<b>31</b>
4.1	The birth and evolution of women’s magazines .....	31
4.2	The synthetic sisterhood .....	36
4.3	Women on the pages.....	41
<b>5</b>	<b>AIMS, MATERIALS AND METHODS.....</b>	<b>45</b>
5.1	The research question .....	45
5.2	Materials and data .....	45
5.3	Grounded Theory Method .....	47
5.4	Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) and Fairclough’s CDA.....	50
<b>6</b>	<b>FOOD AND WOMEN: THE ANALYSIS.....</b>	<b>57</b>
6.1	Categories emerged from data .....	57
6.2	Cooking and eating in current American women’s magazines .....	60
6.2.1	Modern-day women as cooks .....	60
	<i>Women’s cooking at home .....</i>	<i>61</i>
	<i>Food as a creativity-inducing career choice .....</i>	<i>68</i>
6.2.2	Attitudes toward eating .....	75
	<i>Healthy and unhealthy eating .....</i>	<i>75</i>
	<i>Food as a communicative artefact .....</i>	<i>85</i>
<b>7</b>	<b>DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>98</b>

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The relationship between women and food has been actively researched over the past decades, especially from the perspectives of cooking and weight-loss pursuits. The studies on women's cooking have traditionally focused on women's positioning in the domestic sphere, thus discussing views on cooking as a feminine duty or a motherly responsibility (Moisio, Arnould and Price 2004, Inness 2001, Bugge and Almås 2006). On the other hand, women have also been observed in the field of professional cooking, a particular interest being the scarcity of successful female chefs within the male-dominated industry (Harris and Giuffre 2015). Perhaps an equally popular topic has been the complexity of ideologies behind women's eating. For instance, Hesse-Biber (2007) and Veit (2013) have studied women's tendencies to restrict food intake in order to maintain or reduce body size, in this way trying to achieve the idealized form of beauty embraced by the surrounding society. Lelwica (2011) even goes as far as comparing women's dieting to religious behaviour, thus demonstrating the otherworldly philosophy behind the quest for thinness.

In the core of the previous studies have been the representations of feminine identities and which factors contribute to the construction of these identities. In this equation, women's media, especially women's magazines, has often been pointed out as the vehicle in conveying the notions of feminine identities to the public. Indeed, the women's magazine genre has existed for several centuries, eventually shaping into the ultimate guidebook and companion for many women. Moreover, since millions of American women are exposed to the ideals displayed on the pages, women's magazines have notable impact on women's culture (Inness 2007, Hesse-Biber 2007). Due to this, it is not surprising that women's magazines have gained popularity as the medium of choice in the field of feminist research.

Although women's cooking and eating have been studied frequently and extensively in the past, the recently emerged global phenomena have raised new questions about these themes to be answered. Whereas the previous research has pointed out the messages of thinness in media, the lately surfaced *body positivity movement* that celebrates women (and men) of all sizes may have altered the views on beauty and the ideal form of femininity during the recent years. In relation to this, the changes in perception may have also affected the way cooking

and eating are discussed in women's media today, perhaps shifting the focus on other issues than weight-loss. In addition to this, the emphasis on eco-friendliness and the strong social media presence have shaped the consumer behaviour, leading into launching new products and services at an incredible pace. Furthermore, since the modern-day women are more independent than ever before, it will be interesting to discover if and how the culture around cooking has changed.

In the light of these recent developments, this study aims at examining the relationship between women and food as represented in the online articles of contemporary American women's magazines from the perspectives of both cooking and eating. The data will comprise of a hundred food-related articles from four mainstream American women's magazines, which I will analyse in two steps. First of all, I will utilize the tools of Grounded Theory Method in the data categorizing phase of the study, which enables the theory to emerge from data organically. Secondly, I will look at the themes in more detail with the help of Michelle Lazar's Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis. This study touches the research fields of sociology, applied linguistics and communications, especially the areas of persuasion and discourse analysis. The study will begin with a look at the key concepts of the present study before moving onto the analysis, including the definitions of femininity, women's role as cooks and women's eating, as well as the women's magazine genre as an influential force in the lives of modern-day women.

## **2 FEMININITY AND FEMININE STEREOTYPES**

As the present study aims at observing the way women's cooking and eating are represented in modern-day magazines, it is first essential to understand what is in fact meant by such terms as the female sex, gender and femininity, and how these concepts together produce the overall experience of living as a woman. Moreover, by first determining what constitutes as the female sex, the female gender and the stereotypical performance of a woman, these attributes can then be assessed from the perspective of the representations of women's cooking and eating today. In this section, I will discuss how women and femininity have been approached by academic literature in the past, while also introducing the latest research on gender identity. This section will also take a brief look into women's history, showing the evolution of the idealized Western woman from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century to present day.

### **2.1 In the vortex of sex and gender**

Although the terms *sex* and *gender* are frequently used in everyday conversation, sometimes even interchangeably, these two notions are in no way synonymous in the eyes of natural and social sciences. In fact, a lot of research has been dedicated into trying to define these two terms, resulting in a vast bibliography of studies with backgrounds in various scientific disciplines, such as genetics, anatomy, psychology and sociology. Similarly, the link between the two has also caused discussion, in the core of which lies the question of whether one's biological sex functions as a basis for gender development or if gender is a purely social phenomenon. In this chapter, I will introduce the most commonly accepted definitions of sex and gender and the most popular theories on how they relate to one another.

Out of the two concepts, *sex* is probably the one that has been more agreed on in terms of its definition. As Litosseliti (2006: 10-11) and Wharton (2005: 18-21) collate, sex is quite straightforwardly defined as a biological sex category, in which one is assigned at birth or prenatally. Although simplified as a practice, sex determination is usually done through the recognition of either male or female genitalia or, as Jefferson and Weingarten (2009: 2-4) and Bainbridge (2003: 13-15) explain, at a chromosomal level by distinguishing between the pairings of X and Y chromosomes, XY resulting in a male and XX in a female. After birth,

however, the question of gender selection becomes relevant and, as Wharton (2005: 18-21) further elaborates, this assigned biological sex category usually acts as a guide to choosing a gender. In practice, what this means is that an individual with male genitalia typically adopts a male gender, and vice versa. However, as Wharton continues (*ibid.*), in many cases the process of identifying one's biological sex has proven to be more problematic, thus also complicating the selection of a gender. For example, in the cases of inter-sexed infants, whose biological anatomies do not fit in the category of male nor female, gender identity is often chosen for them. In the light of examples such as these, questions have been raised whether gender and biological sex are to be considered as parts of the same continuum at all.

Whereas the definition of sex can be based largely on biological reasoning, including the analysis of human anatomy and genetics, gender research traditions are mostly rooted in social sciences, such as sociology and psychology. According to Tate (2014: 1-2), gender identity can generally be seen as having at least two separate meanings in academic literature, (1) one being the awareness of one's anatomy and (2) the other endorsing the traits that are stereotypical of one's gender group. As Tate (2014: 3-5) states, the earliest views on gender identity development originate from biological grounds and one of the first theories to touch such area was the psychoanalytic theory by Sigmund Freud, which focused on the biological differences between men and women and how these differences affected the psychological development of both genders. Although Freud's theory rests on biological differences, Freud quite notably argued against the notion of gender being a quality fixed from birth or the same as one's biological sex. Instead, according to Freud, psychological identity experiences were crafted throughout one's lifetime, including one's gender development.

Even though Freud's ideas about gender identity served as scaffolding for many gender studies to come, for many decades the starting point for these studies remained in biological differences, as Tate (2014: 3-5) continues. For example, in the 1920s and 1930s, Lewis Terman and Catherine Cox Miles approached the topic of gender theory by dividing the participants into two groups in accordance to their biological sex, thus hoping to find out how the two groups differed from each other in terms of preferences, attitudes and other psychological phenomena. In retrospective, however, the results of the study did not provide much evidence on gender-specific traits, but instead how the social status gap between men and women at the time contributed to their answers. In the 1960s, almost 30 years after Terman and Miles, the assumed connection between birth-assigned category and self-

experienced gender was still a prominent feature in gender research. In 1966, for instance, Lawrence Kohlberg introduced his cognitive-developmental theory of gender identity, which drew from Freudian psychoanalytic theory with an added focus on internal factors. According to Kohlberg's theory, gender experiences occurred in stages during one's childhood, each stage revealing a particular layer of one's gender identity. These stages would range from the first "correct" self-labelling of one's gender in reference to the label provided at birth at around age three, to the realization of the permanence of one's gender at around seven years of age. (Tate 2014: 4-5.)

To return to the present-day, according to Williams (2012: 10) and del-Teso-Craviotto (2006: 2004), gender is currently viewed as a performative action ("*doing gender*"), rather than something people have or are. In other words, gender is the culturally taught manifestation of a particular sex, which is performed by the members of each sex. For instance, a man is not recognized as a man simply because of his male genitalia, but because he performs the male gender through his behaviour, speech and outward appearance. As for the acquisition of these behavioural patterns, the performance of a man or a woman are learned in interaction with others, as demonstrated by Talbot (2006: 740) and Coates (2001: 8291). According to these researchers, sex-segregation can often be observed in many cultures due to a cultural practice or simply because of natural preferences to socially interact with other members of the same sex. This tendency, however, has led into men and women forming two subcultures or co-cultures within societies, each passing on gender-specific behavioural patterns and traditions to the next generation of males or females.

However, how a particular gender is performed seems to be quite an arbitrary cultural construction and del-Teso-Craviotto (2006: 2004) even suggests that gender identity can only be built on discourses available among the cultural and social circumstances of the time and place of one's life. For example, during the time before the coining of the concept of bisexuality, being interested in both sexes might have caused great confusion and distress in an individual, bringing up many question about their gender identity. Similarly, a person always surrounded by culture where only women wear skirts might mistake a young boy in a kilt as female at first glance, before learning the cultural norms of dressing one's gender in Scotland. Indeed, as Wharton (2005: 21) explains, although people rely on many markers to categorize between males and females in their society, such as hair, body type, clothing, voice,



behaviour and internal qualities (emotionality, aggression etc.), the problem remains that there are none that would only or never exist in one gender only across all cultures.

Since there is no single definition of which inner or outer qualities add up to male or female gender, gender identity performance is substantially more complex than just a choice between two genders and the “proper” way of performing each (Coates 2001: 8291). As mentioned above, gender manifestations differ depending on culture, social class, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age and so forth, in addition to which an individual might even blend and mix multiple identities, perhaps highlighting or hiding certain parts of their gender identity (Williams 2012: 11; Litosseliti 2006: 10-11). However, as Williams (ibid.) continues, communicating one’s identity to others relies on the recognisability of discourses, which is why individuals often work with their co-participants to help them recognize the wanted identity. For example, a woman might want to embrace characteristics and behaviours associated with the female gender in the given culture, such as wearing feminine clothing or displaying feminine body language, in this way conveying her willingness to fit the norms of the surrounding society. As for what constitutes the feminine and masculine is a vast and complex study in the fields of human sciences, i.e. social studies, gender research and psychology, and the definitions of these will be further discussed in the next chapter, hopefully giving a better understanding of the relationship between gender identity and masculinity and femininity.

## **2.2 Defining femininity and masculinity**

Alongside sex and gender, another pair of terminology that can often be found in relation to gender identity are *femininity* and *masculinity*, which are typically used as an adjective pair to describe how stereotypically female or male a person is (Tate 2014: 5). Although quite popular juxtaposing terms in common language usage, as well as in academic literature, giving exact definitions to these terms has proven to be immensely challenging. What is more, the approaches in applying these concepts in studies vary greatly as well, with some researchers placing masculinity and femininity as bipolar opposites, while others regarding them as two separate dimensions that exist within every individual (Tate 2014: 5-6). In this chapter, I will cover the relationship between not only femininity but also masculinity to

women, in addition to which I will also discuss the various explanations of the many aspects of womanhood.

When Spence and Buckner (1995: 105-106) asked a group of regular people about the definitions of masculinity or femininity in 1995, most respondents could not come up with an all-inclusive description. Instead, many stated that femininity and masculinity were qualities that were easily recognizable when faced, but almost impossible to explain. What these comments well point out is the first dilemma of defining masculinity and femininity, which is that the meanings of such terms are very culture-specific and rely heavily on shared knowledge. As a brief reminder of the issues of gender development discussed in the previous chapter, Spence and Buckner (ibid.) also state that gender performance patterns are adopted fairly early in childhood, as children quickly learn to recognize their own biological sex and decipher that of others. Since the assigned biological sex guides how a certain individual is treated and addressed in his or her society, the child usually adopts the characteristics and behaviours that make them a member of their gender group. By the time one has developed into adulthood, the idea of describing gender qualities and behaviour with the help of masculinity and femininity spectrums has become an intrinsic and natural habit, and therefore no further explanations are needed.

When resorted to an encyclopaedia for definitions, Oxford Dictionaries Online (Masculine and Masculinity, n.d.), as one example, defines *masculine* (adj.) and *masculinity* (noun) as “having qualities or appearance traditionally associated with men”, such as handsomeness, robustness and muscularity. In a similar fashion, Oxford Dictionaries Online (Feminine and Femininity, n.d.) characterizes *feminine* (adj.) and *femininity* (noun) as having qualities or attributes linked to women, especially delicacy and prettiness. Although these explanations cover the most basic and superficial levels of lexical explanation, according to Spence and Buckner (1995: 106), masculinity and femininity are concepts that carry even deeper emotional meanings. For example, masculinity is often declared as a prized quality in men and respectively femininity in women, and psychological studies report that the feeling of lacking these can cause a sense of devalue or distress in individuals. For instance, someone’s masculinity or femininity can be described as “threatened” by the occasion of losing something that is strongly connected to their gender or biological sex, such as the ability to have children. Similarly, the invasion of the opposing quality might also cause insecurity in one’s sense of masculinity or femininity, for instance working in a field dominated by the

opposite sex. On the basis of these examples it would seem that in addition to the interpretations of outer indicators of masculinity and femininity, these terms are processed at an emotional level as well.

Since masculinity and femininity have fascinated psychologists and other researchers from various scientific sectors for a long time, there have also been many attempts in creating a system to assess or measure one's masculinity or femininity. As mentioned in Williams (2012: 11) and Spence and Buckner (1995: 107-108), one of the most popular approaches to masculinity-femininity testing was to place an individual along a bipolar continuum with masculinity and femininity at the opposite ends. However, this approach has ceased to be used due to notable critique from many researchers; Spence and Buckner (1995: 107-108), for one, point out that because masculinity and femininity as terms are universally undefinable, the placement of the terms as polar-opposites is invalid. Similarly, Coates (2001: 8291) also argues that since masculinity and femininity can be observed to intertwine and overlap within a person, a single scale is not adequate to measure such qualities.

Another popular theory in psychological literature, introduced by Spence and Buckner (1995: 109), is the personality trait division, in which personality traits are allocated into clusters based on the frequency of occurrence in each gender, hence indicating which traits are masculine and which feminine. According to this theory, masculine and feminine traits could be recognized through asking men and women about their attributes and then studying which were the most popular among which gender group. However, this approach has also been discredited as a method. The weakness of the method is that the clusters include both positive and negative traits, which cannot be proven to have correlation between them. For example, more women described themselves as diligent but also anxious, but since there is no known connection between diligence and anxiousness, the method unfortunately has not been able to provide much useful information about women or femininity.

All in all, as far as it is possible to explain masculinity and femininity, Spence and Buckner (1995: 108-109) summarize them as “descriptive labels that help identify the set of phenomena that are, or are believed to be, associated with one gender more than the other”. In other words, defining the two at a universal level is unnecessary, as the context and shared knowledge will fill in the gaps and therefore it is possible for the individual to recognize the phenomena upon seeing it. The key element to understand is, however, that masculinity and

femininity are not psychological opposites and that both attributes are present in both sexes (Spence and Buckner 1995:116). In fact, as the terms cannot be rooted into anything stable and concrete, Spence and Buckner (1995: 135-136) go as far as suggesting that the two terms should cease to be used as part of psychological terminology, as they might hinder or restrict our understanding of the nature of gender in general.

### **2.3 Traditional and resistant femininity**

As established in the chapters above, the present-day understanding of gender describes it as a performance that is realized through selecting and displaying various traits and characteristics, all of which lead to an either easily-recognisable performance of a woman or a man, or to an interpretation of a gender identity that may lie somewhere in between. A woman might, for example, choose to highlight her female gender by conforming to the norms associated with females in the surrounding community through outward appearance or behaviour, or shake up the status quo by adopting traits regarded as belonging to male gender (Williams 2012: 10-11). However, although there is no single way of being a woman or performing the female gender, Williams (2012: 11) argues there are certain constraints and limits to the identities that are more likely to be interpreted as feminine. In this chapter, I will introduce Williams's (2012) theory of *traditional* and *resistant femininity*, which are manifested in women's culture in especially Western societies and, therefore, at the same time influence the process of feminine identity formation.

In her work concerning empowered femininity, Williams (2012: 12-26) has coined two types of femininities that especially American women seem to prominently enact either separately or together, which she refers to as traditional femininity and resistant femininity. According to Williams (ibid.), traditional femininity is a description of a woman with socioemotional or communal characteristics, such as compassion, kindness, helpfulness, affection and devotion to others, which Williams (2012: 12-13) argues are included in the feminine stereotype that women in America are still expected to reflect at least to some extent. This stereotype is characterized as emphasizing the social and emotional aspects of women, thus depicting women as beings who are very much concerned about other people's feelings and thoughts (Williams 2012: 4-5, 12-17). For example, traditionally feminine women are described as interested in communicating primarily to establish connections and do so by sharing their

emotions, gossip and the little details about their day in small groups, as well as by being attentive to the needs of others. Williams (ibid.) points out that this type of behaviour is very different from stereotypical men's, who in turn typically prefer to communicate in order to share information or show expertise, and can find the topics related to feelings and relationships quite uninteresting. Emotionality and vulnerability in general are notably associated with traditional femininity, which can be observed in the many performances and imitations of women. For instance, the clichéd performance of a woman often includes over-emotionality, even irrationality, and crying.

Traditional femininity also highlights the importance of looks, which is reflected in many aspects of women's culture. For example, the positive feedback women give to each other seems to revolve around physical features, such as small body size or facial beauty, and this type of commenting and complimenting each other's appearance is a prominent part of women's communication repertoire. Beauty discourse is also present in many fairy tales and other texts that associate beauty and youth with goodness and kindness, and old age and ugliness with evil and wickedness. Even women's magazines support the traditional stereotype by framing looks and desirability among men as the basis of feminine identity, at the same time presenting the tendency of taking care of one's appearance as commendable or even "normal" behaviour. (Williams 2012: 4-5, 12-17.)

As Williams (ibid.) summarizes, traditional femininity positions women as caretakers, good mothers and daughters, who tend to other people's needs and are able to do so under the care and provision of men. Therefore, perhaps unsurprisingly, the qualities linked to traditional femininity are often associated with housewives and stay-at-home mothers, who usually rely on their husband's or someone else's income. Indeed, economy is a topic that is closely linked to the formation of traditional femininity, as the changes in the means of earning have greatly shaped the everyday lives of families and the hierarchy between men and women. The different phases of Western economy that have affected the development of these gender roles will be further discussed in the next chapter.

While traditional femininity has been applauded in Western societies as desirable in women, the admiration has also fuelled an opposing phenomenon, to which Williams (2012: 17-20) refers as "resistant femininity". Resistant femininity protests against the classification of women as virtuous, soft-spoken and other-centred, and instead embraces the qualities mostly

associated with men and masculinity, such as assertiveness, competitiveness and even crudeness. However, although resistant femininity rejects the ideals linked to traditional femininity, these attitudes do not exclude the existence of both in the same person. For example, the resistant side is often revealed “backstage”, mainly when surrounded by a trusted group of other females. In practice, women might portray an image of a caring and polite person and a good mother frontstage, but express their frustrations, anger and objections to their role backstage. As women seem to constantly walk the line of being too feminine or too unfeminine, this informal setting and safety of a closed circle provide women an outlet to show characteristics deemed as unfeminine and undesirable for women. At the same time, it also allows women to reflect on themselves and criticize others’ conformity to these norms. (Williams 2012: 17-20.)

Williams (2012: 19-20) also emphasizes the importance of analysing femininities in accordance to their cultural and operational context. For example, since the gentle and beauty-oriented traditional femininity is mainly associated with middle class women, many working class women embrace resistant attitudes and evaluate their behaviour as more aggressive, including the tendency to act rowdy and swear. This kind of behaviour could rise from the grounds of demonstrating one’s capability to defend themselves or their group against an opposing force, or act as a protest against the traditional values embraced by middle-class culture. Another context where women seem to resist appearing feminine is in the professional fields dominated by men, such as police work. Police work is often seen as masculine because of the assumption that the job requires the use of brute strength, but actually many female police officers characterize the work as more bureaucratic than physical. In fact, the study regarding the gender behaviour of male and female police officers reports no significant differences in the physical abilities between the genders. However, on the other hand the study also showed that the linguistic techniques of female police officers emulated the techniques typically used by men, including long silences and interruptions. In the light of this, it seems that the interaction style of female police officers imitate that of their male counterparts by focusing on rationality, as well as mental and emotion control. All in all, in this case the resistance rises from the influence of the operational environment. (Williams 2012: 19-20.)

All in all, Williams’ (2012) two stereotypes of femininity, and the many interpretations in between, aim at explaining feminine identity formation in especially Western societies. What

is more, with the help of these stereotypes it is possible to observe, recognize and analyse the feminine behaviour that is endorsed by women's media. Nevertheless, alongside these classifications it is also essential to understand the influence of economical and societal changes to feminine identities. Next, I will introduce women's history and current status in the United States and in Western societies, which become particularly important aspects when examining women's position in the culinary field in the following sections of this study.

## **2.4 Manifestations of femininity in the United States**

The previous chapter focused on Williams' (2012) theory of two feminine stereotypes, which attempt at explaining the way women are characterized and portrayed within Western societies. However, as the tendencies in favouring either stereotype go hand in hand with the development of economy and culture, it is beneficial to briefly discuss women's history and current status in the United States. This chapter will look at the circumstances that initially positioned women as homemakers, continuing with an insight to present-day women's culture within American society. With the help of this chapter, it will become easier to discuss women's roles as home cooks and opportunities in pursuing professional cooking careers in the future sections of this study, as they are issues that are rooted in the women's history.

As Williams (2012: 12-17) argued in the previous chapter, American women are typically still expected to exude the qualities associated with the traditionally feminine stereotype, including attentiveness to the needs of others and reliance on men. In practice, this feminine role is often connected with stay-at-home wives and mothers, whose primary responsibilities are usually limited to taking care of the children and home. Although women staying at home with children while men work outside of the home might seem like the original family setting to many, as a matter of fact this arrangement did not exist until the industrialization of the West (Wharton 2005: 83-85). According to Wharton (*ibid.*), the pre-industrial, late 19<sup>th</sup> century American economy was heavily depended on agriculture and therefore it also served as the primary source of income for many families. Therefore, all family members regardless of age and sex took part in producing goods for sale according to their abilities, including women and children. For this reason, there was no concept for the division of home and work life at this time, as the farms and pastures were adjacent to homes.

However, new social and societal needs emerged alongside industrialization, as more and more workforce was suddenly needed in factories. As a result, many families had to send one or more members to earn a living outside of the home, which led to the separation of family life and work life. Although some families had to have both men and women find employment due to economic constraints, the usual division was to assign men to the factories and have women stay behind at home close to the children. As this arrangement persisted for many decades, in especially middle class families it soon became the norm for men to be seen as workers and women as homemakers. After some decades this arrangement was gradually taken for granted, resulting in men being thought of as the heads of the family and women positioned below. (Wharton 2005: 83-85.)

However, the status of American women is very different today. Williams (2012: 1-2, 4) points out that American women are in a very unique position with more power and influence in all fields from politics to commerce and academy than ever before. Women hold more seats in politics, lead major businesses and in average hold more degrees compared to men. Women are also more represented in authoritative roles, such as media anchors, school administrators and representatives, not to mention company and world leaders. Also, strong female action stars have been celebrated in many recent popular films. At the same time, while women have advanced in working places, more and more women are also choosing to stay at home to take care of their children. In fact, as Williams (2012: 2) reports, only 41.3 per cent of mothers stayed home in 1998, after which the number rose to 44.8 per cent in only two years. This increase is most pronounced among highly educated women, many of who have worked a decade or more before leaving their jobs to raise children. This social change has also had an effect on company policies, and many are offering flexible hours and part-time work in order to help women return to their posts after giving birth.

Even though the rise of women's overall authority and independence in society has certainly benefitted women, Ross (2010: 13-14) notes that it has also left its mark on the male gender by causing a phenomenon to which Ross refers as *the crisis of masculinity*. According to Ross (ibid.), since the traditional masculine roles of providers and fathers have been made redundant during recent decades, many men have been left with a poor self-esteem and insecurities about their role in relation to women. In order to balance this out, women are often positioned as responsible in providing solutions to men's angst and uncertainty about how to perform their manliness in contemporary society, which is reflected in the messages



targeted to women in the media. For example, women are encouraged to act out the traditional feminine stereotype for the sake of their husbands and boyfriends by catering to their needs of admiration in the forms of flattery, such as complimenting their wit, or even faking orgasms.

Alongside gendered behaviour, Williams (2012: 2, 7-8) has observed how women's bodies have become the vehicles of communicating one's identity and femininity to others. On one hand, women have taken on physically demanding jobs alongside men and started competing in sports at a top level, therefore also exercising a certain type of power similar to men's. On the other, however, studies have also shown that American women spend more money and time on their looks than ever before. As shown in *Plastic Surgery Statistics Report 2016* (American Society of Plastic Surgeons), approximately 15.5 million cosmetic procedures were had during the year, out of which 1.6 million were surgical and 13.9 million minimally invasive, such as botulinum toxin type A (Botox) injections and soft tissue fillers. This translates into an increase of 159% in only 6 years. Beauty seems to have its benefits, as Williams (2012: 2-4) reports that attractive people are paid more and marry more desirable spouses, as well as are more likely to get help from others.

There is also debate in terms of how women's bodies should or should not be used as a symbol of empowerment (Ross 2010: 29). For example, many seem to think that women should have the right to bare their breasts if they so wish, but at the same time there are protests to ban breastfeeding in public. Similarly, women are allowed to become celebrities, but are also constantly monitored to see if they keep their body shape fit. The women's body liberation has also caused a feminist conundrum; while some see the current attitudes of flaunting their bodies as a form of liberation, others argue that the female body is now more sexualized and objectified as ever before, and women themselves are seeking to be objectified (Williams 2012: 8).

Indeed, as Williams (2012: 2-4) continues, beauty and power seem to be the two dominating themes in American women's world and while they have been provided women with more options to express their gender identity, the combination of the two has also proven as quite the balancing act. While celebrating one's femininity in terms of physical appearance and spirit has become more common during recent years and many professional women reject the idea of copying men's style in order to succeed (Williams 2012: 2-3), Ross (2010: 29) points out that the trend of emulating men is still present in the behavioural patterns of many women.

According to Ross (ibid.), women demonstrate their empowerment not only by being the womanliest women they can possibly be, but also at the same time by beating men at their own game. Ross describes this phenomenon as a *me-Tarzan-you-Jane mentality*. While the traditional gender division framed men as *Tarzans*, primitive and practical, and women as pristine and delicate like *Jane*, women have since become *Tarzans* in order to narrow down the gap between the sexes and started to take interest in typical male pastimes, such as pornographic magazines, drinking games and other products targeted to male audiences.

With all these issues in mind, it seems that being a woman in the present day United States is complex, to say the least. On one hand, women are expected to carry out traditional feminine qualities, including maintaining good relationships and focusing on personal beauty, while also competing against men in the fields previously dominated by men, including work, professional sport and others alike. With that being said, many women have successfully managed to integrate both the traditional and the resistant aspects of feminine behaviour into their gendered repertoire and, therefore, today's American women could be characterized as an interesting mix of both feminine and masculine qualities; a hybrid form of femininity that can have many faces. Women have indeed risen to high-ranking positions within society, currently working as politicians, CEOs, academics and athletes, and even outnumbered men in some areas. Yet, these achievements have not come without a struggle, since especially women's bodies seem to have become the battlefield of equality, in which multiple parties are arguing over if and how women should display their bodies. At the same time, men's culture is also experiencing changes due to women's empowerment, with the traditional roles of fathers and breadwinners suddenly facing less demand, thus causing anxiety and confusion in men. Overall, both genders are in a state of turbulence where the future of gender roles is currently being renegotiated and transformed. Because of this process the gendered messages in society are perplexed and even contradictory, therefore reflecting into making the enactment of one's gender identity a problematic task.

### **3 WOMEN'S COOKING AND EATING**

When asked to think about food and women, one might instantly imagine the traditional mid-century ideal of a housewife working away in the kitchen or perhaps the plethora of dieting advertisements and advice scattered around in media that endorse an image of a woman fully in control of her food intake. Whatever the mental image may be, food is undoubtedly strongly connected to humanity and an everyday routine we cannot avoid. As such an intrinsic part of human life, food also has the potential to carry many meanings and associations; it can be a warm childhood memory of one's grandmother, a cultural tradition that has lasted for many centuries or even the feeling of nuisance in relation to the efforts needed in the kitchen. With these matters in mind, this chapter will focus on how food has been associated with women and will cover the topic from the perspectives of food preparation and body shaping, hopefully shedding light on how this complex relationship has been thought about and studied in the past. Whether these connections are still alive today will be further discussed in the later parts of this study.

#### **3.1 Women's role in the kitchen**

Women and food have long, if not always, been associated with one another and it seems that the task of preparing and serving food is indeed mainly allotted to women in most societies around the world (Inness (2001: 1). Although the setting might seem natural and self-evident to many, this task assignment apart from breastfeeding cannot be rationalized by stating that women's biological or gendered attributes suit the task better, as that is simply not the case. Instead, the traditional division of women allocated as the home cooks is rooted in cultural practices (Wharton 2005: 83), which in turn are the aftermath of all the socio-economical changes in Western societies that positioned women to homes and men to workplaces. However, since the modern Western woman is well capable to operate alongside men in workplaces and is no longer limited to the realms of their home, the question of why cooking is still assigned to women in relation to their partners, or even thought of as part of women's responsibility, becomes relevant. This chapter will cover the history of labour division from the perspective of cooking, as well as discuss how men's and women's cooking have formed into two distinct areas of expertise. These explanations will serve as the reference point for

the future observations of the representations of women's cooking in women's magazines in the later parts of this study.

As briefly introduced in the previous chapter, historically the types of activities and work that women were able to do were determined by the opportunity of taking care of their children at the same time, which was their primary responsibility (Wharton 2005: 82). Even so, women were capable of participating in the acquisition of food for their families together with men. According to Wharton (2005: 82-83), in the early hunter-gatherer societies most women worked as gatherers and most men as hunters, together providing food for their communities. During this time, women actually brought most of the calories on the table, whereas the meat provided by men comprised only a small portion of the diet. However, the setting was turned around alongside the later plough-based agriculture, where the physical strength of men was most useful when working in the fields and operating the heavy plough. Nevertheless, as long as farming served as the primary source of income for many families, the breadwinning responsibilities were equally shared among all family members.

As Wharton (2005: 83-86) reports, the turning point for family cooking was the industrial revolution that geographically moved men into workplaces and left women to take care of their homes and all tasks related to homemaking, including food preparation. Moisio et al. (2004: 364-369) and Inness (2001: 1, 17-18) point out that as a result, cooking became such symbol for motherly care and unity, and an identifier of womanhood as such, that women's identities in the United States are still greatly linked to their duties of care and home cooking. This identity has also been reinforced by a multitude of women's magazines, cookbooks and food advertisers, which tend to frame cooking as the ultimate key to a successful home life (Moisio et al. 2004: 364-369).

Bugge and Almås (2006: 209-215) produced a similar result in their study that observed the cooking practices in Norwegian homes. The study found out that even though Norway is a relatively gender-equal society, the female participants were much more afraid of the stigma of unmotherliness or unwomanliness due to their incompetence in the kitchen than the label of being subordinate to their male partners. What this means in practice is that women were mostly in charge of home cooking whether they enjoyed it or not, whereas men usually acted as their assistants in the kitchen or did not participate in the food preparation at all. Many of the women justified this division of labour by stating that their food knowledge was better in

comparison to their partners', but many also felt that there was shame linked to being a woman incapable of cooking for their families. A particular importance was placed on especially homemade meals, while frozen foods and convenience foods were seen just as bad as not cooking at all. These attitudes relate back to the findings of Inness (2001: 1, 17-18), which also indicate that food preparation is indeed an important part of the construction of a female identity and the performance of femininity. The mixed feelings about women's position as home cooks are also reflected in the opposing feminist comments. According to Fürst (1997: 441-443), women's cooking duties at home have been criticised as stupefying and a slave-like task, from which women should be freed completely. At the same time, however, Fürst (ibid.) reminds that it has to be taken into account that for many women the activity of cooking may be a subjective experience of desire and a positive aspect to their feminine identity. Therefore, cooking should not be seen merely as a signifier of dominance and subordination between men and women.

Men's cooking in a home environment, on the other hand, is often portrayed as either non-existent or utterly inadequate, or elevated above the level of domesticity and treated as a voluntary pastime. Inness (2001: 17-20) points out that men are almost completely distanced from home cooking in the media, apart from a stereotype of a man who is so unskilled in the kitchen that he has to resort to the help of his mother. This type of a man who is so ignorant and mystified by cooking was also reflected in one of the earliest cookbooks for men in the 1950s, *Wolf in Chef's Clothing* by Robert H. Loeb, which only used tablespoons for measurement because of the assumption that the male readers would not be aware of the difference between a teaspoon and a tablespoon. A similar attitude was yet alive in a study conducted in the United Kingdom during the 1980s, in which men were thought to only produce "easy snacks" at home, as opposed to the "proper" meals that women cooked in the same environment (Fürst 1997: 442). In order to counteract this feminine association, however, Inness (2001: 21-26) demonstrates a recent phenomenon of depicting men's cooking as a notably "masculine" activity, an art form even, in order to distance it from the domestic chore that is thought of as women's work. This is realized, for example, by adding the exclamation "for men only" in cookbook titles or including sexual innuendos on the pages, such as caricatures of skimpily dressed women.

The question is not only *who* cooks at home, but also *what* foods have been presented as more suitable for either men or women to prepare and eat. According to Inness (2001: 23-26, 53-

55), the media of the first decades of the 1900s targeted women with a lot of advice on how to host tea parties and luncheons, including recipes of dainty, ornamental and ladylike dishes, such as desserts, appetizers, salads, small decorated cakes and soups. Men's cookbooks, contrarily, took a clear step away from this type of feminine cooking from the beginning by declaring garnishes, calorie contents calculations, and frilly and fiddly details as irrelevant. Instead, foods marketed as "men's food" comprised mostly of meat and potatoes, topped with alcohol or mustard based sauces. Especially meat has long been seen as "real man's food", which Inness (2001: 23-26, 53-55) suggests could be a wistful nod toward men's task as hunters during prehistoric times.

Outside home and recreational food preparation, cooking is also a vibrant professional field, although one still quite dominated by men, as Harris and Giuffre (2015: 39) note. It may come as a surprise that only 20% of all chefs holding executive positions are women, considering women's remarkable advancements in other male-dominant fields, such as veterinary medicine, pharmacy and accounting. According to Harris and Giuffre (2015: 19-20, 27-28), the scarcity of successful women in professional cooking can be explained by the historic segregation of work after the industrialization of the late 1700s and early 1800s, which separated men and women not only geographically, but also economically. This phenomenon is often called the "separate spheres", which divided the operational environment of work into public or private in nature. In the case of women, as their duties included mostly domestic tasks that were done in the privacy of their home and did not receive a wage, women's work was termed as "the labour of love" and were thought of as unproductive. Men, on the contrary, were shifted into the public arena through paid work and politics, which were valued higher in importance and productiveness.

The division also changed how cooking was perceived depending on whether it was prepared at home or done professionally. As Harris and Giuffre (2015: 20-28) summarize, women's cooking was eventually deemed as "natural" and an extension to their biology, whereas men's cooking as paid chefs for restaurants and private households were thought of as a manifestation of reason, hard training and an expression of culture. While there had been cooking schools for women as well since the 1880s, these organizations did not prepare their students for professional environments, but rather taught women how to run their own homes. Due to these circumstances, women's capabilities in the kitchen were not seen as equal to men's and thus women were excluded from the professional culinary field for a long time.

Harris and Giuffre (2015: 31-32) also remind that the culinary trends in the United States have affected women's chances to succeed as professional cooks. One example of such was the heavy influence of French *nouvelle cuisine* during the 1960s and the many restaurants that celebrated the style. These French restaurants were very much loyal to the traditions of their country of origin, where cooking was seen as a masculine, demanding discipline that required mastering of several techniques. Because of this frame of reference, women's presence in French cuisine was unthinkable. However, as Harris and Giuffre (2015: 32-37) continue, the nature of restaurant food began to change during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the focus was shifted from a technique-heavy French cuisine to a more simplistic way of cooking, such as Italian cuisine. Because the Italian food traditions revolved around family recipes cooked by mothers and grandmothers, a more female-friendly and family-oriented aspect was introduced to restaurants.

According to Harris and Giuffre (2015: 32-35), home style cooking started to gain popularity in general not only due to the increase of Italian restaurants in the United States, but also because of the attitudes of the new generation of famous chefs and food influencers. One of such was chef James Beard, who was appointed as the head chef of Four Seasons in 1959. As a shock to many, Beard adopted American food items on the fine dining menu of Four Seasons, which was a controversial decision during the on-going French cuisine boom. An Oregon-born, Beard placed great importance on food that related back to one's history and stated that homeliness was a quality highly appreciated in food, and a comment most welcome from customers as well. Another influencer that helped to bridge the gap between elite haute cuisine and home cooking was Julia Child, whose cookbook and the accompanying TV series brought the secrets of French cuisine available to wide audiences around the United States. As Child's works made the techniques and recipes of French cuisine accessible to home cooks, most of who were women, the high status of French cuisine began to erode. Since the French chefs could no longer demonstrate the superiority of their cooking in relation to foods prepared at home, home cooking gained more respect and therefore paved the way for many professional female chefs to come.

Today gastronomy is not only perceived as an appreciated paid professional field, but it has also transformed into a vast entertainment industry. As discussed in Harris and Giuffre (2015: 35-38), the number of cooking programmes and other food media has grown notably during the last decade, in addition to which many chefs are now enjoying the status of a celebrity.

Harris and Giuffre (ibid.) hypothesize that the recent fascination toward cooking as a form of entertainment rises from the changes in cooking practices in many American homes. Since people today are spending less and less time in the kitchen, instead feeding themselves or their families with faster or easier alternatives, cooking has become a rarefied skill. Due to this, the tasks that were regarded mundane a few generations ago (e.g. making bread from scratch or deboning a chicken) appeal now to audiences. Harris and Giuffre (2015: 35-38) also argue that the social nature of today's media has played an essential part in the rise of interest in cooking and dining as well. Whereas before the critiquing of trendy restaurants were limited to professional food writers and critics only, the many blog platforms and websites of today have given regular people access to not only reviewing restaurants, but also sharing pictures of their meals consumed and tracking events happening in the culinary world. As Harris and Giuffre (ibid.) conclude, the industry originally seen as servant work has suddenly become the new American Dream with promises of success and financial reward for those who had the creativity and discipline, at the same time challenging college and university level degrees with more and more applicants each year.

All in all, although both women and men are known to cook in Western societies today, historically the attitudes toward the skillsets between the two sexes have differed by operational environment. Women's abilities in the kitchen have often been justified by their assumed natural inclination to take care of their family, while at the same time women have not been nearly as represented in the field of professional cooking. Men, on the contrary, have typically been portrayed as incapable in the family kitchen milieu, but instead have been celebrated as skilled professional chefs for many decades. Even though the changes in society have begun to bridge this gender gap over the past few decades and allowed both genders to take over either domain, on women's part there is still a certain stigma of "unwomanliness" associated with the inability to cook for one's family in a private setting. It seems that attentiveness to other's needs and well-being is so deeply rooted in women's sense of themselves that a shortcoming in the field of cooking compromises their overall confidence in their womanhood. On the other hand, alongside Julia Child women have also become more empowered through cooking and risen on the level of professional cooking, which was once the arena dominated exclusively by French male chefs. However, since the overall level of cooking skills have been in decline with more and more people choosing to live on purchased meals, cooking has become the subject of evaluation and entertainment. As many people have



shifted to observers and consumers of the culinary field, it will be interesting to see how and if the gender gap still actualizes itself.

### **3.2 Women, eating and body-control**

Women's relationship with food is not only limited to the dimension of women functioning as family cooks and preparing food for the social or societal benefits, but women have also formed a more personal and individual relationship with the types of foods they choose to buy and eat. One such connection that has grabbed academic interest is undoubtedly that of body image and dieting, as the connections between female media representations and women's dietary practices have been studied a lot during the past few decades. In this chapter, I will mostly discuss the studies of Hesse-Biber (2007) and Lelwica (2011), which observe controlling one's food intake as culturally reinforced, obsessive and even religious phenomenon. This chapter aims to provide a deeper psychological and philosophical reasoning of how and why eating has gained meaning beyond the purpose of mere fuel in many women's lives especially in the United States.

According to Hesse-Biber (2007: 18-20), a woman's worth in the United States is still greatly determined by her physical attractiveness especially in the eyes of men, in the quest for which body shape and weight play an essential role. Although the ideas of what constitutes as a desirable body have certainly evolved through time with the previous generation celebrating a different shape than the next, Veit (2013: 158-160) argues that thinness in particular has persisted as a standard beauty ideal for women in the United States since the 1910s. The thin ideal is present everywhere with women's magazines, billboards, TV shows and films displaying images of women, simultaneously acting as a constant reminder for their viewers of what they should look like (Hesse-Biber 2007: 63; Madden and Chamberlain 2010: 295).

However, these thinness messages in the media are problematic. As Lelwica (2011: 270-272, 274-278) remarks, first of all, weight loss is strongly paired up with happiness and empowerment. For instance, weight-loss ads often display the results of their services and products in the form of two images that portray the same woman twice: first before weight-loss and then after the transformation. The woman in the before-picture usually looks unhappy and slouchy, whereas the after-picture is the complete opposite, thus suggesting a new, happy life after achieving a slimmer body. Similarly, the headlines in women's

magazines also assume that the body one currently has is not acceptable and offer help for taking control over it in order to achieve happiness in the future ("Bikini Body - you can achieve it in just 4 weeks!"). Another issue with the portrayal of women's bodies in the media, Lelwica (2011: 274-275) continues, is that they are often airbrushed or digitally altered to fit the current beauty standards, and therefore are not a truthful representation of the woman in question. Although these altered images are fairly easy to recognize, the nonverbal instructiveness of the images still has notable impact on women's desires to replicate the look themselves. Therefore perhaps not surprisingly, most American women surrounded by these beauty standards feel unhappy with their bodies (Hesse-Biber 2007: 63) and as a result, as Madden and Chamberlain (2010: 294) state, chase after a slimmer body type through dietary changes and exercise. This has been picked up by the media as well, as according to Reynolds and LoRusso (2016: 2-4) approximately one-fifth of all editorial content of women's magazines in the United States is about weight-loss and body-shaping, totaling to 10 times more compared to men's titles. Although some argue that the quantity of weight-loss content in magazines promotes a healthy lifestyle and fights the current obesity trend in the United States, previous studies have also shown a link between reading fitness and beauty magazines and low self-esteem, eating disorders and negative body image (Harrison, Kristen and Joanne Cantor 1997, cited in Reynolds and LoRusso 2016: 2)

According to Veit (2013: 158-166), the beginning of the weight-loss trend in the United States can be traced back to the era of the First World War, during which the attitudes toward one's body shape changed drastically. Before the war, *fat* was perceived as a positive descriptor, associated with good health, strength and the abundance of resources, whereas a skinny body was seen as aesthetically undesirable and sickly, and as a sign of poverty and malnutrition. However, the attitudes began to change in the early 1900s due to shifts in political atmosphere, medical advancements and the introduction of metrics to the everyday life. First of all, as food manufacturers started printing calorie contents on the sides of food packaging and the fashion industry began to produce ready-to-wear clothes that came in a range of fixed sizes, people were suddenly able to describe and evaluate their body size and food intake in terms of numbers. This had a notable effect on viewing one's body, since the numbers started to dominate how people judged themselves and others. Secondly, the positive connotations to the term *fat* gradually began to turn negative due to the increasing statistical correlation between excessive body weight and various diseases. This factor was further

amplified by news of the European food regulations and shortages during the war, which were reflected to the public debates in the United States. In the fear of possible food shortages in the United States, *fatness* was suddenly deemed as deeply unpatriotic and wasteful, because it embodied hoarding of unnecessary amounts of food in one's body and house. By the late 1910s, fatness was no longer seen as a sign of success and well being, but it had become the sign of greed and moral weakness. On the contrary, the war left the United States with new standards of beauty, which included self-control, moral righteousness and asceticism (Veit 2013: 159).

Veit (2013: 172-176) continues that another factor that reinforced the thinness ideal was the impact of visual media during the first four decades of the 20th century. Due to technological advancements, more and more graphics and pictures were featured in advertising, of which the advertising industry took full advantage. As a result, most visual media including books, magazines and newspapers contained pictures of young female models and actresses, and by doing so the viewers were actively encouraged to take part in evaluating and comparing between women's bodies. Similarly, the new fashionable trends of shorter skirts and tighter suits revealed the bodies of both men and women more than ever before and put bodies on display. In general, Americans were increasingly looking at other people and themselves throughout the 1920s and 1930s, since mirrors and scales became popular in ordinary American homes.

However, as Lelwica (2011: 263) continues, the slowly developed yet not fully bloomed admiration for thinness of the early 1900s made its complete breakthrough during the latter decades of the century when the fashion world launched a completely radical image of womanhood that changed the Western body ideals heretofore: the introduction of Twiggy. As discussed in Veit (2013: 172-176), Hesse-Biber (2007: 42-43), as well as in Delahunty and Dignen (2010), Twiggy (born Leslie Hornby in 1949) was a British fashion model who became a huge celebrity almost overnight in the mid 1960s and was suddenly featured in many magazine covers wearing high fashions. She became known for her short hair and twig-like figure, hence the nickname, and at the time was notably underweight with her weight of a little over 40 kilograms compared to her height of approximately 170 centimetres. According to Hesse-Biber (2007: 42-43), Twiggy marks the beginning of a significant increase in eating disorders, as she served as the body and beauty inspiration for many young women during the latter half of the 20th century. After the launch of Twiggy, the observations in Cramer and

Creedon (2007: 100) show a notably descending curve in the sizes of fashion models between 1979 and 1999. Around 1979, models were measured to weigh approximately 8% less than an average woman, whereas in 1999 the percentage had increased to 23% less.

However, Hesse-Biber (2007: 42-43) reminds that Twiggy was not the only significant female role model of the 1960s, as the newly launched Barbie doll in 1959 demonstrated a similarly unattainable female form to an even younger audience. Although Barbie had constantly evolved since the doll's first release to reflect the zeitgeist of each decade by changing the dolls occupation and hobbies, the doll's body dimensions had stayed roughly the same throughout, featuring exaggerated breasts, unrealistically long legs and a cinched waist. This status quo has been changed only quite recently with the release of Barbie's new curvy, petite and tall lines in 2016 (O'Connor 2016).

As for today, Lelwica (2011: 263-264) comments that thinness has been commercialized and productized in a way that promotes a schizophrenic attitude toward eating. On one hand, Americans are encouraged to supersize everything, suggesting that bigger is always better, while simultaneously the same target group is urged to restrict their appetites and consume low-fat and low-calorie foods. This message is clearly visible on the covers of women's magazines, which display wonder diets next to indulgent recipes. Cramer and Creedon (2007: 99-100) point out that food is also often presented as a solution to a stressful situation or as a step away from relationship issues. This double standard has also been observed by Hesse-Biber (2007: 63-67), as she comments that the advertising industry has learned to tactically make their products appeal to especially women or children, who have influence on the majority of purchasing decisions made in many families. However, because the types of foods that receive the biggest advertising budgets are not necessarily healthy, including fast food and desserts, the unfortunate impact of these ads is visible on the waistlines of many Americans. One might think that these concurrent messages of indulgence and restriction contradict each other, but in fact the opposite is possibly closer to the truth. As the food industry has first managed to fatten up their customers by promoting products too good to resist, the weight-loss industry can then respectively offer counter-solutions in order to achieve the "magazine look" by slimming down. This yo-yoing might be beneficial for the capitalist system as it shifts monetary assets from one end to another, but from the perspective of both physical and mental health of the consumer it is certainly problematic.

Expanding from the observations made by Veit (2013: 158-166) about the post-war values of asceticism and self-control, Lelwica (2011: 267-272) also argues that women's obsessive controlling of their bodies and monitoring one's size is a question of perceived moral goodness. According to her research, women's appetites are often culturally presented as guilty pleasures or sinful urges, suggesting that eating is succumbing to unwanted temptations. This moral scrutiny does not only apply to ordinary women, but also celebrities are constantly under the microscope with magazines moralizing their weight-loss efforts as moral victories or failures. With this in mind, the idea behind the presumed beauty and goodness linked to a slender figure is rooted in the notion of an interior state of discipline and virtue, which are both typically presented as desirable qualities in women. Because of this cultural frame of reference, women might feel guilty for eating the wrong things or eating too much and seek for atonement by purifying or purging themselves with weight-loss methods, such as laxatives, vomiting, starving or exercising excessively. The belief that a good body is a controlled body is so deeply planted in the women's psyches that the rituals women perform every day have become natural and self-evident. For example, many women keep count on their food intake by nutrient, thus separating the good foods from the forbidden ones, and weigh themselves every morning.

Lelwica (2011: 258-270) also remarks the otherworldly nature of many women's weight-loss efforts. According to her, the everyday behaviour of many women follows the patterns of any traditional forms of religion, including performing various rituals that transform into quests for something more than just benefits in the current life. For example, one would assume that most women exercise to be healthier. However, Lelwica (*ibid.*) argues that since health is not limited to one body type only, the quest for thinness has transcended into a question of control and the admiration of others that comes alongside the control. An example of such described by Lelwica (2011: 260-262) is pro-Ana, a movement that celebrates a fictional goddess Ana (short for anorexia) and in which the followers aspire to obliterate the chaos in their lives by making their bodies disappear. This is achieved by various religion-like steps, such as prayers, psalms and by looking at the so called "thinspirational images" of anorexic people for motivation. The pro-Ana worldview is well conveyed in the Ana's creed, a list of ten commandments shared on many pro-Ana websites, according to which fasting is the pathway to reaching perfection, peace, salvation and worthiness in the eyes of others, as well as to gaining control over one's circumstances. Even though the pro-Ana movement is not a

mainstream trend, it represents an extreme end of a bigger scale in the United States, where as many as 80 per cent of ten-year-old girls have been on a diet and more than 75 per cent of healthy-weight adult women believe they are too fat. Therefore, although only a small portion of American women is pro-Ana, the majority of women genuinely believe they would be happier if they lost a bit of weight.

Although the attitudes and concerns toward one's body in the United States are certainly worrying, it is essential to remember that these ideas of beauty and desirable body size are culture-specific. For example, Lelwica (2011: 276) reminds that in many African societies the women in the before-pictures of weight-loss advertising would be considered as more beautiful than their worked, thinner after-versions. However, because of the globalized economy, the thin ideal has started gain popularity in cultures that historically have embraced body ideals different from the white Western model. According to Lelwica (*ibid.*), the exposure to these Euro-American models of femininity has caused growing feelings of anxiety in women in non-Western countries, even in countries where a large number of people do not have enough to eat. For example, the Indian *Elle* magazine features skinny models and the headlines in the magazine cover promote weight-consciousness by offering wonder solutions to weight-loss. Also, similarly to the US version of the magazine, the South African version of *Shape* magazine is very preoccupied with body size.

Ultimately, the observations show that thinness is currently a desirable quality in women in the United States and in the Western societies. The thinness trend has its roots in the idolization of ascetism and self-control of the 1910s, and the slender figure has been celebrated in popular culture and media ever since the 20<sup>th</sup> century, thus producing many female body icons ranging from supermodels to Barbie dolls. However, since the body shapes featured in the media are often extreme, unrealistic or digitally altered, and the frequency of these thinness messages is high, the impact of these two combined to women's mental and physical health has been worrying. First of all, the majority of women in the United States feel like they fail the standards of beauty, which causes dissatisfaction and anxiety with one's body image. As a result, in order to attain the perfect body women participate in obsessive-compulsive and even schizophrenic rituals of eating and exercise, where the end result of thinness has transcended above most secular reasons of health and fitness pursuits, and has become the new ultimate and even spiritual goal in life. Secondly, since thinness has also been commercialized and productized by the food and fitness industries, these feminine

insecurities are nurtured in media for business profit. Although once just a Euro-American phenomenon, the admiration for skinny has recently made a global breakthrough, meaning that these effects are now observable in non-Western countries as well. In total, for the present time it seems that women's body image and behaviour related to maintaining, negotiating and changing that image is greatly in the hands of media and advertisers. Whether the skinny admiration will persist and affect women's eating and exercise habits in the future remains to be seen, but for the time being it seems this body ideal is not going away anytime soon.

## **4 MAGAZINES CONSTRUCTING WOMEN**

Since this study is interested in how women's cooking and eating are presented in contemporary American women's magazines, it is beneficial to understand the role of women's magazines in popularizing and negotiating feminine identities, as well as in shaping women's interests and behaviour. As Inness (2007: 124-125) and Williams (2012: 6) point out, most Western women become acquainted with the attitudes and ideologies endorsed by women's magazines at some point during their lives both directly and indirectly, therefore indicating that it is a medium with substantial influence over women's culture. In this section, I will begin with the starting point of the women's magazine genre and briefly cover the many phases the medium has gone through since its inception. I will also discuss the common strategies that are used in engaging readers and creating communities around the magazine brands. Finally, I will also demonstrate the different feminine stereotypes that have been embraced by the magazines in the past and today.

### **4.1 The birth and evolution of women's magazines**

A magazine in its physical and technical form is defined in the Oxford Dictionaries (Magazine, n.d.) simply as "a periodical publication containing articles and illustration, often on a particular subject or aimed at a particular readership." However, in order to understand the cultural importance of magazines, in this case women's magazines more specifically, this definition is not sufficient as the same could be applied to newspapers and various other media. In this chapter I will focus on the characterizations of women's magazines in particular, as well as discuss why they are still considered as one the most beneficial sources for feminist and gender studies. Firstly, I will give a more detailed definition of what constitutes as a women's magazine, after which I will briefly introduce the lengthy history of the medium in question. Finally, I will discuss the impact of women's magazines on women's culture in Western societies, especially in the United States.

According to Duffy (2013: 21, 30-31), one way to distinguish women's magazines from other means of cultural communication by their material attributes is their general appearance and tactile features. First of all, women's magazines are designed to look aesthetically appealing



to their target audience, which is achieved most commonly through their cover art. The cover image usually displays a model or a female celebrity, accompanied with provocative and eye-catching phrases that circle the person in the middle. The cover mirrors the type of a reader whose attention the magazine wishes to grab and therefore serves as the indicator of the magazine's identity. Secondly, the physical form of women's magazines separates them from, for example, newspapers. The pages are glossy and saturated with colourful images, the price is relatively low and the size of the publication encourages the readers to carry it around with them. All in all, the overall physical manifestation of women's magazines suggests that they are meant as a leisure-time activity.

What comes to the content of the magazines, the most notable differences to other similar sources of information, such as newspapers, are the lack of news, the large number of authorial voices and the mix of genres (Duffy 2013: 21-22) within one issue. Litosseliti (2006: 100) lists that a single magazine can include a vast range of textual genres (columns, advertisements, fictional narratives, letters etc.), as well as diverse discourses (i.e. economics, family topics, beauty, health science). The most prominent feature, however, is the woman-centricity of the overall experience. According to Williams (2012: 6, 28), women's magazines are about "the joys, frustrations, accomplishments and problems of being female", and a reflection of the concerns of women at the time of publication. The deep focus on the experience of being a woman is also visible in the way the magazines present themselves as women through their writers and editors. The editorial tone of the magazines suggests that the magazine experiences the same womanly problems alongside its readers, at the same time establishing itself as an authorial figure that has the solutions to those problems. Therefore, many magazines read as if they were guidebooks containing plenty of information, instructions and advice on how to be womanly. The guidebook-like nature is also reflected in the reader behaviour. According to Litosseliti (2006: 100), rather than reading the magazines from cover to cover, women seek out for individual pieces of information in the magazine. As a whole, women's magazines are undoubtedly a form of fantasy, where the entire ensemble provides an enjoyable reading experience too difficult to resist (Inness 2007: 128) and creates a cycle of repurchasing (Williams 2012: 28).

Women's magazines are also believed to be the first periodical genre targeted to one sex only, as Williams (2012: 27) theorizes. This emphasis has economic reasoning, argued by Duffy (2013:22-23, 33), as it is estimated that women control approximately 70 per cent of all

household spending in the United States. Because of this purchasing power, magazines have branched out to address the needs and interests of specific segments of women of their choice, rather than treat all women as one homogeneous group. With this more narrowed down classification of readers in mind, the magazine is able to create better content for their readers, as well as direct marketing more effectively.

According to Duffy (2013: 21-22), the earliest women's magazine can be traced back to 17th century London, when a periodical Ladies' Mercury promised to answer "all the most nice and curious questions concerning love, marriage, behaviour, dress, and humour of the female sex, whether virgins, wives, or widows" every two weeks. Respectively, Williams (2012: 28) reports that the first American equivalents were launched approximately a hundred years later, in the late 18th century. Nevertheless, by the start of 19th century women's magazines had become a natural part of women's life and in fact, as both Duffy (2013: 21-22) and Williams (2012: 28) point out, a lot of the features adopted during that time, such as advice columns, fictional stories and fashion recommendations, still remain today.

Although the prices of the magazines are relatively low today, the first, pre-industrial era magazines could only be afforded by upper class women, as Williams (2012: 29-30) explains. However, this setting was changed during the American Civil War, which rapidly pushed the industrial innovations forward, including mass production of various products and the rise of advertising. Because of these technological advancements, magazines were able to be produced quicker and more cost-efficiently than before. The industrialization period had also changed the social structure, and the women of the new and expanded middle class were suddenly able to purchase these magazines as well. All of these factors contributed to the magazines becoming much more accessible to a larger audience.

However, the magazine production has also had to undergo a couple of major changes after the initial success that followed after the invention of mass printing. First of such was the arrival of television in mid-1900s, which according to Duffy (2013: 29) shifted the interest of advertisers, along with their marketing budgets, to the possibilities of the new audio-visual medium. In order to compete against this rival, publishers started to launch niche publications that were each designed for an even narrower segment, which therefore enabled even more precise marketing. This approach of diversity is still in effect and as Duffy (2013: 22-29)

points out, despite most media research firms allocating all women's magazines into one subcategory, there is no actual coherence between the magazines.

Yet another crisis the magazine industry has had to face in recent years is the drastic transformation of the media landscape from the early 21st century onward. As Duffy (2013: 37-41) discusses, the Internet age shook the publishing industry with its arrival, as similar material was suddenly available online for free. This also meant that the magazines were no longer only competing against each other, but against all other online content. The jump into the digital era set other challenges to the magazine industry as well, one of which was the uncertainty about the form that women's magazines would or should take. The apprehension was, whether these magazines could exist outside of their printed form or without the usual patterns of magazine editing and still be called magazines. According to Duffy (2013: 37-43), a large-scale response to the changing nature of the publishing industry has been the strategic repositioning of magazines as brands. Instead of staying in the field of mere publishing, publishers have now expanded into websites, mobile apps, organizing events, and even launching TV shows, award programs and merchandise. For example, *Seventeen* has created its own jewellery, as well as prom and bedding lines, while *Glamour* hands annual Women of the Year Awards to influential women of their choice. This shift into all-embracing branding has proven to have been successful, as an astonishing thirty million visitors entered these magazine-branded social networks already back in 2011, as shown in Duffy (2013: 42-43).

Women's magazines are also a beneficial source of information for anyone interested in women and femininity, Inness (2007: 124-125) argues, mainly because of three reasons. Firstly, women's magazines are close to an only medium that is able to keep up with women's reality (Inness 2007: 124-125). From an academic point of view, women's magazines provide a very detailed record of all the phases and changes in women's culture, as the frequent publishing enables the magazines to stay relevant at all times. Secondly, womanhood is a strong signifier throughout the making and reading process of the magazines (Inness 2007: 124-125). The content of the magazines is designed to fit the needs and interests of the type of a woman the magazine targets, on top of which both the producers of that content and the readers are mostly female. Thirdly, both Inness (2007: 124-125) and Williams (2012: 6) state that the impact of these magazines on women's culture is notable at large. In the United States, for example, the mere circulation of a single magazine can total up to millions of American women per magazine, on top of which the women who are not directly in touch

with the magazine face the ideals and notions promoted by the magazines in their everyday lives. Of course, Inness (2007: 127) argues that it has to be taken into account that the femininities the magazines promote have an element of fantasy and therefore cannot be taken as truth. However, women's magazines have significant power to affect how women see themselves and other women (Williams 2012: 6).

Due to their usefulness as subjects of research, women's magazines have been studied frequently. Gough-Yates (2003: 6-7) comments that there are many approaches to study these magazines, including textual and ideological analysis, consumer analysis or how the magazines are produced. Among these, Gough-Yates (2003: 6) argues, the most popular one is the textual and ideological analysis approach, with fewer studies looking into on how the magazines are consumed, and what processes and negotiations are present in the production of the magazines. Gough-Yates (2003: 7) also states that most of the studies on women's magazines are conducted by feminist media scholars, who quite often focus on feminine representations in the magazines. A common point of view of these studies is that women's magazines promote patriarchal and capitalist ideals, which support oppressive attitudes toward women. Duffy (2013: 24) elaborates that especially during the 1970s and 1980s, scholars frequently discussed the impact of women's magazines to identity formation. A popular argument was that the magazines guided and trained women toward different feminine roles that best suited the system at the time, such as the perfect mother, lover, wife, homemaker, accessory or secretary. Another common claim was that the magazines created problems that were solvable mostly through commercial consumption, such as shopping, makeup or other products. However, as Gough-Yates (2003: 13-14) points out, in spite of the laborious studies done on the connection between femininity and women's magazines, nothing conclusive has been demonstrated. Therefore, the relationship between the readers and the magazine still remains unpredictable.

In other words, women's magazines are the first medium to address a single sex and to create content that caters to the interests of that particular group. The magazines are a complex mixture of genres and editorial voices, yet the end result is a well-designed form of entertainment and a source of information that hooks its consumers with a world of fantasy. Because the cultural impact of these magazines is prominent to women's behaviour and attitudes toward themselves, women's magazines is also a medium that has been well studied in the past. In terms of what these fantasies entail and how the readers are engaged in the

process will be further discussed in the next few chapters, which will focus on the types of femininities endorsed by the magazines, as well as the sense of community formed around these magazines.

## 4.2 The synthetic sisterhood

Another interest of academics has been the way each magazine invites their readers to engage, communicate and eventually identify with the magazine. This two-way communication is vital to the magazine, because without an active and frequent readership the magazine would greatly struggle to sell its copies and keep their advertisers. In order to establish this relationship, each magazine studies their target group extensively and then aims at producing relevant, meaningful and fascinating content that appeals to that particular group. However, the quality of the content alone is not sufficient; the delivery is equally as important. Therefore, magazines have adopted a way to use language and other devices that make them appear as if they were a fellow woman, a big sister of sort, who faces the same difficulties as their readers, at the same time guiding and instructing their readers. However, since the magazine as a whole is not a real person but an editorial team, this bond between the reader and the magazine is synthetic. For this reason, Talbot (1995: 147-162) calls this phenomenon a *synthetic sisterhood* (also known as a surrogate sisterhood), in which the reader becomes a member of a sorority-like community, with the magazine acting as the more experienced woman and an expert in being a woman. In this chapter, I will delve into the tactics of persuasion used by mass media in general, but focus especially on how these apply to women's magazines. I will also discuss the sisterly, and unsisterly, aspects of the magazine communities.

Starting with the matter of persuasion, O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy (2004: 6) define it as calculated and premeditated intentions to "mould beliefs, values and actions in a direction favoured by the persuader". This differs from mere influencing, another term often used in the fields of linguistics and communication studies, which can also be unintentional. For instance, celebrities might influence other people without being aware of their role as influencers, whereas persuasion makes an effort to change the interlocutor.

According to O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy (2004: 6-8), there are two prerequisites to effective persuasion, which are gaining trust and overcoming resistance. First of all, the

persuader needs to be trusted by the interlocutor. In the advertising world, for example, the advertisers seek out to earn their consumers' trusts in order to have them cooperate with the brands in question. Common tools to achieve this include taking a notable stand to support specific values or making an effort to always deliver facts. If the consumers trust in the integrity, sincerity and accuracy of a brand, they are also more likely to stay loyal to the brand and tolerate shortcomings. Secondly, the persuader needs to understand the matters that act as shields to persuasion, such as culture, reference groups, social class, individual experiences, perspective of the world, values and emotions. In order to overcome these shields, the persuader may need to, for example, adapt their message to fit into the cultural context of the interlocutor or associate their message with a desirable reference group to make it appealing. (O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy 2004: 8-20.)

However, according to Talbot (1995: 147-148) and Duffy (2013: 68-70), in the time of mass-media, the producers of texts simply cannot address their texts to a specific individual in mind, like one would talk to a friend face to face, but instead need to form an implied reader in order to shape effective texts. Duffy (2013: 68-70) explains that this *ideal reader* is a single profile, an archetype, which is created with the help of research data of current and potential readers and is based upon demographic factors (age, income, marital status, education etc.), as well as more niche attributes such as specific interests and lifestyle traits. The end result is an image of a single person that fits between specific age brackets, educational background, life situation, interests and so on. Of course, these factors naturally apply to millions of other people in the targeted area, although from the individual's perspective the combination given might seem unique and exclusive of other people. Talbot (1995: 147-148) states that this tactic of giving mass audiences the impression of being treated as individuals is called *synthetic personalization*, and it is very commonly used in a variety of mass-targeted texts, such as advertisements, articles, headlines, junk mail and so on. What this means in practice, is that an anonymous audience is addressed as thousands of identical *yous*, with identical assumed values and attitudes.

Talbot (1995: 147-148) reminds that a similar approach to synthetic personalization has been used in advertising for a long time, where a community is formed around a specific product. These *consumption communities*, as they are often referred to, require the purchase of a specific product in order to gain a membership to the community. Although not really a community in the traditional sense of the word, these groups foster a sense of belonging or

status that come along with owning the product in question. Talbot (1995: 156-157) gives an example of a lipstick article in a teenage magazine, where the prerequisite for the membership to the group is the owning or using a lipstick. However, a reader without a lipstick would probably not find as much value in the article, as she could not relate to any of the advice or the testimonials.

Synthetic personalization and the formation of consumption communities are only half of the process, the other half is the personification of the magazine. As the magazine communicates with thousands of individuals, it needs to act as an individual as well in order to generate authentic interaction. According to Talbot (1995: 154-158), the way the magazine creates this effect is by becoming friends with the reader and just like in real life, the magazine signals like-mindedness, closeness and interest in the reader. This tactic is referred to as *positive politeness* that involves the attention to someone's "positive face": a person's need to be liked, approved of, flattered or thought of as interesting. This is separate from *negative politeness* that one might use with strangers, which rises from the need to avoid unpleasantness. In practice, the authors of the magazines show empathy toward their readers' thoughts and feelings, thus stating that they understand and know them as individuals.

Williams (2012: 6, 28) points out that another key element in creating a strong connection between the magazine and the reader is the shared experience of womanhood, or the illusion of it. While the magazine positions itself as a woman who faces the same problems as their readers, it also takes the authority on all matters female, publishing information and advice on how in fact to be womanly. Duffy (2013: 33) states that readers are encouraged to take part in this exchange by submitting letters, requests and stories to their favourite magazines, which the staff then answer with an intimate, sisterly tone. When looking at the editorial staff as individuals rather than the magazine as a whole, Duffy (2013: 31-32) discovers that the sisterly setting is in fact not too far-fetched. According to an Australian study conducted by Kayt Davies (cited in Duffy 2013: 31-32), as much as two-thirds of women's magazine editors matched their readership in age, gender and income, as well as embraced a very similar lifestyle. Gough-Yates (2003: 118-121) also points out the essential role of the editor-in-chief in shaping and maintaining the femininities carried in the magazine. According to her observations, the editor-in-chief is quite frequently the magazine's ideal reader personified and a manifestation of all things the magazine promotes, including a particular fashion aesthetic, career trajectory and overall attitude to life. With all these in mind, the magazines

unite the editorial teams and the readers around a shared idea of how to be a woman, thus creating a sisterly community.

The sense of sisterhood is, of course, a well-crafted illusion. According to Talbot (1995: 155-160), the magazines use rhetorical strategies to simulate a close relationship and relativity to the reader, including the conscious selection of pronouns, vocabulary and punctuation. In terms of pronouns, the authors often group the reader and the magazine in the same group by giving statements as an *inclusive we*. In Talbot's (ibid.) demonstrative article on lipstick, the author assumes that the readers are familiar with the product ("*the lipstick as we know it*"). At times, however, the editorial team may use an *exclusive we* (i.e. editorial *we*) to show expertise or as friendly gossip about the matter ("*We kiss and tell the whole story behind lipstick*"). Conversely, the reader is always addressed as an individual *you*. Magazine texts also include the approximation of vocabulary to suit their target audience, such as slang for creating an informal atmosphere, exclamation marks for signalling emotional states and other boosting devices for effect. In addition to the editorial voice, the magazines also construct simulated interaction within the magazine. An example of such is testimonials, where various characters voice their experience or opinion in relation to the topic at hand. In Talbot's (1995: 156-157, 160) example, the article features images of young women and a short testimonial paragraph about their lipstick using habits. However, in order to make any sense of these utterances, one has to envision what the questions to the interviewees were, therefore also imagining a dialogue between the magazine editor and the person in the picture. This built-in conversation separates the assertive and certain editorial voice from the much softer voices of the other characters, in the end recognizing the editorial voice as the authority.

Although the magazines have the know-how and the tools to create enticing content for their readers, readers are not by any means powerless. Talbot (1995: 145-146) reminds that the reader has control over many aspects of the overall experience, even though they are very seldom aware of that role. For example, they can stop reading whenever they want, skip sections and go back to reread others. The distance between the reader and the producer of the text also gives the reader the opportunity to be more aware of any ulterior motives and evaluate the content more critically. Duffy (2013:25) agrees that while women read periodicals mainly for advice, escapism and entertainment, many also criticise the content. However, Talbot (1995: 145-146) also reminds that if the constructed reader persona is close



enough to the actual reader, the reader is more likely to take up the positions, values and presuppositions offered by the magazine without much concern.

Talbot (1995: 151-153) also criticizes the idea of magazine sisterhoods by contrarily deeming them as quite unsisterly. First of all, women are invited to join a very closed circle that isolates them from other women, and inside that bubble are presented with feminine ideologies and advice on how to achieve them. Because from the individual's point of view it might seem like there are no alternatives to the world offered by the magazine (Inness 2007: 126), the intimacy encourages jealousy and competitiveness with other women, which Talbot (1995: 151-153) labels as unsisterly emotions. Another unsisterly attribute is the guilt related to both following and not following the instructions of the magazine. The magazine pages are filled with beauty advice, on which anonymous authors educate their readers about using artificial aids to elevate their looks closer to the feminine beauty standards. According to Talbot (ibid.), these manuals are also unsisterly, as they make their readers feel bad about not fitting the feminine expectations without resorting to cosmetics, but also about the dishonesty connected to the products. Therefore, the sisterly setting also has its shortcomings.

To summarize, a part of the charm of women's magazines is contributed by the sense of community that they offer to their readers. This feeling stems from the common denominator of being female, which is a theme that runs through the magazine and characterizes not only the topics covered in the magazine, but also the people who make and read the magazine. This is further reinforced with the use of language in the magazine texts that set up the magazine as the more experienced woman, the big sister, in this relationship. Due to this, the bond between women's magazines and their readers is sometimes referred to as a sisterhood or a sorority, within the borders of which women can converse in secret and informally. At the same time, however, this sisterhood also has its counterproductive face. First of all, the intimacy creates an illusion of a monochromatic world where the attitudes and positions offered by the magazine are presented as just, therefore also provoking competitiveness between the members of the group. The women who read the magazines are also left with the stigma of deception with the use of beauty products to enhance their looks, but also feel insecure about their current appearance as it is.

### **4.3 Women on the pages**

The previous chapters discussed the history of women's magazines, as well as the many tactics magazines use in bonding with their readers and in creating communities around their publications. Due to this corresponding relationship, magazines have notably influenced what kinds of femininities have been considered as appealing in each period of time by promoting very specific looks and ideas on their pages, including a plethora of advice on how to achieve the "perfect" form of femininity. Since this study is interested in how women's magazines portray especially food-related attitudes and behaviour, it is essential to take a brief look into how much the magazines actually have an effect on feminine identity formation what kind of femininities have been pushed by these magazines in the past and more recently.

Women's magazines are influential and play an essential part in shaping women's culture. According to Williams (2012: 6, 27-28), women's magazines have notable impact on the way women think about womanness in general, which is rooted in the reciprocal nature of the reader-magazine interaction. On one hand, the magazines publish content that causes their readers to alter their behaviour and attitudes to be more in keeping with the examples shown in the magazines. Respectively, the topics in turn arise from women's current reality, meaning that the existing ideas serve as the inspiration for any new content. Due to this circle, the magazines are in an intermediary position in both reflecting and shaping women's ideas about femininity and themselves. As a result, Inness (2007: 124-126) argues that millions of American women construct their identities based on the models of femininity pitched on the pages, which is why looking into the world of the magazines is crucial in understanding the development of feminine ideals.

Naturally, as Williams (2012: 27-33) reminds, these notions of ideal femininity are in a constant flux, never staying stable or fixed. As a result, women's magazines provide a vast collection of snapshots of the feminine ideals promoted in the past and today, ranging from domestic goddesses to career women and beyond. According to Williams (2012: 29-31), the first recorded feminine ideal was brought on by the social developments of the late 1800s. As the use of domestic staff started to decline after the American Civil War, women started taking more responsibility in the management of their households, including housework and managing staff at the same time. Due to women suddenly being in charge of the home, magazines quickly picked up the idea of portraying women as the centres of homes, thus

defining femininity through domestic life. This trend continued throughout the 1900s and as the middle class gradually grew alongside the economy, more and more advertising started to be featured in magazines. These newly invented *advertorials*, a genre of editorial content fused with advertising, emphasized the consumer role of women by endorsing food, cosmetics, household appliances, furniture and clothing, along with many other products, resulting in an image of an ideal woman who focused on tasty cooking, household decor, successful marriage and motherhood, as well as personal appearance. Williams (2012: 30-31) refers to this ideology of a warm, expressive and self-sacrificing woman as *traditional femininity*, which was covered in more depth in the previous part of this study (see Chapter 2.3). Williams (2012: 30-31) points out that although this feminine archetype was dominant in the mainstream women's magazines in the 1900s, such as *Good Housekeeping* and *Ladies' Home Journal*, many American women are still expected to embrace this feminine type today. Cramer and Creedon (2007: 99) also agree that women have been mostly portrayed as housewives and mothers.

However, Williams (2012: 32) continues that alongside the second wave of feminism in the late 1960s and early 1970s, publishers brought a whole new line of women's magazines to market that addressed the feminists' social and political agenda, and embraced a slightly more *resistant* views (see Chapter 2.3). These magazines, such as *Executive Female Digest*, *Cosmopolitan* and *Women Sports* focused on providing information and instructions to the new, post-sixties' emancipated woman, who wanted to advance in the workplace and be sexually liberated. The form and make-up of these magazines stayed mostly the same as their predecessors', but the content shifted to focus more on career, juggling work and family, social and political issues, as well as embracing one's sexuality. These magazines rebelled against the traditional and domestic image of women by stating that women were as strong, capable and proactive as men. Inspired by the new generation of magazines, the more traditional magazines also started adding new features to their range, including articles on financial management, and stories about work and alternative lifestyles.

In spite of the quantity of the different types of women presented in the magazines, Williams (2012: 30-32) and Litosseliti (2006: 98-99) remind that most of them are still connected by the so-called *beauty work* ethos. Litosseliti (2006: 97-98) explains that magazines make femininity appear as hard work, in which women are positioned as objects in need of constant updating and fixing, and this assumption of women actively taking part in improving their

appearance is so interwoven into women's culture that it is often treated as a common sense value. Williams (2012: 17) and Cramer and Creedon (2007: 102) note that focusing on one's beauty is not a new concept but something that has been present in culture through fairy tales and interpretation of biology for centuries. However, Cramer and Creedon (2007: 241-243) suggest that in the world of advertising and magazines, beauty is defined by a narrow paradigm that consists of specific phenotypical attributes, such as hairstyle, skin texture and body shape. However, in spite of these limited parameters of perceived beauty, Inness (2013: 127) remarks that this quest for the ideal form of femininity is never-ending. According to her, women's magazines suggest that femininity is not a natural state of women, but a performance that can only be obtained through specific steps and how-tos given in the magazines, as well as investing in various beauty products. Cramer and Creedon (2007: 241-243) also comment that beauty is typically presented as achievable through consumerism, with various products showcased next to celebrities promising similar star-like beauty. Indeed, Duffy (2013: 33-35) states that women's magazines have become a playfield of incited consumerism where the readers are made to believe that femininity is achievable in the marketplace, and with women controlling approximately 70 per cent of household spending in the United States it is no wonder that the advertisers have selected women as their main target. The heavy hand in advertising has also created tension among many magazine headquarters, as editors-in-chief have frequently had to battle against their advertising departments in order to maintain editorial integrity.

Another complex theme in women's magazines is that of sexuality. As Williams (2012: 7-8) states, many believe that the female body is more sexualized and displayed today than ever before and in many ways has become the battle site at which women balance between the cultural notions of beauty and their position in relation to men. Some view that women's flaunting of their bodies is a form of liberation, while other argue that resorting to one's sexiness is a backward step into the times of objectification. On the other hand, a modern-day woman can also use their body to signal other qualities, such as strength, fitness and competitiveness (Williams 2012: 7-8). However, Inness (2007: 124) reminds that although magazines occasionally portray toughness or even masculinity through style and fashion photography, these attributes do not hinder the models' attractiveness.

In terms of sex discourse, Litosseliti (2006: 100-101) points out that most magazines promote universal or compulsory heterosexuality, which is shown in the quantity of pages dedicated to

male-female relationships. According to Litosseliti (*ibid.*), magazines repeatedly place women in the position of actively pursuing relationships or preparing for them both physically and emotionally. In addition, the messages of how women should express their sexuality is often conflicting; while women are encouraged to be sexually confident and even manipulative, at the same time they are positioned as the receiving ends of male sexuality.

To summarize, magazines take part in constructing feminine identities and how these identities should be carried out in terms of appearance, attitudes and behaviour, at least in theory, by displaying specific types of women on their pages and giving advice on how to achieve the look in question. Moreover, since women's magazines affect millions of American women either directly or indirectly, these views are often presented as if they were self-evidently required in order to perform the female gender. With these in mind, perhaps it is no wonder that the representations of women in media have caused controversy among the general public, as well as academia. First of all, women's magazines promote the consumerist idea that one's femininity can be improved by investing in particular products. This encouragement to spend money on various treatments and aids conveys a message that one's body is never good enough, but needs more work. Secondly, the performance of female gender is largely based on heteronormativity, in which women's actions are assumed to enhance their attractiveness in the eyes of men. For example, many women's magazines still portray women as mothers, wives or girlfriends, or "train" their readers how to chase after these positions. Thirdly, the representations of female body in general have caused uproar in multiple situations, whether the argument is that women should be able to use their sexuality in order to advance in life without confronting criticism, or that women's bodies are already oversexualized and should be shown less. All in all, as the idolized way of expressing one's femininity changes constantly and remains more or less a matter of subjective opinion, there can possibly never be a consensus about the ultimate form of femininity. This being said, the ideas promoted by media affect the minds of the women at the time, therefore creating an illusion of a consensus, which in turn encourages women to stay up-to-date with the trends and continue resorting to the magazines' advice.

## 5 AIMS, MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 5.1 The research question

The aim of the study is to examine how the relationship between women and food is represented in the online articles of contemporary American women's magazines. The research question the study attempts to answer is the following:

1. *How is the relationship between food and women represented in the online articles of contemporary American women's magazines?*

As food preparation and issues related to food consumption (i.e. dieting) have traditionally been associated with the female sex in particular, this study is interested in how food is discussed in present-day women's magazines as part of the experience of being a woman. The main focus of the study is to observe how these magazines portray women's cooking and eating, as well as what kind of notions of femininity are carried by the magazines in relation to these themes. Hopefully, the findings will shed light on how cooking and eating are marketed to women, thus revealing the idealized version of femininity that is embraced in today's American society.

### 5.2 Materials and data

The data used for the study consists of a hundred food-related online articles from four popular American women's magazines, 25 articles from each magazine. These magazines are *Cosmopolitan*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Marie Claire* and *Glamour*, all of which were chosen due to their vast circulations and popularity among women in the United States and internationally, and the fact that each magazine is targeted to a slightly different audience. The magazines are introduced in more detail in the following paragraphs.

*Cosmopolitan* is the best-selling young women's magazine in the United States with over 80 international versions published all around the world. The magazine boasts with a circulation of over 17 million a month, while its online version *Cosmopolitan.com* caters to over 35 million monthly users. The magazine is characterized as a "bible for fun, fearless females"

that delivers “the latest news on men and love, work, fashion, beauty, health, self-improvement and entertainment”. (Hearst 2018a.)

*Good Housekeeping* is described on Hearst.com (Hearst, 2018b) as a “leading lifestyle media brand” that enables their readers to “discover genius innovations, delicious ideas, style-savvy trends, compelling news and best-in-class products for their homes, families and themselves”. The monthly audience of the magazine is reported at over 30 million readers with five editions published around the world.

*Marie Claire*, the third Hearst (2018c) publication on this list, is a fashion magazine founded in 1937 by French industrialist Jean Prouvost. The magazine is published in 26 countries and is read by more than 15 million people worldwide. According to the introduction on the website (Hearst 2018c), the reader profile is the following:

- (1) Marie Claire is more than a pretty face. It is the fashion magazine with character, substance and depth, for women with a point of view, an opinion and a sense of humor. Each issue is edited for a sexy, stylish, confident woman who is never afraid to make intelligence a part of her wardrobe. (Hearst 2018c.)

*Glamour* is the only magazine out of the four to come from a different publisher. This Condé Nast publication is described as “one of the biggest fashion and beauty magazine brands” that “believes in the power of women being themselves and stands with women as they do their own thing: honestly, authentically, and awesomely.” The circulation of the magazine tops at 9,7 million print readers, with more than 11 million monthly users online. Also, the number of followers on social media is currently over 14 million. (Condé Nast, 2018.)

The data collection was done by selecting only those online articles that cover food, nutrition or eating in general as their main topic. In order to recognize and separate these pieces of writing from the large pool of articles archived on the websites of these magazines, the search was done systematically by taking advantage of the search fields provided on the websites. In practice, the keyword “food” was entered into the search fields and the first 25 results were selected for further examination. As the website algorithms list the results according to their relevance to the keyword, not date, the end result consists of articles with various publishing dates and authors. This method of data selection ensures that the sample collection gathered from all magazines is random and not limited to any specific season, and therefore reflects the current reality and style of each magazine. The large data pool of a hundred cases also

supports the validity of the study, as patterns and trends within the data become more easily identifiable.

After the collection was finished, the data was then studied with the help of a few selected analytical methods. Firstly, the data was categorized in relation to topic and theme by using the Grounded Theory Method (GTM), which will be further explained in the next section. GTM was chosen as one of the methods due to its inductive approach to theory formation, meaning that rather than trying to fit the data into prefabricated categories, the data itself guides the theoretical framework in shaping the categories spontaneously and organically. After the process, the data was formed into various categories and subcategories, which together represent an intricate network of themes, meanings and associations.

The next phase included the more detailed observation of these categories, their themes and frequently occurred phenomena, where the focus was put especially on how they portray contemporary women's cooking and eating. Following the guidelines of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, as well as including Michelle Lazar's feminist perspective to the overall approach, the results were examined in relation to previous studies and attitudes about women's relationship to food. This discussion will be demonstrated in the following sections by introducing examples that embody the consistencies or inconsistencies within the data. As a result, the final product should reveal how the food culture of modern-day women is represented in the magazines. Although the magazines were not compared to one another systematically, the most notable differences and emphases between the publications were taken into account during the analysis when necessary. Overall, however, the magazines are treated as a single voice.

### **5.3 Grounded Theory Method**

Grounded Theory Method (GTM) was first developed in the 1960s by two American sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (Breckenridge 2014: 2-3), who saw problems in the way most sociological methods at the time focused heavily on verifying already existing theories, rather than discovering them (Glaser and Strauss 1967: vii-viii). This dominating need to constantly verify had resulted in a gap between theory and empirical research, which in turn hindered the use of data in establishing newer and more useful theories in sociology (Glaser and Strauss 1967: 1-2). Although originally aimed at



sociologists, Glaser and Strauss (1967: viii) acknowledged the potential use of the method from the beginning in any field of research interested in social phenomena. Indeed, since its birth in the 1960s, GTM has gained popularity in the domain of qualitative research due to its ability to map out and describe a set of phenomena without forcing the data to either agree or disagree with an existing theory (Breckenridge 2014: 2-3). After coining the term in the 1960s, Breckenridge (2014: 2-3) reports that the two have since parted ways in disagreement about the future trajectory of the methodology, resulting in both creating their own versions of the original theory. The present study will lean on the work of Glaser, usually referred to as Classic Grounded Theory (henceforth referred to as CGT) or Glaserian approach, which resembles the original methodology the most out of the two.

Both Glaser and Strauss (1967: 3-4) and Breckenridge (2014: 3-4) state that a theory should always be relevant to the area under study, as well as credible in describing, explaining and predicting behaviour in a way that is not limited to a specific context, people or place. Therefore, so as to meet these requirements the most sensible approach is to let the theory emerge directly from the data. By doing so, the theory will be closely linked to data and therefore cannot be annulled by adding more data or as easily substituted by another competing theory. In order for the data to guide the process, however, it is recommended that the researcher refrains from familiarizing oneself with the literature on the area beforehand, as any presumptions of the end result or associations with previous research might affect one's thinking. The researcher should also remain *theoretically sensitive*, which includes understanding one's subjectivity, such as realizing the influence of one's own character and temperamental qualities to the theory formation, together with the theoretical insights to one's field. (Glaser and Strauss 1967: 37, 45-47; Glaser and Holton 2004.)

According to Glaser and Strauss (1967: 45-47), this sensitivity can get lost especially if the researcher is too devoted to a single preconceived theory and cannot flexibly assess any alternative ideas. In the case of this study, the grounded theory was formed according to the *constant comparative method* explained below before any analysis of the data and prior to the completion of the theoretical background. However, as the effects of women's magazines to women's culture has been a prominent and on-going discussion in the 21<sup>st</sup> century media, one as a researcher cannot be completely desensitized to the topic. Similarly, I acknowledge that my prior experience in the field of women's studies may affect my analytical approach, as I am familiar with the concepts and theories often discussed in the area. That being said, I

believe that my background also allows me to be able to recognize tendencies, and possibly detect trends that are new or have been ignored by previous research. In addition, the data-driven approach of this study assists in staying open-minded toward the themes that emerge.

Grounded theory, as any other method, begins with data collection. However, as Glaser and Holton (2004) remind, GTM is quite unique in its approach to initial data selection as it sees all data as applicable. In fact, both Glaser and Strauss (1967: 50-52) and Glaser and Holton (2004) caution researchers from excluding certain pieces of data due to their “non-comparativeness”. If data is disqualified in accordance to its non-comparability with the rest of the data or its difficulty to fit into a specific framework of reference, the focus of the study has shifted from discovering a theory into verifying predetermined facts. Instead, researchers are encouraged to control their data by being aware of the *type*, *scope* and *class* of their selected range (Glaser and Strauss 1967: 52-60). For example, in the case of this study, the type of data is an online article, the scope of which is limited to four American magazines. However, rather than observing just randomly selected four magazines within the United States, the class of these magazines has also been defined as popular women’s lifestyle magazines. In spite of these prerequisites, the data itself will not be predetermined or assessed in terms of whether it will either confirm or affirm a specific theory.

In practice, GTM is formed through constant comparative method, which is applied by comparing each piece of data to previous incidents and adjusting the groups in accordance to their relevance to each other (Glaser and Strauss 1967: 101-113). Breckenridge (2014: 3-4) introduces three stages of theory formation, which are *open coding*, *selective coding* and *theoretical coding*.

1. ***Open coding***: In this stage, the data is divided into comparable chunks, also known as *incidents*, and given a label to enable the grouping of similar incidents into categories. All incidents undergo this process of first being compared to other pieces of data, after which they are either assigned to an already existing category including similar entities or divided into a new category.
2. ***Selective coding***: In this next stage, the incidents within each category are looked at in more detail and the focus is shifted on structuring the data into a core category and its subcategories. This is done until new data will no longer change the existing categories nor result in the creation of new ones.

3. **Theoretical coding:** In the last stage, the data collection has been completed and the categories can be analysed in relation to each other. The final result should form a theoretical outline that is constructed around a core category that explains the phenomenon, hence *a grounded theory*.

GTM was chosen as the primary means of analysis for two main reasons. First of all, its quality to form a theoretical outline without the hindrance of preliminary assumptions and prejudices allows a more objective approach to a controversial topic, i.e. women's food culture and food-related behaviour, that is frequently discussed in Western societies. Since women's status and role are quite often observed from a viewpoint that tends to characterize them as having problematic areas, GTM gives a voice to the data itself to show whether these characterizations are fair at all. In this way, the categories that emerge from the data will not follow any pattern that has been devised in advance, thus giving space to perhaps discover something new. Secondly, the processes of GTM are optimal for the scrutiny of data that consists of a pool of similar incidents, in this case magazine articles. Since every piece of information will be systematically looked at in detail, categorized, recategorized and finally compared with other similar incidents, each piece of data is able to contribute to the end result without being forgotten or classified as irrelevant or insignificant. In the case of this study, each magazine article offers valuable information on women's relationship to food, whatever the emphasis or topic, which is why using GTM is beneficial for the final result. That being said, GTM is only the first step in the overall analysis and will be followed by a feminist critical discourse analysis. This stage will be explained in detail in the next chapter.

#### **5.4 Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) and Fairclough's CDA**

As was mentioned above, the data will be analysed in two stages: first with GTM and then with the tools of Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth referred to as FCDA). FCDA is a term coined by Michelle M. Lazar, a linguist specialized in critical discourse analysis and feminist discourse studies, which builds on the theorization of Critical Discourse Analysis with a particular interest in gender equality. Whereas CDA has widely been used to study political biases in language usage and their effects on social practices, Lazar's version focuses especially on gender ideologies reflected in language use. In the case of this study, the results of GTM will be analysed from a critical feminist perspective, this time focusing on the

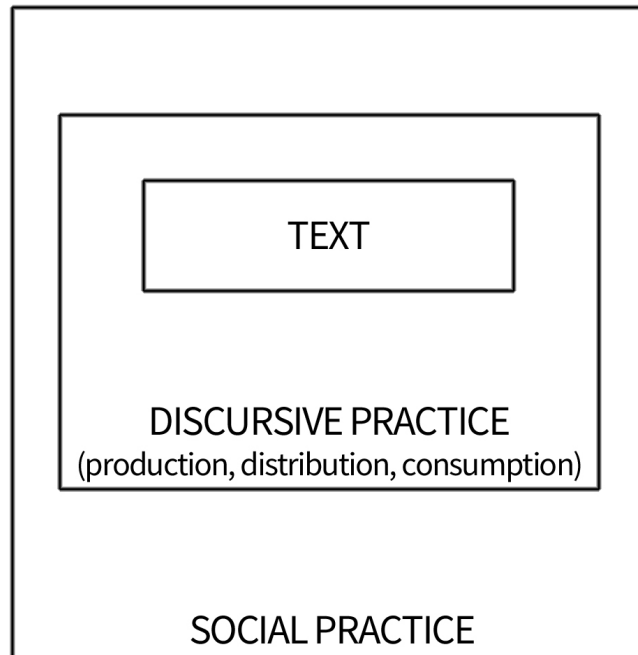
gender-specific attitudes and ideologies toward food consumption and preparation conveyed in the magazine articles. In this chapter, I will introduce the basic terminology and concepts of discourse studies, as well as briefly discuss the theory and method of Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, which will serve as the vehicle of systematic analysis of the data. Finally, I will also elaborate how FCDA differs from CDA and why the feminist approach is beneficial for this study in particular.

To start from the basics, it is essential to clarify what is meant by *discourse* and how the different variations of meaning alter the process of analysis. *Discourse* as a term has multiple meanings, depending on from which theoretical and disciplinary standpoint it is observed. According to Fairclough (1992: 3), in linguistics *discourse* sometimes refers to samples of spoken language, thus distinguishing it from written text. Therefore, these types of discourse analyses focus on the organizational properties of dialogue (such as turn taking) without examining grammatical units or sentences in detail. However, more commonly *discourse* describes extended samples of both spoken and written language, this way including not only the scrutiny of the structures of dialogue or text genre, but also the interaction, interpretation and influence between the writer and the reader, or the speaker and the interlocutor. Regarding this, the situational context of language use is also taken into account in the analysis. In some cases *discourse* is also used to recognize and categorize between different types of language use in various situations, e.g. *newspaper discourse*, *classroom discourse*, *advertising discourse* and alike. However, as Jørgensen and Phillips (2002: 73-74) point out, these types of discourses are not necessarily always easily distinguishable, as they can also overlap and intertwine. For example, it is possible to find instances of academic discourse being blended together with popular discourse in order to make the topic more understandable to the audience. Lastly, as Fairclough (1992: 3-4) further elaborates, in social theory and analysis *discourse* is widely used to refer to different ways of structuring knowledge and social practice, as in the works of Michel Foucault. For example, *medical science* can be seen as one the dominant areas in the practice of health care and opposing to other alternative discourses, such as homeopathy or acupuncture.

In this study, the definition of *discourse* stems from Norman Fairclough's theory of Critical Discourse Analysis. Fairclough (1992: 4-5) describes his own process as a combination between language analysis and social theory, where any *instance of discourse* is simultaneously a piece of text, an instance of discursive practice and an instance of social

practice. These three dimensions are often represented in the form of a diagram of three layers, such as the following (Diagram 1.) portrayed in Fairclough (1992: 73):

**Diagram 1 Fairclough's instances of discourse**



According to Fairclough's (1995: 55, 57-58) theory, in the core of the diagram are *texts*. Fairclough (ibid.) defines any language use, may it be oral or written, as texts that always echo social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and belief. In practice, communication relies on shared understanding and knowledge of certain concepts and as a result, same words and phrases are used in a variety of contexts to signal meanings (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002: 73-74). In relation to this, Gee (2006: 47) elaborates that texts are also simultaneously full of other texts, which can be assimilated, contradicted or ironically echoed. An example of this might be a political satire that relies on the recognisability of the original genre (political discourse) and the understanding of the ironic approach. What comes to the causality of texts, Fairclough (1995: 55, 57-58) also theorizes that the ideologies carried by texts either abide by the norms and rules of their discursive context, this way maintaining the status quo, or attempt to create change.

*Discursive practice*, on the other hand, is the layer that sits between texts and social practices, and includes the production, consumption and distribution of texts (Fairclough 1995: 57-62,

1992: 78). In terms of text production, Fairclough (1992: 78-86) states that it is not always easy to determine the producer. For example, behind each a newspaper article might be a collective team that draws from various reports, archives and interviewees in order to construct a text, yet the article itself often reads as if a single journalist wrote it. Texts are also consumed differently in different situations. Recipes, for example, are not usually read in the place of poems or novels, nor are academic texts interpreted as rhetorical. Some texts are also meant to be re-read or preserved (e.g., official interviews and great poems), while others are consumed just once (e.g., casual conversations). In some cases, such as political speeches and textbooks, the texts might get transformed into new texts. As a result, texts have various outcomes; they can cause to take action or lead to changing attitudes and beliefs. What comes to the distribution of texts, sometimes the process is fairly straightforward, like in a face-to-face conversation where both sides are engaged in the communication event. In some cases, the distribution is more complex. The expected audience might consist of several individuals, like viewers of a TV broadcast, though the consumption depends on the routines and habits of each television viewer. Texts can also be heard indirectly or even overheard without the knowledge of the original addresser. (Fairclough 1992: 78-86.)

*Social practice* (or *sociocultural practice*) in turn is the context that the discursive practices and texts are embedded in, i.e. the cultural and social background of a particular event (Fairclough 1995: 62, 201-205). Fairclough (1995: 62) divides this layer into three levels of abstraction, including the immediate situational context, the wider institutional practices, or even the societal or cultural frames of reference. In practice, this layer represents the systems of knowledge and belief, ideologies, as well as changes in culture and society that are reflected in texts. Vice versa, each text simultaneously contributes to the layer of sociocultural practices by either agreeing with or challenging the status quo. With this in mind, being aware of the sociocultural practices is essential in interpreting any text or discursive practice. (Fairclough 1995: 55, 201-205; Jørgensen and Phillips 2002: 75.)

According to Fairclough (2001: 122), the analysis should consist of three stages that take all the dimensions into account. These stages are (1) the *analysis of discursive practice*, (2) the *detailed linguistic analysis*, and (3) the *analysis of social practice*. The first stage focuses on the production and consumption of the text, including the scrutiny of, for instance, what steps the text has gone through before publication. However, as Fairclough (ibid.) admits, many researchers do not have the access to the early stages of text production or have limited

resources to look into them, and therefore the focus is often shifted to the consumption of the text, rather than production. The second stage observes the linguistic choices in detail, thus analysing the relationship between the author and the reader, the ethos (identities constructed through language and body), metaphors, wording and grammar. The final stage of the analysis focuses on the ideological, political and social consequences of the discursive practice, ergo, whether the text has contributed to social change or reproduced the status quo (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002: 75). In this study, the emphasis will be on the second and third stage, mainly because of the limitations in accessing the journalistic processes behind the scenes of each magazine chosen for the study. Nevertheless, the systems of belief are still reflected in the discourses produced by these magazines, therefore offering ample information on women's food-related culture.

Although Fairclough's definitions and analytical tools of CDA are utilized in this study as the practical methods in examining the data, the focus is guided by Michelle Lazar's writings on feminist CDA (FCDA). Lazar (2005: 1-4) characterizes FCDA as the combination of CDA and feminist language studies, where the attention is directed onto a very narrow area of social inequality and injustice, *the gender*. The aim of feminist CDA is to deepen the understanding of how gendered social arrangements are maintained by the systems of power and ideology in discourse (Lazar 2007: 141). Lazar (2007: 141-142) argues that this is greatly needed in present times, when the issues of gender, power and ideology have become more intricate and indirect. Moreover, another modern-day challenge in gender politics is the difficulty in defining the concepts of "women" and "men" universally, as they intersect with many other categories of social identity, such as sexuality, ethnicity, age, geographical location and so on.

Lazar (2005: 3; 2007: 143-144) states that the need for a feminist label on CDA stems from the feminists' motivation to change the status quo. This vision entails a society, in which gender does not dictate one's identity, direction of self or their relationships with others. Lazar (ibid.) also reminds that most notable works of CDA are still conducted by heterosexual white men, who in turn have cited works by other heterosexual white men. Due to this, another goal of FCDA is to draw from the works of various feminist scholars with different ethnic, demographic and geographical backgrounds, as well as sexual identities. The label also gives feminist scholars the opportunity to bring their works together in a more organized

fashion, therefore also enabling discussion between them and better visibility in general. Without this unifying category, these studies would be left scattered, unfound and unheard.

The main concern of feminist research is to find and critique discourses that maintain a patriarchal social order, in other words the power relations that systematically disadvantage, exclude or disempower women as a social group while privileging men respectively (Lazar 2007: 145). According to the feminist perspective, the dominant conception of gender is based on the idea of dividing people into two classes, men and women, which impose a social separation of labour and traits determined by this sexual difference. These classes also reflect a hierarchical relation of domination and subordination, in which men are placed as the dominant social group. (Lazar 2007: 146-147.) With these statements in mind, Lazar (2005: 3; 2007: 143) points out that gender is treated very differently in comparison with other systems of oppression. For instance, it is not a cultural norm to systematically pair up people from separate ethnic or social classes with one another, yet women are constantly paired up with men. Nonetheless, Lazar (2007: 149) also reminds that since one's gender is intertwined with other systems of power, gender is not the only quality that can cause one to face discrimination. For example, heterosexual women might have better advantages in systems that promote heteronormativity than lesbians, since they are not only evaluated based on their gender, but also their sexual orientation. Due to this observation, Lazar (*ibid.*) suggests that women's social identities cannot be universalized and that is why a comparative approach is recommended when conducting a feminist CDA.

However, feminist CDA should not be confused with popular postfeminist discourse, which aims at a complete power reversal. According to Lazar (2007: 156-160), this school of thought depicts women's empowerment as the result of the disempowerment of men, therefore attempting to demote men as the subordinate social group. In other words, the social hierarchy remains the same as before, yet the gender roles are switched. This is visible in especially advertising, where women are portrayed as sexual dominatrices stepping over men or treating them like domesticated animals. Men can also be disembodied, such as in the perfume advertisement that featured Catherine Zeta-Jones with men depicted as water at her feet. In spite of the aspirations to empower women, such messages in fact limit these efforts into that of mere body and sexual empowerment that still operate within the consumerist and patriarchal systems. The images that show women ruling over men also suggest that this is applicable to conventionally beautiful women only, who are young, heterosexual, thin and of



a selected ethnicity. This paradigm arranges women into a hierarchy, in which only the ones that possess these desirable qualities can be the alpha females. The others, however, may aspire to the top of the pyramid by entering the never-ending loop of consumerism. (Lazar 2007: 158-160.)

I believe that this study will benefit tremendously from Lazar's feminist perspective to CDA, because the topics of women's cooking and eating-related phenomena, such as eating disorders, have traditionally been gender-coded as feminine in many cultures, including the United States. With the tools of FCDA, it will be fascinating to see how food is discussed in modern-day women's magazines, and whether these magazines promote specific attitudes and ideas to their female readership about their food-related decisions and lifestyle. Although the aim of the study is not to speculate or hypothesize the power-relations between men and women, the analysis will hopefully elucidate how the magazines maintain or transform the female gender through food discourse in relation to men as well.

## 6 FOOD AND WOMEN: THE ANALYSIS

### 6.1 Categories emerged from data

After the selection of a hundred food-related online articles from *Cosmopolitan*, *Marie Claire*, *Good Housekeeping* and *Glamour*, these articles were then categorized according to the method of Grounded Theory. In the open coding phase, the articles were first assigned a category based on their general theme and title, for instance by grouping all articles relating to home cooking into one category and all entertainment-oriented stories into another. In the event of an incident not fitting into any of the existing categories, a new one was created until all incidents had been categorized. Next, the articles were looked at in more detail in terms of their content in the selective coding phase. In this stage, the articles were contrasted against the research question of how they represented the relationship between women and food. After this comprehensive scrutiny of the ideologies and attitudes manifested in the articles, some of the incidents were recategorized or even assigned a new category. Finally, the categories were structured into core and subcategories, which will be analysed in this section of the study.

The data as a whole formed eight main categories, which in turn could be further divided into more detailed subcategories (see Table 1). In the following table, the categories and their subcategories are presented on the left, while the number of articles corresponding to that category is shown on the right.

**Table 1. THE CATEGORIES AND SUBCATEGORIES OF GTM ANALYSIS**

CATEGORIES AND SUBCATEGORIES	NO. OF ARTICLES (out of 100)
1. "HACKS"	5
a. Food-related tips	5
2. ENTERTAINMENT	26
a. TV	2
b. Celebrity stories	12

c. Food history d. Food-related news/ sensations e. Festival foods	2 8 2
3. HOME COOKING a. Food preparation b. Housework c. Appliance recalls	10 6 3 1
4. SOCIAL ASPECT a. Political b. Romance & dating c. Motherhood d. Pets	12 1 3 5 3
5. FINANCES a. Cost-consciousness	3 3
6. BODY a. Female physiology b. Body image c. Impact on health d. Pregnancy	21 1 8 9 3
7. PROFESSIONAL COOKING a. Food entrepreneurs b. Professional chefs	6 5 1
8. ADVERTORIALS a. Food item releases and news	17 17

According to these numbers, the largest per cent of the articles approached the concept of food from the perspective of *entertainment* with 26% of the occurrences. This category consisted of mainly amusing food-related stories about cooking shows, celebrities and various timely sensations, including tallies on what celebrities eat and where, which cancelled cooking shows are missed the most and food in extravagant weddings. While most of the articles in this category came from Marie Claire and Cosmopolitan, Good Housekeeping was the only magazine to focus on cooking shows and their cancellations.

The second largest category was the overall topic of *body*, with 21% of the articles focusing on health, body image, body-shaping and pregnancy. As for health, the most common approach was to debate which foods in particular were healthy or unhealthy, or evaluate the impacts of various foods on one's body. The theme of body image in turn included articles about surviving eating disorders and celebrities rallying against unhealthy body ideals, but also covered diet plans and advice on how to avoid fattening foods during the holidays. Also, some articles discussed the effects of nutrition to pregnancy.

The third most prominent category was *food advertorials* with 17% of the data pool. These articles consisted of either direct or indirect food advertising, including brief news about the latest menu items mainly in fast food establishments, such as McDonald's or Starbucks. Unlike the food-related news listed under *entertainment*, these articles clearly aimed at raising awareness about specific products and encouraging the readers to purchase them.

Surprisingly, only 10% of the articles focused on the theme of *cooking in a home kitchen*. Out of the 10%, 6 articles referenced cooking at home directly, while the rest of the data consisted of mainly advice on household management and kitchen appliance recalls. On the other hand, additional 6 articles addressed *cooking in a professional environment*, mainly covering the topic from an entrepreneurial point of view. Only one article introduced female chefs working in various restaurants, while the rest comprised of food business owners, both celebrities and non-celebrities.

In terms of magazine-specific emphases, Glamour and Cosmopolitan focused on love, friendships and keeping up with trends, while Good Housekeeping was the only magazine to include pet-related articles. Good Housekeeping was also the only one to deal with the finance side of food by sharing advice on how to not waste money on groceries and where to get the best coupons.

Despite entertainment being the largest individual category, unfortunately it will provide only little information about women's cooking and eating culture due to its focus on mainly scandalous stories about celebrities and news about older phenomena, such as TV cooking shows and food history. Since this study attempts to observe how cooking and eating are represented to the present-day American female readership of the selected women's magazines, as well as what kind of attitudes and ideas are communicated alongside with these,

the most beneficial themes to look into in the next chapters are the following: **home cooking**, **professional cooking**, **body** and **food advertorials**. These topics aim to cast more light on how women are reported as both amateur and professional cooks, but also how the focus on body and staying relevant guide the eating decisions, not to mention the use of funds.

## **6.2 Cooking and eating in current American women's magazines**

Although the previous chapter revealed some tendencies and trends within the data, the semantics and the attitudes voiced in the articles cannot be analysed simply by looking at the numbers of grounded categories and their corresponding articles. Therefore, the grounded theory merely forms the outline for the study, requiring a more detailed examination of what the data actually indicates about women's relationship to food. The previous part of the analysis found eight main categories and their subcategories that show the distribution of food-related themes in women's magazines. In the following chapters, these themes will be examined and illustrated in two sections, the first concerning women's cooking and the second women's eating, with the help of suitable examples that embody the different ideologies or juxtapositions within the data. This stage of the analysis utilizes FCDA and Faircloughian methodology.

### **6.2.1 Modern-day women as cooks**

Even though food preparation was not a very prominent category among the data in general, the few articles that covered such theme show a division in how women's cooking is presented from the perspectives of home and professional cooking. On one hand, the articles framed home cooking as a series of shortcuts to a meal, suggesting that the readers are not familiar with cooking or too busy to fit that into their daily schedules. In a professional setting, on the contrary, the writings highlighted women as successful entrepreneurs or tried survivors that had overcome challenges, usually promoting them as inspirational role models. In the following paragraphs, I will go over a few selected examples that demonstrate how women's cooking is addressed in these magazines, as well as what kinds of attitudes lie behind the texts. The first part of this section will focus on women's home cooking, after which I will cover women as professional chefs and food business owners.

### *Women's cooking at home*

When looking at the data pool in general, it is noticeable how scarce cooking-related content is compared to the plethora of articles about eating. Only 10 articles out of a hundred addressed cooking in a home environment, while the rest of the data mainly consisted of news about trendy fast food items or snacks, or other miscellaneous food stories. The absence of recipes is understandable since none of the magazines particularly identify as cooking magazines, yet the unbalanced ratio between cooking and eating related articles implies that women consume and are interested in food, but the stage of food preparation is omitted from the magazines. This could be due to its mundaneness as part of one's daily routine or simply because it is outsourced to the service industry. When looking at the remaining articles that referenced women's home cooking, the approaches to the task usually reflected one of the following attitudes. Firstly, some of the articles portrayed women as completely incapable in the kitchen or too busy to cook, and because of that resorting to "quick-fixes" frequently. On the other hand, another set of articles assumed their readers to be quite skilful cooks, which could be further divided into those who seek out to replicate fine dining experiences at home and those, who cook for their families. In the following paragraphs, I will go over some examples from the data that showcase these attitudes, as well as discuss what types of foods women are advised to cook at home.

Starting from the first category, multiple articles assumed that their readers do not cook their meals from the beginning at all, but instead have frequent takeaways and convenience foods at home. This preconception can be observed from the way many of the articles depicted microwaving as normal, even making it seem like hard work. As demonstrated in example (2), Henriques (2017) declares that reheating one's food is a *way of life*, consequently implying that it is a regularly sought out solution by many. In this case, microwaving is portrayed as the main cooking method at home, ranging from reheating the leftovers from previous days to combining food scraps to make a new meal altogether. Moreover, by calling microwaves as *companions*, Henriques (ibid.) also insinuates that the readers, as well as the author herself (hence *our*), have formed a long-lasting relationship comparable to an intimate human relationship with the appliance.

- (2) Reheating dinner is a way of life. Whether it's Friday night and you need to clean out your fridge, or you want to turn your leftovers from last night into a whole new

meal, our microwaves are our handy kitchen companions.  
(Henriques 2017, *Cosmopolitan*.)

A similar article by Baxter-Wright (2017) also characterizes reheating as a sensible solution to a busy woman's lifestyle (*when you're too busy*), which is presented in example (3). As opposed to Henriques' (2017) article, Baxter-Wright (2017) discusses specifically reheating one's takeaway dinner, not a homemade meal, suggesting that cooking at home was never included in the process at all. Interestingly, the author also refers to the reader as a *lazy girl*, leaving a question of how the wording should be interpreted. Laziness is traditionally considered as an undesirable quality and therefore also an insulting remark, but in this case laziness could also represent a relatable quality among the readers, which reinforces the sense of community. Moreover, the article justifies the unwillingness to take on cooking with the otherwise hectic lifestyle of the addressee, hence declaring the situation *understandable*.

- (3) Though reheating takeout when you're too busy is—understandably—a lazy girl's go-to, leftover rice can apparently be quite bad for you if you're not careful.  
(Baxter-Wright 2017, *Marie Claire*.)

While normalizing the use of microwaves, the articles also assumed a lack of prior cooking knowledge by making the process of reheating seem complicated and technical. Both writings included reports of various bacteria and toxins, as well as detailed instructions on how to prevent them from growing, multiplying and potentially causing food poisoning. Furthermore, by making microwaving seem like an intricate method rather than a time saving quick solution that it usually is depicted as, the articles seem to underestimate and even patronize their readers. This attitude can be construed, for example, from the final phrase of Baxter-Wright's (2017) piece (*Who knew leftovers could be so complicated?*), which suggests that the average reader is so out of touch with cooking that even microwaving is a requiring task.

As opposed to the *lazy girl* approach presented above, some articles in turn expected their readers to know a lot about cooking and make significant efforts in the kitchen. Bensman's (2017) article *The 6 Secret Ingredients That'll Make Your Slapdash Dinner Taste Like Real Italian Food* is one of such, which lists six unusual and quite expensive ingredients that are reported to bring an authentic Italian flavour to cooking, including truffles, sheep's milk ricotta and Chianti wine. While most of these items can be found at specialty shops and the local supermarket, some suggestions also demanded notable cooking skills. For instance, Bensman (2017) suggests making *mostarda*, an Italian condiment of candied fruit and

mustard powder, at home by including a link to a recipe. While the recipe itself is not complicated, the process of making *mostarda* takes up to 3 days (AntoniaJames 2013), therefore requiring not only cooking skills, but also commitment and preplanning on the reader's behalf. Bensman (ibid.) also describes pasta making as *laughably easy*, in this way encouraging the readers to attempt making it themselves from the beginning. Once again, although the evaluation of difficulty depends greatly on the intrinsic qualities and prior experience of the individual in question, pasta making is certainly more complex and time-consuming than, for example, buying a premade version, including several steps of kneading, resting and rolling. Based on this, it seems that Bensman (2017) targets a skilled cook, who would probably find the task easy.

Also Clasen (2017) and Vigoreaux (2016) expect prior cooking knowledge, each listing more than twenty recipes for autumnal family favourites or ideas for utilizing the pantry more efficiently. Clasen's (2017) suggestions include dishes derived from various food cultures, such as pilafs, frittatas, chowders, casseroles, pasta, pies, ramen and so forth. Vigoreaux (2016), on the other hand, advises the readers to make their own pesto, pickle vegetables for longer shelf life, and using food scraps as the base for a stock. Even though a single person is probably not expected to cook all of the items on their lists, she is expected to be at a level where all of the options are attainable. With this in mind, the reader group can be deduced to comprise of women, whose skill parameters range from traditional methods of preserving and pickling to having mastered several international cuisines.

However, cooking is not only portrayed from a nutritional or a skill-centric point of view, but it is also made into an indication of lifestyle and a tool of identity building. As Inness (2007: 124-126) and Williams (2012: 6, 27-28) had pointed out earlier, the magazines do not simply base their depictions on real life situations, but also create and reinforce identities through the editor-reader interaction. Ergo, while all the examples above revolve around cooking-related advice, the contexts reveal about the types of women these articles attempt to address, and vice versa, the types of women the readers want to become through the consumption of the content of the magazines. Therefore, without ever attempting to make *mostarda* or pesto, the reader is granted an entrance to the community of like-minded women, who are all connected by the lifestyle the magazine represents.



As the observations show, Henriques (2017) and Baxter-Wright (2017) have identified their readership to comprise of women who cannot cook or are too busy or lazy to do so, thus focusing their advice solely on the use of a microwave. This insinuates that the targeted reader is much more concentrated on other areas of life, such as career, leisure activities or relationships. While this labelling might attract the magazines' ideal reader, it could also alter reader behaviour. Since the writings frame a lifestyle that is too busy for domestic work as normal, even desirable, some readers might interpret it as the sign of being successful and popular. In this fashion, these articles suggest that there is a group of women who wish not to spend a lot of time cooking, but perceive other matters as more important.

Bensman (2017), Clasen (2017) and Vigoreaux (2016), on the other hand, all target women, who are curious about cooking. Nevertheless, these women can also be further divided into two separate communities. Whereas Bensman's (2017) piece entails an image of a luxurious lifestyle, Clasen (2017) and Vigoreaux (2016) address cooking in quite a traditional light by framing women as the family cooks and household managers.

In Bensman (2017), the author reaches out to an audience that is not only interested in cooking Italian food, but also want their food to convey their passion for traveling, foreign cultures and their level of sophistication. In order to do so, Bensman (ibid.) does not simply explain which ingredients will bring an authentic flavour to a dish or how to use them, but paints a picture of a complete lifestyle that includes all of the previously mentioned attributes. With the help of her first-hand experiences of traveling across Italy, dining out in Italian restaurants and making pasta with world-renowned chefs, she establishes herself as an authority in the field of Italian cuisine and a role model in the eyes of the reader. This is clear when looking at example (4), in which Bensman (2017) showcases her immersion to the culture, as well as possibly compensates for her lack of background. For instance, she incorporates a lot of Italian food terminology (*brioche, cappuccino, antipasti, affogato, buon appetito*) to her writing, in this way bringing an exotic nuance to the piece. Bensman (ibid.) also accentuates the luxuriousness and specialness of the Italian way by stating how the attitude toward food in Italy is preferable (*In Italy, food isn't a race or a reward but a daily luxury to be savored*), at the same time also emphasizing her abilities to recognize and appreciate quality.

- (4) I'm quite certain I don't have an ounce of Italian in my blood, but after a week of eating and drinking my way across Italy on a Trafalgar guided vacation, I now feel that I can claim a certain gastronomic expertise. It's nearly impossible not to fall in love with what (and how) Italians eat: Jam-filled brioche and cappuccinos for breakfast, multi-course meals of flavorful antipasti, fresh pasta (the fact that pasta is its *own* course is enough) and simple grilled fish, and the occasional *affogato* or slice of pizza when hunger strikes on the go.

In Italy, food isn't a race or a reward but a daily luxury to be savored. After an unforgettable trip to Rome, Florence, Tuscany and Venice, my promise to myself is that I'm going to let that attitude linger as long as I can, starting first with my approach to cooking and eating, followed closely by updating my shopping list. These six ingredients I developed an appreciation for while dining my way through Italy will play a big role. *Buon appetito!*  
(Bensman 2017, Marie Claire.)

Clasen (2017) and Vigoreaux (2016), on the other hand, have classified their readers to consist of family-oriented women. This can be deduced, for example, from frequent usage of the word “family” in the articles. In examples (5)-(6), Clasen (2017) mentions “family” twice in the context of serving food, therefore assuming that it is relevant to the reader. A similar presumption is made in Vigoreaux (2016) as well, which suggests transforming leftovers into an afternoon snack for the children. However, what is particularly noticeable in these articles is the positioning of women as the family cooks. For instance, the following examples (5)-(6) demonstrate how the reader is expected to be the one who serves the food.

- (5) Better make a double batch of this New England-style soup. Its fresh-from-the-fish-shack flavor will have your entire family begging for seconds. (Clasen 2017, Good Housekeeping.)
- (6) Ah, the ultimate comfort food combo. Add cauliflower, peppers and zucchini into the mix, so you feel good about serving this up to the whole family. (Clasen 2017, Good Housekeeping.)

Clasen (2017) and Vigoreaux (2016) also associate their readers with being considerate and caring. For example, the previous quotes show how the reader is encouraged to act in advance by prepping enough food in case the family wants more, as well as consider the health implications by adding appropriate vegetables. In addition to these, Vigoreaux (2016) also emphasizes the importance of considering the economical and ecological effects of cooking. In her article, *Shop Your Kitchen: 24 Ways to Stop Wasting Food This Month*, the author teaches, among others, how to rearrange the refrigerator for better storing and why to start composting their waste.

What comes to the types of dishes the articles presented as part of women's cooking repertoire at home, the most common nominator was *easiness*. All four magazines pitched various cooking advice as “easy” or “simple”, including not only solutions that decrease the time or effort to a minimum, such as microwaving or using various delivery services, but also when discussing more elaborate cooking from the beginning, such as pasta making. In fact, a common trick to catch the reader's attention was to refer to the various pieces of advice as secrets, shortcuts and hacks, which all carry a promise of an easier, quicker way that has only been recently discovered or revealed. However, the articles did not specify the reasons behind the need to save time or reduce effort, which is why the motivations cannot be fully explained in the light of this data only. One possible reason could be the overall increased pace of modern society. The consumers are used to accessing every service and piece of information instantly, which is possibly why these types of articles interest people. Another explanation could be that promising easiness is a tested way to have more people browse the article and therefore also potentially become more acquainted with the magazine brand in question, whether or not the advice delivers its promise. All in all, the modern-day woman is certainly depicted as busy.

The quality of food was often characterized as either hearty and home-style, or intricate and at times even outlandish. The traditional and robust foods, such as casseroles and pies (Clasen (2017)), were mostly illustrated to be cooked by women with a family, or women who like to cook for other people. In these cases, the foods were described as satisfying and comforting to the consumer, in this way associating feeding other people with nurture. On the other hand, some articles featured complicated dishes, such as iridescent *unicorn noodles* (Matera 2017), *mostarda* and fresh pasta (Bensman 2017). Based on these recipes, women are portrayed to enjoy cooking delicate foods that require precision and skill. Moreover, the intricacy of the dish also translates into an impactful presentation. For instance, (Bensman 2017) states that serving *mostarda* is sure to impress one's friends, whereas Matera (2017) urges the reader to share their versions on Instagram for a public viewing.

Regardless of the type of a dish, another shared factor was the emphasis on feeling responsible for various things, such as health or the environment. Health was one of the most frequently mentioned adjectives when describing cooking, and the readers were often encouraged to ensure that their food had enough healthy ingredients in them. In other words, the social pressure to cook healthy food was notable among the data. For instance, example

(6) from Clasen (2017) demonstrates how women who read the magazine are pushed to think about the effects of their cooking, not only because of their own health, but as to take care of the health of others. In addition to framing women as the cooks of the family, the magazines also imply that they are responsible for the wellbeing of their family members.

Related to being responsible, the articles also emphasized the importance of favouring eco-friendly alternatives, such as organic foods. For instance, Vigoreaux (2016,) shares tips on how to reduce food waste, at the same time saving money and helping the planet. Similarly, Jacoby Zoldan (2017) recommends meal box services, which are promised to not only save time and effort, but also help the environment. However, the qualities of being organic or eco-friendly are also often paralleled with being healthy and bundled together with various other nutrition-related descriptors. As an example, Jacoby Zoldan (2017) endorses Sun Basket meal box service in example (7) by stating that its produce are *organic, antibiotic- and hormone-free*, as well as packaged in an eco-friendly way, this way equalling as *healthy*.

- (7) Its ingredients are organic, and antibiotic- and hormone-free, and they come in recyclable, enviro-friendly packaging. And the best part: Sun Basket promises each recipe (you can mix and match from 18 weekly) can be thrown together in 30 minutes or less. If you've got food rules to manage but not a lot of time to cook, this is the healthy meal delivery service for you. (Jacoby Zoldan 2017, Glamour.)

First off, it has to be taken into account that being organic or eco-friendly does not guarantee healthiness by default, as it is understandably possible to produce a chocolate cake high in calories, fats and sugars with ingredients that are organic, antibiotic- and hormone-free. Ergo, eco-friendly values could be deducted to serve at least partially as notable selling points of products, services and pieces of advice. By giving an impression of making good choices on behalf of the consumer, the companies give the consumer a piece of mind about the quality of their food and its impacts on the environment. Nevertheless, these examples indicate that modern-day women are guided to think about eco-friendly values and choose products that support this sentiment.

All in all, based on these observations and the absence of cooking advice in general it seems that women are represented as being somewhat alienated from the home kitchen, unless it is a form of self-indulgence, an indication of one's identity or a motherly duty. Instead, the task of cooking was often allocated to the service industry. A common selling point was to promote all advice as time- or effort-saving, whether it was a meal box service or a recipe for an Italian

chutney-like condiment. In regards to this, a modern-day woman either has no time to cook or is given the impression that all tasks should be accomplished quickly and with minimum effort. Women were also advised to make healthy and sustainable choices by supporting services that deliver healthy and organic produce to one's doorstep or opting for such ingredients when cooking. Combined with the encouragement to use every bit of food in the kitchen cleverly, reducing waste and being economical, the readers were expected to both feel and act responsible not only for themselves, but also for the sake of their close friends and family, and the environment.

When looking at all these findings together, the juxtaposition of messages is quite surprising. On one hand, these observations reflect the traditionally feminine stereotype in the way they guide women to think about the needs of others and make choices that are kind to the environment. Then again, women are also portrayed as independent and self-assured agents, who can opt for an easier option whenever needed or practice cooking as a form of indulgence. What is also notable is the emphasis on consumption. Most articles highlighted women as consumers by solving the issues related to lacking time or energy with services.

### ***Food as a creativity-inducing career choice***

Although not many of the articles covered women as professionals in the field of cooking and food, there were six that had taken an interest on especially female food entrepreneurs and chefs. In spite of the rarity of such articles in general, the remaining data showed some tendencies. First of all, the authors consistently framed women as tough and persistent heroines that had overcome challenges in order to gain their statuses as successful businesswomen and cooks. The challenges included, among others, competing against men in the same field, lack of credibility and financial issues. Secondly, another common nominator was the emphasis on the female sex. Since the authors often focused on *female chefs*, rather than chefs in general, or *female food entrepreneurs*, rather than just entrepreneurs, the biological sex was highlighted as a more noteworthy attribute than the profession itself. In this way, the women in question were positioned as the faces of female empowerment and idols for the female reader community. In this chapter, I will look at the few articles that reported on women's efforts in the food industry and discuss what these cases reveal about the way women are connected to food from a professional perspective.

The most usual starting point to portray women's careers in food business was to depict them as fights for survival. Many of the articles reported on the resistance and challenges women face as food entrepreneurs, including sexism, financial trouble, exhaustion and time-management issues. In Leahey McKeegan (2017), the former actress and present-day food entrepreneur Sarah Michelle Gellar shares her experience related to founding Foodstirs, a company specialized in organic baking kits. According to Gellar, her femaleness and status as a mother had prevented her from finding suitable investors prior launching the company, as the following example (8) demonstrates. In other words, in spite of Gellar's fame as an actress, her biological sex and motherly role had been seen as exclusive qualities to being an entrepreneur and working as the CEO of the company. By focusing on this aspect of Gellar's endeavours, the author consciously draws attention to this matter, therefore raising awareness of the attitudes that women are confronted with in the field of business.

- (8) "In the beginning, I can't tell you how many potential investors said, 'But you're moms,' or, 'Who's going to run your company?'" Gellar recalls. (Leahey McKeegan 2017, Marie Claire.)

Leahey McKeegan (2017) also discusses the mental strength required to run a company. According to Gellar's comments, a start-up business needs to be taken care of around-the-clock, which she parallels with childcare by characterizing it as "worse than a newborn". In reference to this, she admits being much more exhausted now than during her acting career. The stress of being a food entrepreneur is also reflected in Wood Rudolph (2017), which focuses on the development of Ericka Lassair's hotdog business into a successful food truck concept. In her piece, Wood Rudolph (2017) points out how the pressures to keep the company afloat affected Lassair's mental state. For example, when Lassair's business was going through financial struggles, she persevered by working extremely hard during the day and letting her feelings out in the evenings. This can be seen from Lassair's comment presented in example (9).

- (9) I started borrowing money to pay the rent. I didn't want to ask my family for money, so I took out those quick, high-interest payday loans. I couldn't pay my employees on time. I'd have one good day but then a week of hardly any business. I kept a smile on my face but inside, I was struggling. I would go home at the end of the night and cry. (Wood Rudolph 2017, Cosmopolitan.)

Not only were women portrayed as facing various challenges, but they were also depicted as having overcome them. In both Leahey McKeegan (2017) and Wood Rudolph (2017), the

women in question were reported to have received notable successes and recognition in their fields. For instance, Leahey McKeegan (2017) points out that Foodstrirs had managed to raise 5 million dollars and is negotiating a national distribution of their products in 4000 storefronts. Wood Rudolph (2017), on the other hand, highlights Ericka Lassair's win of a \$10,000 prize for her business idea. According to the article, Lassair has also gained significant local popularity, which help to keep her and the business busy.

Whereas the two previous examples showcased the struggles women have conquered in the context of food business, Leal's (2016) article, *Meet the 21 Badass Women Changing the Food World as We Know It*, celebrates female-only chefs from around the world who have been nominated for a James Beard Award. Even though the previous examples had selected women entrepreneurs to serve as the essence of their texts, Leal's (2016) writing highlights the biological sex even more. First of all, the female sex is referenced multiple times in the course of the article (*female* 3 mentions, *woman/women* 2 mentions, *ladies* 1 mention), in this way making it as a notable keyword of the article. This factor becomes clear already in the very first paragraphs, which are presented in example (10). In the light of the previous research, mainly Harris and Giuffre (2015), this emphasis could be interpreted to criticize the male dominance in the culinary field. Since women have been traditionally placed in home kitchen and men in professional kitchens, the successes of the female chefs in Leal's (2016) piece are treated as noteworthy. Although the article does not compare the female chefs to male chefs per se, or in fact reference the male sex at all, the attention given to the femaleness in general gives an impression of a feminist agenda.

- (10) The James Beard Awards are here—AKA the Oscars of Food—and women. are. killin' it. This year, 21 women have been recognized for their contributions to the culinary world, from industry vets to stars on the rise. Winners will be announced on May 2 in Chicago, but honestly, these ladies are already changing the game. (Leal 2016, Marie Claire.)

In Leahey McKeegan (2017) and Wood Rudolph (2017), on the other hand, men are portrayed as a supporting force. Leahey McKeegan (2017) notes that while Gellar is on tour to promote her cookbook, her husband stays at home on "parent duty". In Wood Rudolph's (2017) article, Lassair's business partner and cousin-in-law, Andre, participates in the running of the business both financially and through work. However, the women act as the frontwomen of their businesses.

All three cases depict women as tough and determined. In Leahey McKeegan (2017) and Wood Rudolph (2017), toughness is portrayed through perseverance. Both Gellar's and Lassair's stories serve as testimonies of staying strong in testing situations and not giving up when faced with adversities. By covering their journeys from "rags to riches", the aim of the article is to first have the readers empathize with their experiences of hardship and then be inspired by their triumphs. In Leal's (2016) case, strength is demonstrated through accomplishments. By listing the many merits of the selected female chefs, the author presents them as worthy opponents in the business. The author also parallels them with the "forces of nature", in this way pointing out their influence and authority. Ergo, similarly to a heavy storm or a strong wind, the female chefs are depicted to shape the field and the conventions. Leal (2016) also uses the term "badass" to describe the chefs, in this way indicating that the women in question are tough, even intimidating.

Being in food business is also portrayed as a tool of self-expression and an outlet for creativity. All three authors (Leahey McKeegan 2017; Wood Rudolph 2017; Leal 2016) introduce women who had changed their career paths in order to pursue cooking. Along with the actress turned into a food entrepreneur Sarah Michelle Gellar (Leahey McKeegan 2017), Ericka Lassair had also worked as a collections agent, a retail credit analyst and a sales assistant (Wood Rudolph 2017) prior to starting her hotdog restaurant. In addition to this, multiple renowned chefs on Leal's (2016) list are mentioned to have had a previous occupation, ranging from a stock trader to a management consultant. What is noticeable is that apart from Sarah Michelle Gellar, the majority of these previous jobs are office-related and perhaps often regarded as non-creative. Possibly due to this, the subjects of these articles described cooking as a way to be creative, or even feel "complete". The three following examples (11)-(13) demonstrate the reasoning behind the career changes of Ghaya Oliveira (Leal 2016), Ericka Lassair (Wood Rudolph 2017) and Sarah Michelle Gellar (Leahey McKeegan 2017).

- (11) -- she chose to pursue creative challenges in the kitchen rather than on the trading floor. (Leal 2016, Marie Claire.)
- (12) Ericka Lassair left a job that made her unhappy to create Creole-inspired hot dogs for a living. (Wood Rudolph 2017, Cosmopolitan.)



- (13) "I just wanted to do more. I wanted to *be* more," she explains. "I wanted to be present in my kids' lives because you realize how short life is." (Leahey McKeegan 2017, Marie Claire.)

Based on these comments, it could be interpreted that a career in food is often rendered as a calling and even as a gateway to happiness. Rather than staying in jobs that are perhaps more well-paid but offer fewer chances of being creative, the women reported shifting into positions in the food industry due to their desire to be more inventive and active. The pursuits for *being more* or becoming happy through a career as a cook or a food entrepreneur also suggest that the field is associated with having the power to harness the full potential of an individual or support personal growth. In other words, food industry is strongly connected with qualities that are beyond just daily livelihood. Moreover, these shared ideas indicate that women of today value vision as the driving force of their career trajectory, not money or even fame, as Gellar's case suggests (Leahey McKeegan 2017).

Food-related careers were also associated with rekindling one's roots or carrying on the legacy of their families. In Wood Rudolph (2017), Lassair is mentioned to have gotten the idea for a Creole-style hotdog business from her New Orleanian background, incorporating, for example, fried chicken and crawfish to her chilli hotdogs. Similarly, Leal (2016) also introduces a couple of the nominated female chefs in more detail, thus concentrating on the influence their background has had on their careers. For instance, Soto-Innes is stated to come from a long line of women cooks, which had caused her to take interest in food from an early age. Rachel Yang in turn combines her Korean roots with traditional French techniques in creating new and innovative dishes. In example (14), Mallon (2017) also emphasizes the communal aspects of food, which, according to her, entails not only memories of cooking with loved ones, but carries the potential to assimilate and create connections with other cultures as well.

- (14) "Cooking is one of the universal characteristics of being human. So many of us have memories of cooking with our mothers and grandmothers, be they in small towns across the United States, New York City, Baghdad, or Aleppo," – – We believe that the experience of cooking and sharing meals can help build bridges between cultures. Our mission is to empower refugees but also to use food to demonstrate the incredible value that refugees bring to their new communities. American food has always been comprised of a mix of flavors and culinary traditions. In every generation, waves of immigrants and refugees have helped add another layer to the American palate. (Mallon 2017, Glamour.)

What these cases indicate is that food is presented as culturally significant and as an integral part of one's identity. Even though the people in the articles operate in a business environment, staying connected with one's heritage is treated as important and even as an asset in food industry. However, food is not only portrayed as a form of self-expression, but also as a vehicle in bonding with others and communicating one's culture and self. Mallon (2017) states that while cooking connects all humans around the world, the dishes prepared in every family contain unique cultural value and therefore serve as a welcome contribution to the American food culture.

Female food professionals were also portrayed as nurturing, empathetic and emotional, hence embracing softer and traditionally more feminine values. This becomes clear when looking at the emphasis on people-centricity, caring and fostering a sense of community in the articles. For instance, Leahey McKeegan (2017) reports that according to Gellar's vision, Foodstirs aims at creating a *community-focused culture* by celebrating the birthdays of their employees, arranging seasonal parties and having installed a washing machine and a dryer at their headquarters for the employees to use. The attention on the nurturing side is also visible in Mallon's (2017) article, *How One Woman Is Using Food to Help Refugees Assimilate to American Life*, which focuses on Kerry Brodie's non-profit organization that aims at training refugees for culinary jobs in the United States through cooking lessons and ESL tutoring. As can be seen in example (14), Brodie's mission is not only to support individuals through food, but also assist community building on a multinational level.

The women in the articles are also portrayed as experiencing various emotions. In Leahey McKeegan (2017), Gellar is reported to take the human resource management to heart. In the passage presented in example (15), Gellar states feeling emotional towards dismissing employees, thus showing her softer side. Similarly, Wood Rudolph (2017) also points out the various emotional responses of Ericka Lassair over the course of the development of her business idea, including desperation, misery, disappointment, excitement and being overwhelmed. In relation to Gellar's concerns for her employees, Lassair is also reported to experience negative feelings due to her worry about the livelihoods of her employees, as is presented in example (16). Through narratives like these, the authors frame the women in food business as relationship-oriented and emotionally complex. However, the emotionality is not depicted as a weakness or a form of hysteria, but as a deep sympathy and concern for the wellbeing of others.

- (15) "Every time we've had to let someone go or it doesn't work, I am heartbroken. It doesn't matter how many times somebody from a bigger company tells me that this is just the way it goes," says Gellar. (Leahey McKeegan 2017, Marie Claire.)
- (16) -- I started to worry, *What if this doesn't work out?* I don't want to ruin his life too. (Wood Rudolph 2017, Cosmopolitan.)

Overall, it seems that women have gained more presence in the world of professional cooking, thus working as renowned chefs and acknowledged food entrepreneurs. A typical approach was to highlight women in food industry as strong and persistent heroines, who had worked hard to gain their success. In most cases the protagonists had faced difficulties over the course of their career, such as being discriminated because of their femaleness or lacking the funds needed to keep their businesses afloat. Through eventually overcoming these challenges, the women in question were framed as targets of admiration. On the other hand, women were also portrayed as emotional and focused on other people. For example, the articles entailed a vast range of emotions, many of them related to changes in relationships, such as when letting an employee go or being anxious for their future in the company. In spite of portraying women as prone to emotional responses, generally speaking they were depicted as balanced individuals. Moreover, caring was often portrayed as a form of nurture and as fostering a strong sense of community.

Food-related careers were also discussed from the perspective of creativity and self-expression. Many of the women in the articles had changed their careers from office jobs to restaurant and test kitchens, stating that this new career trajectory allowed for utilizing their creative capabilities better, as well as enabled personal growth. Because of this, being a food entrepreneur or a cook was perceived much more meaningful compared to any previous occupations, even labelling it as a way to happiness. Related to this, food was also seen as a vehicle to communicate one's background and heritage to other people. Many of the women used their cultural backgrounds as sources of inspiration, in this way also distinguishing themselves from other cooks and people in the field. Based on these observations, food-related careers were portrayed as routes to achieving the "American Dream", a lifestyle that offered those with imagination and perseverance a chance to succeed, which was already pointed out in Harris and Giuffre (2015). However, *the dream* is depicted to come together with highs and lows, which are detectable from the experiences of the women in the articles. Therefore, although the overall tone of voice in the articles is positive and encouraging, the readers are also reminded of the realities of the field, if they ever wished to pursue it.

## **6.2.2 Attitudes toward eating**

Compared to the themes of cooking as a domestic and a professional undertaking, the majority of the articles focused on eating. Out of the articles that covered women's eating, a notable portion included mainly (1) suggestions of what could be considered as healthy or unhealthy eating, (2) the effects of food on the body, and (2) promotions of specific foods or food brands. Although these categories may seem self-evident and relatively straightforward, the ideologies woven into these categories are in part conflicting, in part even mutually exclusive. For instance, the majority of hype was frequently created around fast food items and desserts, which contradicted with the otherwise healthy-focused eating advice in the magazines. Also, while some of the articles demonstrated the bad effects of monitoring one's food intake, others educated their readers to count calories and the like. In the following chapters, these two topics will be further examined through selected examples from the texts, hopefully illuminating the eating-related attitudes that lie underneath. The first chapter will focus on the aspects of nutrition and health, and how eating is described to affect the body, while the second will showcase what kinds of food products or brands are advertised to the readership.

### ***Healthy and unhealthy eating***

Among many of the articles that covered eating, a notable number focused on mainly healthy eating advice. However, the way health was described to look and feel depended greatly on the source of information and the author, some focusing on body shape as the indicator, while others defined it through individual ingredients. In practice, multiple writings reported on how to make better food choices, which foods could be considered healthy or unhealthy and how a healthy body should look. A typical way to approach this theme was to characterize certain foods or ingredients as "good" or "bad", therefore also presenting some nutritional values as more desirable than others. At the same time, many of the articles also emphasized the importance of making "wise" decisions when eating out and did so by listing the calorie, sugar and fat contents of various fast food items and holiday dishes, simultaneously also promoting the idea of monitoring one's intake of food in the quest for better health and a better body. This chapter will focus on what is constructed as healthy or normal eating in the magazines, as well as what these eating tips reveal about women's relationship to food as it is

represented in women's magazines. The themes of healthy eating will be discussed in smaller sections.

### **Categorizing foods according to nutritional value**

One typical approach was to categorize foods according to their nutritional value. An example this, *4 Food Hacks That Help You Maintain Your Energy Throughout the Day* by Keong (2017) lists four eating-related pieces of advice for staying healthy. In this particular case, health is defined as a stable stream of energy throughout the day, which can be achieved by following the few tips provided in the article. As can be seen in example (17), the article begins by pointing out that most Americans are unaware of their bad eating habits and by doing so, establishing the author's expertise and piquing the reader's interest. As most can probably relate to eating unhealthily at times, the wording attempts to benefit from this insecurity. Next, the article highlights the main culprit to low energy levels, which is the amount of sugar and anything that can turn into sugar after indigestion in most people's diets. As a solution, the article promises to introduce easy alternatives to foods containing sugar or simple carbohydrates.

- (17) -- most Americans—millennials especially (who scored the lowest of all age groups at 24 percent)—were misinformed on basic nutrition facts like the amount of sugar in their drinks and how certain foods convert to sugar in the body. In short, this means that most of us are likely eating foods that slow down our energy. Eeeek. (Keong 2017, Marie Claire.)

Although the primary goal of the article seems to be to educate the readers on avoiding excess and unnecessary sugars that have the tendency to spike blood sugar levels, the make-up of the article discredits sugar as unhealthy altogether, thus labelling it as “bad”. This becomes especially clear when looking at the alternatives the two nutritionists interviewed in the article suggest in example (18), including replacing sugar and carbohydrates with high-fibre grains and foods high in protein and fat. According to the same nutritionists, added sugar, bread, some fruits and low-fat products should be avoided respectively.

- (18) "For breakfast, instead of having low-fat yogurt with added fruit and sugar, have a full-fat Greek yogurt and add berries and nuts to it. Instead of having orange juice, have unsweetened tea. Or even have a whole milk instead of juice. Watch what you drink. Even your choice of fruits could be simple replacements. Instead of having bananas, have berries." (Keong 2017, Marie Claire.)

Although this format of separating foods into groups of “good” or “bad” is certainly easy to understand from the reader’s perspective, it also makes the parameters of healthy eating relatively narrow. As can be seen from this article, sugar is accentuated as the ultimate harmful ingredient, therefore providing a very limited view on healthy eating. Moreover, the list of healthy substitutes given in the article is quite sparse, thus leaving more questions about the regimen than providing answers. All in all, the article gives an impression that one’s eating habits could be easily made healthier, yet the content itself makes eating feel complicated with certain foods to avoid. At the same time, however, it needs to be questioned whether the diet presented in the article is actually healthy or not. With the main interviewee being a representative of Atkins Nutritionals Inc., a company famous for its high-fat and high-protein diets, the inclinations toward favouring fat and protein are understandable and consequently also biased.

A similar logic of assigning labels to foods could be detected in pregnancy-related articles as well. As an example, *10 Foods to Avoid If You're Trying to Get Pregnant* by Weiss (2017) lists various ingredients that should be avoided when trying to conceive. These ingredients include, among others, excessive alcohol use, raw animal products, soft cheeses and carbonated soft drinks. Similarly to the previous example, this article also discusses eating from a perspective of avoidance. In this case, however, the dividers between “good” and “bad” foods are the level of artificiality and, of course, the qualities of individual food items that are known to affect foetal development.

- (19) A recent study in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics* found that many women aren't eating as well as they should be when they're expecting a baby. (Eating right isn't easy, guys.) But if pregnant women are not nailing their diets once they're already pregnant, odds are their diets during the trying-to-conceive time aren't exactly full of greens and lean proteins either. So we wanted to know: What exactly constitutes a healthy diet when you're trying to conceive? Part of it is eating enough fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and other foods that are good for you, of course. Another is avoiding artificial ingredients, synthetic hormones, and potential contaminants that could make conception less likely and may be harmful to a potential fetus. (Weiss 2017, *Glamour*.)

Whereas the previous article persuaded the readers to click on the article by offering so-called “quick fixes” (“Food Hacks”) to healthy eating, this article in particular resorts to tactics of intimidation. First and foremost, it is noticeable how the overall tone of the article is negative. This becomes obvious when examining the lexical and phrasal choices presented in example (19), such as the repeated negative verbs (“aren’t”, “isn’t”) and the threatening if-clause (“if

pregnant women are not nailing their diet”). The writing also highlights the undesirable results (“harmful to a potential fetus”) as potentially applicable if not following the diet in question. Overall, the article sets negative expectations toward eating by directly stating how “eating right isn’t easy”.

### **Portion control and self-denial**

In addition to dividing foods into categories in accordance to their assumed health advantages or disadvantages, another tendency was to promote monitoring and controlling of one’s intake of food. As an example of such, *The Healthiest Fast Food Desserts You Can Order* by Weinberg (2017) attempts to help the readers in making better dessert choices at fast food restaurants by listing the nutritional values of 9 chosen fast food desserts. This article is part of a series that systematically reveals the contents of one fast food group at a time, previous writings including burgers, salads and breakfasts. The advice comprises of, for example, ordering from the children’s menu in order to avoid bigger portion sizes or opting for an option that has fewer calories, less sugar and less fat, even if the taste might not be as enjoyable as something a bit more indulgent. Also, the article lists mainly calorie, fat and sugar contents of the fast food desserts, therefore assigning them as the criteria of assessing healthiness.

- (20) -- That it's OK to have a little dessert. And it is ... if you choose wisely. As luck would have it, every restaurant's most popular treats are usually their most indulgent (we're looking at you McFlurry), but we found a handful of sweets that won't have you nursing a wicked food baby later in the day.  
(Weinberg 2017, Cosmopolitan.)

Even though example (20) is only the beginning paragraph of the article, it is revealing in its way of reflecting the eating ideologies marketed to the readership. Firstly, it needs to be pointed out that the article does not deem fast food unhealthy by definition. However, the wording seems to support the idea of restriction in the way it gives the reader permission to indulge at times (“it’s OK to have a little dessert”), but only if the portion size remains “little”. Also, the if-clause preceded by an ellipsis (“...if you choose wisely”) indicates that unless one is familiar with the nutritional values of their food and uses that knowledge to their advantage, something ominous might happen.

A similar perspective of constraining one's intake was featured in an article on GoodHousekeeping.com (*Cutting This One Food Out*, 2017), which introduced the weight-loss and fitness story of Anna Victoria, a former fast food addict and a present-day "fitspiration" (slang for "fit inspiration", Fitspiration, Oxford Dictionaries, n.d) idol. The article begins with a quick look at Victoria's history of unhealthy eating and the hospitalization that was caused by her fast food habit, followed by a number of tips on how she now keeps herself looking and feeling good. In practice, the article lists various recommendations for travel snacks, breakfast items and alike, saturated with Victoria's personal Instagram posts and before-and-after images to provide motivation.

Also in this case, willpower and self-denial are emphasized above all else as the keys to a better lifestyle. For instance, in the following example (21) Victoria confesses that she is still tempted by fast food ("who admits she's still that girl who loves junk food"), yet she has also learned how to control her desires ("keeps her splurges at bay"). Although this revelation about Victoria's inner character makes her more relatable to many of the readers who presumably struggle with keeping themselves from caving in to temptations too often, it also emphasizes the mental strength needed in making a change.

- (21) -- Victoria is now a certified fitspo-queen with 1.3 million followers on Instagram, where she is far from chronicling her latest meal of a burger and fries. The now personal trainer serves as an inspiration with pics of her beach-ready bod and healthy meals like smoothie bowls. We talked to Victoria — who admits she's still that girl who loves junk food — about how she keeps her splurges at bay. (*Cutting This One Food Out* 2017, Good Housekeeping.)

Instead of going over the number of calories in various dishes like in the previous article, Victoria explains her system of mixing "healthy" and "unhealthy" foods that includes maintaining a ratio of 80–20 per cent. As can be deducted from examples (22)-(23) below, this comprises of a diet of occasional "cheat meals", with 80% of the foods being lean meats and vegetables with a little bit of sauce. Again, staying on track with a reasonable diet is presented to require willpower ("Victoria stays strong", "The hard part is choosing it"), whereas the "cheat meal" represents an occasional relapse from the usual standard of eating. By referring to this deviation from a diet as a "cheat meal", the naming gives an impression of doing something "naughty" in secret, paralleled with cheating on test for future gain or giving in to temptations, such as cheating on one's partner. With these in mind, the message that the article conveys is that eating, for the most part, should be carefully rationed and monitored.



On the other hand, in order to hold on to the joy in life, the only option is to set aside a small allowance to deviate from the plan.

- (22) Anna Victoria admits to splurging pretty regularly — 20% of the time, to be exact. She enjoys a cheat meal every week — I think the 20% is just as important as the 80%. The 20% takes care of you emotionally. I think food should be fun ... you should be able to enjoy a meal out without feeling guilty about it." (*Cutting This One Food Out* 2017, Good Housekeeping.)
- (23) To help her make her 80% choices when she's eating out, she Victoria stays strong and keeps a complex plate full of well-balanced foods. Think lots of lean protein, veggies, and sauces and dressings on the side. "The hard part is choosing it," she admits. (*Cutting This One Food Out* 2017, Good Housekeeping.)

### **The unwanted effects on body**

Despite the fact that many of the headlines imply added health benefits, the main reasons to select lower calorie options are nearly always appearance-related. In Weinberg's (2017) article on healthy fast food desserts, the unwanted effects of eating the wrong types of desserts include "a wicked food baby", a widened waistline or spending too much of the daily quota of calories on dessert. In this equation, the author declares the editing staff (*us*) as the saviours of the readers' waistlines, signalling that the readers can rely on the magazine to rescue them from unnecessary calories and fat (see example 24).

- (24) -- you can thank us later for saving you 500 calories and 10 grams of fat. (Weinberg 2017, *Cosmopolitan*.)

Also Peng (2016) draws the reader's attention to thinking about the effects of eating on their body, generally implying that showing weight-gain, at least visibly, is undesirable. Peng's (2016) article, *What to Wear When You've Eaten Too Much*, introduces several outfits to help conceal the stomach after overeating or weight-gain, or distract the others from noticing. As is presented in the following examples (25)-(26), visible weight-gain is characterized as an *unwelcome visitor* and even paralleled to a body of a drowning victim, even though the article specifically ensures that it is **not** the case. Nevertheless, the overall message is that the effects of eating should not be seen on the outside. However, if one should gain noticeable weight, the illusion of slimness must be kept intact. In this way, the article guides the readers to feeling ashamed of their bodies, as well as their eating habits.

- (25) If your unwelcome visitor has dissipated a bit, swap out the bottoms for proper trousers and heels – – (Peng 2016, Marie Claire.)
- (26) Further mislead them (and yourself—it's all psychology) with shock-and-awe accessories that distract from your body, which is in NO WAY bloated like that of a drowning victim they find on SVU, no matter what you're thinking. (Peng 2016, Marie Claire.)

Similarly in Anna Victoria's (*Cutting This One Food Out*, 2017) case, the expectations the article sets for the rewards after pursuing her lifestyle include not just good health. For example, as was mentioned in example (21), dedicating oneself to a strict exercise routine and diet is depicted as resulting in a "beach-ready" body, fame on social media, a successful career and even happiness. In spite of Anna Victoria stating that health is the paramount for her, the writing undeniably focuses on Victoria's physique, which is discussed several times with a tone of admiration.

Although it cannot be stated that being aware of the negative effects and acknowledging the calorie contents of certain foods are problematic as such, the articles carry the schizophrenic notions of indulgence and restriction that were discussed in the previous studies. Whereas the readers are encouraged to treat themselves with pastries and cakes, they are also advised not to show it on the outside, as Peng (2016) demonstrates. The way Weinberg's (2017) article allows for an occasional treat, but only if the choice of treat is carefully reflected upon and will not damage one's looks, has an undertone of pressuring women to achieve or maintain a specific look. All in all, the essence is not to give their readers healthy eating advice, but to drive them into consuming unhealthy fast foods while also nurturing an unhealthy self-image.

### **Food trends as commercialized products**

The tendency to commercialize healthy eating was also detectable across the data pool. In fact, when looking at the article about Anna Victoria's diet (*Cutting This One Food Out*, 2017), the diet in question is presented in snippets that do not reveal too much about the entirety of the regimen, nor are the nutritional information shared in detail. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that Victoria's story is a mere catalyst that guides the reader to find out more about Victoria's diet. Indeed, when following the links included in the embedded Instagram posts on the page, it becomes apparent that the article is an advertorial-like piece that guides the reader to Victoria's fitness and meal plan business ([annavictoria.com](http://annavictoria.com)).

As can be seen from this, becoming healthy and gaining a “beach-ready body” is not only a matter of willpower and self-denial, but in the end also a commercialized product. When looking at the other articles as well, healthy eating advice is often sided with specific diets, food items, services or even representatives of various companies, such as the nutritionist from Atkins Nutritionals Inc. interviewed in Keong (2017). This trend was also visible in *Top 10 Healthy Food Trends You Need to Know in 2017* by London (2016), which lists various food families or themes that are expected to become popular soon. According to the article, the new food trends for the year 2017 include retro foods, white “neutral” foods, foods without added sugar or with reduced quantities of salt, as well as more specific diets such as a Micro-Mediterranean or a low-FODMAP diet. Respectively, in example (27) London (ibid.) also declares certain foods, such as the avocado toast and rainbow bagels, as already passé.

- (27) If you've eaten enough avocado toast and rainbow bagels to last a lifetime, freshen up on the latest food trends you'll be seeing everywhere once the ball drops. (London 2016, Good Housekeeping.)

The theming of various food types seems to be a marketing scheme, which makes the trends more easily recognizable and accessible to the public. Indeed, the recognisability seems to be the main focus of the article as almost none of the diets on the list are presented in the context of one’s daily life nor given a thorough dietetic reasoning. For instance, the descriptions promise various health benefits from weight-loss to improved physiological health (e.g. reduced risk of diseases, heart and stomach health), yet the nutritional values that make the diet healthy or unhealthy are lacking in most. For example, in the excerpt below the author states that certain white vegetables and produce are “serious superfoods”, yet the explanations of how to use them, as well as why and in which quantities these ingredients are healthy, are absent. This lack of information, alongside with a seemingly arbitrary association between white vegetables and health, suggests that being acquainted with the trend is more important than actually adopting it, therefore entailing some other types of benefits, such as social rewards. In other words, keeping up-to-date with food trends is an indicator of one’s personal trendiness, which in turn might result in received admiration or improved status.

- (28) RD's like me are certainly prone to using one-liners like "eat the rainbow!" But you should also fill your cart with neutral-toned ingredients in 2017. White asparagus, cauliflower, eggs, and of course, the oft-forgotten potato are serious superfoods! The #1 white-food trend we're excited to try this year: Tapioca everything. As a fiber and mineral-containing, naturally allergen-friendly grain-substitute (it's gluten, dairy and

nut-free), it can serve as a base for many baking recipes. (London 2016, Good Housekeeping.)

Articles that marketed healthy foods, such as London's (2016), also did so by blending other popular values with the concept of health. In example (28), the author expresses excitement toward the plethora of tapioca items that are to become in fashion soon. Tapioca is introduced as a gluten, dairy and nut-free grain-substitute that is also high in fibre and minerals, therefore labelled as extremely healthy. Although the ingredient might certainly be useful to a person with said allergies, the article associates allergen-friendliness with health in general.

A similar approach of endorsing diets that restrict or omit certain ingredients was noticeable in other articles as well, for instance in Jacoby Zoldan's (2017) article (*The 9 Best Healthy Food Delivery Services When You Just Can't With Grocery Shopping*) that was already briefly discussed in the previous section (6.2.1.) about women's home cooking. In Jacoby Zoldan's (2017) piece, various food delivery services are branded as healthy based on their dedications to organic produce and various "free-from" diets (e.g. vegan, vegetarian, Palaeolithic, gluten-free). However, since Jacoby Zoldan (ibid.) does not provide any evidence of health benefits, the argument of health must therefore be a matter of image. As green values (such as organic farming, protecting animal rights and opting for recyclable packaging) are typically associated with naturalness and benevolence, incorporating these values to diets give an overall impression of choosing the healthier and socially more acceptable alternative. With these in mind, healthy food seems to be portrayed as a form of public display of trendiness and philanthropy rather than a private matter of improving one's physical health. In this equation, the green values undoubtedly assist the selling of these diets and services.

### **Food and mental health issues**

As the previous discussions show, healthy or "normal" eating is often accompanied with the pressure of staying in control of one's body and relevant with food trends. However, some articles also took an opposing stand by criticizing portion control or sharing stories of troubled eating. *How I Recovered From an Eating Disorder I Didn't Think Was Real* by Jocelyn Runice (2017) is one such article that shares the author's personal experience with an eating disorder. In her article, Runice (2017) recalls her concerning eating habits and deteriorated self-image, as well as reports on her steps to recovery. In the following example

(29), Runice (2017) explains her behaviour at the time of her illness, which she has characterized in the preceding paragraphs as “sick”.

- (29) By this time, I was surviving on nothing more than a small baggie of Popchips a day. In my mind, Popchips were “good” for some inexplicable reason, and every other food was “bad.” – When my parents wanted to go out for dinner, I’d eat an appetizer or some smaller meal, not wanting to draw attention to the fact that I was restricting my caloric intake. But then we’d get home and I’d quietly cry myself to sleep, feeling like I was spiraling out of my own control. Every time I ate something other than my portioned-out Popchips, it was like this boulder I had been rolling up a hill—a burden of weight loss and self-control—tumbled back to the bottom, and I had to start all over, restricting myself more and more as punishment. (Runice 2017, *Glamour*.)

When looking at the mannerisms presented in example (29), it is noticeable that they reflect greatly the advice discussed earlier in this chapter. First of all, Runice (*ibid.*) reports believing that her usual portion of snacks was the only suitable food to consume, whereas all other foods needed to be avoided. Secondly, she also recalls keeping a constant calorie count of her food, at the same time trying to restrict her intake even more. Runice (2017) also documents the negative effects on her mental health caused by her illness, for instance the feelings of anxiety, shame, failure and spiralling out of control. Runice (*ibid.*) also states to have had punished herself due to failing her self-imposed diet, which relates back to the religious-like behaviour discussed in Lelwica (2011).

Even though Runice’s (2017) actions resemble the behavioural models presented in the previous examples, a connection between her eating disorder and the advice given on women’s media cannot be drawn, nor does Runice (2017) state what had caused her illness to break out and deteriorate. That being said, the constant exposure to these messages about avoiding and restricting foods might affect the line of thought in the long run, as was discussed in Hesse-Biber (2007) and Madden and Chamberlain (2010). What these contradicting articles do reveal is the incoherence and multivoicedness of messages within women’s media. Since the magazines do not seem to be committed to any specific medical or dietetical doctrine, the ideologies of health differ from article to article and author to author. What this means is that the end result is a confused image of health that is probably not helpful to a reader. In fact, it is presumable that these articles are meant to be read more as a form of entertainment rather than to be used as a source for health-related advice. Since the magazines are driven by the need to have as many people engage with their product as

possible, the constant flow of new food trends enables the magazines to keep their readers consuming their content.

All in all, the majority of the articles that specialized in healthy eating stories promoted a monitoring attitude toward food, including not only the scrutiny of the ingredients or nutritional values, but also being attentive to the changing trends. However, although these inclinations were shared across the articles and authors, the articles did not agree which ingredients and diets were healthy in particular. Whereas others disapproved of fast foods, others advised against specific food groups or ingredients, such as sugar. That being said, the magazines still depicted poor diets resulting in dire conditions, such as hospitalization or foetal complications at worst. More commonly, though, the magazines emphasized the visibility of a good or a poor diet in one's body, portraying healthiness as a toned body and unhealthiness as weight-gain. On the contrary, the minority of the articles also took a stand against the need to monitor through discussions of eating disorders. Based on these heterogeneous messages of health, it is justified to argue that the image of healthy eating in women's lifestyle magazines is scattered and lacks professional competence in the fields of dietetics and medical science. With the advice relying on trends and individual, varying sources of information, the suggestions should be taken as entertainment, not serious nutritional advice. However, the readers with weak skills of media criticism might not have the ability to evaluate the advice.

### ***Food as a communicative artefact***

When looking at the data as a whole, the vast majority of the articles that covered women's eating consisted of short news about new food item releases from miscellaneous food brands. The most noticeable factor about these articles was their commercialized angle. First of all, the brands that were given journalistic attention were almost without exception large multinational corporations that have a notable presence among the consumerist market already, such as McDonald's, Starbucks and Oreos. Although the articles were not marked as advertisements, it is likely that these brands receive coverage due to their affiliations with the magazine brands or through paid reviews. Secondly, a typical approach in marketing these products was the attempts at creating hype around them. In most cases, the food items were designed to look unique and interesting, so that they have visual impact. In addition, the articles often praised various elements about the products, therefore also attempting to incite

the readers to try them. In this chapter, I will analyse what kinds of foods are marketed to women, and how these foods depict women as consumers.

The foods promoted in the articles were mostly fast foods, snacks and desserts, such as doughnuts, slushies, sweet coffee drinks and biscuits. Based on this, it could be interpreted that an average modern-day woman is expected to visit fast-food restaurants and purchase sweet desserts quite often, which is why they are constantly advertised. This assumption is in keeping with the previous observations about women's home cooking, which found out that women's magazines depict women as resorting to takeaways and premade foods at home in order to save time and effort (See Chapter 6.2.1. *Women's cooking at home*). What is quite peculiar, however, is the contradiction between the types of products advertised and the overall health discourse in the magazines. Whereas a notable portion of the articles emphasized the importance of eating healthily (as was seen in Chapter 6.2.2. *Healthy and unhealthy eating*) including limiting one's fast food intake, the vast majority of the individual product releases endorsed the opposite. With this in mind, it seems that the magazines support both opposing arguments simultaneously. This demonstrates the lack of cohesion among the articles and the overall incoherence within the magazine. From a reader's point of view, this mix of messages might ultimately appear as confusing, even hypocritical.

Most of the individual food items were quite ornate, decorative and even feminine in style. For instance, in his article, Rosa (2017) introduces Starbucks's new Unicorn Frappuccino, which is a sweet mango-flavoured coffee drink that changes colour from purple and blue to pink when stirred. The coffee is topped with whipped cream and layered with pink and blue powders. Mei (2016) also reports on a comparably intricate trend in the world of desserts; various pastries frosted with purple, blue and pink swirls that form a galaxy-like pattern. Although the decorativeness, intricacy, as well as the soft pastel colours of these cannot be labelled as strictly feminine, they are qualities that would probably be more associated with the female gender in general. Moreover, these dishes relate back to Inness's (2001) discussions on women's cookbooks in the early 1900s, which often included recipes of dainty and ornamental small cakes and desserts for luncheons.

The imaginative look is undoubtedly also a marketing gimmick. When looking at the texts, it becomes clear that the images are trusted to draw in the majority of the interest, as the taste profiles of the food items are described quite sparingly. This indicates that the items are

mainly designed to catch the eye and have a visual impact in photographs. In the following example (30), Rosa (2017) admits the taste being a secondary factor in the evaluation of the Unicorn Frappuccino, stating that its potential to take a good picture and gain attention on social media (*instagrammability*) is far more important for the consumer.

- (30) As for how it tastes (which, who cares as long as it's Instagrammable), the release describes it as being “made with a sweet dusting of pink powder, blended into a crème Frappuccino with mango syrup and layered with a pleasantly sour blue drizzle,” then finished with “vanilla whipped cream and a sprinkle of sweet pink and sour blue powder topping.” (Rosa 2017, Glamour.)

This camera-worthy appearance was also a notable shared quality among the articles that promoted similar new releases. As coverage on social media is essentially free advertising for the companies, it is presumable that the photogenicity and the sharing potential have been taken into account even in the early stages of product development, thus resulting in whimsical dishes like the galaxy foods or the Unicorn Frappuccino. Through clever productization, it is likely that the brands aim at creating hype around their products and even making them social media sensations. Relating to this, the articles emphasized social media as the arena to share experiences related to the products, particularly visual-based platforms, such as Instagram. Whereas the graphics of multiple articles comprised of embedded Instagram posts with images of the trendy foods, some authors suggested visiting the venues or trying recreating the foods at home, and taking pictures of them. For instance, the examples (31)-(32) demonstrate the many ways the readers are pushed to using social media, ranging from Matera’s (2017) direct suggestion to Tullo’s (2017) personal opinion as the author.

- (31) So what are you waiting for? Go forth and conquer unicorn noodles. And then, of course, Instagram it for all of us to see. (Matera 2017, Glamour.)
- (32) This year, the food at Coachella might be more Instagram-worthy than the flower crowns and crop tops. (Tullo 2017, Cosmopolitan.)

Another factor that makes these items tempting to the consumer and increases the desire to photograph them, is the image associated with the brands in question. For instance, since most of the brands, such as Starbucks (Rosa 2017), McDonald’s (Adebowale 2017), and Oreos (O’Neil Bellomo 2017) are strongly connected with a cosmopolitan lifestyle, including an image of sipping a takeaway coffee while carrying a doughnut bag in the other hand, toting these items allows the consumer to showcase a similar image. In addition, the individual



appears trendy in the eyes of her peers by keeping up with the latest product releases of these brands and by being the first to try them. This tendency to use food as a communicative artefact that conveys the desired image or social status of a person is not only limited to displaying those trends on themselves, but it extends to other areas as well, such as motherhood. The article by Bonner (2015) is an example of such phenomenon, reporting the possibility of Kate Middleton, the Duchess of Cambridge, launching a line of homegrown, organic baby food. In this case, the food trends are showcased through children, who act as the extensions to the mother's public image. In other words, feeding one's child the food developed by a member of the British royal family separates the mother from other mothers and associates her with the characteristics of the British royalty, such as opulence and upper class sophistication.

This behaviour relates to Talbot's (1995) studies about *consumption communities* that are created around food brands and individual products. As Talbot (1995) had theorized already more than 20 years prior, one goal of marketing is to foster a sense of belonging and community around products, which in turn increase customer loyalty. By purchasing a product, the consumer enters a group that is associated with the product's image, therefore also receiving the social benefits linked to that group. These social benefits in turn motivate the individual to repurchase the product in order to maintain the status quo. On the other hand, the company profits from this loyalty since the frequent repurchases help boost the sales and their reputation.

Based on these observations, the majority of the foods advertised to women are fantastical-looking and elaborate fast foods and desserts. With a great number of these items being sweet or generally considered quite unhealthy, they contradict with the general message of pushing the readers in making healthy food choices and reigning in their temptations. However, quite interestingly, the articles elevated the photogenicity of the items above the taste, even stating it is a more meaningful quality in the products. What this suggests, is that these items are consumed in order to gain other benefits outside enjoying the flavours, such as increased popularity on social media or the respect of peers. In relation to this, many of the articles directly suggested the readers to try the items themselves and sharing their images on social media. Another reason for the demand of these food items is their value as communicative artefacts. Through the consumption of specific products, the consumer is allowed an entrance to a community that is associated with the qualities of brand, such as sophistication or

trendiness. For instance, by publicly consuming takeaway coffees, the individual communicates their inclination toward a metropolitan lifestyle, in which the takeaway coffee acts as a symbol of a busy life in the city. Similarly, by purchasing baby food designed by the Duchess of Cambridge, the mother signals her taste in higher-class brands. All in all, the data indicates that women are pushed to consume various food products for the feeling of inclusiveness and other social rewards, rather than for the taste or the exceptional quality of the products.

## 7 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of the study was to observe how the relationship between women and food is represented in the online articles of contemporary American women's magazines, thus narrowing the focus on especially the ideologies and female representations communicated through cooking and eating. The materials chosen for the study were the online articles of four mainstream American women's magazines (Cosmopolitan, Marie Claire, Glamour and Good Housekeeping), 25 articles from each magazine, together forming a data pool of a hundred cases. These magazines were selected as the source of data due to their popularity among American women and their vast circulations, but also because of a notable online article archive on their websites. The data collection was conducted by first typing the keyword "food" into the search engines of the magazine websites, then selecting the first 25 corresponding articles from each search. Since the search engines filtered the results in accordance to their relevance to the keyword, not date, the selection was kept random and did not represent any particular season.

After the data collection, the articles were analysed in two parts. First, the articles were divided into main categories and subcategories according to the methodology of Grounded Theory Method (GTM). With the help of GTM, the theoretical outline was allowed to form on the basis of the data alone, rather than assigning the instances of data into prefabricated categories. In practice, each article was assessed individually in terms of its topic and content, and then moved to a category based on its similarities or dissimilarities with other pieces of data, either complying with a previously generated category or expanding out to form a new category altogether. As a result, this process produced eight main categories. These categories were then examined more closely, rearranged and further divided into subcategories. After completing this process, the end product consisted of a detailed classification of the data, i.e. *a grounded theory*. After arranging the data by using the Grounded Theory Method and selecting the most beneficial themes for later inspection, these themes were then looked at in the light of Michelle Lazar's Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, assisted by Faircloughian approach to CDA. In this stage, the main goal was to analyse the texts in a way that would answer the research question, at the same time keeping the feminist perspective in mind.

As elaborated in more detail in Chapter 6.1., the majority of the articles focused on food as a form of entertainment with 26 % of the data. The second most popular topic was the impacts of food to the body, comprising of 21% of the data and ranging from healthy eating advice to pregnancy-related topics. The third most common article type was to promote individual food items with 17% of the data, mainly including notifications on the latest product releases from large brands. Although cooking and food as a career were in the minority of topics, together they comprised of 16% of the overall data. In order to answer the research question about how women's cooking and eating are depicted in the magazines, four themes were selected for a more detailed examination on the basis of the tendencies portrayed in these categories: women's cooking at home, women as food professionals, focus on healthy eating and body, and food advertorials. In the next paragraphs, I will go over my findings one category at a time and discuss their relations to the previous research.

In general, the articles showed a division in the way women were portrayed as home cooks. On one hand, women were depicted as too busy or incapable to cook, and because of that resorting to microwaving frequently. At the other end of the spectrum, women were portrayed as the family cooks, serving large portions of hearty but healthy dishes for their families. In between these two polar opposites, some articles shared tips on elevating easy meals by means of exquisite ingredients or occasionally putting more effort into food, therefore presenting cooking as hobby-like and connected to indulgence. Based on these, women are largely no longer portrayed as *domestic goddesses* in magazines, but resemble Inness's (2001) characterizations of men's cooking. According to Inness (2001), men's cookbooks have always distinguished their style of cooking from women's by presenting it as a voluntary activity and an art form. Consequently, it is not connected to domesticity, but a product of creativity and a demonstration of skill. In a similar way, present-day women's magazines indicate that cooking is not a service or a feminine duty, but an activity to be enjoyed, as well as a way to enhance one's everyday living from the basis of volunteerism. Good Housekeeping, on the contrary, was the only magazine to present women as the family cooks. In this case, women were often portrayed as proactive and in constant anticipation to take care of the needs of others. For instance, the articles reminded women to be prepared for serving second portions and think ahead about their spending of money or the effects of their consumption to the environment. That being said, Good Housekeeping in accordance to its

title targets a more domestic-oriented readership, which is why this division in ideologies is quite understandable.

Nevertheless, regardless of skill-level or interest in cooking, an observable trend among the data was the tendency to present most tips in the forms of shortcuts and “hacks”, or promote various activities and tasks as “simple” or “easy”. This implies that present-day women are interested in advice that will make their lives easier or speed up the processes. In terms of cooking-related advice, the standard was to promise short cooking times or present recipes as not too challenging for anyone to attempt. Some articles even suggested outsourcing various tasks to the service industry, including resorting to takeaways and ordering pre-prepped ingredients to one’s doorstep. Quite interestingly, the articles did not pose any detailed arguments to support the need for making things easier or accelerating the general pace, but instead treated it as an intrinsic value. With these in mind, based on the evidence, the assumption is that the modern-day woman is preoccupied with other aspects of life that take up time from housework, such as social life, work and hobbies.

This trajectory of women relying increasingly more on various services shows that while women’s status in society has improved significantly over the course of the last decades, managing domestic duties has taken a form that bears resemblance to the time before the American Civil War. As Williams (2012) notes, many households relied on service staff to perform most of the domestic duties until the late 1800s, after which they started to shift over to the women of the family. Based on the representations in the magazines, these tasks are once again allocated to the service industry, and although the providers of the service are no longer adjacent to homes like the servants of the late 1800s, the influence of a service-reliant culture over households is potentially remarkable. Hence, even though the articles referenced women’s home cooking at present, it is possible that it is an area that may continue to deteriorate and interest even less in the future.

However, it has to be taken into account, that even though the magazines do not cover women’s home cooking in large numbers, and portray it requiring only little effort, it is not necessarily a reflection of reality. As Bugge and Almås (2006), Moisio et al. (2004) and Inness (2001) concluded in their studies, cooking was commonly regarded as a woman’s responsibility among their target groups, resulting in women feeling inadequate and even unwomanly in the event of them lacking in that particular skill. Since this study concentrated

only on the representations featured in women's magazines without comparing the findings to real life, it could be interpreted that the type of a carefree and effortless life portrayed in the magazines feeds the hedonistic side of women by portraying a dream-like state or even serving as an escape from reality. The reality of the matter, however, might still resemble the results of the previous studies. Nevertheless, if the content of the magazines is taken as a reflection of the wishes and desires of the present-day female readerships, women are certainly looking for ways to minimize the time and effort needed in the kitchen.

The types of foods that were endorsed for the readerships to cook at home reflect Fürst's (1997) results, mainly consisting of traditional, robust and seasonal meals, such as casseroles, soups and pies. On the other hand, some articles leaned more towards the ideas presented in Inness (2001), encouraging the readers to take on more elaborate and "fiddly" recipes, such as the *unicorn noodles*. These two food types were noticeably distinguished by the medium, with Good Housekeeping introducing the majority of the hearty recipes, while the other magazines focused on complex-looking dishes. However, since the data on the types of dishes women were encouraged to cook at home was quite sparse, these results need to be considered more as a small sampling of a larger theme, rather than a complete representation of women's home cooking.

Whereas cooking at home focused more on utilizing seasonal ingredients or trying out the latest food trends, food-related careers, quite interestingly, were often depicted as the playfields of personal interest and self-expression. In the selected examples, many of the female food professionals commented to have had changed their careers in the hopes of finding a job that would satisfy their needs to be creative, contribute more to society or even become more "complete" as a person. With these factors in mind, it seems that food-related careers are currently seen as carrying a deeper meaning than just being a source of income, even being characterized as a gateway to success and happiness. This direction was already pointed out in Harris and Giuffre (2015), who had observed the increasing popularity of cooking as a career choice. According to their study, cooking has transformed from a servant-level job into becoming the new take on the American Dream, which is an ideal that sees every American with determination and diligence as having an equal opportunity to succeed. Harris and Giuffre (2015) also argue that the recent rise in interest could also be due to the general deterioration of cooking skills within society, which has elevated those with said skills above the general level. In other words, since the number of people with cooking skills

has decreased, the people with notable skills have become celebrity-like entertainers. Because of this, cooking is no longer depicted as “just a job”, but framed as a way to express oneself on a more meaningful and publicly respected level.

In the professional world, one’s cultural heritage was also emphasized more compared to cooking at home. On one hand, food and cooking were seen as ways to communicate one’s cultural background to other people, in this way either reinforcing one’s own cultural background and maintaining relationships with people within the same community, or in turn to build bridges between communities and establish new relationships. For instance, Ericka Lassair’s story highlighted the importance of staying connected with one’s roots (Wood Rudolph 2017), whereas Mallon’s (2016) and Leal’s (2016) cases demonstrated how the merging of different food cultures had the potential to increase the added value. On the other hand, one’s background also served as a way to distinguish oneself from the competition and functioned as an element of uniqueness, such as in the case of Rachel Yang (Leal 2016). Yang was described to utilize her Korean heritage in innovating new fusion dishes, thus giving Yang an important competitive advantage.

In terms of eating, a peculiar common nominator across the data was the emphasis on health. Healthiness was constantly brought up in various contexts as the main goal of eating, whereas the previous studies had mostly discussed women’s eating from the perspectives of weight-loss and beauty. Weight-loss and beauty ideals were still clearly present in the process, yet in this case they were often portrayed as the embodiments of health rather than separate intrinsic values. In practice, this meant that many of the articles promoted their advice and tips to help the readers to become *healthier*, rather than more beautiful or thinner, even if the advice focused on appearance or weight-loss. The frequent usage of “health” as the keyword in promoting content could indicate that it is a topic that has become trendy lately. As for where the pursuit for health stems from, the data does not provide a direct answer. However, based on the evidence, it could be that *being healthy* has recently become synonymous with *beautiful*. As Veit (2013) points out, *fatness* had been widely associated with good health and wealth before the First World War, until thinness was suddenly seen as more aesthetically pleasing. Since thinness has been criticized steadily since the rise of eating disorders in the late 1960s and due to the pro-Ana movement, it is possible that *health*, both physical and mental, has risen as the latest symbol of success.

However, the embodiment of health was not straightforward, as the articles did not agree on the definition. Some articles depicted health through appearance, typically showcasing it in the form of an either muscular or a slim body. On the contrary, visible weight-gain was often framed as shameful and even as a point of disgust. As a solution to this feminine problem, the magazines taught the readers how to hide their bodies or distract looks away from their stomachs. Some articles also associated health with specific ingredients or diets, such as organic foods, the FODMAP diet or gluten-free products. Based on these observations, it is clear that healthiness is paralleled with the ideas of beauty and attractiveness, and even commercialized and productized in the same way. This is in keeping with Inness' (2013) argument about women's magazines being known to suggest that femininity can be achieved through purchasing specific products. Whereas Inness's (2013) statement was related to beauty at the time, this idea could be extended to healthiness as well.

Some examples also underlined healthiness as a mental quality to control one's impulses and moderate the intake of food. The readers were actively encouraged to, for example, count sugars, calories or fats in their food, in this way ensuring that they did not exceed their daily quotas. Similarly, the readers were also pushed to substitute certain ingredients in their diets to healthier options. These pieces of advice, however, were dietetically and nutritionally questionable, as they were often provided by a biased party (such as Atkins Nutritionals Inc.), or were based on the experiences of a single person (such as Anna Victoria's eating routine). Oddly enough, the articles also promoted the opposing ideology, thus reminding the readers to indulge on unhealthy foods once in a while, portraying occasional "deviations" from a healthy diet as normal. In addition, the magazines shared content that acted as warnings against the notion of restriction. For instance, Runice's (2017) personal experiences demonstrated the harms of being over-controlling over food, having resulted in an eating disorder. Runice's (2017) story also reflected the ideas discussed in Lelwica (2011), including a religious-like approach to her weight-loss journey. In the same way as Lelwica (2011) parallels women's urges to exercise in order to burn off unwanted calories to the religious act of purging, Runice (2017) also admits punishing herself from eating too much. In general, the lack of consistency across the data suggested that the magazines were not committed to one dietetic doctrine, but changed their views depending on the article.

The contradictive nature was also present in the way specific products received coverage. The magazines frequently notified the readers about new products releases that were usually



unhealthy, such as sweet coffee drinks, fast foods and snacks, despite the number of articles that recommended avoiding such foods. The selling point of these products was rooted in their brand value, which was conveyed as a tool in signalling one's lifestyle and status. For instance, many of the products embodied a metropolitan lifestyle, thus suggesting that purchasing the product would allow the consumer to be part of a community of like-minded people. The readers were also encouraged to share their pictures of the products on social media or to join in on other fads, especially on Instagram, consequently boosting the product sales and earning respect and attention within their peer group. Like this, the magazines systematically cultivated a consumption-based culture around their readerships, as Talbot (1995) and Duffy (2013) had pointed out earlier.

However, due to these frequent inconsistencies, it could be stated that the magazines illustrate the unsisterly behaviour that was theorized by Talbot (1995). While portraying itself as a fellow woman and constantly establishing its authority over how to think about eating, which products to buy and what to cook, the magazines offered unreliable advice that often contradicted with itself. Instead, the magazines sought out to guide the reader into consuming various products in order to achieve various benefits, such as increased health, beauty, social rewards, and even express their individuality.

As for the overall representations of femininity, the data showed a clear division that was in keeping with Williams's (2012) theory of *traditional* and *resistant* femininities. Women were persistently portrayed to personify both resistant and traditional qualities in their demeanour. In a professional context, women were depicted to possess attributes that are conventionally associated with masculinity, such as assertiveness and strength. For example, the female business owners were shown to stay persistent and tough through various hurdles on their way to success, such as sexism, exhaustion, and lack of funds, eventually having won them. The female chefs, on the other hand, were celebrated as influential, skilful and competitive in a field that is still mostly dominated by men, even referring to them as "badasses". Through these experiences, the women in question were idolized as the strong faces of female empowerment and embodiments of resistant femininity. That being said, toughness was equally accompanied by softness. All articles on female food professionals reported on their softer side, for instance, by writing about their fluctuating feelings, attentiveness to other people's needs and their aspirations to help the world. A similar tendency was seen in other parts of the data as well. For example, women with family were reported as prone to taking

care of others and considering the environment, while many of the articles that covered women's eating guided the readers to focus on appearance and their public image. These attributes, respectively, are typically associated with *traditional* femininity, a femininity type that is connected to socioemotional and communal tendencies.

As to conclude, the findings of this study largely agree and reflect the theses of the previous research. However, as any research, this study could benefit from further development as well. First of all, although the number of articles used as the material was set to a hundred, the dispersion of data into multiple categories and subcategories caused the sample sizes in individual categories to remain small. Because of this, the number of articles that corresponded to each notion was sparse at times. Therefore, in order to verify the reliability of these categories and the interpretations based on them, a study in a larger scale could be beneficial. However, due to the restrictions of time and resources the data pool was kept at a hundred cases at this time. On the other hand, since tendencies and trends were detectable from the data, and the majority of the results agreed with the previous research, it could be concluded that this study continues the long line of studies on women's food culture. In addition, since a great amount of feminist media research has been dedicated to discovering patriarchal biases and reinforcing the weight-loss ethos, I believe that the emphasis on health discourse allowed this study to contribute to the field of feminist media research in an unpredictable way. This study also offers some interesting starting points for future examination. For instance, although the scope of this study was narrowed to focus on male-female dichotomy, similar topics could be observed from the angle of LGBT identities. In addition, future research might also benefit from the multimodal approach to analysis, including the study of images and other visual communication. Therefore, this study is only a small contributor to the large pool of feminist studies and a reflection of the present time.

## 8 REFERENCES

### Primary sources

- Adebowale, T. (2017). OMG, McDonald's Is Adding Slushies to Its Menu. *Cosmopolitan* [online]. 6 April, 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.cosmopolitan.com/food-cocktails/a9240968/mcdonalds-minute-maid-slushies/>
- Baxter-Wright, D. (2017). Ladies, Watch Your Takeout: Leftover Rice Could Make You Very Sick If You Don't Do This One Thing. *Marie Claire* [online]. 28 March, 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.marieclaire.com/food-cocktails/a26230/leftover-rice-make-you-sick/>
- Bensman, J. (2017). The 6 Secret Ingredients That'll Make Your Slapdash Dinner Taste Like Real Italian Food. *Marie Claire* [online]. 5 January, 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.marieclaire.com/travel/a23859/secret-italian-ingredients/>
- Bonner, M. (2015). Your Future Child Could Eat Baby Food Made by Kate Middleton. *Marie Claire* [online]. 18 November 2015. Retrieved from <https://www.marieclaire.com/celebrity/news/a17059/kate-middleton-baby-food/>
- Clasen, T. (2017). 35 Comfort Food Dishes That Are Perfect for Fall. *Good Housekeeping* [online]. 26 October, 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/food-recipes/healthy/g978/comfort-food/>
- Cutting This One Food Out of Her Diet Dramatically Sculpted This Woman's Body. *Good Housekeeping* [online]. 24 April 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/health/diet-nutrition/news/a43848/what-fitspo-star-anna-victoria-eats-in-a-day/>
- Henriques, S. (2017). 8 Common Food You Should Never Reheat. *Cosmopolitan* [online]. 11 March, 2017. Retrieved from <http://www.cosmopolitan.com/food-cocktails/a9120967/foods-you-shouldnt-reheat/>
- Jacoby Zoldan, R. (2017). The 9 Best Healthy Food Delivery Services When You Just Can't With Grocery Shopping. *Glamour* [online]. 7 April, 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.glamour.com/story/healthy-food-delivery-services>
- Keong, L. (2017). 4 Food Hacks That Help You Maintain Your Energy Throughout the Day. *Marie Claire* [online]. 21 April 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.marieclaire.com/health-fitness/a26660/foods-that-help-maintain-energy/>
- Leahey McKeegan, C. (2017). Sarah Michelle Gellar's Second Act? Disrupting the Food Industry. *Marie Claire* [online]. 18 april, 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.marieclaire.com/career-advice/a26483/sarah-michelle-gellar-foodstirs/>
- Leal, S. (2016). Meet the 21 Badass Women Changing the Food World as We Know It. *Marie Claire* [online]. 2 May 2016. Retrieved from <https://www.marieclaire.com/culture/g3676/james-beard-award-female-nominees/>
- London, J. (2016). Top 10 Healthy Food Trends You Need to Know in 2017. *Good Housekeeping* [online]. 14 December 2016. Retrieved from

<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/health/diet-nutrition/news/g4073/healthy-food-trends-2017/>

- Mallon, M. (2017). How One Woman Is Using Food to Help Refugees Assimilate to American Life. *Glamour* [online]. 15 February, 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.glamour.com/story/how-one-woman-is-using-food-to-help-refugees-assimilate-to-american-life>
- Matera, A. (2017). Even If You Can Barely Cook, You Can Make These Mystical Unicorn Noodles. *Glamour* [online]. 22 March, 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.glamour.com/story/unicorn-noodles>
- Mei, G. (2016a). Galaxy Food Is the New Rainbow Food– and It’s Even More Gorgeous. *Marie Claire* [online]. 8 June 2016. Retrieved from <https://www.marieclaire.com/food-cocktails/a20945/galaxy-food/>
- O’Neil Bellomo, R. (2017). Oreo Might Be Coming Out With Salted Caramel And Coconut Flavors. *Cosmopolitan* [online]. 7 April 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.cosmopolitan.com/food-cocktails/a9244240/oreo-thins-salted-caramel-coconut/>
- Peng, C. (2016). What to Wear When You've Eaten Too Much. *Marie Claire* [online]. 5 December 2016. Retrieved from <https://www.marieclaire.com/fashion/news/g4259/what-to-wear-after-eating-too-much/>
- Rosa, C. (2017). Starbucks Is Definitely Releasing a Unicorn Frappuccino. *Glamour* [online]. 17 April 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.glamour.com/story/starbucks-release-unicorn-frappuccino>
- Runice, J. (2017). How I Recovered From an Eating Disorder I Didn’t Think Was Real. *Glamour* [online]. 27 March 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.glamour.com/story/how-i-recovered-from-an-eating-disorder-i-didnt-think-was-real>
- Tullo, D. (2017). Proof the Food Is the Best Thing About Coachella. *Cosmopolitan* [online]. 4 April 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.cosmopolitan.com/food-cocktails/a9228753/what-food-is-at-coachella/>
- Vigoreaux, G. (2016). Shop Your Kitchen: 24 Ways to Stop Wasting Food This Month. *Good Housekeeping* [online]. 14 September, 2016. Retrieved from <https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/food-recipes/cooking/g3852/food-waste/>
- Weinberg, S. (2017). The Healthiest Fast Food Desserts You Can Order. *Cosmopolitan* [online]. 20 March 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.cosmopolitan.com/food-cocktails/a9155481/healthiest-fast-food-desserts/>
- Weiss, S. (2017). 10 Foods to Avoid If You’re Trying to Get Pregnant. *Glamour* [online]. 5 April 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.glamour.com/story/foods-to-avoid-if-youre-trying-to-get-pregnant>
- Wood Rudolph, H. (2017). Get That Life: How I Turned a Failed Restaurant Into a Successful Food Truck. *Cosmopolitan* [online]. 27 March 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.cosmopolitan.com/career/a9179053/diva-dawg-food-truck-ericka-lassair-get-that-life/>

## Secondary sources

- Bainbridge, D. (2003). *The X in Sex*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Breckenridge, J. (2014). *Doing Classic Grounded Theory: The Data Analysis Process*. London: SAGE.
- Bugge, A. B. and Almås, R. (2006). Domestic Dinner: Representations and Practices of a Proper Meal among Young Suburban Mothers. *Journal of Consumer Culture* 6 (2), 203-228.
- Coates, J. (2001). Language and Gender. In N. J. S. B. Baltes (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*. Oxford: Pergamon, 8288-8292.
- Condé Nast (2018.) Glamour. <http://www.condenast.com/brands/glamour/>. (19 January, 2018).
- Cramer, J. and Creedon, P. J. (2007). *Women in Mass Communication*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Delahunty, A., and Dignen, S. (2010). Twiggy. In *The Oxford Dictionary of Reference and Allusion*. Oxford University Press. Retrieved from <http://www.oxfordreference.com.ezproxy.jyu.fi/view/10.1093/acref/9780199567454.001.0001/acref-9780199567454-e-1859>. (13 May 2018).
- del-Teso-Craviotto, M. (2006). Words that Matter: Lexical Choice and Gender Ideologies in Women's Magazines. *Journal of Pragmatics* 38 (11), 2003-2021. doi: <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.jyu.fi/10.1016/j.pragma.2005.03.012>.
- Duffy, B. E. (2013). *Remake, Remodel: Women's Magazines in the Digital Age*. Baltimore, US: University of Illinois Press.
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Media Discourse*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Fairclough, N. (2001). Critical Discourse Analysis as a Method in Social Scientific Research. In R. Wodak and M. Meyer (eds.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis: Introducing Qualitative Methods*. London: Sage.
- Feminine. (n.d.) In *Oxford Dictionaries Online*. Retrieved from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/feminine>. (8 October 2017).
- Femininity. (n.d.) In *Oxford Dictionaries Online*. Retrieved from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/femininity>. (8 October 2017).
- Fitspiration. (n.d.) In *Oxford Dictionaries Online*. Retrieved from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/fitspiration>. (20 January 2019).
- Fürst, E. L. (1997). Cooking and Demininity. *Women's Studies International Forum* 20 (3), 441-449. doi: [http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.jyu.fi/10.1016/S0277-5395\(97\)00027-7](http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.jyu.fi/10.1016/S0277-5395(97)00027-7).
- Gee, J. P. (2006). *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). New York: Routledge.
- Glaser, B. G., & Holton, J. (2004). Remodeling Grounded Theory. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 5(2) n. pag. Retrieved 18 November 2018 from <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.jyu.fi/docview/869223799?accountid=11774>

- Glaser, B. G. and Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory : Strategies for Qualitative Research*. New Brunswick (U.S.A.) and London (U.K.): A Division of Transaction Publishers.
- Gough-Yates, A. (2003). *Understanding Women's Magazines: Publishing, Markets and Readerships*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Harris, D. A. and Giuffre, P. (2015). *Taking the Heat : Women Chefs and Gender Inequality in the Professional Kitchen*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.
- Hearst (2018a). Cosmopolitan. <http://www.hearst.com/magazines/cosmopolitan>. (19 January, 2018).
- Hearst (2018b). Good Housekeeping. <http://www.hearst.com/magazines/good-housekeeping>. (19 January, 2018).
- Hearst (2018c). Marie Claire. <http://www.hearst.com/magazines/marie-claire>. (19 January, 2018).
- Hesse-Biber, S. N. (2007). *The Cult of Thinness* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Inness, S. A. (2001). *Dinner Roles: American Women and Culinary Culture*. Iowa City: University of Iowa City.
- Inness, S. A. (2007). Pretty tough: The Cult of Femininity in Women's Magazines. In C. Carter and L. Steiner (eds.), *Critical Readings: Media and Gender*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Jefferson, S. E. and Weingarten, C. N. (2009). *Sex Chromosomes: Genetics, abnormalities and disorders*. New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc.
- Jørgensen, M. W. and Phillips, L. J. (2002). *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*. London: Thousand Oaks, Calif, Sage Publications 2002.
- Lazar, M. M. (2005). *Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis: Gender, Power, and Ideology in Discourse*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lazar, M. M. (2007). Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis: Articulating a Feminist Discourse Praxis. *Critical Discourse Studies* 4 (2), 141-164.
- Lelwica, M. (2011). The Religion of Thinness. *Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis* 23, 257-285.
- Litosseliti, L. (2006). *Gender and language: Theory and practice*. London: Hodder Arnold.
- Madden, H. and Chamberlain, K. (2010). Nutritional Health, Subjectivity and Resistance: Women's Accounts of Dietary Practices. *Health* 14 (3), 292-309.
- Magazine. (n.d.) In *Oxford Dictionaries Online*. Retrieved from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/magazine>. (23 April 2018).
- Masculine. (n.d.) In *Oxford Dictionaries Online*. Retrieved from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/masculine>. (8 October 2017).
- Masculinity. (n.d.) In *Oxford Dictionaries Online*. Retrieved from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/masculinity>. (8 October 2017).

- Moisio, R., Arnould, E. J. and Price, L. L. (2004). Between Mothers and Markets: Constructing Family Identity Through Homemade Food. *Journal of Consumer Culture* 4 (3), 361-384.
- O'Connor, C. (2016). Mattel launches Barbie in curvy, tall, petite body types and diverse skin, eye, hair colors [online]. *Forbes.com*, Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/clareoconnor/2016/01/28/mattel-launches-barbie-in-curvy-tall-petite-body-types-and-diverse-skin-eye-hair-colors/#21253080fe46>. (28 January 2016).
- O'Shaughnessy, J. and O'Shaughnessy, N. J. (2004). *Persuasion in advertising*. London: Routledge.
- Plastic Surgery Statistics Report 2016*. American Society of Plastic Surgeons [online]. <https://www.plasticsurgery.org/documents/News/Statistics/2016/plastic-surgery-statistics-full-report-2016.pdf>. (29 January 2018).
- Reynolds, C. and LoRusso, S. (2016). The Women's Magazine Diet: Frames and Sources in Nutrition and Fitness Articles. *Journal of Magazine & New Media Research*, 17 (1), 1-23.
- Ross, K. (2010). *Gendered Media: Women, Men, and Identity Politics*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Spence, J. T. and Buckner, C. (1995). Masculinity and Femininity: Defining the Undefinable. In P. J. Kalbfleisch and M. J. Cody (eds.), *Gender, Power, and Communication in Human Relationships*. Hillsdale (NJ): Erlbaum, 105-366.
- Talbot, M. (1995). A Synthetic Sisterhood: False Friends in a Teenage Magazine. In K. Hall and M. Bucholtz (Eds.), *Gender Articulated: Language and the Socially Constructed Self*. New York: Routledge.
- Talbot, M. (2006). Gender and Language. In K. Brown (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Language & Linguistics* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Oxford: Elsevier, 740-742.
- Tate, C. (2014). Gender Identity as a Personality Process. In B. L. Miller (ed.), *Gender Identity: Disorders, Developmental Perspectives and Social Implications*. Hauppauge, N.Y.: Nova Science Publishers, Inc.
- Veit, H. Z. (2013). *Modern Food, Moral Food : Self-control, Science, and the Rise of Modern American Eating in The Early Twentieth Century*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Wharton, A. S. (2005). *The Sociology of Gender: An Introduction to Theory and Research*. Malden (Mass.): Blackwell.
- Williams, T. R. (2012). *Empowered femininity: The Textual Construction of Femininity in Women's Fitness Magazines*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Pub.