

Unapologetic Female Bodies:

Italian Lingerie Advertising on Instagram and the Faults of the Body Love Spell

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ABSTRACT

The cultural idealization of the thin white woman as the object of heterosexual male attention has long been constructed through the visual culture of advertising. Feminist literature has extensively documented the turbulent negotiation of female identities in relation to the Beauty Myth, discussing the role of lingerie advertising in the historic perpetuation of oppressive and fatphobic body image ideals. In the Italy of 2022, the shells and tools have changed, but not the substance. Like elsewhere in the world, the advertising industry has recently moved to social media platforms such as Instagram, and marketers have learned that to win the favor of contemporary women, they could exhort them to feel good about themselves. Thus, advertising messages designed to shame women into buying products to “correct” their appearance have been replaced by narratives of body love and self-confidence. Positioned at the convergence of neoliberal feminism and the corporatized appropriation of the principles of the Body Positivity movement, this phenomenon is more current and nuanced than ever. This thesis project aims to explore the use of affirmative, body-positive language and feminist sentiments in the Instagram advertising of two popular Italian lingerie labels: Intimissimi and Yamamay. This thesis also considers which female bodies are associated with said messages, thereby investigating how the brands’ policies of gender representation intertwine with intersectional issues of fat, race, and age. The research involves a Multimodal Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis of a corpus of 40 exemplary texts from the brands’ official Instagram accounts and websites. The analysis of the data was conducted using a toolset developed by Machin and Mayr (2012) for Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in combination with the principles of analysis developed by Lazar (2007) for Feminist CDA. Findings suggests that, despite their seemingly inclusive language, the two brands’ Instagram advertising empties feminist ideals of their political charge and excludes fat people from representation. It depicts and encourages a neoliberal feminist subject that can “have it all” and conventionally conforms to Western heterosexual standards of desirability.

KEYWORDS: *Instagram, Body Positivity, Fat Stigma, Neoliberal Feminism, Femvertising, Representation, Intersectionality, Lingerie, Italy*

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*“In many cases, learning to love oneself is not enough.
We have spent years reading Perugina cartouches,
convincing ourselves that love works miracles, yet
it doesn't seem to make ramps appear at the
entrances and sizes over XL appear in the stores.”*

Marina Cuollo, 2021

1. Introduction

I have a particular feeling every time I look at myself in the mirror. I get close to my reflection, scrutinize every pore, every inch of fat that lingers on my thighs. I look at my body and I feel gratitude for it, for sustaining me over the years, for getting me through the tough times, and for the journey of peace it has taken me on. At the same time, I look at my body and I do not feel love for it, nor pride. I often reminisce about the times when I made myself smaller so that I could feel less out of place. I still look at my body and feel the urge to tear it apart so that it would stop being so visible, so that it would be easier to dress it up in clothes that I like and not just in clothes that fit. I have learned to live in that ambivalence, as that is what it means to inhabit a fat body, to unlearn all of the reasons why I should hate it and fight back the negativity it has been culturally and socially loaded with.

As a consumer, I have watched endless ads where conventionally beautiful women around the world speak words of self-love and self-worth. None of them ever looked like I did or like many of the women around me did. Corporations in my home country, Italy, have also recently fallen under the charm of such messages. So, when the popular Italian lingerie label Intimissimi hosted its “Self-Love is First Love” talk on November 9, 2021, I was immediately very intrigued. The event was marketed as a *soirée* dedicated to the topics of body positivity, self-love, self-esteem, and female empowerment (Grazia, 2021). It was live-streamed on Intimissimi’s social media channels and website and it featured a panel of ten well-known Instagram personalities including influencers, mental health professionals, entrepreneurs, talents, and comedians (Olivia, 2021). The aim of the event was to share the panelists’ journeys to self-confidence and how they won their “inner battles” with their insecurities and “imperfections” (Olivia, 2021). The initiative was part of a marketing plan to boost Intimissimi’s latest “Beautiful in Your Own Way” campaign,

a celebration of beauty and self-love with which the label announced the expansion of the size range of several models of bras up to cup F. The “Self-Love is First Love” talk was praised for its inclusive and body-positive messages by several Italian magazines such as Vogue Italia, Grazia, Vanity Fair Italia, and others. Nevertheless, the event was not received positively within the Italian feminist community on Instagram. Intimissimi was indeed criticized for its “happy” and “glossy feminist” rhetoric and choice of panelists, which included only one Black woman and no fat, (visibly) disabled, or transgender women (Belle di Faccia, 2021). In addition, the brand was accused of wrongfully monopolizing and commercializing the discourse on Body Positivity and inclusivity for its own capitalistic and market gains. Due to its reverberations on social media, this case prompted interesting reflections among Italian consumers. However, Intimissimi was only one of many brands to take such an empowering turn in their communications.

Over the past decade, following a broader global trend, a number of fashion and beauty brands in Italy have embarked on a mission to bridge the gap between female consumers and normative conceptualizations of body standards. In an attempt to offer a more democratic understanding of beauty, Italian brands have begun to incorporate body-positive ideals into their (online) marketing efforts (Johnston & Taylor, 2008). In this process, advertising messages designed to shame women into buying products to “correct” their appearance have been replaced by narratives of self-love and self-esteem (Sobande, 2019a). Affirmative language and uplifting sentiments are often used in these ads to suggest that personal satisfaction and success can be attained through “individual ambition and consumption” (Belle di Faccia, 2019; Sobande, 2019a, p. 2724). This phenomenon can be broadly positioned at the convergence of two main theoretical concepts of interest. The first one is *neoliberal feminism*, a form of postfeminism that encourages meritocracy and entrepreneurial agency but dismisses how existing gender disparities still limit women’s access to equal opportunities and rights (Rottemberg, 2014). The second one is the mainstream interpretation and appropriation of the principles of the *Body Positivity (BoPo)* movement in corporate settings, also called *BoPopriation* (Brathwaite & DeAndrea, 2021). The two concepts widely inform today’s marketing strategies that target female consumers and attempt to appeal to the female gaze.

The circulation of communications featuring these messages is facilitated within the online media space, where mainstream body-positive and neoliberal feminist themes easily navigate online conversations, especially through the powerful use of hashtags and the workings of

algorithms (Varghese & Kumar, 2020). As Intimissimi’s “Self-Love is First-Love” suggests, a market that strongly capitalizes on messages of empowerment in advertising is the lingerie market.

1.1. The Italian Lingerie Market: Yamamay & Intimissimi

The French term “lingerie” is used in English-speaking countries to refer to women's underwear. For this reason, the present study uses the terms “lingerie” and “underwear” interchangeably. Lingerie can be broadly divided into the following components:

<i>Bras</i>	Bralette, Triangle, Balconette, etc.
<i>Briefs</i>	Classic, Culottes, Thongs, etc.
<i>Home Lingerie</i>	Chemise, Kimono, Babydoll, etc.
<i>Stockings</i>	Pantyhose, Hold-Ups, etc.
<i>Bodices & Shapewear</i>	Bustier, Guapier, Bodysuits, etc.

In 2020, the global market for women’s lingerie was valued at roughly 42 billion US dollars, and it is expected to reach 78.66 billion US dollars in 2027 (Statista, 2020). Italy has traditionally been a market leader in this sector, which is seen as an expression of the so-called “Made in Italy” (Businesscoot, n.d.). The Italian lingerie market comprises two segments: fast fashion single-brand store chains and luxury stores carrying premium quality brands (Businesscoot, n.d.). Chains currently account for around 37.8% of the domestic market, while independents cover 17.9% (Businesscoot, n.d.). Major Italian players in the chain segment of the market include the Calzedonia Group (Calzedonia, Intimissimi, Tezenis), Yamamay, La Perla, and others. Because of their popularity among Italian consumers and price accessibility, this thesis project focuses on two of these brands: Yamamay and Intimissimi.

Founded in 2001 in Gallarate, Italy, Yamamay is part of the Pianoforte Holding SpA Group and is now one of Italy’s leading retail brands of lingerie, underwear, corsetry, clothing, accessories, and swimwear (Pianofortegroup.com, n.d.). Yamamay-branded products are sold in more than 600 stores worldwide mainly under the franchise formula (Pianofortegroup.com, n.d.).

Part of the Calzedonia Group, Intimissimi is an Italian label operating in the lingerie, sleepwear, and intimates market (Calzedoniagroup, n.d.). The brand was founded in 1996 and is now present in 48 countries and more than 1,500 stores worldwide (Calzedoniagroup, n.d.). Both Yamamay and Intimissimi pride themselves on offering an excellent price/quality ratio and valuing sustainability and inclusivity (Pianofortegroup.com, n.d.; Calzedoniagroup, n.d.). Therefore, as an Italian consumer, the researcher for this project has a genuine and vested interest in the choice of marketing materials produced by these two brands as a relevant sample for this study.

1.2. Lingerie Advertising

Given the nature of the material used in this thesis project, it is important to situate the research within the broader context of lingerie advertising. When shopping for lingerie or simply navigating the Internet, women often engage with visual representations of lingerie in advertising, branding, and catalogs (Wood, 2014). Because of the clear link between states of undress and sexual activity, scholarship often refers to this type of advertising as “problematic” (Amy-Chinn, 2006, p. 156). On the one hand, from the brand’s perspective, there is an obvious need to show how the product fits the body. On the other hand, any public display of women in *déshabillé* risks framing women as sex objects, especially within the confines of conservative dynamics of sexual relationships that see men as dominant over women (Amy-Chinn, 2006). Scholars have explored the construction of femininity through the visual culture of lingerie, highlighting a historic shift in the representation of women from sexual objects to active sexual agents over the past three decades (Gill, 2003, as cited in Wood, 2014). Such postfeminist portrayals of female sexuality show women “as being empowered to ‘choose’ to present themselves as sexually autonomous individuals” (Wood, 2014, p. 13). This shift from “passive” to “active” femininity is situated primarily within a “sexy body”, a site of both empowerment and constant surveillance (Gill, 2007, as cited in Wood, 2014). As Wood (2014) suggests, the female bodies depicted in these representations are homogeneous, standardized models of femininity against which women evaluate and modify themselves.

1.3. Social Relevance

Because of its fleeting yet ubiquitous nature, (online) advertising is a key site where cultural practices are produced and represented (Lazar, 2007; Sobande, 2019a). While providing information on products, brands, and services, advertising reflects current cultural trends (Kordrostami & Laczniak, 2021). Thus, the way women's bodies are represented in advertisements both mirrors and suggests the roles women are supposed to play in society, as well as the aesthetic standard to which they are required to conform (Kordrostami & Laczniak, 2021). For this reason, as the world moves toward a more gender-balanced distribution of power, it is crucial to study how representations of women's bodies and femininity evolve in marketing.

In addition, research indicates that consumers expect brands that operate in today's market to show some level of engagement with socio-political issues (Sobande, 2019a). Since capitalism intersects with systems of oppression such as racism, sexism, and fatphobia, it is critical to explore how social justice concerns are negotiated in the corporatized dimension of advertising (Sobande, 2019a). This thesis project aims to shed light on how lingerie advertising responds to the evolving needs of Italy's social fabric, where social change has historically been slow and created polarized cultural environments.

1.4. Scientific Relevance & Research Questions

Research has extensively investigated the role of print and mass-media advertising in the negotiation of female identities. In particular, it has discussed how advertisements can contribute to the perpetuation of the male gaze and oppressive fatphobic regimens that center around the so-called *beauty work* (Camussi, 2010). Nevertheless, due to its most recent development, the emerging area of social media advertising that associates women's bodies with body-positive and empowering slogans remains largely unexplored in the analytical literature. This is especially true in the Italian context, where such discourses have only just started to enter the public arena (Meloni & Mibelli, 2021). Indeed, while the phenomenon spreads across the globe, the vast majority of scholarly writing on the subject remains US or UK centric.

In addition, research has so far mainly investigated the presence of such corporate messages in filmed marketing material uploaded to YouTube, a platform that favors long-form video content. In contrast, the development of the phenomenon on Instagram has received little

scholarly attention. The present thesis project aims to address these gaps, offering new theoretical insights into the ways two of the most popular Italian lingerie companies incorporate the body-positive and neoliberal feminist narratives at their disposal in their Instagram advertising efforts. As a social networking site (SNS) with interactive, accessible and short-form video content, Instagram offers new avenues for reflections on the way socially relevant issues are addressed or elicited by social media advertisements. This makes it a relevant platform to explore for this thesis project.

In light of these considerations, the research question that this paper aims to answer is:

Research Question	<i>How do Italian lingerie labels Intimissimi and Yamamay make use of body-positive and neoliberal feminist signifiers in their Instagram advertising?</i>
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In the interest of investigating how this phenomenon relates to a broader cultural discourse that legitimizes social disparities in body representation, this paper will also address the question:

Sub-Research Question	<i>What kinds of bodies are framed as bearers of these emancipatory values?</i>
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The methodology that was chosen to answer these questions consists of a Multimodal Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis of a corpus of 40 exemplary texts from the brands' official Instagram accounts and websites. The analysis of the data was conducted using a toolset developed by Machin and Mayr (2012) for Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in combination with the principles of analysis developed by Lazar (2007) for Feminist CDA. The aim of such a methodological approach was to investigate the patterns of meaning embedded in the data from a feminist perspective (Lazar, 2007). The transformative aspect implied in the analysis invited a conversation on the gendered social practices that frame today's lingerie advertising.

1.5. Outline of Thesis Structure

This thesis project consists of five chapters. The first chapter introduced the topic of the thesis and its social and scientific relevance. The chapter contextualized the research within the issue of lingerie advertising; presented the two Italian lingerie labels whose advertisements compose the sample; and provided an overview of the main features of the market in which the two brands operate.

The second chapter frames the rationale of the study within two clear phenomena of interest: neoliberal feminism and the Body Positivity movement. The chapter provides an overview of previous research on the historical evolution of the terms, as well as their (mis)uses in today's corporate communications. In particular, the theoretical framework discusses the rise and popularity of slogans that encourage female empowerment and how they place the sole responsibility of women's successes on their ambition. The chapter also problematizes how the culture of female slenderness, fat stigma, and society's obsession with beauty still impact today's interpretation of the principles of the Body Positivity movement.

The third chapter details the methodological approach that was adopted to carry out the research, a Multimodal Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, and how its tools allowed for the interpretation of the data from a feminist perspective. It provides an in-depth description of the dataset and the coding steps that were followed to answer the research questions.

The fourth chapter presents the main results of the qualitative analysis and discusses them in relation to the research questions and the theory. The chapter includes observations from the coding process and their connections to sensitizing concepts from the literature. Divided into four difference themes and several subthemes, the chapter explores how the brands' advertising commodify feminist and body-positive signifiers within the context of neoliberalism. It also discusses inequalities in body representation and the misinterpretation of the principles of intersectionality. The fifth and final chapter provides a conclusion that takes stock of the results, considers the theoretical and practical implications of the study, and suggests directions for future research.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. The Importance of Terminology

In popular and fashion media, body-related terminology that describes non-conventionally slim individuals has mainly leaned towards adjectives such as “curvy” and “plus-size”, preferring them to the seemingly derogatory “fat” (Limatius, 2018). Similarly, in health care settings and within public health communication, the Body Mass Index (BMI) has standardized and legitimized the use of the terms “overweight” and “obese” as objective descriptors of size and health (Peters, 2014; Rose et al., 2020). It is worth noting, however, that the BMI itself has become a controversial notion in contemporary social science research. Various studies suggest that, as a simple height to weight ratio, the BMI does not adequately account for factors such as age, body composition, sex, bone structure, or distinguish between fat and muscle (Rothman, 2008). Over the past two decades, experts have expressed concerns on such limitations and urged the use of more accurate measures of fatness (Burkhauser & Cawley, 2008). Moreover, fat studies scholarship argued that the words “overweight” and “obese” pathologize the size of a body and are therefore intimately connected to weight stigma and societal disapproval (Meadows and Daníelsdóttir, 2016). As a response, the Fat Advocacy community has sought to reclaim “fat” as a term of empowerment, a neutral descriptor, and an identity marker (Peters, 2014). In honor of such concerted efforts, this research project makes use of the term “fat” as a neutral descriptor of size, associating it with all bodies having adipose tissue (Kirby, 2013, as cited in Baker, 2015). Most importantly, “fat” is used in this thesis project as a term with no inherent moral value, with the ultimate objective of “affirm[ing] and respect[ing] the human dignity” of the social groups it wishes to describe (Meadows and Daníelsdóttir, 2016, p. 3). In addition, this thesis adopts a non-medicalized taxonomy of fatness created by activist Ash Nischuk (n.d., as cited in Manici, 2021): “small fat”, “mid fat”, “superfat”, “infinifat”. In doing so, it will hopefully account for the nuances and differences between the levels of discrimination to which fat people are subjected to because of their size in various private and public domains of life.

2.2. The Issue of Fatness and BoPopriation

2.2.1. *The Tyranny of Female Slenderness*

Weight preoccupation and disordered eating have been explored extensively in feminist scholarship and activism since the 1970s, with texts such as Susie Orbach's *Fat is a Feminist Issue*¹ (1978, as cited in Fikkan & Rothblum, 2011) identifying societal pressures and constraints on women's autonomy as the source of weight-related concerns. Other authors (Wooley et al., 1979; Brown, 1965; Chrisler, 1989, as cited in Fikkan & Rothblum, 2011) later recognized the gendered component of weight bias, illustrating how women are allowed significantly fewer deviations from aesthetic ideals than men. As a result, more women than men experience disruptive relationships with their bodies and engage in corrective actions such as restrictive dieting, obsessive exercising, and, in turn, eating disorders (Fikkan & Rothblum, 2011). Scholarship in the 1980s also noted that women endure the cost of having so-called “deviant” bodies beyond their psychological and emotional well-being, experiencing discrimination in multiple spheres that include work, family, lifestyle choices, and so on (Wooley et al., 1979, as cited in Fikkan & Rothblum, 2011). Since then, oppressive beauty standards and their impact on women's freedom have been a central theme within feminist research.

Indeed, building on these concerns, in 1990 author Naomi Wolf² published *The Beauty Myth*, a foundational feminist text which conceptualizes beauty as a currency system governed by the laws of the patriarchy. According to Wolf (2015), this system arose in response to the disruption of the traditional family unit brought about by the second wave of feminism, which saw women enter the workforce and progressively gain autonomy across various domains of life.

¹ It should be noted that Orbach's work was later criticized for its simplistic formulation of fatness as a psychological pathology, which left uncontested the assumption that the resolution of a women's psychological issues is the only pathway to permanent weight loss and desirable thinness (Fikkan & Rothblum, 2011).

² It is imperative to acknowledge that Wolf has recently become a controversial figure after tweeting anti-vaccine information during the Covid-19 pandemic and sharing historical inaccuracies in *Outrages* (2019), her latest publication, where she was accused of confusing child abuse with gay persecution (BBC News, 2021; Flood, 2021). Her work on *The Beauty Myth* was also criticized for placing on women the responsibility of rising from the Myth and resisting society's oppressive beauty practices (Morris, 2019). Nevertheless, her text remains foundational for feminist scholarship insofar as it theorizes the functioning and roots of society's obsession with a certain female aesthetic (Johnston & Taylor, 2008). Citations of her earlier work will therefore be made in this thesis project keeping a critical perspective at the forefront of the analysis.

The Myth, as Wolf (2015) documented, was precisely designed to challenge women's newfound independence and equality through the establishment of a restrictive hegemonic beauty regimen. In the attempt to frame feminism as an enemy, companies began to suggest that women's appearance would suffer what theorist Michèle Barrett (1989, as cited in Morris, 2019) called the "stresses and strains of the male world" (p. 54). Therefore, through advertising materials and other media, companies contributed to the communication of certain "scripts of femininity" (Windsor, 2014, p. 893) which instructed women on how to properly perform their gender and prevent their looks from being "downgraded" by their professional advancement (Morris, 2019; Wolf, 2015). The implications of the Beauty Myth are still very much relevant today. Indeed, the Myth continues to present women with an aesthetic ideal that is seemingly objective and attainable, creating a hierarchy of standards in which women are forced to compete with one another (Lachover & Brandes, 2009; Wolf, 2015). In doing so, "women lose their power as a group" (Lachover & Brandes, 2009, p. 304) and navigate a system that perpetuates male dominance. The construction of ideal femininity goes hand in hand with the elevation of thinness to one of the highest prizes awarded to women by contemporary societies.

In her text *Unbearable Weight*, Susan Bordo (2004) investigates the cultural meanings associated with the body and its "slender" and "fat" iterations. The philosopher identifies a number of possible meanings associated with the cult of female slenderness. In the first instance, Bordo (2004) discusses how self-control in Western society is coded as a traditionally masculine prerogative, whereas physiological manifestations of the body such as hunger, emotions, sexuality - to be monitored and restrained - are classified as feminine. In this context, the control of hunger equals the control of the female desire, a recurring theme in patriarchal societies (Manici, 2021). Then, Bordo (2004) examines how slenderness intersects with the notion of liberation from certain female obligations (i.e. domesticity and reproduction) and the entrance into the male-dominated workplace. This argument shares many contact points with Wolf's Beauty Myth in that it explains how, as a response to their newfound autonomy in the job market, society might have pushed women to "prove" their worth through aesthetic work and the maintenance of a "respectable" professional profile. Indeed, deviation from the culturally constructed ideal body would have disrupted the already overturned order of things, leading to additional societal opposition. The tyranny of female slenderness is particularly relevant in this

thesis, as it effectively frames the analysis of the advertisements within the value system related to beauty typical of Western and Italian societies.

2.2.2. *Fat Stigma*

Given the tyranny of slenderness is both pervasive and has a documented negative impact on the psychological and social wellbeing of women, it is equally important to explore the stigma associated with fatness and the notion of being fat. In *Revolting Bodies?: The Struggle to Redefine Fat Identity*, fat theorist Kathleen LeBesco (2004) discusses how the obsessive fear of weight gain is rooted in a popular culture that conceptualizes fat people as revolting, lazy, morally-unworthy citizens. The social discrediting implicit in these judgments fuels the so-called *fat stigma*, that is, the systematic devaluation and discrimination of an individual based on their weight (Fikkan & Rothblum, 2011). Fat stigma falls into two of the three categories of stigma identified by sociologist Erving Goffman (1963). Such categories include “abominations of the body” (i.e. stigma of physical traits such as blindness, fatness, disability, etc.) and “blemishes of individual character” (i.e. stigma of character traits associated with a lack of will, dishonesty, “unnatural” passions, etc.) (Goffman, 1963, as cited in Pausé, 2012, p. 44). Affiliation with these categories suggests that fatness is perceived as a deformation of the body caused by an individual's lack of control and surveillance over it (Pausé, 2012). Fat stigma can manifest itself in all areas of life and limit fat people's access to the workplace, education, clothing, (mental) health, romantic relationships, and so on (Fikkan & Rothblum, 2011). In light of the stigma, fat people are used to talking about themselves and hearing about their bodies in the media as a “disgrace” (Manici, 2021, p. 17). As a result, many of them have interiorized such hatred and found ways to “cope” with their condition by making themselves smaller, more likable, or by self-deprecating.

Because fatness is immediately detectable to the eye, the fat individual is “discredited” (Goffman, 1963, as cited in Manici, 2021, p. 13), meaning they will need to engage in forms of identity management to deal with tensions arising from their hostile social interactions. According to Goffman (1963), stigmatized individuals may engage in three forms of identity management: “passing”, “covering” and “withdrawing”. As outlined by Cat Pausé (2012), *passing* refers to the ability of the stigmatized individual to blend into the dominant groups and

conform to the functioning of the “ordinary” society. Arguably, since fatness is a visible and non-conceivable characteristic of the body, many fat individuals are unable to “pass” (Pausé, 2012). On the other hand, those who engage in *covering* act in ways aimed at reducing the frictions between them and the critical society. This is exemplified by the diet culture, “fat talk”, weight management, and so on (Pausé, 2012). Lastly, engaging in *withdrawal* implies removing oneself from certain situations in a more or less complete fashion (Pausé, 2012). For instance, fat individuals are forced to withdraw from certain circumstances or social events that they might consider unsafe, triggering, or shameful (Pausé, 2012). In conclusion, identity management practices imply a degree of emotional and physical labor that stigmatized individuals must engage in because of the mere act of existing.

2.2.3. *The Invisibility of Fat Bodies*

Framed as a social and medical threat, fat bodies have been largely absent from beauty and apparel advertising, with industries such as the fashion and cosmetic industries relentlessly “work[ing] to disseminate and normalize fat stigma” (Peters, 2014, p. 47). In writing about their experience, many fat authors note the fundamental cognitive dissonance between the feeling of being hyper-visible in public spaces - due to spatial inequalities and social discrimination - and the feeling of invisibility (Owen, 2012). Fat bodies live in a world that is essentially designed for thin people and are constantly reminded of it as they move around: towels that don’t fit around their waist; seatbelts that are too short to protect them; tiny seats in planes, transportation, restaurants; narrow hallways, etc. (Gay, 2017; Owen, 2012). Yet, they are invisible, unseen, unrecognized, and their experience is systematically dismissed and discredited in the media.

The invisibility of fat bodies in media often implies that the “burden of representation” (Yadlin-Segal, 2018, p. 46) falls on the fat community. Like other marginalized groups, fat people take advantage of the affordances of their digital media platforms to self-narrate and create communities around shared interests and values (Szulc, 2019; Treem et al., 2016). The phenomenon is regularly visible on social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, which allow for the circulation of diverse narrations of the fat experience and help convey the image of a fat subject whose weight is not a moral compass of their worth (Afful & Ricciardelli, 2013). Fat users and content creators also use social media to publicly express their dissatisfaction with

how corporations represent and dismiss certain bodies in their (online) marketing, providing resources and suggesting possible improvements. This occurred in the online response to several advertisements featured in this thesis project, which show different members of the Italian Fat Advocacy community³ “calling out” the brands’ campaigns and interacting with their contents on Instagram. Among them, a notable mention goes to the project Belle di Faccia⁴ (@belledifaccia, which would conversationally translate to “Such a Pretty Face”), an Instagram page that offers invaluable insights into the issues of fatness and fat stigma. Their work has inspired and informed this research project beyond measure.

2.2.4. *Tracing the History of Fat Activism*

The challenge to end visual and social annihilation by those within the Fat Advocacy community has roots that date back almost 50 years. In *Fat Activism: A Radical Social Movement*, American sociologist Charlotte Cooper (2016) traces the long history of fat activism from its roots in the second wave of feminism to the present day. Like any self-respecting revolutionary movement of the 1960s, the Fat Acceptance movement began with a sit-in or “fat-in” in 1967: 500 fat people gathered in New York’s Central Park to protest against fat bias and discrimination (Meloni & Mibelli, 2021). The principles of fat activism were first developed within US-born movements such as the NAAFA (National Association to Aid Fat Americans) and FU (Fat Underground) and later spread around Europe inside queer and feminist collectives (Meloni & Mibelli, 2021). The movements advocated for a simple notion: that the fat body was worthy of respect and that weight-related discrimination needed to be eradicated (Meloni & Mibelli, 2021; Morris, 2019). Between the late 1990s and early 2000s, fat feminism lost its momentum and was overtaken by so-called *body-positive* discourses centering around beauty and body image.

Among the first companies to choose this interpretation was the Dove brand of the multinational company Unilever. In their 2004 “Campaign for Real Beauty”, Dove embarked on

³ The (online) Fat Advocacy community in Italy is part of an Italian intersectional feminist network fighting for the rights and dignity of fat people (Meloni & Mibelli, 2021).

⁴ Belle di Faccia is a feminist project founded by Italian activists Chiara Meloni and Mara Mibelli. It was born as an Instagram page in 2018 and later became an Italian association advocating for Fat Acceptance (Belle di Faccia, 2021). In 2021, the founders of the project published a book of the same name which is regularly mentioned in this thesis as it is the first and most comprehensive Italian piece of literature to deal with the issue of Fat Liberation.

a corporate project which claimed to oppose restrictive aesthetic standards by democratizing access to beauty (Johnston & Taylor, 2008). The campaign was thoroughly investigated by scholars Johnston and Taylor (2008), who compared it with the Toronto-based “Pretty, Porky, and Pissed Off” (PPPO) grassroots initiative. According to these scholars, while the latter advocated for fat activism and revolution against the oppressive system of fat stigma, Dove’s campaign preached inclusivity and self-love whilst promoting products that encouraged conformity to female beauty standards (Johnston & Taylor, 2008). Yet, despite the criticism it received from the academic literature, the campaign was hugely successful (Johnston & Taylor, 2008). Therefore, since then, several companies have incorporated similar ideas into their marketing efforts, obscuring the history of the Fat Acceptance movement and commercializing its causes.

2.2.5. Misunderstanding the Body Positivity Movement: Corporate BoPopriation

As discussed earlier, research has extensively documented the negative implication of exposing women to the hegemonic beauty standards perpetuated by mass media and their impact on body-focused anxiety and dissatisfaction (Baele et al., 2016; Johnston & Taylor, 2008; Peters, 2014). In light of these concerns, body-positive discourses have entered feminist online spaces with the objective to foster a broader vision of beauty, inclusive of different ages, shapes, sizes, races, and (dis)abilities (Brathwaite & DeAndrea, 2020). Social media platforms such as Instagram offer a fertile ground for these types of narrations, as users often showcase body features such as belly rolls, cellulite, and stretch marks, advocating for the normalization and celebration of bodily “imperfections” (Brathwaite & DeAndrea, 2020). Cohen et al. (2019) and others note that such posts often emphasize individual self-love and body appreciation, encouraging women to embrace the features that society has labeled as “shameful” or “wrong”.

Given the popularity of body-positive content produced online, companies have begun to recognize the power of the movement and capitalize on its imagery and messaging through advertising (Brathwaite & DeAndrea, 2020). Gill (2020) describes this as the rise of a new advertising genre that emerges from a popular reinterpretation of the body positivity movement and appropriates its slogan in celebration of a newfound “diversity” and “body revolution”. Brands that affiliate with these principles usually post unedited promotional images, launch

“plus-size” clothing lines, or simply include small-fat models in their advertising (Brathwaite & DeAndrea, 2021; Gill, 2020). Such images are often associated with “love your body” claims and an emphasis on self-love and self-confidence.

Although the body-positive discourses that these brands advocate for in their advertisements may appear on the surface to be virtuous examples of corporate ethics, they often result in a “carefully curated diversity” (Gill, 2020, p.14) that centers on a glamorized, polished version of *the other*. Despite preaching inclusivity and disruption of bodily normativity, what these ads often present is a “glossy diversity” (Gill, 2020, p.14) featuring bodies that only slightly diverge from socially accepted standards of beauty. This is the case of the so-called “curvy” bodies, that is, shapely and slender bodies whose “curves” are generally perceived as flattering and positive (Limatius, 2018; Markula, 1995). On the other hand, bodies that traditionally deviate from culturally constructed notions of beauty, such as fat bodies, are excluded from representation altogether. This is particularly true in the Italian context, where awareness and education on the demands of the Fat Acceptance movement have only recently gained more traction.

2.2.6. *The Italian Context*

When the Belle di Faccia “phenomenon” gained ground on Instagram, issues around fatness became increasingly more popular in Italy, reaching audiences beyond the feminist activism niche (Manici, 2021). To date, several national newspapers have covered the topic of fatphobia, although often using problematic vocabulary like “Fatphobia, that absurd moralism against those who are obese” on *Il Fatto Quotidiano* (Ambrosi, 2017). Numerous newspapers including *La Repubblica* mention Belle di Faccia in their articles on the subject, which indicates that the project has been highly impactful within the national context. For instance, the title of a 2020 article that featured an interview with Belle di Faccia’s founders reads “Fatphobia, ‘thin privilege’ and ‘fat acceptance’: let’s clarify terms and definitions” (with “thin privilege” and “fat acceptance” written in English) and was included in *La Repubblica*’s Fashion & Beauty section (Perilli, 2020). Nevertheless, one cannot claim that this is a genuine conversation taking place in the country: considerable improvements are still needed for such themes to become less taboo.

The abovementioned newspaper article title also confirms that English terms are often used to navigate the issue of fatness in Italy. In the words of Belle di Faccia's founders and authors Meloni and Mibelli (2021), "fat studies and gender studies are particularly prolific in Anglo-Saxon countries" (p.18), and so, naturally, English terminology is often borrowed to discuss such topics in everyday communications elsewhere. However, it is also crucial to note that, in Italy, fatphobia and Fat Advocacy discourses are often regarded as non-issues within the general public, so much so that, in principle, there exists no extensive vocabulary to give meaning to them in Italian. There are reasons to believe that the near-total lack of consideration of fat bodies in the Italian language stems from the country's internalized hatred of fat, from a culture that idolizes thinness and pushes fat people to the margins of sociality (Meloni & Mibelli, 2021; Peters, 2014; The Take, 2020). This is one probable explanation of the reason why, when affiliating with the body positivity movement, Italian labels usually subscribe to its most foreign, politically unloaded interpretation.

Following their boost in popularity in Anglo-Saxon contexts, body-positive discourses also found their way into Italian mainstream media, with several digital "women magazines" including *Vogue Italia*, *Vanity Fair Italia*, and *IoDonna* publishing articles where they list "empowering" influencers to follow or report on the rise of a supposedly "new and inclusive beauty" (Melotti, 2021). Such articles usually only scratch the surface of the issue and center around beauty practices. The same phenomenon is observable in the marketing efforts of Italian companies that adopt body-positive discourses.

2.3. Neoliberal Feminism

2.3.1. The Roots of Neoliberal Feminism: Postfeminism and Popular Feminism

The intertwined issues of body image, fatphobia, and advocacy to regain agency by the fat community cannot be separated by the realities of both the neoliberal economic order in the West and *neoliberal feminism*. The rise of neoliberal feminism stands at the intersection of two modern interpretations of feminism: postfeminism and popular feminism. Gill (2020) describes *postfeminism* as a set of ideas and images that give meaning to the contradictory representation of women in 1990s media, where celebrations of female "success stories" were often opposed to

normative portrayals of womanhood and femininity. According to Capecchi (2021), postfeminism presents a value system where feminist and antifeminist beliefs coexist. It is an interpretation of feminism emptied of its subversive political charge, a “sensibility” (p.148) that encompasses the ambivalences of media culture while reinforcing the emphasis on women’s personal choices and individualism. As summarized by Yoong (2020), postfeminism both celebrates and denies feminism: it is optimistic about women’s empowerment but apolitical in relation to social mobilization, as it presupposes that the main goals of feminism have already been achieved in the past.

Following an increased interest in feminist discourse and activism, the term has been widely debated and contested in recent academic literature. This led the author herself to ponder whether, in light of the new mediated visibilities of feminism, postfeminism is an outdated phase (Gill, 2016). Nevertheless, Gill (2016) concluded the term is still in fact relevant and reflective of the current state of affairs, as the diffusion of new feminist values in society is often coupled with a rise in inequalities in representation, misogyny, racism, and populism.

With the rise of digital media, feminism gained unparalleled traction, rapidly becoming “a popular brand” that now circulates through hashtags, slogans, and merchandise (Banet-Weiser, 2018). According to Banet-Weiser (2018), *popular feminism* includes all those feminist practices that are visible and accessible to a broad public, appearing in popular and commercial media from films and television to social media, blogs, and magazines. It also promotes a version of “happy feminism” (Banet-Weiser, 2020, p. 9) that involves women in the conversation but seldom mentions or challenges sexist structures and discourses around them. As in the case of postfeminism, scholars of the caliber of Angela McRobbie (2004) have identified a *double entanglement* between popular culture and second-wave feminism. On the one hand, the value of equality of rights and opportunities is invoked, while on the other hand, individualism and self-regulation are encouraged (McRobbie, 2004). This is coherent with the characteristics of Western society’s neoliberal economic models (McRobbie, 2004, as cited in Capecchi, 2021). As Banet-Weiser (2020) indeed suggests, to emerge so powerfully, popular feminism leveraged the neoliberal capitalist context afforded by the new digital platforms, which allowed for the expansion of its market reach.

2.3.2. The “Neoliberal” in Feminism

The term *neoliberalism* describes the 20th-century resurgence of a social order characterized by the privatization and deregulation of markets as well as an increase in capital mobility (Evans, 2015). According to scholars, neoliberalism has far-reaching implications that affect not just the economic positions taken by political parties, but also the lives of single individuals (Evans, 2015). In particular, neoliberalism legitimizes and accelerates the defunding of public welfare organizations in favor of privatization within all civic institutions (Afful & Ricciardelli, 2015; Ghadery, 2019). Evans (2015) argues that, as a consequence of this free-market rationality, inequalities rise and the quality of life of the most vulnerable individuals in society drops.

The evolution of neoliberalism into a political rationality beyond its original economic purpose is perfectly illustrated by the concept of *neoliberal feminism* (Ghadery, 2019). Drawing on postfeminism’s foundational premise, neoliberal feminism assumes that feminist struggles for equality of rights and opportunities have already taken place and succeeded in the past (Rottemberg, 2014). Rottemberg (2020) argues that, particularly in the Anglo-Saxon world, feminist themes have converged into neoliberal agendas that place the responsibility for their success on women’s personal achievements and ambitions. Through the use of liberal terminology belonging to the realm of opportunity, equality, and choice, neoliberal feminism constructs a feminist subject that is “oriented towards optimizing her resources through incessant calculation, personal initiative, and innovation” (Rottemberg, 2014, p. 422). Within the neoliberal architecture, success is measured by women’s propensity for self-care through consumption performance (Phipps, 2014). This implies the conviction that women can fulfill their potential in life and be advanced through the realization of their entrepreneurial freedoms and skills (Ghadery, 2019; Rottemberg, 2014). As noted by Phipps (2014), failing to do so is recast as a personal issue rather than a gender, class, race, or resourced-based inequality.

It is important to recognize that, in neoliberal feminism, current inequalities are seen as a personal issue that women can work through with projects of self-realization (Baer, 2016). As a result, neoliberal feminist principles only resonate with individuals who dispose of sufficient resources to sustain this narrative, namely those who are white, wealthy, heterosexual, cisgender, and conventionally attractive (Rottemberg, 2020). According to this model, the neoliberal feminist is a woman whose body comforts to the cultural construction of normative beauty and a

woman who “has it all together” as she can “juggle” multiple personal and professional obligations, including her family, her beauty, and her job (Rottemberg, 2020). In the context of lingerie advertising, the neoliberal feminist typically has a curated and alluring appearance, she has learned how to “manage” her body, and she has the spending power to purchase items that can “flatter” her figure and make her feel self-assured. Lazar (2011) argues that this is a systematic reduction of the political to the personal, an interpretation of feminism that disregards how interconnected inequalities of rights and opportunities still influence the social fabric where women operate.

2.3.3. *Confidence (Cult)ure and Femvertising*

Within the neoliberal context, it is easy to observe the depoliticization or flattening of the feminist discourse to a self-help manual that encourages women to overcome their issues through self-invention (Moore, 2017, as cited in Evans & Bussey-Chamberlain, 2021). First theorized by Gill and Orgard (2017), *Confidence (Cul)ture* refers to the emergence of a “gendered ‘technology of the self’” (Foucault, 1988, as cited in Gill & Orgard, 2017, p. 18) that locates the roots of gender disparity within a form of confidence subjectivity. To illustrate this point, confidence culture identifies women’s lack of confidence or low self-esteem as the main obstacle to their personal and professional achievements, thereby promoting the notion that confidence alone can be a solution to structural inequalities (Gill & Orgard, 2017). Within this culture or “cult”, happiness can be reached following a linear trajectory: a standardized change in behavior leading to an improved, more confident selfhood (Gill & Orgard, 2017). These messages span across multiple domains of the living - from consumer culture to education to the workplace - and are exemplified in the success and content of various bestsellers, including *Lean In* by Sheryl Sandberg and *The Confidence Code* by Katty Kay and Claire Shipman (Gill & Orgard, 2017). Although intending to promote progressive feminist ideals, these manuals do not confront the social pressures and obstructions of patriarchal institutions but encourage women to internalize the change.

Articulated in a series of advice or self-help discussions, confidence culture perfectly intersects with neoliberal principles in its focus on self-love and self-care (Riley et al., 2019). In recent years, affirmative and empowering statements about women have replaced the abundance

of narratives highlighting women's imperfections and shortcomings (Riley et al., 2019). Such statements resonate with basic feminist principles (i.e. women's inherent value and worth) but simultaneously "psychologize" feminist discourse, suggesting that insecurity and self-doubt are responsible for women's struggles (Gill & Orgard, 2017; Capecchi, 2021). As a result, feminism is "remade into a therapeutic rather than a political project" (Gill & Orgard, 2017, p. 33) using a positive, resilient tone that constructs a patriarchal and corporate-friendly feminist subject. Against this backdrop, a new advertising phenomenon has rapidly gained ground in the Anglo-Saxon world and gradually entered the Italian advertising arena: *femvertising*.

Born from the combination of "feminism" and "advertising", femvertising⁵ refers to the set of corporate communication practices that market female talents and excellence, thereby aiming to promote and encourage female empowerment (Varghese & Kumar, 2020). Pioneering the introduction of the concept of femvertising was, once again, Dove's 2004 "Campaign for Real Beauty" campaign (Johnston & Taylor, 2008; Sobande, 2019b). Since then, femvertising has been widely used as an advertising strategy, with some proven positive effects on brand reputation, purchase intentions, and brand loyalty among millennial women (Drake, 2017; Varghese & Kumar, 2020). Nevertheless, several scholars define femvertising as harmful to feminist political concerns because it decontextualizes and reduces feminist statements to marketing messages that reinforce a male-dominated and profit-driven consumer culture (Sobande, 2019b; Varghese & Kumar, 2020). Critical reviews of the phenomenon have also lamented femvertising's improper use of the language of *intersectionality* and its superficial discussion of the role of race and other identity-markers as oppressive forces in Black women's lives especially (Sobande, 2019a). This has been well documented in feminist critical accounts of intersectionality as an advertising tool.

⁵ The term was first coined in 2014 during an Advertising Week panel moderated by Samantha Skey, CEO of SheMedia, and it was used in reference to campaigns challenging stereotypical portrayal of women in advertising. Since 2015, SheMedia has established the Femvertising Awards to honor campaigns that celebrate female empowerment in different categories (Capecchi, 2021).

2.3.4. *Depoliticizing Intersectionality*

The neoliberal feminist “algorithm” permeating consumer culture and femvertising stands in stark contrast to the issue of *intersectionality*. Developed as a concept by civil rights activist and scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), intersectionality is a term and analytical framework that theorizes how multiple facets of an individual’s social and political identities (i.e. race/ethnicity, class, (dis)ability, sexuality, age, etc.) are intertwined into a hierarchy of power, privilege, and oppression. This interconnectedness implies that, although women share a universal experience of structural subordination to men in the patriarchal order, gender oppression doesn’t manifest itself in the same way for every woman everywhere (Lazar, 2007). Anna Carastathis (2014) argues that “oppression is not a singular process or a binary political relation” (p. 304). Rather, it must be understood in the context of the interwoven systems of gender social practices (Carastathis, 2014). As highlighted by Carla Rice et. al (2020), Crenshaw (1989) used the metaphor of a “traffic intersection where privilege and disadvantage collide” (p. 179) to discuss racial oppression, highlighting the limitations of gender as a single analytical concept. According to Leslie McCall (2005), intersectionality is one of the most crucial theoretical contributions to feminist theory to date.

Through the promotion of a version of feminism that doesn’t recognize the structural limitations that obstruct women’s access to equal opportunities, neoliberal feminism undermines the “radical possibilities of intersectionality” (Evans & Bussey-Chamberlain, 2021, p. 345). In other words, the denial of the preconditions that produce structural inequalities dilute and disarticulate intersectionality, neutralizing its potential to bring about social transformation (Bilge, 2013). In her article “Intersectionality Undone”, scholar Sirma Bilge (2013) highlights how depoliticizing intersectionality is especially beneficial to a neoliberal agenda that “reframe[s] all values as market values” (p. 407). Bilge (2013) argues that a variety of minority struggles or identity-based political concerns are often “turned into corporatized diversity tools” (p. 407) and used by dominant groups to attain economic goals. This is coherent with this chapter’s previous reflection on corporate BoPopriation and the use of body-positive signifiers to further consumption goals in advertising, for instance.

3. Methodology

3.1. Chapter Overview

This chapter provides a detailed description of the methodology used to carry out the study. First, a justification is offered to support the reasons why a qualitative research method was deemed most suitable for the research strategy. Second, this chapter explores the importance of the use of a Multimodal Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis to analyze the research material, providing insights into the intersectional nature of the study and its strong connection to feminist theory. The chapter also describes the sample and how the data was collected, presenting tables that summarize key information. The section on data collection, in particular, offers an assessment of the importance of purposive sampling for the selection of the most relevant and useful data from the Instagram accounts of the two Italian lingerie labels Intimissimi and Yamamay. The chapter continues with an outline of the steps that were followed during the coding process and how the data was operationalized, offering a transparent account of the tools used by the researcher to formulate certain interpretations of the data. Finally, the chapter addresses the theoretical and practical approach used to ensure validity and credibility despite the small size of the sample, alongside acknowledging research limitations and suggestions for future studies.

3.2. Methodological Approach

The methodological approach for this study was chosen to address the following research questions:

Research Question	<i>How do Italian lingerie labels Intimissimi and Yamamay make use of body-positive and neoliberal feminist signifiers in their Instagram advertising?</i>
Sub-Research Question	<i>What kinds of bodies are framed as bearers of these emancipatory values?</i>

This study's critical approach to digital marketing material involved a close reading of social media texts and the narratives that popular Italian lingerie labels associated with them at the time of creation (Sobande, 2019a). Driven by the research questions, this thesis project conducted a multimodal analysis of the Instagram advertising campaigns of the Italian popular lingerie labels Intimissimi and Yamamay. The aim of this analysis was to ultimately cast a spotlight on the (mis)use of emancipatory slogans in the brands' Instagram advertisements and on the bodies that are chosen to represent such ideals.

A qualitative research method was deemed most suitable to analyze the dataset. Such an approach is based on the epistemological premise that data texts contribute to building our social realities instead of simply mirroring them (Schreier, 2013). In Bonnie Brennen's (2017) words, qualitative textual analysis is interested in revealing "the social practices, representations, assumptions and stories" (p. 205) present in data texts, that is, any visual or literal construct that we use to interpret how meanings are made and conveyed. This type of non-numerical examination makes it possible to observe and interpret the patterns of relationships that exist in the dataset, offering a depth of analysis that any quantitative method would fail to provide (Babbie, 2010). Within this qualitative framework, a Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) was chosen to investigate the dataset.

3.2.1. CDA & FCDA

As a form of textual analysis, CDA is rooted in the assumption that, much like linguistic communications, images are answerable for the construction and transmission of meanings in society (Machin & Mayr, 2012). As powerful creators of ideas, values, beliefs, (moving) images and other visual elements can dismantle or reinforce the dominant power structures permeating our social realities (Hall et.al, 2013; Machin & Mayr, 2012). According to Brennen (2017), the aim of CDA is to detect socially constructed discourses in the data and then situate them within a broader cultural context. The notion of FCDA perfectly resonates with the purpose of CDA, but also offers the additional tools for the analysis of the possible "strategies of negotiation, resistance, solidarity, and social empowerment of disenfranchised women" (Nartey, 2021, p. 659). FCDA does not merely deconstruct texts but focuses on the political project of emancipation for groups of women in specific communities.

Feminist CDA stands at the nexus of critical discourse studies and feminist studies and is interested in the creation of a political perspective on gender relations in discourse (Lazar, 2007). In contemporary societies, issues of gender, power, and ideology have assumed increasingly more complex and subtle forms (Lazar, 2007). This is why, as outlined by scholar Michelle Lazar (2007), a feminist reading of data texts can provide a more nuanced understanding of the discourses that sustain certain social arrangements. According to Fairclough (2003), discourses both reflect and constitute social practices, as they “‘word’ or ‘lexicalize’ the world in particular ways” (p. 129). In turn, different discourses construct the world differently.

Although a great deal of CDA research has investigated “‘serious’ political, professional, and news media contexts and texts” (Lazar, 2007, p. 156), so called “banal” texts such as consumer advertisements have received less attention. However, from a critical perspective, such texts are fundamental precisely because they are fleeting yet ubiquitous in modern culture (Lazar, 2007). As Lazar (2007) suggests, consumer advertisements “do not invite serious attention” (p.156) and hence authentically reflect some of the cultural processes taking place in the public sphere. In this context, Feminist CDA creates space for what lies behind the cultural politics of such texts. The adoption of a feminist perspective offers a reminder that social practices are gendered and regularly intersect with other hierarchical systems of power that highlight differences in social class, race/ethnicity, sexuality, age, culture, and so on (Lazar, 2007). As discussed in the theoretical framework, this notion is informed by Kimberlé Crenshaw’s (1989) work on intersectionality, a foundational theorization of the intersecting systems of oppression permeating women’s lives.

A feminist critique in discourse analysis seeks to ultimately attain social justice and transformation by challenging the gendered social practices implicit in the workings of societies (Lazar, 2007). Lazar (2007) argues that this approach is based on a “dialectical relationship between theory and practice” (p. 145), that is, on the regular mobilization of feminist theory to inform critical assessment of texts and support strategies for change. Such an orientation resonates with one of the principles of qualitative research, which Babbie (2010) calls “the continuing interplay between data collection and theory” (p. 394). This is exemplified by this thesis’ data analysis, which involved a constant dialogue with feminist theory and its account of both neoliberal feminism and fat studies.

The coding process in this study followed a combination of deductive and inductive approaches, meaning that the researcher situated the project within a theoretical phenomenon of interest (*deduction*) and simultaneously developed relevant observations from the qualitative inquiry of the dataset (*induction*) (Morse & Mitcham, 2002). According to Wodak and Meyer (2001), the social critique implicit in CDA engages with data that is “[embedded] in the social” (p. 9). Glenn Bowen (2006) discusses how a grounded theory approach in qualitative research “calls for a continual interplay between data collection and analysis to produce a theory during the research process” (p. 13). In this context, *sensitizing concepts* from the literature can be used as analytical tools to formulate expectations and direct the research process (Bowen, 2006). Bowen (2006) also observes that, while sensitizing concepts might make the researcher aware of the key contextual aspects of certain research situations, they might also divert attention away from other crucial aspects. To overcome the issue, Deborah Padgett (2004) suggests that sensitizing concepts drawn from the literature be used as a starting point to interpret the data, or as analytical lens to inform the researcher’s judgment throughout the coding process. Emerging concepts from the analysis can then either support, alter or replace sensitizing concepts (Padgett, 2004). Therefore, this thesis project adopted Padgett’s (2004) approach and observed how emerging themes or concepts from the data “supplemented” or “displaced” (p. 301) sensitizing concepts from the literature.

In addition, since FCDA acknowledges the interconnectedness of language and other semiotic modalities such as images, gestures, and sounds, this research employed a multimodal approach to the analysis of the dataset (Lazar, 2007; Wang, 2014). This approach is best suited to study the material under examination as it offers the tool to decode “more than one mode of semiosis” (O’Halloran, 2005, as cited in Wang, 2014, p. 264), namely auditory, visual and textual. The goal of multimodality is to investigate the ways in which meaning is realized intermodally rather than through separate semiotic modes such as language, sounds, or images (Roderick, 2018). Within FCDA, a multimodal view also provides a more holistic critique of culturally constructed discourses of gender (Lazar, 2007). The analysis of the advertisements in this thesis project was multimodal in nature, reflecting the multimodal dimension of the sample.

3.3. Sample and Data Collection

Instagram was chosen over other social media platforms as it constitutes a crucial advertising channel for brands operating online today (Cwynar-Horta, 2016). Because this thesis project focuses on the Italian market, two popular Italian brands' accounts were included in the analysis: Intimissimi (@intimissimiofficial) and Yamamay (@yamamayofficial). As of the time of the research for this project, Intimissimi has 3.8 million followers and Yamamay has 929,000 followers on Instagram. In the interest of investigating the brands' most recent advertising efforts, the selected material covered a time span of approximately four years, from 2019 to the present. The overall dataset consisted of 40 exemplary cases and featured Instagram posts (both images and videos) including their original hashtags, captions, slogans, and other online initiatives associated with the social media campaigns (e.g. filmed marketing content such as the recording of the “Self-Love is First Love” Intimissimi panel, available on the company’s website) (Table 1).

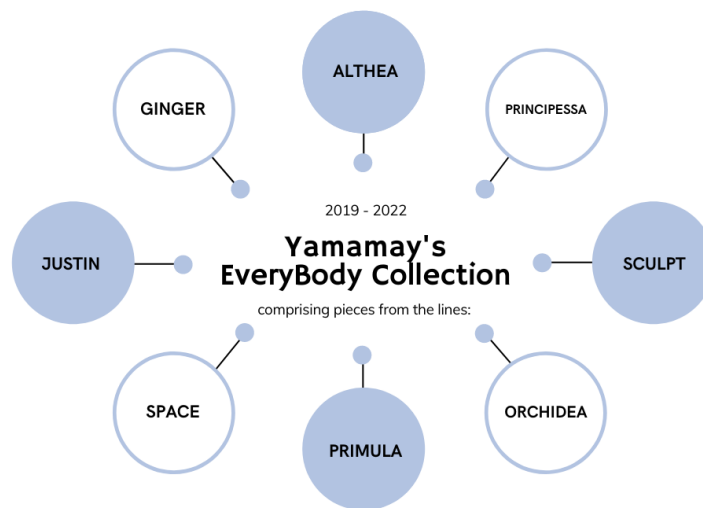
Table 1. *Overview of Exemplary Texts by Unit of Analysis*

Corpora	Source	Unit of Analysis	Number of Exemplary Texts
Visual Corpus	Yamay's official Instagram account (@yamamayofficial)	Instagram posts (videos & photos) and captions	25
Visual Corpus	Intimissimi's official Instagram account (@intimissimiofficial)	Instagram posts (videos & photos) and captions	14
Visual Corpus	Intimissimi's Website	“Self-Love is First Love” panel	1

In the case of Yamamay, the Instagram posts advertised two lingerie collections: “EveryBody” (2019 – 2022) and “Pure Basics” (2021). As specified on the company’s website, Yamamay’s “EveryBody” collection is a “compilation of underwear” designed for “every body” and for “every

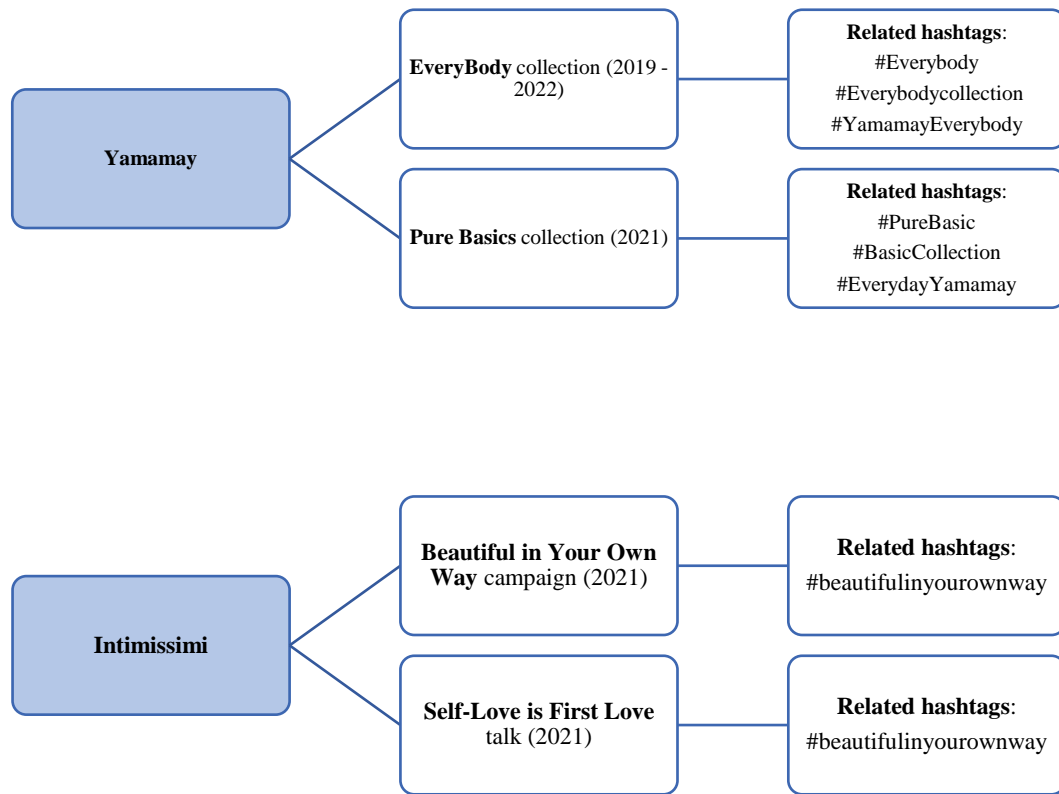
woman” (Yamamay, n.d.). The collection has been regularly featured on Yamamay’s social media channels since 2019 and is periodically advertised as new pieces are added to the company’s different lingerie lines. All underwear lines included in the “EveryBody” collection are listed in Table 2. Similarly, the “Pure Basics” collection was launched in 2021 and claimed to offer basic staple underwear pieces for “all sizes” (Yamamay, n.d.).

Table 2. *Overview of the underwear lines included in Yamamay’s EveryBody collection*



As for Intimissimi, the Instagram posts refer to the company’s “Beautiful in Your Own Way” (2021) campaign, with which Intimissimi announced the expansion of its cup sizes for several models of bras up to size F (Bloom, 2021). The “Self-Love is First Love” talk (2021) was also an initiative associated to the “Beautiful in Your Own Way” campaign. The event was live-streamed on Intimissimi’s website and it was dedicated to the topics of female empowerment, self-esteem, and Body Positivity (Grazia, 2021). A summary of the selected material for this study can be viewed in Table 3.

Table 3. *Summary of Selected Material for the Study & Related Hashtags*



Given that the two labels conduct business internationally, the content that was examined from their Instagram pages (including both text and audio) was already in English and therefore did not require further translation. On the other hand, relevant filmed initiatives related to the campaigns were hosted in Italian and were (partially) translated by the researcher.

Data collection was conducted through purposive sampling, meaning that the sample was personally selected from the brands' official Instagram accounts based on two criteria: exemplarity and availability (Palinkas et al., 2015). Purposive sampling is a form of nonprobability sampling that selects data based on the researcher's judgment about the representativeness of a unit to be observed (Babbie, 2010). To determine which posts would be most "useful" or "representative", the researcher adopted several inclusion criteria, which will be illustrated in the following section (Babbie, 2010). A summary of the data collection criteria can be viewed in Table 4.

Table 4. *Summary of Data Collection Criteria*

General Information	
Sampling method	Purposive Sampling
Source	Intimissimi's Website & Intimissimi and Yamamay's official Instagram accounts
Sample size	40 exemplary texts
Covered time span	2019 - present

3.4. Inclusion Criteria

As mentioned above, the researcher personally selected the sample for this thesis project based on what she deemed most “representative” and “useful” in the context of the study, thus delineating five inclusion criteria. First, the researcher determined that Instagram posts and related content should be uploaded by Intimissimi and Yamamay’s official Instagram accounts. Second, the researcher only chose advertisements for products marketed to females. Given the performative and constructed dimension of gender, the researcher recognizes that this distinction is inherently binary and limited (Butler, 1988). However, to limit the scope of data collection, such a simplification was only used to select advertisements displaying lingerie garments that are traditionally associated with femininity, namely bras, panties, shapewear, and other related items of clothing. The data were further filtered based on the use of feminist signifiers including slogans related to the realm of body positivity, self-esteem, self-love, and female empowerment. Additionally, advertisements were selected based on the presence of body diversity claims, such as inclusive sizing and inclusive representation. Finally, the researcher selected associated online initiatives that could provide more context and depth to the Instagram campaigns. A summary of the data collection criteria can be viewed in Table 5. A critical theoretical framework that accounts for systemic fat-phobic and sexist social forces guided this process and allowed for the collection

of adverts alluding to various socially relevant cues (Sobande, 2020). A feminist rationale alerted the researcher to the most interesting and relevant aspects of the investigated data.

Table 5. *Summary of Inclusion Criteria*

Inclusion criteria				
Availability of campaigns on the Intimissimi and Yamamay's Instagram accounts	Products displayed must be marketed towards females	Use of slogans related to body positivity self-esteem, self-love & female empowerment	Presence of body diversity claims (inclusive sizing, inclusive representation)	Presence of online initiatives associated with the Instagram campaigns

3.5. Operationalization & Data Analysis

The analysis of the sample was conducted manually, meaning that no software was used to code the data. Each Instagram post was coded through an identical procedure: first, the (moving) image was visually examined; second, the sounds including music and voiceovers were coded; third, captions and related hashtags were investigated to complete the understanding and the overall evaluation of the post. Critical readings of the advertisements were conducted in four sequential steps, following a toolset developed by Machin and Mayr (2012) for CDA. Once this first screening of the data was completed, the advertisements were coded using the principles of analysis developed by Lazar (2007) for FCDA.

First, (moving) images were analyzed to identify the levels of *denotation* and *connotation* of their elements. To do so, each element depicted in the advertisement was carefully listed and described (denotation), as well as interpreted to detect the potential symbolic meanings it carried (connotation) (Hall et al., 2013; Machin & Mayr, 2012). According to Hall et al. (2013), at the descriptive level of denotation the degree of agreement is high, as most people would concur on a manifest meaning using their conventional classifications of an object (e.g. a bra). The level of connotation, however, goes beyond the obvious interpretation of said object as it connects it to the value system and conceptual framework of society to explore its “meaning potential”

(Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 51) (e.g. physical support, comfort/discomfort, social norm, regulation of women's bodies, restriction and sexualization of women's bodies, and so on). Because no meaning is "fixed" (Hall, 2013, p. 9) in representation, reflecting on the symbolism of an object reveals important information on why it is present in a text or composition. Thus, in this phase, the researcher compiled an objective and comprehensive inventory of the objects and attributes included in the images to investigate their latent meanings.

Second, image settings were investigated, namely the physical space in which the advertisements were set. During this step, the researcher examined the outside or inside surroundings of a subject or object (Machin & Mayr, 2012). In the words of Machin and Mayr (2012), "settings are used to communicate general ideas, to connote discourses and their values, identities and actions" (p. 52). Therefore, in the data analysis for this thesis project, settings helped reveal the general spirit of the brands' communications (e.g. serious, playful, ironic, optimistic, etc.), and the potential symbolism associated with each element of the images (e.g. did the advertisement create a fantasy world through abstracted settings? Is the realism of the setting coherent with the mission value of the advertisement?).

Next, salience was examined, that is, any accentuated features of the objects or subjects in the composition. This included size, tone, contrasting colors, foregrounding, focus, overlapping, and so on (Machin & Mayr, 2012). In the words of Wang (2014), salience "plays a vital role in reinforcing the theme of the picture" (p. 274), thereby communicating which values have symbolic prominence in a composition. For instance, the spatial arrangement of the panelists in Intimissimi's "Self-Love is First Love" talk revealed which guests were given more visual prominence during the event, and, in turn, more speaking time. Or again, the extensive use of the color white in Yamamay's communications connoted values of purity and freshness.

Finally, in coding the literal text present in the data (song lyrics, video voiceovers, video text overlays, post captions, hashtags, slogans, website texts, video information, etc.), particular attention was devoted to lexical choices and genre, as well as word overlexicalization, suppression, and structural oppositions. In particular, *lexical choices* and *genre of communication* signaled the general tone and style used by the brands to market their products (i.e. persuasive, assertive, didactic, formal, informal, friendly, trustworthy, inspiring, etc.). *Overlexicalization* refers to the emphasis on certain words and their synonyms, which, in this research were, for instance, body image terminology (e.g. curves, body, beauty) and imperative

verbs such as “embrace”, “love”, etc. (Machin & Mayr, 2012). The abundance of particular words often indicated the presence of something “problematic or of ideological contention” (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 37). *Suppression*, on the other hand, refers to the lexical absence of certain words that might be expected in a context. This was the case with the absence of any social and feminist commentary about structural discrimination in sizing or body representation in the advertisements, for instance. On the other hand, *structural oppositions* refer to the presence of opposing concepts in a text. In this research, this tool was used to decode empowering texts celebrating body diversity next to images portraying normative beauty, for example.

Although the process of coding for this project draws on a CDA framework, it is important to note that Feminist CDA takes the analysis of gender issues several steps further (Nartey, 2021). In particular, FCDA builds on the developments of critical feminist theory to delineate five interrelated principles of analysis. (1) *Feminist critical activism*, which refers to the analysis of the discourses that sustain certain workings of power, and, by doing so, contribute to the development of strategies of resistance and change (Lazar, 2007). (2) *Gender as ideological structure and practice*, which highlights “the underlying dualism of gender structure” (Lazar, 2007, p. 148) that divides people into the two binary classes of “men” and “women” based on a hierarchical relation of subordination. (3) *Complexity of gender and power relations*, which acknowledges the intricacy of the forms of oppression that both divide and bring women together (Lazar, 2007). (4) *Discourse in the (de)construction of gender*, that is, the different forms of semiotics (written, verbal, visual) that contribute to upholding or contesting a certain social order. (5) *Critical reflexivity as praxis*, which detects where knowledge about social processes is used in institutional practices to further non-feminist ends. These five criteria can be observed, for instance, in the advertisements’ appropriation of feminist values of emancipation and inclusivity to achieve non-feminist goals (i.e. capitalism, consumerism, restricted body representation, etc.).

3.6. The Coding Process

The coding process was informed by the abovementioned FCDA tools and was organized in three steps: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. First, the researcher conducted a

line-by-line scrutiny of raw data during *open coding*, the earliest phase of the process in which codes were generated and labeled through constant comparison (Benaquisto, 2008). This process included the examination of written, verbal, and visual material, which was initially broken down into different codes in Excel. Open coding was carried out over a period of approximately ten days and it laid the groundwork for *axial coding*, the phase where major categories began to emerge from the data (Benaquisto, 2008). During this phase, the researcher systematically identified relations between the codes and used written memos and Excel diagrams to determine core categories (Madill, 2008). Axial coding was completed over approximately two weeks. Finally, *selective coding* was used to strengthen weak categories by going back to the raw material and/or coding new data that was specifically gathered to fill in the gaps (Benaquisto, 2008). During this step, the researcher identified the final categories and expanded the dataset to include 40 exemplary texts instead of 30. As a result, new relevant material was used to saturate the categories and identify one unified “story” or theory grounded in the data. As expected, this stage was the lengthier: selective coding was carried out over a period of twenty days.

3.7. Validity & Reliability

In conducting this study, the researcher recognizes her role as a queer Italian woman whose articulation of fat identity is in constant evolution and how those elements of her identity have played into the development of the project. As an interested participant in this research, she acknowledges that her personal biography might influence credibility and that the presentation of observed results will inevitably imply a degree of subjectivity (Darwin Holmes, 2020). In addition, as a white abled woman, the researcher’s own experience of oppression (and related understanding of it) differs from that of other women. The intersectional approach explicit in this research project takes these fundamental limitations into account. Knowing that her privileged experience might skew or cloud her judgment on the pervasiveness of certain power systems, thereby affecting the quality of the research, the researcher has ensured validity and reliability through three steps.

First, the researcher has strived to situate her writing within a clear feminist theoretical perspective, adopting a reflexive approach to all phases of the research process aimed at reducing bias and partisanship (Darwin Holmes, 2020). As suggested by Boeije (2010), she has carefully

carried out analytical induction by comparing the results observed at each stage of the research with previous literature outlined in the theoretical framework.

Second, to ensure analytical rigor, the researcher chose to adopt intra-coder reliability over inter-coder reliability. Van den Hoonard (2008) describes inter-coder reliability as the result of at least two researchers independently coding the data to determine a percentage of agreement. On the other hand, intra-coder reliability refers to how consistently a researcher codes data (van den Hoonard, 2008). Inter-coder and intra-coder reliability are adopted in both qualitative and quantitative research. Nevertheless, the former is more commonly used in studies involving statistical methods, while the latter is mainly employed to analyze texts, which makes the approach suitable for this study (van den Hoonard, 2008). Operationally, intra-coder reliability was carried out in this study by constantly rereading the texts and carefully observing the patterns of sequence of codes emerging from the data.

Similarly, following Silverman's directions (2011), every step of the methodology used to analyze the data as well as the lenses framing the theoretical framework were made available and transparent to ensure reliability. Theoretical transparency of the research strategy made explicit why the coding process produced certain interpretations and excluded others.

3.8. Research Limitations

Framed as part of a qualitative research design, the FCDA rationale that guides this study was concerned with measuring the *affect*, rather than the *effect* of the advertisements in the dataset. Although the sample under examination was expanded since earlier stages of the research, it remains relatively small and only partly representative of the broader cultural context where the advertisements are situated. It was therefore paramount to carry out a comprehensive treatment of the material, an analysis of any deviant cases, and a constant comparison between data to ensure the validity of the results (Boeije, 2010). This implied re-evaluation of results every time new insights emerged from the research material.

In addition, given that the purpose of this study was to investigate the online communication strategy used by the most popular Italian lingerie labels, only two brands were included in the research data. For this reason, this study does not claim to be exhaustive or offer results that can extend to the entirety of the Italian lingerie market. Thus, if this research was to be

conducted on a larger scale, data would have to be gathered until saturation, meaning “the point when no new information is obtained from additional qualitative data” (Kerr et al., 2010, p. 271). Doing so would imply looking into more brands or extending the covered time span of data from Intimissimi and Yamamay.

Ultimately, this study seeks to contribute the ongoing scholarly discussion on the (improper) use of feminist signifier and social justice activism terminology in corporate advertising. The research encourages a reflection on the problematic narratives that seem to favor and celebrate women but, in reality, contradict their own mission. Because of the pervasiveness of said content in today’s online consumer culture, a feminist perspective on the issue can provide strategies to resist such simplifications and it is thus more urgent than ever.

4. Results and Discussion

The material in the dataset was empirically investigated through a Multimodal Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, an approach that focused on the critical assessment of the linguistic and audiovisual components of each text. Patterns were identified and contextualized within feminist theory, leading to the formulation of four themes: the labor of body love, power femininity, the inclusivity claim, and a timid resistance.

4.1. The Labor of Body Love

One of the first major observations that emerged from the examination of the data is the recurrence of texts that insist on a narrative of body love. The analysis revealed that both Intimissimi and Yamamay adopt a language that actively encourages, inspires, and often dictates body love in their Instagram communications. Such discourse includes both the physical dimension of the body and the psychological dimension of the mind. Indeed, several texts in the dataset depict a form of self-love that accepts and celebrates the self in its bodily manifestations and encourages regulation of its spiritual, subjective manifestations. Both forms of body love imply a degree of emotional and physical labor that subjects women to a constant state of self-vigilance. This is exemplified in three sub-themes: the imperative of self-love, the beauty project, and the currency of self-confidence.

4.1.1. *The Imperative of Self-Love*

The analysis suggests that the theme of self-love is often represented in the dataset as one of the main preoccupations in women's lives. The brands treat the issue and share statements about it as if the quest for self-love were among everybody's first order of business. This is visible in this extract from the first minutes of Intimissimi's "Self-Love is First Love" panel:

"The goal of this evening, but perhaps in general, I would say, of life, is one and only one: to learn to love ourselves a little more. Every now and then in life, it happens that we lose sight of the importance of our own beauty and uniqueness. And so, this evening we're going to ask ourselves how we can reverse this trend." (Comello, 2021, 11:45).

In this passage, presenter Lodovica Comello details the goals of the evening, immediately framing Intimissimi's plan for the panel within a clear neoliberal feminist sensibility. In particular, the repeated use of the personal pronoun "we" and possessive pronoun "our(selves)" indicates the creation of an in-group (women) that is responsible for a change. Comello explicitly refers to women by using the feminine Italian declension of the reflexive pronoun "ourselves" ["noi stesse"], as opposed to the widely used Italian 'universal masculine' "noi stessi"]. Although she addresses women as a collective identity, it is clear from her words that such change is not intended to be collective. Indeed, the transformation implicit in her speech concerns the way one looks at oneself, one's very own "point of view" on one's life, one's "eyes" (12:05). Thus, she ultimately suggests that "[reversing] the trend" of self-doubt requires an individual intervention.

The conversations on self-love that the panelist entertained during the event were prompted by a video where Intimissimi asked 100 women to share who the person they loved most in the world was (Intimissimi, 2021, 30:25). The majority of the women featured in the video mentioned their mothers, their partners, their best friends, or their children. Only a few women mentioned themselves. Comello used the video to suggest that it is often very complex to look at oneself without judgment, but it is indeed the most important form of unconditional love. Therefore, the general lesson Intimissimi imparted at the end of the video was the necessity for women to love themselves first. At the end of the event, this message was synthesized in the caption of an Intimissimi's Instagram post featuring the ten panelists (Figure 1):

[IN11] "Self-Love is first Love': a mantra every woman should follow [...]"

The use of the modal auxiliary verb "should" denotes a sense of obligation and is consistent with the general tone of messaging used by Intimissimi and Yamamay in the advertisements comprised in the sample.



Figure 1. *Intimissimi. Instagram Post on November 14, 2021*

In particular, the data suggests that discourses on self-love in the sample are often delivered in a didactic tone, with the two brands using affirmative imperatives directed at consumers in several of their captions, background song lyrics, or video voiceovers. In the advertisements, the brands urge consumers to “embrace” their bodies and “highlight” their curves, using imperatives such as “show-off” and “enhance”. Below is a specific example of this type of ad from Yamamay:



Figure 2. *Yamayay. Instagram Post on January 16, 2020.*

The post features a mid-size woman leaning back on her heels and sitting on a bed in a black bra and shaping slip dress. She touches her leg and chest while glancing serenely at the camera. The caption of the post reads:

[YA9] “Show off your curves and feel irresistible in our Princess set with shaping slip dress [...]”

As the abovementioned post shows, the imperative of self-love is frequently enacted in the texts through a positive lexical association with the body and its qualities, particularly with the term “curves”. Other examples from the dataset include:

[YA3] “Highlight your curves with Yamamay New Collection” (Caption)

[YA12] “Choose your favorite Yamamay Basic and enhance your beautiful curves in the most natural way” (Caption)

The common denominator among these messages is the exhortation for women to appreciate their bodies and highlight their natural attributes through the purchase of lingerie products. Semantically, the verbs in the adverts are all positive and denote emphasis (“highlight”, “enhance”), and performance (“show off”).

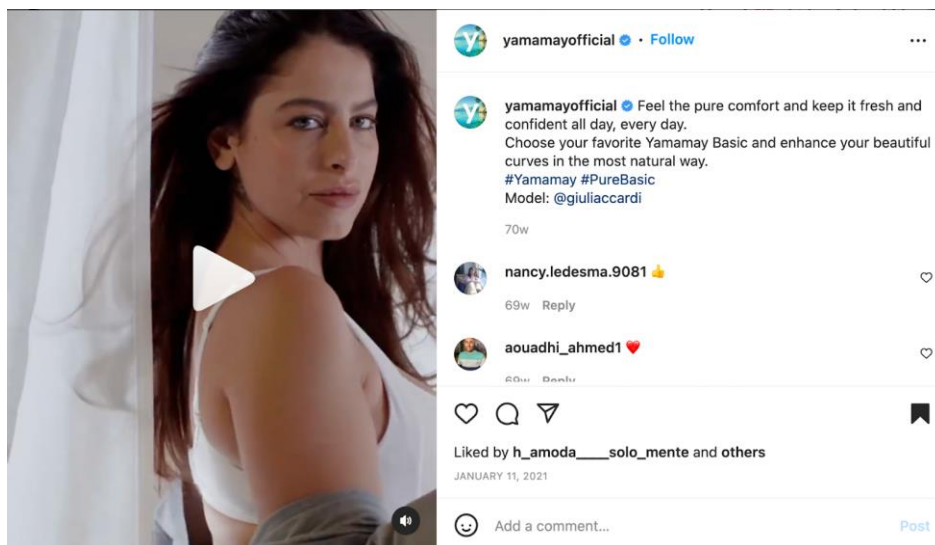


Figure 3. Yamamay. Instagram Post on January 11, 2021

Settings in the ads alternate studio sets (with professional lighting and backgrounds) and other indoor locations such as bedrooms or other rooms in a house. The presence of home-based settings connotes ideas of comfort, familiarity, and belongingness, and thus makes the message more personal than it if delivered from a studio setting. No outdoor settings are included in the dataset. This suggests that a woman's work on body love starts from the inside, from her individuality, or from the comfort of her home.

4.1.2. The Beauty Project

The critical assessment of the dataset also revealed the vast presence of texts that portray beauty as a personal project of self-love and self-discovery. This was the overall theme of the “Self-Love is First Love” Intimissimi panel, which host Lodovica Comello opened by reciting the following lyrics:

“You were a little girl // [...] // Today you are fifteen years old // And you cry alone locked in the bathroom // At your birthday party [...] // You, like a bassoon in the mirror // You cry and see only your flaws // Ugly // You look at yourself and see yourself ugly [...]” (9:34).



Figure 4. *Intimissimi. Lodovica Comello recites the lyrics of the song “Ugly” by Alessandro Canino during the “Self-Love is First Love” panel. Screenshot. November 14, 2021*

These lyrics from a 2013 song by Alessandro Canino titled “Ugly” tell the story of a teenage girl and her experience with social comparison and feelings of insecurity about her appearance. Locked in the bathroom during her own birthday party, the girl looks at her reflection in the mirrors and sees “a bassoon”. While her friends are playing in the living room and admiring the other girls, she looks at herself and “[she sees herself] ugly. Towards the end of the song, a friend (the male singer) reassures her that “growing up is always a fight”. He tells her that he likes her and that she can count on him, because to him, “[she] is not ugly”.

The paternalistic tone of the song and its use an opening act in the panel exemplifies Intimissimi’s pedagogical ethos: inspiring women to be/feel “beautiful in [their] own way” (Intimissimi’s 2021 campaign slogan). Along with Intimissimi’s entire “Beautiful in Your Own Way” 2021 campaign, this text invites women to discover their own version of beauty, which is framed as an individual project of self-discovery. After receiving validation from outside (e.g. from the man in the song, from Intimissimi and Yamamay, or from the “Self-Love is First Love” panelists), women are urged to turn to the inside to find their beauty. This narrative is supported by other texts in the dataset, for instance:

[IN8] “Because every woman has her own beauty (Post Graphics), and we know how to enhance it” (Caption)

[YA1] “#Everybody is beautiful in their own way, so love yourself and love others.” (Caption)

Here, Intimissimi and Yamamay do not act as providers of beauty, but as knowledgeable experts who “know how to enhance it”. On the other hand, beauty is represented as an inherent quality that women have to discover within themselves. The ads claim that beauty is present in every woman, so the acknowledgment and pursuit of beauty become “an extension of the female empowerment project” (Lazar, 2006, p. 507). It is clear from the data that such statements act as motivators, inspiring women to believe that the beauty project is indeed feasible and attainable (Lazar, 2006). With these texts, Yamamay and Intimissimi wish to democratize access to beauty, suggesting that it may come in different shapes beyond the traditional restrictive standards.

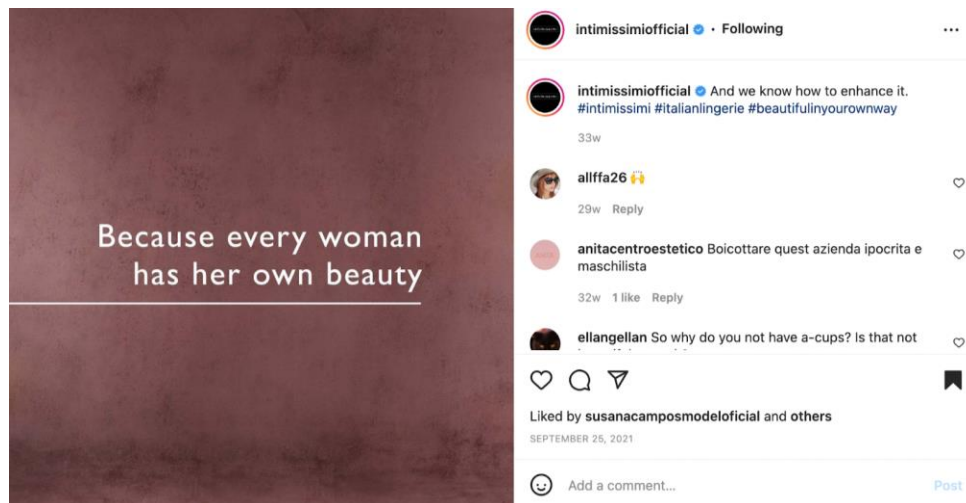


Figure 5. *Intimissimi. Instagram Post on September 26, 2021*

The texts imply that women can and should strive to be (and feel) beautiful. Thus, instead of dismantling the centrality of beauty in the first place, they reinforce its importance in women's lives (Johnston & Taylor, 2008). In addition, the texts suggest that even self-love is contingent on the recognition of beauty as a central asset ("Everyone is beautiful in their own way, so love yourself and love others"). According to Gill and Elias (2014), within the neoliberal feminism context, beauty becomes an individual project, a "state of mind" (p. 185) that requires a move from body labor to psychic labor. The psychological regulation that is implicit in this discourse is at the heart of the cult(ure) of self-confidence.

4.1.3. The Currency of Self-Confidence

Communications in the advertisements also move from the territory of physical appearance to the psychological realms of self-confidence and self-esteem. Particularly relevant in this context is the overlexicalization of the words "confident" or "(self-)confidence", used in seven of the ads in the sample and numerous times throughout the "Self-Love is First Love" panel. In the panel, confidence is frequently described as one of women's greatest strengths, one that will help them overcome the burden of external judgment and realize their full potential. "It is an awareness that comes from the mind" enunciates Olympian champion Carlotta Ferlito (49:39), with the implication that being confident in one's self is a psychic journey that women

need to embark on. In the dataset, self-confidence is framed as a state that can be achieved through the purchase and use of lingerie:

[YA5] “Self-confidence is the best outfit, even better if paired with Yamamay underwear” (Caption)

[YA7] “Be confident in your own skin wearing the perfect lingerie set [...]” (Caption)

[YA11] “Made with the innovative Sensitive Sculpt fabric it will frame, flatter and enhance your silhouette so that you feel your most confident self” (Caption)

This is consistent with Gill and Orgard’s (2017) conceptualization of *Confidence (Cul)ture*, which reframes the imperative to “love oneself” and construct a more confident self-hood as the main pathway to one’s achievements. In this neoliberal feminist context, self-confidence is realized through the exercise of women’s entrepreneurial freedom (Phipps, 2014). As a result, self-confidence becomes a currency that can be bought through consumption and trained through the incessant calculation and improvement of the self. As Gill and Elias (2014) argue, the makeover implied in these advertisements is indeed less about the body and more about women’s attitudes towards it. This is visible in the caption of one of the ads:



Figure 6. Yamamay. Instagram Post on August 24, 2019

[YA4] “[...] A strong feminine attitude comes with the perfect trendy mix: the glamorous #Liquirizia bralette + basic #Sculpt leggings [...]”

Here, the body that is celebrated and deserving of attention and inspiration is a sculpted body that carries itself with “a strong feminine attitude” and confidence. The image in itself is heavily edited with digital lighting and airbrushing tools that enhance every visible inch of the model’s body (face, arms, breasts, upper abdomen, and feet). Moreover, the dance pose and the words included in the post’s caption imply that the model’s body love is realized by putting herself on display. In another ad, the same confidence rhetoric is used to establish a form of acceptable femininity that recognizes “[one’s] limits” and “strengths”:

[YA3] “@georginagio is a confident woman, that knows her limits and her strengths [...]”.



Figure 8. Yamamay. Instagram Post on August 22, 2019

The use of the words “limits” and “strengths” serves as an additional reminder that women’s self-expression should also be monitored and disciplined at all times. Indeed, according to Gill and Elias (2014), the shift from bodily regulation to psychic regulation is among the implications of contemporary Love Your Body discourses. In the neoliberal context, it is no longer sufficient

to discipline one's body, but it is also necessary to work on the performance of one's mind (Gill & Elias, 2014). The ability to self-regulate defines a winning neoliberal feminist subject, who, in turn, may become an "idol" that other women can look up to.

The pervasiveness of Love Your Body (LYB) discourses in contemporary advertising has been well documented by Gill and Elias (2014). The two scholars (2014) proposed a nuanced interpretation of the phenomenon, pointing out certain ambivalences and cultural implications that are relevant to the argumentation of this thesis project. On the one hand, LYB discourses in the dataset constitute a discontinuity from the media's hateful commentary on women's bodies. They assert that "Style has no size" (YA7), that everybody is "beautiful in [their] own way" (Intimissimi's 2021 campaign slogan), that "self-confidence is the best outfit" (YA5), and in doing so, they encourage women to embrace and proudly celebrate their bodies. Nonetheless, substantial criticism of such messages can be raised. First, the two brands adopt the iconography of female authenticity and naturalness but make use of precisely the digital editing techniques they claim to oppose: filters, makeup, Photoshop, etc. (Gill & Elias, 2014). Next, the models featured in the ads embody the slender archetype of beauty, as shown in Figure 7.



Figure 7. *Yamamay and Intimissimi. Representation of women and use of photo editing tools. Instagram Posts, August 2019 – February 2022*

Lastly, LYB discourses assume that women's bodies are "inherently difficult to love" (Gill & Elias, 2014, p. 184). They assume that a women's relationship with her embodied self is broken in principle and is thus in need of repair ("You cry and see only your flaws // Ugly // You look at yourself and see yourself ugly", from Canino's song). This intervention is divorced from any patriarchal context and is reframed as an "easy fix" of the mind (Gill & Elias, 2014). Once again,

this implies a degree of vigilance within the neoliberal order and suggests that women have the power to turn their lives around, redefine their experiences, and become the best version of themselves via consumption.

4.2. Power Femininity

The third theme that the analysis of the data revealed is power femininity. The advertisements in the dataset articulate an interpretation of female identity that sees women as empowered agents who have full control over their lives. This finding is congruent with Lazars' (2006) conceptualization of *power femininity*, a global discourse in which feminist values of empowerment and autonomy are depoliticized by the assumption that modern women face no inequalities and hence “can have it all” (p. 505). Power femininity is a recurrent theme in neoliberal feminism and it manifests itself in the sample in two dimensions: power-over and power-to. Feminist scholarship defines *power-over* as the control that an individual can exercise over another individual, a group of people, or an environment (Kordrostami & Laczniak, 2021). On the other hand, *power-to* suggests that an individual has the willpower and self-control to change their own behavior or thoughts (Kordrostami & Laczniak, 2021). Both dimensions of power construct a feminist subject that has full agency over her own life and decisions.

4.2.1. Power-to

In feminist literature, the concept of “power-to” is commonly associated with personal empowerment, that is, the ability to change the self for the better or become the best version of oneself (Kordrostami & Laczniak, 2021). This discourse was at the heart of the “Self-Love is First Love” panel, as presenter Lodovica Comello's remarks suggest:

“Ladies, we are here to talk about fundamental things like taking care of ourselves, enhancing our potential, giving our best, or as Chiara [Ferragni] would say, trying to be the best possible version of ourselves” (16:56)

Here, Comello starts a conversation with 27 million-follower fashion influencer and entrepreneur Chiara Ferragni by introducing one of her most popular mottos, also known as “La Chiara che

vorrei essere” [“The Chiara I would like to be”]. In previous interviews, the influencer explained how she uses the motto to remind herself of what the best version of herself looks like and of the person she intends to be day after day (Saltalamacchia, 2019). During the panel, when asked to share her journey to self-awareness and self-confidence, Ferragni answered that she was raised believing “she could do and be anything” (17:50). She then shared that, even though “we all have flaws and things about ourselves that we don’t like”, we should try to “enhance the things we do like about ourselves” (18:55). Her words can be framed within a neoliberal feminist framework that sees women as active agents of their destiny and responsible for the enhancement of their own strengths (Rottemberg, 2014). The call for the optimization of personal resources that both Comello and Ferragni refer to resonates with the connotation of other texts in the dataset:

[YA2] “Give yourself the opportunity to be whoever you want to be. Discover the #NewCollection with our girls: @georginagio @la_pauselli @greta_zuccarello @demiroxmensah @beckynamgauds [...]”

[IN6] “Feeling your best in our new Lace Elena bra [...]”

The ads imply that being “whoever [one wants] to be” and “feeling [one’s] best” is a matter of giving oneself the opportunity and choice to do so. Thus, it is clear that Intimissimi and Yamamay use these texts to define a discourse of *self-actualization*. The term was first coined by Kurt Goldstein (1934) and then popularized by Maslow (1970), who defined self-actualization as “the full use and exploitation of [one’s] talents, capacities, potentialities, etc.” (p. 150). In other words, self-actualization refers to the ability to realize one’s full potential, or “to become everything one is capable of becoming” (Maslow, 1943, p. 382). Because of the crucial link between capitalism and the nature of advertising, women’s agency is inextricably connected to consumption (Lazar, 2006). In the sample, self-actualization is enabled by the brands’ products: female prospects can realize their potential through Yamamay’s “#NewCollection”, “the perfect mix” of two glamorous lingerie pieces, or through Intimissimi’s “Lace Elena bra”. Intimissimi further cements this message in the launch video for its 2021 “Beautiful in Your Own Way” campaign:

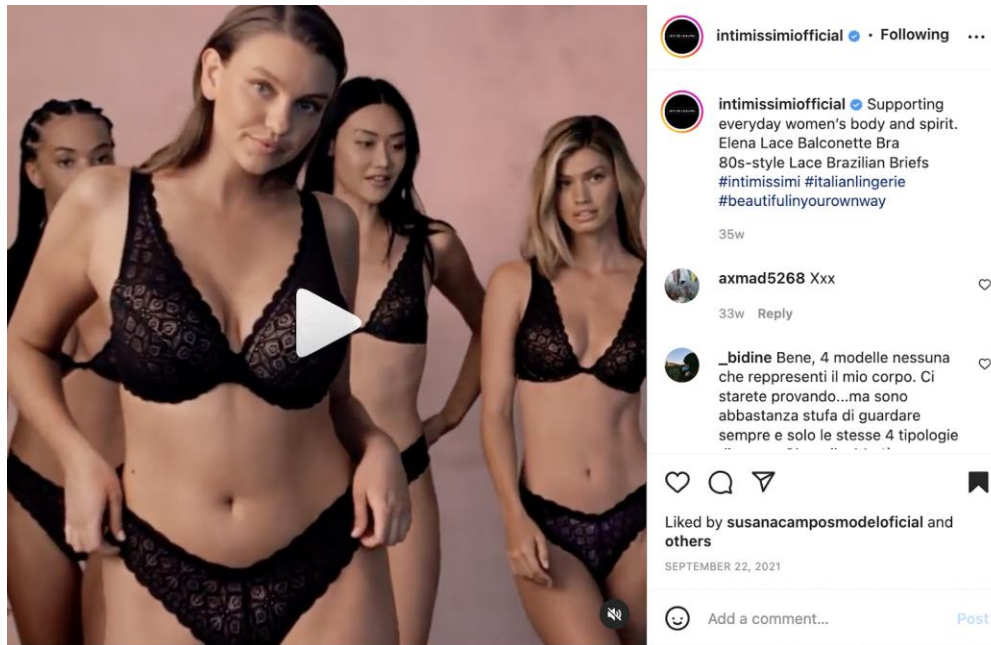


Figure 11. *Intimissimi. Instagram Post on September 22, 2021*

The video depicts four women with slightly different body types wearing the same lace set in different sizes. The models include a young Black woman, a young Asian woman, and two white women. All models are conventionally thin, except for the model foregrounded in Figure 11, who could be considered curvaceously slender. First, they are all shown walking confidently towards the camera, then posing together in the frame. In the background, a voiceover narrates:

[IN4] “Find your own power, find your own beauty // Own it, embrace it, embrace you. Finally, support your body and your spirit [...]”

The ad attaches a dimension of discovery to the pursuit of power through the use of the verb “find”, which, together with the word “finally”, suggests that women have been waiting to take control over their “bod[ies]” and “spirit[s]”. The presence of both “body” and “spirit” implies that the discovery of one’s own personal power is an experience that is both physical and psychological. The use of affirmative imperatives, including the verbs “own” and “embrace” is consistent with the previously discussed findings on the imperative of self-love. In the ad, Intimissimi frames itself and its products as the mean through which power is achieved.

4.2.2. Power-over

In the sample, the concept of “power-over” is mainly found in the portrayal of women who are urged to secure control over their environment:

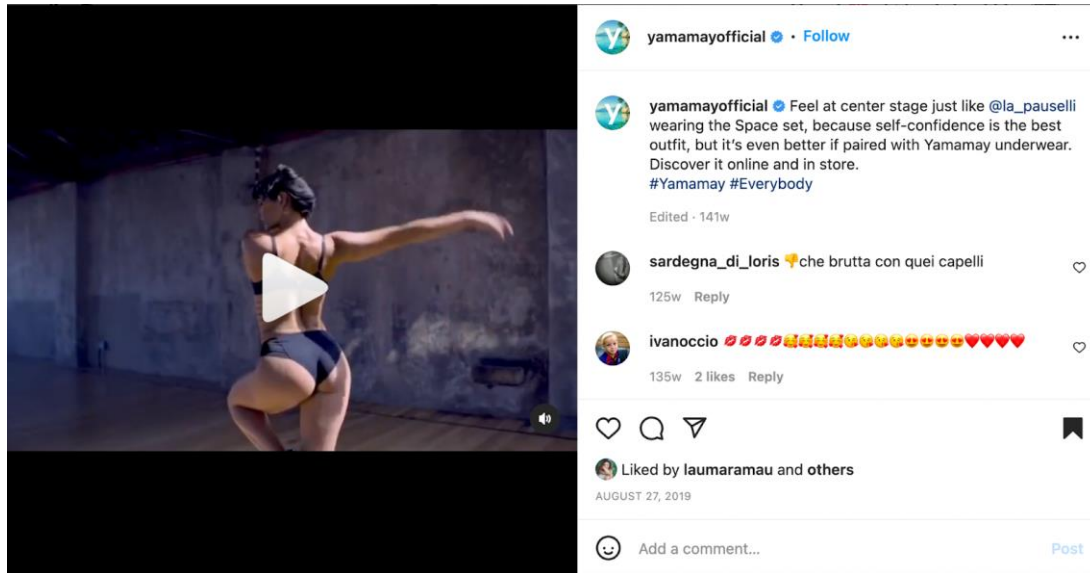


Figure 12. Yamamay. Instagram Post on August 27, 2019

The brief video represented in Figure 12 is part of Yamamay’s 2019 “EveryBody” campaign. It shows a woman dancing alone in black underwear and heels in what appears to be an empty dance studio. The woman has a slender and athletic physique. Upbeat music accompanies her sensual dance, which ends with her glancing seductively at the camera. The caption encapsulates the essence of the post, as it persuades prospects to experience the same dimension of power that the model wields over her surroundings:

[YA5] “Feel at center stage just like @la_pauselli wearing the Space set [...]”

In the text, the expression “feel at center stage” suggests that women watching the ad are encouraged to feel like the most noticeable person in a situation or receive attention from others in a certain environment. A similar theatrical metaphor is used in another Yamamay video ad that features three models posing in a studio set. The models appear comfortable with themselves

and with each other, moving confidently in their matching underwear sets and hinting smiles at the camera. In the background, a song with the following lyrics plays:

[YA13] “Baby you glow, you glow // You shine, you shine // Baby you shine so bright // Because all eyes on you when you step in the room // ‘Cause you’ve got the spotlight [...]”



Figure 13. *Yamamay. Instagram Post on September 23, 2021*

Here, the prospect is directly addressed through the overlexicalization of the personal pronoun “you” and celebrated with several verbs in the present simple (“glow”, “shine”, “move”, “have (got)” etc.). The choice of tense indicates that the advertisement assumes those statements to be universal truths. Expressions such as “all eyes on you” and “you’ve got the spotlight” reiterate the invitation to “feel center stage” (YA5) and receive external attention as one “steps into a room”. There is, indeed, an element of performativity in these actions, as being “center stage” (YA5) or having “the spotlight” (YA13) implies the existence of an audience or outside eye watching.

This prompts the question as to who is in a position to witness such performances and how that collides with discourses of empowerment and autonomy. There is no doubt that the

models in these ads are at the center of what Laura Mulvey (1975) called “the male gaze”, that is, the objectifying, gendered way of looking at female bodies that presupposes a male spectator. Nevertheless, the models are far from passive or subject to the male authority (Amy-Chinn, 2006). Another video belonging to Yamamay’s 2019 “EveryBody” campaign shows five women dancing in the same empty dance studio as YA5. In the several shots that compose the ad, the women dance in their bodysuits, underwear, stockings, and heels. The leader of the group and face of the “EveryBody” campaign is international model Georgina Rodríguez, who visually appears at the center of every shot featuring all five models. Accompanying the dancers is a song with the following lyrics:

[YA1] “Player, I’m a true player [...] // I fuck you up with my style, you smile // you glance at my Catwoman stance [...] // [I’m] stronger than rum when I put you on your knees // watch out for my weaponry // faking no pleasantries.”

Here, the interplay between the personal pronouns “I” and “you” suggests that the text is a conversation between a woman (“I”), and a second individual (“you”), presumably, a man or several men. The language used in the text invokes images of female sexual dominance, suggesting that the “I” exerts her power over someone else. The word “player” and the reference to the DC Comics character Catwoman further support this finding, depicting power as an alluring and seductive force. The women in the ad hold serious and confident facial expressions throughout their performance, which reinforces the abovementioned conceptualization of power-over. Dominance is further patterned in the use of expressions such as “when I put you on your knees” or “watch out for my weaponry”, which connote authority and command.

4.3. The Inclusivity Claim

4.3.1. The “For Every Woman” Claim

The fourth theme that emerged from the data is the claim that the displayed lingerie is suitable for every size and every woman. Specifically, the sample presents an abundance of texts that repeat the words “all” and “every” and associate them with the terms “shape(s)”, “size(s)”, “cup(s)”, and “women”. Some examples include:

[IN1] “For all the shapes, for all the women” (Caption)

[YA13] “It fits all cups all sizes, all shapes” (Video Text Overlays)

[YA14] “New Principessa Super Bra is super stretchy and perfectly fits all cups all sizes, all shapes” (Caption)

Such texts make assertions on the suitability of Yamamay and Intimissimi’s products for all types of bodies, informing the potential customers that the line or pieces featured in the ad are inclusive of all sizes. The language used in these posts unequivocally connotes an association with one of the main principles of the Body Positivity movement, that is, the belief that all bodies should be recognized and respected, and thus, that clothing should dress all sizes (Brathwaite & DeAndrea, 2021). This is often visually represented in the advertisements through the spatial composition of the images, where multiple models are placed in a row or very close proximity to display diversity (Figure 14).



Figure 14. Intimissimi and Yamamay. Body diversity in the ads. Instagram Posts, August 2019 – February 2022

The brands' inclusive claims are further supported by ten texts arguing that Intimissimi and Yamamay listened to women's size concerns and crafted their products accordingly. Through the use of verbs such as “designed”, “studied”, “created”, and “made” in the past tense, the brands state that they “shaped” their products on their female consumers’ “needs and fits” (IN9). This can be seen in the following examples:

[YA6] “[...] Underwear created to support your curves and define your natural beauty with a glam touch [...]” (Caption)

[YA15] “Principessa Super Bra is made to embrace all cups, all shapes, all sizes from 1 to 9 [...]” (Caption)

[IN5] “We studied [the] new lace Elena bra in order to guarantee support and elegance, up to cup F [...]” (Caption)

Implicit in these texts is the idea that the brands designed their products and collections with their consumers in mind, and thus, that the brands’ inclusivity “calling” starts with the manufacturing process.

In addition, the brands’ body-positive cues are often paired with messages informing prospects that the displayed product is available up to a certain size, as shown in the following posts:

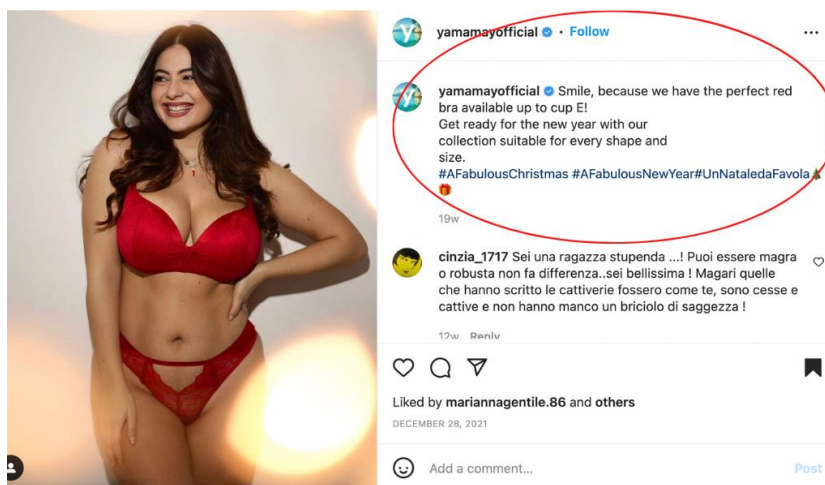


Figure 14. Yamamay. Instagram Post on December 28, 2021



Figure 15. Yamamay. Instagram Post on September 28, 20

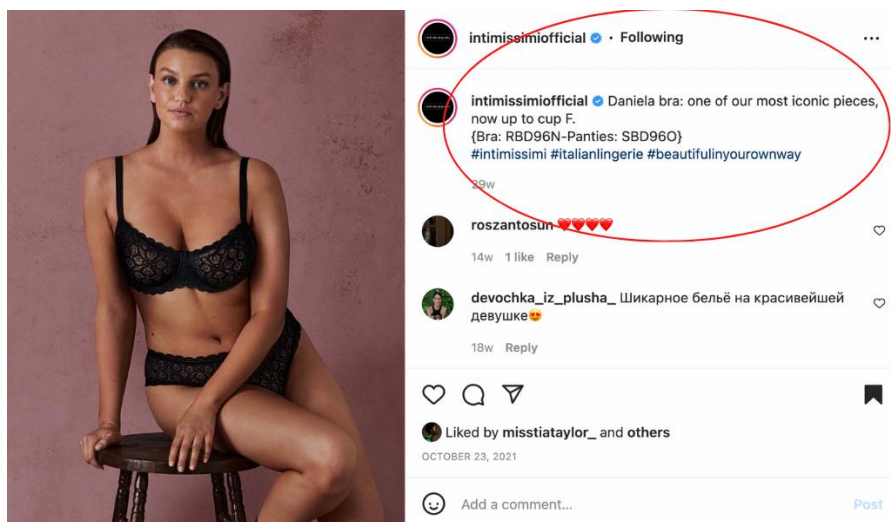


Figure 16. Intimissimi. Instagram Post on October 23, 2021

The captions of these posts use either the didactic tone that is typical of LYB communications (“smile, because we have the perfect red bra available up to cup E”) or a more informative tone (“one of our most iconic pieces, now up to cup F”), which simply signals the alleged inclusiveness of the brand’s sizing.

It is obvious, however, that “cup E”, “cup 1 - 9”, or “cup F” are not “all cups”, “all shapes”, or “all sizes”. The range of sizes is indeed infinite, as women’s bodies exist beyond cup F. Yamamay and Intimissimi’s claims to carry all sizes are therefore contradictory in nature.

The analysis of these examples reveals a disconnect between the brands' linguistic texts (captions, text overlays, song lyrics, or video voiceovers) and visual materials (photos and videos). While linguistic texts claim size and body inclusivity, visual texts show very limited body diversity. In particular, the type of bodies featured in the advertisements only slightly diverge from what heteronormative desirability accepts as beautiful, attractive, and sexy (Elias et al., 2017) (Figure 17).

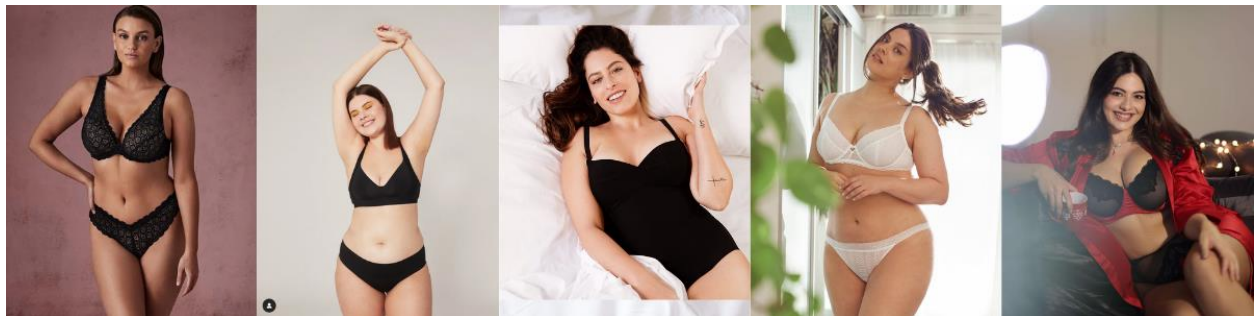


Figure 17. *Intimissimi and Yamamay. Size inclusivity in the ads. Instagram Posts, September 2019 – February 2022*

It is clear from Figure 17 that the models in the advertisements are curvaceously slender or very-small fat, which means that they might experience some weight preoccupation and stigma but are generally accommodated within the normal functioning of society (Manici, 2021). No women on the inclusive spectrum of fatness women (mid fat, superfat, infinifat), whose right to exist and be represented is advocated by the Fat Acceptance movement, are featured in the ads. As a result, the appropriation of a body-positive language in the advertisements only serves a narrow portion of the population whose experience has already been largely documented and privileged in every type of media.

4.3.2. *The Misuse of Intersectionality Signifiers*

Yamamay takes the discourse on inclusivity one step further and addresses generational concerns in its 2022 “EveryBody” campaign, arguing that the brand “designed [its “EveryBody” collection] for every woman, no matter the generation they belong to X, Y, Z” (YA25). In the launch video for the campaign, six women pose, dance, and play with each other against a white

studio background while wearing different Yamamay products (matching underwear sets, bodysuits, loungewear). The ensemble includes a young Black woman, a young small-fat woman, a young slender woman, a middle-aged slender woman, an old slender woman, and an adult pregnant woman. Their facial expressions and body language throughout the video connote joy, playfulness, and confidence. In the background, a song with the following lyrics plays:

[YA18] “We take care of every generation // ‘Cause every woman deserves to feel exceptional // Every woman, we have personality // We’re so different, we’re so alike // Step outside, every day, every time. // There’s just one you // Yamamay”.

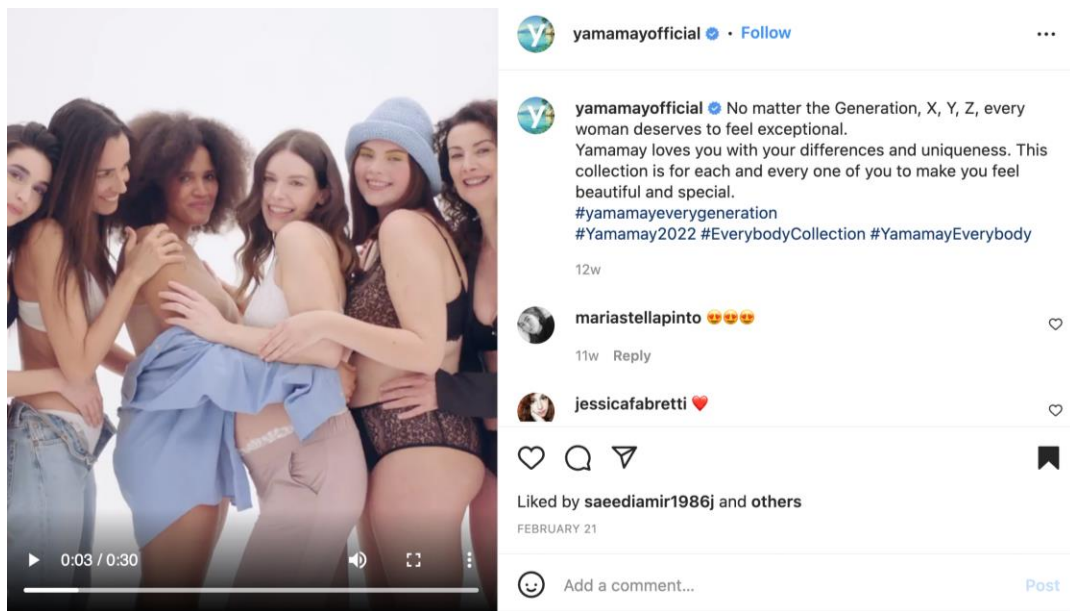


Figure 18. *Yamayay. Instagram Post on February 21, 2022*

The central theme of the song is the inclusion of every generation, from generation X to Z. In the lyrics, there is no interplay between an (implied) “we”/ “I” and a “you”, as it often happens in other advertising materials. Rather, the repeated use of the personal pronoun “we” to refer to both Yamamay and women inserts the brand right into the community it wishes to serve, functioning as a means of identification. Once again, through the overlexicalization of the word “every”, Yamamay stresses that, as a brand, it designs lingerie for (“take[s] care” of) every woman, no matter her generation. In addition, Yamamay asserts certain truths about women,

including the fact that they “have personality” and “[deserve] to feel exceptional”. The contrast between “we’re so different” and “we’re so alike” suggests that women grow up perceiving great differences from earlier generations of women, while they can be, in fact, quite similar. Nevertheless, it is their elements of uniqueness that truly make them special (“there’s just one of you”). The attempt to adopt an intersectional language is clear in the following ads belonging to the same campaign:



Figure 19. Yamamay. Instagram Post on February 24, 2022



Figure 20. Yamamay. Instagram Post on February 22, 2022

Both ads portray two generations in comparison and feature two women who happily lean on each other. In Figure 19, Yamamay refers to the models as “two generations connected by femininity and naturalness”. In Figure 20, Yamamay shows two “examples of confidence and beauty”. The vocabulary used by the brand in these ads suppresses any commentary on why age divisions among women may be detrimental to social progress or about the lack of representation of older women in advertising (Baumann & de Laat, 2012; Golombisky, 2019). It places two women from different generations in a frame together and claims that what connects them are characteristics traditionally associated with womanhood (“femininity”, “confidence”, “beauty”, and “naturalness”). In doing so, Yamamay forgoes the potential to construct a more socially relevant discourse around the cultural aversion to aging in a world where youth is one of the most valuable assets a woman can offer.

Similarly, Yamamay and Intimissimi attempt to show racial diversity through the occasional inclusion of non-white women in their advertisements. For instance, an ad belonging to Yamamay’s 2022 “EveryBody” campaign depicts a Black woman in a bodysuit, as shown in Figure 21 (left). The model, who appears joyful and serene, is portrayed in the photo with her naturally Afro hairstyle. In Figure 21 (right), Intimissimi also portrays a Black woman with a braided Afro hairstyle. Historically, Black hair has been the object of stigma and recast as inferior to the European standards of feminine beauty, which prescribed smooth and straight hair (Mitchell & Morris, 2019). The advertising industry has played a significant role in upholding this idea of socially desirable hair, pressuring Black women into investing resources to “correct” their natural hair texture (Mitchell & Morris, 2019). The 1960s and 1970s in the US marked a time of resistance to white Eurocentric beauty standards in which Black Americans reclaimed the “Afro” style (produced by the natural growth of their hair) as a political statement (Mitchell & Morris, 2019). Following political and social turmoil in matters of race, the first two decades of the 2000s have seen an increase in the popularity of Afrocentric hairstyles and textures, including braids, locs and a return of the Afro (Mitchell & Morris, 2019). For these reasons, the brands’ attempts seem like a step in the right direction. There are, however, several layers of complexity to consider.

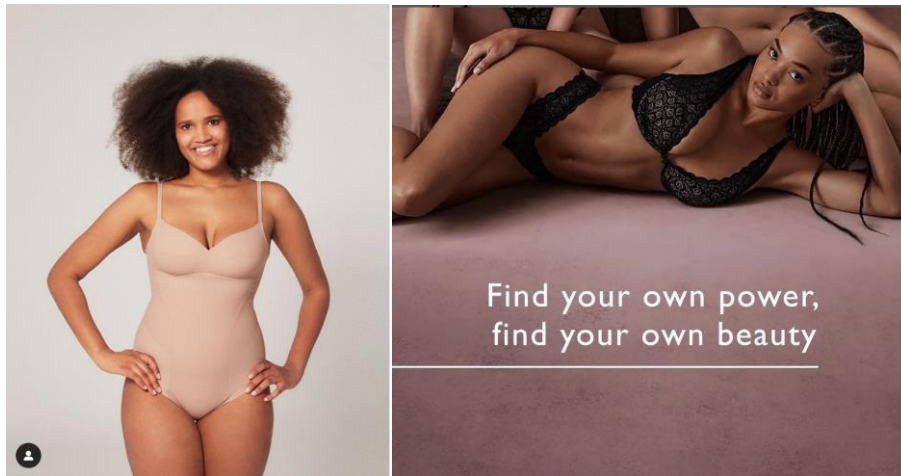


Figure 21. *Yamamay. Instagram Post on February 23, 2022 (left) – Intimissimi. Instagram Post on September 21, 2022 (right)*

The caption of Yamamay’s ad reads “For ambitious and positive women like @666ssoda we created a collection that enhances their shape while giving support [...]”. Here, the Black model is associated with the adjective “ambitious” and “positive” connoting determination, bravery, and optimism. Similarly, the text overlay on Intimissimi’s image associates the model with the narrative of power discovery (“find your own power”), which has been covered in earlier sections. As discussed by Sobande (2019a), these types of narration in advertising dismisses any conversations on oppression and upholds the neoliberal idea that Black women can overcome structural barriers through personal determination. The model is also shown glancing at the camera in a sensual pose, which may perpetrate narrative of objectivization to the male gaze. Moreover, particularly noticeable in Yamamay’s post is the color of the model’s bodysuit, which appears to be several shades lighter than her skin.

The same issue is present in other Yamamay ads included in Figure 22. Both the Latina model Georgina Rodríguez (who appears in all of the three advertisements) and the Black model Demi Rox (who appears in the advertisement in the middle) wear a set in a ‘nude’ color that does not match their own skin tones. Such finding contradicts Yamamay’s claim to be inclusive of all women, as only a normative version of femininity, light-skinned and slender, is reflected in its products. This empties Crenshaw’s (1989) intersectionality of its transformative, political force, turning the representation of minority groups into a mere corporatized tool.



Figure 22. *Yamamay. Discordance of colors between lingerie and the models' skin tones. Instagram Posts, August 2019*

Such a pattern can also be observed in the choice of panelists for Intimissimi's 2021 "Self-Love is First Love", which, among others, included some middle-aged slender women and only one Black woman. The Black woman in question is Tia Taylor, a US American YouTuber and influencer living in Milan, Italy. Taylor was assigned a seat in the top left corner of the stage and was only addressed at minute 1:17:30, after every other panelist had spoken at least once. She was also very rarely filmed by the camera during the panel. When her turn came, she was asked to talk about how the concept of taking care of oneself and loving oneself in spite of the judgments might differ in the US and Italy. During her 4-minute speech, Taylor mentioned Italy's "tendency to collectivism" (1:18:16), that is, the practice of prioritizing others over one's own personal needs. She then reflected on her US-American upbringing and shared how the US's tendency toward individualism helped her prioritize her needs and ultimately become better for others too. There was no mention of the role that race might have played in her path to self-actualization, despite the influencer being very vocal about the issue on her own social media channels. The limited time that Taylor was given during the panel, as well as her physical placement on stage, are symptomatic of Intimissimi's failure to address and properly include *all* women, contrary to its recurring claims.



Figure 23. *Intimissimi. Tia Taylor's placement on the Self-Love is First panel's stage. Screenshot. November 14, 2021*

4.4. A Timid Resistance

The last theme that emerged from the analysis of the material is the presence of discursive strategies of resistance that seem to oppose the dominant narratives discussed so far. These discourses are to be found in the remarks made by certain panelists during Intimissimi's "Self-Love is First Love" panel, including, for instance, the insights given by Cristina Fogazzi. Fogazzi, also known as @estetistacinica, is the CEO of the Italian multimillion-dollar skincare company VeraLab and a beloved Instagram personality.



Figure 24. *Intimissimi. Cristina Fogazzi during the Self-Love is First Love Panel. Screenshot. November 14, 2021*

During the panel, she discussed the double standard women are subjected to in every realm of the living, arguing that society makes it “difficult for a woman to assert herself net of her body” (33:01). She mentioned that, if instead of ten women the panel had featured ten men talking about finance, nobody in the room or online would have scrutinized their outfits, questioned their professionalism, or negatively commented on their bodies. Despite recognizing the external forces that are responsible for such disparities, however, Fogazzi ended her remarks on an individualistic note and encouraged women to look at themselves and each other without judgment. Her speech was then followed by an interesting exchange between fellow panelist Daniela Collu and host Lodovica Comello. The conversation went as follows:

Daniela Collu: “And let me also propose the next step. We suck, and that’s fine [...] We are ugly, we can stink. We may not feel like being wonderful [...]”

Lodovica Comello: “Let's embrace our flaws!”

Daniela Collu: “But they are not flaws, they are life! I am tired of cataloging the days between virtues and flaws [...] I can't disregard a whole part of my existence that happens when I just suck. [...] And so, no, let's not embrace our imperfections...I embrace my junk! [...] (37:06 - 39:13)

Daniela Collu is an author, radio and television host, and she was undoubtedly the most irreverent of the panelists. Visibly bothered by the narrative of “embracing [one’s] flaws”, she countered Comello’s claims, changing the direction of the conversation towards the inevitable realization that life cannot be made up of virtues and flaws. Rather, she claimed, life is made up of moments where “[one] just suck[s]” and those moments are as valid as the ones where one excels. This constitutes a breaking point that separates women from the neoliberal narratives that encourage them to make the most of their flaws or to strive to be the best version of themselves everywhere and at all times. Collu herself represents an element of rupture within the neoliberal context established by the panel, as her other remarks suggest:

“In my life, I tried to bring a ‘different’ model of woman on television [...] But then every time I realized that my body is [...] far too conforming [...] and if I go through all

this trouble, then the people who really have a body that doesn't fit into clothes, that doesn't fit into people's sexual imaginations [...] what do they do?" (58:30 - 59:17)



Figure 25. *Intimissimi*. Daniela Collu during the *Self-Love is First Love* Panel. Screenshot. November 14, 2021

Here, Collu recounts her career on television as a mid-sized woman. She acknowledges her privilege and argues that she should advocate for (“take care of”) those whose bodies do not conform to society’s criteria of desirability.

Particularly worthy of note are also the observations made by Francesca Crescentini, Italian influencer, blogger, and translator. Crescentini used her space to discuss the “aesthetic function” of the female body, arguing that women are often seen as just “beautiful” and “ornamental” (1:09:50). She preached the importance of not delegating to others the legitimacy of existing and asserted that women should wear what they feel best in, regardless of what might be considered flattering:

“Maybe I don't feel like wearing something that ‘flatters’ me. It's not mandatory that I dress flattering, I mean it's not like I always have to go out dressing uncomfortably because, to your eyes, what I’m wearing flatters me. It’s my own business” (1:12:06)



Figure 26. *Intimissimi. Francesca Crescentini during the Self-Love is First Love Panel. Screenshot. November 14, 2021*

On the whole, these discursive strategies represent a breaking point from the dominant narratives disseminated in the dataset. Nevertheless, they are only a “timid” resistance within the neoliberal context fostered by the panel, which did not allow the overall discussion to move beyond the superficiality of self-love discourses.

5. Conclusion

As a queer Italian feminist, I felt a strong desire to explore how contemporary advertisements in my country tap into the territory of feminism and deny/give agency to bodies that do not conform to normative beauty standards. With that in mind, this thesis project was designed to investigate the use of neoliberal feminist and body-positive messages in the Instagram advertising of Italian lingerie labels Intimissimi and Yamamay. The analysis also sought to examine the types of female bodies associated with said messages, with the aim to unveil social disparities in body representation. A total of 39 posts from the brand's official Instagram accounts and one filmed panel event were collected and analyzed through a Multimodal Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis. Four overarching themes emerged from the analysis and were discussed in relation to previous relevant theoretical concepts from the literature.

5.1. Answering the Research Questions

The findings revealed that the two brands commoditize body-positive messages in their advertising. In addition, it became clear that the brands frame their empowering slogans directed to female prospects within a clear neoliberal sensibility. First, the brands instruct their (potential) consumers to choose self-love, to heal their relationship with themselves and discover their own version of beauty. Implicit in these communications is the belief that a woman's relationship with her embodied self is broken in principle and apparently easy to repair (Gill & Elias, 2014). Gill and Elias (2014) call this "the normalized cultural pathologization" (p. 184) of the female body, namely the conventional treatment of the female body as inherently difficult or abnormal. On the one hand, Intimissimi and Yamamay contribute to the cultural understanding of the female body as "difficult to love" (Gill & Elias, 2014 p. 184). On the other hand, they suggest that it is a woman's responsibility to make peace with her body, based on the assumption that the act of self-love is an easy and fast fix of the mind. Not only does this devoid the process of self-growth of its psychological complexity, but it also divorces it from any structural gendered determinants of women's experiences (Gill & Elias, 2014). As activist page Belle di Faccia puts it: ultimately, "self-love alone will not solve discrimination" (2021). Within this neoliberal feminist framework, such communications reject the existence of inequalities and recast body love as the solution to women's issues (Phipps, 2014). This is intrinsically tied to capitalistic

aims, as it attaches a dimension of consumption to women's propensity for self-love. Indeed, the advertisements suggest that for both Intimissimi and Yamamay, self-confidence and self-love can be achieved through the purchase of their products.

In the data, the articulation of female identity is inevitably associated with the body, an "editable design" (Manici, 2021, p. 30) that can be reshaped and repurposed through self-confidence and consumption. As scholar Hester Baer (2016) suggests, within the contexts of digital culture and neoliberalism, "identity is uncoupled from social status" (p. 23). In turn, with its emphasis on self-actualization, individual choice, and entrepreneurial freedom, neoliberalism recasts the body as "the primary locus of identity" (Baer, 2016, p. 23). This occurs against the backdrop of a fundamental contradiction - the body as a site of both empowerment and surveillance (Baer, 2016; Budgeon, 2011). In Intimissimi and Yamamay's advertising, women are encouraged to tell their truths through self-expression and personal narration while simultaneously being required to monitor and observe themselves (Baer, 2016; Budgeon, 2011; Gill & Orgard, 2017). Thus, feminist principles such as autonomy and self-invention are endorsed in the advertisements alongside competencies such as discipline and reflexivity, associated with traditional femininity (Budgeon, 2011). As a site of both feminist resistance and ambivalence, the body in the advertisements takes on a dimension of precariousness.

As for the brands' choices in body representation, the apparent democratization of beauty represents only a tiny shift from the normative ideal of female attractiveness. The models in the advertisements and the guests in the Intimissimi panel are still curvaceously slender and conforming to the standards of heterosexual desirability (Lazar, 2006). Intimissimi and Yamamay also tap into the territory of intersectionality, including cues intended to convey the brands' support of all women, regardless of race, age, or size (Sobande, 2019a). Nonetheless, the brands only treat the issue superficially, decontextualizing and recontextualizing intersectionality through the realities of consumer culture (Sobande, 2019a). The ads suggest that only certain forms of inclusivity are acceptable and that there should only be one form of inclusivity at a time. Indeed, nowhere in the ads does a woman who is both Black and fat appear, or a woman who is both old(er) and fat. There are no visibly disabled women or women beyond what could be considered small fat. The fat body is, once again, absent from any visual representation (Owen, 2012). This marks a stark disjuncture between what the brands preach in their textual communications about size and body inclusivity and their actual policies in body representation,

which continue to favor narrow and normative portrayals of female beauty. Moreover, the size expansions that the brands claim in their advertising only go up to cup E/F and the color range of the lingerie sets displayed in their communications is often not inclusive of darker skin tones. Ultimately, in light of the lack of actual inclusivity in sizing, shades, and representation, the body-positive signifiers adopted by both Intimissimi and Yamamay in their communications appear void.

The advertisements have been designed to cultivate empowering (power to self-actualize), inspirational (self-love, body love) and aspirational (self-confidence) feelings. However, it is precisely the narrow selection of women associated with these messages that can be contested. Intimissimi and Yamamay suggest that empowerment is contingent on certain professional or aesthetic credentials (Sobande, 2019). According to Intimissimi and Yamamay, with very rare exceptions, an empowered woman is generally thin or at most curvaceously slender, white, young, abled, and financially successful. The slender empowered woman dominates the discourse on body-positivity, as the fact that she is not “actually fat makes [her] the perfect victi[m] with whom one can sympathize” (Belle di Faccia, 2021). By the standards of a fat-phobic society, her body does not make people uncomfortable, she doesn’t deserve body-shaming because she is not lazy and abhorrent like fat people are (Belle di Faccia, 2021). This is why the empowered woman is the only type of woman that is invited to speak at a panel on self-love, or the only type of woman that appears next to a “love your body” slogan. The origins and the struggles of the movement that she champions are never part of the message. It is worth noting that some of the panelists of the “Self-Love is First Love” expressed opposition to these narratives. Nevertheless, their remarks were short and definitely in the minority. The structure of the event was designed to only superficially address the issue of self-love and did not allow for the exploration of a more nuanced discussion of the self-growth experience. This is symptomatic of today’s corporate culture, where body-positivity and feminism are commodified to further the normative aims of late capitalism.

5.2. Theoretical and Practical Implications

This thesis’ findings contribute to the body of research on the use of empowering and body-positivity imaginaries in advertising. Theoretical concepts from the literature such as

neoliberal feminism and BoPopriation are supported by the findings, which reveal the brands' interest in uplifting their female prospects and inspiring them to pursue body love. The results supplement the ongoing academic discussion on the issue with a perspective from Italy, a country that is fairly new to the language of femvertising. In addition, findings suggest that some of the patterns typical of such communications in more traditional media (e.g. TV advertising, print advertising, or, more recently, YouTube advertising) translate to the platform of Instagram. From a theoretical perspective, this expands the knowledge of the phenomenon, proving that the use of such messages is in fact transnational and more digital than ever. In light of the inconsistencies and paradoxes present in the results, this thesis also shares the concerns that researchers have raised and will continue to raise on the improper use of feminist signifiers in advertising.

Findings also have practical implications for brands that operate in the lingerie market or related markets such as the fashion and beauty industry. In particular, the results invite brands that might consider the adoption of messages of empowerment in their marketing efforts to take the ambivalences of such communications into account and avoid including them if motivated only by consumeristic concerns. Indeed, as the findings suggest, practitioners that decontextualize the feminist legacy may risk reducing the female experience, and all its diversity and complexity, to a mere act of personal choice. Thus, in a time where neoliberal ideas pervade the societal notion of "proper womanhood", corporations might need to reevaluate their impact and contribution to the patriarchal order of society.

5.3. Future Research

Rooted in a "glossy diversity" and apolitical in nature, Intimissimi and Yamamay's advertising inevitably raises the question of whether the companies' appropriation of feminist values may generate transformative outcomes. While being beyond the scope of this thesis project, this would be an interesting starting point for future research. Specifically, future research might consider the adoption of a content analysis of the comments and reactions of users to the companies' Instagram posts, as well as either in-depth interviews or focus groups with Italian women to investigate consumers' feelings on the advertisements. Future research efforts could investigate whether the adoption of such messages has a positive or negative impact

on consumers' perception of self and negotiation of female identity. Consumers might also be asked to elaborate on how they perceive portrayals of women's bodies in the advertisements, and whether they feel represented in what they see. A focus on consumers' reception of the companies' messages can further inform scholarly discussions on the status of femvertising in Italian consumer culture. It might also offer insights on consumers' feelings towards the brands, examining whether brand loyalty and propensity to purchase are impacted by the brands' use of such communications in their advertising.

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- Yamamay [@yamamayofficial]. (2019b, August 21). *Give yourself the opportunity to be whatever you want to be. Discover the #NewCollection with our girls: @georginagio @la_pauselli @greta_zuccarello* [Instagram Post]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/B1bEKn6i-xW/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- Yamamay [@yamamayofficial]. (2019c, August 22). *@georginagio is a confident woman, that knows her limits and her strengths. Highlight your curves with Yamamay New Collection. Discover* [Instagram Post]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/B1dpYJdiHyr/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- Yamamay [@yamamayofficial]. (2019d, August 24). *Get inspired by @georginagio wearing the #NewCollection. A strong feminine attitude comes with the perfect trendy mix: the glamorous #Liquirizia* [Instagram Post]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/B1izakxiDjo/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- Yamamay [@yamamayofficial]. (2019e, August 27). *Feel at center stage just like @la_pauselli wearing the Space set, because self-confidence is the best outfit, but it’s even* [Instagram Post]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/B1qf36_jqEh/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- Yamamay [@yamamayofficial]. (2019f, September 20). *Verified It’s not a secret anymore, #Morgana Shapewear Collection is finally here: underwear created to support your curves and define* [Instagram Post]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/B2oTWWADqTo/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- Yamamay [@yamamayofficial]. (2019g, September 27). *Optimum comfort and support, without compromising on style. Be confident in your own skin wearing the perfect lingerie and embrace*

[Instagram Post]. Instagram.
https://www.instagram.com/p/B26U7pTj3Mw/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Yamamay [@yamamayofficial]. (2019h, September 29). *Verified #Althea set is almost too pretty to be worn underneath thanks to the stunning delicate lace: the padded balcony* [Instagram Post].
 Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/B3AESMuCsVc/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Yamamay [@yamamayofficial]. (2020a, January 16). *Show off your curves and feel irresistible in our Principessa set with shaping slip dress just like @lovecurvy__laurabrioschi! Check it* [Instagram Post]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/B7YQHL0i2Pz/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Yamamay [@yamamayofficial]. (2020b, September 18). *Sensuality & comfort, it's a match when it comes to our Basic Collection. Like @paola_torrentereal feel seductive without renouncing to* [Instagram Post]. Instagram.
https://www.instagram.com/p/CFRkwRaiPBW/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Yamamay [@yamamayofficial]. (2021a, January 10). *Get covered in white and experience the freshness with our Sculpt Bodysuit. Made with the innovative Sensitive Sculpt fabric it* [Instagram Post].
 Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CJ3OINjHzby/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Yamamay [@yamamayofficial]. (2021b, January 11). *Feel the pure comfort and keep it fresh and confident all day, every day. Choose your favorite Yamamay Basic and* [Instagram Post].
 Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CJ5zAExCL7W/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Yamamay [@yamamayofficial]. (2021c, September 23). *Our revolutionary Principessa Super Bra is finally here! Super comfortable, super innovative, super breathable for a super you! Discover it* [Instagram Post]. Instagram.
https://www.instagram.com/p/CUKS8GwgfNs/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Yamamay [@yamamayofficial]. (2021d, September 24). *Principessa Super bra is super stretchy and perfectly fits all sizes, all cups and all shapes. Try it now, you* [Instagram Post]. Instagram.
https://www.instagram.com/p/CUM4rYSgUvo/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link



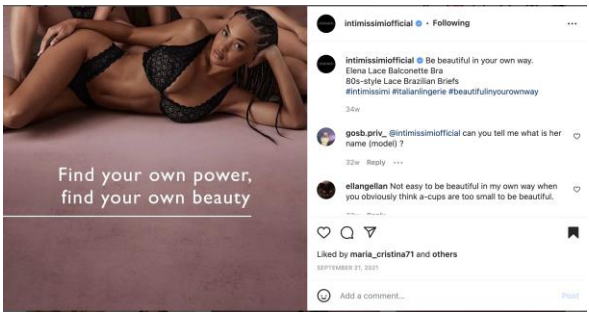
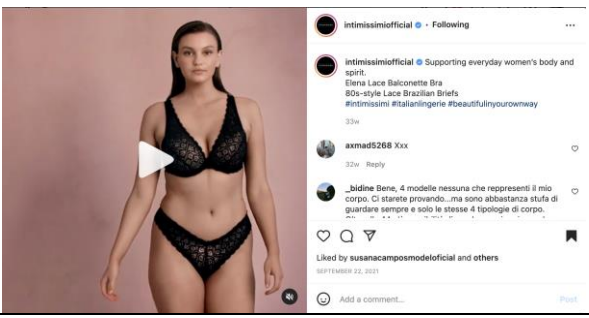
Yamamay [@yamamayofficial]. (2021e, September 28). *Principessa Super Bra is made to embrace all cups, all shapes, all sizes from 1 to 9, so you can* [Instagram Post]. Instagram.
https://www.instagram.com/p/CUXMuAWA882/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link




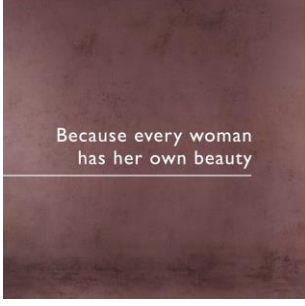
Yamamay [@yamamayofficial]. (2021f, December 19). *Perfect for all shapes and sizes without renouncing on feeling sexy and glam 🌟 Come find it online and in store.* [Instagram Post].
 Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CXqbgdyAhxg/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link






Yamamay [@yamamayofficial]. (2021g, December 28). *Smile, because we have the perfect red bra available up to cup E! Get ready for the new year with* [Instagram Post]. Instagram.
https://www.instagram.com/p/CYBivPKKkjz/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link


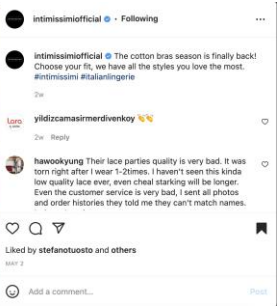

- Yamamay [@yamamayofficial]. (2022a, February 21). *No matter the Generation, X, Y, Z, every woman deserves to feel exceptional. Yamamay loves you with your differences and* [Instagram Post]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/tv/CaPNVQHq6FL/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- Yamamay [@yamamayofficial]. (2022b, February 22). *@ilariayoga and @mortismoonless are stunning examples of confidence and beauty. Orchidea bra is made to give you that sensational feeling.* [Instagram Post]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CaRzpkHKdVk/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- Yamamay [@yamamayofficial]. (2022c, February 23). *For ambitious and positive women like @666ssoda we created a collection that enhances their shape while giving support, discover it* [Instagram Post]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CaUXarsKf6e/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- Yamamay [@yamamayofficial]. (2022d, February 24). *wo generations connected by femininity and naturalness, @stellamanagement and @elnmoro wear the Principessa collection with its innovative fabric and second-skin* [Instagram Post]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CaW8FhIKDhj/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- Yamamay [@yamamayofficial]. (2022e, February 26). *@mortismoonless is part of a dynamic generation that never stops. That's why she needs a bra that accompanies her in* [Instagram Post]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CacFrRwoDme/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- Yamamay [@yamamayofficial]. (2022f, February 27). *Determination, resolution and empathy define @stellamanagement's generation. Orchidea collection suits every woman making her feel elegant and sensual. Discover the* [Instagram Post]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CaeqqMLgqYQ/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- Yamamay [@yamamayofficial]. (2022g, February 28). *Delicate lace for a sensual and glamour attitude. Available up to cup F, discover the Primula bra online and in* [Instagram Post]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CahPKqwKC2H/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- Yamamay [@yamamayofficial]. (2022h, March 3). *Yamay collection is designed for every woman, no matter the generation they belong to X,Y, Z. Our purpose is to* [Instagram Post]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/reel/Cao9WK3qYKN/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
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Appendix A. Overview of the Data: Intimissimi

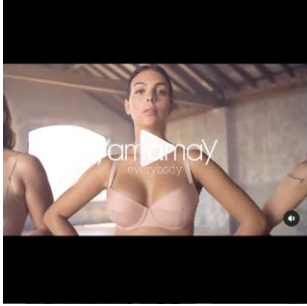



Identification Number	Post/Video	Publication Date	Link
IN1	 <p>intimissiofficial • Following</p> <p>intimissiofficial • For all the shapes, for all the women. Discover our cotton collection and find your perfect fit. (Triangle bra: RSD6SM-Brassiere: RSP6SB-Brazilian: SBD6SA-Slip: SID6SA) #intimissimi #italianlingerie #beautifulinyourway</p> <p>53w</p> <p>jessofmed Love the natural one</p> <p>52w Reply</p> <p>macarenavillanagonzalez Me gusta que una modelo sea más real. Vive la realidad. Nadie es perfecto.</p> <p>Liked by l.n.u.r.a and others</p> <p>MAY 2, 2021</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	05/07/2021	https://www.instagram.com/p/COICTqOBIUs/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
IN2	 <p>intimissiofficial • Following</p> <p>intimissiofficial • New lace bras, up to cup F. Discover the timeless Elena bra in the new lace. Our iconic balconette is now available up to cup F. Both models are wearing: Elena Lace Balconette Bra 80s-style Lace Brazilian Briefs #intimissimi #italianlingerie #beautifulinyourway</p> <p>33w</p> <p>luigia_chianese sono già due settimane che vado al punto intimissimi più vicino a me ... deve arrivare, non abbiamo la taglia, non abbiamo il colore ... chiamo domani alle 15.00 ... chiamo noi chiamo alle 16.00 ... uffa è così difficile poter provare la 5 coppa d ? e oltretutto blu non !</p> <p>Liked by paolaturani and others</p> <p>SEPTEMBER 20, 2021</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	20/09/2021	https://www.instagram.com/p/CUCv4NIqbpl/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
IN3	 <p>intimissiofficial • Following</p> <p>intimissiofficial • Be beautiful in your own way. Elena Lace Balconette Bra 80s-style Lace Brazilian Briefs #intimissimi #italianlingerie #beautifulinyourway</p> <p>34w</p> <p>gosh.priv_@intimissiofficial can you tell me what is her name (model) ?</p> <p>32w Reply</p> <p>efangelan Not easy to be beautiful in my own way when you obviously think a-cups are too small to be beautiful.</p> <p>Liked by maria_cristina71 and others</p> <p>SEPTEMBER 21, 2021</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	21/09/2021	https://www.instagram.com/p/CUFyKkZKAq3/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
IN4	 <p>intimissiofficial • Following</p> <p>intimissiofficial • Supporting everyday women's body and spirit. Elena Lace Balconette Bra 80s-style Lace Brazilian Briefs #intimissimi #italianlingerie #beautifulinyourway</p> <p>33w</p> <p>axmad5268 Xxx</p> <p>32w Reply</p> <p>_bidine Bene, 4 modelle nessuna che rappresenti il mio corpo. Ci starete provando...ma sono abbastanza stufo di guardare sempre e solo le stesse 4 tipologie di corpo.</p> <p>Liked by susanacampomodeloficial and others</p> <p>SEPTEMBER 22, 2021</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	22/09/2021	https://www.instagram.com/p/CUIXIzoKMhn/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

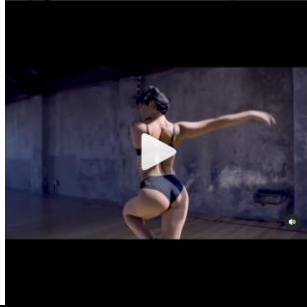
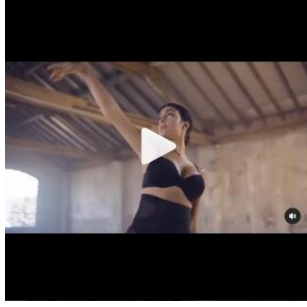


IN5	 <p>intimissimiofficial • Following</p> <p>intimissimiofficial • We studied new lace Elena bra in order to guarantee support and elegance, up to cup F. Elena Lace Balconette Bra 80s-style Lace Brazilian Briefs #intimissimi #italianlingerie #beautifulyourownway</p> <p>34w</p> <p>ivashchuk_victoria_95 C 95 д</p> <p>34w Reply</p> <p>ivashchuk_victoria_95 Ljiva</p> <p>34w Reply</p> <p>Liked by cristinatouka and others</p> <p>SEPTEMBER 22, 2021</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	22/09/2021	https://www.instagram.com/p/CUIDI_KqLTt/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
IN6	 <p>intimissimiofficial • Following</p> <p>intimissimiofficial • Feeling your best in our new lace Elena bra. All models are wearing: Elena Lace Balconette Bra 80s-style Lace Brazilian Briefs #intimissimi #italianlingerie #beautifulyourownway</p> <p>Edited • 33w</p> <p>eliangelan Makes me feel my worst, since you do not have any a-cups.</p> <p>32w Reply</p> <p>emilie_sa_nd Kiabi e Triumph hanno le coppe fino alla F.</p> <p>Liked by fernandarebelaog and others</p> <p>SEPTEMBER 23, 2021</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	23/09/2021	https://www.instagram.com/p/CUKn2NKK2Bz/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
IN7	 <p>intimissimiofficial • Following</p> <p>intimissimiofficial • Our Elena bra provides you with the support you've been always looking for. #intimissimi #italianlingerie #beautifulyourownway</p> <p>Edited • 33w</p> <p>fraliland E la foto?</p> <p>32w Reply</p> <p>nicolewallen Promote to love your own body is great, but where is the plus size models to show that all body's are beautiful and accepted? Your words mean nothing when you only share photos with skinny models!</p> <p>31w • 4.5 likes • Reply</p> <p>Liked by susanacposmodeloficial and others</p> <p>SEPTEMBER 23, 2021</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	23/09/2021	https://www.instagram.com/p/CUK-7JK2Vn/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
IN8	 <p>intimissimiofficial • Following</p> <p>intimissimiofficial • And we know how to enhance it. #intimissimi #italianlingerie #beautifulyourownway</p> <p>32w</p> <p>aliffa26</p> <p>29w Reply</p> <p>anibacronestetic Boicottare quest azienda ipocrita e maschilista</p> <p>32w • 1 like • Reply</p> <p>eliangelan So why do you not have a-cups? Is that not</p> <p>Liked by susanacposmodeloficial and others</p> <p>SEPTEMBER 25, 2021</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	25/09/2021	https://www.instagram.com/p/CUPEkvrKeZH/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link



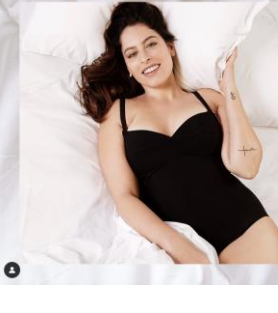

IN9	 <p>intimissimiofficial • Following</p> <p>intimissimiofficial • The widest range of sizes we've ever had, shaped on your needs and fits. You need to try the new Elena bra. All models are wearing: Elena Lace Balconette Bra 80s-style Lace Brazilian Briefs #intimissimi #italianlingerie #beautifulyourownway</p> <p>33w</p> <p>fatimamarfer It's great that you do up to size F, but... Will you ever remember that cup A also exists? We women with small breasts also deserve to wear nice bras that fit us well, it's really disappointing never finding our size (specially hard for pretty ones without push-up)</p> <p>Liked by ismaelk993 and others</p> <p>SEPTEMBER 26, 2021</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	26/09/2021	https://www.instagram.com/p/CUSOu_jqgR7/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
IN10	 <p>intimissimiofficial • Following</p> <p>intimissimiofficial • Daniela bra: one of our most iconic pieces, now up to cup F. (Bra: RBD96N-Panties: SBD96O) #intimissimi #italianlingerie #beautifulyourownway</p> <p>29w</p> <p>roszantosun ❤️❤️❤️</p> <p>14w · 1 like · Reply</p> <p>devochka_iz_plusha_ Шикарное белё на красивейшей девушке</p> <p>18w · Reply</p> <p>Liked by misstiataylor_ and others</p> <p>OCTOBER 23, 2021</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	23/10/2021	https://www.instagram.com/p/CVXvuEzqw-J/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
IN11	 <p>intimissimiofficial • Following</p> <p>intimissimiofficial • "Self Love is first Love": a mantra every woman should follow. We have talked about self love, body positivity, empowerment and self esteem with many different women during a special event we hosted in Milan. You can still find the record on our IGTV and our website too. @lodicomello @chiaraferragni @katoska76 @misstiataylor_ @stazzitta @estetistacina @nicoromanazzi @tegamini @sara_don @corlyferly #intimissimi #italianlingerie #beautifulyourownway</p> <p>Edited · 26w</p> <p>ell_jama81_ Ma proprio voi Intimissimi, che ipocrisia</p> <p>25w · 1 like · Reply</p> <p>Liked by chiaraferragni and others</p> <p>NOVEMBER 14, 2021</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	14/11/2021	https://www.instagram.com/p/CWQgcDWqIL_/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
IN12	 <p>intimissimiofficial • Following</p> <p>intimissimiofficial • @chiaraferragni has been part of our "Self Love is first Love" with other inspiring women. Are you curious about what they said? Check our IGTV and website. #intimissimi #italianlingerie #beautifulyourownway</p> <p>26w</p> <p>mazzonemolina @udgocialmediapr</p> <p>22w · Reply</p> <p>bhavesn.nayka.330 Hi</p> <p>23w · Reply</p> <p>Liked by chiaraferragni and others</p> <p>NOVEMBER 14, 2021</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	14/11/2021	https://www.instagram.com/p/CWQrc0qRn3/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
IN13	 <p>intimissimiofficial • Following</p> <p>intimissimiofficial • On November 9th we celebrated women with a special event "Self Love is first Love". A live talk presented by @lodicomello you can still find on our IGTV. Go check it out! #intimissimi #italianlingerie #beautifulyourownway</p> <p>26w</p> <p>_simone_mareike_</p> <p>25w · Reply · ...</p> <p>kochi_774 Do take order from Indians from this December</p> <p>25w · Reply</p> <p>Liked by giuliana and others</p> <p>NOVEMBER 14, 2021</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	14/11/2021	https://www.instagram.com/p/CWP8WIPqgZA/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link


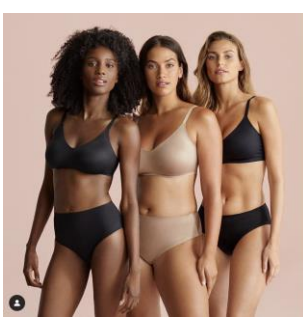
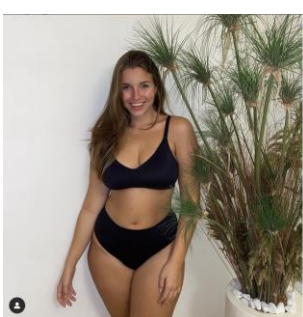

<p>IN14</p>	 	<p>02/05/2022</p>	<p>https://www.instagram.com/tv/CdDKFk9qDu-/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link</p>
<p><i>Self-Love is First Love Panel</i></p>		<p>14/11/2021</p>	<p>https://www.intimissimi.com/it/donna/int_woman_lp_it-it/self_love_is_first_love/</p>





Appendix B. Overview of the Data: Yamamay





Identification Number	Post	Publication Date	Link
YA1	 <p>yamamayofficial • Follow</p> <p>yamamayofficial @ #everybody is beautiful in their own way, so love yourself and love others. #Yamay designed the #NewCollection to embrace all curves and always make you look and feel at your best, like @georginagio and our girls @lu_pauselli @greta_zuccarello @demiroxmensah @beckynangauds. Discover it online and in store.</p> <p>Edited · 141w</p> <p>netoolivere @caritosquinta04 @eduardo.ramirez96 noches, amigos.</p> <p>118w · 1 like · Reply</p> <p>Liked by _trovami and others</p> <p>AUGUST 20, 2019</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	20/08/2019	https://www.instagram.com/p/B1YGsmvH19c/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
YA2	 <p>yamamayofficial • Follow</p> <p>yamamayofficial @ Give yourself the opportunity to be whatever you want to be. Discover the #NewCollection with our girls: @georginagio @lu_pauselli @greta_zuccarello @demiroxmensah @beckynangauds #Yamay #Everybody #NewCollection</p> <p>142w</p> <p>Ivanoccio Love ❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️</p> <p>134w · Reply</p> <p>Ivanoccio ❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️</p> <p>Liked by marti_grasso_ and others</p> <p>AUGUST 21, 2019</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	21/08/2019	https://www.instagram.com/p/B1bEKn6i-xW/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
YA3	 <p>yamamayofficial • Follow</p> <p>yamamayofficial @ @georginagio is a confident woman, that knows her limits and her strengths. Highlight your curves with Yamamay New Collection. Discover it online and in store. #Yamay #Everybody #NewCollection</p> <p>142w</p> <p>mohamed_boz 🍌🍌🍌🍌🍌🍌🍌🍌🍌</p> <p>119w · Reply</p> <p>alexjona_fc19 🍌🍌🍌</p> <p>123w · Reply</p> <p>Liked by yasin_arafath_happy and others</p> <p>AUGUST 22, 2019</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	22/08/2019	https://www.instagram.com/p/B1dpYJdihyr/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
YA4	 <p>yamamayofficial • Follow</p> <p>yamamayofficial @ Get inspired by @georginagio wearing the #NewCollection. A strong feminine attitude comes with the perfect trendy mix: the glamorous #Liquizila bralette + basic #Scult leggings. Discover the perfect set for you now online and in store. #Yamay #Everybody #NewCollection</p> <p>142w</p> <p>christiasurf ❤️</p> <p>138w · Reply</p> <p>ali_a_d ❤️</p> <p>Liked by giuliarena and others</p> <p>AUGUST 24, 2019</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	24/08/2019	https://www.instagram.com/p/B1izakxiDjo/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link


YA5	 <p>yamamayofficial • Follow</p> <p>yamamayofficial @ Feel at center stage just like @la_pauselli wearing the Space set, because self-confidence is the best outfit, but it's even better if paired with Yamamay underwear. Discover it online and in store. #Yamay #Everybody</p> <p>Edited · 14w</p> <p>sardagna_dj_loris che brutta con quei capelli</p> <p>125w Reply</p> <p>ivanoccio</p> <p>135w 2 likes Reply</p> <p>Liked by laumaramau and others</p> <p>AUGUST 23, 2019</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	27/09/2019	https://www.instagram.com/p/B1qf36_jqEh/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
YA6	 <p>yamamayofficial • Follow</p> <p>yamamayofficial @ It's not a secret anymore, #Morgana Shapewear Collection is finally here: underwear created to support your curves and define your natural beauty with a glam touch. Discover it online and in stores. @georginagio wearing the shaping shorts. #Yamay #FW19</p> <p>132w</p> <p>mrs.sabzikar</p> <p>107w Reply</p> <p>besnikhalilaj</p> <p>Liked by saraisanmiguel and others</p> <p>SEPTEMBER 10, 2019</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	20/09/2019	https://www.instagram.com/p/B2oTWWADqTo/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
YA7	 <p>yamamayofficial • Follow</p> <p>yamamayofficial @ Optimum comfort and support, without compromising on style. Be confident in your own skin wearing the perfect lingerie and embrace your curves with Yamamay Collection. Discover it online and in our stores. #Yamay #FW19</p> <p>137w</p> <p>bryan.lemas @?</p> <p>130w Reply ...</p> <p>aleksandra.prokopijevic @milica_sandra_mirka</p> <p>132w Reply</p> <p>Liked by arioch_arioch and others</p> <p>SEPTEMBER 23, 2019</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	27/09/2019	https://www.instagram.com/p/B26U7pTj3Mw/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
YA8	 <p>yamamayofficial • Follow</p> <p>yamamayofficial @ #Aitheia set is almost too pretty to be worn underneath thanks to the stunning delicate lace: the padded balcony bra comes in different cup sizes supporting your beautiful curves. Get it online and in our stores. #Yamay #FW19</p> <p>137w</p> <p>rahul_shetty What's her bra size?</p> <p>107w Reply</p> <p>boutique_pico</p> <p>120w Reply</p> <p>Liked by arioch_arioch and others</p> <p>SEPTEMBER 29, 2019</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	29/09/2019	https://www.instagram.com/p/B3AESMuCsVc/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

YA9	 <p>yamamayofficial • Follow</p> <p>yamamayofficial Show off your curves and feel irresistible in our Principessa set with shaping slip dress just like @lovecurvy_aurabrioschi! Check it now online and in all our stores. #Yamamay</p> <p>121w</p> <p>giuseppetalia73 Bello 🔥🔥🔥</p> <p>115w Reply</p> <p>stellazito61 Sei Stupenda Tesoro 🍷</p> <p>115w Reply</p> <p>Liked by giularena and others</p> <p>JANUARY 16, 2020</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	16/01/2020	https://www.instagram.com/p/B7YQHL0i2Pz/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
YA10	 <p>yamamayofficial • Follow</p> <p>yamamayofficial Sensuality & comfort, it's a match when it comes to our Basic Collection. Like @paola_torrenteal feel seductive without renouncing to your comfort. Discover the Orchidea set online and in all our stores. And what's your Basic? #EverydayYamamay #BasicCollection</p> <p>Edited · 85w</p> <p>ludovica_mossina Bellissimo davvero</p> <p>82w Reply</p> <p>mr.sghatash Ciao ma il kimono trasparente che indossa? Quale è il codice? grazie</p> <p>Liked by lady_butterfly_2540 and others</p> <p>SEPTEMBER 16, 2020</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	18/09/2020	https://www.instagram.com/p/CFRkwRaiPBW/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
YA11	 <p>yamamayofficial • Follow</p> <p>yamamayofficial Get covered in white and experience the freshness with our Sculpt Bodysuit. Made with the innovative Sensitive Sculpt fabric it will frame, flatter and enhance your silhouette, so that you feel your most confident self. Comment with a 🍷 if you'd like to lie down comfortably just like @giuliacardi #Yamamay #PureBasic</p> <p>Edited · 69w</p> <p>dajanecristalll apprezzo di più questo tipo di donna che si mostra con le sue forme, vedere un po' di natiche, soprattutto su copertine di questo tipo! Sarebbe bello vedere questo più spesso</p> <p>Liked by parveenarjun and others</p> <p>JANUARY 10, 2021</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	10/01/2021	https://www.instagram.com/p/CJ3OINjHzby/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
YA12	 <p>yamamayofficial • Follow</p> <p>yamamayofficial Feel the pure comfort and keep it fresh and confident all day, every day. Choose your favorite Yamamay Basic and enhance your beautiful curves in the most natural way. #Yamamay #PureBasic Model: @giuliacardi</p> <p>70w</p> <p>nancy.ledesma.9081 🍷</p> <p>69w Reply</p> <p>asoudhi_ahmed1 ❤️</p> <p>69w · 1h</p> <p>Liked by h_amoda_solo_mente and others</p> <p>JANUARY 11, 2021</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	11/01/2021	https://www.instagram.com/p/CJ5zAExCL7W/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

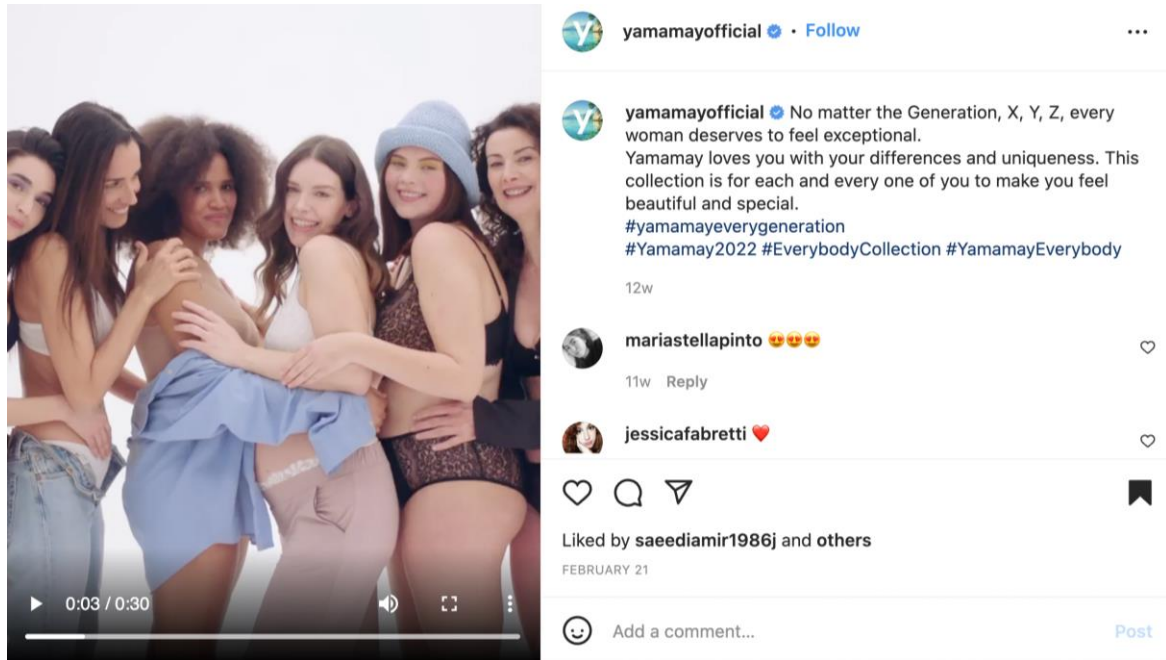
YA13	 <p>yamamayofficial • Follow</p> <p>yamamayofficial • Our revolutionary Principessa Super Bra is finally here! Super comfortable, super innovative, super breathable for a super you! Discover it online and in store. #Yamamay #EverybodyCollection #YamamayEverybody</p> <p>34w</p> <p>Liked by quittemelec and others</p> <p>SEPTEMBER 23, 2021</p>	23/09//2021	https://www.instagram.com/p/CKS8GwgfNs/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
YA14	 <p>yamamayofficial • Follow</p> <p>yamamayofficial • Principessa Super Bra is super stretchy and perfectly fits all sizes, all cups and all shapes. Try it now, you won't be able to live without it. #Yamamay #EverybodyCollection #YamamayEverybody</p> <p>Edited • 28w</p> <p>Liked by ozankane and others</p> <p>SEPTEMBER 24, 2021</p>	24/09/2021	https://www.instagram.com/p/CKUM4rYSgUvo/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
YA15	 <p>yamamayofficial • Follow</p> <p>yamamayofficial • Principessa Super Bra is made to embrace all cups, all shapes, all sizes from 1 to 9, so you can be super confident just like @ladybongina! It's time to try it, online and in store. #Yamamay #EverybodyCollection #YamamayEverybody</p> <p>Edited • 28w</p> <p>Liked by antonucci3462 and others</p> <p>SEPTEMBER 26, 2021</p>	18/09/2021	https://www.instagram.com/p/CKUXMuAWA882/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
YA16	 <p>yamamayofficial • Follow</p> <p>yamamayofficial • Perfect for all shapes and sizes without renouncing on feeling sexy and glam! Come find it online and in store. #AFabulousChristmas #UnNataledaFavola 🎄</p> <p>21w</p> <p>perito882 Prezzo e taglia grazie</p> <p>14w Reply</p> <p>rick_richard_44 🍷</p> <p>18w Reply</p> <p>Liked by lam_ryan_kapil and others</p> <p>DECEMBER 19, 2021</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	19/12/2021	https://www.instagram.com/p/CKXqbgdyAhxg/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

YA17	 <p>yamamayofficial • Follow</p> <p>yamamayofficial Smile, because we have the perfect red bra available up to cup E! Get ready for the new year with our collection suitable for every shape and size. #AFabulousChristmas #AFabulousNewYear#UnNataledaFavola &</p> <p>cinzia_1717 Sei una ragazza stupenda...! Puoi essere magra o robusta non fa differenza...sei bellissima! Magari quelle che hanno scritto le cattiverie fossero come te, sono cesse e cattive e non hanno manco un briciolo di saggezza!</p> <p>13w • 15w • 15w • 15w</p> <p>Liked by mariannagentile.86 and others</p> <p>DECEMBER 26, 2021</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	28/12/2021	https://www.instagram.com/p/CYBivPKKkjz/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
YA18	 <p>yamamayofficial • Follow</p> <p>yamamayofficial No matter the Generation, X, Y, Z, every woman deserves to feel exceptional. Yamamay loves you with your differences and uniqueness. This collection is for each and every one of you to make you feel beautiful and special. #yamamayeverygeneration #Yamamay2022 #EverybodyCollection #YamamayEverybody</p> <p>12w</p> <p>mariastellapinto</p> <p>11w Reply</p> <p>jessicafabretti</p> <p>Liked by saeediamir1986j and others</p> <p>FEBRUARY 21</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	21/02/2022	https://www.instagram.com/tv/CaPNVQHq6FL/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
YA19	 <p>yamamayofficial • Follow</p> <p>yamamayofficial @lariayoga and @mortismoonless are stunning examples of confidence and beauty. Orchidea bra is made to give you that sensational feeling. Discover the new collection online and in store. #yamamayeverygeneration #Yamamay2022 #EverybodyCollection #YamamayEverybody</p> <p>11w</p> <p>valentina.rosina Stupende</p> <p>11w Reply</p> <p>annalisa06_66 Fino a che taglia??</p> <p>Liked by vane.aguirre.395 and others</p> <p>FEBRUARY 22</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	22/02/2022	https://www.instagram.com/p/CaRzkpHKdVvk/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
YA20	 <p>yamamayofficial • Follow</p> <p>yamamayofficial For ambitious and positive women like @666ssoda we created a collection that enhances their shape while giving support, discover it online and in store. #yamamayeverygeneration #Yamamay2022 #EverybodyCollection #YamamayEverybody</p> <p>11w</p> <p>scappomaresto Perfetto!!!</p> <p>11w Reply</p> <p>raffaellapallaria L'ho utilizzato al matrimonio ed è stato di una comodità incredibile.</p> <p>Liked by art_u_my_philosophy and others</p> <p>FEBRUARY 23</p> <p>Add a comment...</p>	23/02/2022	https://www.instagram.com/p/CaUXarsKf6e/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

YA21	 <p>yamamayofficial • Follow</p> <p>yamamayofficial • Two generations connected by femininity and naturalness, @stellamanagement and @elnmoro wear the Principessa collection with its innovative fabric and second-skin effect. #yamamayeverygeneration #Yamamay2022 #EverybodyCollection #YamamayEverybody</p> <p>11w</p> <p>scappomaresto</p> <p>11w 2 likes Reply</p> <p>yamamay_udine_cittafiera</p> <p>11w 4 likes Reply</p> <p>Liked by melina_rober and others</p> <p>FEBRUARY 24</p> <p>Add a comment...</p> <p>Post</p>	24/02/2022	https://www.instagram.com/p/CaW8FhIKDhj/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
YA22	 <p>yamamayofficial • Follow</p> <p>yamamayofficial • @mortismoonless is part of a dynamic generation that never stops. That's why she needs a bra that accompanies her in every movement, without sacrificing comfort and style. Discover the Innergy collection online and in store. #yamamayeverygeneration #Yamamay2022 #EverybodyCollection #YamamayEverybody</p> <p>13w</p> <p>lingeries.manufacturer good</p> <p>13w 2 likes Reply</p> <p>giuliano_tw</p> <p>13w Reply</p> <p>yamaypastena</p> <p>13w Reply</p> <p>Liked by naki.earth and others</p> <p>FEBRUARY 26</p> <p>Add a comment...</p> <p>Post</p>	26/02/2022	https://www.instagram.com/p/CacFrRwoDme/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
YA23	 <p>yamamayofficial • Follow</p> <p>yamamayofficial • Determination, resolution and empathy define @stellamanagement's generation. Orchidea collection suits every woman making her feel elegant and sensual. Discover the collection online and in store. #yamamayeverygeneration #Yamamay2022 #EverybodyCollection #YamamayEverybody</p> <p>Edited · 10w</p> <p>linasidney59</p> <p>10w Reply</p> <p>dahech_navel</p> <p>Liked by natasamiltsopoulou and others</p> <p>FEBRUARY 27</p> <p>Add a comment...</p> <p>Post</p>	27/02/2022	https://www.instagram.com/p/CacFrRwoDme/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
YA24	 <p>yamamayofficial • Follow</p> <p>yamamayofficial • Delicate lace for a sensual and glamour attitude. Available up to cup F, discover the Primula bra online and in store. #yamamayeverygeneration #Yamamay2022 #EverybodyCollection #YamamayEverybody</p> <p>11w</p> <p>scappomaresto</p> <p>10w Reply</p> <p>virginiavercelli.lingerie What a gorgeous bra! bellissima!</p> <p>Liked by vane.aguire.395 and others</p> <p>FEBRUARY 28</p> <p>Add a comment...</p> <p>Post</p>	28/02/2022	https://www.instagram.com/p/CahPKqwKC2H/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

YA25	 <p> yamamayofficial • Follow Yamamay Everybody </p> <p> yamamayofficial • Yamamay collection is designed for every woman, no matter the generation they belong to X,Y, Z. Our purpose is to make each of them feel unique and beautiful. Visit us online and in store, we are waiting for you ❤️ #yamamayeverygeneration #Yamayay2022 #EverybodyCollection #YamayayEverybody </p> <p> Thanks to @elnmoro, @gloriadosvi, @666essoda, @stellamanagement, @ilariayoga e @mortismoonless ❤️ </p> <p> Edited · 10w </p> <p> diana_hdezrios Hermososs 🍷 </p> <p> Liked by instamitaa and others MARCH 3 </p> <p> Add a comment... </p>	3/03/2022	https://www.instagram.com/reel/Cao9WK3qYKN/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
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Appendix C. Example of Applied FCDA: Video (YA18)



TOOL: Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis	DENOTATION	CONNOTATION
General (video as a whole)	The video portrays six women who pose, dance, and playfully interact with each other while wearing Yamamay lingerie. A song plays in the background.	The video connotes a general sense of joy and cross-generational unity.
Song Lyrics	“We take care of every generation // Cause every woman deserves to feel exceptional // Every woman, we have personality // We're so different we're so alike // Step outside, every day, every time. // There's just one you // Yamamay”	Use of ideas connected to intersectionality (age)

Post Caption	<p>“No matter the generation, X, Y, Z, <u>every woman deserves to feel exceptional</u>. <u>Yamamay loves</u> you with your differences and uniqueness. This collection is <u>made</u> for each and every one of you to make you feel beautiful and special #yamamayeverygeneration #Yamamay2022 #EverybodyCollection #YamamayEverybody”</p>	<p>→ Yamamay claims to ‘care’ and ‘love’ every woman, no matter her age</p> <p>→ Yamamay’s ‘inclusivity calling’ starts with the manufacturing process (Yamamay claims to cater its products to customers’ needs)</p>
Voiceover	None	-
Video Text Overlays	<p>→ Everyday Every Body Every Generation XYZ</p> <p>→ Yamamay Everyday Every Body Every Generation</p>	Use of ideas connected to intersectionality (age)
Objects (every object in the video)	<p>The ensemble includes: → a young ‘curvy’ Black woman → young small-fat white woman → a young slender white woman → a middle-aged slender white woman → an old slender white woman → an adult pregnant white woman</p> <p>Wearing: → matching underwear sets → bodysuits → loungewear</p>	<p>Despite the age inclusivity, there is no significant body-size diversity. Women mostly conform to Western (slender) beauty standards.</p> <p>The Black woman is portrayed with her Afro hair style = progressive direction in Black representation (no straight hair).</p>

Setting (background info)	White studio background & lights – abstract setting	Conveys a sense of order, purity, peacefulness, cleanliness
Salience (color, tone, foregrounding, size, focus, overlapping, cultural symbols, etc.)	<p>The video alternates between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → shots in which every woman is portrayed alone → shots in which two or more women are portrayed together → shots in which all women are portrayed together. <p>→ Every woman in the ad has a similar visual prominence and is foregrounded at least twice in the video.</p> <p>→ Colors are mostly neutral (black, white, nude) with an occasional light-blue and yellow.</p> <p>→ No overlapping</p> <p>→ Focus is often on the models' faces/eyes</p> <p>→ Cultural symbols: hand-holding, different hands in the air</p>	<p>→ Every woman is given the same importance in the video = inclusivity claim</p> <p>→ Naturalness, peace, calm, reliability</p> <p>→ Truth, soul</p> <p>→ Strength, power, protection, cross-generational unity</p>
Genre of communication (formal, informal, trustworthy, inspiring, etc.)	Informal, Assertive, Empowering, Inspiring	-
Lexical choices	→ “ <u>We</u> take care of every generation” & “Every woman <u>we</u> have personality” =	

	<p>conflation of “we” Yamamay and “we” women</p> <p>→ “Cause every woman deserves to feel exceptional” + all verbs in present simple</p> <p>→ “Every woman, we have personality”</p> <p>→ “We’re so different, we’re so alike”</p> <p>→ “There’s just one of you” & “We love you for your differences and uniqueness”</p>	<p>→ Yamamay identifies with the women it wishes to serve</p> <p>→ Yamamay holds unconfutable (positive and encouraging) truths about women</p> <p>→ For Yamamay, women have worth beyond their bodies</p> <p>→ For Yamamay, women from different generations are more similar than they think</p> <p>→ For Yamamay, women’s uniqueness makes them special</p>
Overlexicalization	<p>“Every”:</p> <p>→ “Every woman”</p> <p>→ “Every generation”</p> <p>→ “Every day”</p> <p>→ “Every time”</p>	Inclusivity claim
Suppression	-	<p>Suppression of any commentary on/acknowledgment of:</p> <p>→ why generational divisions may be detrimental to progress in society</p> <p>→ the underrepresentation of older women in advertising</p> <p>→ Yamamay’s role in upholding a certain</p>

		social order up until that point
Structural oppositions	-	<p>Disconnect between text and visual:</p> <p>→ Text: “Every woman”</p> <p>→ Visual: mostly normative portrayal of Western beauty</p>
TOOL Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis	DENOTATION	CONNOTATION
Feminist critical activism (Presence of strategies of resistance in the text)	<p>→ Inclusion of women from different generations and walks of life (ex: pregnant woman)</p> <p>→ Model with Afro hairstyle</p>	Attempt at intersectionality
Gender as ideological structure and practice (Representation of social structure and practices that highlight a hierarchical relation subordination of women to men in the text)	-	-
Complexity of gender and power relations (Account of the intricacy of forms of oppression in the text)	Inclusion of women from different generations and walks of life (ex: middle-aged woman, old woman, pregnant woman)	Attempt at intersectionality
Discourse in the (de)construction of gender (Presence of semiotics that uphold or contest a certain social order)	No body-size diversity	The texts uphold the social order that sees slender women as the default beauty standard
Critical reflexivity as praxis (Knowledge about social processes used to further non-feminist ends)	Intersectionality signifiers	Intersectionality becomes a corporatized tool to appeal to the female gaze

Appendix D. Example of Applied FCDA: Photo (IN9)



TOOL: Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis	DENOTATION	CONNOTATION
General (photo as a whole)	The image portrays four women wearing the same lace Intimissimi set in different sizes.	The image connotes a general sense of seriousness and order.
Post Caption	<p>“The widest range of bras we’ve ever had, shaped on your needs and fits. You need to try the new Elena bra. All models are wearing: Elena Lace Balconette Bra 80s style Lace Brazilian Briefs #intimissimi #italianlingerie #beautifulinyourownway</p>	<p>→ Intimissimi’s ‘inclusivity calling’ starts with the manufacturing process (Intimissimi claims to tailor its products to consumers’ needs and fits)</p> <p>→ Intimissimi claims to be size-inclusive</p>

Objects (every object in the video)	<p>The ensemble includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → a young slender Black woman → a young slender Asian woman → a young ‘curvy’ white woman → a young slender white woman <p>Wearing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → matching underwear sets <p>2 stools</p>	<p>2 non-white women but no significant body-size diversity. Women mostly conform to Western (slender) beauty standards.</p> <p>The Black woman is portrayed with a typical braided hairstyle = progressive direction in Black representation (no straight hair).</p>
Setting (background info)	Mauve/rose gold studio background & lights – abstract setting	Conveys a sense of femininity, decadence, youth
Salience (color, tone, foregrounding, size, focus, overlapping, cultural symbols, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Every woman is foregrounded in the composition → Colors are black and mauve. → Mild overlapping between the models due to their poses → Focus is on the two central models (the Asian model on the stool and the Black model). All women are glancing at the camera except the curvy woman. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Every woman is given the same visual importance in the video = inclusivity claim → Nevertheless, the two women that catch the eye are the Black woman and the Asian woman = intersectionality claim → The ‘curvy’ woman seems lost or detached from the rest = no consideration of different body types

Genre of communication (formal, informal, trustworthy, inspiring, etc.)	Informative, persuasive	-
Lexical choices	<p>“Widest range of sizes we’ve ever had”</p> <p>“Shapes on your needs and fits”</p> <p>#Beautifulinyourownway</p>	<p>→ Size inclusivity claim</p> <p>→ Intimissimi claims to tailor its products to consumers’ needs and fits</p> <p>→ Intimissimi encourages women to find their own version of beauty</p>
Overlexicalization	-	-
Suppression	-	<p>Suppression of any commentary on/acknowledgment of:</p> <p>→ the underrepresentation of certain body sizes in advertising</p> <p>→ racial inequalities & body inequalities</p> <p>→ Intimissimi’s role in upholding a certain social order up until that point</p>
Structural oppositions	-	<p>Disconnect between text and visual:</p> <p>→ Text: “Widest range of sizes we’ve ever had”</p> <p>→ Visual: All models wear relatively small sizes</p>
TOOL Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis	DENOTATION	CONNOTATION
Feminist critical activism (Presence of strategies of resistance in the text)	<p>→ Inclusion of two non-white women</p> <p>→ Model with braided Afro hairstyle</p> <p>→ Expansion of size range</p>	<p>Attempt at intersectionality</p> <p>Attempt at size inclusivity</p>

Gender as ideological structure and practice (Representation of social structure and practices that highlight a hierarchical relation subordination of women to men in the text)	-	-
Complexity of gender and power relations (Account of the intricacy of forms of oppression in the text)	Inclusion of two non-white women	Attempt at intersectionality
Discourse in the (de)construction of gender (Presence of semiotics that uphold or contest a certain social order)	No body-size diversity	The texts uphold the social order that sees slender women as the default beauty standard
Critical reflexivity as praxis (Knowledge about social processes used to further non-feminist ends)	Body-positive signifiers	Glossy diversity