

*The celebrity wellness and lifestyle sector: maintaining dominant gender
norms and structures in a postfeminist online culture*

By

Sarah Turner

A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Social Policy, Sociology, and Criminology
School of Social Policy
College of Social Sciences
University of Birmingham

January 2024

**UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM**

University of Birmingham Research Archive

e-theses repository

This unpublished thesis/dissertation is copyright of the author and/or third parties. The intellectual property rights of the author or third parties in respect of this work are as defined by The Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 or as modified by any successor legislation.

Any use made of information contained in this thesis/dissertation must be in accordance with that legislation and must be properly acknowledged. Further distribution or reproduction in any format is prohibited without the permission of the copyright holder.

Abstract

Postfeminism, which is evolving and increasingly intertwining with neoliberalism, is a topic that needs to be (re)explored to establish a better understanding of it and its effects on women's lives. How postfeminism operates within the online sphere is an important area to research due to social media platforms, which play a significant role in identity construction, constantly undergoing transformations. This thesis aims to explore how postfeminism is evolving by looking at *Poosh*, a celebrity-run wellness lifestyle site promoted through Instagram. The wellness industry is a pertinent area to look at due to its emergence being linked to postfeminism and social media. Furthermore, my research explored the normative portrayal of motherhood within *Poosh*, as the concept of postfeminist motherhood has so far only received sparse attention in the literature. The thesis found that while some postfeminist sensibilities seem to have evolved superficially, at the core they remain the same, and still contribute towards maintaining dominant norms and structures. Moreover, while 'correct' parenting techniques are being reframed within postfeminism, in particular due to neoliberalism's influence, to help produce future happy productive and resistant neoliberal subjects; childrearing is still portrayed as the woman's main responsibility.

Dedication

*To my better half,
thanks for yeeting me over the finish line.*

Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank Dr Shelley Budgeon, and the University of Birmingham Social Policy, Sociology, and Criminology department for enabling me to undergo this PhD and work on this thesis. It has been truly a life-altering experience, which I am immensely grateful for.

Furthermore, I would like to thank Dr Shelley Budgeon for being a supportive and inspiring supervisor during the first one and a half years of my PhD and for helping me guide and navigate the change of my research project during this stage, together with my supervisor Dr Frankie Rogan. While Dr Frankie Rogan was assigned to my supervisory team, I could not have asked or wished for anyone better. I am truly grateful for the support and patience she has provided me with throughout the entire process. While finding a replacement supervisor, I never felt like my work was affected thanks to her, she is one of the hardest working people I know. I was fortunate enough to have someone as experienced and knowledgeable as Dr Emma Foster join my supervisory team halfway through my project. I can truly say that this thesis would not be at the point it is without their valuable input, and I will dearly miss our supervisions which thanks to them were a highlight of the month for me instead of something to dread.

Just as most exciting and challenging things in life, this project certainly came with its ups and downs. Therefore, I could not be more grateful for my friend Egle who was always up for a coffee break, and to lend an ear. It truly would have not been as fun a time without her. I will especially miss our time in the office together.

Of course, I also want to thank my non-PhD friends who allowed me for a brief moment to be able to not think about my work, and kept me from ever doubting myself. In particular, my friend Sabrina I want to thank for this, who has always been there for me since school. I am also thankful for the new friends I made, especially my ‘Canadian friends’ Sonali and Kat who always knew how to cheer me up during days where work had not necessarily gone as planned and who knew how to have a good time. Definitely missing those ‘weekend wind-downs’.

I am thankful for my family’s support, and especially for my parents, including my dear beau-papa, who enabled me to have the education I had. In particular I am grateful for my mum who has always supported me in everything I wanted to do and achieve in life. And last, but definitely not least, I want to thank my partner, Aimeric, who has been by my side since undergraduate, and has always encouraged and helped me to pursue my goals.

Contents

<u>Introduction:</u>	1
Aim of this thesis	3
A feminist framework, and defining gender and sex as social constructs	5
The research questions explained	6
Roadmap of the thesis	9
<u>Literature Review Part 1: Postfeminism – Liberating women from the patriarchy and/or feminism?</u>	14
1.1 Sex vs gender: Identities, roles, performativity, and power dynamics	15
1.2 An evolving postfeminist culture in a neoliberal society	24
1.3 Embodying postfeminism: Body work, the ‘makeover paradigm’, and ‘sexual freedom’	29
1.4 Internalising postfeminism: The psychological, neoliberal elements, and the happiness industry	40
1.5 Consuming feminism: Commodifying the postfeminist subject?	53
<u>Literature Review Part 2: Postfeminist celebrity culture and reconceptualising motherhood in the online environment</u>	62
2.1 Web 2.0: The prosumer within a changing consumer culture	63
2.2 Social media platforms transforming the celebrity cultural landscape	67
2.3 The role of the wellness industry as a ‘lifestyle’ within postfeminism	76
2.4 Work-life balance vs life-balance and having vs doing it all phenomena	81
2.5 The representation and re-portrayal of good mothering online	85
2.6 Enabling social reproduction through ‘correct’ parenting practices	95
<u>Chapter 3: Methodology – Mixed research methods and new ethical considerations</u>	100

3.1 Objectivity vs (inter)subjectivity and social constructionism	101
3.2 The myth of sisterhood: Adopting a feminist theoretical framework	103
3.3 Feminist research methods: Using a mixed-methods approach	106
3.3.1 Single-design case study: <i>Poosh</i>	108
3.3.2 Data collection	112
3.3.3 Data analysis	114
3.4 Social media as research platform and ethical considerations	123
3.4.1 'New' ethical considerations and limitations	124
3.4.2 Positionality and reflexivity	128
<u>Chapter 4: Quantitative Results Analysis - Data analysis results of the content analysis</u>	130
4.1 Results: Stories/posts	131
4.2 Results: Instagram collected articles	136
4.3 Results: Motherhood section articles	144
4.4 Visual analysis: Stories, posts, and pictures	152
<u>Chapter 5: Postfeminist celebrity culture in the online environment – Transforming and maintaining gender norms within the domestic space</u>	155
5.1 The second shift: Optimising and beautifying the domestic space	156
5.2 The intersection of the second and third shift: Optimising and simplifying food surveillance	173
<u>Chapter 6: Body work as a third shift – Transforming and maintaining postfeminist beauty standards through wellness practices</u>	195
6.1 Re-sexualisation of the body: Complying with evermore demanding beauty expectations	196
6.2 The <i>je ne sais quoi</i> factor: Beauty as 'a state of mind' within a postfeminist culture	215

6.3 Consumerism as unfulfillable lack and state of 'becoming' in a neoliberal society
237

<u>Chapter 7: Reconceptualising motherhood in a postfeminist culture and neoliberal society</u>	254
7.1 The cruel fantasy of how to balance it all: having it all vs doing it all	255
7.2 Transitioning into motherhood within postfeminism	268
7.3 The paradigm of 'failing' to create good productive neoliberal adults	286
7.4 The third shift: Pre and postpartum body work	295
<u>Conclusion:</u>	316
Answering the research questions	316
Limitations, challenges, and reflecting on the research process	327
Future research projects	330
<u>Bibliography</u>	334
<u>Appendix 1 – Coding Sheets</u>	348
<u>Appendix 2 – Full text of articles used in CDA displayed in thesis</u>	352

Introduction

This thesis is interested in the postfeminist culture, conceptualised by Rosalind Gill (2007, 2017) and Angela McRobbie (2004), which emerged in the 1990s during the period of 'girl power' (Banet-Weiser, 2018). While postfeminism as a phenomenon has been traced back as early as the 1970s (Hall & Rodriguez, 2003), this project seeks to interrogate the relevance and endurance of 1990s/2000s postfeminism in shaping contemporary femininities. Specifically, I am using Gill's (2007) postfeminist sensibilities concept as my working definition of postfeminism.

In 2007 Gill articulated that postfeminism should be understood as a 'distinctive sensibility', that ought to be viewed as an amalgamation of interrelated themes, which include the following: 'that femininity is a bodily property; the shift from objectification to subjectification; an emphasis upon self-surveillance, monitoring and self-discipline; a focus on individualism, choice and empowerment; the dominance of a makeover paradigm; and a resurgence of ideas about natural sexual difference' (Gill, 2007, p. 147).

While 1990s/2000s postfeminism was characterised by the belief that feminism was something of the past, by the mid-2010s this changed with feminism becoming 'popular' again (Banet-Weisser, 2018). This change caused some to question whether this meant that postfeminism was, therefore, moving into a post-postfeminist era. For example, scholars like Keller and Ryan (2018) suggested that postfeminism needed to be 'problematised' and that instead what was needed was a 'better account for emergent feminisms' (p. 13) as they believed that these new 'emergent feminisms' would pose a 'challenge to postfeminist media culture'. Even though, Gill (2016) argued that postfeminism, rather than being replaced by

new forms of feminism, was still relevant as it had instead evolved. Furthermore, scholars like Gill (2016, 2017) argued that the form of feminism that had (re)gained popularity in the 2010s, should not be confused with a political form of feminism, but instead was a type of feminism inextricably linked to consumerism and individualism. McRobbie (2004) had already provided a concept to make sense of this ‘feminism within postfeminism’ having coined the term ‘double entanglement’ to describe how, when feminism was present within postfeminism, it was only ‘taken into account’ to ultimately historicise and depoliticise it.

Furthermore, when revisiting the notion of postfeminism she had conceptualised 10 years prior, Gill (2017) suggested that it had even ‘tightened its hold upon contemporary life and become hegemonic’ (p. 606). Moreover, Gill (2017) found that the ‘psychological’ was becoming increasingly important within postfeminism as a (new) sensibility, which was ‘built around cultivating the ‘right’ kinds of dispositions for surviving in neoliberal society: confidence, resilience and positive mental attitude’ (p. 606).

The essential issue with postfeminism is that it is built on the concept that ‘equality’ has been ‘achieved’ and ignores existing structures and norms which continue to keep women subordinate to men. Therefore, it is concerning that this culture is becoming increasingly complex and hegemonic. Thus, I wanted to explore with my research how postfeminism has further evolved since Gill revisited her postfeminist sensibility concept in 2017. Continuing to research and understand how this postfeminist culture is evolving and adapting to socio-economic and cultural changes is crucial due to the influence this phenomenon has on especially women’s life. In particular, as it seems that we are far from moving beyond this culture, and that its intensification is insidious to women, as I will argue throughout my thesis.

Therefore, it is arguably imperative to begin with understanding the potential harmful effects postfeminism within its contemporary state has on women's lives, if we ever aim to move beyond this cultural phenomenon, which is helping maintain dominant structures and norms that keep women subordinate. In other words, to enable us as a society to truly achieve gender 'equality' and/or 'equity'.

In this chapter I will outline the aim of this thesis, followed by a discussion of the framework I am using throughout. Furthermore, I briefly give the definition of gender and, therefore, 'sex' I based myself on when referring to these concepts within my thesis. This is followed by an introduction to the research questions that guided my research, including my rationale behind answering them. The chapter will then finish by providing a roadmap to the content of this thesis.

Aim of this thesis

The aim of this thesis is to contribute to existing debates surrounding the changing nature of postfeminist culture, as briefly discussed above. These debates will be unpacked in more detail in chapters two and three, which serve to review the current literature in the field. I specifically aim to review the 'postfeminist sensibilities' which were established by Gill in 2007 and revisited in 2017. The main sensibilities identified in Gill's (2007, 2017) work on postfeminism were: focus on the body, 'sexual freedom', 'double entanglement' (coined by McRobbie), neoliberalism, and a focus on the psychological. Meanwhile in my research the most pertinent of these sensibilities found were: focus on the body, neoliberalism, and focus on the psychological. In this thesis I explore how these sensibilities have superficially evolved while remaining the same at the core.

This will be done within the context of the case study, *Poosh*. *Poosh* is an online wellness lifestyle site owned and run by celebrity Kourtney Kardashian, which aims to provide guidance and the necessary tools to ‘live a modern life’. Furthermore, with a following of 4.8 million on Instagram (at the time of writing), it can be viewed as an influential platform. Therefore, *Poosh* is situated within the debates of social media, wellness and celebrity culture, which will be laid out in more detail in chapter three. Moreover, due to *Poosh* at the time of research being a relatively new platform, having launched in 2019, the research is to my knowledge providing the first in-depth study on this particular lifestyle site. Thus, I am making an original contribution towards the wider postfeminist literature, which intersects in particular with literature concerning the online (celebrity) wellness lifestyle sector, by providing an in-depth study on the phenomenon that is *Poosh*.

Throughout the thesis I aim to demonstrate how postfeminism in the context of the online wellness industry has adapted and evolved to fit within the current social system, which *Poosh*, an online wellness lifestyle site run by a celebrity, as a case study allowed me to explore. Hence, after establishing that Gill’s postfeminist sensibilities were present, I analysed which ones were more dominant over others. More importantly, this allowed for me to reaffirm their still persistent existence, and how at the core they remain the same, even if superficially they seem to have evolved. For example, while being ‘thin’ is not pushed onto the reader directly, when following the provided fitness advice and healthy recipes, a ‘thin’ physique is still inevitable.

Furthermore, I explore how postfeminism is reconceptualising the phenomenon of motherhood. This contributes towards an emerging new field, since the generation of girls that

grew up in this postfeminist culture in the 1990s and 2000s, as highlighted and conceptualised by scholars like Gill (2007, 2017) and McRobbie (2004), are starting to experience motherhood. This is important, as traditional and idealised forms of motherhood, which often frame mothers as selfless subjects who serve their families, arguably sit in tension with postfeminism's self-centred individualistic subject who focuses on constantly improving themselves. Therefore, I aim to demonstrate how motherhood is being portrayed in a space which is deeply situated within and therefore reflects this postfeminist culture and the neoliberal elements that are intrinsically linked with it.

The ultimate underlying aim of my research is to highlight how dominant norms and structures in relation to gender are being maintained and reconfirmed through postfeminist practices which keep women subordinate. *Poosh* allowed me to do this as its lifestyle content, while clearly promoting postfeminist practices that are associated with 'body work' like aesthetic and glamour labour, simultaneously helps maintain the second shift in women's lives. This is done through encouraging, for example, aesthetic and glamour labour within the household. Hence, maintaining household work ultimately as a feminine task, which will be discussed more explicitly in chapter five.

A feminist framework, and defining gender and sex as social constructs

My thesis is situated at the intersection of social media, the wellness industry, celebrity culture, and sociology of gender. Hence, I am using a feminist approach to gain a better understanding of what is being portrayed to women, including mothers, as the norm in a postfeminist culture. In this particular case, as already stated, the focus will be on the online celebrity wellness lifestyle sector. Moreover, I used a critical postfeminist lens throughout this thesis and my research. Even though I have already mentioned that my work is heavily

influenced and very much in conversation with the work of McRobbie and Gill, I wanted to clearly highlight here that it is Gill's and McRobbie's feminist work I am influenced by. In particular their influential research in the fields of popular culture, gender representations and the role of media practices. Moreover, I was also influenced by Catherine Rottenberg's (2014, 2019) work on neoliberal femininity.

Throughout the thesis my definition of gender, and subsequently sex, is based on Judith Butler's (2006) work who views both concepts as social constructs. However, while I am mostly interested in the role gender plays within feminist practices, I acknowledge that class and other aspects such as ethnicity cannot be isolated and therefore should not be ignored when looking at the 'social construction' of gender. Although gender is something that is constructed, as opposed to an essential characteristic, it is surprisingly restrictive. This is due to what Butler (2006) refers to as 'gender play', restricting the (possible) range of gender performances. Therefore, if one is not born as a male or female, but rather *becomes* either, Butler (2006) argues that one can, therefore, logically choose to become neither. However, this is easier said than done due to gender identities already being assigned before birth through statements like: 'It's a girl or It's a boy' (*ibid*), which reinforces the idea that a 'natural' gender identity exists. This is problematic, as these 'natural' divides are used to justify differences between the gender identities, and consequently women's subordinate position.

[The research questions explained](#)

The research was guided by three main research questions which therefore helped structure the thesis layout:

- **Using *Poosh* as a case study, how have Gill's postfeminist sensibilities evolved? Furthermore, which elements of postfeminist subjectivity are portrayed more dominantly throughout the lifestyle *Poosh* is trying to 'sell'?**

This question focused on the research looking for Gill's sensibilities within the case study, and examining which ones were present more than others, as this arguably shows which sensibilities seem to be or have become more dominant in an evolving postfeminist culture. Furthermore, it allowed me to explore how these sensibilities have adapted to a changing society, especially within the online wellness lifestyle the case study *Poosh* is trying to sell. Therefore, I am not just demonstrating that postfeminism has evolved, but I am exhibiting, using *Poosh*, how this evolution of postfeminism has taken shape. Hence, answering this research question will provide a more recent understanding of postfeminist culture operating within this online wellness celebrity lifestyle context, which *Poosh* is situated in.

- **Which dominant norms and structures, portrayed by Kourtney Kardashian via *Poosh*, are being transformed and/or maintained in a postfeminist culture?**

This question really builds on the previous one by trying to dive deeper into the case study and explore how its portrayal of 'living a modern life' is helping to maintain dominant norms and structures. In particular the research here wanted to explore how through the evolved postfeminist sensibilities the different 'shifts' in women's lives were being changed and/or further established, while ultimately making sure these shifts remained essentially 'feminine shifts'. Thus, by answering this research question I will demonstrate how the evolved postfeminist sensibilities, identified through the

previous question, ultimately still help maintain the second and third shift as essential ‘feminine tasks’.

- **What is the normative portrayal of the (re)construction of postfeminist motherhood as depicted by *Poosh*? How has the representation of the idea of being a ‘good’ mother changed in an evolving postfeminist culture?**

The first half of this question focuses on what the case study is trying to portray as ‘postfeminist motherhood’. Answering these questions helps to deduce what is being portrayed as what motherhood should look like for the ‘girls’ that grew up in this 1990s and 2000s postfeminist culture. The second half of the question focuses implicitly on what is being shown to these ‘new’ mothers as ‘good’ mothering practices, as I was expecting to find a new representation of what it means to be a ‘good’ mother which conforms with postfeminist and neoliberal ideals. In other words, answering the first half of this research question will contribute towards gaining an understanding of this new concept that is ‘postfeminist motherhood’. Answering the second half of the question will build on the previous half, by demonstrating how motherhood practices encouraged in a postfeminist culture differ from traditional motherhood ideals. However, while the encouraged practices might differ, answering both questions will reconfirm that childrearing is still seen as the women’s responsibility.

It is worth mentioning that this research does not aim to provide any ‘objective’ facts, but simply aims to provide an inter-subjective account illuminating the continued relevance of

postfeminism in a digital age, which will be clarified and explained more thoroughly in the methodology, the third chapter in this thesis.

Roadmap of the thesis

In this last section of my introduction, the reader will be guided through my thesis' roadmap providing a short summary of what is to come, and therefore, enable a better understanding of the direction of my thesis. First, in chapters one and two, I will review the necessary literature in which my research is situated. The literature review was split into two chapters to help organise and simplify an exploration of the necessary literature from such diverse fields, even though they interlink within this project. The first chapter begins with a brief introductory section on the concept of gender, before shifting the focus on exploring the extensive literature on postfeminism and its relationship with neoliberalism. I look, in particular, at the emergence of the postfeminist culture Gill and McRobbie outlined in the 2000s, and how neoliberalism increasingly became more prominent within it. Furthermore, I explore in more depth the postfeminist sensibilities as highlighted by Gill (2007, 2017), and how these sensibilities have remained the same at the core despite having simultaneously evolved. Therefore, for ease the chapter has been further divided into three sections. These respectively focus on: the 'embodied' aspects of the postfeminist sensibilities, the 'internalisation' of these sensibilities, and the role of feminism and consumerism within postfeminism.

The second chapter will narrow down the focus of the literature review in the sense that it will explore the role the emergence of Web 2.0, which 'refers to the second generation of the Web' (Wilson et al., 2011, p. 2), had on the celebrity and consumerism landscape in relation to postfeminism. The chapter will then proceed to explore the literature concerned with the wellness industry, in particular O'Neill's (2020a, 2020b) work will be viewed in relation

to this industry, homing in on the racialised connotations between wellness and promoting the 'glow' of the white woman. Alongside this, the relevant aspects of 'brand me' in relation to neoliberalism and Rottenberg's (2014, 2019) work will be discussed. The review will then proceed to explore how the phenomenon of 'having it all' evolved into the notion of 'doing it all' after feminism's so-called second-wave.

There, the notions of 'work-life balance' and 'life-balance' will be differentiated and discussed in relation to 'having it all' and 'doing it all'. The second part of the literature review will, in its final two sections, narrow its focus on to the aspects of 'motherhood' that the research wants to analyse in relation to postfeminism, by first viewing how social media portrayals of 'good' mothering practices are (negatively) affecting mothers. Then the final section will focus on how, in general, 'correct' parenting practices are encouraged through representations online, and how this feeds into the literature concerned with social reproduction. In short, my literature review aims to explore the current dominant gender norms and structures that help to maintain women's subordination, particularly in relation to constructions of femininity, (aesthetic) labour, and motherhood.

In the third chapter, after having established where within the vast academic literature my research is situated, I will outline my methodological practices. The aim of the chapter is to provide full transparency of the research process, and to justify my research methods. Therefore, I first establish my positionality from an epistemological point of view, before explaining in more detail the framework I decided to adapt for my research. The rest of the chapter will focus on my research methods. I explain the rationale behind the chosen case study, *Poosh*, and outline how the data collection took place. Then the research methods and

the analysis process are discussed. This includes a justification of why a mixed method approach using a content analysis followed by a critical discourse analysis was chosen. The chapter will finish with the final section outlining the ethical implications that I needed to consider given that my research took place in the online domain.

The fourth chapter will outline the quantitative data collected through the content analysis. This chapter is designed to present these quantitative findings, to make way and set the scene for a deeper, richer discussion in the subsequent chapters. The substantive discussion consists of 3 chapters. The first two chapters, chapters five and six, focus on discussing the aspects and elements necessary to answer the first two research questions. Chapter 7, on the other hand, is more focused on discussing the concept of motherhood within a postfeminist context, with the aim to answer the third research question.

Chapter five focuses more on the aspects of the domestic space that *Poosh* engages with. The chapter first explores how *Poosh* is helping to maintain the second shift as an essential feminine task through promoting the ‘beautification’ of the home. This beautification is mainly encouraged through the use of the makeover paradigm, and neoliberal elements of constant self-improvement and individualism. Furthermore, Elias, Gill, and Scharff’s (2017) concept of aesthetic labour and Wissinger’s (2015) concept of glamour labour are also explored within this context. The chapter then proceeds to focus on how food lies at the intersection of the second and third shifts within postfeminism. It will demonstrate how even though the preparation of food is situated within the second shift, the elements of surveillance and monitoring that are associated with it, especially in a postfeminist context, intertwine with the third shift. Consequently, approaches towards controlling what women eat in relation to

body work, like 'calculated hedonism' (Hollows, 2000) and 'glow from the inside' (O'Neill, 2020a), will be discussed. Hence, the role of the wellness industry in relation to controlling food intake will be examined.

The sixth chapter will shift its focus to entail aspects within the public sphere, rather than the private sphere, first continuing the discussion of the previous chapter by focusing more exclusively on the third shift and body work. This chapter will explore how the body is still presented as the most vital site for women to express their femininity. Furthermore, how biological differences are enhanced through the body work practices *Poosh* promotes, which are presented as 'natural' differences. Moreover, the chapter will argue how the 'focus on the psychological' has increasingly become a more important element of postfeminism that is becoming increasingly intertwined with the postfeminist sensibility of 'focus on the body'. Hence, the influence of neoliberal elements within this evolvement will be explored, particularly discourses of constant self-improvement, and individualism. Moreover, the role of the 'happiness industry' (Davies, 2015) will be explored here. Finally, this chapter will round off the discussion by exploring how consumerism underlines all the aspects discussed so far, and how it is a vital element within *Poosh* and a wider postfeminist context.

The seventh, and final, discussion chapter will shift the focus of the discussion onto the reconceptualisation of motherhood within a postfeminist context. The chapter will first discuss how the phenomenon of 'having it all' and 'doing it all' are presented in the *Poosh* lifestyle. Furthermore, the chapter explores how the concept of 'work-life balance' seems to be increasingly replaced with the concept of 'life balance' due to the blurring of the lines between the public and the private within social media. This, therefore, seems to also cause a blurring

between the shifts. The focus of the discussion then shifts onto *Poosh*'s portrayal of the 'transition' into motherhood, and what is being represented as the norm. Next the chapter will elaborate on how 'good' parenting practices have evolved from traditional parenting practices to comply with neoliberalism. Hence, it can be seen that *Poosh* encourages parenting practices that help form productive and resilient future adults. Finally, it will be demonstrated how the third shift (defined by intensive and ongoing 'body work') is still being promoted as essential by *Poosh* both pre- and postpartum. These unrealistic portrayals are not only damaging for new mothers but also help to maintain the dominant norms and structures that keep women subordinate and legitimise gender inequality.

The thesis will finish with a concluding chapter, where I will reiterate the answers to the research questions. Furthermore, I will discuss any implications and limitations that occurred during the research, and outline my positionality within this research through reflexive practices. Moreover, I will reiterate how this thesis aimed to add an original contribution in this research area, and emphasise how I believe I have managed to succeed in this. Finally, I will conclude by highlighting potential directions of future research.

Chapter One

Literature Review Part I

Postfeminism – Liberating women from the patriarchy and/or feminism?

With this thesis I aim to contribute to the complex literature surrounding postfeminism. Therefore, this chapter will explore the relevant existing literature in relation to postfeminism, to situate my own research within this wider context. This also serves to identify gaps within the literature, demonstrating the relevance and necessity of my own research. However, due to the nature of the cultural phenomenon that is postfeminism, and the case-study *Poosh* which has been selected for the research, I needed to draw on and look at other literature in areas that intertwine with it: the wellness industry, social media, and celebrity culture being some of the areas that will, therefore, be discussed more thoroughly in the second chapter.

Even though my research was initially focussed on understanding the reconceptualisation of motherhood within a postfeminist culture, it became clear from the explored literature that postfeminism itself was going through a transformation. Hence, it was found to be necessary to re-explore postfeminism as a concept before being able to understand how an ‘evolved’ form of postfeminism was affecting the idea of motherhood. Thus, there was a need to first establish whether postfeminism was still contributing towards maintaining dominant norms and structures around gender in general, and if yes, how; before understanding what it means to be a postfeminist mother.

Therefore, this chapter will first engage with the social concept of gender, before exploring the existing literature on postfeminism and its increasing intertwinement with

neoliberalism. The focus will be particularly on exploring the conceptualisation of postfeminism as a cultural phenomenon constituted of a set of particular sensibilities, as originally laid out by Gill (2007), since the research displayed later in this thesis has based itself on this conceptualisation when exploring the data.

[**Sex vs gender: Identities, roles, performativity, and power dynamics**](#)

Gender and sex are intrinsically linked, and it seems often used interchangeably. However, sex is mostly associated with biology: e.g. 'anatomy, hormones, and physiology'; whereas gender is thought of as something one 'achieves', as it is 'constructed through psychological, cultural, and social means' (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 125). Gender 'refers to the meanings, values, and characteristics that people ascribe to different sexes' (Blackstone, 2003, p. 336), and therefore, it can be said that it is society's beliefs which define what are considered 'appropriate' gender roles based on the differences between the sexes (Blackstone, 2003). The same is true when talking about gender identities, they are not something 'natural or fixed', even though they are made to seem that way, but rather something that only comes into existence, and thus gains meaning, 'when *acted out* or performed' (Butler, 2006; Laughey, 2007).

Although gender is something that is constructed and therefore needs to be performed, it is surprisingly restrictive. This is due to social norms and conditions that cause the (possible) range of gender performativity to be restricted (Butler, 2006; Laughey, 2007). However, this can be challenged through what Butler (2006) refers to as *gender trouble* where, as Laughey (2007) rephrases it, the 'traditional lines of division between masculine and feminine identity are capable of being blurred and eroded by gender playing that subverts conventional sex differences; that amounts to troublesome gender performativity in the eyes

of traditionalists' (p. 114). For instance, transgender people, drag kings/queens, and bisexuals are examples of (creating) 'gender trouble'. This is interesting, because to assume that certain gender performances or identities are 'troublesome', would constitute that there is a 'non-troublesome' performance, i.e. 'natural' gender identity. However, Butler (2006) notes that such a 'natural' gender identity does not exist, since it would need to be forever enacted, both prior and after becoming 'natural' or 'normal'. Thus, this implies that 'traditional' gender identities are only made to seem 'natural', and 'other' gender identities are only labelled as 'troublesome' due to them threatening to unveil this traditionally established 'natural' identity's 'unnaturalness'. In other words, they have the potential of stripping the dominant norm of its 'power'.

The study of the concept of gender as something different from sex within feminist sociology dates back to the 1970s, when in 1971 Ann Oakley as the first social scientist actively 'distinguished the concept of gender from the concept of sex' (Blackstone, 2003, p. 336). Even though de Beauvoir's work was eventually more influential and famously known for differentiating between sex and gender, de Beauvoir saw only gender and not sex as something unstable. This is where Butler's work, despite initially being heavily influenced by de Beauvoir's research, separates itself from de Beauvoir's. According to Butler (2006), seeing sex as something stable, i.e. natural, is problematic since assuming a binary distinction between biological sexes, determined by nature, generates a binary gender system. As sex is determined 'through the application of socially agreed upon biological criteria for classifying persons as females or males.' (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 127), feminine and masculine gender norms will automatically be reinforced through differentiating between male and female, if we only

recognise gender as a social construct. In other words, additionally to gender, sex also needs to be recognised as a social construct.

Therefore, if one is not born as a male or female, but rather *becomes* either, Butler (2006) argues that one can, therefore, logically choose to become neither. However, this is easier said than done. This is because gender identities are already assigned before birth through statements like: 'It's a girl or It's a boy' (*ibid*), which reinforces the idea that a 'natural' gender identity exists. Thus, once a child is born it is already expected to 'perform' in a certain way according to its assigned gender identity, which is in turn continuously reconfirmed through performativity.

Furthermore, this categorisation, of which gender or sex one belongs to, is something that is established and sustained in everyday life through participating in certain 'socially required identificatory displays that proclaim one's membership in one or the other category' (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 127). This becomes further enforced throughout one's life through a series of discourses, that 'ensure our conformity to the reiteration and citation of gender norms' (Storey, 2015, p. 169). For example, through the influence of our parents, education institutions, fashion industry, and foremost the media (Storey, 2015), including *Poosh* as will be demonstrated. Hence, Butler (2006) argues that one's gender identity is something forced upon individuals, instead of a free choice. However, this all only makes sense in a society that has 'agreed to divide humans into male and female on the grounds of biological difference' (Storey, 2015, p. 169). Butler (2006) dives deeper into this line of argument by stating that the only reason for these categories to exist, is to serve 'the economic

needs of heterosexuality' and to make 'the institution of heterosexuality' not only seem as the norm but also as the only 'natural' way.

This is problematic, as these 'natural' divides are used to justify gendered and sexual inequalities. In Western societies, West and Zimmerman (1987) argue, 'the accepted cultural perspective on gender views women and men as naturally and unequivocally defined categories of being with distinctive psychological and behavioural propensities that can be predicted from their reproductive functions' (pp. 127-128). Therefore, in Western societies, if one is born with 'female' sex reproductive functions it is seen as 'natural' and 'inevitable' that 'she' will, for example, become a mother and, therefore, perform the role associated with the concept of 'motherhood'. The divisions of gender roles (e.g. father or mother) which is dependent on one's gender identity (male or female), determines one's (restricted) gender performances (masculine or feminine). However, the issue is that they do not carry the same weight. One identity, the male one, is seen as the more important one, and this is reflected within societal structures. West and Zimmerman (1987) argue that 'the structural arrangements of a society' can be seen as responsible for the differences (the inequality) that persists between the genders.

In a society that is based on the idea of a binary sex and gender system, certain 'structural arrangements, for example, between work and family, actually produce or enable some capacities, such as to mother, that we formerly associated with biology' (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 126). However, while motherhood is often depicted as something 'natural', Smart (1996) discusses how it is 'not a natural condition', but rather 'an institution that presents itself as a natural outcome of biologically given gender differences, as a natural

consequence of (hetero)sexual activity, and as a natural manifestation of an innate female characteristic, namely the maternal instinct' (p. 37). Instead of seeing motherhood as a 'self-evident fact', Smart (1996) argues that it should be seen as a 'possible outcome of specific social processes that have a historical and cultural location which can be mapped.' (p.37). Therefore, motherhood can be seen as a phenomenon by itself, and 'one of its essential elements is a parent with one or more children.' (Saldana, 2011, p. 8).

The same is true for the concept of 'childhood'. Childhood is depicted as a natural phase in contemporary society, even though it is 'the product of a number of cultural processes and modernist ideas' (Smart, 1996, p. 37); childhood is not a natural phenomenon but also a social construction, and therefore 'capable of further change and redefinition' (Smart, 1996, p. 37). Hence, arguably the traditional nuclear family is just as much a social construct as it is a phenomenon. Smart (1996) argues that one needs to deconstruct the 'western notion of the idealized family' to reveal that it is also not 'a naturally occurring unit'. Especially the role of the mother within this 'idealised family' is important to deconstruct, as even in contemporary society the main responsibility to maintain this idealised family arguably rests upon the woman due to the idea that it is their 'natural' (gender) role.

Smart (1996) rightfully questions 'why motherhood is presumed to be natural', as a number of events need to first occur before a woman even becomes a mother (let alone being naturally gifted at then being a 'good' mother). The chain of events that need to occur, according to Smart (1996), before a woman becomes a mother is as follows: 'sexual activity -> pregnancy -> birth -> mothering -> motherhood' (p. 39). Therefore, it is interesting how in society motherhood is 'presumed to be so natural as to be inevitable, unquestionable and

automatic.' (Smart, 1996, p. 39). Especially, as during this chain of events a lot can still occur to disrupt it. Therefore, something that is presented as a natural and unavoidable occurrence is really a 'channelling of choices and options that are historically and culturally specific. At each stage of this process, decisions are taken that relate to existing values, social conditions and available options.' (Smart, 1996, p. 39-40).

Nevertheless, it is seen as natural for the women to look after and raise the children. That women are in charge of childrearing has, however, not always been the case (Smart, 1996; Williams, 1999). Before the emergence of domesticity, which coincided with the industrial revolution, women were not deemed fit to raise children as it was seen as too important a job (Williams, 1999). Therefore, before the separation of home-life and work-life, it was the father who was in charge of raising the children. However, once men needed to leave the home for work, they no longer had time to raise children, and therefore, the mother assumed that role, while maintaining her initial household duties (Williams, 1999). Furthermore, during this period it was believed that the children should be raised and educated in a certain fashion, and that this should be done by the mother and not a stranger (Williams, 1999). This was the emergence of what we refer to as the traditional nuclear family, and which is often depicted as the norm.

Despite the efforts of governments and advertising companies of the 1950s and 60s promoting the image of 'the white, middle-class, stay-at-home mother', in the 1960s the second feminism wave emerged, also known as the Women's Liberation Movement, led mainly by liberal feminists who fought for the right of women to 'equally' enter the workforce (Gatrell, 2005). This was arguably successful, as by the 1990s, feminisation of the labour force had

become a fact in most western industrial democracies (Boyd, 1997). However, it did not turn out completely the way feminists had advocated and hoped for, and certainly did not solve the still persistent inequality, as entering the workforce did not liberate them from their household and childrearing responsibilities. Instead, a ‘second-shift’ was introduced into women’s life (Hallstein, 2011; Hochschild, 2012). This was further reinforced due to the economy adapting to dual income households, forcing both partners to work if they wanted to be able to maintain the same standard of life as before. This became the ‘new’ norm instead of working hours being reduced to, for example, 4-day-work weeks, which certain feminists had initially advocated for (Littler, 2019).

Despite women since the late twentieth century seeking egalitarian relationships, which is defined as ‘both partners sharing power, decision-making, financial and emotional contributions, as well as childrearing and homemaking’ (Rodman Aronson & Schaler Buchholz, 2001, p. 110), and expect men to contribute to the household and childrearing tasks (Schwartz, 1994); it seems that even if they initially might share housework equally, it is often only up until the woman is pregnant with the first child (Hallstein, 2011). From that point onwards, it seemingly becomes the main responsibility of the mother to take care of the childrearing and household, despite them also still having a career. This arguably shows not only how housework is seen as a feminine role, but also how giving birth and transitioning into motherhood reinforces this gendered identity. Furthermore, it seems to be much more complex than simply seeing housework as being women’s work, as according to Natalier (2003) not doing the housework seems to be an intrinsic part of building ‘masculinity’.

Natalier (2003) found that gender remains important, even in households where women are absent, when it comes to household tasks. According to them the 'greatly feted New Man with his enthusiasm for all things domestic, is a myth.' (p. 255). They discuss that a big difference is that when men do housework, they *choose* to do it. Thus, they 'opt-in', while women actively 'opt-out' (Natalier, 2003). According to Natalier (2003) these patterns are 'significant not simply as markers of difference, but as means of reproducing relationships of power.' (p. 255). Furthermore, she states that 'the sociological definition of a wife is sometimes referenced to a man's appropriation of a woman's labour, and incorporates subordinate status, economic dependence and deference...housework becomes a symbol as well as a material contribution to women's oppression' (pp. 255-56).

This stands in contrast with Butler's point of view on power dynamics in relation to gender and sex hierarchies. Butler (1999) rejects the idea that women are subordinate to men simply by nature of their gender, as they find that 'heterosexual normativity ought not to order gender, and that such ordering ought to be opposed' (p. xi). This, however, is arguably too simplistic a thought. So, while I agree with, and base myself on, Butler's work in defining the concepts of gender and sex as being social constructs, I do not fully agree with their view that women ought to not be viewed as subordinate. While women might not be subordinate in a direct relationship with a 'male-companion', within wider societal context, which is structured to cater to the advantage of the straight-white-male (Maier, 2000), it is arguably impossible to not view women as subordinate. This is because a member of any 'category' that does not fall within the constraints of 'straight', 'white' and 'male' (being otherwise in a similar class or economic situation) is arguably inevitably subordinate in comparison, due to the discriminative structures that are still in place. Therefore, while women 'ought' to not be

subordinate because of their gender, we need to first acknowledge their disadvantaged position in society, to be able to try and change this subordinate position.

Moreover, Natalier (2003) found that even in a same-sex household, different genders are still symbolically present. This is where the power dynamics determine the symbolic genders present in the household. The person who has more power, often financially better off, is the one who does not need to do (as much) housework as the one that is financially worse off, and therefore has less power. This shows how in heterosexual marriages/relationships household work is another tool to maintain the inequality between men and women, which arguably shows how these dominant power dynamics in and/or outside a relationship, are persisting as a form of suppression for women. Especially in the particular case of gendering housework, it contributes to continue tying women to the domestic space. In other words, reinforcing their place within the private sphere.

Thus, while liberal feminism's goal was achieved, and women gained increasing access to the public sphere through entering the workforce, women remained subordinate as they had not been liberated of their domestic responsibilities. While this in itself is not necessarily the issue, as after all arguably a big milestone was achieved overall; the issue was that culturally and societally it was assumed that women were now 'equal' to men due to them having gained access to the 'work-sphere'. This stance was at first adopted by the emerging postfeminist culture post the second wave feminism era, which was (roughly put) promoting the idea that women could 'have it all' (family life and a career) as 'equality' had been achieved. Hence, ignoring the still persistent dominant norms and structures that were preventing women from 'equally' participating in e.g., the public sphere. Or, as Hochschild

refers to it, the 'stalled revolution' where 'women have gone to work, but the workplace, the culture, and most of all, the men, have not adjusted themselves to the new reality' (in Kay, 1998, p. 435).

Therefore, a cultural phenomenon like postfeminism, based on the assumption that 'equality' has been achieved, even though it has not, is insidious to women, as it helps maintain dominant structures and norms that sustain inequality by masking the obstacles in the way of achieving equality, in particular by shifting the focus on to the 'individual'.

[**An evolving postfeminist culture in a neoliberal society**](#)

Postfeminism in the literal sense means 'after' or 'beyond' feminism (Nurka, 2016). Even though the term 'postfeminism' appears to have been around since the 1970s, according to the popular media the postfeminist era emerged around the 1990s (Hall & Rodriguez, 2003). In North America and Europe, during this time, a new rhetoric of 'girl power' emerged, specifically through girl-centred music or television shows, such as the *Spice Girls* or *The Powerpuff Girls* (Banet-Weiser, 2018). This 'girl power' rhetoric promoted individual achievement and not feminism (Gill, 2017). Furthermore, this media culture entailed notions of self-confident, assertive, intelligent girls and it was not just a simple trend but the beginning of a new emerging culture: a 'postfeminist' culture (Banet-Weiser, 2018). While on the one hand 'girl power' seemed to be celebrated, on the other hand 'female success sat side-by-side with the intense, hostile scrutiny of women in the public eye' (Gill, 2017, p. 607).

This postfeminist culture seemed to be intrinsically linked with neoliberalism, as within it, girls and women were being portrayed as 'choice-making agents' (Gill, 2007), who are active subjects 'free to shape their own destiny' (Adamson, 2017). However, this

promised 'freedom' was underlined by the image of the independent 'working girl' that was associated with 'a progressive femininity', which caused a responsibility to be put on women to self-discipline and constantly improve, simultaneously dismissing structural issues by making the individual accountable for their success and failures (Adamson, 2017).

Neoliberalism has become a term often used as 'a catchall term to explain away all of society's ills' (Rogan, 2023, p. 19). However, traditionally, it was used as a term to describe a political economy that emerged via the implementation of large-scale economic changes in both the UK and the USA in the late 1970s and 1980s (Rogan, 2023). These economic changes resulted in a 'large-scale economisation of the social, wherein the logic of the market became the paradigm through which social life was conceptualised more broadly' (Rogan, 2023, p.21). Simultaneous to the emergence of neoliberalism with its notions of individualism and personal responsibility in the 1980s, there was a 'sociological exploration of shifting notions of the self' (Rogan, 2023, p.22). Under neoliberalism's notion of individualisation, the sense of self became less about fixed characteristics and traits that would traditionally determine membership to communities like class, gender or 'race' (Rogan, 2023). Instead, in a neoliberal context, one's achievements and failures define the individual, which results in an incessant creation and revision of one's sense of self, as it is always possible to create a 'better version' of oneself by seizing opportunities and giving in to demands of society (*ibid*).

Therefore, in relation to postfeminism, neoliberalism can be viewed as 'a form of governmentality that works through (re)shaping subjectivities' (Adamson, 2017, p. 317). However, it (re)shapes subjectivities to work in its favour and, therefore, it deems certain mindsets and attitudes more valuable than others. Specifically, its preferred desirability is in

relation to self-discipline and transformation, which includes the individual aligning their autonomous choices to become a 'productive subject in all spheres of life' (Adamson, 2017, p. 317). This is where Adamson (2017) argues neoliberalism's 'autonomous, calculating, self-regulating subject' and postfeminism's 'active, freely choosing, self-reinventing subject' strongly resemble each other. However, I agree with scholars like Rottenberg (2014, 2019) that neoliberalism and postfeminism can be seen as overlapping, since the postfeminist subject, I will be discussing throughout the thesis, embodies a type of neoliberal femininity that Rottenberg (2014, 2019) conceptualises within her work on neoliberal feminism.

Since postfeminism's emergence in the 90s, its cultural landscape has become more fraught and complicated, due to neoliberalism having deepened its hold within it (Gill, 2017). Thus, when talking about postfeminism it is impossible to not also mention and consider neoliberalism. Meanwhile, neoliberalism had managed to infiltrate from the macro-political and economic scale into 'a central organizing ethic of society that shapes the way we live, think and feel about ourselves and each other' (Gill, 2017, p. 608). It has not just become part of, but even shapes our everyday life. The surprising thing about neoliberalism is its 'stability', not only has it withstood serious economic crises in the past, but it has even tightened its grip (Gill, 2017). Against the backdrop of this resilient neoliberalism and links to capitalist discourses which 'encourage women to concentrate on their private lives and consumer capacities as the sites for self-expression and agency' (Vered & Humphreys, 2014, p. 157), postfeminism, according to Vered and Humphreys (2014), therefore can be described as 'part of a Third Wave political economy' (p. 157).

Although the term postfeminism had become ‘one of the most important in the lexicon of feminist cultural analysis’ (Gill, 2007, p. 147), there were ongoing debates about a clear and agreed upon definition (Tasker & Negra, 2005), before scholars like Gill (2007) helped conceptualise the term. Some argued that the lack of a ‘comprehensive definition’ for postfeminism (Hall & Rodriguez, 2003) may not have been too problematic, as this indicated that it was something worth discussing, if it had not been for two things. These were, that not even the features of postfeminism seemed to be defined with any rigour, and that it was difficult to apply any current notions to specific cultural or media analysis (Gill, 2007). In other words, the only thing certain was the ‘uncertainty’ about where ‘feminism’ stood in the early 2000s postfeminist culture (Hall & Rodriguez, 2003). Some scholars, such as Ebeling (1990), therefore argued that feminism was already ‘dead’, others, such as Kaminer (1993), thought that it was suffering an ‘identity crisis’, which would however lead to its ‘demise’, while others, such as Hogeland (1994), simply stated that the problem was a so-called ‘fear of feminism’ (in Hall & Rodriguez, 2003). However, it became increasingly important to ‘come to grips with postfeminism in part because its language and conceptualisation ... [were] so pronounced a feature of popular discourse’ (Tasker & Negra, 2005, p. 107).

Gill (2007) conceptualised postfeminism as a cultural phenomenon that should be understood as a ‘postfeminist sensibility’, which is made up at the core of a set of ‘distinct sensibilities’ which are interrelated. These, despite postfeminism’s flexibility to adapt, fundamentally remain the same. While it seems that some, like Vered and Humphreys (2014), have argued that this ‘sensibility framework’ still fails to offer ‘a coherent framework’, as they find that ‘its micropolitics of privilege and consumerism does not in itself offer a framework for critique or plan for change’ (p. 162), scholars like Riley et al. (2017) argue that it is its

flexibility that makes it so successful, as it allows for research to span ‘a range of disciplines’ and be applicable within different contexts. Gill’s (2007) definition of postfeminism, as being a culture that is regulated and made up of a series of certain core sensibilities that remain the same, is my working definition of postfeminism within this thesis.

In the 2010s a renewed increase in ‘feminism’ among especially ‘young’ women, and a resurgence of the topic in the media and popular culture, caused some scholars like Lumby (2011), Whelehan (2010), and Retallack, Ringrose, and Lawrence (2016) to start questioning the validity of ‘postfeminism’ and whether it could still be considered a relevant or even useful concept. However, scholars like Keller and Ryan (2018) express that, while we should not overly rely on postfeminism as a framework, just because there are signs of some (new) ‘emerging feminisms’ it does not mean that postfeminism is not relevant anymore. Especially, as long as postfeminist elements and discourses are still so present in TV and the media (Vered & Humphreys, 2014). The resurgence of some feminist activism, which was used as the main point to argue that we were moving into a post-postfeminist era, did not mean that postfeminism was ‘over’, as in particular the set of ideas which Gill (2007) had termed as ‘postfeminist sensibilities’ could still be found circulating throughout our society (Gill, 2016; Riley et al., 2017). It is the presence of these persistent postfeminist sensibilities that my thesis explores.

However, these debates about whether we were moving into a post-postfeminist era, despite Gill (2016) refuting these claims, did cause Gill (2017) to revisit her initial framework 10 years onwards. Gill (2017) found that this ‘new visibility of feminism exists in an environment that is at best highly contradictory and at worst profoundly misogynist’ (p. 611).

Therefore, it would be wrong to assume, just because (a certain form of) feminism has become 'visible', especially in the (popular) media, that postfeminism and neoliberalism have loosened or are loosening their hold. Quite the contrary, it should be seen in the light of postfeminism's incredible skill to 'change and mutate' quite rapidly in response to new ideas and socio-economic and cultural change (Gill, 2017), and as a way for neoliberalism to deepen its hold in society. My research, therefore, explored how postfeminism, and neoliberalism have evolved within the context of the lifestyle page *Poosh*, which was selected as the case study after observing postfeminist and neoliberal aspects' persistent presence throughout, as will be explored more thoroughly during the discussion.

Therefore, conforming to and enacting these core sensibilities is, within this thesis, seen as what arguably constitutes the perfect postfeminist subject. Hence, due to these core sensibilities' heavy influence on the research, they will now be discussed in greater detail in the following sections. To ease the review of this particular subset of literature, the subsequent sections have been organised according to the following three points, focusing first on the embodiment of postfeminism, then on the internalisation of postfeminism and neoliberalism, and finally reviewing the role of consumerism within postfeminism and whether the postfeminist subject can be considered a feminist and/or simply a commodity.

[**Embodying postfeminism: Body work, the 'makeover paradigm', and 'sexual freedom'**](#)
One aspect of postfeminism seems to be the 'obsessive' focus on the body, especially when it comes to defining femininity. In postfeminism, femininity is intrinsically linked with bodily properties instead of 'social, structural or psychological' ones (Gill, 2007). However, the latter one does become increasingly important as Gill (2017) found when revisiting her postfeminist sensibilities, which was also the case in my research as will be shown. To be successful, as a

woman, in a postfeminist culture and neoliberal society a ‘sleek, toned, controlled figure’ used to be key according to Gill’s (2007) original theorisation, and this body was represented as their source of power. At the same time it is also presented as something that needs constant monitoring, surveillance, and, therefore, discipline and remodelling as it needs to continuously adapt to the ‘ever-narrower judgements of female attractiveness’ (Gill, 2007, p. 149). Therefore, the woman’s body is constantly at ‘risk of failing’ (Gill, 2007). This is arguably influenced by, or links back to, neoliberal values which encourage constant improvement for people to become the best possible version of themselves (Rottenberg, 2014, 2019). Even though, since 2007 the requirement of a ‘thin’ physique has become less explicit, probably in reaction to an emergent ‘body positive’ movement and general wider discourses around ‘loving one’s body’, arguably the woman’s body can still be viewed as their source of power which requires constant monitoring roughly 15 years onwards, as will be shown throughout this thesis. Therefore, women’s appearance remains an ever important and oppressive factor in society, as my findings, that will be discussed more thoroughly throughout the discussion chapters of this thesis, will reflect.

Wissinger (2015) looks at how, through the changing requirements to be able to be a model, the beauty image of ordinary women has become not only more demanding but also more unrealistic over the years. She starts by looking at the required aspects needed to be a model from the 60s to 2000s. While in the 60s, 70s, and 80s the requirements to be a model involved being tall and thin, there was, however, an attitude that if you were not tall or thin it did not matter; one could simply not be a model (Wissinger, 2015). In contrast to this, from the 90s onwards, suddenly the idea was promoted that everyone could look like a model, if they tried hard enough (Wissinger, 2015). It suddenly was portrayed as something achievable

by all. Therefore, it is perhaps not a coincidence that by the 90s the fitness boom, that had emerged during the 1980s, was well established, and a 'third shift' in women's life was added, also known as body work (Hallstein, 2011). Furthermore, the responsibility of whether they succeed or fail to achieve this 'idealised body' lies with the women (Dworking & Wachs, 2004). This, however, is ironic as during this time period the invention and improvement of Photoshop occurred. Hence, the image of beauty that was promoted became more unrealistic and, therefore, unachievable because the images being represented were increasingly altered using software (Wissinger, 2015).

Furthermore, due to the surge in models being photographed in everyday settings, with the increase of paparazzi, they now also had to look camera ready in their everyday life settings. Thus, promoting the idea of 'the blink', that women should always look 'model' ready in their everyday life to be prepared to be photographed (Wissinger, 2015). This, Wissinger (2015) refers to as 'glamour labour', which entails working on both the body and one's image. According to Elias, Gill and Scharff (2017) glamour labour can be viewed as 'a development from notions of aesthetic labour, which encompasses the multiple labours required to 'look good', because it 'fuses' different aspects of bodywork,' (p.37). More importantly, they argue that because there is 'no outside of (beauty) work', that it 'is never done', therefore, women in postfeminist contexts are 'always unfinished and in a state of becoming' (ibid, p.38). Hence, for Elias, Gill and Scharff (2017) 'the link between femininity, self-transformation and the body is key to understanding the interplay between gender and subjectivity in the neoliberal era' (p. 24).

The idea that a woman needs to constantly work on her body is reminiscent of Butler's (2006) theorisation that gender is performative, as both underline the necessity for women to consistently train their bodies to reflect their gender. And even though this arguably proves again how gender is not 'natural', due to these gendered practices it causes women's bodies to learn and internalise 'their place in a system of power and privilege' (Roberts, 2002, p. 325), which causes them to ultimately defend 'the status quo' (ibid). Therefore, it is interesting that in postfeminism the body is often framed as a 'locus of success' (Riley et al., 2017), when feminist scholars like Roberts (2002) argue that it is 'our bodies [that] often betray us.' (p. 325).

In 'the hypervisible landscape of popular culture' the woman's body is 'her gateway to freedom and empowerment in a neoliberal market economy' (Winch, 2015, p.21). Therefore, it is not surprising that the 'autonomous postfeminist subject' fits perfectly with the 'psychological subject' that neoliberalism demands (Gill, 2007; Adamson, 2017). Both, at their core, are centred around the idea of 'choice', and that people can improve their lives by making the right choices and by being autonomous, however, leaving out any critique of social structures that might 'constrain' the individual (Gill, 2007; Chen, 2013; Adamson, 2017) and hinder those ambitions. This is because, the notion of 'choice' within a neoliberal context, does not refer to the 'traditional humanist definition of unlimited, universalised and absolute freedom' (Chen, 2013, p. 443), but instead invites women to 'choose maximum material gain and profit in order to construct one's own self' (ibid, p. 443). Furthermore, within this 'neoliberal version of femininity', women's sexual and dating practices are all presented as imperatively 'freely chosen' (Gill, 2007; Adamson, 2017; De Wilde et al., 2020), and these notions of choice are always accompanied by a notion of empowerment. However, while individuals might be presented with an array of choices, these choices are, in virtually all areas

of social activity, governed by decisions not in the control of the individual (Giddens, 1994), and therefore, not truly free. Furthermore, the ‘who’ and ‘how’ of taking those decisions is, by nature, a matter of power and thus outside of the common individual’s control (*ibid*). Thus, this arguably contradicts this notion that choices can empower the individual, because when the decisions were taken (for them) before their own ‘choice-making’ process, the element of power had already taken place, and therefore, cannot lie with the individual.

The makeover paradigm is another core theme of postfeminism, which in the 2000s required ‘people (predominantly women) to believe, first, that they or their life is lacking or flawed in some way; second, that it is amenable to reinvention or transformation’ (Gill, 2007, p. 156). This paradigm is particularly well-witnessed via the medium of reality makeover television shows (Toffoletti, 2014), where ‘experts’ help the individual in the show to transform themselves, with the aim of improving ‘status and life chances through the acquisition of forms of cultural and social capital’ (McRobbie, 2009, p. 128). These kinds of TV-shows were (and still are) not of a ‘gentle-kind’ as they encourage the audience to laugh at the participants and their flaws (Hollows, 2000; McRobbie, 2004; Gill, 2007; Lewis, 2009). This is done to educate the audience on what they should do by showing them what not to do (Lewis, 2009). This is further highlighted through the use of the ‘before and after’ rhetoric within these makeover shows (*ibid*), with the later point mostly displaying the ‘transformational new lifestyle regime’ (Lewis, 2009, p.2) which has been (successfully) implemented by the subject of the makeover show. Thus, presenting the audience with the ‘new self’ in a usually highly emotional moment known as the ‘reveal’, highlighting the improvement (Lewis, 2009).

The issue with these types of shows is that they take a quite ‘instructional and interventionist’ format, which is centred on advising the audience on all aspects of their daily life (Lewis, 2009). These shows, however, are mostly aimed at women (*ibid*), and just like in real-life, women can ‘simply not win’ as it is inevitable that eventually they will fail (Gill, 2007). And while there are some shows that are centred around male participants, they are, according to Gill (2007), marked as ‘less serious’. A contemporary example of this is the makeover show *Queer Eye*, which rather portrays ‘grooming and fashion makeovers’ as a means of expressing self-care (Affuso, 2023). Furthermore, in the end there is a clear narrative that ‘reassures male viewers that such self-transformations are not really necessary: being oneself is all that is required to win the woman’s heart, and ‘authentic masculinity’ wins the day’ (Gill, 2007, p. 158). This last point seems to still be the big difference between the female and male orientated makeover paradigm in postfeminist culture. While men are reassured that they do not need to work on themselves, as long as they maintain a masculine identity, women are, on the other hand, constantly encouraged and reminded that they continuously need to ‘work’ on themselves (Gill, 2007; Toffoletti, 2014; Gill, Elias, & Scharff, 2017).

This aspect of needing to continuously ‘work’ on themselves is clearly still a contemporary point, as this was observed within *Poosh*. Thus, while a masculine identity seems to be characterised by invariance here, continuous change and a quest for self-improvement are, in contrast, inherent parts to a feminine identity, which was certainly the case within the feminine identity *Poosh* constructs, as will be exhibited.

Furthermore, the makeover paradigm, especially when presented in (reality) TV-shows, promotes the neoliberal idea that focusing on the individual and seeking self-improvement are

the solutions to one's dilemmas in contemporary life (Gill, 2007; Lewis, 2009; Toffoletti, 2014).

In particular, to articulate a successful feminine subjectivity requires constant and intensive labour in the form of self-improvement, transformation and maintenance of the body via means of consumerism (Toffoletti, 2014).

However, with the rise of social media, arguably the 'makeover paradigm' is playing out in more wide-reaching and complex ways. Furthermore, while it would not be (completely) postfeminist if the show's scenarios did not contain profound class and gender differences, and racialization too, even though for the latter mainly through exclusion (Gill, 2007); some feminist critique argues that within the context of neoliberalism, this paradigm invokes expectations for successful femininities to transcend the obstacles imposed by class, race and gender (Toffoletti, 2014). Nevertheless, it is too simplistic to assume or argue that women of colour are completely excluded from postfeminism (Butler, 2013; Gill, 2017). While they might be excluded from the discussion, especially when it comes to 'postfeminist sexuality' (Butler 2013; Gill, 2017), it, however, does not mean that they are not affected by postfeminism. For example, celebrities such as Beyoncé, Rihanna, Nicky Minaj, and Jennifer Lopez might be 'non-white' but are clearly postfeminist figures (Gill, 2017; Keller & Ryan, 2018).

Dosekun's (2015) research, for example, reflects this as it finds that postfeminism can and should be understood as a 'transnational culture' instead of cultural globalization, which circulates through 'mediated circuits of consumer culture' (Gill, 2017). Even though countries outside the West may have not gone through the same 'feminist waves' as the West beforehand, a 'powerful postfeminist sensibility' can still be observed circulating there too (Gill, 2017). This is because 'Post-feminism sells transnationally – from "Beyoncé" to "boob

jobs" to "Brazilian waxes," from Shanghai to Mexico City to London to Lagos' (Dosekun, 2015, p. 9).

From the existing literature (including Dosekun's examples above) it seems that in postfeminism the body is the most important site for women to perform, express, and construct their femininity. This intense focus on the body as a site of femininity Gill (2007) argues is linked with the increasing 'sexualization of contemporary culture', which could be observed by the early 21st century (Riley et al., 2017). Sex started to be promoted to women as not only something 'empowering', but also requiring 'fitness and beauty-related bodywork', which entailed the notions of self-monitoring and surveillance (Gill, 2007; De Wilde et al., 2020). For example, the constant need to groom, and perform exercises that helped improve flexibility. Similar discourses surrounding 'sex' can still be observed, at least in the findings of my research, as will be shown in the discussion part of the thesis.

Furthermore, while the sexualisation of women within the media, in particular advertising, has been taking place since the emergence of advertising itself (Gill, 2008); there has been a notable shift at the beginning of the early 21st century. The once passive woman, catering towards the so-called 'male-gaze', had been replaced by an active sexual subject that is forever 'up for it' (Riley et al., 2017). In other words, the representation of women had shifted from 'sexual objectification' to 'sexual subjectification' (De Wilde et al., 2020).

The acts of self-sexualisation and self-objectification which stem from this concept of sexual subjectification have supposedly led women to experience a sense of power (Bue & Harrison, 2019; De Wilde et al., 2020). Even though this idea of liberation through the medium of 'choice' is often present in third-wave feminist discourses, including those relating to the

subject of sexualisation, some feminists cannot help but conclude that while the narrative, in the form of the ‘motivation’, changes, the outcome remains surprisingly similar to the patriarchal structures that feminists have sought to dismantle (Gill, 2007; Snyder-Hall, 2010). Hence, why some scholars argue, that this so-called empowering notion surrounding choice in relation to sexualisation, really is illusory as ‘empowerment is conflated with the idea of choice, and that the choices made may feel like choices to girls but not be choices at all’ (Lamb & Peterson, 2011, p. 704). This particular discourse is not new, however, but rather part of a longer standing conflict within feminism, with on the one side, the imperative of achieving gender equality and, on the other side, a desire for sexual pleasure (Snyder-Hall, 2010).

Thus, while the feminist movement supposedly enabled women to have the same sexual freedom as men, they, however, seem to still be condemned and even ‘slut’ shamed for it if they attempt to exercise that freedom. It has been argued that in contemporary society, women’s ‘sexual freedom’ has not yet been fully incorporated into society (Press, 2011), and that traditional values around ‘sex’ are still very much socially legitimated. However, arguably postfeminism seems to celebrate women’s bodies in relation to sexuality and to promote ‘sexual freedom’, encouraging women to explore their sexuality, even at a much younger age. This, at first, was something I found in my initial exploration of the case study *Poosh*, where some of the ‘sex(ual)’ articles focused also on educational aspects, which arguably can be seen as a positive development. However, despite ‘sex’ being promoted as almost a given, I also found that it still carried some aspects of ‘taboo’ with it. Hence, showing how traditional values seem to still be present, as will be discussed in more detail in chapter six.

The issue with this is that postfeminism promotes a very one-sided heterosexual image, which was also certainly the case I found with *Poosh*. Postfeminism assumes ‘heterosexuality’, and therefore promotes ‘ideals of ‘heterosexy’ beauty and self-presentation’ (Gill, 2017, p. 614). Hence, not only reinforcing heterosexuality’s ‘naturalness’ but also its dominance, as it ignores ‘gender troubling’ groups like, e.g., lesbians or bisexuals (Butler, 2006, Laughey, 2007). And even though there has been a growing visibility concerning lesbians in the mainstream media, it is however ‘organized around [an] intensely policed appearance norm’ (Gill, 2017, p. 614). It takes these ‘troublesome gender identities’ into account (Butler, 2006, Laughey, 2007), only to the point that its potential threat towards the dominant heteropatriarchal order is dismantled (Gill, 2017; Riley et al., 2017). Moreover, it is often done in a fashion to include/incorporate them, and also ‘other’ minorities or subordinate groups, into ‘white society’ (Szeman & O’Brien, 2017). This is mainly done to signal a ‘reassuring message that “they” are just like “us”’ (Szeman & O’Brien, 2017, p. 109).

Nevertheless, ‘other’ non-normative identities were, and still are, often excluded in postfeminism, as only a specific ‘type’ of woman fits this construction of heterosexual female subject that is the ‘new figure’, which is young, slim, flawless and digitally edited (Gill, 2007; Bue & Harrison, 2019). Even though postfeminism in the past was mainly seen in relation to ‘young’ women, it has evolved to include ‘older’ women by ‘highly sexualizing’ the idea of them, which caused the emergence of the concepts of the ‘MILF’ and the ‘cougar’ (Gill, 2017).

The acronym MILF was originally made popular specifically by the character of Stifler’s mum (portrayed by Jennifer Coolidge) in the 1999 film *American Pie*, and further feeds into this tension surrounding sexuality as ‘empowering’, due to the term being perceived

simultaneously as porn genre and source of empowerment (Friedman, 2014). Nevertheless, while women's actual age might not exclude women anymore from being 'sexually desirable', they, however, still need to conform with the 'youthful' standard described above to be considered attractive (Gill, 2007). Hence, this reconfirms that appearance is central to women building their femininity at various stages of their life. This was again reinforced through popular cultural mediums already in the later 2000s, who not just ridiculed, but vilified unattractive women who desire a sexual partner (Gill, 2007); as it showed exactly what should not be done, it 'turned-off' the audience, and encouraged the audience at the same time to discipline themselves to do, desire and want the opposite.

However, it seems that, while Gill's (2007) point (that the intense focus on the body as site of femininity is linked with the increasing 'sexualization of contemporary culture') remains valid, it now goes much further, as Gill (2017) herself found, the 'exterior' is no more the only thing that postfeminism encourages women to constantly work on and improve, with the 'psychological' becoming more and more integral within postfeminism. Women now also need to work on their personality and attitude, i.e. on the 'inside', which enables them to not only express, but also to fully incorporate postfeminist discourses and values. Including the values of neoliberal femininity, as mentioned earlier. Hence, as postfeminism evolved, it seems to promote more than just a way of 'looking', but a 'way of living'. Which the 'focus on the psychological' postfeminist sensibility seemed to become increasingly central to (Gill, 2017). This expected increase in centrality can be confirmed from my findings, as the 'psychological' plays a principal role within the postfeminist lifestyle *Poosh* is promoting. However, it has not overtaken the 'focus on the body' sensibility which could have been expected from Gill's (2017) work, as will be discussed.

Internalising postfeminism: The psychological, neoliberal elements, and the happiness industry

On top of postfeminism promoting a very one-sided heterosexual image, another point is that it caused the resurgence of the concept of natural sexual differences between women and men (Gill, 2007). With postfeminism creating a focus on needing to 'self-improve', a 'notion of sexual differences' re-emerged, especially due to the 'explosion of self-help literature' (Gill, 2007). Many of these self-help books are centred around the question why, despite feminism, there still exists the 'battle of the sexes' (Gill, 2007), to which the answer is always 'because men and women are fundamentally different' (Gill, 2007, p. 158). Furthermore, this type of self-help book focuses the blame for relationship difficulties on the women, while consequently endorsing 'traditional gender roles' (Crawford, 2004). The central idea of these texts often is that women and men fail to comprehend one another (Wood, 2002; Gill, 2007;) because of psychological differences causing fundamentally different needs within the relationship for men and women (Crawford, 2004). Often, these texts end up shifting the responsibility on the women to maintain the harmony in the relationship (*ibid*).

One of the most prominent examples is John Gray's 1992 book *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus*. Instead of focusing on sexual differences as a biological matter, his supposed genius was that he located it 'as a psychological' matter (Wood, 2002; Gill, 2007). However, his portrayal of women and men, and his key claims regarding their communication, have been since (heavily) scrutinised as they do not correlate to the results of credible, data-based research (Wood, 2009; Ahmad & Rethinam, 2010). This sentiment is contrary to the 1970s and 80s popular cultural context where for a short while, the basic similarities between the genders took hold, before reverting back to suggesting 'natural sexual differences' in the

1990s (Gill, 2007). Moreover, research like Zell et al. (2016) recommended targeting exaggerated gender beliefs as they found a positive correlation between sexism and the tendency to inflate supposed psychological differences between the genders. Interesting was that within *Poosh*, as will be explored further in chapter six, this psychological difference between the genders directly was not pushed, but rather an increase of biological differences was being pushed by promoting exercise and diet routines that intensify the appearance of gender differences.

Some workplaces introduced gender neutral language to create a more equal working environment (Smithson & Stokeo, 2005). However, the problem with this is that it does not 'get to the root' of the actual gender inequality (Smithson & Stokeo, 2005), because it does not change the current gendered nature of the organisational practices (Liff & Cameron, 1997). Moreover, because many women have anxieties about being regarded as in need of special treatment in the workplace it can then cause silencing of women as they do not share their issues, due to not wanting to seem weak or wanting to highlight their differences or lack of suitability for the work (Liff & Ward, 2001). Therefore, it just forces women to 'mould themselves into male working-patterns' (Liff & Cameron, 1997). In other words, they become 'surrogate men', which they arguably need to do to be able to succeed in a world built by and for men (Maier, 2000). Therefore, this shows how 'gender-neutral assumptions about workers have damaging effects on women' (Saul, 2003, p. 7). This is arguably since, just as Gray (1992) fails to address in his book, they did not consider 'the socially constructed nature of differences between women and men and the consequential, material implications that result in inequitable opportunities and circumstances for the sexes' (Wood, 2009, p. 201).

Therefore, while one could at first see it as a positive that postfeminism is (re)focusing on 'differences' rather than denying them, by focussing on 'psychological differences', however, it contributes towards re-establishing not only differences between the genders, but also 'power-relations' between them and to even construct these as 'sexy' or pleasurable, if read correctly (Gill, 2007). This is problematic as what is seemingly needed is an acknowledgment of 'natural reproductive differences', and not a (made up) difference between two gender groups on a 'psychological' level determined by the sex they have had assigned.

Furthermore, the notion of 'choice', combined with 'a grammar of individualism,' has become central to being a postfeminist subject (Gill, 2007; Lewis, Benschop & Simpson, 2017; Riley et al., 2017). These neoliberal elements seem to really become increasingly central within postfeminism. They certainly played a principal role within the findings of my research. This sensibility has changed the narrative in media culture away from notions of politics or cultural influences in women's life, and instead posits that self-determination and individual choices are the solution to women's problems in contemporary society (Gill, 2007; Lewis, Benschop & Simpson, 2017; Riley et al., 2017). In particular, the emphasis on 'individual choice', presents women as in charge of their own fate, unhindered by external inequalities or imbalances (Gill, 2017; Lewis, Benschop & Simpson, 2017; Riley et al., 2017).

These sensibilities of choice and empowerment that seem to be specifically linked with and/or influenced by neoliberalism can be found particularly in self-help books aimed at women. Popular examples include: Annie-Marie Slaughter's *Why Women Still Can't Have It All*, which appeared in 2012; Sheryl Sandberg's *Lean In*, which appeared in 2013; and Ivanka

Trump's *Women Who Work*, which was released in 2017. These texts contributed to the trend that arose in the mid-2010s where more 'high-profile' or 'high-powered' women adopted a particular form of 'popular' and mainstream feminism. Furthermore, these books are promoted as 'feminist manifestos', which have gained media attention due to the large quantities that they have managed to sell (Rottenberg, 2014). However, even though it might seem like feminism is being revived, when analysing these so called 'feminist manifestos', it is clear that they are filled with postfeminist notions and aspects or as Gill would refer to it: postfeminist sensibilities. One could see Sandberg's *Lean In* as a reaction to Anne-Marie Slaughter's *Why Women Still Can't Have It All*, as the latter argues that women should 'reaffirm their commitment to family', and the former tries to push women to 'reaffirm their commitment to work' by stating that women can 'have it all' if they work hard enough (and make the right choices). However, both books are similar in that they use liberal language of equality, and emphasise individuality (Rottenberg, 2014). This clearly situates their texts in a neoliberal context.

Also, in Ivanka Trump's book, *Women Who Work*, there are elements of neoliberal feminism and postfeminist sensibilities. Ivanka Trump's book contains notions of female empowerment, even though these notions are 'not very feminist at all' (Rottenberg, 2019, p. 1074). The main message the book conveys is that women need to work on every aspect of their lives, which Rottenberg (2019) sees as an encouragement for women to see themselves as 'a form of stock', whose value can be increased by working on every aspect of themselves. Therefore, Ivanka Trump's 'feminist manifesto' further erodes the divide between private and public, by turning 'women' into an enterprise themselves. This attitude and tendency could also be recognised when analysing *Poosh*'s articles, as will be discussed more thoroughly,

where women are encouraged to continuously increase their value, and where this erosion between the private and public could be observed in the context of social media personalities.

The erosion between the private and public space, especially in relation to women's access and place within these spaces, is an interesting development. According to Jürgen Habermas the 'public sphere', i.e. *Öffentlichkeit*, which is based on the concept of 'public people coming together as a public,' became more and more dissociated from the private family relations or 'intimate sphere', i.e. the 'private sphere', from the eighteenth century onwards (McCulloch, 2004). While 'the world of work and organisation became ever more 'public', 'family became increasingly 'private'' (McCulloch, 2004, p. 8). Hence, due to the family becoming ever more private, and women's roles shifting increasingly towards maintaining the household and childrearing as mentioned earlier; women became confined to the domestic sphere, i.e. 'private sphere', of the family in the nineteenth century compared to the men who 'directed themselves towards the public realm' (McCulloch, 2004, p. 8). The 'dimension of gender relations' involved in this public/private divide is an important point that Habermas's work failed to address but certainly should be considered (McCulloch, 2004). Especially, as tying women to the private sphere, i.e. the domestic space, via housework can still be observed in contemporary society (Natalier, 2003), as previously discussed.

Women's access to the public space has been slowly increasing since Victorian times, starting with women gaining access to public spaces (without male companions) through 'shopping'. During the Victorian era a lot of change happened regarding access to public space, which was ultimately thanks to 'consumerism'. While in Victorian Britain not everyone was an equal citizen and, therefore, not everyone had the same 'right' to public spaces, this started

to change in late Victorian London (Walkowitz, 1998). The West End became known as a 'pleasure capital' and second business district used by men and women of different classes. This enabled women to experience a new freedom within the city by entering palaces of consumption that were designed for them, and at the end of the Victorian era, one can observe the emergence of the independent, 'advanced' woman which constituted a small percentage of the female population in London at the time (Walkowitz, 1998).

However, from the 1960s women started to emerge increasingly into the public sphere in ways that were not just 'consumerist'. Once women entered the workforce in big numbers it seemingly eroded the public and private divide. However, the divide merely became permeable (Bacik & Drew, 2006). Habermas himself had already pointed out that 'the private and the public have often engaged in 'mutual infiltration' and 'reciprocal permeation' (Habermas 1992, pp. 145, 151)' (quotes in McCulloch, 2004, pp. 7-8). Thus, while the boundaries had become more blurred, the divide between 'public' and 'private' seemed to persist. However, within neoliberalism, as mentioned, this divide seems to become increasingly permeable. The rise of digital media had a particular role to play as it allowed this divide to become even more blurred, due to facilitating women to promote themselves as an 'enterprise' and increasing their access to information on how to improve themselves as 'a form of stock'. Which is why scholars like Ford (2011) argue that using a dichotomous approach has, therefore, become outdated, and that the public/private distinction should instead be theorised as a continuum. *Poosh*, seemed to not only provide the access to this kind of information and/or encourage women indirectly to see and treat themselves as a form of stock, but the increasing blurring between the public and private sphere could also be observed in relation to Kourtney Kardashian and her *Poosh* team. For social media

personalities like influencers, their home and family-life is often part, if not centre, of their public account, which seems to merge the private and public spheres for women (at least those who are social media influencers), arguably more than ever before. This will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Moreover, it is exactly because of this focus on individualism, and ‘internalizing the revolution’ (that the patriarchy has been ‘defeated’ and, therefore, feminism has been ‘completed’), that products such as Ivanka Trump’s, Slaughter’s, and Sandberg’s ‘feminist manifestos’, which contain neoliberal notions and postfeminist sensibilities, can be so easily popularised, and therefore sold in the marketplace (Rottenberg, 2019). However, for Rottenberg (2019) this ‘popularization’ could be a ‘silver lining’ as feminist movements, like #MeToo, are able to gain much more attraction than ever before.

It needs to be noted though that the issue with referring to the above mentioned works as feminist manifestos, is the feminism component. Otherwise, as manifestos are ‘signals of a time, a place and an attitude’ (Colman, 2010, p. 375), their popularity arguably justifies referring to these works as manifestos, as they do reflect the particular ‘Zeitgeist’ that women are experiencing in a neoliberal society. However, the (real) problem with these ‘feminist manifestos’, according to Rottenberg (2014), is that not only are they solely relevant and addressed at women in similar situations to the author’s, less than 0.1% of the general population, but by only focusing on the well-being of this type of women, it is ‘increasingly coming at the expense of the 99.9%, namely, the overwhelming majority of poor, working class, and middle-class women in the USA’ (Rottenberg, 2014, p. 343), and, no doubt, beyond. While this was mostly also the case within the lifestyle site *Poosh*, as will be discussed in later

chapters, the one significant difference is that *Poosh* and Kourtney Kardashian have never positioned themselves as feminist or their work as feminist manifestos. Hence, they never claimed to 'solve' gender inequality or to 'liberate' women. Therefore, the focus of *Poosh* and other lifestyle sites like it is simply on 'helping' one cope with 'modern' life. In other words, as will be discussed more thoroughly in the discussion chapters, how to cope with the demands of and excel within a postfeminist culture and neoliberal society.

In a postfeminist context because ongoing vigilance and self-scrutiny is required of women, and confidence in contemporary postfeminist culture has become imperative, it is 'hailed as an answer to what is formulated as girls' low self-esteem...it will help them 'lean in' and feel powerful; ...it is claimed as 'the new sexy'" (Gill, 2017, p. 618). In other words, the fault lies (again) with the individual if they do not succeed or feel unhappy; as women are called on to recognize that it is not a patriarchal capitalist system or institutionalised sexism that is holding them back, but just a lack of confidence (Favaro, 2017). Thus, the critical gaze is turned away 'from socio-political and economic structures' (Favaro, 2017, p. 285). Postfeminism presents self-doubt and neediness as a 'toxic state', and insecurities as the new ugly (Gill, 2017; Favaro, 2017). Hence, self-confidence has emerged as the locus for more elaborate, intricate and insidious modes of regulation, whose most prominent perpetrators are often the very same institutions that have a vested interest in maintaining women's insecurities (Favaro, 2017). However, this holds only in relation to women, male vulnerability is not presented or treated the same way (Gill & Orgad, 2015; Gill, 2017).

Female celebrities in particular are constantly required to 'perform a particular kind of upbeat and resilient selfhood' (Gill, 2017, p. 618), as the examples of Nicole Kidman and

Jennifer Anniston show. Nicole Kidman and Jennifer Aniston were praised in the media for how put together they looked during their respective divorces (Gill, 2007). This encourages the idea that no matter how hurt or vulnerable one may feel, one still needs to perform 'gleaming, commodified beauty and dazzling self-confidence' (Gill, 2007, p. 150). Thus, reflecting the neoliberal spirit which demands of women to be self-regulating and self-reliant agents, who are entirely accountable and furthermore responsible for their own fate, and whose intrinsic value is measurable by their capability of self-care and self-improvement (Favarro, 2017).

Furthermore, 'uplifting' media messages, exclusively aimed at women, focus on them living 'their best lives right now'. I found this to be the driving factor of *Poosh*, as 'living one's best life' is the motto throughout the lifestyle site, with Kourtney Kardashian (the founder of the site) repeatedly stating in the media that she just wants to 'live her best life'. This, as I will show in more depth in chapter six, arguably plays into the argument that postfeminism causes a woman to be responsible for the creation of her own happiness (Gill, 2017), through employing 'micro-techniques for the cultivation, enhancement and maintenance of positive outlooks and self-regard' (Favarro, 2017, p. 286).

Thus, accompanying this 'personal choice' sensibility in a postfeminist culture, is also an emphasis on self-government, which includes the micro-practices of self-surveillance, self-monitoring, self-discipline, and self-scrutiny (Gill, 2007; Favarro, 2017), which are arguably crucial to being a postfeminist subject, as it not only helps women achieve or maintain their 'exterior', but also to 'internally' compose themselves in the right fashion. Such micro-practices are also interconnected with the biopolitical management of women, through

'apparatuses of power/knowledge increasingly centred on inserting positive affect within infrastructures of measurement, discipline and exploitation' (Favarro, 2017, p. 299).

Foucault's work has provided a good basis for feminists to understand and argue how biopolitical structures (can) contribute towards (in)equality, which will be expanded on in chapter 7. The Foucauldian discussion on the concepts of biopower and disciplinary power, despite a lack of consideration for the difference between female and male bodies, has been useful within feminist theories to build appropriate frameworks for especially the examination of the mechanisms employed to exercise control over reproduction (Boyle, 1997). The noted difference between the bodies has been reflected upon by feminists, however, as power, both in its material and discursive forms, is predominantly exercised by men (*ibid*). Related to the concept of biopower, and inseparable to it, is the notion of biopolitics, which primarily involves the use of knowledge and technology, whereas biopower concerns itself with the direct intervention on the body as a biological entity (Fotopoulou, 2016). The term 'biopolitics', developed and understood by Foucault (1979), designates what 'brought life and its mechanism into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge-power an agent of transformation of human life' (Foucault, 1979, p.143). In this way, biopolitics can be regarded as the process by which life is turned into an object of political strategies and discussion, affording it a central role of political order (Lemke, 2005). For a more in-depth discussion of biopolitics in relation to feminism, especially concerning (human) reproduction, see Deutscher, 2010; Whittaker, 2015, and/or Mills, 2017.

Thus, by means of the micro-practices of self-government mentioned above, women are required to also transform and remodel their 'interior life' and not just the 'exterior' (Gill,

2007; Favaro, 2017). This seems to be underlined by notions from the happiness industry, where happiness is depicted as a ‘scientific, measurable state’, and ‘a self-centred, self-dependent and individualistic endeavour, as an ongoing, never-ending project’ (Cabanas & Illouz, 2019, p. 113). Moreover, within this industry, happiness is associated with goodness, while unhappiness has become viewed as indicating ‘malfunctioning’. In other words, being happy is ‘the new normal’ (Cabanas & Illouz, 2019). Moreover, it encourages people to strive for more, instead of simply being content, and to value positive thought and emotions over negative ones (*ibid*). However, Cabanas and Illouz (2019) argue that this point of view neglects to acknowledge that positive and negative emotions ‘cannot be separated if we are to make good sense,’ (p.119), as life is far too complex to allow for a dichotomy between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ emotions. Cabanas and Illouz (2019) give as example, to demonstrate this complexity, when a relative dies of a long-term illness, one might feel relief that they are not suffering anymore, but at the same time sad for one’s loss. Furthermore, they state that to assume positive emotions always leading to positive outcomes and similarly for negative emotions is ‘over-simplistic’.

However, as Davies (2015) finds, this over-simplification benefits the governments and corporations, who he argues do not care about improving our ‘wellbeing’, but aim to capitalise on people’s emotions through placing ‘them under continuous surveillance’. Furthermore, he discusses how the advertising industry has made use of psychology to create a ‘space in which desires can be pursued but never fully satisfied, or else the hunger for consumption would dwindle’ (Davies, 2015, p. 103). This supports Cabanas and Illouz’s (2019) point: that the happiness project can be viewed as a never ending one, which ultimately seems to support consumerism as people are often called upon to consume more and more to achieve

'happiness'. Thus, this upbeat, positive resilience within postfeminism can also be viewed as another aspect which further enables consumerism, which was also the case, as I found, within *Poosh*.

Furthermore, women also experience 'horizontal surveillance', or i.e. 'peer surveillance', which Winch (2013) calls the 'girlfriend gaze', where 'women are regulating each other's bodies through affective networks of control which constitute a gynaeopticon where the many girlfriends survey the many girlfriends.' (p.10). This 'girlfriend gaze', Winch (2013) argues, encourages, entices and coerces women 'into experimenting with the pleasures of converting their bodies into more appropriate and visible commodities or feminine brands.' (p. 22). This can be seen as a 'specifically postfeminist gaze' (Elias, Gill, & Scharff, 2017; Gill, 2017), as 'girls and women police each other's appearance and behaviour through a homosocial gaze characterized simultaneously by affection and 'normative cruelties' (Gill, 2017, p. 617). Moreover, again this requirement of working and transforming the self is mainly aimed at women, instead of at men. This self-surveillance and peer-surveillance is particularly pertinent on social media platforms, which is an interesting point as it arguably challenges the concept of the 'male gaze'.

'Irony and Knowingness' is presented as possibly the most 'dangerous' sensibility of postfeminism, as it enables contemporary media culture to 'have it both ways' (Gill, 2007); have its cake and eat it. For example, through using irony (and knowingness) in advertising it creates what Goldman (1992) coined 'sign fatigue', as it hails its 'audiences as knowing and sophisticated consumers, flattering them with their awareness of intertextual references and the notion that they can 'see through' attempts to manipulate them' (in Gill 2007, p. 159). It

enables the 'audience' to establish a safe distance between themselves and certain sentiments or beliefs that they think they should not feel or yearn for, as it might be interpreted as 'uncool' (Gill, 2007). For example, for women to still dream of a big white wedding. This is reflected in the movie *Bridget Jones Diary*, where the main character Bridget 'imagines herself in a white wedding dress surrounded by bridesmaids, and the audience laughs loudly because they, like Bridget, know that this is not how young women these days are meant to think' (McRobbie, 2004, p.262). However, through irony one can imagine or stage certain scenarios, without it being taken too seriously, even though at the core there is a 'grain' of seriousness.

This is potentially concerning as it allows postfeminist media culture to still express sexist, homophobic or otherwise unpleasant/tasteless sentiments by framing it in an 'ironized form' as they can then 'claim' that it was not 'actually' meant seriously (Gill, 2007). By framing these sentiments as 'harmless fun', thus 'foreclosing, through the irony, any opposition and critique' (Lewis, Benschop & Simpson, 2017, p. 9), irony wields the potential power of 'silencing', which according to Gill (2007) is exactly its intended use. This proposition seems potentially too simplistic an idea, however, when positioning these arguments within the context of satire.

Satire, even if embedded in popular culture, aims to highlight certain issues through depicting 'humorous' e.g. moderate to highly exaggerated 'constructions of stereotypes' (Szeman & O'Brien, 2017), and thereby confronting and addressing these issues. To achieve this, satire often uses sarcasm and/or irony. Hence, within this context the use of irony is to raise awareness of existing issues. This then, however, seems to conflict with Gill's (2007) point on irony. Nevertheless, it needs to be addressed that it might be too simplistic to simply

assume the effects on the audience and its reaction towards the ironic content. Even when irony and knowingness is used, and the audience does see it as just a joke within this particular context, it does not exclude that simultaneously the audience might acknowledge that these are persistent issues within society. Moreover, simply because people, or in this case women, do not show active opposition does not mean that they agree or do not acknowledge the misogyny that is shown (Livingstone & Das, 2013). Hence, Irony might not cause 'silencing' to the extent Gill (2007) believes and presents within her work. In the same vein, it is arguably important when doing research, like mine, on portrayals and their possible repercussions to not simply assume for the audience how they perceive and internalise this content.

[**Consuming feminism: Commodifying the postfeminist subject?**](#)

Feminism had initially become represented as 'obsolete' within the emerging postfeminist culture as it was only acknowledged after being established as something 'no longer with us' (Scharff, 2012). However, over time, feminism has increasingly regained in popularity (Gill, 2007, 2017; Lewis, Benschop & Simpson, 2017; Banet-Weisser, 2018). Nevertheless, it seemed to be a very 'consumerist-feminism' as it did not have much to do with political action but rather with consumption (Gill, 2007, 2017; Banet-Weisser, 2018). This brings us to the postfeminist sensibility that is the constant contradiction between feminism and the anti-feminist notions postfeminism incorporates, coined by McRobbie (2004) as 'double entanglement'. McRobbie (2009) finds that the incorporation of feminist principles is often accompanied by a simultaneous repudiation of feminist action. This repudiation occurs alongside a process of 'retraditionalisation' (Lewis, Benschop & Simpson, 2017), and is marked by a 'selective take-up of feminist principles such as choice, empowerment and agency referred to as a domestication of feminism' (*ibid*, p. 3).

Therefore, this notion of ‘choice’ (and its conflation as empowering) can be considered a site where this ‘double entanglement’ takes place; blurring gender and class hierarchies before the contextual backdrop of neoliberalism and postfeminism (Sørensen, 2017; Lewis, Benschop & Simpson, 2017). As according to Sørensen (2017), it is precisely this vocabulary of choice which enables and upholds a specific reality and subject position, which much like gender in Butler’s (2006) framework is performative in nature, leading to the ‘saturation’, within both bodies and minds, of neoliberal and postfeminist ideas.

When the ‘women’s liberation movement’, which the mainstream media had rechristened as ‘feminism’, reached its peak, the meaning of the cause had slowly begun to be reshaped (Eisenstein, 2017). Liberal feminism (which was focused around women gaining equal access at ‘all levels of society’), Marxist feminism, and especially radical feminism had come to be at least silenced if not ‘brutally crushed’ (Eisenstein, 2017). This made space for the emergence of the rhetoric of ‘girl power’ within popular culture, neoliberalism, and postfeminism. The emergence of postfeminism in the 1990s, as work like Gill’s and McRobbie’s (and this thesis) focuses on, according to Eisenstein (2017) was mainly a reaction to liberal feminism and built on popular feminism. Thus, as postfeminism can then be seen as a reaction towards mainly liberal feminism, and a continuation of popular feminism (which was all about ‘girl power’), it might not be surprising, as liberal feminism arguably advocated for women to become ‘surrogate’ men, that postfeminism is trying to emphasise differences between ‘men’ and ‘women’ again. This is done by trying to have women celebrate being ‘women’ and distinguishing them from men through emphasising their ‘femininity’. Thus, it aims to ‘empower’ women through a focus on ‘femininity’.

Hence, it is not that surprising then that (second-wave) feminism is portrayed as a sort of ‘policeman’, that will not allow women ‘the pleasure of traditional femininity’ (Gill, 2007). Meanwhile postfeminism is portrayed as the ‘good guy’ who lets women behave as they want (ibid). However, at the same time the issue is that postfeminism tells them what it is they should want (Gill, 2007). While it is portrayed that women can ‘choose’ traditional values instead of having them pressed onto them, or having them denied (Gill, 2007), the end result is, however, still very similar to what the ‘women’s liberation movement’ tried to ‘free’ women from, and even educate them on. In the early days of second-wave feminism, the late 1960s and early 70s, women would join ‘consciousness-raising groups’ which focused on studying and overcoming the harmful effects of ‘patriarchy’ (Eisenstein, 2017). The aim was to not just examine but also bring to public awareness the elements present in social life that caused oppression (or even exploitation) of women (Eisenstein, 2017).

While, as discussed, postfeminism now ignores the still existing effects of ‘patriarchy’, and instead of focusing on elements present in women’s daily social life that contribute to their oppression in society, it instead focuses on the individual and encourages and promotes the ‘materialism side’ of life (again) by claiming that everything can be achieved or solved through consumerism (Gill, 2007, 2016, 2017; Riley et al., 2017). This is despite (or maybe because) the materialism side of ‘the American way of life’ being questioned as a whole during the second-wave in the 1970s (Eisenstein, 2017). As postfeminism is focused on the body as the site of where ‘femininity’ is constructed and expressed, it raises the question of whether within postfeminism one can see the female body as a ‘commodity’ instead of ‘her gateway to freedom and empowerment in a neoliberal market economy’ (Winch, 2015, p.21).

Moreover, advertisements are filled with postfeminist discourses which use ‘feminist’ rhetoric, depoliticizing it at the same time, to sell and encourage women to consume. Even so-called femvertisements, which are ‘advertisements aimed at empowering women through pro-female messages, and which are celebrated by the industry’ (Windels et al., 2020, p. 18), in most cases include postfeminist discourses that in the end repudiate feminist ideals (Windels et al., 2020). Just as other advertisements that end up using feminist ideals, only to ‘strip them of their power’ and reduce empowerment to consumption (Windels et al., 2020); even femvertisements that have received awards for empowering women, when analysed by scholars like Windels et al. (2020), eventually undid ‘the progress of feminism’, with consumption being positioned as ‘the way to achieve confidence’. For example, Windels et al. (2020) looked at various campaigns, including *Dove’s* 2004 ‘Real Beauty’ and 2013 ‘Real Beauty Sketches’ campaigns, which led them to claim that the professionals have just realised the profitability of using feminism in their advertisements (Windels et al., 2020), rather than being invested in promoting meaningful feminist politics. Although, femvertisements do contain some positive elements, each of the advertisements Windels et al. (2020) examined, especially the ones designed to ‘empower women,’ contained ‘feminist and anti-feminist themes’. Hence, this neutralised ‘the political force of feminism’ (Windels et al., 2020).

However, magazines, which can be seen as ‘resistant to the challenges of feminism’, were found already in the 1990s to be widely supported by women through consuming them (Budgeon & Currie, 1995). And while postmodern writers argued that feminist readings of these magazines were the problem (and not the magazines themselves), due to anticipating these ‘negative’ readings and constructing ‘oppressive interpretations’; early research like Budgeon and Currie’s (1995) found that the construction of readers as potential consumers,

for multinational fashion and cosmetic industries, still ‘reconstitute[s] women’s subordinations’ (Budgeon & Currie, 1995). Furthermore, this construction of the reader as consumer is critical as magazines depend mainly on the ‘ability to sell “audiences” to advertisers’ (Budgeon & Currie, 1995, p. 174). Even though it could be found that while traditional values were still promoted, both the editorial copies and advertisements incorporated discourses of the women’s movement (Budgeon & Currie, 1995).

However, the ‘commercially produced women’s magazines’ were devoid of any “serious” (or political) feminist content (Budgeon & Currie, 1995). This was the same whether for ‘adult’ or adolescent female geared magazines, where ‘traditional feminine beauty, fashion, and romance’ (Budgeon & Currie, 1995) were primarily conveyed. While there was a clear subtext of feminism present, it was at the same time being transformed (Budgeon & Currie, 1995). For example, while gender inequality was acknowledged, which is a feminist element, at the same time this gender ‘difference’ was being promoted as desirable, and ‘pleasurable solutions’ were proposed (Budgeon & Currie, 1995). This arguably shows postfeminist elements: acknowledging inequality for a split second, and then brushing over it with a ‘fun’ resolution.

Furthermore, women were being directed to individual goals, and empowering qualities were linked to ‘products’ by the magazines of the 90s/2000s (Budgeon & Currie, 1995), and this has become amplified as I will demonstrate through *Poosh*. Apart from the obvious ‘glossy layouts’, that are pleasurable to the eye, Budgeon and Currie (1995) found that magazines were still widely read because what was being promoted is that beauty is a goal that is ‘accessible to all women’ (Budgeon & Currie, 1995). This danger, and allure, of beauty

being accessible to all women, even though magazines might not be as widely read (at least the paper version) as back in the 1990s and 2000s seem to still be persistent, however, as in my research similar notions could be observed in the lifestyle site *Poosh*. However, it would be a mistake and a danger to see 'pleasure' as the same as 'empowering', because this can cause 'romanticizing' of the idea of resistance through 'reading' (Budgeon & Currie, 1995); and this, may 'act to restore the very condition for women's continued subordination' (Budgeon & Currie, 1995, p. 185).

While on the one hand, in a range of films and shows, and not just in romantic comedies or female-centred sitcoms, second-wave feminism aspects are shown, they are at the same time being undone, through articulating 'dissatisfaction with the rhetoric of second-wave feminism' (Tasker & Negra, 2005, p. 108). Thus, arguably entailing the postfeminist notion of 'double entanglement' (Gill, 2007, 2017; McRobbie, 2004). For example, in fiction, that entails postfeminist discourses, the problem of women trying to balance their personal and professional lives is much more likely to play an important role, rather than the still existing 'pay gap' (Tasker & Negra, 2005).

For example, Orgad (2017) compares the main character, Alicia Florrick (portrayed by Julianna Margulies), in the TV-show *The Good Wife* (*TGW*) with the experiences of successful women, through the use of interviews, who left their job and became stay at home mothers (SAHM). Orgad (2017) finds that even though the show's existence is only possible because it is a commentary on the struggle of 'having it all', it simultaneously reinforces the myth of 'having it all', because it represents a fantasy. This cruel fantasy, as Orgad (2017) refers to it, causes women, even though they know it is unrealistic, to still want to pursue it. Thus, causing

them to feel like failures, because once again it is seen as their own fault that they did not manage to have a successful career next to childrearing. This is because *TGW* fails to address, and therefore ignores, societal structure issues and gender inequalities that exist in 'real-life'. Even though the SAHM interviewees in Orgad's (2017) research were aware of their privileged position, which enabled them to stay at home, they still felt guilty and blamed themselves for quitting their jobs, instead of recognising that 'societal structures' had forced them to inevitably quit. This was because the SAHM interviewees argued that if they wanted it badly enough, they would not have quit. Thus, all the women felt like they were not ambitious enough despite the fact that each of them had an exceptional academic and professional career behind them. They thought this, despite the fact that they clearly showed awareness of them being the ones mostly left with the household and childrearing tasks, while their husbands/partners carried on with their life as usual/before the child(ren). Orgad (2017) concludes that '[t]elevision seems both complicit in these structural conditions and capable of helping to transform them' (Orgad, 2017, p. 180). The lifestyle *Poosh* portrays can also be seen as a 'cruel fantasy' due to *Poosh* claiming that its lifestyle is achievable by all, despite it promoting neoliberal elements and aiming for 'perfection', which according to McRobbie (2015) causes a constant state of 'becoming', as will be discussed.

Furthermore, women and men's situations or problems are portrayed and solved differently in film and TV according to their gender. For example, there are two genres of films dealing with the post-2008 financial crises: 'the recessionary chick flick' and 'the corporate melodrama' (Negra & Tasker, 2013). While the former downplays the aftermath of unemployment for the female protagonist, the latter rather melodramatises the consequences of redundancy for the male protagonist, framing it both as 'a tragic scenario and as an

opportunity for personal reinvention' (Negra & Tasker, 2013, p. 359). For the female protagonist it is mostly a love interest that comes along that 'solves' everything, the fact that the woman is in an unemployed situation is not really solved and mostly left in the background as in, e.g., *Bridesmaids*.

Thus, 'economic citizenship is significantly gendered', as the protagonist's work, in the chick flick compared to the 'corporate melodrama', is not valued enough or does not raise enough economic concerns to 'carry real narrative weight' (Negra & Tasker, 2013). Arguably, because women can solve their problems by getting married, while the men still carry the burden of being the main breadwinners. Nevertheless, both 'share a habit of trying out fantasy resolutions to the structuring inequalities of a neoliberal society' (Negra & Tasker, 2013, p. 359). This arguably gives the audience an escape, even though it is neither realistic nor feasible. Moreover, it also shows how postfeminism is constantly adapting and changing according to economic, cultural and/or political change happening to stay relevant and incorporated in women's lives. These tendencies to stay relevant and incorporated within women's lives are, therefore, unsurprisingly present within *Poosh*.

Before being able to move into discussing the details of the research process, which will be laid out in chapter three, the next chapter will shift the focus of the literature review into the areas that intersect with postfeminism relevant to this research. The media culture I have explored so far relates strongly to the areas focused on in the early work of those theorising a postfeminist media context in the 2000s (TV, film, magazines, and advertisements). However, the media landscape has evolved in most recent years to

incorporate a highly influential digital terrain, which will also be addressed and explored in the following chapter.

Chapter Two

Literature Review Part II

Postfeminist celebrity culture and reconceptualising motherhood in the online environment

The previous chapter was mainly focused on exploring the literature concerning postfeminism and its link with neoliberalism, in particular the postfeminist sensibilities conceptualised by Gill (2007, 2017). This chapter will build on the previous one, through narrowing its focus by exploring the other literature relevant to the case study (*Poosh*) and how these intersect with postfeminism. Hence, as the case study is an online celebrity and wellness lifestyle site, and the research was also interested in exploring how motherhood (as well as femininity more broadly) is being portrayed by this lifestyle site, the rest of the literature review will focus on exploring the relevant research in these areas. This chapter is, therefore, concerned with reviewing the literature outlining the emergence of Web 2.0, and how it has changed the environment of consumerism. Furthermore, with the emergence of social media it has become much easier to become famous and to, therefore, gain influence.

Thus, Web 2.0 has changed the celebrity landscape. Celebrities have been argued to have a significant influence in women's lives, and within *Poosh* they seem to not only be an example to live up to but also the person to measure oneself against and that dictates what is possible to achieve. There are an increasing number of prominent figures who seem to have a real influence on people's everyday lives through the content they promote, which often contain postfeminist sensibilities especially on social media platforms like Instagram. This, in relation with the consumerist aspects of social media, is important to look at, because it can

have negative effects on women's life due to the selective sharing that occurs, which often only shows the 'good' sides and/or highly curated content.

Then the emergence of the wellness industry, due to postfeminism and social media platforms, and its role in ultimately promoting neoliberal elements, will be dissected. The next section will outline how concepts like 'having it all' and 'work-life balance' are becoming more nuanced in a postfeminist context due to neoliberalism's influence. The following section will explore how the online representations and portrayals of 'good' mothering are negatively influencing 'real' mothers; while the last section will focus on how 'correct' parenting practices play a vital role within reproducing social systems. In particular, the way that current class and gender structures of our current social system help maintain inequality.

[**Web 2.0: The prosumer within a changing consumer culture**](#)

Livingstone and Das (2013) found that contemporary media audiences have become more versatile than ever before due to 'an explosion of texts and technologies' (p.105), which resulted in a large amount of social life becoming digital and mediated. In particular the emergence of Web 2.0, which 'refers to the second generation of the Web' (Wilson et al., 2011, p. 2), has enabled people to increasingly participate in the wider media culture(s), as Bruns (2007) discusses, allowing them to take an active role in the online sphere. Web 2.0 Bruns (2007) uses the concept of 'produsage' to describe these emerging 'user-led content creation environments'. Moreover, Bruns (2007) argues that this emergence and paradigm shift of 'Web 2.0' has no doubt had a profound impact on social practices and even democratic society itself. Thus, 'Web 2.0', has created a 'new hybrid form of simultaneous production and usage' (Bruns, 2007, p. 99) to occur. Jenkins (2006) 'participatory culture' concept describes a similar process, where through fans interacting '[c]onsumption becomes production; reading becomes writing;

spectator culture becomes participatory culture' (p. 60), which has very likely intensified with the emergence of social media platforms. This 'participatory culture' could also be observed with *Poosh*, where followers would tag the site when using their products and/or showing off the *Poosh* recipe they recreated. Furthermore, with the tools Instagram provides, followers can actively comment on and participate in *Poosh*'s creation of its content, which will be discussed more in chapter six.

While Livingstone and Das (2013) discuss how it used to be assumed that the audience was passive and, therefore, could be exploited for mass consumerism, their research found this to not be the case. Therefore, in the age of 'Web 2.0' and social media, which is not only reconfirming that the audience is far from passive but even lets them actively participate to a level they were never able to before, it is paradoxical that it is this active participation that seems to be contributing towards turning this audience into the 'perfect consumer' (Strinati, 2004; Livingstone & Das, 2013). In an ideal capitalist and neoliberal society 'the mass audience is there to have its emotions and sensibilities manipulated, to have its needs and desires distorted and thwarted, to have its hopes and aspirations exploited for the sake of consumption, by the meretricious sentiments, the surrogate fantasies, the false dreams of mass culture' (Strinati, 2004, p. 12). And while this has been challenged (Strinati, 2004; Livingstone & Das, 2013), it arguably does not mean that neoliberal society is not still trying to transform audiences into 'perfect consumers' in various ways. For example, through the use of the happiness industry, as discussed in the previous chapter.

Jenkins (1992) original work, *Textual Poachers*, and, therefore, his subsequent work on 'participatory culture', was influenced by Fiske (1989), who defined popular culture as

something created by the people, as opposed to the culture industry. Therefore, Fiske (1989) believed that the power lies with the ‘consumer’. Thus, for him popular culture is created by the consumers due to their behaviour ultimately influencing what becomes ‘popular’. Fiske (1989) also argued that people are not passive but rather active and productive consumers which, furthermore, should not be viewed as a homogeneous group. Therefore, even if people might partially be controlled through TV and advertisements, they are not passive but active, by influencing what, ‘in the spiral’, is successful and what is not (Fiske, 1989, Laughey, 2007). This equally seemed to be the case for *Poosh*, where the social media tools were not only used by the followers to participate with the production of *Poosh*’s content as discussed above, but also by *Poosh* to collect data in the form of ‘preferences’ from its audience, as will be discussed in more detail in chapter six.

However, Bourdieu’s (1977) work aimed to demonstrate with his theory of the habitus, that consumer taste is still influenced by one’s social circumstances and not purely by one’s personal choice (in Laughey, 2007). His habitus theory is based on the idea that people’s consumption practices are ultimately also socially structured, even though he agrees that these are diverse and varied, and not homogeneous (MacKay 1997; Laughey, 2007). Therefore, individuals’ habitus causes ‘a stable and group-specific way of seeing or making sense of the social world; in other words, a *distinctive mode of cultural consumption*’ (Lee, 1993, p. 34) to not only be produced but also reproduced (Lee, 1993; Laughey, 2007). This is arguably reinforced within *Poosh* too, as even though, the followers participate actively with the content, in the end it is still *Poosh* who determines which content the followers engage with. Therefore, as will be explored in the discussion chapters, *Poosh*’s followers are ultimately

reproducing the postfeminist sensibilities that are embedded within the lifestyle promoted by *Poosh*.

While social media platforms have on the one hand allowed for the audience to become more heard and have enabled them to participate more actively within the production of the content, it has also allowed for this active audience to be exploited by brands and companies through collecting freely provided ‘marketing’ information. Hence, causing this online active audience to perform free labour, which is utilised to sell them more targeted products. This free labour, Nouri (2018) argues, is saving brands and entrepreneurs a large amount in marketing costs. Hence, why there exist continuous debates within the literature on whether Web 2.0 empowers digital audiences through enabling more active ‘participation’ or whether it disempowers the audience by exploiting them through this extraction of ‘free labour’ (Vesnić-Alujević & Murru, 2016). These were debates considered and relevant to *Poosh*’s Instagram account and the participation of their followers.

Furthermore, this works in favour of a neoliberal context and society, as before social media it was very difficult to predict how the target audience would react to a product. This unpredictability is why, Laughey (2007) discussed, only a small percentage of films and music actually became hits or sold well. Hence, the industry could ‘only conjure up a ‘fantasy consumer’ model for its own marketing purposes’ (Laughey, 2007, p. 186); while the ‘public verdict’ would in turn allow only for ‘a retrospective authority’ (Laughey, 2007). However, social media platforms have enabled the possibility for faster, if not immediate, ‘public verdict’ before and during the production phase (Laughey, 2007; Nouri, 2018). This, as already

addressed, makes content creation easier for *Poosh*, by being able to directly ask their followers what kind of content they are more interested in.

This makes one wonder if the emergence of Web 2.0 has influenced and/or altered Silverstone's 'consumption cycle'. Silverstone (1994) explored 'how objects not only move in and out of commodification as such but that their status as commodities (and their meaning as a commodity) is constantly in flux' (p. 124), in what he terms the 'consumption cycle'. In other words, 'how everyday consumer practices feedback to producer practices, which are in turn fed back to consumers' (Laughey, 2007, p.179). This is similar to Jenkins's (2006) 'participatory culture' idea and Burns (2007) 'produsage' concept, in which consumers are a part of the production process. Silverstone's (1994) consumption cycle is made up of six moments/phases, 'in which the dependent moments of consumption themselves feed back, especially the last, to influence, and some argue ... define the structure and the patterns of commodification itself' (p. 124). Hence, the first phase being commodification, which is followed by imagination, appropriation, objectification, incorporation and conversion (see Silverstone 1994 and/or Laughey, 2007 for a more detailed description of the cycle). However, in the age of Web 2.0 one could wonder if this 'consumption cycle' is sped up and causes a faster turnover; and/or whether the 'feedback' phase occurs already at an earlier stage of the cycle. This, in relation to *Poosh*, will be further unpacked in chapter six of this thesis.

[**Social media platforms transforming the celebrity cultural landscape**](#)

The emergence of Web 2.0 has not only altered the consumerist processes or the consumer culture, but it has also caused significant change within other cultural processes due to its significant reach and impact. Just as television has allowed for the 'reality-TV' celebrity to emerge, social media platforms have enabled for new forms of celebrities, like the 'influencer'

and ‘microcelebrity’, to appear. While microcelebrities technically existed beforehand, the emergence of social media platforms enabled them to move from the internet’s margins to the mainstream (Senft, 2013). Senft (2013) coined the term ‘Microcelebrity’ in 2001 to describe, at the time, how camgirls¹ used images, videos, and/or blogging to increase their online audiences and construct fan bases through promoting themselves as a ‘brand’. Hence, being a microcelebrity implies that one is famous only in a certain context, but not in general or i.e. on a ‘macro’ scale.

More recent shifts in the terrain of ‘internet celebrity’ has seen the production of an online ‘influencer culture’. Being an Influencer can be defined as ‘a person with a high follower-to following ratio on social media who has made the move from personal to ‘business’ account, making use of advertorials and ‘paid partnerships’ (Leaver, Highfield, & Abidin, 2020, p. 107). Hence, as the name suggests, becoming an influencer means that one has enough followers online to be ‘influential’ socially and culturally. However, microcelebrities who gained their fame through social media platforms are often also (social media) influencers. Microcelebrities can transcend to the ‘macro’ level from the ‘micro’ level through gaining popularity outside their previous limited context (Casey & Littler, 2021), by gaining appearances and fame outside just their social media platform (account), such as the examples of Addison Rae and Emma Chamberlain. The former rose to fame on the social media platform TikTok, and initially gained prominence within this platform for her dance videos, but managed to transcend this platform and has since gained fame outside the limited context of TikTok also starring in Movies (e.g. *He's all that*) since. The latter initially gained fame on YouTube, especially for her fashion

¹ ‘Camgirls’ here is used to describe in general the girls and/or young women who often used cameras to help increase their online presence, and does not exclusively refer to ‘sex workers’ to which this term often nods.

content, which has now transcended to a macro level with Chamberlain being invited to Fashion weeks and collaborating with Vogue.

Furthermore, while (traditional) celebrities have always had an influence on their fans, it is not the same kind of influence this new category of 'Influencers' seems to have. Firstly, the influence of 'traditional' celebrities has always been more from a removed position (Rojek, 2004; Nouri, 2018). Furthermore, being an 'Influencer' seems to entail more of an active rather than a passive element, and, more importantly, there seems to always be a consumerist aspect tied to them (Nouri, 2018; Baker & Rojek, 2020). However, having a consumerist element is not exclusive to the influencer, as consumerist elements seem to have always been part of being a celebrity. Nevertheless, compared to the traditional celebrity who gained their fame through the conventional channels (Rojek, 2004), it seems to be a much more central aspect in the influencer's 'career' (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Nouri, 2018; Młodkowska, 2019). In the end, for traditional celebrities being involved in e.g. advertisements is a side or extra endeavour, while the content Influencers produce mainly revolves around the promotion of products.

Rojek (2004) distinguishes between three celebrity statuses: ascribed, achieved and attributed. While Rojek (2004) originally conceptualised these celebrity statuses in the context of television, before social media platforms became more widely used, his work remains important and relevant in contemporary discussions around fame and the internet. As his work is still referenced and used in contemporary discussions in relation to 'fame' and 'celebrity statuses', also in relation to online (social) media environments (see Stewart and Giles, 2020). The 'ascribed celebrity' status relates to 'lineage', i.e., achieving one's celebrity status is

predetermined by one's blood-line. 'Achieved celebrity' status is achieved through one's 'accomplishments...in open competition' (p.18) and refers to individuals who are recognised in the public to 'possess rare talents or skills' (p.18). Finally, 'attributed celebrity' status, achieves their celebrity status through being perceived 'as noteworthy or exceptional by cultural intermediaries' (Rojek, 2004, p. 18). Compared to the achieved celebrity, the attributed celebrity does not need to possess any talents and/or skills according to Rojek (2004), but instead is 'vaulted into public consciousness as noteworthy figures, primarily at the behest of mass-media executives pursuing circulation or ratings wars' (p.18).

However, if an attributed celebrity status is short-lived, Rojek (2004) describes this sub-group as 'celetoid' who 'command media attention one day, and are forgotten the next' (p.21). For example, lottery winner Bill Morgan, who gained short fame for winning the lottery twice, repeating the feat while reenacting his first win for the 'cameras'; or Paul Crowther, known for being the man who threw a milkshake at politician Nigel Farage. Nevertheless, Rojek (2004) does argue that there are 'exceptional cases a celetoid may acquire a degree of longevity' (p.22). The Kardashians, including Kourtney Kardashian (the creator and owner of the lifestyle site *Poosh* used as the case-study for the research), are probably the most noteworthy example, considering that Kim Kardashian's sex-tape led to her and her family becoming reality-TV stars, and, through the rise of their social-media use, achieved proper 'stardom'.

The Kardashians are often referred to as 'being famous for being famous' (Rojek, 2004; Harris, 2016, Rogan, 2023), i.e. 'famous for doing nothing' (McDonnell, 2016). However, it is exactly this 'type of fame', Rogan (2023) points out, which makes 'celebrities' like the Kardashians seem more 'ordinary' and 'accessible'. This causes their 'lifestyle' to be potentially

perceived as achievable, by everyone ‘who knows how to get it’ (Rogan, 2023, p. 132), which *Poosh* is claiming to provide the means to. Hence, the Kardashians/Jenners cleverly capitalised ‘on the changing nature of celebrity’ (Rogan, 2023, p. 132). They expanded their fame beyond their show, using the emerging social media platform networks, by promoting both their ‘individual and collective’ entrepreneurial endeavours (e.g. SKIMS, KKW Beauty, Kylie Cosmetics, Good American, 818 Tequila, and *Poosh*), which eventually led to their current celebrity status (Rogan, 2023).

While social media platforms also allow for already famous celebrities to develop their fame or build a ‘better’ relationship with their fans, it has also enabled more opportunity for ‘ordinary’ people to become famous (Senft, 2013; Abidin, 2017), without going through the conventional channels of being talented in certain aspects (actress, singer or athlete) (Rojek, 2004). Even though this is not new, as reality-TV had already enabled this since the later 1990s and early 2000s, it still differs from the reality-TV star. Despite both involving ‘ordinary’ people to begin with, that then become famous, reality-TV stars have less control. While reality-TV stars are dependent on the TV-program and need to first gain ‘access’ to the show, influencers (and microcelebrities) are supposedly not dependent on anything but their viewers, as all they need is a social media account (and maybe a camera). However, reality-TV stars now also have a social media account to further expand their ‘branding’. Arguably showing how important this concept of ‘promoting’ oneself has become in a neoliberal context for women, as addressed in the previous chapter, especially over social media it seems here.

Thus, social media has enabled ‘ordinary’ people to become famous on a much larger scale, as the platforms are more easily accessible, compared to reality-TV shows or other

pathways to fame. This has also influenced the effect (female) celebrities have on 'ordinary' women's lives, especially in a postfeminist cultural context, due to them being a vital element that helps reinforce certain gender norms and roles (Hallstein, 2011; Gill, 2017). Traditionally this was primarily done through reinforcing certain discourses via media outlets like films, television, magazines, and advertisement, as discussed in the previous chapter. In other words, there was always distance between the (traditional) celebrity and the audience and/or fan (Rojek, 2004), which seems to still be the case (Nouri, 2018). However, with the emergence of the online domain and especially social media platforms, a new way of communicating between celebrities and their fans was made possible (Rojek, 2004; Nouri, 2018; Baker & Rojek, 2020; Casey & Littler, 2021).

Microcelebrities are very successful when it comes to 'selling' products to their audience, because they are seen as more relatable and therefore, trustworthy (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Nouri, 2018). While social media has allowed for more 'ordinary' people to become microcelebrities, it is arguably not the 'micro'-level that causes them to be better at 'selling', but the fact that their audience knows that they came from an 'ordinary' position. In other words, from a commodifying perspective, 'ordinary' people who have gained influence seem to be more successful at building relationships with their followers, and therefore 'selling', due to having a more trustworthy and relatable approach with their audience (Senft, 2013; Abidin, 2017; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Nouri, 2018).

However, there is a danger with Influencers being seen as relatable, due to the nature of the social media platforms they operate on, especially Instagram. Even though according to '[t]he reflection hypothesis [which] argues [that] the media have to reflect social values in

order to attract audiences' (Strinati, 2004, p. 168); it does not mean that it is necessarily a 'true' image. This is especially the case with social media platforms like Instagram, which research like Mayoh (2019) found is a platform notorious for showing almost exclusively the 'good-sides' of life by focusing mainly on 'leisure activities and happy moments'. Furthermore, in combination with the 'idealised' images which shape our 'visual ideas about beauty regarding 'acceptable' bodies' (Mayoh, 2019, p. 205) circulating on Instagram, one can see how the postfeminist sensibilities of focus on the body and the psychological are intrinsic to this platform.

While Abidin's research looked specifically at family influencers, the findings seem to be adaptable to influencers in general. Abidin (2017) discusses how the content of Influencers seems to always be 'staged', rather than 'authentic'. According to their findings, Influencers mainly produce two kinds of content, which is 'anchor' content where they 'demonstrate their creative talents such as producing musical covers or comedy sketches' (Abidin, 2017, p. 1); and 'filler' content where they show their 'everyday routines of domestic life' to convey to their followers that they are 'normal', which Abidin (2017) refers to as 'calibrated amateurism'. Calibrated amateurism can be defined as 'a practice and aesthetic in which actors in an attention economy labor, specifically over crafting contrived authenticity that portrays the raw aesthetic of an amateur' (Abidin, 2017, p. 1). The former one is (normally) the main content/reason for which they become famous, nevertheless, the latter one still plays a very important part. The 'filler' content is done to make the influencer seem more genuine and relatable to their followers.

In other words, it is argued that this content is used to gain more trust and, therefore, more followers. However, the ‘filler’ content, while presented as ‘natural’ and ‘spontaneous’ is often actually highly ‘coordinated’ (Abidin, 2017), arguably even more than the ‘anchor’ content. Considering that the ‘filler’ content is meant to promote an image that others aim to aspire to, a reason why followers ‘follow’ them; it is not surprising that it is only an ‘ideal’ image that is presented and not reality, as is the case with most content posted on social media, particularly Instagram. However, due to the influence and power these microcelebrities/Influencers hold, this can be damaging for ‘ordinary’ people, due to them only showing carefully calibrated content which is presented as ‘real’ and authentic to its audience. Hence, causing people to aspire towards something that is not even ‘real’ and/or ‘achievable’.

Research like Senft’s (2013) finds that there is an increasing demand for more intimate and instant details of ‘online’ celebrities, influencers or news coverage in general, therefore, demanding for these online personas to adapt certain practices to protect themselves (Mäkinen, 2020). Mäkinen (2020) found that what often occurs is a balancing act between the vulnerability and control shown, as while the former one is needed to portray the type of content and ‘honesty’ that the audience wants; the latter is needed for the microcelebrity when reacting or dealing with online bullies. They need to deal with the problem in a calm, collected and professional way, despite the fact that often the bullies attack the ‘vulnerable’ content that they (were forced to) share.

Hence, as achieving attributed celebrity status depends not on the person themselves, but on the viewers (including male and female audiences), it causes an identity crisis (Senft,

2013). According to Senft (2013), this is as the identity no longer belongs to the ‘bearer’, but to the ‘perceiver’ now. Since this ‘perceiver’ can be both male or female, this is an interesting point when considering whether the gaze is always ‘male’ or not. Mulvey (1975) argued that the gaze is always ‘male’. However, Mulvey (1975) did make this claim in the context of the cinema and argued specifically that popular culture movies cater to the ‘male gaze’. Hence, that ‘we the spectators watch cinematic films through the eyes of the dominant male protagonist and are implicitly addressed as though we were men desiring heterosexual pleasures, even if we are – in fact – heterosexual women or homosexuals’ (Laughey, 2007, p.103).

However, as Storey (2015) points out, feminist scholars like Gamman and Marshment, have questioned and challenged ‘whether ‘the gaze is always male’, or whether it is ‘merely’ “dominant”’ (Storey, 2015, p. 142). Therefore, Storey (2015) agrees that ‘it is not enough to dismiss popular culture as merely serving the complementary systems of capitalism and patriarchy, ...It can also be seen as a site where meanings are contested and where dominant ideologies can be distributed’ (Storey, 2015, p. 142). More importantly, Storey (2015) advertises for ‘a cultural politics of intervention’ (p. 142) as ‘we cannot afford to dismiss the popular by always positioning ourselves outside it’ (Gammand and Marshment, 1988, p.2 quoted in Storey, 2015, p.142). Furthermore, Storey (2015) adds, it ‘is from popular culture that most people in our society get their entertainment and their information’ (p. 142). Therefore, Storey (2015) agrees with Gammand and Marshment that it ‘is here that women (and men) are offered the culture’s dominant definitions of themselves...’ (Gammand and Marshment, 1988, p.1 quoted in Storey, 2015, p.142).

These arguments and concepts of popular culture (movies) can arguably also be extended and considered in the context of social media. The notion that the 'gaze' is inherently male is problematic, and theories like Mulvey's can be seen as flawed in general as they do not consider the audience, but instead make assumptions for them. While Gamman and Marshment's (1988) argument that the male gaze may 'merely' be more dominant might still hold true in the context of popular culture movies, this cannot (currently) be argued in the context of social media. Rather, it seems that a female gaze is arguably the more dominant one, at least on social media platforms like Instagram. Especially in the form of the 'girlfriend gaze', i.e. horizontal or peer surveillance, which as mentioned before is where 'girls and women police each other's appearance and behaviour through a homosocial gaze characterized simultaneously by affection and 'normative cruelties' (Gill, 2017, p. 617); which can be seen as a 'specifically postfeminist gaze' (Gill, 2017). This then encourages a self-surveillance 'gaze', as it allows individual women to survey, monitor and therefore control themselves; arguably for the sake of the 'perceiver' (Elias & Gill, 2018). This is a vital point also within this thesis, as will be discussed more thoroughly in the discussion part, since some of the advice provided by *Poosh* entails notions of this 'girlfriend' gaze to help 'motivate' the audience to follow through with the provided advice.

[**The role of the wellness industry as a 'lifestyle' within postfeminism**](#)

The sensibility of self-surveillance and monitoring is, as discussed in the previous chapter, a crucial core-theme within postfeminist culture, and, therefore, can be observed in several aspects throughout postfeminism. Food is another central element which has often been used to assert control and instil self-surveillance notions over women. This tendency was highly

visible within the articles focused on and/or around food in *Poosh*, as will be demonstrated in chapter five.

This is not necessarily new or unique to social media. Hollows (2003), when looking at Nigella Lawson and her 'lifestyle' that was being promoted via her TV-shows and cookbooks in the early 2000s, found that it clearly contained postfeminist elements and aspects. Furthermore, what is interesting about Nigella Lawson and her 'lifestyle' that was being promoted, is that she represented a 'new-middle-class' (Hollows, 2000). This shows how postfeminism constantly 'adapts' while still maintaining neoliberal elements, and its core-features. This 'new-middle-class' did not contain the up-tightness of the 'old-middle-class', but still clearly set itself apart from the undisciplined 'working-class'. The core features of this 'new-middle-class' were that they could strike a (perfect) balance between 'letting go' from time to time, while overall remaining disciplined; which is referred to as 'calculated hedonism' (Hollows, 2000). This is shown in Nigella Lawson's show where the balance between being allowed to eat chocolate fudge cake, while also having just miso soup another time to balance out the cake is demonstrated (Hollows, 2000). This reveals postfeminist elements of self-surveillance, monitoring, and discipline, as women need to constantly monitor and be disciplined about what they are eating to find the right balance between self-indulging and self-control. Thus, they are in constant need of surveying their eating habits. Therefore, it is interesting that, in an interview with *The Guardian*, Nigella Lawson herself said that: "Everybody likes to think cooks are nurturing, but maybe we're just controlling - controlling what people eat." (Freeman, 2020).

Furthermore, Hollows (2003) notes how Nigella Lawson clearly sets herself apart from the 'old-middle-class-housewife', who would need to cook perfectly, and from the male-professional chef. This was also the case in *Poosh*, as will be discussed in chapter five, where the recipe articles are focused on being simple and quick to prepare. Instead, she promotes not only the joy of cooking, which should be used to destress from 'everyday-life' instead of it being the cause of (extra) stress, but also the joy of eating (Hollows, 2000). The joy of eating is promoted through this 'calculated hedonism', because eating healthily is also promoted as something joyful, as it is wrapped in the dialogue of taking care of one's inner 'temple'. The motivation to cook is changed to doing it for 'themselves' instead of cooking for the 'man'.

Here we see again this notion of individualism and the narrative of women 'doing things for themselves' as mentioned in the previous chapter. However, as Hollows (2003) finds, the result remains the same, as the woman is still the one cooking. The situation remains similar 20 years on, as my findings regarding *Poosh* will demonstrate within the discussion, although there is a difference to how the act of cooking itself is framed. Within *Poosh*, cooking is portrayed as something that one should do for oneself and not exclusively for one's family or others, since it has become framed as an individual project that can always be improved, as will be discussed. Nevertheless, it *de facto* remains the women's task to cook. Hollows (2003) argues that when men cook, it still is perceived as a clear exception, and men clearly do not feel the same pressure, because they do not need to be able to do this well. While it seems that for women, not being able to cook can still be seen as a failure on the feminine front. Furthermore, the act of cooking, according to Hollows (2003), is still perceived as 'a means of performing motherhood by both feeding children and socializing them into culinary competence' (p. 186).

With the emergence of Web 2.0, especially on the ‘photo-sharing platform Instagram’, the idea and trend of ‘clean eating’ moved from more privileged remote areas of e.g. ‘sun-soaked California’ to even ‘the concrete enclaves of urban Britain’ (O’Neill, 2020b, p. 628). Through, as O’Neill (2020b) describes it, ‘seeds of this burgeoning movement-market [being] sown on social media’ (p.628-629), which focuses on promoting healthy eating through ‘sharing recipes and dietary advice’. This, due to its success, was quickly capitalised on by the publishing industry, and even the food industry itself adapted to cater towards this new ‘health lifestyle’ demand. This rising intuitive demand for health and well-being, O’Neill (2020b) argues, was an influential part of causing the emergence and rise of the wellness industry, which is in particular linked to food and nutrition practices. Furthermore, Baker and Rojek (2020) argue that this wellness industry can be viewed as prime example of lifestyle advice being commodified. However, it carries certain gender and class aspects with it, especially in the online-domain, as will be discussed shortly. Similar, if not the same, wellness practices and gendered and class aspects were also present within *Poosh*, which is not surprising as Kourtney Kardashian did situate her lifestyle site *Poosh* within the wellness industry.

O’Neill (2020b) describes how in online contexts, wellness entrepreneurs all ‘adhere to a particular profile’: being ‘young, slim, class-privileged, able-bodied, and almost uniformly white’ (p. 629). Furthermore, O’Neill argues that these women perpetuate and reanimate Dyer’s (1997) “glow of white women” as they can be seen ‘as embodiments of idealised femininity’. However, O’Neill (2020b) notes how even though the wellness industry is most prominently occupied and promoted by white and upper-class entrepreneurs, it does not limit its appeal of ‘good health and preternatural vitality’ to them. This, O’Neill (2020b) finds, is not surprising, as ‘the promise of wellness has widespread appeal’ (p.629), especially ‘in an era of

heightened precarity' (p. 628), by promising the tools to 'bolster the self against the strains of contemporary life' (O'Neill, 2020a, p. 15). This promise of helping the reader not only achieve coping but even excelling in modern life was a key point within the wellness lifestyle *Poosh* is promoting, which will be discussed more thorough in chapter six specifically.

In Western neoliberal societies, like the UK, eating healthily as part of wellness work is sold in particular to young women, who grew up in a postfeminist culture, 'as a route to financial as well as physical empowerment' (O'Neill, 2020a, p. 3). Therefore, according to O'Neill (2020a), this also works to reconceptualise health 'as a private good' and turning it into a 'personal responsibility' (p. 4). Moreover, O'Neill (2020a) contributes towards the rising recognition that the surge of these wellness practices, especially in the United Kingdom, seems to go hand in hand with declining welfare practices and budget cuts.

O'Neill's (2020a) research on 'Deliciously Ella' demonstrates this well, as she finds that 'Mills² elevates self-care as a gendered imperative while obfuscating the classed and racialised privileges that attend this' (p. 1). Her story of 'healing' through healthy eating practices, after not finding relief from her symptoms through medication, and therefore stating that she 'could no longer rely on [her] doctors' (O'Neill, 2020a, p. 2), feeds right into this narrative. Arguably this narrative of taking health matters into one's own hands is understandably appealing in a society where budget cuts within the health sector are becoming more frequent. While Mill's at first glance might differ from Lawson's 'calculated hedonism' by disavowing 'notions of dieting and restrictions', both still share the notions of surveillance and monitoring. In Mills' case, instead of encouraging a 'calculated hedonism', she favours 'a more intuitive and

² Ella Mills is a wellness entrepreneur and the founder of the food brand Deliciously Ella, which is a 'multi-platform, multi-product and multi-million pound food brand' (O'Neill, 2020, p. 1).

enjoyable approach to ‘healthy eating’ (O’Neill, 2020a, p. 3), which is largely based on a vegan diet.

Therefore, there is still a constricting and monitoring element to the ‘wellness lifestyle’ Mills promotes, which was also found to be the case in *Poosh*’s lifestyle, as will be discussed in chapter five. In particular, she still feeds into this notion of perceiving, and therefore treating, one’s body as a temple, by promising more than ‘freedom from disease’, but also ‘a kind of preternatural exuberance and luminous vitality’; which seems to have been relabelled as what O’Neill (2020a) refers to as ‘glow’. In other words, ‘glowing from the inside out’ (O’Neill, 2020a), which seems to not be exclusive (at least anymore) to *Deliciously Ella*, as this notion and narrative was also observed within *Poosh*.

This reflects how the neoliberal element of constant (self) improvement, as discussed in the previous chapter, seems to become more vital as postfeminism and neoliberalism become increasingly intertwined, in particular since the idea of “brand me” has exploded (Senft, 2013), which will be further unpacked in the next section.

[Work-life balance vs life-balance and having vs doing it all phenomena](#)
The notion of ‘self-branding’ in a postfeminist culture seems to be particularly influenced and linked with the sensibility of choice and individualism. However, even ‘outside’ of social media one can observe the increase in promoting and working on oneself through self-help books, which, when geared towards women, are particularly focused on how to ‘manage’ their lives. Some recent examples, as already discussed in the previous chapter, include Annie-Marie Slaughter’s *Why Women Still Can’t Have It All*, Sheryl Sandberg’s *Lean In* (Rottenberg, 2014), and Ivanka Trump’s *Women Who Work* (Rottenberg, 2019). To reiterate, Sandberg’s *Lean In* pushes women to ‘reaffirm their commitment to work’ by stating that women can ‘have it all’

if they work hard enough (and make the right choices); Ivanka Trump's book, *Women Who Work*, also includes a happy work-family balance which is not just being (re)presented 'as a normative ideal for women but as a progressive feminist ideal,' (Rottenberg, 2019, p. 1075); and even though Anne-Marie Slaughter's *Why Women Still Can't Have It All* argues that women should 'reaffirm their commitment to family', they all fundamentally retain the same aim (Rottenberg, 2014). This is due to the texts aiming to provide women with the right tools and 'attitudes' to manage 'family balance' (Rottenberg, 2014).

Social media platforms, like Instagram, arguably further play an interesting role in eroding this public-private divide, as it gives women in particular a platform to work on themselves and promote themselves, which contributes to these notions of self-branding, and fits with Ivanka's intentions of turning women into an enterprise themselves (Rottenberg, 2019). After women entered the workplace in large numbers, the question arose as to whether women could 'have it all' (i.e. a family and a career). However, after it was established that women could have a career and children, the phenomenon of 'having it all' became associated with the notion of 'work-life' balance, which focused on balancing work and family (Rottenberg, 2014). Therefore, the focus shifted towards how to balance both home and work 'properly', by being an ideal worker while simultaneously also being a good mother. However, it seems that with this, the public-private divide increasingly eroded, due to women promoting themselves as an enterprise. Especially for social media personalities like influencers, their home and family-life is often part, if not centre, of their public account, which seems to merge the private and public aspects for women, at least social media influencers, arguably more than ever before. Moreover, as it was established that women could have it all, research like Nicolson's (2003) discusses, it raised the question of whether women should 'do it all'.

When it came to the phenomenon of ‘having it all’, the danger in its representation in popular culture, as mentioned in the previous chapter, is how they enforce a certain image that often represents a ‘cruel-fantasy’ (Orgad, 2017). To reiterate, in the case of Orgad’s (2017) research, even though her women participants knew that what was being portrayed in the media (through television shows such as *The Good Wife*) was unrealistic, they still wanted to pursue this ‘cruel fantasy’, which resulted in them feeling like failures. This was because the show TGW, and arguably others too, failed to address, and therefore ignored, societal structures and gender inequalities that exist in ‘real-life’. Hence, this transition into no longer questioning anymore if it is possible for women to ‘have it all’, even though structurally nothing has changed in society (i.e., not acknowledging the ‘stalled revolution’ Hochschild (2012) identified as discussed in the previous chapter), is damaging.

The phenomenon of ‘having it all’, seems to play a crucial role in helping maintain dominant norms and structures, due to reinforcing traditional gender norms and roles. However, it raises concern about the (negative) effects of this sentiment having further evolved from the narrative of ‘work-life balance’ into ‘life-balance’. In other words, apart from it not being a question anymore as to whether women can ‘have it all’, it seems to also not suffice anymore to ‘only’ balance ‘work’ (i.e. being an ideal worker) and ‘home-life’ (i.e. being a good wife and/or mother). This is not surprising in a culture situated in a neoliberal society that tries to strive for improving every aspect in a person’s life (Rottenberg, 2014, 2019). With the assumption and focus having shifted into a narrative that it is ‘simply’ a question of balancing every single aspect of one’s life correctly, by having the right priorities, it seems the responsibility to ‘succeed’ has been completely removed from society and been put solely on the individual (Gill, 2007, 2017).

This especially, seems to affect and target women, as according to Genz (2009), arguing that women can ‘have it all’, actually puts pressure on women that they therefore, should ‘do it all’. However, ‘doing it all’ does not simply entail having children and a career, but it is also accompanied by increasingly demanding motherhood expectations (Miller, 2007). Traditionally, women have been associated, both in the workplace and within their marriage or partnership, with the responsibility for emotional labour, which was linked with the idea of ‘the angel in the house’ (Gatrell, 2005). This idea became the symbol of ‘unselfish femininity’, causing further exploitation of women as the image of the ‘selfless angel’ validated the role of purely pleasing others (Gatrell, 2005). For decades, this caused women to not take their own needs seriously due to the constant feelings of guilt and failure this image induced in them (Gatrell, 2005).

However, the ‘selfless angel’ seems to not have disappeared, but to simply have been ‘rebranded into the ‘domestic goddess’ (Gatrell, 2005). More importantly, these ideals that women, especially mothers, should live up to are not only centred once again around the family, but are also represented in a way that makes it seem like they should be effortless. Thus, leaving no excuse for women to not also look beautiful and elegant while doing it (Gatrell, 2005). In recent years, unrealistic expectations around motherhood have been especially maintained and fuelled through social media representations, where these are seemingly met through false portrayals of mothers ‘doing it all’. This is also the case with Kourtney Kardashian portraying and claiming to be ‘doing it all’ through *Poosh*, which studies have found can have real negative and detrimental effects on especially new mothers (Miller, 2007; Hallstein, 2011; Lee, Vasileiou, & Barnett, 2017).

The representation and re-portrayal of good mothering online

Motherhood is often portrayed and conveyed to (expecting) mothers as coming naturally. Due to the social construction of gender and, in particular femininity, women have traditionally been believed to be more nurturing than men (Blackstone, 2003), which is still the dominant view today (Teodorescu, 2018). While in academia, it has mostly been acknowledged that motherhood is socio-culturally constructed (*ibid*), 'there is also a salient constant in perceptions and representations of motherhood through time, a constant that has shaped, and, ... [works like Teodorescu (2018) show], continues to shape the cultural representations of womanhood in general: motherhood seen as a natural expression of women's dominant features' (p.77). Therefore, women behaving in nurturing ways can be seen as an intrinsic way of conforming to and reinforcing their feminine gender role (Blackstone, 2003). However, motherhood is the outcome of 'specific social processes', and not a 'given' (Smart, 1996). Hence, the expectations that are bound to motherhood are just another aspect of 'unrealistic assumptions' that are 'embedded in gendered discourse that patterns women's lives' (Miller, 2007, p. 337). This causes women to experience motherhood in a very different way than they might expect.

Miller's (2007) research for example focused on exploring how new mothers experienced motherhood and demonstrated how they perceived 'the powerful discourses that surround mothering' in contemporary society. They found that none of the mothers experienced it the way they had expected, and most of the mothers felt as if they themselves had failed somehow. This was due to the birth and motherhood not coming as 'naturally' to them as they had anticipated. Miller (2007) blames the silence on the matter of pain in discourses around reproduction, which can cause women to feel like their bodies let them

down. Therefore, the combination of this ‘silence’ and neoliberal values that promotes the idea that the individual is responsible for succeeding and for them failing, which probably also further reinforces this silence, can potentially be extremely harmful for (new) mothers and help maintain these false gendered discourses around the experience of motherhood.

Furthermore, Saul (2003) already argued that the issue with the ‘naturalness’ often portrayed around motherhood is that women are being pushed into a ‘gender-role’, which scholars like Teodorescu (2018) and Riley, Evans, and Robson (2019) still find to be the case. This is due to assumed biological differences, that women are more nurturing than men, often attributed to their ‘maternal-instinct’, even though there is no real proof of this (Saul, 2003; Teodorescu, 2018), which Riley, Evans, and Robson (2019) attribute to biological essentialism. Most feminists entirely reject the idea that women are more nurturing than men, and even scholars like Hrdy (2011), who do believe that caring for children comes more naturally to women than men, argue that this is not a good enough reason to have women do more childcaring than men. Saul (2003) agreed with Sarah Blaffer Hrdy, that men also have ‘nurturing impulses’, and that just as for the women, they need to spend time with their children to activate these. Acknowledging this, Saul (2003) argued, is crucial as women are forced into a childcare role, while men are being pushed out of it, which is still very much the case (see Teodorescu, 2018). This arguably is backed by Miller’s (2007) research, which found that only after some time with their babies did the mothers start feeling more connected and confident in their ‘caregiving impulses’. Moreover, this not only causes women to be subordinate in their relationship, due to being forced to prioritise childrearing, but Saul (2003) found that it was also not fair to withhold the opportunity from the father to (want to) spend

more time with their children and on childrearing. Hence, Saul (2003) argued that our system could be viewed as deeply unjust for both mothers and fathers, and this still arguably holds.

'Mummy blogging' is one domain within the digital context which, particularly in its early iterations, was used as an alternative form of resistance, that Hunter (2016) refers to as a 'radical act'. 'Mummy blogs' were argued to be spaces in which mums could share their honest experiences of motherhood in contrast to the 'images of motherhood portrayed in mainstream media' (Hunter, 2016, p. 1306). These mummy blogs gained high followings because of this 'honesty', which then gained the attention of advertisers. Advertisers started to approach increasingly popular mummy blogs with a large audience, and by now it can be considered the norm that (popular) mummy blogs contain some form of advertisement (Hunter, 2016). This, of course, Hunter (2016) notes was framed as 'empowering', as it allowed for the mothers to earn their own money, and in some cases to even become the main provider for their families. However, Hunter (2016) argues that with the introduction of advertisement in the blogs, a shift in the 'honesty' of the blogs could be observed, as they became more and more commercialised. This sometimes caused a 'backlash' towards the mummy bloggers as some readers accused them of 'blogging for profit' (Hunter, 2016). Hunter (2016) found that 'the backlash' is mostly a reaction driven by a fear of losing the sense of 'community' that these blogs had created before they became 'monetised'.

Compared to those early blogs, social media, in particular Instagram, has become a ground where it seems that only the ideal parts of life are shared (Mayoh, 2019). This, therefore, creates a false and dangerous image/representation of life, especially concerning women's bodies. The expectations surrounding women's appearance are not only becoming

an increasingly time-consuming element, but more and more unrealistic due to the use of filters and photoshop as discussed in the previous chapter. While ‘normal’ women are already massively affected by the ‘perfect’ images that are presented on social media, pregnant women seem to be even more negatively affected.

In contemporary times pregnant women are increasingly on social media, due to them using it as a form of ‘digital leisure’ (Mayoh, 2019). However, this causes them to be increasingly exposed to images of pregnant bodies that are being presented as ‘normal’ even though they show unrealistic ideals (Mayoh, 2019). Mayoh (2019) has explored the social media platform Instagram, because it ‘is a culturally communicative and visual platform and a pervasive context in which to explore body discipline and regulation’ (p.204). They found that the ‘normalised images of pregnant bodies’, contained themes of ‘The “Perfect Pregnancy and Middleclass, Consumptive Ethic”’, ‘Doing Exclusive Heteronormative Pregnant Femininity’ and ‘Self-surveillance & Hyper-visibility of the Digital Fleshy Pregnant Body’ (p. 204). Therefore, the images incorporated ‘dominant discourse regarding neo-liberalism, consumption, traditional medicine, heteronormativity, and hegemonic masculinity’ (p. 204), which (mostly) caused pregnant women ‘to engage in self-surveillance, policing, and monitoring of their pregnant bodies’ (Mayoh, 2019, p. 204).

Therefore, it has often been argued that social media platforms, like Instagram, are particularly harmful when it comes to body representations. Furthermore, research like Mayoh’s (2019) and Hallstein’s (2011) demonstrates how it continues to be harmful for mothers after the pregnancy, as the platform mostly encourages only the ‘good-sides’ of motherhood to be shared. Nevertheless, Mayoh (2019) does mention ‘a silver lining’ they

found within their research, which saw Instagram also being used by some women to counter these 'normalised images of pregnant bodies' by displaying 'alternative posts' of pregnant bodies, therefore resisting dominant discourses. Hence, as Instagram can be used and viewed by almost anyone it can allow for 'realistic' images or experiences of motherhood to also be shown. Nonetheless, they still found that the accounts that (mostly) show the ideal parts of their life were more popular than 'alternative' accounts.

Even though it seems that the groups that are being portrayed (unrealistically) often know/realise that it is a false representation, this does not prevent them from being (negatively) affected by it (Liechty et al., 2018). In Liechty et al.'s (2018) case they looked at how pregnant and postpartum women were affected by (unrealistic) body images of women in the media, as there already exists significant research on the effects on non-pregnant women. Their interviews revealed four main themes: the participants did question the realism of the body images that they saw 'online'; second, despite the first point the participants still reported that the images did affect them negatively; third, probably because of the second point, the participants expressed a desire for 'media messages' to be more realistic and to depict more diverse 'images'; fourth, the participants pointed out that despite the negative impact of social media, it also had (the potential of having) a positive impact. The latter arguably supporting Mayoh's (2019) 'silver lining' point, that as social media platforms can be used by everyone, and therefore also by 'normal' women, there is potential for 'realistic' images to be portrayed.

However, the accounts that portray 'realistic' images seem to still be sparse, or at least not as dominant, as the unrealistic ones. Liechte et al. (2018) argue that further research on

the effects of body image is crucial and should be further explored, especially in the context of pregnant and postpartum women, as the promotion of unrealistic body images negatively affect women's (mental) health. Even though the participants were aware that the images were unrealistic, Liechte et al. (2018) found that it did not (significantly) reduce the negative impact the images had on them. Thus, they argue that acknowledging that the images are 'unrealistic' does not suffice. Hence, it seems that one of the main strategies that Liechte et al. (2018) found effective to counter these (negative) feelings was for the participants to reduce their media intake.

Tiidenberg and Baym's (2017) research looked at how pregnant women on Instagram 'perform their pregnancies', as this contributes to the discourse on how pregnant women should 'behave'. They found that, particularly through social media, pregnancy has become something not only 'highly visible', but also 'intensely surveilled'. On top of pregnancy being 'marketed as a consumer identity', they find that on Instagram pregnancy is being done 'via three overlapping and complementary discourses', which are 'learn it', 'buy it', and 'work it' (p.1). These three discourses were also observed within the motherhood section of *Poosh*, as will be demonstrated in chapter seven. Together, these discourses contribute towards what they call 'intense pregnancy'. They find that the accounts of pregnant women on Instagram that perform these discourses 'influence and enforce discursive hegemonies' (Tiidenberg & Baym, 2017). Furthermore, they argue that through sharing posts that show them performing the three discourses, the pregnant women show how they are not only preparing to be, but already are 'good' and 'responsible' mothers. This encouraging notion of having to demonstrate that one is a good and responsible mother before the baby is even born, was also

observed in the articles on Kourtney Kardashian's pregnancy which will be discussed in more detail in chapter seven.

Hence, it is promoted that to be a good mother you need to buy things for the baby. However, while it might be promoted as a universal way of preparing, caring, and being a good mother for the (expected) baby, it really focuses on a very small percentage of women. Only privileged women can take the time and afford to buy baby items such as 'onesies, baby sneakers, strollers,' and even 'designer diaper bags' (Tiidenberg & Baym, 2017, p.6) in excess, most other expecting mothers are not in a position to do this. Therefore, they might try to comply with this behaviour of showing they care through consumerism by buying second hand or feel guilty and like failures and/or bad mothers for not being able to provide this consumerist care for their child (Tiidenberg & Baym, 2017). Thus, Tiidenberg and Baym (2017) argue that the followers or audience are being exploited rather than empowered by providing solutions through consumerism. Whether it is truly 'only' exploitative is debatable and was not something that could be explored to the required extent in my research, but this tendency to provide solutions through consumerism also in relation to being a good mother was definitely present within *Poosh* as will be shown in chapter seven.

Hallstein (2011) discusses Douglas and Michaels' work, who found that 'celebrity mom profiles are at the heart of the new momism' (p. 112). Hallstein (2011) argues that 'new momism is the contemporary form of intensive mothering' (p. 112), which started to emerge in the 1980s and has reached full force today. Hallstein (2011) finds that the "good mothering" ideology bases itself on three core beliefs and values: 'that no woman is complete until she has children'; 'that women are the best caregivers of children'; and finally, 'that "good"

mothers must devote their entire physical, emotional, and psychological beings to their children all day, every day' (Hallstein, 2011, p. 112). On top of these impossible ideals, the new momism encourages women to believe that being a mother is their most important job (Hallstein, 2011), thus, causing women to be defined through their relation to their children, instead of through themselves and their own actions. While within *Poosh* motherhood is not explicitly stated as women's most important job, motherhood is certainly portrayed as another job. However, as will be more thoroughly shown in chapter seven, it seems that, at least within *Poosh*, women are not solely being defined through their relationship with their children.

Hallstein (2011) also connects the celebrity mom profiles, promoting and reinforcing the new momism, to what she calls 'a new post-second wave crisis in femininity', which 'emerges when contemporary women become mothers' (p. 112). This is because, even though women have gained increasingly more access to education and the job market since the latter half of the twentieth century, many women, once they have children, have not been relieved from childrearing, which then also becomes their primary responsibility (Hallstein, 2011). This seemed to also be the case with *Poosh*'s portrayal of childrearing, with articles giving advice centred around childrearing clearly being geared towards women/mothers. Hence, Hallstein (2011) argues that in contemporary society women's lives contain both elements from pre and post second-wave. On the one hand their lives contain post second-wave gains, on the other hand their lives are still being oppressed through pre second-wave gender-based understandings of family life, which are expected of mothers once they have children (Hallstein, 2011). Moreover, Hallstein (2011) argues that the body can be seen as 'a key site for understanding larger cultural changes' (p. 113). Thus, by looking at the image celebrity mums portray, like the bikini-ready post-partum body, allows for 'insights into how the new momism

is continuing to develop and shape the contemporary rhetorical situation of motherhood,' (Hallstein, 2011, p. 113).

It seems that within a postfeminist context the third shift and second shift are becoming increasingly linked, through having the third shift portrayed as something that is needed to help with the second shift (Dworking & Wachs, 2004). Dworking and Wachs (2004) found that what seemed to differ in a postfeminist context, is that working out and staying active was also being sold to the expecting women as training. This is 'training' for both the birth and postpartum, the former being a particularly interesting point, as compared to Miller's (2007) findings this shows a difference to traditional expectations that motherhood and birth should occur naturally. Hence, it seems that performing the third shift, in the form of body work, as a mother is being increasingly portrayed as a way of demonstrating that one is a good mother in a postfeminist culture (due to it being portrayed as necessary to perform the second shift, including childrearing, well). Especially, performing body work related activities pre-partum is portrayed as a way to already demonstrate that one is a 'good' mother (Dworking & Wachs, 2004). For example, exercising to facilitate the birth is seen as a way of already taking care of the child (Dworking & Wachs, 2004). In the case of *Poosh*, this notion of body work was not limited to exercise, but for example also included nurturing the unborn child through eating the right 'foods', as will be elaborated on in chapter seven.

However, demonstrating 'good' mothering practices through the mother's body seems to have already been a practice before the introduction of the 'third shift'. Especially, the feminist literature on breastfeeding supports this point. In the context of demonstrating that one is a 'good' mother breastfeeding is portrayed as vital in helping to form the so-called

'mother-infant bond' (Schmied & Lupton, 2001; Phipps, 2014). This, portrayal, research like Johnson et al. (2009) found, causes women to continuously attempt breastfeeding despite experiencing significant discomfort and/or other issues. research like Schmied and Lupton's (2001) finds that even when it comes to breastfeeding, women have very different experiences. Despite this, due to breastmilk and breastfeeding being viewed as providing the best health outcomes, as Johnson et al. (2009) find, it is viewed as a moral obligation that needs to be performed if one wants to be a 'good' mother. Within *Poosh* this was also the case, with breastfeeding being portrayed as the best and most 'healthy' option for one's baby.

Thus, it is viewed by some, like Símonardóttir and Gíslason (2018), as an oppressive element that reinforces a 'highly gendered' image by idealising a certain version of 'infant feeding' in relation to performing good mothering. Therefore, it is not surprising that some research has started to focus on disproving the 'naturalness' and 'simplicity' of the mother-infant bond developed through breastfeeding, by focusing on the negative ramifications these 'oversimplistic' and/or 'false' portrayals can have (Law et al., 2018). For example, Law et al. (2018) looked into how the mother's 'sense of competence' could 'undermine maternal-infant bonding' due to 'high level of psychological distress', caused by not meeting these standards.

Hence, from the current existing literature it seems that within a postfeminist context, being a good mother is also demonstrated through the 'body', which is arguably not unsurprising. Nevertheless, apart from the body still appearing to be the most central and important aspect within postfeminism to construct and express one's femininity as a woman; the potential change within childrearing appears to not yet be very well explored. This is where the thesis aims to make an original contribution, by exploring how postfeminist motherhood

is being portrayed within a postfeminist context, which will be explored in detail in chapter seven. Even though, more current literature is beginning to evaluate the change in the portrayal of motherhood within a postfeminist culture (see Lagerwey, 2017; Riley, Evans & Robson, 2019, especially chapters 5 and 6), this concept has not been explored in sufficient depth and breadth, as there is no consensus yet surrounding the (re)conceptualising of motherhood within this context. In particular, the change of parenting/motherhood practices within a neoliberal context, especially the concept of 'correct' parenting, requires further thorough analysis, which this thesis is contributing towards.

Enabling social reproduction through 'correct' parenting practices

How to raise children 'correctly' has been an ongoing debate ever since the acknowledgement that children are not 'little adults' but rather become 'adults' (Ball, 2021). Therefore, parenting became seen as a vital influence in the gradual shaping of children into adults. As such, 'improper' parenting became periodically seen as the cause for society's problems (Ball, 2021). However, as Ball (2021) discusses, it seems that 'correct' parenting can be seen as a way to try and shape 'correctly socialised adults', arguably in relation to their current social system. Hence, parenting is a factor that plays a part in the 'process by which a social system reproduces itself' (Federici, 2019, p. 55). However, it is certainly not the only aspect. Laslett and Brenner (1989) named 'schools, politics, culture and ideology, the labor market and the workplace' (p. 382) as other aspects that influence social reproduction.

Nevertheless, 'correct' parenting can be seen as a core aspect that helps a current social system 'stay in place', through reproducing the dominant norms and structures in a fashion that makes them seem 'natural'. Hence, it can be seen as a contributing process that enables for both the current economic structures and social hierarchies to be sustained. This

includes gender norms and roles, and therefore, also inequalities (Lasslett & Brenner, 1989; Collins, 2009). Hence, 'correct' parenting should form the next generation into individuals that are prepared to participate in the system's current labour force, which could be observed within the parenting advice provided by *Poosh* as will be discussed in chapter seven.

Furthermore, it includes maintaining the unpaid and/or invisible labour that is largely done by women (Federici, 2019); which in turn contributes towards gender inequality by keeping women from 'equally' participating in the 'formal' labour market. This is why the literature, from a feminist-political-economic perspective, aims to highlight the critical role of unpaid, and especially gendered, labour which helps maintain not only capitalist economies but also current dominant social hierarchies (Lasslett & Brenner, 1989; Collins, 2009; Federici, 2019). This is important work, as online platforms like social media, while they technically also provide a space for 'resistance' are not much used as such (Tiidenberg & Baym, 2017; Liechte et al., 2018; Mayoh, 2019), likely due to people instead focusing more on trying to comply with dominant discourses (Lasslett & Brenner, 1989; Collins, 2009).

The makeover paradigm, especially when presented in (reality) TV-shows, as discussed in the previous chapter, promotes the (neoliberal) idea that focusing on the individual and seeking self-improvement are the solutions to one's dilemmas in contemporary life (Gill, 2007). Hence, arguably in a society and culture that seems to constantly increase its expectations around parenting, and in particular mothering, it is not a surprise that mothers might seek 'help' or 'advice' via different channels. Especially, in a postfeminist culture and neoliberal society that promotes seeking 'self-improvement' as the solution to their motherhood/childrearing dilemmas. However, as discussed, it seems that as they are trying to

live up to unrealistic expectations, many women will inevitably fail, and probably blame themselves for not trying hard enough. Hence, they will likely keep following the advice from these ‘makeover paradigm’ channels, which with the rise of social media is not exclusive to television anymore. Even though, within *Poosh* at first this seemed different, in relation to the concept ‘mum guilt’, in the end the sentiment was merely dismissed as an unnecessary and unproductive feeling, instead of *Poosh* actually addressing the root of the problem, as will be shown in chapter seven.

Moreover, due to the process of surveillance online having changed, with everything becoming more public online, one opts into rather than out of privacy. Therefore: ‘one must always behave on the Internet as one would if placed on a public stage,’ (Senft, 2013, p. 347). To be more specific, not only is everything one does on the internet public, but it is also eternalised (Orton-Johnson, 2017). This, according to Orton-Johnson (2017), can cause mothers to not honestly participate and share their struggles or thoughts online out of fear that one day their children might see these comments. Orton-Johnson (2017) looked specifically at ‘bad’ mummy blogs, as they can be used to look at alternative perspectives on motherhood compared to the mainstream media images or blogs that give parental advice. They found that ‘in framing narratives of motherhood in terms of parental failure and a desperation for gin, “bad mummy” blogs collapse social contexts in important and interesting ways’ (Orton-Johnson, 2017, p. 1).

However, Orton-Johnson (2017) found that while mummy blogs are normally seen as ‘potentially transformative spaces’, there is a tension tied to them due to the eternalisation of messages posted on the Internet. Therefore, they find that mummy blogs might actually serve

as '*another* platform in which articulations and struggles around long-held normative ideas about the nature, identity, and role of motherhood are being reinforced and reified' (Orton-Johnson, 2017, p. 8). This seems to be the same for social media platforms. Therefore, this raises the question, how much potential for resistance social media offers, and reaffirms how social media portrayals of 'good' mothering potentially help reproduce the current postfeminist culture.

This is why it is important to try and fill the gap on how postfeminism has evolved and how postfeminism might have especially changed the concept of 'good' mothering, as this is a vital aspect which contributes towards reproducing our current social system, which in turn reproduces the current gender and class constructs that constitute 'one of the basic dimensions of all social organization' (Laslett & Brenner, 1989, p. 382). Therefore, shaping and institutionalising the social relationships between men and women, which support the justification for gendered division of labour. Thus, reproducing the dominant norms and structures that keep women subordinate. This is why one of the aims of the research was to explore how 'good' mothering practices are being portrayed on *Poosh*, to identify how these discourses are contributing towards the reproduction of the current social system and therefore, how current 'motherhood-practices' are (still) helping maintain dominant norms and structures. Especially, as the existing literature currently does not do this in sufficient breadth and depth.

To (re)conceptualise contemporary postfeminist motherhood, it is first essential to reestablish the current state of postfeminism within contemporary society, of which the postfeminist mother is a substantial component. With my research, I am thus interested in

exploring contemporary postfeminism, as the literature demonstrates that the concept of postfeminism is not fixed, but rather an evolving sensibility that requires a continuous reevaluation of the cultural postfeminist landscape. Especially the increasingly convoluted online domain needs to be investigated in this regard, as popular social media platforms such as Instagram, in particular in regard to the online wellness sector, are showing signs of postfeminism which seem to become more insidious. Therefore, there is a need for a better understanding of how postfeminism operates within this contemporary wellness online environment. This, however, is arguably difficult as the online environment is constantly evolving at a fast pace, which is why it is necessary to continuously observe and reanalyse it. Furthermore, despite the assumed socio-cultural influence of Kourtney Kardashian's lifestyle site, *Poosh*, which is firmly situated in the domain I am interested in, there seem not to be any in-depth studies on it. Therefore, it seemed not only an appropriate case study, but a necessary one to explore in its own right.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Mixed research methods and new ethical considerations

The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of the research process, to enable a better understanding of the reasoning behind this process, and to allow for the research to be replicable (as far as is possible with research of this nature). The primary objective of the research was to demonstrate that postfeminism is evolving rather than moving into a post-postfeminist era (Gill, 2016). Furthermore, I aimed to explore how the postfeminist sensibilities originally established by Gill in 2007, and revisited most notably in 2017, have further evolved. And finally, that the concept of motherhood, in particular the idea of being a 'good' mother, has changed within a postfeminist culture. The following research questions were used to help guide the research:

- Using *Poosh* as a case study, how have Gill's postfeminist sensibilities evolved? Which elements of postfeminist subjectivity are portrayed more dominantly throughout the lifestyle *Poosh* is trying to 'sell'?
- Which dominant norms and structures portrayed by Kourtney Kardashian via *Poosh*, are being transformed and/or maintained in a postfeminist-culture?
- What is the normative portrayal of the (re)construction of postfeminist-motherhood as depicted by *Poosh*? How has the representation of the idea of being a 'good' mother changed in an evolving postfeminist culture?

First, the chapter will address the philosophical assumptions within this project, before discussing why a feminist framework was adopted. Afterwards, the research process will be

outlined, starting with introducing *Poosh* and explaining the reasoning for selecting it as the case study. Thirdly, the data collection and analysis process will be justified. Here I will outline why Fairclough's 5-point analytical framework was chosen for the Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA). Finally, this chapter will conclude with a discussion of the ethical implications that needed to be considered for this research project, the limitations that were in place, and a reflection on the research process as a whole. This will specifically focus on the (new) challenges that needed to be considered when researching online in a social media age.

Objectivity vs (inter)subjectivity and social constructionism

One is not born a woman, but rather, becomes one – de Beauvoir (1949)

When it comes to the debate in research around philosophical assumptions, I find this quote of *de Beauvoir* very fitting. It reminds us that nothing in our social world is 'natural', but rather socially constructed. Therefore, it can make one think whether 'objectivity' is ever truly possible in a social world where, arguably, everything is constructed and needs to be reconfirmed constantly, for example, through discourses to seem 'natural' and, subsequently, dominant. Furthermore, I find *de Beauvoir's* quote fitting for this discussion, as even though her work had a huge impact on the study of gender, one of the main critiques of her work was that she did not proceed far enough. De Beauvoir, while acknowledging that gender was constructed, did not see 'sex' itself as something constructed but rather as something natural (Butler, 2006). Butler pointed out that the flaw with thinking that sex is natural automatically leads to adopting binary gender identities and norms if we do not recognize that sex itself is also a social construct (Butler, 2006). Hence, by recognising that both sex and gender are socially constructed it should strip these 'dominant' gender identities that are portrayed as

natural of their power. However, it is astonishing how gender, even though it 'holds the potential for change', is surprisingly stable in its nature (Natalier, 2003).

This is due to this categorisation, of which 'gender' or 'sex' one belongs to, being established and sustained in everyday life through participating in certain 'socially required identificatory displays that proclaim one's membership in one or the other category' (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 127). Which becomes further enforced throughout one's life through a series of discourses, that 'ensure our conformity to the reiteration and citation of gender norms' (Storey, 2015, p.169). For example, through the influence of our parents, education institutions, fashion industry, and foremost the media (Storey, 2015). Hence, why Butler (2006) argues that one's gender identity is something forced on one, through a series of discourses, instead of a free choice. Thus, gender is naturalised through discourses.

Nevertheless, how people experience their gender identities and the norms associated with them is not 'universal' but rather 'unique'. That is because aspects like class and ethnicity intersect with gender and this impacts how people experience certain phenomena, like motherhood or fatherhood. For example, I would like to refer back to Miller's (2007) research where all the participants conformed with the image of 'the good mother': 'partnered, heterosexual, and white and mostly self-identified as middle class' (p.341). However, the data revealed very 'diverse and complex early mothering experiences' despite the fact that it was a very homogeneous group (Miller, 2007). Therefore, I deduce from Miller's (2007) research that knowledge is partial and contingent, considering the diversity of experiences despite the superficially homogeneity of the group. Thus, with research of this nature, the aim of the

research should not be to find an objective truth, as this does not only seem inappropriate, but simply impossible.

Therefore, the aim of my research is to help (re)conceptualise the topic and phenomenon of motherhood in a postfeminist (online) culture. However, my findings should be seen as part of many intersubjective understandings of this phenomenon. Hence, the research adopted an interpretivist research philosophy, instead of a positivist one. Thus, it did not make use of a hypothesis, but rather used research questions, as mentioned earlier, to guide the research process. Moreover, it would be foolish to think that, epistemologically, as a researcher I am removed from my research and do not have an effect on it (Haverland & Yanow, 2012). Therefore, rather than having seen my influence and interaction with the social world as a hindrance or liability, I used reflexive practices to incorporate my own position and to be aware of how my background might have influenced the research. Furthermore, by being aware of my positionality and incorporating it, I believe that it in the end positively enriched my research rather than interfering with it (May, 2011), which will be further discussed at the end of this chapter.

[**The myth of sisterhood: Adopting a feminist theoretical framework**](#)

At the core of all feminist scholarship is the motivation to reach the goal of 'social emancipation and transformation' through criticising the 'grossly unequal social orders' (Lazar, 2007). Similarly, at the core of this research the aim is to contribute towards 'social emancipation and transformation' for women through a critical analysis of the 'lifestyle' site *Poosh*. However, while the research therefore wanted to use a feminist theoretical framework, there are no clear 'rules' on how to use a feminist framework. This is because while it may seem that feminism's aims should be clear, these aims are, in fact, highly contested.

Furthermore, it is not clear what 'real' equality means or what it might look like, and what structures or aspects are mainly to blame for the (still) persistent existence of gendered inequality. Furthermore, it needs to be considered whether the aim is equality or equity and with whom.

In the past, feminist research has been contradictory when it comes to establishing what is to blame for causing and maintaining gender inequality, and how to eliminate it. Liberal feminists were convinced that equality could be reached through 'education and legal reform' (Bradley, 1996). Marxist feminists believed it was through the 'revolution against capitalism' (Eisenstein, 2017), while radical feminists thought it could be achieved by eliminating the patriarchal system (Storey, 2015). Liberal feminism's plan towards equality was flawed in that it did not seek any transformation of the system, while Marxist feminism falsely viewed 'society as an integrated and unified system' (Bradley, 1996, p. 87). Equally, radical feminism was flawed in that it neglected differences between women, due to overly focusing on the concepts of womanhood and 'sisterhood' (Gatrell, 2005).

However, since the late 1980s it has become clear that 'speaking of 'women' and 'men' in universal, totalizing terms has become deeply problematic' (Lazar, 2007, p. 141). This is because '[g]ender as a social category intersects with other categories of social identity, including sexuality, ethnicity, age, (dis)ability, social class and position, and geographical location' (Lazar, 2007, p. 141). Furthermore, especially in contemporary times where 'issues of gender, power, and ideology have become increasingly more complex and subtle' (Lazar, 2007, p. 141), it is important to acknowledge how the intersection of gender with other social

categories causes individuals to experience different issues or to have different priorities when it comes to certain aspects or phenomena.

In other words, it needs to be acknowledged ‘that social identity categories such as race, gender, class, sexuality, and ability are interconnected and operate simultaneously to produce experiences of both privilege and marginalization’ (Smooth, 2013, p. 11). Moreover, it needs to be recognised that it is through these different social identity categories interacting with one another that ‘societal power hierarchies’ are defined (Smooth, 2013). Therefore, even though there seems to be a reemerging aching for a ‘sisterhood’ among some feminists (Evans & Bussey-Chamberlain, 2021), we need to be careful to not universalise ‘women’. However, while more recent iterations of Neoliberal and Popular feminism accommodate to more specific and individual needs, they do this as it benefits corporate interests (Flood, 2019). Thus, there is a danger of commodifying women instead of actually comprehending and catering to these individual needs.

One of the main reasons, as discussed earlier, why feminists seem to be so critical of postfeminism is because it is constructed on the assumption that equality exists, and that women can ‘do’ and ‘have it all’ now (Kornfield, 2014). It ignores still existing power dynamics and (old-fashioned) social constructs that are in place that do not allow for women to live the same way and have the same possibilities as their male counter parts (Natalier, 2003; Saul, 2003). However, apart from this false perceived idea that equality exists, which falsely leads to claims that women can ‘do’ and/or ‘have it all’, the concepts of claiming that something is achievable, and therefore, applicable to ‘all women’ is dangerous.

Hence, postfeminism is particularly problematic as it not only universalises women, by claiming that its lifestyle is applicable and achievable by all, but it simultaneously individualises women by shifting the responsibility of succeeding onto themselves. This is why I was particularly interested in researching postfeminism to gain a better understanding on how it operates and still causes harm to women. Thus, this research used a postfeminist framework, based on, as already discussed, Gill's (2007, 2017) and McRobbie's (2004) work, by using a critical lens to analyse the postfeminist discourses that are operating throughout *Poosh*.

[**Feminist research methods: Using a mixed-methods approach**](#)

When it comes to the research methods, it has been argued, most feminist researchers seem to favour qualitative research methods (Strinati, 2004; Hesse-Biber, 2014). Feminists have often criticised purely quantitative research methods, as they argue that they can only ever produce a (limited) descriptive picture (Strinati, 2004), while qualitative research methods allow for a more explanatory approach (Strinati, 2004; Hesse-Biber, 2014). Therefore, even though there are technically no 'clear' rules on how to do feminist research, there seems to be a general agreement about what methods are seen as more 'feminist' than others. Even though using qualitative methods (especially in the form of discourse analysis) seems to be seen as a more feminist research approach (Lazar, 2007; Hesse-Biber, 2014), quantitative methods should not simply be dismissed for the sake of excluding them (Strinati, 2004).

While discourse analysis is not unique to feminist research, it is particularly apt in this field as it 'enables the change of discriminatory constructs' (Hesse-Biber, 2014, p. 46). However, Lazar (2007) points out that while feminist linguists often have used, especially critical discourse analysis, 'without needing to flag a feminist perspective explicitly' (p. 143), they do note that because not 'all studies that deal with gender in discourse are necessarily

feminist in this critical sense' (p. 143), there is a need for a feminist (critical) discourse analysis. Feminist discourse analysis, like other approaches and methodologies in feminist research, focuses on examining the questions asked about women's experiences themselves instead of looking for answers to them (Hesse-Biber, 2014). In this way, 'prevailing theories can be deconstructed into their constituent parts, and insight to the power dynamics and other factors that have informed their makeup highlighted' (Hesse-Biber, 2014, p. 46). Doing this opens up the possibility to change the discriminatory construct into a nurturing one (Hesse-Biber, 2014). Hence, 'feminist discourse analysis aims to effect change in perception and action of and against women' (Hesse-Biber, 2014, p. 46).

One prominent example to how the use of feminist discourse analysis methods can really enable a new insight into areas previously (wrongly) dominated by male perspectives, and therefore, allow for a new, more accurate perspective is the research of Laura Sjoberg. Her work on gender discourses in International Relations, by using feminist discourse research methods, has revealed the actual role of women in the male dominated fields of 'war', 'violence', and 'terrorism'. Women have traditionally not been linked with these fields, as it contradicts the conservative interpretation of gender seeing 'women as peaceful and apolitical' (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007, p. 2), and in these contexts women are usually viewed mainly in relation to their male counterparts (Sjoberg, 2016). Therefore, Sjoberg's works have allowed for these women to be acknowledged and discussed in their own rights within these fields.

Nevertheless, even though qualitative methods, especially in the form of (critical) discourse analysis, are the preferred methods used in feminist research, the results achieved

from a quantitative method are not invalid or not valuable, they are simply more broad results instead of offering a more in-depth analysis of certain aspects of social phenomena (Yilmaz, 2013). Thus, they allow the research to gain a broader oversight of the data than qualitative methods would ordinarily allow for (ibid). Hence, by using both quantitative and qualitative methods, the research can simultaneously gain a broad understanding and a more explanatory understanding (ibid). Thus, while qualitative methods are essential when doing feminist research, as they allow for the ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions to be answered in a much more in-depth way (Hesse-Biber, 2014), it does not mean that quantitative methods should not be used at all (Strinati, 2004; Yilmaz, 2013). Especially as quantitative and qualitative methods should be considered as alternative research strategies to each other, as opposed to ‘incompatible research paradigms’ (Yilmaz, 2013, p. 323). Furthermore, using a mixed-methods approach can be very beneficial for research, as it allows for triangulation (Cunliffe, 2011), which can be ‘defined as the combination of two or more theories, data sources, methods, or investigators in the study of a single phenomenon’ (Kimchi, Polivka, & Stevenson, 1991, p. 364). Therefore, this research took a mixed-methods approach, using content analysis and critical discourse analysis to explore the constructions of femininity and motherhood in a postfeminist digital culture. Moreover, a case study was selected to help narrow down the scope of the research, which will now be discussed in more detail.

Single-design case study: *Poosh*

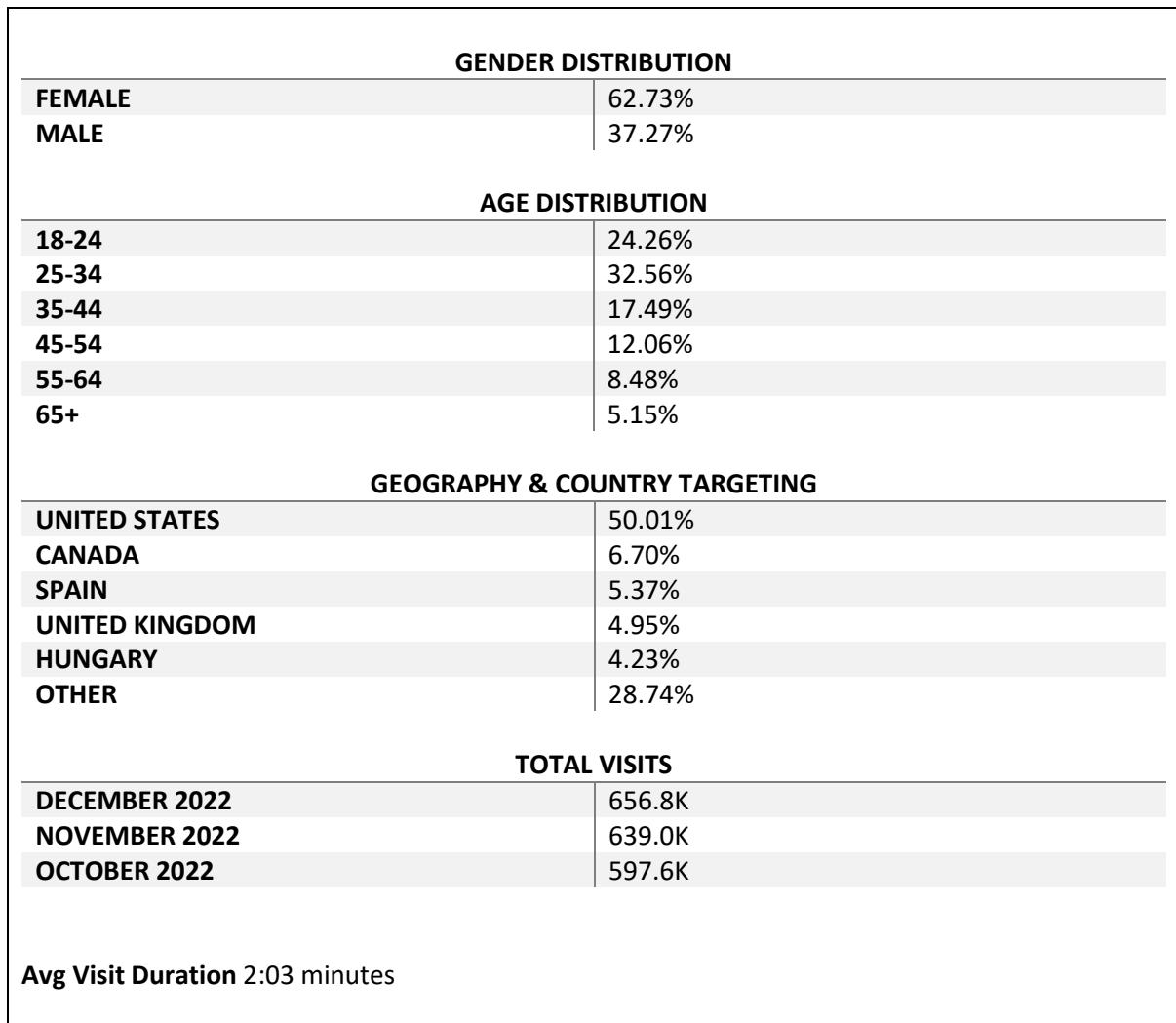
‘Poosh is the modern guide to living your best life’ and ‘Our mission is to educate, motivate, create, and curate a modern lifestyle, achievable by all’ (Available at <https://poosh.com/about/>)

Poosh, a lifestyle website that was founded and is run by Kourtney Kardashian and a wider team, was selected as the case study. The reason why it was selected, on top of being a lifestyle site that provides advice and ‘digital-leisure’, is that it is run by a (former-reality) celebrity. This celebrity aspect is an interesting addition to consider during the research, due to the nature and influence that especially (female) celebrities have on ‘ordinary’ women’s lives (Gill, 2016, 2017; Hallstein, 2011; Khamis, Ang, & Welling, 2017). In particular, *Poosh* being owned and run by a Kardashian is a significant aspect due to their cultural power and influence. The Kardashians rose to their ‘extraordinarily wide-reaching’ level of fame by capitalising ‘on the changing nature of celebrity’ using ‘digital technologies and social media platforms’ to enable ‘their individual and collective’ growth (Rogan, 2023, p. 132). Therefore, situating them at ‘the intersection of mainstream celebrity, social media celebrity, and influencer culture’ (Rogan, 2023, p. 132). This intersectional position is stated as the reason why the Kardashians, despite their immense level of fame, are still often viewed as ordinary and accessible (Rogan, 2023). Moreover, their lifestyle is often viewed as accessible and obtainable due to the ‘aesthetic entrepreneurship and ongoing body work’ the Kardashian’s fame is based on, which is ‘tied up with notions of consumerism, fashion and glamour’ (Rogan, 2023, p. 132). Hence, clearly situated within the postfeminist culture considered in this thesis.

Therefore, Kourtney Kardashian’s lifestyle page should allow me to explore what the normative representation and portrayal of a postfeminist lifestyle looks like, also as a mother, in contemporary society. I also chose to look at the lifestyle site through the ‘lens’ of Instagram, as social media platforms are becoming more and more intrusive and essential parts of women’s lives (Mayoh, 2019). Furthermore, Instagram is a highly ‘visual-platform’ (Tiidenberg & Baym, 2017), which is especially interesting in relation to postfeminism, considering that

postfeminism focuses especially on the body and general aesthetics as a site for a woman to express and construct their femininity (Gill, 2007, 2017). Analysing both the *Poosh* website and *Poosh*'s Instagram account, enabled a better understanding of what it means to be a postfeminist subject in the age of social media.

Who are the Pooshies?



Poosh Demographics – Available at <https://www.similarweb.com/website/poosh.com/#traffic>

From the general demographic information that can be found, it can be deduced that the majority of *Poosh*'s readers are women between the age of 18 and 35 and that most of the readers are situated within the United States. However, from the 'About' section on *Poosh*'s website, it can also be derived what type of audience the lifestyle is trying to cater to. In other

words, it can be discerned what type of audience *Poosh*'s content is aimed at. Therefore, while the lifestyle produced and presented by *Poosh* is explicitly sold as 'achievable by all', it does not necessarily mean applicable to all. Moreover, *Poosh*'s followers are often referred to as '*Pooshies*', as can be seen from their Facebook page, where the closed group which one can join is labelled *Pooshies*. Hence, it seems that there are attempts to establish a sort of community that tries to achieve the same lifestyle or live by the same life-philosophy (no matter their background).

Who You Are:

You're cool. You're confident. You're clever. You care.

We get you, and we're here to give you all the sweet treats that your heart (and body) desire. From non-toxic beauty alternatives to tips for multitasking moms, healthy recipes that don't skimp on taste to home decor ideas for every budget, Kourtney-approved workout hacks to stylish sartorial options for date night, girls' night, and everything in between. You want it all, and you want a place that provides a little bit of everything, without being lectured or preached to (you already have a parent/ partner/ child/ sibling — we feel you).

Think of us as a really good friend...but way less judgy.

Available at <https://poosh.com/about/>

Therefore, even though one could argue that the advice provided by *Poosh* should only be applicable to a small part and specific class of women, who have the financial means and time to potentially follow the advice given, it is not that simple. While some research like Miller's (2007) shows how the real danger is for the women who identify most with this (upper) class that can afford to follow the advice, and therefore, feel like they need to conform

with this lifestyle that is promoted; it does not necessarily mean that women who do not fall within this specific class will not still aim to achieve this lifestyle, as it is sold as 'achievable by all'. Therefore, arguably, it is potentially detrimental to any woman wanting to be a *Pooshie*.

Data collection

The research was mainly interested in analysing the articles provided by the *Poosh* lifestyle website. However, I wanted to collect them via the route most likely taken by their readers. Therefore, the data was collected via the following two routes: through *Poosh*'s Instagram account and directly from *Poosh*'s website. This was done as the former route was most likely taken by *Poosh*'s followers when using it as digital-leisure, while the later route was more likely followed when *Poosh*'s readers were looking for specific 'advice'.

Hence, for the former route the articles that were being promoted through *Poosh*'s Instagram account via its stories and/or posts were collected, including the stories and posts that contained the link to the articles and advertised them. The data collection happened daily, from the 5th of October 2021 onwards until data saturation could be observed (approximately 1-2 months after). The data was collected by clicking the embedded links in *Poosh*'s stories, which linked to articles on the website. These articles were then 'printed' and saved into a subfolder labelled with the date that the data was collected. The posts did not entail an embedded link but rather encouraged followers or readers to click the link in the bio of *Poosh*'s Instagram account to reach the article. However, the article(s) promoted via the post(s) were also promoted via the stories. Hence, the article that was being promoted via the post was also always promoted in the stories, but not all stories were promoted via posts.

While posts (except if actively deleted by the owner of the Instagram account) stay permanently on an Instagram account, the stories remain for a far shorter time period. Once

posted/shared on an Instagram's account's story feed, they can only be viewed for 24 hours until they disappear, unless they are saved as a 'highlight'. Therefore, to be able to collect the story feed, the stories were screenshotted and saved as JPEG files in a subfolder labelled in a corresponding way to the articles which they were promoting (and provided the link to). The posts were collected as a whole by saving them under my personal Instagram account under a 'collection' labelled 'Instagram-Posts-Poosh'. This was done as it enabled the entire post to be saved, which would allow for better analysis.

After a relatively short amount of time, approximately one month, repetitive themes and/or content could be observed within the articles collected. However, new themes and/or content (i.e. different aspects surrounding the main theme and/or content) still seemed to emerge (which arguably would be expected, as the aim should be to keep providing fresh content to keep one's readers interested and entertained). Therefore, it was decided to continue collecting data for another month (total of 2 months) to be sure that data saturation among the main themes and/or content could still be observed, which it was. Even though, this might appear as a relatively short amount of time for data collection, it should be noted that within this timeframe, 562 stories and 153 posts, which corresponded to 396 articles, were already collected.

For the latter route, due to the sheer number of articles on the website already at the time, the research decided to collect the articles directly under the sub-heading 'Motherhood' as this seemed the most relevant way to help answer the third-research question. Hence, all articles available under the sub-heading 'Motherhood' were collected and stored in a folder in order of release (oldest to newest). Compared to the above-mentioned data collection

process, this one was constricted by the number of articles available under the sub-heading Motherhood, which at the time was 52 (26/10/2021).

Data analysis

The data analysis was split into two phases: the first being a content analysis, which was then followed by a critical discourse analysis. I decided to first use a content analysis as the quantitative method of my analysis as it 'is a research technique that involves a systemic analysis of text...which makes replicable valid inferences from the material examined' (Ward, 2012, p. 4). Furthermore, it allowed me to look for specific aspects, including Gill's (2007, 2017) postfeminist sensibilities, as a content analysis is applied when the researcher is 'interested in the "aboutness" of the content, more so than the content itself' (Ward, 2012, p. 4). Hence, using a content analysis for my first phase allowed me to view 'the underlying structure, form, and organization of the information contained in [the data]' (Ward, 2012, p. 4).

However, had I only used a content analysis it would have limited the research to look only at the variables that I had set for the coding sheet(s), which would have meant that some interesting or even important findings that were not thought of ahead of the research could have potentially been missed. Thus, by using a qualitative research method on top of the quantitative one, it allowed for the research to also gain a deeper and richer understanding of the data, on top of the broad picture the content analysis provided. Specifically, using a critical discourse analysis (CDA) allowed for the research to explore other aspects of the research questions, as it not only considers the text within the wider context it is situated in, but also looks at what is not explicitly written. Moreover, it allows for claims to be made about the language use. Therefore, I decided to use CDA as the qualitative research method to complement the content analysis.

One cannot analyse a text without first reading it, therefore, some degree of interpreting the text, before being able to reach its foundational codes and processes, is unavoidable (Gripsrud, 1995). In other words, one's own interpretation of the text can be affected through one's own subjectivity, and thus, might not comply with the interpretations of others (Gripsrud, 1995). However, as the research uses a(n) (inter)subjective approach this is not really an issue, due to the research not aiming to give results of an objective nature. Rather, it is trying to contribute towards a bigger understanding of the problem and phenomenon it is looking at. Moreover, to reiterate, by acknowledging one's possible influence on the interpretation and incorporating it in the research instead of trying to deny it, e.g. through reflexive practices, it will instead enrich the research (Gripsrud, 1995).

Thus, by adopting a mixed-method approach, using content and critical discourse analysis, it allowed for the research to benefit from both research methods' strength while minimising their disadvantages through cancelling most of these out, as outlined above. Furthermore, while the main focus of the research was 'text', arguably completely ignoring and not considering the pictures that were embedded in the articles meant that key discourses would have been missed. For example, in the case of the stories, even though the main interest was in their purpose of promoting the articles, the pictures are a vital part and should not be ignored. Therefore, as discourse analysis is not restricted to language, while the research did not do an in-depth focus and analysis of each of the pictures embedded within the articles or stories, they were however considered where relevant.

Content Analysis

An initial read-through was used to identify certain themes in the articles. This was then followed by the content analysis to obtain a statistical overview of the data, which allowed for

an understanding of the actual frequency in which these themes appeared in the articles as opposed to the perceived frequency from reading it. Doing so was particularly important in answering the first research question, which required numerical data to compare how often the different postfeminist sensibilities appeared. Furthermore, the content analysis allowed for the themes and patterns to be mapped out, enabling me to explore where to focus the critical discourse analysis. Examples include the fact that health did not appear just in relation to food, but also in relation to beauty, and the fact how little, despite being a guide on modern living (for women), household related themes were mentioned.

Apart from the fact that the content analysis in this research is mainly being used as a tool to locate where best to perform the CDA within the vast amount of data collected, since I was looking for specific aspects and themes rather than just counting the use of specific words (as is often done with content analysis), the way I performed this analysis still fits within my (inter) subjective approach. This specific approach, as mentioned above, of interpreting the text requires a subjective interpretation first, so another reader would be expected to obtain (slightly) different results even when using the exact same coding sheets. Hence, arguably being consistent with the (inter) subjective approach I have chosen.

The Coding Sheets

In preparation for the content analysis, a coding sheet was first designed and pilot tested. Initially the coding sheet was created abductively. On the one hand the postfeminist sensibilities determined by Gill (2007, 2017) were used to pre-inform the coding sheet, as well as some aspects concerning motherhood, celebrities and consumerism that were discussed in the literature review; the rest of the coding sheet was informed by the patterns and content that could be observed from the data when collecting the articles. The aim of the use of a

coding sheet, in this research, was really to allow certain aspects to be quantified and, therefore, to allow numerical data to be produced and analysed to see what variables were more prominent. In other words, what content was more often written about (e.g. 'relationships', 'health', or 'sex' etc.), as this arguably should show what aspects were prioritised for the readership by *Poosh*. After pilot testing the coding sheet on 13 articles (the first 2 days of data collection) it became clear that some alterations were needed before continuing.

The modified coding sheet was then tested again on the next day (day 3 of data collection) to see whether any tweaking was still necessary. It was assumed that only some small alterations would be necessary before applying the coding sheet to the rest of the 'Instagram-collected' articles (including the previous articles which were pilot tested: day 1 and 2). However, more complications than expected were noted. Therefore, the coding sheet strategy needed to be rethought entirely, as I realised that having one coding sheet to cover 3 different sections was not only making things too complicated but also did not really make sense. Therefore, instead of having one coding sheet, three coding sheets were created to cover the different 'sections'. One specifically collecting numerical data on the stories and posts (*see Appendix 1.1 for the complete coding sheet on p. 348*); the second specifically looking at the articles promoted via the stories and posts (*see Appendix 1.2 on pp. 349-350*), focusing more on aspects like the postfeminist sensibilities; and finally for the motherhood sub-section, the third coding sheet was created to concentrate more on 'motherhood' aspects intertwined with postfeminist notions (*see Appendix 1.3 on p. 351*).

To reiterate, one of the aims of the research was to establish what the normative representation and portrayal of being a postfeminist-mother is. Specifically, how lifestyle pages, like *Poosh*, represent and portray the norm of being a postfeminist-mother. Therefore, the research first needed to (re)establish what it in general means to be a postfeminist woman, due to postfeminism (seemingly) evolving. In other words, using *Poosh* as a case study, what does the current postfeminist culture look like? Second, what does *Poosh* represent as the norm for being a (postfeminist) mother?

Therefore, the aim of the content analysis was to see whether Gill's (2007,2017) postfeminist sensibilities are still present and/or relevant, and to get an oversight of which of these sensibilities seem to be featured more or less than others on the lifestyle site. Hence, establishing which sensibilities arguably carry more weight, and seem to have become (or remain) most important. At the same time, the research wanted to look for particular aspects, which had been identified and chosen after an initial 'skim-through' when the articles were collected (i.e., additional aspects that emerged during an initial look at the data). Furthermore, going through the data, as part of the content analysis, equally allowed for an initial read through, to see whether new or evolved themes and/or sensibilities could potentially be identified. This permitted for an initial first read for the critical discourse analysis that was done after the content analysis, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

As already stated, the analysis was divided into three parts: Stories and posts from *Poosh*'s Instagram account, the articles on *Poosh*'s website that were directly 'advertised' on *Poosh*'s Instagram page, and further articles relating to Motherhood that were found directly on *Poosh*'s website. The stories and posts coding sheet was focused on quantifying and

understanding which of the stories linked to the articles, or to the website's shop, or involved/collected information from their followers (*see Appendix 1.1 for the complete coding sheet on p. 348*); while the coding sheet for the Instagram-collected-articles aimed to quantify/get an overview of which postfeminist sensibilities and other aspects/elements (e.g. health, food or consumerism or celebrities) could be identified (*see Appendix 1.2 on pp. 349-350*). Finally, the coding sheet for the motherhood-section-articles was designed to quantify and view whether 'traditional' elements of motherhood (based on the elements identified and discussed in the literature review. For example, traditional gender roles, childrearing, household work etc.) could be identified, and which postfeminist sensibilities could be identified in relation to motherhood (*see Appendix 1.3 on p. 351*). Afterwards, SPSS was used to help quantify and further analyse the data from the coding-sheets.

Feminist CDA

While many feminists use CDA for their research, doing CDA is not the same as doing feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA). FCDA focuses on social justice and transformations of gender via analysing discourse (Lazar, 2007). Nevertheless, it is important to note that just because a study deals with gender in discourse it is not necessarily feminist (Lazar, 2007). However, arguably due to the elements and aspects the research is interested in exploring and critiquing, as discussed previously, the second form of analysis I am using in my research can really be viewed as a FCDA. The main concern of FCDA is to critique 'discourses which sustain a patriarchal social order – relations of power that systematically privilege men as a social group, and disadvantage, exclude, and disempower women as a social group' (Lazar, 2007, p.145), which is at the core of this research.

To help guide the FCDA, the research decided to loosely adapt Fairclough's (2001) five-point analytical framework, due to his work focusing on power dynamics and struggles which arguably are at the core of gender inequality and the root of maintaining current dominant norms and structures. And even though Fairclough focuses more on economic and capitalist relations, power dynamics and struggles are not exclusive to his topic. Arguably ignoring power dynamics in general within research would be a great mistake. However, due to the focus of Fairclough's topic being so different from this research's topic, it feels necessary to briefly demonstrate how his framework can be adapted to this research specifically.

Fairclough's five-point analytical framework

An important element of Fairclough's five-point analytical framework is the use of relational and dialectical elements. In other words, a 'dynamical interplay between unified oppositions', by first looking at dominant discourses that persist in our society and then by looking at what forms of resistance exist against these dominant discourses. Hence, also looking at the context the 'problem' is located in, and not just at the 'text' through (which the problem is being communicated) isolated from its social/cultural context. As the aim of using this framework is not only to see if 'the problem' can be solved (i.e. is not 'necessary' in society), but also how it could be solved, through identifying false 'beliefs' in our society, as Bhaskar (1986) argues for using 'explanatory critique', and making people aware that they are 'false'.

Fairclough's five-point analytical framework, which is based on the critical theorist Roy Bhaskar's concept of 'explanatory critique', consists of the following five steps:

1. Focus upon a social problem which has a semiotic aspect.
2. Identify obstacles to it being tackled, through analysis of

- a. The network of practices it is located within
- b. The relationship of semiosis to other elements within the particular practice(s) concerned
- c. The discourse (the semiosis itself)
 - Structural analysis: the order of discourse
 - Interactional analysis
 - Interdiscursive analysis
 - Linguistic and semiotic analysis.

3. Consider whether the social order (network of practices) in a sense 'needs' the problem.
4. Identify possible ways past the obstacles.
5. Reflect critically on the analysis (1-4).

(Fairclough, 2001, p. 125)

The first stage is to 'focus upon a social problem which has a semiotic aspect'. This step has partially already been completed in the Literature Review chapters, as for this step it is necessary for the research to go outside of the text to understand the social context in which the 'problem' is situated by looking at both academic and non-academic sources. The 'social problem' my research focuses on is how postfeminism contributes towards maintaining dominant structures in which women are still subordinate, especially the role gender norms play in this. The issue here is that gender norms and roles are presented as a given and 'natural', and therefore immovable, as previously discussed, instead of what they really are: social constructs. The second stage is to identify obstacles that are in place for the social problem to be tackled. It is necessary to explain here the context the 'text' is situated in. In my

case, the texts are located within an online and postfeminist cultural context. Thus, my issue is 'locked into this powerful network', in which the *Poosh* lifestyle website is potentially 'a substantial obstacle' which prevents the 'tackling' of 'the problem': gender inequality.

The third stage then should 'consider whether the social order (network of practices) in a sense 'needs' the problem' (Fairclough, 2001, p. 125). Fairclough (2001) points out that the representation of the social problem as something 'inevitable' is an important part of legitimising it, which then raises 'the question of ideology' as these 'are partial representations and misrepresentations' (Fairclough, 2001, p. 134). However, at this stage it is important to keep in mind that 'there is nothing that has been socially created that is incapable of being socially changed' (Fairclough, 2001, p. 134), which arguably is an important point to keep in mind when researching anything in relation to gender, no matter how grounded its concept seems to be in our society. Fairclough reminds us here that the point is that these 'representations are misrepresentations which clearly contribute to sustaining unequal relations of power – they are ideological' (Fairclough, 2001, p. 134). And as mentioned already, postfeminist sensibilities, gender norms, and expectations around motherhood in general need to constantly be reaffirmed as they are not 'true' or 'natural' representations but misrepresentations which sustain the current dominant ideological power relations.

The fourth stage would entail identifying possible ways past the obstacles. At this stage, the research should try to move from focusing on the dominant forms to instead considering forms of resistance, because one needs to remember that the dominant form of contemporary text and interaction (no matter how much it is represented as such) is not the only one. This should then allow for the research to see how 'representations of change' from forms of

resistance are different from the dominant one. However, while '[t]hese alternative representations are located within an emergent counter-network of social practices which at least constitutes a possible resource for countering the obstacles...it is currently relatively marginal' (Fairclough, 2001, p. 134). While implementing this fourth stage was outside the scope of this thesis, future research could build on the research by looking at alternative representations, which in turn could be compared to the dominant representations analysed within this thesis.

Thus, even though there are more direct texts which resist the dominant representations, they are still quite marginalised. Therefore, with debates about whether postfeminism is evolving or moving into a post-postfeminist era, it would be interesting to see if forms of resistance against the current dominant representations can be found (maybe in different texts) within the same platform promoting a particular 'lifestyle'. In other words, whether an emerging change in representation/mentality can be observed. This, however, is not expected to occur. Then the fifth, and final stage, is to reflect critically on the analysis done in the previous four stages, which will be addressed here in the next section.

[**Social media as research platform and ethical considerations**](#)

While 'ethics are fundamental in maintaining the integrity and legitimacy of research in society and in protecting practitioners and participants in its practices' (May, 2011, p. 47); '[r]eflexive practices...bring us into the realm of understanding the relationship between research and values' (May, 2011, p. 46). Hence, why ethics and reflexive practices are both important aspects to consider in academic research and will be discussed throughout this final section of the chapter.

The emergence of social media platforms has created a new medium of communication, which has not only enabled researchers to use it in relation to research, but for this new domain in itself to be explored. However, these online platforms, including Instagram, continue to be fast paced changing platforms (Page, 2017). While using social media platforms to do research on the one hand provides a lot of opportunities that previously were not available, it on the other causes new challenges to emerge when it comes to researching online (Page, 2017). Furthermore, one cannot simply apply the same ethical conduct and/or 'rules' that have been established for non-online research methods, which is especially true for social media platforms due to them undergoing continuous change. Therefore, it is difficult to establish what constitutes an up to date ethical approach to using online platforms for research purposes.

'New' ethical considerations and limitations

One of the main issues with using social media as a research platform is the question around what is private and what is public in an online setting, as private and public seem to become increasingly blurred, which raises new questions about access and consent (Hookway, 2008). In other words, it needs to be rethought what can freely be used for research and where consent needs to be acquired, and how the collected content should be treated and used in the research and write up.

Hookway (2008) already considered this in relation to blogs and argued that there generally seems to be three camps. The first one being that because 'archived material on the Internet is publicly available', that 'participant consent is not necessary' (Walther, 2002; Hookway, 2008). This is based on the idea that material that is 'publicly accessible Internet content' should be treated the same as television content. However, the second camp believes

that even though the material has been posted online, and are publicly accessible, that they might have been ‘written with an expectation of privacy and should be treated as such’ (Hookway, 2008, p. 105). Finally, ‘there are those who argue that online interaction defies clear-cut prescription as either public or private’ (Hookway, 2008, p. 105).

Nevertheless, it seems that mostly the ‘fair game-public domain’ position used to be adopted, which is based on the idea that if something is ‘firmly located in the public domain’ that the ‘necessity of consent should be waived’ (Hookway, 2008, p.105). However, one still needs to be aware of copyright laws, even though ‘there are special provisions built into the copyright act(s) which allow for ‘fair dealing’ of copyright material for the purpose of study or research’ (Hookway, 2008, pp. 105-106). In this case, according to the ‘fair game-public domain’ using online-material/text from *Poosh* (which is arguably firmly located in the public domain) should not have any ethical implications at least apart from having to consider copyright laws.

Since Hookway’s (2008) study on blogs, the media landscape has significantly changed, with social network sites having gained millions of members. Therefore, while this enables even more possibilities for research it also means that the ethical applications need to be once again rethought (Page, 2017). Social media, and the interactions that take place on them, have massively evolved over the last decade (Page, 2017). The ‘internet-based media environment’ has turned into a place where there is a ‘need for constant updates and massive competition for clicks,’ (Bouvier & Machin, 2018, p. 179). In other words, social media, and especially Instagram have turned into platforms that seem to mainly be used for ‘promoting’.

However, this includes one update that arguably has helped with making more clear what material is in the public or private domain, in the case of Instagram, which is that the account holder can set their account to 'public' or 'private'. In the case of the former everyone on the Instagram platform will be able to view the profile and its content, while in the case of the latter only people following the account (which needs to be approved by the account holder) are able to view the content of the account. Furthermore, Instagram has introduced more measures since this update to give their users more control over their accounts. For example, one can de-activate comments (meaning one cannot comment underneath their posts) or one can remove any 'followers' from one's account (even if it is a public account).

Therefore, arguably, when the account is public and not set to private, especially in the case of *Poosh* (which certainly has a media officer/expert as part of their team), the account holder should be aware that their material is located in the public domain. Especially, as it is run by a celebrity (Kourtney Kardashian), who is arguably used to having their pictures and 'material' (what they write or say) reproduced by the media. Normally, when wanting to reproduce material, especially pictures, consent is acquired from the owner of the account/picture. However, due to the (celebrity) status of this account, that is not possible. At the same time, thanks to this celebrity status, from an ethical point of view, using *Poosh's* material for research should not have any deep implications or issues due to the above-mentioned points.

Furthermore, while reproducing images is always trickier, in this case, there should not be any ethical repercussions due to the nature of the account. Just as in the case of Casey and Littler's (2021) research of the Instagram account '@mrshinchhome', *Poosh's* account (apart

from being ‘public’) is clearly a ‘business and work Instagram account’, which is separate from Kourtney Kardashian’s personal account (even though this is also public and arguably serves to promote herself (as a brand)). Hence, it is used as a platform to promote *Poosh*’s ‘lifestyle’ (i.e. Kourtney Kardashian’s, even though this is clearly presented as a separate entity), and therefore the only implications of reproducing text or image should in this case be concerning copyright.

This was further confirmed to me by the ethics review panel, which, due to the nature of my research, saw no further ethical implications that needed consideration. The only request they made was that I contact the copyright services of the University of Birmingham Library to enquire about the copyright procedures with regards to reproducing images within my thesis. The library’s copyright and licensing advisor referred me to section 30 of the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act, and explained that as long as my work falls within the fair dealing with a work, publicly available, for the purpose of criticism or review, there should be no copyright infringement occurring. Especially as, if possible, only the part of the image that was relevant for the research was used, instead of the whole picture being reproduced. Moreover, any images used from *Poosh* in this thesis are properly referenced, and credit to the owner of the image (in this case *Poosh*) is given according to copyright law guidance provided by the University of Birmingham Library services. However, due to the complicated nature of reproducing images of children (even though Kourtney Kardashian does this with her own children and nieces and nephews on her website), images depicting the children were not used.

Positionality and reflexivity

Being a woman who uses social media, in particular Instagram, for digital leisure I wanted to consider my own experience rather than ignoring it, as I did not believe that it was desirable to fully ignore my own personal use in a research project with this focus. In this context I wanted to use my personal experience as an addition to the research, rather than using it as a 'main' research method; to help inform it. Furthermore, while the reality TV-show, *Keeping Up With The Kardashians* (KUWTK), is not directly part of the research, having watched all 20 seasons (fairly recently around the time of the research process), it feels important to note how my interpretations of the content from the show acts as additional context towards the research. Ignoring this would mean omitting valuable insight that is already freely available. However, I do want to make clear that it should not be seen as active research that has been conducted but rather as additional information and context that contributes towards the research and analysis. Furthermore, from an ethical position using the content from the TV-shows should not be an issue as the content is available for anyone (if a subscription is paid), and in general, when considering the acts and fair dealings view, there should be no copyright issues as the content is used as informative rather than directly for the research.

Reflexivity is a useful way for researchers to reflect and be aware of their influence on their research. Autoethnographic elements informed my reflexive practices throughout, as it entails 'reflexive, cultural reporting of self' (Saldana, 2011, p. 15). This guided my reflexive practices throughout the research, and arguably helped me to gain a better understanding of the influence of my positionality within the research. Moreover, it allowed me to judge how my personal experiences and/or influence were potentially impacting the research process (Reeves, Kuper, & Hodges, 2008), which will be discussed in the conclusion. This is arguably

important when adopting an intersubjective approach, as pluralism is favoured over and challenges absolutism, and knowledge and meanings are embedded in particular contexts (Cunliffe, 2011). Therefore, as already addressed, 'social realities and knowledge are not durable in the sense of being replicable, generalizable, and predictive, but instead offer contextualized understandings' (Cunliffe, 2011, p. 656), just as this research will. Furthermore, while the research aimed to contribute towards the wider issue of equality for women, by looking at a specific area of 'conflict', it did not aim to resolve it as at this stage the issues seem beyond control to resolve yet. Nevertheless, it 'does not mean we should not seek clarification,' (May, 2011, p. 46).

Chapter Four

Quantitative Results Analysis

Data analysis results of the content analysis

The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of the quantitative results from the content analysis (CA). This is to provide the reader with an overview of *Poosh*'s content, and therefore, to provide context to help better understand the detailed analysis that will follow after this chapter. As previously mentioned, a total of 562 stories, 153 posts, and 396 articles were collected from and through Instagram over the span of 2 month, and 52 more articles were collected directly from the *Poosh* website from the motherhood (sub)section. The aim was to collect the articles via Instagram until data saturation could be observed, which happened after one month. I decided to collect data for a further month to see if data saturation had really taken place. Furthermore, this allowed me to observe whether sub-themes would also show data saturation or not, as one could technically expect new fresh content within the reoccurring themes as that is arguably the aim of the lifestyle-site(s); to consistently provide new content. However, after collecting the data for another month, even within the sub-themes, no new material was found, indicating that data saturation had been achieved. While the content was of course different in that new articles were written and new posts were shared, the discourses and messages embedded within them had already been noted.

To reiterate, I decided to base the research on the postfeminist sensibilities established by Gill (2007), which Gill (2017) also revisited 10 years later. The main ones being: focus on the body, 'sexual freedom', 'double entanglement' (coined by McRobbie), neoliberalism, and focus on the psychological. Thus, another aim of the research during the CA was to see whether Gill's

(2007, 2017) postfeminist sensibilities are still present and/or relevant. This allowed for the research to establish an oversight of which of these sensibilities seemingly were featured more or less than others comparatively on *Poosh*. Hence, this arguably established which sensibilities carry more weight than others, and therefore, seem to have become (or still are) more important in a postfeminist culture.

Results: Stories/posts

The content analyses of the stories showed that 90.9% of the stories contained an embedded link, as can be deduced from the table in figure 1. From the 562 stories 76.7% of them linked to an article on the *Poosh* website. Thus, it seems to show that promoting the articles is the main function of the Instagram page, considering that only 11.9% of the stories linked to the *Poosh* shop, most of which led directly to a specific product(s) section. Only 13 articles linked to something other than the *Poosh*-website, which was either the Ambari³ website (which *Poosh* was in a paid partnership with) or *Poosh*'s other social media platforms: Facebook or Snapchat.

Story linked to	Amount	Percentage
Article	431	76.7
Shop (specific)	49	8.7
Shop (non-specific)	18	3.2
Other	13	2.3
Nowhere	51	9.1
Total	562	100

Figure 1 – Where the link embedded within the story on Instagram linked to.

The stories that did not exclusively contain an embedded link, contained in most cases either a poll, a question-box with answers or just a background picture. The poll function was the most recurring tool used by *Poosh* on their stories that did not contain an embedded link.

³ Skincare brand

Second was the question-box tool, which allowed *Poosh* to ask a question to their followers, and for them to respond by inserting their answer into the empty question-box. Following this, *Poosh* then published a selection of answers that probably suited their interests. This can be assumed as the published answers were always accompanied by an embedded link to one of *Poosh*'s articles that was supposed to address and help with the concern or topic inputted into the empty question-box. Hence, this arguably demonstrates once more how the main function of *Poosh*'s stories is to promote the articles. Furthermore, it also reveals how *Poosh*'s followers are actively involved in the production of *Poosh*'s content, which will be elaborated upon in chapter six.

Story contained	Amount	Percentage
Embedded-Link	511	90.9
Poll	24	4.3
Q-Box (without answers)	7	1.2
Q-Box (with answers)	32	5.7
Rating Bar	5	0.9
Countdown Function	1	0.2
Background Pic (only)	18	3.2
Post or Reel	5	0.9

Figure 2 – The story function's tools/options inserted apart from 'text'.

Interestingly, from the 339 stories that had tagged someone, 50.2% of people tagged were 'others', as can be seen in figure 3. While Kourtney Kardashian herself was only tagged 11 times, she was visually depicted in a higher number of the stories (just rarely tagged). This is likely due to *Poosh* assuming that people following the account know who Kourtney Kardashian is and what she looks like. However, the other (famous) Kardashians or Jenners were cumulatively also only tagged in a total of 11 stories. Even other celebrities were merely tagged a total of 34 times. Equally, members from the *Poosh* team were also only tagged 37 times. When checking why, it at first became clear that the majority of tagged accounts were

simply the accounts from where the background pictures had been taken. In some cases, it was someone who had written the article who was not an official *Poosh* team member (or celebrity etc.). Nevertheless, it raises questions whether the lack of ‘tagged’ celebrities is deliberate, so as not to contradict their objective of promoting the *Poosh* lifestyle as ‘achievable by all’.

Tagged	Amount	Percentage
Total (Stories)	339	60.3
Kourtney	11	2
Other K/J	19	3.4
Celebrity	34	6
Poosh TM	37	6.6
Other	282	50.2

Figure 3 – Who was tagged within the story.

This notion seems to be reinforced when viewing the times *Poosh* reshared a story, as depicted in figure 4. The reshared stories were mostly from non-celebrities, and only 9 of them were from a celebrity. This, however, could also demonstrate again their interest in building a relationship through interacting with and involving their fans/followers.

Reshared	Amount	Percentage
Yes	51	9.1
Celebrity	9	1.6
Non-Celebrity	42	7.5

Figure 4 – Whether the story was reshared, and if yes, by a celebrity or non-celebrity.

From the 466 stories which promoted content, 162 also had their content promoted via a post. This demonstrated how using stories seems to really be the main source used to promoted *Poosh*’s articles. However, promoting an article via story and also post potentially shows what content *Poosh* considers to be more interesting for its followers. Therefore, arguably showing what themes and/or sensibilities *Poosh* considers to be more important.

Story content promoted via	Amount	Percentage	
Story only	304	54.1	
Story and Post	162	28.8	
Total	466	82.9	

Figure 5 – Whether the content was promoted only via the story, or also using a post.

At the end of each week, *Poosh* would release their top 5 most read stories, indicating which topics the audience actually found most interesting and/or most relevant that week. When comparing what was promoted via post and what made the top 5 at the end of the week, some differences can be observed.

Section	Top 5		Posts	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Adulting	1	2.22%	2	1.55%
Beauty	2	4.44%	12	9.30%
Body	3	6.66%	11	8.53%
Décor	0	0.00%	2	1.55%
DIY	0	0.00%	1	0.78%
Entertaining	1	2.22%	1	0.78%
Fitness	6	13.33%	11	8.53%
Giving Back	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Guides	4	8.89%	5	3.88%
Hacks	4	8.89%	9	6.98%
Health	7	15.56%	16	12.40%
Kourtney	4	8.89%	6	4.65%
Mind	1	2.22%	9	6.98%
Motherhood	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Recipes	3	6.66%	16	12.40%
Relationships	6	13.33%	21	16.28%
Soul	0	0.00%	1	0.78%
Style	1	2.22%	4	3.10%
Travel	2	4.44%	2	1.55%
Total	45	99.97%	129	100.02%

Figure 6 – Topics of the top 5 most read articles of the week in comparison to the posts promoted by *Poosh* via their Instagram account.

Articles from the relationship section were the most promoted by posts, as can be seen in figure 6, followed by recipes, health and beauty. While articles from the health section were the most regularly in the top 5, i.e. actually read, followed by relationships and fitness. Hence,

the content *Poosh* assumed would be most interesting and what the audience actually found most interesting to read mainly overlapped in the health and relationship sections.

Section/top 5	1	2	3	4	5
Adulting	1	0	0	0	0
Beauty	0	1	0	0	1
Body	2	0	1	0	0
Entertaining	0	0	0	0	1
Fitness	2	0	1	1	2
Guides	1	1	0	1	1
Hacks	0	2	1	0	1
Health	0	2	2	2	1
Kourtney	2	0	1	1	0
Mind	1	0	0	0	0
Recipes	0	2	0	1	0
Relationships	0	1	1	3	1
Style	0	0	1	0	0
Travel	0	0	1	0	1

Figure 7 – The ranking of the topics of the top 5 articles read weekly.

However, when looking more specifically at the top 5 rankings, as shown in figure 7, one can see that articles from the sections adulting, body, fitness, guides, Kourtney, and mind ranked in first position (at some point), while articles from the sections beauty, hacks, health, recipes and relationships never placed higher than second in the top 5. Therefore, it seems that *Poosh*'s four most promoted topics are not actually the audiences number one interest. Hence, raising the question why *Poosh* might still be putting such a strong emphasis on these topics. Or whether it demonstrates how despite the involvement of the audience within the content production, it is still tricky for *Poosh* to cater to their followers exact interests. However, it might simply reflect that these four areas are seen as the more crucial areas that make up the *Poosh* lifestyle.

	Pronounce	Amount	Percentage
Gender-neutral	542	96.4	
Female	14	2.5	
Male	6	1.1	
Total	562	100	

Figure 8 – What pronounce were used within the text.

Another surprising find was that 96.4% of the stories used gender-neutral language. This, however, was mostly not reflected by the (background) pictures, which will be discussed briefly later in the visual analysis section.

Results: Instagram collected articles

Poosh's Sections	Amount	Percentage
Adulting	6	1.5
Beauty	47	11.9
Body	24	6.1
Décor	6	1.5
DIY	3	0.8
Entertaining	4	1
Fitness	32	8.1
Giving Back	4	1
Guides	17	4.3
Hacks	20	5.1
Health	51	12.9
Kourtney	27	6.8
Mind	24	6.1
Motherhood	1	0.3
Recipes	58	14.6
Relationships	56	14.1
Soul	1	0.3
Style	10	2.5
Travel	4	1
No Section-Heading	1	0.3
Total	396	100.2

Figure 9 – The different sections under which the articles were classified according to Poosh.

The articles from the following sections, as can be observed in figure 9, were the most reoccurring in the *Poosh* articles that were promoted via Instagram: recipes, relationships and health, which was closely followed by beauty. Even though articles ranked under the ‘health’

section, as classified by *Poosh*, only placed third in occurrence, this did not accurately represent the frequency at which the topic of health appeared throughout the articles. This became apparent when looking for the ‘sub-themes’ present throughout the individual articles. Apart from their main theme, I was interested in identifying other themes present throughout the articles, which is why I labelled these as ‘sub-themes’ (to the main theme of the article), which are displayed in figure 10.

The topic of health⁴ not only appeared as a theme throughout other articles, but was even the most reoccurring theme throughout all articles with 43.2%. This was followed second by food/recipes (which included general diet mentions), and the third most occurring sub-theme was appearance. While arguably these results are not surprising, considering that recipes, health and beauty were part of the top 4 most reoccurring sections, it is surprising that even though relationship was the second most occurring section, relationship as a sub-theme only occurred 80 times: 61 times in regard to romantic relationships and 19 times in regard to ‘other’ relationships. Sub-theme wise I made the clear distinction between ‘romantic relationships’ and ‘other relationships’, as the content of the articles from the relationship section was not restricted to ‘romantic relationships’ but also talked about friendships. Therefore, when looking at romantic and other relationships as separate sub-themes, exercise and stress each were present more often with 77 and 73 times respectively. Hence, romantic relationships only occurred as the fifth most common sub-theme.

⁴ Health was looked at as a separate element from food/recipes, as during data collection it became clear that health was being mentioned in relation to elements other than just food. For example, beauty.

Sub-Themes	Amount	Percentage
Health	171	43.2
Sex(uality)	46	11.6
Food/Recipes	154	38.9
R-relationship	61	15.4
O-relationship	19	4.8
Appearance	101	25.5
Exercise(s)	77	19.4
Household	21	5.3
Productivity	36	9.1
Mood	43	10.9
Anxiety	39	9.8
Stress	73	18.4

Figure 10 – Themes, apart from the ‘main’ theme, identified within the article collected through Poosh’s Instagram account during a first read through.

However, *Poosh*’s relationship section also included topics on sex or personal gratification (i.e. personal relationships with oneself), which I distinguished as the sub-theme sex(uality). Therefore, this reflects the loose definition *Poosh* has given to its relationship section, as it entailed sex(uality), romantic and other relationships which, if combined, occurred 126 times. Thus, technically being in the top three again if one considered these 3 sub-themes under the umbrella term of relationships as *Poosh* did. It is interesting, however, that *Poosh*, does not actually just have a separate section on sex, but instead seems to ‘hide’ it under the label of relationships. Arguably reflecting how even though postfeminism is said to promote sexual freedom for women, the reality is that it is still not equal to the same freedom men experience.

Another point that was interesting was that appearance with 25.5% was a more mentioned sub-theme than exercise with 19.4%. The sub-theme appearance here was explicitly distinguished from ‘exercise’, and included only aspects that would affect one’s exterior appearance (e.g. style advice, make-up and/or skincare tips) but would not affect one’s figure. Furthermore, it was surprising to find that household as a sub-theme was only

present 21 times, considering that *Poosh* is claiming to be a guide to modern living. Hence, due to the central role the household still plays in women's lives, one would expect it to be a more central theme in any guide on 'living'.

Sensibilities	Amount	Percentage
Focus on the Body	198	50
Sexual Freedom	30	7.6
Neoliberal Elements	139	35.1
Psychological	140	35.4
Double Entanglement	27	6.8
None	70	17.7

Figure 11 – Gill's postfeminist sensibilities looked for within the articles collected through Instagram.

When looking at the main postfeminist sensibilities, based on Gill's (2007, 2017) work, present throughout the articles 'focus on the body' remained the most occurring postfeminist sensibility with 50%, followed by psychological and neoliberal elements, with 35.4% and 35.1% respectively. While it was expected to find that the focus on the psychological and neoliberal elements are more prominent sensibilities, it could be surprising to see that sexual freedom and double entanglement were present as little as shown in figure 11. However, after finding that *Poosh* hides its sexual content under the umbrella label 'relationships' it is not that surprising that elements of the sexual freedom sensibility were sparse. Furthermore, while McRobbie's (2004) notion of 'double entanglement' is seen by Gill (2007, 2017) as a crucial element within postfeminism, it is however, not unexpected that it was barely found throughout *Poosh*'s content. This is as *Poosh* never makes any claims to be feminist. Hence, why there are no feminist elements present that can be depoliticised or robbed of meaning. The few instances that 'double entanglement' was noted, were always articles written by third parties that claimed a (false) feminist element to their work.

Just as I wanted to explore deeper by looking at the sub-themes of the articles, I wanted to explore more broadly the postfeminist sensibilities present throughout the articles to allow for a better understanding on how they had evolved. Therefore, I decided to look for what I labelled as ‘sub-sensibilities’. For example, ‘Focus on the body’ as a main sensibility contains various aspects in relation to ‘the body’, including figure, appearance (excluding figure), and sex. Hence, I wanted to see which of these aspects within the main sensibilities were more prominent than others.

Sub-Sensibilities	Amount	Percentage
Figure Focussed	<u>74</u>	<u>18.7</u>
Appearance Focussed	<u>89</u>	<u>22.5</u>
Body-Focussed (Sex)	<u>10</u>	<u>2.5</u>
Relationships	65	16.4
Emotional Labour	44	11.1
Irony and Knowingness	3	0.8
(Self)-surveillance	162	40.9
Confidence	29	7.3
Sexual-differences notion	10	2.5
Individualism	144	36.4
Self-improvement	109	27.5
Makeover-Paradigm	35	8.8

Figure 12 – More nuanced aspects and notions of the postfeminist sensibilities looked for within the articles collected through Instagram.

While ‘focus on the body’ was the most occurring main sensibility with 50%, if one looked at the ‘sub-sensibilities’ one can see that the ‘appearance focused’ sub-sensibility is the most occurring one with 22.5%. Nevertheless, the ‘figure focused’ one is still close with 18.7%. However, while the sub-sensibility which is focused specifically on appearance (not figure) occurred much more in general throughout the articles, the figure focused one occurred mostly by itself in articles that were specifically focused on exercise advise, and not in general throughout the articles. Also, only 10 articles talked about exercises one could do ‘body wise’ to improve sex. Therefore, 25 articles focused exclusively on health in relation to the body.

Hence, supporting earlier discussed findings on how health seems to be an important aspect throughout *Poosh*'s content, and it seems that having the right figure is no longer pushed as much as having the right 'look' (i.e. clothes and makeup) which could be Postfeminism navigating the 'body positive' movement. This, however, does not stop *Poosh* from indirectly trying to have their followers achieve certain figure standards, as will be elaborated upon in the later discussion chapters.

When further looking at figure 12 one can see that (self-) surveillance/ monitoring was by far the most reoccurring sub-sensibility with 40.9%. This was followed closely by the notion of individualism (e.g. individual responsibility and notions of choice) with 36.4%. Self-improvement was also a big reoccurring sub-sensibility, being present in 27.4% of all articles. Hence, as all three of these sub-sensibilities are linked with neoliberalism, therefore, this supports the idea of neoliberalism's rising influence within postfeminism.

While it might seem surprising that 17.7% of the articles were labelled at first as not containing any postfeminist sensibilities, see figure 11, on further reflection it instead reveals a more complex picture. Most of these were the recipe articles or articles which focused on 'Christmas-gift' recommendations. It could seem unsurprising that most of the recipe articles did not have postfeminist sensibilities directly within its texts. However, in the broader spectrum if one considers these recipe-articles they arguably are still very much postfeminist, as they are focused on 'healthy' but really calorie-poor recipes to help have a 'good' and thin figure. Thus, showing how postfeminism is still trying to push for a thin figure, even if indirectly as discussed above. This last point is exactly the reason why it is so important to combine

qualitative research methods with quantitative ones. This helps to look at a bigger picture, in more depth, but also allows one to look at what is not said.

Specific Themes/Elements	Amount	Percentage
Consumerism (as solution)	106	26.8
Notion of Empowerment	46	11.6
Motherhood	24	6.1
Having it all	4	1
Work life balance	31	7.8
General life balance	64	16.2

Figure 13 – Specific themes and elements looked for within the articles collected through Instagram which were deduced from the literature beforehand.

Apart from the sub-themes, which were influenced by patterns that emerged during the data collection, I wanted to further look for themes and elements that were deduced from the literature. Among the specific themes and elements, displayed in figure 13, the research looked at the three terms: having it all, work life balance, and general life balance. Of these, general life balance was mentioned the most, followed by work life balance, and then having it all. This shows a shift away from the idea that women should aim to ‘have it all’ in contemporary time, but instead that women should aim to establish ‘general-life-balance’ (arguably not only ‘having it all’, which seems to be assumed, but also being able to perfectly balance every aspect in their life.). This will be analysed in more depth in the discussion chapters, especially in chapter seven.

Motherhood was only (indirectly) present in 24 articles, which is interesting as this arguably could be because it is either a given or not seen as an important enough aspect to mention in a postfeminist-lifestyle, which is often predicated upon development of individual identities. While notions of empowerment were present, they were present in only 46 articles, which was a lot less than previously expected.

Consumerist element	Amount	Percentage
no	98	24.7
Indirect	188	47.5
yes	110	27.8
Total (yes/indirect)	298	75.3

Figure 14 – Whether a consumerist element was present, direct or indirect, within the articles collected through Instagram.

Furthermore, consumerism was promoted as a solution in 106 articles, see figure 13, hence being present in a quarter of all the articles. This in combination with the fact that 188 articles indirectly had a consumerist element (things were promoted at the end of the article, instead of in text) and that 110 articles had a direct consumerist element, see figure 14, shows that the lifestyle *Poosh* promotes is heavily focused on consumerism, even if only 67 out of 562 stories linked directly to the *Poosh* shop.

Celebrity mentioned	Amount	Percentage
Yes	125	31.6
Kourtney	115	29
Other K/J	32	8.1
F Celebrity	6	1.5
M Celebrity	2	0.5

Figure 15 – Whether a celebrity was mentioned within the articles collected via Instagram, and if yes, whether it was Kourtney Kardashian, another Kardashian/Jenner, or another female or male celebrity.

Furthermore, Interestingly, even though, Kourtney Kardashian was rarely tagged in the stories, out of the 125 articles in which celebrities were mentioned she was mentioned in 115 articles, as can be observed from figure 15. Other members of the Kardashian/Jenner family were only mentioned in a total of 32 articles. Most of these articles were centred around gift ideas for Christmas for example. Other female celebrities (non-Kardashian or Jenner) were mentioned in only 6 articles, and only in 2 articles were male celebrities (indirectly) mentioned. This arguably supports the notion of how specifically female celebrities promote postfeminist culture, compared to their male counterparts.

Pronounce	Amount	Percentage
Gender-specific	123	31.1
Not gender-specific	273	68.9
Total	396	100

Figure 16 – What pronounce were used within the articles collected through Instagram.

Moreover, the language was surprisingly non-gender specific (even if from the text it is clear that it is mainly aimed at women) with 273 articles containing non-gender-specific language and only 123 of the articles using gender-specific language, as shown in figure 16.

Tone	Amount	Percentage
Positive	391	98.7
Neutral	4	1
Negative	1	0.3
Total	396	100

Figure 17 – The tone of the articles collected through Instagram.

The tone analysed, as depicted in figure 17, unsurprisingly was overwhelmingly positive in most articles with 98.1%, while 4 articles were neutral, and only one was arguably negative (here meant sad/depressing, as it talked about a charity and the experience of one of the writers spending a day there and helping). Except for that one article, and the 4 neutral ones, all other articles always at least ended on a positive note. This demonstrates the positive twist, tone and attitude (towards life) of postfeminism. Hence, this shows how *Poosh* is encouraging that having a positive mindset is crucial for ‘living a modern life’, which will be further unpacked in chapter six.

Results: Motherhood section articles

Within the articles collected from the motherhood section of *Poosh*’s website, health was also the main sub-theme present with 53.8%, as can be seen in figure 18. Furthermore, the notion of health is again not used solely in relation to food here, as the sub-theme food/diet/recipes places second with 40.4%. Thus, meaning that in 13.4% of the cases health was mentioned

independently of 'food'. This confirms that *Poosh*'s lifestyle is situated within the wellness sector, and how it is promising a form of control underlined by this notion of 'health', while simultaneously using this notion as a 'new' motivational aspect within promoting this postfeminist lifestyle.

Sub-themes	Amount	Percentage
Health	28	53.8
Sex(uality)	4	7.7
Food/diet/recipes	21	40.4
Romantic-relationships	4	7.7
Other-relationships	9	17.3
Appearance	9	17.3
Exercise(s)	12	23.1
Household	15	28.8
Productivity	5	9.6
Mood	2	3.8
Anxiety	4	7.7
Stress	6	11.5

Figure 18 – Themes, apart from the 'main' theme, identified within the article collected through *Poosh*'s Instagram account during a first read through, and looked for in the articles under *Poosh*'s Motherhood section.

What was unexpected is that productivity is only mentioned in 5 articles, and stress, anxiety, and mood (arguably very present emotions in mothers) are only mentioned in 6, 4, and 2 articles respectively. Interestingly, however, household as a sub-theme is mentioned throughout 28.8% of the articles collected from the motherhood section of *Poosh*, compared to the 5.3% occurrence (as shown in figure 10) within the articles collected via Instagram. Hence, within the articles collected from the motherhood section, household ranked slightly higher than exercise, with 23.1%, in contrast to the articles collected via Instagram where exercise ranked significantly higher, with 19.4%, than household. This makes one wonder whether the reason household as a theme is more prominent throughout the articles under the motherhood section is because it relates to childrearing aspects.

Postfeminist-sensibilities	Amount	Percentage
Focus on the body	24	46.2
Psychological	16	30.8
Neoliberal elements	29	55.8
Confidence notion	4	7.7
(Self-)surveillance/monitoring	18	34.6
Irony and Knowingness	0	0
'Sexual Freedom'	1	1.9
'Sexual Differences'	0	0
'Double Entanglement'	0	0

Figure 19 - Gill's postfeminist sensibilities, and more nuanced notions and elements of it, looked for within the articles collected from Poosh's motherhood section.

Interestingly, in the motherhood section articles, the postfeminist sensibility of focus on the body is only the second most present with 46.2%, as can be seen in figure 19. Meanwhile, neoliberal elements, which here included the notions of individualism and constant (self)improvement, are present in more than half of the articles. This is followed by (self-)surveillance/monitoring with 34.6%, and very closely by the postfeminist sensibility of focus on the psychological with 30.8%. Surprisingly, the notion of confidence, which here was on purpose set as a separate entity instead of under the umbrella term of neoliberal elements, is only mentioned in 4 articles. The reason why the notion of confidence was set as a separate point, was because I expected it to be more prominent throughout the articles, considering how within postfeminism this neoliberal element of confidence is often pushed as a 'solution' to achieving one's goals. Hence, I expected it to be mentioned more throughout the articles as a solution to managing, balancing and/or coping with being a new mother.

Motherhood-elements	Amount	Percentage
Career/Work (First Shift)	4	7.7
Childrearing (Second Shift)	36	69.2
Household Work (Second Shift)	13	25
Body-Work (Third Shift)	14	26.9
Emotional Labour	8	15.4
Mom-Guilt	4	7.7
Having It All	1	1.9
Work-Life Balance	4	7.7
General-Life Balance	10	19.2
Consumerism (as solution)	21	40.4
Notion of Empowerment	2	3.8

Figure 20 – Specific themes and elements in relation to motherhood looked for within the articles collected from Poosh's motherhood section which were deduced from the literature beforehand.

With the third coding sheet I shifted the focus more onto exploring aspects and notions relating to motherhood. Therefore, I here also wanted to look for specific themes and elements in relation to motherhood that were deduced from the literature. When looking for those motherhood-elements, I distinguished between childrearing and household work when looking for elements in relation to the second shift. This distinction allowed me to observe that childrearing specifically was the most prominent theme, being present in 69.2% of the articles, as displayed in figure 20. In comparison, household was only present in a quarter of the articles. Meanwhile, body work (third shift) was slightly more frequent with 26.9%, which made it the third most occurring theme. This corresponds to a difference of only 1 article. However, it is interesting to see that body work, i.e. the third shift, plays an equally significant role (if not slightly more so) than the aspect of household within the second shift. This already indicates how *Poosh* is trying to set the third shift on par with the second shift, which will be expanded on throughout the discussion chapters.

Meanwhile, career/work, i.e. the first shift, was barely mentioned throughout compared to the other two shifts, with 7.7%. Consumerism as solution predictably ranked

highly as a theme, ranking second with 40.4%. Moreover, general-life balance appeared more often as a concept than work-life balance and ‘having it all’, just as was the case for the articles collected via Instagram. Hence, reinforcing how there seems to be a shift towards encouraging women to generally manage and improving all aspects within their life, instead of solely focusing on their work and homelife. The theme of ‘mom-guilt’ was addressed in only 4 articles, which is unexpected considering how detrimental this concept is for mothers’ mental health. Nevertheless, what is more important than the frequency with which this theme was mentioned, is how the article engaged with the concept of ‘mom-guilt’, which will be unpacked in chapter seven.

Author	Amount	Percentage
Poosh	28	53.8
Kourtney Kardashian	5	9.6
Charli Reda	1	1.9
Jennifer Galivan, PH.D.	2	3.8
Lexie Messinger	1	1.9
Samantha Hyatt	2	3.8
Carson Meyer	3	5.8
Erica Spiegelman	1	1.9
Amanda Lee	2	3.8
Allie Rizzo	2	3.8
Astrid Swan	1	1.9
Courtney Virden	3	5.8
Katie Durko Karvinen	1	1.9
Total	52	99.7

Figure 21 – The writer’s names of the several articles collected from Poosh’s motherhood section.

Most of the articles were written by ‘Poosh’ and many of the non-Poosh writers were mothers, while Kourtney Kardashian herself only officially wrote 5 of the articles. This was unexpected considering how much motherhood is part of Kourtney Kardashian’s identity (which can strongly be observed in the KUWTK and spin-off series). However, concerning the

articles she wrote herself, it is again more relevant to consider their content than their amount, which will be done in chapter seven.

Traditional motherhood/ parenthood elements	Amount	Percent
No	20	38.5
Indirectly	11	21.2
Yes	21	40.4
Encouraged	10	19.2
Neutral	9	17.3
Discouraged	14	26.9

Figure 22 – Whether traditional motherhood and/or parenthood elements could be found, directly or indirectly, within the articles from Poosh's motherhood section, and if yes, whether they were discussed in an encouraging, neutral, or discouraging manner.

Throughout the articles from the motherhood section, I looked for traditional motherhood and parenting elements, based on concepts discussed in the literature review. This was because I wanted to explore how often these were present, considering that I was expecting to find new motherhood and parenting notions within this postfeminist context. Therefore, I also distinguished whether, if traditional notions and/or elements were present, they were mentioned in an encouraging or discouraging way.

I found that, while traditional motherhood and parenting elements are mentioned, directly and indirectly, over a quarter of all the articles in the motherhood section talked about these traditional elements in a discouraging manner, as can be viewed in figure 22. Meanwhile 9 articles were found to talk in a neutral manner about these traditional elements; while not necessarily explicitly negative they certainly did not encourage these elements. 10 articles could be observed talking in an encouraging manner about traditional motherhood and/or parenting notions, however, this was exclusively concerning aspects in relation to celebrating Mother's Day. Hence, while motherhood itself is being reconceptualised within postfeminism,

it is clearly still the role of mothers to raise their children, as will be elaborated on in chapter seven. The section on *Poosh*'s website is called 'motherhood' instead of 'parenting' after all.

Celebrity mentioned	Amount	Percent
Yes	27	51.9
Kourtney	20	38.5
Other Kardashian	3	5.8
Female Celebrity	6	11.5
Male Celebrity	6	11.5

Figure 23 – Whether a celebrity was mentioned within the articles from *Poosh*'s motherhood section, and if yes, whether it was Kourtney Kardashian, another Kardashian/Jenner, or another female or male celebrity.

Out of the 27 articles which mention a celebrity, Kourtney Kardashian is mentioned in 20 of them, as can be observed in figure 23. Her sisters or mother are only mentioned in 3 articles, which is less than non-Kardashian/Jenner female celebrities. Even though a male celebrity has been mentioned in 6 articles, it was, however, Scott Disick each time, which is unsurprising considering that he is the father of Kourtney Kardashian's children.

Consumerist Element	Amount	Percent
No	23	44.2
Indirectly	13	25
Yes	16	30.8
Total Yes/Indirectly	29	55.8

Figure 24 - Whether a consumerist element was present, direct or indirect, within the articles collected from *Poosh*'s motherhood section.

Figure 24 shows that 44.2% of the articles did not have a consumerist element present, which was unanticipated considering the overall presence of consumerist elements observed in the articles collected via Instagram (see figure 14). Nevertheless, consumerist elements (as in that something was attempted to be sold to the reader) were still clearly present, with 30.8%

of the articles trying to sell something directly, and 25% indirectly. Hence, still being present in more than half the articles.

	Gender pronouns	Amount	Percent
Gender-neutral	29	55.8	
Not gender-neutral	23	44.2	
Total	52	100	

Figure 25 – What pronouns were used within the articles collected from Poosh's motherhood section.

The articles collected from the motherhood section contained less non-gender specific language, with 55.8% (see figure 25), than the articles collected via Instagram, with 68.9% (see figure 16). This is, considering the rest of the data, not unforeseen as motherhood does still seem to be heavily gendered and linked to specific gender-roles in a postfeminist culture.

	General Tone	Amount	Percent
Positive	49	94.2	
Neutral	1	1.9	
Negative	2	3.8	
Total	52	99.9	

Figure 26 – The tone of the articles collected from Poosh's motherhood section.

Within the articles collected from the motherhood section the general tone was again very positive, with 49 of the articles ending on a positive note or just being positive throughout, as is displayed in figure 26. Only one article was neutral, and two were negative. However, to clarify, here the two articles I classified under negative were not being negative about the topic of motherhood, but can rather be viewed as words of caution. For example, about why it is important to pay attention to which sun cream you buy and put on your children etc.

Visual analysis: Stories, posts, and pictures

Even though the language used was surprisingly gender-neutral, as discussed above, the pictures used did not reflect this. The pictures all showed very ‘traditional’ heterosexual relationships (if a romantic relationship was discussed in the articles the picture was used in or that the story promoted), picturing a woman and a man. Hence, arguably promoting a traditional/heterosexual relationship image. The only time two or several women were shown was when the article (promoted) talked about friendships. Also, even though in the articles relating to exercise ‘thinness’ is not promoted (at least not directly), the women or the silhouette of female bodies depicted all clearly conformed to a certain body standard: being fit and thin. From all the images seen while doing the analysis only a handful showed a not ‘thin’ body. This demonstrates how even though gender-neutral language was used regularly via *Poosh*, when looking at the visual material it confirms how the content is feminised and mainly aimed at heterosexual ‘women’.

This implicit focus on women and heteronormative relationships in the visuals reinforces the way romantic ideals are represented within the content published by *Poosh*. Any ‘romantic’ or ‘dating’ advice was always given in relation to men, while the relationship advice concerning women was always on a platonic basis. However, both types of ‘relationship’ advice (‘romantic’ and ‘other’) did have in common that the advice was always on how to behave, i.e. a psychological element was present, rather than advice on what to wear or where to go. And while ‘behavioural’ advice in itself is not new, as McRobbie (1991) already found it present in her research on *Jackie Magazine*, the fact that *Poosh* appears to almost exclusively give advice on a behavioural level and if at all very little on appearance (in the context of relationships) reflects the increasing prominence of neoliberalism. Hence, one can observe

neoliberalism's influence, in particular the aspect of (continuously) improving oneself, with dating (and even friendship) advice seemingly emphasising behavioural advice over appearance-based advice. Therefore, it was even more interesting that in the articles featuring dating advice 'psychological' differences between the sexes were one aspect that was not central to the discussion, unlike one would have expected based on the research outlined in the literature review (as one can see from the friendship behavioural advice which extends towards the same sex). Instead, what was surprisingly observed from the articles focused on 'sex' under the 'relationship' section, was a renewed emphasis on establishing biological differences between the sexes.

Conclusion

From the content analysis it seems clear that *Poosh* is well situated within the postfeminist wellness lifestyle sector and contains neoliberal elements. The topic of health was most prominent as a sub-theme throughout all the articles, and while it was mostly mentioned in relation to food, it was not done exclusively so. The postfeminist sensibility of focus on the body was the most dominant throughout the articles collected via Instagram. It was also still second most present in the articles collected via the motherhood section, where neoliberal elements took over as the most present sensibility. Hence, it is not surprising that appearance and beauty are important aspects within the *Poosh* lifestyle. However, while exercise and other aspects specifically related to the figure at first seemed to be less important, when considering them in a wider context, it became clear that they certainly were not unimportant. Furthermore, while focus on the body overall was the most dominant sensibility, however, focus on the psychological was also significantly present throughout all articles. The neoliberal elements most prominent throughout the *Poosh* lifestyle were individualism and constant

(self)improvement. It was interesting to observe how the concept of general life-balance was most prominent, compared to the concepts of work-life balance and 'having it all'. Furthermore, the notions of (self)surveillance/ monitoring are clearly key to the *Poosh* lifestyle. More unexpected take aways from the data were how little household aspects were found, considering the gravity it still plays within women's life. Moreover, mom-guilt was present in only 4 out of the 52 articles collected from the motherhood section of *Poosh*'s website. Therefore, the research was interested in dissecting how the topics of mom-guilt and household were addressed within the few articles they appeared in. Despite the analysis of the first coding sheet on the stories and posts not explicitly revealing the centrality consumerism plays within *Poosh*, the content analysis of the data collected via the other two coding sheets clearly indicates that consumerism is a constant and central element to the lifestyle *Poosh* is promoting. These key, and unexpected, findings were central to informing the (F)CDA and will be expanded on in a more detailed discussion throughout the following three chapters.

Chapter Five

Discussion Part I

Postfeminist celebrity culture in the online environment: Transforming and maintaining gender norms within the domestic space

This chapter will focus on the influence of postfeminist sensibilities on the second shift aspects which are situated within the private sphere, specifically the domestic space. The focus will be to discuss the role Kourtney Kardashian as a lifestyle celebrity, with her lifestyle site *Poosh*, plays in maintaining and/or transforming the dominant norms and structures in relation to the second shift in a postfeminist culture. This will bring to light the postfeminist sensibilities that seem to play a more dominant role within transforming, while simultaneously maintaining, the second shift. The second shift, which to briefly reiterate here refers to being in charge of the household⁵, and can be seen as a second unpaid job which women are expected to still be in charge of next to their paid jobs (the first shift), has played a vital role in maintaining gender inequality. This is as it promotes traditional gender norms through reinforcing and legitimising the gendered division of labour in the home (Gatrell, 2005). Therefore, this maintains the dominant gendered expectations around the labour in the home.

It will be discussed how this maintaining of gendered expectations concerning the second shift causes current societal structures to be reaffirmed through 'naturalising' these dominant structures instead of challenging them. This is why it is vital to re-explore how the second shift is being portrayed in an evolving postfeminist culture and how it may continue to act as a crucial dimension of 'having it all' and 'doing it all'. To demonstrate this, the chapter is

⁵ This includes childrearing, which however, will be discussed more properly in chapter seven.

divided into two sections, which will focus on two different aspects in relation to the second shift within the domestic space. The first section of this chapter will focus on the increase of aesthetic labour performed in relation to beautifying the home itself, while the later section will explore the role of 'food preparation', and how, influenced by postfeminism, both contribute towards maintaining societal structures and gender norms. While 'food preparation' has traditionally been more associated with the second shift, therefore, situated in the private sphere, in a postfeminist culture it is arguably becoming also more pertinent in relation to the third shift (i.e. 'body work'). This is arguably due to the postfeminist sensibility of self-monitoring, which has been discussed more thoroughly in the literature review. Therefore, within postfeminism it seems to be situated at the intersection of both shifts. Hence, it will provide the transition from this chapter into the next chapter, where the focus will be on aspects associated with the third shift, i.e. body work, which are situated more in the public sphere.

[**The second shift: Optimising and beautifying the domestic space**](#)

The two figures below, 27 and 28, show the sub-themes that were found during the content analysis. Figure 27 shows only the results from the articles that featured Kourtney Kardashian, while figure 28 shows the overall results from the articles collected via Instagram. They revealed that only 2 articles that feature Kourtney Kardashian had household as an obvious sub-theme present. Even when looking at the overall content analysis data of the Instagram collected articles only 21 articles contained household as an obvious sub-theme, which means that it was present in only 5.3% of all articles analysed. On first thought one could derive from this that household in the form of domestic-labour seems to not play a vital role within a

postfeminist-lifestyle. However, the more important data to observe here is in what is not 'stated'.

Sub-Themes	Amount	Percent
Health	23	46.9
Food/Recipes	24	49
Appearance	17	34.7
Exercise(s)	10	20.4
Household	2	4.1
Productivity	1	2
Mood	5	10.2
Anxiety	4	8.2
Stress	6	12.2

Figure 27 – Sub-themes found in the articles featuring Kourtney Kardashian collected from Instagram.

Sub-Themes	Amount	Percentage
Health	171	43.2
Sex(uality)	46	11.6
Food/Recipes	154	38.9
R-relationship	61	15.4
O-relationship	19	4.8
Appearance	101	25.5
Exercise(s)	77	19.4
Household	21	5.3
Productivity	36	9.1
Mood	43	10.9
Anxiety	39	9.8
Stress	73	18.4

Figure 28 – Sub-themes found in the general articles collected from Instagram.

At first the aspects and elements concerning the second shift, in particular in relation to household, seem to not be as numerously present as one might have expected. However, when looking more thoroughly, it not only becomes clear that a lot of 'invisible' labour in relation to the second shift can be found, but what can further be observed is a clear reflection of how the second shift is receiving a 'makeover'. In other words, the expectations of 'aesthetic' labour seem to not be limited to the body, but are also increasingly applied to women's direct surrounding environment; in particular, the domestic space (Elias, Gill, & Scharff, 2017). This can be observed here through what Wissinger (2015) refers to as 'glamour labour', which developed from notions of 'aesthetic' labour and entails the idea that certain aspects of body work have 'bled together' and have become inseparable (Elias, Gill, & Scharff, 2017). More importantly, it is not limited to the physical body, but also includes 'personality,

relationships, lifestyle and – crucially – social media use' (Elias, Gill & Scharff, 2017, p. 37). Furthermore, glamour labour's emphasis on dynamism, and simultaneously its lack of ever being fully 'achieved', can be observed here. Hence, creating the notion that 'glamour labour is never done' as 'It is always unfinished and in a state of becoming' (Elias, Gill & Scharff, 2017, p. 38).

This is interesting as, to reiterate, after the intensification of the third shift, which focuses mainly on 'body work', in women's lives in the 1990s, magazines and media outlets tried to 'motivate' women to incorporate the third shift into their lives by framing it as something that was required to handle the second shift, or at least would help make it easier to manage. In particular, preparing for childbirth and the postpartum phase was framed as something to 'prepare' for through the third shift, and to be maintained after, mainly through physical exercise, as it would in general make childrearing easier (Dworking & Wachs, 2004). However, within *Poosh* it seems like maintaining a well organised and aesthetically pleasing household is framed as something that will help simplify it, and therefore, make other-household related tasks easier. The third shift and 'aesthetic labour' in relation to the body will be discussed more thoroughly in the following chapter. Therefore, it is interesting to observe how it seems that within *Poosh* the boundary between the second and third shift is being blurred more through the aspect of working on one's 'lifestyle'. Aesthetic notions, in particular in the form of 'glamour' labour, seem to be conveyed as a key aspect in helping balance one's life correctly and to therefore be able to do it all, through constant work on the 'body, style and reputation' (Elias, Gill, & Scharff, 2017), with the domestic space here arguably falling within the latter two categories.

When analysing the ‘household’ content on *Poosh* more thoroughly there seems to be a shift away from focusing on traditional housework within the second shift, which according to Hochschild (2012) includes any household and childcare duties that need to be done next to one’s ‘paid work’, normally entailing cleaning and tidying, towards more of a focus on producing an aesthetically ‘pleasing’ household. This reflects the ‘beautifying’ notion that seems to have taken hold in women’s lives in a postfeminist context that is linked to this increasing demand in aesthetic labour (Elias, Gill & Scharff, 2017). Kourtney Kardashian seems to try and conform to the demands of these aesthetic expectations, even with aspects related to her domestic-surrounding, and the postfeminist sensibilities of the ‘makeover paradigm’ and neoliberal elements of constant (self) improvement seem to play a vital role within this (Gill, 2007, 2017). Moreover, there seems to still be a clear, unspoken, expectation that women should be in charge of the domestic space, whether married or even single. This can be seen in the third article featured in figure 29, which will be discussed more thoroughly later.

This resonates with what McRobbie (2015) terms the ‘perfect’, which appears to be closely linked with the notions of ‘aesthetic’ labour, and encourages women to ‘seek self-definition’ through individualised projects that encourage ‘competition’ with themselves, instead of with ‘men’. Furthermore, apart from this being a central element in a neoliberal society, which encourages individualism and shifts the responsibility of succeeding onto the individual, it also helps maintain current ‘male’ dominant structures and norms while being ‘disguised’ by this notion of ‘feminine self-regulation’ (McRobbie, 2015). Not only are women adapting to a male dominated environment especially in the workplace, i.e. becoming ‘surrogate men’ (Maier, 2000), but by encouraging women to compete with ‘themselves’, it takes away the competition with their male counterparts. This helps to maintain men’s

dominance over women (McRobbie, 2015), which within *Poosh*, is visible in relation to the domestic space, as it is maintaining the gendered division of labour in the home.

However, instead of honestly framing this gendered division in relation to their male counterparts, i.e. as something that men do not do as it is a ‘women’s job’, it is framed as something that women should do no matter their marital status. Housework, within *Poosh*, is disguised as a feminine individualised project where women should aim for this new ‘horizon of perfect expectation’ linked to these evermore increasing aesthetic demands that again are disguised under the pretence that it will help improve one’s life (McRobbie, 2015; Elias, Gill, & Scharff, 2017). Thus, reaffirming Natalier’s (2003) findings that women need to still actively ‘opt-out’ of the housework due to it being assumed as a ‘feminine task’. Therefore, this maintains male dominant structures, through reinforcing gendered expectations even outside the nuclear family unit, which reaffirm the second shift as an essential ‘feminine task’.

Poosh, using especially Kourtney Kardashian as an example, encourages this increase in ‘aesthetic’ demand in the form of ‘glamour’ labour within the second shift, through providing guidance on how to navigate it, instead of liberating women from it, while simultaneously ‘invisibilising’ the actual labour that it entails. Through providing advice that promises to make ‘traditional’ household tasks less time consuming (e.g. in relation to groceries), by organising the domestic space correctly, *Poosh* feeds into the ‘cruel fantasy’ narrative that women can ‘do it all’. And apart from feeding into what Orgad (2017) describes as this ‘cruel fantasy’ *Poosh* also uses ‘cruel optimism’ as discussed by Berlant (2011), by arguably making an unrealisable promise to their ‘audience’ that through ‘aspiration’ and ‘hard work’ they can have and do it all (McRobbie, 2015).

The article on **Kourtney's pantry** states:

'Take a peek inside Kourt's *pristine* pantry and you'll learn a couple things: 1) Snacks, spices, and cereals are all *perfectly* in place (thanks to *affordable* baskets). 2) Never underestimate the power of a label maker.

While this level of organization *might seem intimidating*, it really comes down to a *simple set of essentials*. To kickstart your kitchen *reorganization* process, we're breaking down how you can *recreate the poosh-approved* pantry below.' (Everything you need to know about organising your pantry, Poosh, p.2; emphasis added)

The article on what is in **Kourtney's medicine cabinet** states:

'We all have one lurking in our bathroom. It's hidden behind a mirror, filled to the brim with our unmentionables. *Usually*, medicine cabinets are *an eyesore* that we'd like to *hide out of sight* and pray that no one goes through.'

'...But medicine cabinets *don't have to be* this top-secret wasteland. We're only human – we *need* these little bits and bobs to *keep us healthy, happy, and living our best lives*. So we're peeling back the veil and giving you a peek inside Kourt's *organized essentials*.' (What's in Kourt's Medicine Cabinet, Poosh, p.1-2; emphasises added).

The article on how to recreate **Kendall's Living Room** for Under \$100:

'...her *sisters and mom taught her* that "*a house* is always a *work in progress*." From artwork to accent pillows and trinkets, it's the *small details* that really *make a space feel like a home*.'

‘...sure to give a luxurious touch without the **steep price tag.**’ (How to Recreate Kendall’s Living Room for Under \$100’; emphases added)

Figure 29 – Partial text of articles on Kourtney’s pantry, what is in Kourtney’s medicine cabinet, and how to recreate Kendall’s Living Room for Under \$100. For the full text see Appendix 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 respectively.

The two *Poosh* articles that contained household as an obvious sub-theme, featured in figure 29, were on Kourtney Kardashian’s pantry and medicine cabinet. They reconfirm this evolution of ever-rising expectations that require women to continuously improve every aspect of their life, through ‘individualised projects’. This is underlined by expectations of the ‘perfect’ outlined above (McRobbie, 2015), and encouraged through the use of the ‘makeover’ paradigm (Gill, 2007, 2017). The fundamental aspect of the paradigm is to make people aware of a flaw they or their life in general has, and ‘encourage’ people to redeem this aspect of their lives through a ‘makeover’. This is not exclusively bound to a person’s appearance but has extended to many other aspects in a person’s life, including the domestic space (Gill, 2007, 2017).

While the makeover paradigm originally was mainly found, as discussed previously, in reality TV-shows, whose content would for example focus on ‘what not to eat and what not to wear’ (Lewis, 2009, p. 1), it seems to now be more prominent in other forms of media. However, its key components are very much unchanged even when featured in other mediums. For example, this can be observed in the increase of international bestsellers like Marie Kondo’s book, where organising and tidying is framed as something ‘joyful’, which then (ironically) was turned into a reality TV-show. This signals part of a wider rise of ‘cleanfluencers’, like Mrs Hinch who have become more prominent on platforms like Instagram (Casey & Littler, 2021). These figures renowned for cleaning and organising are part of ‘a

rapidly expanding self-help literature and YouTube micro-blogging industry,' that provide advice that is heavily grounded in 'classed, racialised and gendered 'qualities'' (Elias, Gill, & Scharff, 2017, p. 36), which will be expanded on shortly. Furthermore, this particular type of content which focuses on not only organising or tidying, but advertising these 'mundane' household task as something 'fun' and even 'pleasurable', promote a new level of 'perfection' in relation to domestic household tasks, while simultaneously framing them as something 'desirable' to accomplish. This also carries other implications with it, like divides in the type of housework and domestic labour based on class, which will be discussed shortly.

All three articles, in figure 29, focus not only on how a space can be transformed into a well organised, and therefore, more efficient space while simultaneously conforming with postfeminist aesthetic demands, but also that there is no excuse to not do it. The first two articles in figure 29 feature Kourtney Kardashian directly, while the third article also contains household as a sub-theme but features mainly Kourtney Kardashian's half-sister Kendall Jenner. It is included here as it features Kourtney Kardashian indirectly, and contains some crucial elements that should be included in the following discussion around the second shift in a postfeminist culture, and how lifestyle celebrities influence it.

While traditional household chores are not directly mentioned in the first two articles, they are still present, just unspoken. For example, the *snacks*, *spices*, and *cereals* need to be acquired in the first place before one is able to *perfectly* put them *in place*, and Kourt's *organized essentials* also need to be acquired first. While it is not mentioned that women should oversee this, it is also not mentioned that they should not be the main person in charge of it. By not addressing the traditional household tasks, more specifically not challenging them,

the ‘traditional’ gender divided tasks arguably just stay in place, as dominant gender roles are based on assumed differences between the sexes (Blackstone, 2003). Therefore, as the gendered division of labour is assumed, it would need to be actively challenged and disrupted, as it will not change otherwise due to people simply continuing to perform the roles they think are ‘natural’ in relation to their ‘gender’.

Moreover, apart from the fact that a relatively monotonous task of organising and putting items away is framed here as an exciting and almost life changing activity. Unspoken or ‘invisible’ domestic labour which in the case of financially ‘privileged’ people like celebrities is most certainly done by staff, is not being consciously addressed. However, the accompanying prestigious images of perfectly curated and tidy spaces clearly show a demand and expectation for women to keep their domestic space tidy. In other words, by portraying this expectation of tidiness, but not mentioning the domestic labour that is required to achieve this, shows how ‘naturalised’ this unspoken domestic labour has become.

As none of these gendered tasks and roles are, indeed, ‘natural’ or ‘fixed’, and they, therefore, need to constantly be reinforced and (re)defined through gendered performances (Butler, 2006; Laughey, 2007), it should suffice to encourage women, through for example *Poosh*, that their role is to ‘beautify’ and ‘improve’ the functionality of the ‘domestic space’ to reinforce in general that women should be mainly in charge of the second shift. This, therefore, simultaneously helps maintain that traditional household tasks are women’s responsibility, as even though gender and the roles and norms attached to it have the potential for change, it is important to keep in mind how surprisingly stable they are (Natalier, 2003).

Nevertheless, while women remain responsible for maintaining the domestic space, the type of household tasks they end up performing seems to be very much dependent on their class. In a society whose fundamental structures have not adapted for the same person to have a fulltime job while also maintaining the household, let alone be responsible for childrearing, Hochschild (2012) discusses that the second shift in relation to household is often outsourced. She even goes into much more extreme detailed examples, where for instance choosing the name of one's child is being outsourced. However, Hochschild (2012) still makes a valid and relevant point that if women have a full-time 'first shift' they are almost required to outsource most of the tasks in relation to the second shift, if they want to be able to succeed well in their 'paid' work. This, however, is only possible if you have the monetary means to be able to delegate most of the second shift to someone else. Or it requires the help of family-members or communities for less well-off families especially in relation to childrearing if they cannot afford to outsource these certain tasks. This then contributes towards reproducing gendered, racialised and classed inequalities, as in order for one woman to 'succeed' in the paid labour market, they have to pay another woman a (presumably) significantly lower wage to do this work in their place (Meagher, 2002). Furthermore, as 'the existence of markets for domestic labor is predicated upon inequalities of race-ethnicity, class and gender,' (Meagher, 2002, p. 62), it will very often be a non-white lower-class and/or migrant woman doing this paid housework.

Moreover, this reflects and feeds into what Berlant terms 'slow deaths' which reflects how the working class, or as McRobbie (2015) puts it 'voiceless populations at the bottom of the social scale,' (p.6), are responsible for performing these 'mundane' and especially physically exhausting aspects of the household tasks, and end up carrying the burden of the

'heightened demands of bodily capacity' (Puar, 2012, p.149 in McRobbie, 2015, p.6) that is demanded in contemporary neoliberal society.

Hence, while privileged middle to upper-class women who delegate these 'traditional' tasks to staff or household keepers, (as is almost certainly the case for Kourtney Kardashian⁶), they are still required to perform mental and emotional labour in relation to the domestic space, through overseeing the household tasks that need to be performed, and therefore, remain responsible for the domestic space (Charles & James, 2005; Gatrell, 2005). They are able to cherry-pick and delegate these 'mundane' and physically exhausting tasks to working-class and also often non-white women. Therefore, it is ironic that someone as privileged as Kourtney Kardashian is used as an example to frame these tasks as something 'fun' to do, when she almost certainly is not responsible for maintaining these areas in her own household. Furthermore, this helps maintain dominant structures by producing the second shift as an essential feminine task, as privileged (white) women simply delegate domestic household tasks onto 'other' women, instead of sharing responsibility with their male counterparts.

By delegating domestic household tasks to other women, instead of men, it enforces the idea that taking care of the household is an essential feminine task, as the 'categorisation' of which gender one belongs to, as it is not something 'natural', to reiterate is sustained through participating in certain 'socially required identificatory displays that proclaim one's membership in one or the other category' (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 127). And while the underlying causes and motivations for performing this 'feminine' task might have changed in a postfeminist culture, from my research's findings it seems that once again at the core nothing

⁶ From KUWTK it is clear that she has help from various staff. However, one never gets to see anyone specifically performing these mundane household tasks.

has changed (Gill, 2007, 2017), but rather the ‘naturalness’ of this role as a feminine one seems to be reinforced. This can be seen when looking at the third article featuring Kourtney Kardashian indirectly. In the article Kendall Jenner discusses how her sisters (including Kourtney Kardashian) and mother (i.e. all women in her family) have taught her that she is responsible for not only maintaining her household but to make it *feel like a home*.

This article emphasises much more clearly than the other two articles that it is a woman’s job to continuously take care of the house(hold). Furthermore, the neoliberal element of constant self-improvement can be observed here with the comment that there is an expectation of constant *work in progress*, and that it’s *the small details* that matter. Hence, what seems to be communicated to women here is that they should have a very well curated living space that they have transformed into a ‘home’ through attention to small details which, however, is a continuous work in progress. This requires continuously adding ‘small details’ to improve the homeliness of their space.

Apart from reflecting Wissinger’s (2015) point that ‘glamour’ labour is essentially never finished as discussed earlier, also Lacanian ideas concerning the notion of ‘unfulfillable lack’ can arguably be applied here, which is based on the notion that in a capitalist-based society people are constantly driven to seek to fulfil a ‘false need’, which is what leaves them ultimately ‘unsatisfied’. This occurs especially often in relation to consumerism, which will be discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter, where people are essentially encouraged to work and consume more than they need (Vanheule, 2016). In the case of *Poosh* I found that there is a ‘false need’ created in relation to the domestic space, that convinces especially women that they ‘need’ a well-organised and aesthetically pleasing domestic space. However,

as this not only is a 'false need', but also something that can never be 'achieved' due to it being a constant work in progress, it creates arguably a vicious spiral. Hence, causing women to continuously seek to fulfil new 'false' needs that in the end leave them unfulfilled, which, however, arguably helps encourage and drive the neoliberal element of constant (self) improvement in a neoliberal society.

The neoliberal demand of constant self-improvement can be observed in the article on Kourtney Kardashian's pantry, where the use of the word 'reorganization' instead of 'organizing' reinforces the idea that women are not only in charge of organizing the domestic space in the first place, but that they should aim to do better through 'reorganising'. But in particular the 'makeover paradigm' can be observed as underlying motivation for the 'suggested' improvements, and therefore, arguably plays a key role in transforming while simultaneously maintaining dominant norms and structures.

The role of the makeover-paradigm as underlying catalyst for transforming the domestic space can be observed particularly well in the article on Kourtney Kardashian's medicine cabinet where a whole new level of perfectionism in relation to aesthetic demands of the household is reflected. Furthermore, this is enforced visually through the use of a picture in the article, showing the level of aesthetic organisation that is expected, which can be seen in figure 30. Hence, once again showing the underlying persistence of the 'perfect' as a catalyst in a neoliberal society (McRobbie, 2015), which is becoming more intrinsically linked with postfeminist sensibilities. Thus, indicating how a neoliberal society and postfeminist culture are complementing each other 'perfectly'.



Figure 30 – A picture of Kourtney's medicine cabinet from the article *What's in Kourt's Medicine Cabinet* by Poosh. Accessed 22 November 2021: <<https://poosh.com/kourtney-kardashian-medicine-cabinet/#:~:text=Kourt's%20medicine%20cabinet%20is%20filled,Band%2DAids%20and%20cough%20drops.>>

Through making women feel that storing their medicine in a cabinet behind a mirror is them ‘hiding’ this space and to then compare it to a ‘wasteland’, see figure 29, shows the centrality the makeover-paradigm plays here, which is based on the idea that, in particular women, need to first believe that their life or something within it is flawed, but that this can be amended (Gill, 2007). This is clearly the case in the medicine cabinet article by making their reader aware of a space in their home which they now must think of as flawed, and something that they have been purposefully *hiding*. Furthermore, *Poosh* then proceeds to quickly reassure their reader that this is amendable, by stating that it does not *have to be this top-secret* wasteland. Moreover, while this article focuses on ‘amending’ the medicine cabinet it also reinforces the idea that a lot of ‘other’ cabinets should be amended, even if this is not stated, as arguably the medicine cabinet is one of the last places in a household one might think of ‘beautifying’.

Furthermore, in the second paragraph of the pantry article the neoliberal element of individualism, based on Gill’s (2007, 2017) work, was observed; it is made clear to the reader that they have no excuse for not also having a pantry as organised, functioning and aesthetically pleasing as Kourtney Kardashian, who is clearly used here, as well as in the other article, as something to measure oneself by, through stating that while it might seem like an ‘intimidating’ task it really is quite a ‘simple’ one. There is no mention or acknowledgement of the physical, mental and emotional labour that is needed for this level of (re)organisation and the time that it would require, which not everyone has. And most of *Poosh*’s readers will not be in the same privileged position as Kourtney Kardashian, as discussed earlier.

Moreover, the financial aspect is also diminished by simply using the word 'affordable' in a side comment in brackets. This is also the case in the third article on Kendall Jenner's living room, where the title already reads *how to recreate Kendall's living room for under \$100*. However, 'affordability' and \$100 might mean very different things for many people depending on their economic circumstances. Hence, this raises the question if Kourtney Kardashian, due to her economic position, is generally so removed from what 'reality' is that she does not realise that not 'everyone' can afford, financially and/or time-wise, to (re)organise their pantry, or even medicine cabinet, and especially living room the way the articles suggest. What seems more likely though, is that the articles simply reflect the hetero (white) middle to upper class standards that are so central to, and associated with, a postfeminist culture within which *Poosh's* lifestyle is situated.

Hence, when Kourtney Kardashian says achievable for all in *Poosh's* about section, it really should read as something everyone should 'try' to achieve, no matter their socio-economic background and what potential economic and financial barriers this might entail. While it might seem from this that class and ethnicity are ignored in a postfeminist context, they actually play a central role (Gill, 2017; Dosekun, 2015). The point is that elements and aspects in relation to the wrong 'class' or 'ethnicity', i.e. not white and middle to upper class, are ignored. And what is not said, is sometimes more important than what is being said, or written in this case. Especially, to identify these unspoken aspects is crucial when using a (F)CDA. This is where the makeover paradigm ties in again.

The makeover paradigm, especially when used in the context of the entertainment business like reality-TV, is mainly used to 'educate' the audience through showing them what

not to do and what to do instead (Gill, 2007, 2017). Mostly in reality-TV shows the main focus is on showing the audience what not to do, often featuring people from working-class backgrounds (Gill, 2007, 2017; Wood, 2017). However, as within the articles discussed the focus is on Kourtney Kardashian and Kendall Jenner, who do conform with the postfeminist standards of class, in hindsight in this context, it is not surprising that the focus seems to be more on educating the audience on what to do. In other words, portraying the standards they should aim to achieve (no matter their socio-economic circumstances). A good 'neoliberal-citizen' should be self-regulating, self-governing, self-disciplining and be(come) 'a future-directed mobile self that can move through space and time with ease' (Wood, 2017, p. 46). Anyone who does not conform with this, can 'redeem' themselves through overcoming certain 'markers of class, race and excess' (Wood, 2017, p. 46), to conform with 'the expectations of work and self-work in the current neoliberal conjuncture' (Wood, 2017, p. 51).

This section so far has established how when it comes to the advice provided by *Poosh* in relation to the domestic space, especially featuring Kourtney Kardashian (including her half-sister) the focus is to provide advice and clever tips on how to manage and simplify this 'shift' rather than to question or challenge its nature. However, to reiterate neither *Poosh*, nor Kourtney Kardashian, claim to be feminist. Hence, they are not pretending that their aim is to liberate women (e.g. from the second shift) because there is an unspoken assumption that there is nothing to liberate women from. Instead, the discourses produced by *Poosh* promise that they can help women 'do it all', feeding into this 'cruel fantasy' and 'cruel optimism' narrative, which ultimately helps maintain the dominant norms and structures that cause women to be 'unequal' and unable to 'do it all' or even 'have it all' in the same way men do. However, this is not limited to the materialistic aspects in the domestic space within the

second shift, but can also be observed in the labour of and aspects surrounding 'cooking' which is a vital task within the second shift which will be discussed in the next section.

The intersection of the second and third shift: Optimising and simplifying food surveillance

While the previous section mainly focused on the more organisational and aesthetic aspects of the domestic space, this section will focus on the role food and cooking play in maintaining and transforming dominant norms and structures in a postfeminist culture and neoliberal society. Specifically, by exploring how *Poosh* conveys the role food and cooking should play in a woman's life. This was done by mainly focusing on the relevant articles that also featured Kourtney Kardashian, due to her celebrity status presumably increasing the articles' influence on the readership. Food and cooking, arguably lie at the intersection of the second and third shift in a neoliberal society, due to it having become an 'individual' project, rather than just a family-oriented task, which encourages the pursuit of wellness. Therefore, the role it plays in the context of the second and third shift will be viewed and discussed simultaneously, as it is nearly impossible to not discuss it without referring to both contexts.

Most of the articles featuring Kourtney Kardashian were recipe or food based. However, during the first phase of the research, the sub-theme household was initially not considered 'present' as links to the household are relational and pernicious. This is why they were not picked up during the coding part of the content analyses, which is a method that focuses on identifying explicit, rather than subtle themes. However, when these same texts were reanalysed using a critical discourse analysis, it yielded more results, due to the scope of this method allowing to identify subtle themes by considering them within a wider context. Therefore, it became clear that unspoken links in relation to the household were not absent.

Even though a transformation could be observed, which will be unpacked in this section, at its core cooking and/or being in charge of providing nourishment, still plays a role in maintaining dominant norms and structures in relation to the second shift and also third shift (i.e. 'body work').

Sub-Themes	Amount	Percent
Health	23	46.9
Food/Recipes	24	49
Appearance	17	34.7
Exercise(s)	10	20.4
Household	2	4.1
Productivity	1	2
Mood	5	10.2
Anxiety	4	8.2
Stress	6	12.2

Figure 31 – Sub-themes found in the articles featuring Kourtney Kardashian collected from Instagram.

Sub-Themes	Amount	Percentage
Health	171	43.2
Sex(uality)	46	11.6
Food/Recipes	154	38.9
R-relationship	61	15.4
O-relationship	19	4.8
Appearance	101	25.5
Exercise(s)	77	19.4
Household	21	5.3
Productivity	36	9.1
Mood	43	10.9
Anxiety	39	9.8
Stress	73	18.4

Figure 32 – Sub-themes found in the general articles collected from Instagram.

When looking at the data shown in figure 31, it shows that from the articles featuring Kourtney Kardashian almost half of them included food or a recipe(s) as a sub-theme. Hence, it is unsurprising that this was the most present sub-theme throughout the articles. Furthermore, the sub-theme 'health' was also almost as present with 46.9% occurrence throughout the articles featuring Kourtney Kardashian. Therefore, it might be unsurprising to find that they were often presented together in the same articles. This, however, indicates arguably the role food is supposed to play in women's life, as food within *Poosh* is portrayed as something that is supposed to be healthy, rather than for example, indulged in.

The same was fundamentally the case when looking at the data from the general Instagram collected articles, which can be seen in figure 32. The sub-themes of health and food/recipe were not exclusively present together, as health was also present in some articles that did not contain food/recipe as a sub-theme, which was mostly in relation to appearance or beauty⁷. Nevertheless, health was still mostly present when the article featured food and/or a recipe(s). However, from this it already becomes clear that health is used by *Poosh* as a legitimising discourse towards dieting and beauty regimes. In other words, helps to legitimise ‘beauty’ and ‘glamour’ labour (Elias, Gill & Scharff, 2017), under the cover that it is good for one’s health, even if by chance the results also cause one to comply with postfeminist beauty standards (Gill, 2017).

This is not surprising as, after all, *Poosh* as a ‘lifestyle’ business/brand has been situated by Kourtney Kardashian in the wellness sector, which can be defined as a space that ‘sell[s] strategies of health-enhancement’ (O’Neill, 2020b, p. 628). Thus, wellness can be seen as a concept that aims to improve one’s ‘health’ and ‘well-being’ through various strategies, which is particularly often associated with food and nutrition in Western culture, including the UK (O’Neill, 2020b). Moreover, this “wellness” journey can be seen as a ‘burgeoning movement-market’ (O’Neill, 2020b), which has been ‘sown’ and grown (in the Western World) due to social media, and especially Instagram. Furthermore, O’Neill (2020b) found that the ‘most brightly illuminated wellness entrepreneurs’ all seem to match the same particular profile: ‘young, slim, class-privileged, able-bodies, and almost uniformly white’ (O’Neill, 2020b, p.

⁷Therefore, health was classed as a separate sub-theme from food/recipe(s)

629). Kourtney Kardashian fits this profile too, apart from potentially the ‘uniformly white’ aspect, which O’Neill (2020b) did emphasise is only ‘almost’ always the case.

From a legal standpoint the Kardashians are considered white (Tehranian, 2020). This, however, can change as racial definitions seem to be continuously shifting, especially when it comes to the ‘legal’ definition (Tehranian, 2020). Furthermore, being ‘white’ is also a question of societal perception, where certain people might be considered ‘white’ within a certain context and ‘not-white’ in another (Tehranian, 2020). Nevertheless, just because Kourtney Kardashian might in some social contexts not be perceived as ‘uniformly white’ due to her Armenian background, it does not mean that she does not contribute towards promoting, what Dyer (1997) terms, the ‘glow of white women’ through her ‘wellness’ lifestyle, which is ultimately promoting the embodiment of ‘idealized femininity’ (O’Neill, 2020b).

This is especially the case when it comes to representations of ‘food work’ within the wellness lifestyle, and the ‘restrictive diet’ that is promoted is often displayed through the lens of upper-class white femininity (Wilkes, 2021). These ‘restrictive’ diets are often associated and underlined by ‘ideals of whiteness and neoliberal rhetoric’ (Wilkes, 2021, p. 2), due to them being mainly embraced, apart from celebrities, by upper- and middle-class white women. However, the issue is that these discourses surrounding these restrictive diets are promoted as normal and relatable, promoting ‘neoliberal mantras of the hard-working female entrepreneur and individual “choice”’ (Wilkes, 2021, p. 2). This narrative then feeds into the postfeminist claims of universality, which in turn ‘deny the structural advantages that are ascribed to upper-class white women’ (Wilkes, 2021, p. 2). Hence, no matter one’s ‘background’ the aim should be to become a ‘privileged white woman’ through eating ‘clean’,

as this is the ideal 'subject' within a neoliberal and postfeminist context (Wilkes, 2021). In other words, 'middle-class womanhood is idealised as a norm at the expense of the marginalisation of working class femininities' (Emre Cetin, 2016, p. 117-118).

In an 'acceleration society', time cannot be understood as a uniform experience, as time pressure is experienced differently depending on gender, especially if children are involved as they absorb 'an enormous amount of parental time, particularly from mothers' (Wajcman, 2008, p.64). Furthermore, while data has shown that men and women overall seem to have the same amount of leisure time, when both work, there is a significant difference in the 'quality' of this time (Wajcman, 2008). Women seem to experience a lot more 'interrupted' leisure, while men experience a lot more 'pure' leisure. This, often means that women's leisure time ends up being less 'restorative' than men's. Hence, 'the domestic division of labour, can produce qualitatively different experiences of time' (Wajcman, 2008, p. 65).

Kourt's New Oatmeal Recipe

Homemade oatmeal is a morning staple year-round, but with fall right around the corner it's especially comforting as temperatures start to drop. To update your go-to oats bowl we wanted to share Kourt's latest recipe. She likes to add a bit of vegan butter to make it perfectly creamy and just a little salty. Plus, she tops it with a selection of fresh fruit. And you can't forget the final step: sprinkled cinnamon.

Oatmeal is a classic breakfast dish for good reason: it's filling, full of fiber, and fuels your body with healthy nutrients for the day. Read on to learn the step-by-step instructions for Kourt's newest Oatmeal recipe below.

Recipe Type: Breakfast Serving Size: 1

Prep Time: 5 mins Cook Time: 20mins Total Time: 25mins

Kourt's New Go-To Salad

Recently *Kourt has been swapping her signature salad* with today's plate full of greens. If you follow anyone on the Poosh team, then you've probably seen us post about our weekly edit meeting salads. As *requested by our readers*, we're sharing the ingredients for the *healthy lunch option* that *Kourt eats each week*.

Recipe Type: Lunch or Dinner Serving Size: 1

Prep Time: 5 mins Cook time: 8mins Total time: 13mins

Kourt's New Go-To Salad *Kourt's giving her signature salad(s) a break this fall and swapping in today's healthy lunch option.* The crunchy zoodle creation is colorful and full of fresh flavors: Plus, it's *super easy to make*. She typically eats it two or three times a week and *never gets sick of it*. Learn the *step-by-step instructions* on how to *recreate her latest lunch* recipe below.

Recipe Type: Lunch Serving Size: 1

Prep Time: 5 mins Cook Time: 10mins Total Time: 15mins

Figure 33 – Partial text of articles on Kourt's New Oatmeal Recipe, Kourt's New Go-To Salad, and Kourt's New Go-To Salad. For the full text see Appendix 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6 respectively.

When looking specifically at the recipe articles featured in figure 33, one can observe a new sub-theme of 'quick and easy'. It seems that *Poosh* is trying to cater to the fact that women have less quality time than their male counterparts (Wajcman, 2008), in a neoliberal context. Therefore, *Poosh* provides recipes that are not only prepared 'quickly' but also supposedly not difficult to cook, while simultaneously still being healthy and nutritious. Furthermore, all three articles featuring Kourtney Kardashian's 'regular' meals in figure 33, feature 'new' or updated recipes, and therefore seem to reflect neoliberal elements of constant (self) improvement, and notions of 'the perfect' and 'glamour labour' can, again, be

observed (McRobbie, 2015; Wissinger, 2015). These aspects within *Poosh* extend into, and seem to even be required in, the 'cooking' domain of the second shift. Cooking and eating have become framed as individual projects (McRobbie, 2015), reflected in the serving sizes being indicative of one person within the recipes, and something that can and should always be improved.

Therefore, reflecting how it is up to the individual women to not only eat healthily, but to constantly *update* and *swap* her meals to make sure they are as 'healthy' and *perfect* as they can currently be, i.e. even one's diet being in a constant 'state of becoming' (McRobbie, 2015). In addition to this, the notion that beauty is also 'nourished' from within can be seen entangled within this (Elias, Gill & Scharff, 2017), which will be discussed in more detail later this chapter. Moreover, due to the detailed instructions provided here including the list of ingredients (not featured here), and that all these recipes can be done in less than half an hour, it arguably implies that there is no excuse to not eat healthily.

Thus, it becomes the woman's responsibility to manage to eat healthily, and if she does not, it is her individual fault, as 'lack of time' seems to not be an acceptable 'excuse' anymore. However, at the same time, the additional labour that is required around 'cooking' is ignored once again. For example, the food shopping and tidying up that needs to be done before and after cooking. This is probably because these are physical labours that can be delegated to other people, in the form of paid help, as already discussed in the previous part of the chapter. Therefore, this reflects again how throughout the articles the discourses surrounding the advantages of upper-class white women are presented as universal (Wilkes, 2021), which is not necessarily denied here, but rather simply assumed.

However, not everyone can afford to delegate these time-consuming tasks around ‘cooking’ (Charles & James, 2005; Gatrell, 2005; Hochschild, 2012). Therefore, there is a danger in ‘selling’ these tasks, like cooking, as something that is easy and quick to accomplish, as this could lead to the individual feeling like they have ‘failed’ if they do not succeed to cook and eat healthily despite trying to follow this advice. It also shows how essentially ‘cooking’, being responsible for providing food and nourishment, is still maintained as a feminised task. While in the past cooking has often been seen in relation to women’s duties as a (house)wife and mother, as it was (and still is) seen as a nurturing task, in a postfeminist culture it seems to have taken a central role in women’s life in relation to self-monitoring (Gill, 2007, 2017). This has caused the role of ‘cooking’, and providing nourishment, to be maintained as an essential ‘feminine’ task, linked to aspects of being ‘nurturing’ and ‘caring’, which in turn are re-established as feminine values (Blackstone, 2003).

In an interview with the *Guardian* Nigella Lawson herself once said: “Everybody likes to think cooks are nurturing, but maybe we’re just controlling – controlling what people eat.” (Freeman, 2020), which in a postfeminist and neoliberal context could arguably not be truer. Especially when it comes to women cooking for themselves, i.e. controlling what they eat. This is an interesting point and arguably provides a new way of thinking of the role of food and its preparation, and its effect on shaping the body, which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. While the standards regarding effort and the process of preparation have changed throughout the years, Nigella Lawson having played a crucial role within this aspect in British culture (Hollows, 2003), it seems that in relation to women food has always, and still does, carry an element of control (Emre Cetin, 2016).

This arguably reflects the sentiment expressed by Gill (2007,2017) that while one can observe a transformation within this aspect of the second shift, it is only in the form of motivation behind it, not the end results. While Gill in particular focused on the sexualisation of women's bodies when she made these claims, arguably the same can be said when it comes to 'food' and 'cooking', especially in relation to the sensibilities of 'self-control' and 'monitoring', as my findings demonstrate. Food has long been used as a way to 'control' women and encourage them to 'self-monitor' and 'survey' their bodies, and even if now 'health' is named as the main reasoning, as is the case for *Poosh*, the end result of women monitoring and surveying their bodies through food and nutrition remains (Emre Cetin, 2016).

Poosh maintains this through instructing women what they can(not) eat, if they want to be 'healthy', which is framed as a positive choice they should make (Cairns & Johnston, 2015). Furthermore, these dieting discourses constrain women through promising them that eating this way is not only 'morally responsible' but will also empower them (Cairns & Johnston, 2015). This, therefore, frames 'food choices through a lens of empowerment and health, rather than vanity and restriction' (Cairns & Johnston, 2015, p. 153). In other words, the postfeminist sensibility of self-monitoring can be seen to play a central role within this 'positive-diet-choice', underlined with the notion of 'empowerment', which became apparent in the articles featured below in figure 34.

What Kourt Eats in a Day: The vegan edition

'As you've probably noticed from Kourt's Instagram, she's gone (mostly, like 95%) vegan when it comes to her diet. From keto to intermittent fasting, she's *no stranger*

to adjusting her meals to live a healthier lifestyle. She's been easing into it for the past six to seven months with no meat (and the occasional butter and honey).

Since *she's leaning into* a plant-based diet (which she's also passionate about given the environmental impacts that eating less meat has on the planet), we wanted to *share a peek inside her daily plate.*

If you're thinking about becoming vegan, you can make the shift in small waves if that's easier for you. Start by replacing meat with plant-based options once a week and increase from there. Kourt admits when she first started, she couldn't resist and had a baked crab handroll while at dinner during the first few weeks. It's *all about balance and finding how and when you're comfortable with incorporating the changes into your lifestyle.*'

Kourt's favorite vegan Meals and Snacks

'Whether you're looking to slowly transition to a vegan lifestyle or are already on the V bandwagon and need some new recipe ideas, you're in the right place. Since Kourt has adjusted her diet to be vegan-friendly, *she's crafted a handful of tasty meals and snacks to add to her daily rotation.* From her *famous* quesadillas (that are perfect for a late-night grub session) to her *drooly-worthy* cinnamon toast (which is a breakfast staple in her household), read on to learn what else is on Kourt's vegan menu.

...Take a *read at your leisure*, and in the meantime, bookmark the below *delicious and filling* vegan meals and snacks Kourt loves.'

Figure 34 – Partial text of articles on What Kourt Eats in a Day: The vegan edition and Kourt's favorite vegan Meals and Snacks. For the full text see Appendix 2.7 and 2.8 respectively.

The main focus of the articles in figure 34, featuring Kourtney Kardashian's diet, is to demonstrate how Kourtney Kardashian manages to eat healthily on a daily basis. Kourtney Kardashian is again used here as a standard that the reader should measure themselves against and aspire towards. Hence, emphasising that there is no excuse to not eat healthily daily. Moreover, there are clear neoliberal undertones of constant (self-) improvement when the article discusses how Kourtney Kardashian is not a *stranger to adjusting her diet to be healthier*, which arguably tells the reader that one should constantly adjust one's diet if it can be 'healthier', as Kourtney Kardashian does.

Furthermore, the neoliberal element of individualism is present to remind the reader that *balancing* and *incorporating* these *changes* depends on themselves and their lifestyle. Hence, this shifts the responsibility for succeeding onto the individual, and more importantly makes them responsible if they fail (Gill, 2007, 2017). This again is concerning, as within the article on Kourtney Kardashian's favourite vegan meals and snacks, in figure 34, these 'invisible' labours, which have been discussed earlier, can be reobserved. For example, in the article, there is no mention on how Kourtney Kardashian acquired these groceries and ingredients that are needed before being able to prepare the meals, and the 'clean up' that is required afterwards. Therefore, again leaving the type of work that privileged (white) women can and often do delegate to 'other' women, unspoken as discussed earlier.

While at a superficial level what seems to be promoted is a 'healthy' lifestyle, which is also achieved through eating and fuelling one's body correctly, what is really provided is detailed advice on how to achieve a 'body' that conforms with postfeminist beauty standards, through controlling one's body by continuously self-monitoring. This feeds into what Elias, Gill,

& Scharff (2017) discussed as performing aesthetic labour from the ‘inside’, to achieve what O’Neill (2020a) describes as ‘glow from the inside out’.

Women are encouraged to eat ‘clean’ through consuming the right foods, which will help them enhance their ‘beauty’ from the inside, in a culture where beauty ideals and aesthetic labour demands are ever increasing (Elias, Gill & Scharff, 2017). This can be seen reflected in the articles in figure 35, where the first three articles focus on consuming the right nutrition in the form of beverages to help promote beauty from the inside, and the last article focuses on enhancing one’s ‘health’ and ‘appearance’ and even ‘energy’ by taking the right ‘supplements’ catered towards the individual.

Kourt’s New Green Smoothie Recipe

By now, you know Kourt drinks her avocado (or banana – which she recently started mixing into her rotation) shake every morning after her workout. It’s been her post-exercise tradition for years to hold her appetite over until lunch. Lately, she’s slightly updated the original recipe to include chocolate protein powder instead of vanilla and a few shakes of cinnamon, in addition to other small tweaks. Find out all the ingredients you need to make Kourt’s new green smoothie below.

Recipe Type: Lunch Serving Size: 1

Prep Time: 2 mins Total Time: 5 mins

Kourt’s Matcha Latte Recipe

Aside from a source of caffeine (sans the jitters), green tea has powerful mind, body, and beauty benefits like fighting inflammation and protecting your body against aging (thanks to vitamins B and E, it boosts collagen production), and it has been

shown to boost your metabolism so you burn fat as energy quicker. Need more convincing to add the green powder into your daily routine? Below we're sharing exactly how Kourt makes her matcha tea latte at home.

Though there's not much that goes into making matcha tea, Kourt has truly perfected how she takes her latte. ...it's such a treat...

Recipe Type: Beverage Serving Size: 2

Prep Time: 5 min. Total Time: 5 min.

Kourt's Iced Chagaccino Recipe

... So what exactly is chaga, and why are wellness devotees (Kourt included) so into it? Let's break it down.

Chaga is a type of mushroom ... has been used in traditional medicine in Northern Europe for centuries. Over the years, the adaptogenic powder gained hype in the wellness world thank to its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. It's also commonly known to increase the mental focus, reduce fatigue while balancing energy, and improve immune function since it's a natural antimicrobial. Chaga can be used as a natural caffeine alternative (without all the jittery side effects) to replace your daily brew. That said, some people do like to add chaga powder to their latter or morning cup of joe (aka mushroom coffee) to amplify the mood-boosting benefits.

Now that you know the mind and body health perks of chaga, find out how Kourt takes her chagaccino. Learn the simple recipe below.

Recipe Type: Beverage Serving Size: 1

Prep Time: 5 mins Total Time: 5 mins

Or shop the pre-made powder: Chagaccino RTD Powder Price: \$29.99

Kourt's Current Supplement Lineup

While supplements are a great part of a daily wellness ritual, not every supplement out there is necessary for every person, every day, and certainly not all brands are created equally. ...Other, times, they may be unaligned with our own personal health needs and goals, which can actually create an imbalance.

The right idea is to first assess how we're feeling. Tired? Stressed? Depleted? ...

If you're unsure, ask a doctor! ...

It's crucial not to blindly purchase supplements. ...Kourt's current supplement lineup is aligned with her diet and lifestyle, but that's always changing and evolving. These are just some quality, trusted brands that are totally Poosh-approved.

Figure 35 – Partial text of articles on Kourt's New Green Smoothie Recipe, Kourt's Matcha Latte Recipe, Kourt's Iced Chagaccino Recipe, and Kourt's Current Supplement Lineup. For the full text see Appendix 2.9, 2.10, 2.11, and 2.12 respectively.

The articles in figure 35 reflect this increasing focus in the beauty industry towards the 'inside' of the body (Elias, Gill, & Scharff, 2017), which is done through encouraging the consumer's demand for products like 'vitamins and minerals' or 'heavily promoted daily 'drinks' that promote collagen, anti-oxidant defences, and so on' (Elias, Gill, & Scharff, 2017, p.30). In addition, even though, the first three articles are not recommending 'supplements' directly, they still feed into current beauty narratives that Elias, Gill and Scharff (2017) discuss regarding how beauty, and especially anti-ageing, is something that is increasingly 'swallowed' (as can be seen in Kourtney Kardashian's medicine cabinet shown earlier). It is clear that beauty and domains like 'pharmacology, surgery, genetic science, digital technology and even food' (Elias, Gill & Scharff, 2017, p.30), are becoming more intertwined. *Poosh*, entails this

entwinement between 'food' and 'beauty', including, as mentioned previously, 'swallowing' beauty in the form of healthy smoothies or other shakes, and even taking supplements. This is becoming increasingly important in not only maintaining postfeminist beauty standards, but also in maintaining the vicious spiral of the ever 'becoming' aesthetic labour demands, which seems to have become entangled in the 'everyday' aspects of women's life(style) (McRobbie, 2015).

On top of the 'beauty' benefits, neoliberal elements can also be observed throughout the short recipe articles. In addition to the recipes, in figure 33 and 35, being able to be prepared quite fast, especially the recipe articles in figure 35 discuss how consuming these beverages and supplements will help increase the right 'type of energy', which in turn helps improve their productivity. Moreover, the neoliberal element of individualism can be observed in the supplement article in figure 35, where the reader is encouraged to take supplements to help with their 'overall wellbeing', but at the same time responsibility is transferred onto the individual again, as the reader is required to assess how they feel first, and to then identify what their individual needs are accordingly.

Furthermore, while the beauty industry is increasing the range of products that one can 'swallow' to help improve one's appearance from the inside out, arguably the notion that beauty is not only something one maintains from the outside but that one should also boost from the inside has been around for a while already (Elias, Gill & Scharff, 2017). Even though in the past it might have been more subtle, one can already recognise it in the notion of treating one's body as a temple (Hollows, 2000). This has evolved into the little less subtle notion of 'glowing from the inside out', which unsurprisingly is centred at its core around

'healthy eating' (O'Neill, 2020a). Compared to the notion of 'treating one's body as a temple', which focuses more on compensating to balance-out eating 'unhealthily', the 'glowing from the inside out' notion rather focuses on encouraging 'healthy eating' as an intuitive and enjoyable experience (O'Neill, 2020a). In other words, instead of promoting healthy eating as something that should be done to balance out the 'enjoyable' non-healthy eating, it tries to reframe (the mundane task of) eating 'healthily' as enjoyable. (O'Neill, 2020a).

This can also be observed in the articles in figure 33, where the very 'healthy' lunch and/or dinner options are being portrayed as something 'yummy' and enjoyable and the 'health' aspect of it seems to play more of a secondary role. Nevertheless, as can be seen in the articles in figure 33 and 34, the 'beauty' and 'body' benefits that eating these 'healthy' meals and beverages will provide are not ignored. Hence, while the motivation and narrative around eating (healthily) has changed, with 'enjoying' one's food being framed as the main element, it still ends up ultimately supporting 'beauty' and 'body' standards that correspond to the evermore demanding strict image of postfeminist beauty standards. Thus, at the core these postfeminist beauty standards are being maintained by framing 'cooking' and 'nurturing' their own bodies as an individual project, through monitoring what they eat. Neoliberalism can therefore be seen 'as a 'cultural invasion' which targets women's bodies through their eating habits and their understanding of food' (Emre Cetin, 2016, p. 117).

Hence, in a neoliberal society, and postfeminist culture, 'food' and its preparation seem to have become an individual project which plays a central role within performing 'glamour labour' and is underlined by notions of 'the perfect'. However, this raises the question of whether this is a continuation of the 'domestic goddess' narrative or a reaction

to it. The 'domestic goddess' narrative, to reiterate, was already a 'rebrand' of the 'selfless angel' that used to refer to the 'ideal woman' as 'a self-sacrificing person devoted to the physical and emotional well-being of others' (Gatrell, 2005, p.68), as discussed more thoroughly in the literature review. Its evolved form, the 'domestic goddess', would demonstrate this through cooking for her family and elevating her cooking to heavenly status (Gatrell, 2005). Therefore, the question is also whether this means that instead of cooking for one's family to demonstrate one's devotion to them, women should now cook for themselves to demonstrate their devotion to themselves?

It seems that while food and cooking have become an individual project as part of performing 'glamour labour' and trying to comply with wellness notions in women's life in a neoliberal society, it does not mean that they should not also cook for their families to demonstrate their devotion as a 'wife' and/or 'mother'. This can be inferred from looking at the article on Kourtney Kardashian's thanksgiving menu in figure 36, displayed below.

A peek at Kourt's Thanksgiving Menu

Curious about what Kourt will be serving this Thanksgiving? We thought you might be. That's why we're giving you a peek inside her Thanksgiving menu with three recipes from the Kardashian/Jenner family.

On the Thanksgiving menu is Kris' famous green bean casserole, candied sweet potatoes, and a special sweet potato souffle. Read on for the step-by-step directions, and watch Kourt and Sam make two of the recipes in our Poosh Palate video below.

[Kris' Green Bean Casserole](#)

Recipe Type: Side Dish	Serving Size: 8-10 people
Prep Time: 5 mins	Cook Time: 30mins
Total Time: 35mins	
<u>Candied Sweet Potatoes</u>	
Recipe Type: Side Dish	Serving Size: 12
Prep Time: 5 mins	Cook Time: 35mins
Total Time: 40mins	
<u>Sweet Potato Souffle</u>	
Recipe Type: Side Dish	
Prep Time: 20-30 mins	Cook Time: 1 hour
Total Time: 1hour30mins	

Figure 36 – Partial text of article on A peek at Kourt's Thanksgiving Menu. For the full text see Appendix 2.13.

The article in figure 36 shows how Kourtney Kardashian is still responsible for organising Thanksgiving, and in charge of what to serve during this holiday. Furthermore, by sharing what she will serve, and providing a detailed list of ingredients (not listed in the figure here), and simple and detailed instructions, it again reinforces that women should cook and 'look after' their family too, considering the serving sizes start at 8 people. This can also be seen from the comment within the article that Kris Jenner's (Kourtney Kardashian's mother) famous green bean casserole will be served. Hence, showing how the women provide the food to demonstrate they are devoted to their families, as there is no mention of any of the famous dishes that have been passed down or are being planned to be served by the men in the family. Furthermore, in the first article in figure 37, it is briefly mentioned that Kourtney Kardashian's healthy eating is extended to her *Poosh* team. Hence, is still seen as an act that ultimately demonstrates 'devotion', whether to oneself, one's family or even one's surroundings.

How Kourt Stays Healthy when eating out

'During the meet and greet with Kourt, ... wanted to know *how Kourt stays on track while eating clean*. Kourt shared her tips for when she would do keto to kickstart her summer body or intermittent fasting when she's getting ready for an event...

The team also shared *different healthy snacks that she's gotten us hooked on*, including her signature avocado shake... the importance of eating quality food and trying to eat carbs and heavier meals earlier in the day rather than ending the day with a massive dinner.

Kourt wrapped up her answer by giving ... one last token of healthy eating advice: "When I go to a restaurant, and *if I'm really trying to be good*, the hardest part is ordering the food. Once it comes, you're going to be happy with it. Even if you order vegetable soup, it's still going to taste good once it comes. Obviously, you'd rather order the French fries and a burger, but it's just *about making the wise order*, and once it arrives, *you're going to be fine*," Kourt explained.'

Cheat days Are Necessary – Here's how we do it

A healthy lifestyle requires balance – allowing yourself to hit the snooze button when you really need it, skipping the gym for quality time with friends, and of course cheat days. Yes, indulging every once in a while is self-care. Whether you follow a strict diet or not, we all deserve days off. No guilt and no boundaries...

"I cheat twice a day with a little something sweet after lunch and dinner. But when I did the keto diet, I was very strict six days a week and my cheat day was on Sundays. I'd go to the farmers market before church and get a matcha latte and chocolate croissant from Alfred's, and then after church, I'd head to Soho House for their buffet (all-you-can-eat waffles with

butter and syrup). On my recent trip to Turks, we had a handful of junky food, like Double Stuf Oreos and Cheetos for all of us to snack on.” – Kourt’

Figure 37 – Partial text of article on How Kourt Stays Healthy when eating out and Cheat days Are Necessary – Here’s how we do it. For the full text see Appendix 2.14 and 2.15 respectively.

When ‘cooking’ for oneself the focus should be on eating healthily, and in the end, this still reaffirms traditional notions that it is a feminine task to be in charge of providing nourishment, whether for oneself or others. This, as discussed, is motivated in particular through the influence of neoliberal elements, which create ‘cultural ideals around food, the body and lifestyle’ (Emre Cetin, 2016, p. 117). While there seems to be a shift of framing eating ‘healthily’ as something ‘joyful’, that one should never *get sick of*, interestingly this aspect of balance in one’s diet, concerning ‘cheat’ days, could still be found in the articles featuring Kourtney Kardashian in figure 37. However, instead of it being framed along the lines that one should compensate after having indulged food wise (Hollows, 2003), there is more of an emphasis that ‘cheat days’ are earned instead through normally following a healthy diet.

This can be observed in the articles in figure 37. The second one features Kourtney Kardashian and some of her *Poosh* team members⁸ and demonstrates this idea that these ‘cheat days’ are only possible (and allowed) if the other days are not cheat days, because even though the article states that *everyone deserves a day off*, you can only have a ‘day off’ if usually you eat ‘healthily’. Meanwhile the first article features Kourtney Kardashian giving tips on how not to ‘indulge’ even when eating out. This causes food to be classified into ‘good’ and ‘bad’ foods. Therefore, it shows how discourses surrounding the ‘healthy diet’ engenders guilt to help discipline bodies, ‘particularly those of women’ (Emre Cetin, 2016, p. 118). Hence, it

⁸ The *Poosh* team members comments were not included here.

should still be seen as a form of 'calculated hedonism' (Hollows, 2003), which entails notions of self-monitoring and surveillance, as it is up to the individual to *make the wise order*. In other words, as Morris (2019) puts it, 'women are subject to disciplinary discourses that encourage an omnipresent regulation of their bodies' (Morris, 2019, p. 143).

However, even though this development of including oneself in taking care of one's physical well-being could be seen as a positive transformation, as it is accompanied by this notion of (self) surveillance and monitoring, it ultimately encourages and maintains dominant body and beauty ideals as discussed before. Furthermore, these ideals are underlined by the postfeminist sensibility of 'focus on the body', which feeds into this ever 'becoming' demand of aesthetic labour (Elias, Gill, & Scharff, 2017). This, in turn, is masked under the pretence of 'health', which is promoted to women, by wellness lifestyle influencers like Kourtney Kardashian, as not only a way to 'physically' realise their best potential, but also as a way to empower themselves, which ultimately is a 'personal responsibility' (Cairns & Johnston, 2015; O'Neill, 2020a, 2020b). Food and eating has become gendered through this neoliberal framework, which is 'led by feelings of guilt and anxiety' (Emre Cetin, 2016, p. 118).

Hence, contemporary food cultures seem to be predominantly driven by neoliberalism (Emre Cetin, 2016), which help maintain the responsibility and task of cooking as an essential feminine role (Blackstone, 2003). Therefore, women are increasingly embodying neoliberal values and discourses through food and exercise practices (Moore, Fall 2012/Spring 2013), which is framed as an individual project that requires constant monitoring, and is accompanied by the neoliberal elements of (self) improvement and individualism.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored how the second shift in women's life is framed by *Poosh* in the context of a postfeminist culture and neoliberal society. It has found that the line between the second and third shift has become increasingly blurry in contemporary postfeminism. Kourtney Kardashian as a lifestyle celebrity, operating within this postfeminist and neoliberal context via *Poosh*, is reinforcing dominant discourses when used to give (in)direct advice on how to navigate this 'second shift'. This, therefore, reaffirms the 'naturalness' of this shift in women's lives, rather than challenging it. The role *Poosh* plays in transforming these dominant norms and structures in relation to the second shift, is mainly to alter the motivation behind undertaking it and what specific aspects to focus on. This includes tying aspects of the third shift to the second shift, by blurring the line between them. As a result, *Poosh* is motivating women to try and comply with evermore demanding expectations of the 'perfect', especially in relation to performing 'aesthetic' and 'glamour' labour. The discourses produced by *Poosh* simultaneously maintain that the second shift is a feminine task, and reinforce its 'naturalness', using neoliberal messages of constant (self) improvement and individualism, and the postfeminist sensibilities of 'focus on the body', (self-) surveillance and monitoring, and the makeover-paradigm. Thus, through this ever more nuanced and detailed advice, it increases the expectations and demands of domestic labour, seemingly creating an endless vicious spiral of reaffirming and reinforcing the dominant norms and structures attached to this 'shift', which creates a state of 'unfulfillable lack', and a constant 'state of becoming', as one can always 'improve', with no final end point to work towards. The next chapter will focus on continuing this discussion, by focusing more on how the third shift (i.e. 'body work') in women's life is being framed in the context of a postfeminist culture and neoliberal society.

Chapter Six

Discussion Part II

Body work as a third shift: Transforming and maintaining postfeminist beauty standards through wellness practices

This chapter will focus on the influence of postfeminist sensibilities on the third shift, specifically on body work. The focus will be once more on discussing the role Kourtney Kardashian and *Poosh* play in maintaining and/or transforming the dominant norms and structures but this time in relation to the third shift in a postfeminist culture. While the aim is again to bring to light the postfeminist sensibilities that play a more dominant role within transforming, while simultaneously maintaining, the third shift; the slippage between the shifts should be kept in mind throughout. Nevertheless, the main focus will be on exploring how the third shift plays a vital role in maintaining gender inequality through reinforcing and legitimising the socially constructed differences between the genders.

The first section of this chapter will focus on body work, the third shift, and how the postfeminist sensibility of 'focus on the body' is still very much present, even though it has evolved to become more complex as will be discussed. It will also show how the body work postfeminism contributes towards legitimises gender differences based on 'natural' body differences, even though they are constructed through this body work. The second section of the chapter will build on the first, by demonstrating how the 'focus on the psychological' has become not only more prominent as a postfeminist sensibility, but has become increasingly intertwined with the postfeminist sensibility of 'focus on the body'. It shows how having the right 'look' does not suffice anymore in a postfeminist culture, but that the right 'attitude' is also needed. In particular, the notion of 'confidence' is becoming increasingly central to the

idea of 'succeeding' in a neoliberal society. The chapter will finish with the third section looking at how consumerism is presented as a solution and something that is needed to succeed within a postfeminist lifestyle.

Re-sexualisation of the body: Complying with evermore demanding beauty expectations

This section will continue building on the later section from the previous chapter, but will focus primarily on discussing body work, the third shift, and particularly the aspects that are influenced by the postfeminist sensibility of 'focus on the body'. From the articles that featured Kourtney Kardashian, there were quite a few that focused on exercise and appearance. A selection of those articles will be used to discuss how body work is being portrayed by *Poosh*, and how this contributes towards maintaining the dominant norms and structures that are tied to the third shift. Furthermore, it will demonstrate how Kourtney Kardashian as a celebrity is helping maintain the expectation on ordinary women to strive towards obtaining these unrealistic body and beauty standards.

When looking at the data, two main elements were discovered that Kourtney Kardashian focused on to maintain her body 'standard', which were food and exercise. The former one has already been discussed in the previous chapter. However, looking at the data revealed that apart from showing how Kourtney Kardashian maintains her body to conform with dominant beauty standards, she also performs a lot of 'external' aesthetic labour in the form of skincare and other appearance related practices. The concept of 'health' is again used as a legitimising discourse to justify the narrative around these elements. Moreover, the postfeminist sensibility of 'focus on the body', and the neoliberal elements of 'self-surveillance' and constant (self) 'improvement' could again be identified within these narratives.

Sub-Themes	Amount	Percent	Sub-Themes	Amount	Percentage
Health	23	46.9	Health	171	43.2
Food/Recipes	24	49	Sex(uality)	46	11.6
Appearance	17	34.7	Food/Recipes	154	38.9
Exercise(s)	10	20.4	R-relationship	61	15.4
Household	2	4.1	O-relationship	19	4.8
Productivity	1	2	Appearance	101	25.5
Mood	5	10.2	Exercise(s)	77	19.4
Anxiety	4	8.2	Household	21	5.3
Stress	6	12.2	Productivity	36	9.1

Figure 38 – Sub-themes found in the articles featuring Kourtney Kardashian collected from Instagram.

Figure 39 – Sub-themes found in the general articles collected from Instagram.

When looking at figure 38, which features the sub-themes found in the articles featuring Kourtney Kardashian, one can see that 10 contained the sub-theme exercise and 17 the sub-theme appearance (which focused on distinguishing non-physique related elements in relation to appearance, from physique related notions within the exercise sub-theme). Moreover, when looking at the general articles in figure 39, the sub-theme exercise was equally less prominent than non-physique related elements of appearance. This shows an interesting shift within postfeminism, where certain non-physique related ‘appearance’ standards, which will be outlined later, seem to have become more important to conform with than achieving a certain physique or complying with certain body measurements that are often related to heteronormative beauty standards. This shift is also confirmed when looking specifically at the postfeminist sensibilities present throughout the data.

Sensibilities	Amount	Percent
Focus on the Body	23	46.9
Neoliberal Elements	13	26.5
Psychological	6	12.2
Double Entanglement	1	2
None	21	42.9

Figure 40 – Postfeminist sensibilities found in the articles featuring Kourtney Kardashian collected from Instagram.

Sensibilities	Amount	Percentage
Focus on the Body	198	50
Sexual Freedom	30	7.6
Neoliberal Elements	139	35.1
Psychological	140	35.4
Double Entanglement	27	6.8
None	70	17.7

Figure 41 – Postfeminist sensibilities found in the general articles collected from Instagram.

Figure 40 contains the postfeminist sensibilities that were present in the articles featuring Kourtney Kardashian, and figure 41 shows the ones found in the articles collected via the Instagram page. While, in both figures one can observe that the ‘focus on the body’ sensibility is still very prevalent, when looking more precisely, it can be concluded from the data that the focus is more on appearance, rather than on the ‘figure’.

Sub-Sensibilities	Amount	Percent
Figure focussed	8	16.3
Appearance focussed	17	34.7
(self)surveillance	13	26.5
Individualism	6	12.2
Self-Improvement	8	16.3
Make-over Paradigm	3	6.1

Figure 42 – Postfeminist-'sub'-sensibilities found in the articles featuring Kourtney Kardashian collected from Instagram.

Sub-Sensibilities	Amount	Percentage
Figure Focussed	74	18.7
Appearance Focussed	89	22.5
Body-Focussed (Sex)	10	2.5
Relationships	65	16.4
Emotional Labour	44	11.1
Irony and Knowingness	3	0.8
(Self)-surveillance	162	40.9
Confidence	29	7.3
Sexual-differences notion	10	2.5
Individualism	144	36.4
Self-improvement	109	27.5
Makeover-Paradigm	35	8.8

Figure 43 – Postfeminist-'sub'-sensibilities found in the general articles collected from Instagram.

Figure 42 shows the postfeminist sub-sensibilities that were present throughout the articles featuring Kourtney Kardashian, and figure 43 the postfeminist sub-sensibilities throughout the general collected articles. One can see in figure 42 that in 34.5% of the articles that featured Kourtney, the sub-sensibility ‘appearance’ can be found, while the sub-sensibility

'figure' was only present in circa half the number of articles. This tendency was less severe in figure 43, but 'appearance' with 22.5% was still present more often throughout the general articles than 'figure' with 18.7% occurrence. This might be due to postfeminism reacting to the criticism around body-shaming by rather evolving around it through incorporating it. In this instance, it seems that *Poosh* is trying to rather cater towards body positivity activists, who 'encourage fat women to learn to liberate themselves from dieting through acts of self-love' (Morris, 2019, p.18) , by encouraging women to choose to 'accept and love their bodies' (ibid, p. 144), and rather participate in practices such as 'fat-shion'. Because, even though, *Poosh* is certainly not directly addressing 'fat' women or even advocating for 'fat-shion', and the images and aesthetics they use continue encouraging the pursuit of being 'thin'; by never centring this or even using the word 'thin' (instead replacing it with notions of health/wellness), the messages can conceivably be received by all women as 'for them'. Therefore, notions of 'body positivity' can be co-opted by those who fit into narrow standards of beauty because it encourages the celebration of 'all' bodies. Hence, ultimately encouraging women of 'all' body types to participate in postfeminist culture through consumerism, as all bodies have the potential 'to be made into signs for consumption' (Toffoletti, 2014, p. 116).

However, Toffoletti (2014) warns that potential 'should not be construed as offering some sort of liberation for women from the confines of a patriarchal beauty ideal' (p.117). Rather, it causes no one to be 'exempt from being or becoming beautiful....[as] beauty isn't measured by a narrow standard only few can meet' (ibid); instead it is something everyone can achieve through adhering to the right beauty practices (Elias, Gill, & Scharff, 2017). This is the same message that *Poosh* propagates, by firstly stating in general that the advice, including on appearance, is applicable by and to all. Secondly, the articles giving advice on skincare

and/or makeup focus on promoting the right products, needed to accomplish the right look, which, therefore, can be achieved by anyone who acquires these products. This includes having the right style, by acquiring the right clothes and accessories. Third, the exercise articles are often promoted as something to do for one's health. Even when they do focus on, for example how to get a snatched waist or firm buttocks, there is never a focus on achieving certain measurements or a target weight. Furthermore, it is always phrased in a way that anyone who follows the advice should achieve the promised results.

Furthermore, what is interesting when looking at the sub-sensibilities in figure 43, is that there is a small focus on the body specifically in relation to sex in 2.5% of the cases. What is interesting about this, considering how *Poosh* seems to try to portray a very 'sex-positive' image, is that in the articles featuring Kourtney Kardashian this sub-sensibility is not present at all, which will be expanded on later in the chapter. However, this also means that 7.92% of the articles where the postfeminist sensibility of 'focus on the Body' could be observed were not in relation to either appearance, figure, or sex. Instead, there was an exclusive focus on the body in relation to 'health'.

Overall, there seems to have been a shift regarding the 'focus on the body' sensibility, as when Gill (2007) initially introduced it she was referring mostly to the 'figure', and even in her 'revisit' of the postfeminist sensibilities in 2017, she talked more about the psychological becoming more prominent and did not address this shift away from the 'figure' as thoroughly yet. Nevertheless, in my findings one can still observe the sentiment expressed by Gill (2007,2017) that the only aspect that is changing is the motivation behind it, not the end result. This is because, even if some of the articles containing the postfeminist sensibility 'focus

on the body' were framed exclusively around the aspect of 'health', the end result of following their advice would still help maintain dominant postfeminist beauty standards.

Furthermore, the (sub)theme of 'exercise(s)' was mentioned around 19.4% of the time throughout all articles collected via Instagram, and 20.4% in the articles featuring specifically Kourtney Kardashian. However, compared to the 'health' and 'food/recipes' (sub)themes, exercise was not mentioned as much throughout other 'themed' articles, but mainly when the article was focused on providing exercise plans and/or advice. Hence, it was much more concentrated, but definitely still prevalent. Moreover, what was very interesting concerning the articles focused specifically in relation to exercise, just like the 'recipe' articles, was that they were mostly very short content-wise and that a sub-theme of 'quick and easy' could be observed again, see figure 44. In other words, here it can also be observed that *Poosh* is acknowledging and giving advice around the fact that women have less time nowadays. However, even if they remove the unrealistic cooking and workout (time) standards, they are still not challenging that women should not have to 'work-out' regularly, just like they should not need to be responsible for cooking and providing food for their family.

Kourt's Jump Rope Routine

True story, Kourt is a jump rope beast. ... we asked her for her exact routine, and as she was telling us, the team was truly impressed at her roping stamina. Mainly because the rest of us are just now picking up on the old-school activity (well, reintroducing it into our fitness rotation) and needles to say are a little rusty. Kourt, ... is a pro and is *helping us set our jump rope goals* so we can (*hopefully...yes, mild*

wishful thinking here) *get on her level*. Turn on our *at-home workout* playlist and learn Kourt's jump rope drill below.

This is a great activity ... *You can do it in the driveway or in the backyard.*

Kourt's #1 At-Home Workout to Tone Lower Abs

If you watched Kourt's recent video with Khloe ... then you heard Kourt share this nugget of great workout advice. She explained that one of the best at-home exercises to tone your lower abs is the old-school trick of lying down on the floor, having someone stand behind you, and holding the other person's ankles while they push your legs down. You know which one we're talking about – it's a classic for good reason. Repeat this as many times *as your core can take it.*

Since we're still in quarantine and social distancing, you can rework this move without another person. Instead of using a partner, you can hold onto the side of your bed or a heavy chair and perform the leg lifts. You can even wear ankle weights to *up the intensity.*

... and shop essentials to update your *at-home workout* gear.

Kourt's HIIT Workout

Ready to learn Kourt's high-intensity interval training (HIIT) workout? Below, our in-house Poosh trainer, Amanda Lee, is breaking down the HIIT routine she does with Kourt. If cardio's your thing, this is the workout for you. *Intensify* your next fitness session with these four moves, and shop Kourt's leggings and sports bra at the end.

Figure 44 – Partial text of article on Kourt's Jump Rope Routine, Kourt's #1 At-Home Workout to Tone Lower Abs, and Kourt's HIIT Workout. For the full text see Appendix 2.16, 2.17, and 2.18 respectively.

The articles in figure 44, show how the 'work-out' articles are structured in a similar way to the 'recipe' articles, discussed in the previous chapter. They are short, to the point, and include a list of exercises (not featured here). Furthermore, they are often exercises that are

presented as workouts that can be done ‘anywhere’. Thus, they do not require any gym equipment. Moreover, the workouts are presented in a way that you can get the maximum results out of a ‘short’ workout. The neoliberal element of constant (self-) improvement can be observed again, through encouraging its reader to ‘intensify’ their workout routine, to make it as efficient as possible. Of course, it should be noted that efficiency in itself is another principle of neoliberalism. Hence, while it seems that *Poosh* is trying to cater to the fact that most women do not have an hour or more to exercise, this needs to be compensated through making that short workout ‘count’ and be as intense and efficient as possible within that short time span.

Thus, *Poosh* is contributing towards making the third shift, body work, another ‘essential’ job in women’s lives, and using Kourtney Kardashian as a standard to measure against once more. In the first article in figure 44, the ‘*Poosh*-team’ is literally measuring themselves in relation to Kourtney Kardashian, and by telling the reader that they aim to be as ‘good’ at exercising as her, they are arguably encouraging the readers to be too. Furthermore, by stating that trying to be as much of a *pro* as Kourtney Kardashian, is *wishful thinking*, in brackets, they are also telling their reader that they should keep aiming to achieve this even though they might never achieve this level of fitness. Hence, we can observe again this endless spiral of ‘becoming’ (McRobbie, 2015), and the influence of glamour labour at work here (Wissinger, 2015).

Moreover, the neoliberal element of individualism can also be found, with statements such as ‘repeat this as many times as your core can take it’, which arguably again shifts the responsibility onto the individual, and makes exercising an ‘individual’ project. Hence, feeding

again into McRobbie's (2015) idea of 'the perfect'. By claiming that these 'tasks' can be done really quickly and that they are very simple, it arguably causes more pressure to be put on women, as there is even less of an 'excuse' to not exercise, just like with eating healthily. Hence, reinforcing dominant structures and norms related to the 'third shift', i.e. in maintaining dominant beauty standards and reinforcing certain gender roles.

Furthermore, the fact that the 'exercises' can be done anytime, for example, while watching TV, and anywhere, especially at home, was often emphasised. Hence, this not only reinforces the notion of multi-tasking, which is often associated with women, but it also trivialises the degree of intensity working out entails as a task, while also establishing that women belong in the domestic space. Therefore, this reconfirms women's place and role within the second shift. Otherwise, arguably why would it be 'easier' for women to exercise at 'home' while e.g. watching TV. Thus, while the pursuit of a 'thin' physique is rarely explicitly stated as the aim of exercise, through the use of the (F)CDA it became apparent that a 'thinner' figure is almost inevitable when one considers the content of these (and the aforementioned recipe/food) articles even if the primary motivation stated is health.

By centering their discourse on diet and exercise around health and not on obtaining a 'thin' physique, *Poosh* arguably provides a way for women to 'lose weight' without having to feel 'guilty' about it. As Morris (2019) found, even when women are aware of the suppressive aspects of dieting discourses, it does not necessarily stop them from wanting to obtain a thin physique, but simply causes them to feel guilty about wanting to lose weight. Avoiding discussions about a 'thin' figure is thus arguably a way for *Poosh* to circumvent the potential issues their advice might create. Hence, it seems that postfeminism has integrated the

criticisms around ‘body image’ and has evolved and adapted, while still achieving the same results. This sentiment can be reflected in the pictures that accompany the articles (whether as the stories’ backgrounds or within the articles), they almost all portray thin and conventionally (hetero) white-standard ‘attractive’ bodies/silhouettes.

From all the articles few showed non ‘thin’ bodies, which almost reinforced the norm again as they were so out of place in the abundance of the other ‘figure’ standard that was demonstrated (Lazar, 2007). This links to the next point of discussion, on how ‘gendered bodies’ are not as natural as often portrayed, but are also shaped and educated to ‘emphasise’ the difference between male and female bodies, to justify different gender roles based on the belief that ‘the sexes have fundamentally dissimilar bodies, tastes, and abilities, excel at different tasks, and are suited to different social roles’ (Shilling, 2015, p. 24). The first article in figure 45, shows the intertwinement between ‘exercise’ and ‘appearance’, because even though ‘appearance’ might have become more of a focus, both aspects essentially are part of the ‘focus on the body’ postfeminist sensibility.

How Kourt is Managing Her New Short Hair

With a new chop comes a new haircare regimen. Since Kourt recently revealed her shortcut, we wanted to share how she’s updated her ~mane~ maintenance. We’re revealing what’s changed in her daily routine, the vibe behind her new hairstyle, and how it’s *so much easier to maintain during her workouts*.

Kourt’s Hairstylist Spills The Secret To Shiny Hair

Honey, don’t let anyone dull your shine – especially when it comes to your mane. In the summer months, it can feel like humidity has a personal vendetta against us all – turning our locks into frizzy, untamed monsters. Couple that with breakage and

dull, dry hair and it can feel like a losing battle. We tapped Andrew Fitzsimons, Kourt's longtime hairstylist, to detangle the truth around shine, and give us the tricks of the trade behind her smooth-as-glass hair.

The Root of the Problem

"Generally, people who have shiny hair have a very healthy diet. It's the fundamental factor of great hair and skin." ...

Rinse, Don't Repeat

"Having a good shampoo and conditioning regimen is a close second behind diet. It's important to figure out the longest you can go without shampooing your hair. For some, your hair becomes greasy more quickly, so you have to wash your hair more often, but over-washing your hair can leave it looking dull."

Figure 45 – Partial text of article on *How Kourt is Managing Her New Short Hair and Kourt's Hairstylist Spills The Secret To Shiny Hair*. For the full text see Appendix 2.19 and 2.20 respectively.

Even though the focus of the first article, featured in figure 45, is on how Kourtney Kardashian has changed her haircare regimen after changing her hairstyle, it is also emphasised how this change has made it *so much easier* for Kourtney Kardashian *to maintain her hair during her workouts*. Hence, it appears that when working out one still needs to be aware and take care of one's appearance. Furthermore, it reflects the increase in aesthetic labour that is demanded of women, as not only is the neoliberal individualism element again present, as each individual needs to take care of their hair differently, but apparently one needs to even adapt this 'care-regimen' when changing one's haircut, which arguably also involves the 'makeover paradigm' again.

Interestingly, the second article in figure 45, mentions how diet is clearly the most important aspect in how to achieve healthy shiny hair, and that the right ‘products’ like shampoo and conditioner are only second, even if close. This again reflects the move into how beauty is also something fuelled and maintained from the inside (Elias, Gill & Scharff, 2017; O’Neil, 2020), as discussed in the previous chapter. The articles reinforce again the point that eating ‘healthily’ will result in good looking hair and skin. In other words, looking ‘good’ is portrayed as the result of eating healthily. This again shows how in the wellness lifestyle sector ‘health’, especially in the form of what one consumes nutrition-wise, is a reaction to ever-more increasing beauty demands, that need to be fulfilled through evermore demanding glamour labour (Wissinger, 2015).

Furthermore, especially here in the case of *Poosh*, a ‘natural’ aesthetic and beauty is promoted. While on the one hand a lot of aesthetic and glamour labour is being promoted to its audience, the results need, however, not reflect this effort and labour behind it, but instead should seem ‘natural’ while at the same time flawless. This builds on Smith et al.’s (2022) work, where they discuss how the calls to look natural from the “no-makeup movement”, did ‘not reduce the value placed on looking attractive, but rather highlight[ed] another aspect of appearance enhancement that consumers need to manage – the amount of effort others believe went into their appearance’ (Smith et al., 2022, p. 324). This contributes to the ‘natural versus fake’ dichotomy which, in relation to ‘proper’ versus ‘improper’ femininity, is highlighted by Rogan (2023) whose research revealed that the ‘production of beauty was only aspirational and appealing insofar it could be considered as appearing natural’ (p. 155), no matter the actual effort and cost that went into achieving the ‘natural’ look. Rogan (2023) argues that the success of the ‘natural’ look is due to its association with the more

'respectable' version of the 'white, middle-class', which is put into contrast to a 'fake', and therefore, problematic look that overtly displays sexuality.

The articles in figure 46, demonstrate the extensive effort that should go into one's appearance, while making sure the end result 'signal[s] low effort to others' (Smith et al., 2022). Hence, this changes what 'natural' looks like if it contains so many steps to be achieved, which links back to the always camera-ready look by Wissinger (2015), discussed in the literature review, that demands evermore unrealistic and unachievable beauty standards. This reflects the ever-becoming aspect of 'the perfect' where women continuously strive towards a beauty 'image' they will never achieve (McRobbie, 2015).

Kourt's No-Makeup Glow Routine

A day in the (non-glam) life of Kourt. To clarify, when we say non-glam, we're referring to the days she doesn't have her hair and makeup squad. Other than that, her life is always

slightly glamorous because it's Kourt and pretty damn fabulous ofc.

So what's the secret sauce to keep her skin glowing with little to no makeup? Let's walk you through it.

Shop Kourts Nude-ish Makeup Look

Summertime calls for a fresh makeup routine that doesn't require too much time or effort. Enter: the nude-ish look. We tapped Kourt's makeup artist ... to walk us through just how to achieve a natural glow this season... Get your glow on below with the step-by-step instructions and shopping list at the end.

Kourt's Fall Skincare Routine

Our vibe right now? Fresh for fall. Wellness, beauty, wardrobe, and of course our skincare selection. Since skin tends to freak out as the seasons change, the post-summer, pre-fall transition calls for slight alterations in our skincare regimen. Think ... products ... to enhance that natural glow.

Since Kourt likes to alternate what she uses in her skincare routine, we asked her to share the top items in her fall lineup. It's a mix of tried-and-true products she swears by year-round, plus a few new additions she's using to boost her skin for the upcoming season. Keep reading for a peek inside her fall skincare essentials and ... why she likes each item.

The Makeup Tips Kourt Recently Learned from Kylie

Glam by Kylie. ... the makeup queen taught her oldest sister a few new application tricks. Kourt said after the session that it made her appreciate the process more because Kylie truly doesn't skip a step – she goes all out. Ahead, we're sharing the tips Kourt picked up from the cosmetic guru and the ways she'll apply her makeup differently from now on.

Figure 46 – Partial text of article on Kourt's No-Makeup Glow Routine, Shop Kourts Nude-ish Makeup Look, Kourt's Fall Skincare Routine, and The Makeup Tips Kourt Recently Learned from Kylie. For the full text see Appendix 2.21, 2.22, 2.23, and 2.24 respectively.

The first article in figure 46, for example, is labelled 'Kourt's no-makeup glow up' routine, even though in the text they immediately expand that what is meant with this is, the makeup look Kourtney Kardashian applies herself, when she does not make use of her *hair and makeup squad*. However, what can be seen is that even when she is not being styled 'professionally' Kourtney Kardashian always makes sure to look 'glowing'. This encourages 'ordinary' women to replicate 'the flawless, unreal, glamour of a supermodel [and/]or celebrity' (Felski, 2006, p. 278), as '[u]nder this regime, any body can be ... beautiful, ... not just

those ... women who ... have flawless faces' (Toffoletti, 2014, p. 116). However, the effort that went into this 'natural look' is not allowed to show, as it would otherwise expose the 'expensive, elaborate, and time-consuming' aspect associated with this 'natural' beauty that still demands women to look flawless (Felski, 2006; Toffoletti, 2014; Wissinger, 2015; Smith et al., 2022).

Moreover, in the second and third article in figure 46, the makeover paradigm, underlined by the neoliberal element of constant (self) improvement, can be observed again, as one's makeup routine needs to constantly be updated and tailored to suit even with the different seasons, in this case summer and autumn. Moreover, in the last article in figure 46, it is stated how Kourtney Kardashian *appreciated the (makeup) process more* (after the session with her younger sister) because *Kylie Jenner* (Kourtney Kardashian's half-sister) *does not skip a step, but goes all out*. Hence, enforcing what Elias, Gill, and Scharff (2017) discuss on how aesthetic labour is becoming evermore demanding, and that simply putting on 'lipstick' has now turned into a 10 step process.

In figure 47, both articles are arguably also situated in this wider phenomenon of performing beauty and/or glamour labour from the inside out, already discussed in the previous chapter. However, while the previous chapter mainly focused on the aspects concerned with enhancing 'beauty' or i.e. 'appearance' from the inside, the articles here are an extension of this, as they reflect how 'body work' seems to have also become something to increasingly do from the 'inside' out. For example, the first article focuses on *detoxing* and *resetting* the 'body', and again is framed as something to do for one's health. While it is also framed as 'me' time, it does still contribute to establishing this 'third shift' as something

essential in women's life. This also demands evermore taxing aspects in relation to 'body work', especially in the form of monitoring and 'controlling' one's body.

Kourt's Sauna Detox Routine

There's nothing quite like sweating it out (big exception: when you're wearing a silk top ... pit stains are everyone's enemy). Whether it's a tough day at the office, blowing off steam from a text conversation with an ex, or simply carving out alone time for self-care – situation aside, sweating is one of the healthiest ways to detox and reset your body.

As part of Kourt's wellness routine, she uses sauna bathing to detox five days a week. Here's her exact pattern: 10 minutes in the sauna, a cold rinse, wait 3 minutes, and then 10 minutes again in the sauna, repeated five days a week. Tip: wear a hair wrap if you don't want your hair to get sweaty – Kourt wears our Aquis x Poosh turban when she wants to keep her hair in place. ...

If these health advantages aren't enough to convince you to add the habit to your wellness routine, consider the time spent in the sauna as glorified "me" time where you clear your head and mentally reset while sweating out the day's noise.

Kourt's De-Bloating Massage Routine

Whether you're bloated from **your period** or perhaps a heavy dinner from the night before – it's never a good feeling. Your clothes fit a little tighter, your belly feels full of gas, and it's nearly impossible not to think about how uncomfortable your body feels – We've all been there and know the discomfort all too well.

Luckily, there are remedies, like this [list of supplements](#) and [these exercises](#) to help reduce the excess buildup. To add to our helpful solutions, we tapped Detox Massage Creator, Rebecca Faria, who recently worked on Kourt, to give us the lowdown on everything we need to know about the power of a detoxifying massage. Keep reading to learn the technique, benefits, and how to re-create the results of the treatment from the comfort of your home.

Figure 47 – Partial text of article on Kourt’s Sauna Detox Routine and Kourt’s De-Bloating Massage Routine. For the full text see Appendix 2.25 and 2.26 respectively.

In the second article, in figure 47, the advice is all about how to *de-bloat*. Even though, arguably, bloating is a natural response of the body, it seems to be expected of women to now do something about it in the form of ‘body work’. Within the article there are two links to other articles that will help control and get rid of bloating in the form of supplements and through physical exercises. Meanwhile the article suggests a third option on what ‘work’ can be done to get rid of bloating. Furthermore, within this article we can find the domestic aspect again, as it is specifically emphasised that this ‘work’ can be done *from the comfort of the home*.

Moreover, it is interesting how in this second article ‘periods’ are mentioned as culprits for this bloating. This is because while on the one hand *Poosh* seems to provide an educational and informative aspect when it comes to women’s bodies and their ‘natural’ reproductive processes, which is arguably not always easily and freely available to girls and/or women, it on the other hand also feeds into emphasising the ‘natural’ differences between male and female bodies when considered in a wider context. Furthermore, even though *Poosh* states that you should do body work to de-bloat for ‘comfort’ reasons, this contributes to a wider context where women should educate and form their bodies to take as small a space as possible, while men are often encouraged to take up space (Shilling, 2015). Hence, gendered bodies are not

as natural as often portrayed, but are shaped and educated to ‘emphasise’ the difference between male and female bodies, which happens from birth onwards. This helps maintain dominant norms and structures, as ‘sexed bodies came to be viewed as one of the most important foundations for social distinctions, identities, and divisions (Shilling, 2015, p.27).

Shilling (2015) discusses that ‘the suggestion that embodied ‘sex differences’ are natural and unalterable has been used historically to assign fixed identities to men and women, identities that condemn them to limited and unequal roles’ (p.25). Hence, if suddenly it was found that biologically there was not much of a difference between the sexed bodies, but that these differences are actually encouraged and formed through educating them into different ‘forms’ in our society, these fixed identities based on embodied ‘sex differences’ would not be ‘natural’ anymore. Or to be more accurate, they would not be perceived as ‘natural’ anymore. However, ‘[t]he first set of conditions that must exist for gendered bodies to be created involves the existence of stereotypical views and actions that ignore the similarities, yet highlight and exaggerate the differences, between male and female bodies’ (Shilling, 2015, p. 32); and arguably ‘appearance’ and especially makeup (and styling) play a big role in this. After all, according to Butler (2006), makeup and other styling products, can be seen as props that support gendered performances.

Nevertheless, it seems that *Poosh* is not just trying to emphasise the sex-differences through educating the body physically and encouraging gendered performance props to emphasise this distinction more, but they also delve into the ‘sexual’ body function differences. What is interesting, as mentioned earlier, is that even though 2.5% of the general articles that contained the postfeminist sensibility of ‘focus on the body’ were exclusively

focused on the body in relation to sex, this sub-sensibility was not present in any of the articles featuring Kourtney Kardashian. When looking at the 'sex' articles more carefully it became clear, that even though *Poosh* might seem quite advanced and very open to 'sex', it is still framed as something to be 'hush' about. For example, one of the regular pieces of writing on something 'sexual', is done through anonymous questions, and then the article(s) literally writes 'dear anonymous' before answering the question and going into detail. Hence, this arguably still reflects this notion that sex is still something 'taboo'.

Moreover, while some of the articles are 'sexually' and 'biologically' informative, as female body processes are being explained in detail, and have an educational aspect to them, when considering them, using (F)CDA, in the wider context of *Poosh*, this ultimately helps to reinforce the differences between 'female' and 'male' bodies. Thus, reinforcing this idea that 'if sexed bodies are not actually malleable biological phenomena, but fixed and unequal organic structures that exerted an unalterable effect on the destinies of men and women, inequalities could be explained on the basis of natural conditions over which society was powerless. Such naturalistic views of embodiment reinforced men's position in society, while damaging the status of women' (Shilling, 2015, p. 28); because only 'If the bodily constitution and capacities of males and females were essentially similar, despite variations, [would] there...[be] no Enlightenment justification for denying women the rights accorded to men' (Shilling, 2015, p. 28). On top of *Poosh* contributing towards a wider phenomenon that helps shape and educate the differences between sexed bodies, it is also feeding into Gill's (2017) work on how differences between 'men' and 'women' are also being framed as 'psychological' instead of just 'biological'. The psychological in general is becoming more prominent in women's lives in a postfeminist culture, which will be discussed in more detail now.

The je ne sais quoi factor: Beauty as ‘a state of mind’ within a postfeminist culture

This section will build on the previous one, by focusing on the ‘psychological’ elements of postfeminism, and how working on one’s ‘appearance’ is no longer sufficient, but the right attitude and state of mind are also needed to succeed. For this I looked at the articles featuring Kourtney Kardashian that contained the ‘focus on the psychological’ sensibility, and the articles that were classified under the ‘mind’ section of *Poosh*’s website. This was because, even though the articles featuring Kourtney Kardashian contained the ‘focus on the psychological’ postfeminist sensibility, it was not a central element, compared to within some of the articles under the ‘mind’ section of *Poosh*’s website. These latter articles focused exclusively on how to ‘be happy’ and/or ‘change one’s mood’. This arguably makes sense, as Kourtney Kardashian is shown managing this all already, while the reader/audience (might) still need to work on this aspect. Therefore, it is then unsurprising that the ‘psychological’ postfeminist sensibility would be more a central element in the articles, not featuring Kourtney Kardashian, present under the mind section of *Poosh*’s website. Furthermore, arguably the fact that *Poosh* has a ‘mind’ section in itself corresponds with the focus on the psychological being a notable postfeminist sensibility.

The ‘focus on the psychological’ sensibility seems to be intrinsically linked with the postfeminist elements of individualism and constant self-improvement. While at first glance it might seem that the advice is genuine about helping its reader ‘overcome’ e.g. heartbreak or to ‘set boundaries’, in the end it all comes down to ‘productivity’. From the (F)CDA of the articles under the ‘mind’ section, it became clear that the real intent from giving the advice was to help the reader become a productive neoliberal subject, which will be explained and explored in more details throughout this section.

Figure 48 below shows all the sections the articles collected via Instagram were classified under. As shown, 24 articles from the 396 were under the mind section. Hence, while 6.1% might seem to be a small proportion, it is not an insignificant amount. The 24 articles under the mind section focus exclusively on how to improve one's mindset and mood, for the latter focusing mainly on how to be 'happy' and feel confident.

Poosh's Sections	Amount	Percentage
Adulting	6	1.5
Beauty	47	11.9
Body	24	6.1
Décor	6	1.5
DIY	3	0.8
Entertaining	4	1
Fitness	32	8.1
Giving Back	4	1
Guides	17	4.3
Hacks	20	5.1
Health	51	12.9
Kourtney	27	6.8
Mind	24	6.1
Motherhood	1	0.3
Recipes	58	14.6
Relationships	56	14.1
Soul	1	0.3
Style	10	2.5
Travel	4	1
No Section-Heading	1	0.3
Total	396	100.2

Figure 48 – Poosh's general article sections collected from Instagram.

When looking at figure 49 below, containing the articles featuring Kourtney Kardashian, and figure 50 below, containing the articles collected through Instagram, one can see that 'mood' is present as a sub-theme 10.2% and 10.9% of the time respectively. Moreover, when including the sub-themes anxiety and stress, which are part of one's 'psychological' state of mind, the theme of mind/psychological is present in around 30% of the articles featuring Kourtney Kardashian, and even in circa 37% of the articles collected via Instagram.

Throughout various articles the sub-themes mood, stress, and anxiety are intertwined with the main element, as opposed to being the main element. This I will demonstrate, indicates how the right state of ‘mind’ is portrayed as something essential to the *Poosh* lifestyle. In other words, it is essential towards living one’s ‘best life’.

Sub-Themes	Amount	Percent
Health	23	46.9
Food/Recipes	24	49
Appearance	17	34.7
Exercise(s)	10	20.4
Household	2	4.1
Productivity	1	2
Mood	5	10.2
Anxiety	4	8.2
Stress	6	12.2

Figure 49 – Sub-themes found in the articles featuring Kourtney Kardashian collected from Instagram.

Sub-Themes	Amount	Percentage
Health	171	43.2
Sex(uality)	46	11.6
Food/Recipes	154	38.9
R-relationship	61	15.4
O-relationship	19	4.8
Appearance	101	25.5
Exercise(s)	77	19.4
Household	21	5.3
Productivity	36	9.1
Mood	43	10.9
Anxiety	39	9.8
Stress	73	18.4

Figure 50 – Sub-themes found in the general articles collected from Instagram.

Furthermore, figure 51 below, which shows the postfeminist sensibilities present in the articles featuring Kourtney Kardashian, and figure 52 below, which shows the postfeminist sensibilities present in the articles collected through Instagram, show how the ‘focus on the psychological’ postfeminist sensibility is regularly present. In the former figure the ‘focus on the psychological’ postfeminist sensibility is present in 12.2% of the articles, while in the latter figure is present 35.4% of the time. However, when excluding the ‘none’ option⁹, the ‘focus on the psychological’ sensibility is the third most present postfeminist sensibility in both the articles collected via Instagram, and the articles featuring Kourtney Kardashian.

⁹ Just to remind the reader, that the reason the ‘none’ option had such high percentages was due to the recipe articles.

Sensibilities	Amount	Percent
Focus on the Body	23	46.9
Neoliberal Elements	13	26.5
Psychological	6	12.2
Double Entanglement	1	2
Non	21	42.9

Figure 51 – Postfeminist sensibilities found in the articles featuring Kourtney Kardashian collected from Instagram.

Sensibilities	Amount	Percentage
Focus on the Body	198	50
Sexual Freedom	30	7.6
Neoliberal Elements	139	35.1
Psychological	140	35.4
Double Entanglement	27	6.8
Non	70	17.7

Figure 52 – Postfeminist sensibilities found in the general articles collected from Instagram.

Hence, while the ‘focus on the body’ seems to still be the most present and dominant sensibility in a postfeminist culture, and neoliberalism seems to have become much more intertwined within it, the psychological seems to also play an increasingly important role, even if it has not overtaken the ‘focus on the body’ sensibility (yet). I had assumed, from Gill’s (2017) findings, that I would find the ‘focus on the psychological’ sensibility to have overtaken the ‘focus on the body’ sensibility. However, instead I found that while the ‘focus on the psychological’ does indeed play a more important role as a postfeminist sensibility, it had not surpassed the ‘focus on the body’ postfeminist sensibility.

This, however, could be as the ‘focus on the psychological’ is becoming more integral in combination with the ‘focus on the body’ sensibility, and is less seen as a separate aspect. To retake the point mentioned in the previous section, as Wissinger (2015) already explored, having the right ‘appearance’, or at least striving for it, seems to not suffice anymore. One also needs to have the right ‘energy’ and/or arguably attitude. Wissinger (2015) found that the ‘models who will “make” it, not only have the right look, but have the right sense of “energy” about them’ (p.12). In other words, this can arguably also be described as the *je ne sais quoi*¹⁰ factor, and this certainly also extends to ‘ordinary’ women in the age of the ‘blink’, where

¹⁰ Used in the French language to describe a certain pleasing elusive quality that someone has, which is difficult to put into words.

everyone is supposed to be 'camera-ready' at all times, as 'the idea that everyone should do their glamour labor' and 'try to fit the model norm came into full flower in the digital age' (Wissinger, 2015, p.13). Moreover, the competition for attention has become increasingly difficult due to the fast-paced nature of the social media age (Wissinger, 2015).

The increasing relation between the 'focus on the body' and the 'focus on the psychological' sensibilities can be seen in the articles featuring Kourtney Kardashian in figure 53. Both have already been discussed previously, the former one in relation to the third shift and exclusively the 'focus on the body' sensibility, while the latter one was discussed in relation to enhancing one's appearance from the 'inside out' in the previous chapter. However, at the same time the 'psychological' benefits from having a 'sauna (detox) routine' and taking 'supplements' is not ignored but mentioned alongside the 'other' previously addressed benefits, e.g. 'debloating' and burning calories. For example, the first article in figure 53 mentions how benefits from traditional sauna usage and deep sweating include *reducing stress, releasing endorphins* (aka happy hormones), *balancing sleep patterns* and *lowering blood pressure*. In combination with the second article, which includes a detailed guide of what supplements to take to 'deal with modern life', you get advice on how to deal with the everyday stress and issues, rather than how to avoid them.

Kourt's Sauna Detox Routine

There is nothing quite like sweating it out (big exception: when you're wearing a silk top...pit stains are everyone's enemy). Whether it's a tough day at the office, blowing off steam from a text conversation with an ex, or simply carving out time

for self-care – situation aside, sweating is one of the healthiest ways to detox and reset your body.

...

Benefits from traditional sauna usage and deep sweating include:

- Flushes toxins
- Promotes healthy skin
- **Can reduce stress and release endorphins** (aka make you feel good post-sweat)
- Burns calories
- Soothes aches and pains
- **Helps balance sleeping patterns**
- **Can help lower blood pressure**

Kourt's current Supplement Lineup

While supplements are a great part of a daily wellness ritual, not every supplement out there is necessary for every person, every day, and certainly not all brands are created equally. ...Other, times, they may be unaligned with our own personal health needs and goals, which can actually create an imbalance.

The right idea is to first assess how we're feeling. Tired? Stressed? Depleted? Coming down with something? Maybe we are keyed up, or working a ton and not getting enough sunshine...

If you're unsure, ask a doctor! ...a naturopathic doctor can help assess what compounds are missing from your diet or being depleted from lifestyle choices, etc. It's crucial not to blindly purchase supplements. ...Kourt's current supplement lineup is aligned with her diet and lifestyle, but that's always changing and evolving. These are just some quality, trusted brands that are totally Poosh-approved.

Drenatrophin PMG

...Its special blend of minerals, nucleotides, and peptides helps to **mitigate our bodies' natural stress response to daily things** we shouldn't have to compromise our health over. It's an **excellent addition when balancing the nervous system** is of utmost importance.

Immunotix 500

Flu season calls for a dose of beta-glucans...It works by activating the immune system's front-runner cells for a super quick first-line immune response.

Zinc Citrate

Zinc is absolutely essential for healthy, clear skin, hair, and nails, as well as **maintaining a strong immune response**. It's crucial for bone density and strength, and even helps maintain normal vision and eye health.

MegaSporeBiotic

...It's the only product to include *Bacillus indicus*, which is an incredible spore that produces its own carotenoids...in the GI tract at the site of their absorption for **major antioxidant effect**...

Tru Niagen

Think total cellular health. This supplement helps increase NAD+, which is essentially our cellular energy source. This can help to boost metabolism, feed the mitochondria for quicker and more efficient detox, defend against metabolic stress (even overeating, yikes), and boost cellular repair from oxidation and stress as well. Basically, it **undoes the impact of modern life on a cellular level**. It's the ultimate anti-aging supplement.

Reishi Supreme

...This is the only one we'll say that it won't hurt to try – and that goes for everyone...reishi has the power to stimulate the immune system, support the liver and kidneys, support sustainable energy, and **help our bodies' response to stress.**

Thorne Amino Complex

...They are a great addition to collagen powder for an active workout routine to help restore, build, maintain, and heal muscles that get worked on the regular. They help to enhance cellular energy production so that you can keep up the stamina instead of constantly plateauing. **They are for reaching major #goals.**

Magnesium

Unfortunately, most of the Western world is deficient in magnesium. This can **result in trouble sleeping, heightened stress and anxiety in the body**, muscle cramps and soreness, being **prone to depression**, and a slew of other conditions...It's safe to say it's a pretty important mineral to keep in the lineup, and Kourt takes that seriously.

Vitamin D3/K2

Ideal for both **cardiovascular health** as well as **bone health**, this combo is more potent and easily absorbed by the body when taken together...

Dragon Herbs 8 Immortals

This herbal supplement is the tincture to end all tinctures...to **support energy, stamina, mood, stress, focus, beauty, immunity, and more**. For those who don't want a million tinctures in their cabinet, this one is king.

Figure 53 – Partial text of article on Kourt's Sauna Detox Routine and Kourt's current Supplement Lineup. For the full text see Appendix 2.25 and 2.12 respectively.

The supplements mentioned in the latter of the two articles in figure 53, either help with *stress, anxiety, sleep or mood* in general, to increase one's *immune system*, or to help you reach major *#goals*. In other words, to undo *the impact of modern life*, instead of avoiding the 'impact' of modern life. This shows how postfeminism seems to be encouraging a lifestyle that

caters to the needs of a neoliberal society and supports Wissinger's (2015) point where the right 'mindset' and/or 'energy' is becoming an increasingly important aspect.

While the articles in figure 53 cover more content on how to prevent being 'ill', and therefore unproductive, and to cope with the stress and/or anxiety that comes from continuously working towards a goal that can never be achieved; this continues to be quite superficial. When looking at the article in figure 54, one can observe how far this 'focus on the psychological' sensibility plays a role in creating productive subjects. And therefore, this arguably feeds into a demand to consume more and more to reach this increasingly unobtainable state of 'wellness', as previously discussed.

The 100-Day Happiness Challenge

(Price: \$26)

Why we love it:

Simply put, it encourages us to **not live on autopilot** and instead **take inventory** of our daily habits, **thoughts, and emotions**. The result? A happier and more mindful life. It's about making change and doing the work to **live your best life**.

How does it work? It opens by walking you through an assessment of what makes you unhappy and guides you on how and if you can change these things. If you can't change something, it encourages you to **change how you think** about the thing that makes you unhappy. Because friendly reminder, **perspective is a powerful tool that only you have control over**.

Then it kicks off the 100-day journal section where it prompts you to write "what you're excited about, your main focus for the day, and your schedule." You'll do this

every day and then at the end of the week, you'll complete weekly reviews. These include a rating scale of how happy, productive, tired, stressed, etc. you felt overall during the past week. Plus, **what you learned**, when you felt happy, and what you were most proud of.

It's **essentially like free therapy** all in one sacred notebook.

The other cool thing about this 100-day exercise is that it includes the **29 rules to live by for a happy life**, like appreciating what you have, **self-reflection**, expressing your gratitude, being understanding, and living with passion (to call out a handful of examples), which are all great reminders to **feel fulfilled** throughout your day, week, month, and beyond.

If you're in any sort of funk or simply looking to **expand on self-development** and live a more positive and happy life, this inspiring journal is for you.

Figure 54 – Partial text of article on The 100-Day Happiness Challenge. For the full text see Appendix 2.27

The article in figure 54 discusses the 100-day happiness challenge, and arguably feeds into the wider narrative and modern-day discourse where women are told to *lean in* (Rottenberg, 2014; Gill, 2017). This is based on the idea that, as women can now have and do it all, all they need is the right attitude, especially confidence. This is accompanied by a sense of 'upbeat and resilient selfhood' (Gill, 2017), as discussed in more detail in the literature review. This demands that women maintain a form of constant self-scrutiny and vigilance in the form of self-monitoring, but it also makes them responsible for their own 'happiness' and again shifts the responsibility onto the individual.

This 'challenge' reflects how women should take control of not only their *daily habits*, but also their *thoughts* and *emotions*, by stating that one should be aware of them and 'take

control' instead of *living on autopilot*. Even though one is allowed to feel 'negative' emotions, one is expected to 'get over' them as soon as possible through thinking 'positive thoughts' (Gill, 2017). This, however, is problematic as it does not really allow for these negative feelings to be properly resolved, and is underlined by the postfeminist sensibility of self-surveillance. The promise of completing this '100 day happiness challenge' is to help one *live one's best life* and to *feel fulfilled*, through *changing how one thinks*. However, *only you have control*. Hence, this shifts the responsibility clearly onto the individual. In other words, this *inspiring journal* allows women to essentially become their own therapist, to help *expand on* their *self-development*. This is interesting in light of decreasing funding for mental health services in many health care systems and makes one wonder if this is part of the phenomenon of people trying to take their (mental) 'health' into their own hands in a neoliberal system, as seems to be the case with the rise of wellness practices, as discussed previously.

In other words, this 'happiness-challenge' reflects this constant 'state of becoming', which is underlined with the neoliberal element of constant (self) improvement (Gill, 2007, 2017). Nevertheless, while on the one hand this is framed as an individual project, and therefore, should differ for every person, this journal ultimately generalises people. In the end, it is the same exercises and *29 rules to live by for a happy life* that is provided to everyone. Thus, it seems that the only individual element present here is when it comes to bearing the responsibility for succeeding and/or failing. Otherwise, it seems that the true aim here is not to create 'unique-individuals' but instead to make them conform towards becoming 'happy', and therefore, productive neoliberal subjects.

This ‘happiness-journey’ seems to be part of a larger industry, which tries to capitalise on people’s emotions. Specifically, ‘happiness’, which is portrayed as ‘a muscle that requires regular exercise in order to keep it strong and healthy’ (Di Leo, 2015, p.89). In this industry, also known as the ‘happiness industry’ as coined by Davies (2015) and discussed in the literature review, ‘governments and corporations have become obsessed with measuring how people feel and then cashing in on it’ (Di Leo, 2015, p.85), through capitalising on our emotions by having these placed under continuous surveillance (Di Leo, 2015). *Poosh* conforming with this happiness industry can be seen with the article on the happiness challenge, that requires you to firstly buy the happiness journal, costing \$26, to then regularly ‘exercise’ your happy ‘muscle’ by filling in the journal every day.

Furthermore, the market has been redesigned into a ‘space in which desires can be pursued but never fully satisfied, or else the hunger for consumption would dwindle’ (Davies, 2015, p. 103). This is done, as the articles also reflect, by depicting ‘happiness’ as not only a ‘self-centred, self-dependent and individualistic endeavour’, but also as something ‘ongoing’ and a ‘never-ending project’, which however, should be viewed as ‘the worthiest goal in life to pursue’ (Cabanas & Illouz, 2019, p. 113). Hence, this justifies continuous consumerism and self-work to enable becoming the best possible neoliberal subject. The same sentiments, even if framed differently, can be observed in the article in figure 55. While the article here is about *feeling your hottest*, they immediately make clear that they are talking about a *mindset* and not about *physical features*.

How to feel your hottest

To be clear, we're **not referring to physical features** here. It's a **mindset** – read that again. Feeling "hot" is all about your mindset. One person can feel their hottest or most confident after accomplishing a big task or trying a new hobby. For others it's when they feel connected to others or simply wake up having an amazing hair day. It's **different for every single person**, and that's the beauty of what makes everybody on this planet truly **unique**.

Feeling hot – whatever that means to you – shifts your energy, and people pick up on this spirit. When you **feel good about yourself**, you **make better decisions**. When your vibes are high, you're more open to putting yourself first (in the best way possible) and setting boundaries that are good for you and, as a result, **create a path to live your best life**. They say misery loves company (which is so true), and on the flip side, **happy and optimistic people** are just as **contagious** and a **delight to be around**. It's a win-win for everyone. So yes, **when you feel hot**, your **mindset is in a place to attract the life you want and deserve**.

Keep reading for things that can help shift your mindset to feel your hottest.

Figure 55 – Partial text of article on *How to feel your hottest*. For the full text see Appendix 2.28

The mindset, discussed in figure 55, is framed as something individual that differs *for every single person*, which is *what makes everybody on this planet truly unique*. However, the end goal is once more the same, making sure everyone is able to be their best, aka most productive. This can be deduced from comments like *when you feel good about yourself, you make better decisions*. In other words, you make the 'right' decisions. This is motivated throughout with the idea of creating and *living your best life*, through adapting the right mindset, which will help you attract the life you want and deserve. According to *Poosh*, this is

achieved through being happy and optimistic, aka *feeling hot*. Hence, again making one's happiness an individual project, which simultaneously transfers the responsibility onto the individual, while shaping these 'individuals' into the same productive subjects. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that this article is not discouraging beauty practices/labour, and in combination with the other elements discussed up to now (where the right mindset/'psychological' is being linked with the postfeminist sensibility of 'focus on the body'), it rather helps one gain the right mindset to achieve one's desired appearance. In other words, it indirectly promises to help one manage all three shifts.

To continue the point, that while one is allowed to feel 'negative' emotions, as discussed in the literature review, one is actively encouraged to 'get over' them as soon as possible, as negative feelings are counterproductive to 'living one's best life' and especially towards being a productive, consuming neoliberal subject. This is very well reflected in the article in figure 56, where the content is focused on how, and why, to get out of a bad mood. First, even though the article literally starts by stating that some days you *find yourself in a funk you just cannot seem to shake*, this seems to still not be an excuse, as they present here 10 (generalised) tips, which are tried and tested, and therefore, will definitely get you out of your bad mood (despite the fact that everyone is unique). In other words, there are no excuses for not being in a 'good' mood after having tried the following 10 tips.

10 ways to get out of a bad mood

Some days, you just **find yourself in a funk that you can't seem to shake**, whether it's because you stayed up too late watching Bridgerton, you had a fight with your mom, or your damn hormones just got you again. So **here are 10 tried and tested**

ways to get you back in those high vibes for the next time you find yourself in a bad mood.

1. Go for a walk
2. Scroll Through Funny Memes

...no better antidote to a bad mood than laughter.

3. Journal
4. Call Your Best Friend

...Reminding you what a badass queen you really are.

5. Meditate

...give you the opportunity to think differently.

6. Have a Dance Party for One

...whatever way makes you feel most empowered, liberated, and alive.

7. Have a Candlelit Bath
8. Book Something In

9. Visualize

...just imagine yourself living through your perfect day...This is step one to manifesting your perfect day, and a great exercise to raise your vibe.

10. Make Banana Bread

Figure 56 – Partial text of article on 10 ways to get out of a bad mood. For the full text see Appendix 2.29

Moreover, the tips provided in the article displayed in figure 56 reflect what Gill (2017) already noted on how 'uplifting' media messages have become more prominent in women's lives in reminding them to focus on living 'their best lives right now', and emphasising simultaneously how women are solely responsible for their own happiness. In the article in

figure 56, this is mirrored by telling women to *scroll through funny memes*, as *laughter* is the *best antidote*, or to *meditate*, as one simply needs to refocus and *think differently*. By framing being ‘happy’ as a personal choice it also increases the amount of self-surveillance women do, through constantly surveying how they feel.

In the article there is arguably even a form of horizontal-surveillance, by calling a friend and having them help police one’s feelings. This self-monitoring is often framed as ‘manifesting’, which again shifts the responsibility onto the individual, by making them aim to ‘live their best life’, an individual project which they can only achieve if they work hard enough to accomplish it. This can be done by, for example, visualizing their perfect day, and then going ahead and living it. This, as already discussed in the literature review, feeds into what Rottenberg (2014) described as women in a neoliberal society seeing, and therefore, treating themselves as ‘a form of stock’, which means that it encourages women to micro-manage every aspect of their lives, to increase their ‘value’.

For example, the whole article in figure 57 is focused on *how to become a morning person*. This is consistent with the temporal expectations of neoliberal systems, because why would one try to become and/or care about becoming a morning person if not for the sake of productivity. The article not only promises, but arguably demands, change to one’s natural characteristic despite this being difficult to accomplish.

How to become a morning person

Some people simply aren’t born as a **natural “morning person”** (ourselves included).

That said, **you do have the power to change your mindset** and become an early bird

– though it **will take practice** and a **positive attitude**. If you’re **truly up for the**

lifestyle adjustment, we're sharing 11 ways to shift your outlook on waking up early and to officially become an a.m. **individual**.

-Try **Kourt's tips** and sing her "Good Morning, Good Morning" song to brighten your day.

-Motivational speaker and author, Gabrielle Bernstein, shared her advice with us. "The morning is a sacred time – it's when we choose how we want the rest of the day to go. Set yourself up to win by starting your day with a practice I call the Daily Design Method. I teach it in my new book, ... It's easy to do. Each morning when you wake up, open your journal and answer these four questions:

- **How do I want to feel today?**
- **Who do I want to be today?**
- **What do I want to receive today?**
- **What do I want to give today?**

When you make the DDM a morning habit, you'll start to notice that things begin to work out exactly as you planned – or that something even better happens."

-This tip should go without saying, but set an earlier bedtime so you can **wake up feeling refreshed and rested**.

-Keep your cell phone and laptop out of reach (and definitely not in your bed). This will also **force you to hop out** of your sheets to turn your phone alarm off.

-**Instead of leisurely** lying around in the morning, **get out of bed** right when you wake up. Easier said than done, but **once you get in the habit of it**, you'll **see the productive benefits payoff**.

-**Avoid hitting snooze.** It's a slippery slope, end of story.

-After you get moving, practice deep breaths: ...

-Before you go to sleep, **make a mental or physical checklist** prioritizing plans for the next day. This will **help you visualize** what you **need to accomplish** in the a.m.

-Another Poosh contributor, Erica Spiegelman, suggests, "Reward yourself. Give yourself a nice **reward when you've achieved a small goal or milestone.**" ...be sure to acknowledge the new **healthy habit** you've **accomplished.**

-Schedule a morning workout (even when you're feeling lazy) and **encourage yourself to show up** and sweat it out. Exercising in the a.m. **increases energy** and **improves productivity for the day.**

-Draw your curtains back and let in the natural light first thing in the morning.

Figure 57 – Partial text of article on *How to become a morning person*. For the full text see Appendix 2.30

Becoming a morning person is supposedly achieved through adapting the right *mindset, practice and a positive attitude*, see figure 57, but only if *you are truly up for the lifestyle adjustment*. In other words, only if you really want it. Hence, elements of individualism are again visible as underlying notions, shifting the responsibility of succeeding, and more importantly failing, onto the person. This individualist aspect is literally written in the text here, where the goal is to *officially become an a.m. individual*. Not person, but individual. Again, there is a paradox present here, where while the narrative is focused on the reader being a *unique individual*, it is, however, possible to give generalised advice, here in the form of *11 tips*, instead of catered advice towards this *individual*.

Unsurprisingly, the solution here is once more changing one's *mindset*, through persistent *practice*, but also by having a *positive attitude*. However, you will only succeed if

you're truly up for it. Hence, if you do not succeed it is not because of any other reason than that you did not really want to change your lifestyle and/or have the right positive mindset and attitude. This echoes Miller's (2007) findings, where her female participants blamed themselves for having left their jobs to become stay at home mothers. They all felt that if they had really wanted it, they would have not quit their jobs, as discussed in the literature review. Texts like the ones found on *Poosh* seem to reinforce these discourses and ideas in women's lives.

However, even though the intent is nicely packaged in the form of helping the individual achieve the life they want, as long as it aligns with neoliberal values, the real intent is to make the readers more productive. All the advice focuses on being more productive throughout the day, and not solely on how to wake up early. For example, *Poosh* advises going to bed early to feel refreshed and rested in the morning, but then to not leisure around in the morning, and instead hop straight out of bed, not being allowed to snooze (which one can trick oneself into by leaving one's phone with the alarm out of reach from the bed). Furthermore, while it is again acknowledged that this is not an easy change, there is a promise that one will get used to it, especially once one sees the *productive benefits* of it, which are arguably mainly intended to be beneficial for a neoliberal society.

Even though within the article, in figure 57, it is not specified what exactly being productive refers to, one can infer it from the subtext. After all, the article is about being a morning person, in other words, about getting up early. This links back to the concept of capitalist organisation of time, i.e. the hegemony of 9-5, as getting up early is useful in a society that revolves around working one's first shift from 9-5. In this one-dimensional society, where

'the cultural is gradually incorporated into the economic' (Thrift, 1990, p. 105), 'capitalist order takes the form of a 'new hegemony' based upon routinised, reciprocally confirming, calculative practices and projects grounded in a functional, spatial and temporal differentiation of production and consumption,' (Thrift, 1990, p. 105). Hence, if one especially as a woman wants to and/or should accomplish tasks in relation to the other two shifts, getting up early can be seen as a key way to achieving this. Thus, being productive here means being able to complete one's other two shifts around one's first shift.

Furthermore, it requires mental labour, in the form of visualizing and planning one's day ahead. For example, making a mental and/or physical checklist the night before, to make the next day more efficient. However, it then also includes questioning, or in other words self-surveying, oneself every morning *what one feels, who one wants to be, what one wants to receive, and what one wants to give today*. Furthermore, by stating that one should *reward* oneself when *achieving a 'small' goal or milestone* for having *accomplished* this *healthy habit*, it arguably also feeds into the idea that one can only reward oneself, just like having a cheat day (as discussed in the previous chapter), if otherwise you follow this advice and become a good productive morning person. In other words, you become a good postfeminist subject.

Moreover, to be even more productive, one should wake up even earlier, to manage a morning workout before work, which *will increase one's energy and improve one's productivity for the day*. This reflects the same sentiment and 'motivation' Hallstein (2011) found, as mentioned in the literature review, where the third shift is framed as something necessary to help with accomplishing the 'other' shifts, instead of acknowledging it as an 'extra shift' in a

woman's life. And here Kourtney Kardashian is again used as an example and standard, even if much more subtly than in other articles featuring her.

The article in figure 58 is another example of how far the psychological has infiltrated a postfeminist culture to benefit neoliberal society. The article poses itself as a helpful guide on how to 'stop overthinking about your crush', but really instead of taking anxiety or worry away from the reader, it is focused on the reader not 'wasting' their time and mental energy on this, as they should be focusing it elsewhere: becoming a more productive neoliberal citizen.

How to stop overthinking about your crush

Whether it's a dating scenario like today's reader submission or a conversation you can't get off your brain – some situations call for reinforcement (like the 10 suggestions I'm sharing below) to really clear your mind and think about literally anything else besides what's consuming your headspace due to a case of obsessive thinking.

"How can I stop my mind from obsessively overthinking about whether my crush is going to text/call me back?"

Overthinking causes us to spend too much time on the same thoughts, getting **stuck in a loop of inaction** and turning positive reflection into debilitating worry. Not only does it **not move us forward**, but it also **moves us backward** and **downward**. I find this comes up a lot in dating. Worrying and overthinking about whether someone will call you or text you back, whether they like you, and did you say too much or too little are all common topics that come up when working with my clients.

I like to use DBT (Dialectical Behavioral Therapy) techniques to **create awareness** and provide my clients and you with the tools you will need to **stop the worrying and overthinking**. Here are my top 10 tips.

1. Look at the Bigger Picture	6. Acknowledge Your successes
2. Remember the 90-10 Rule. ¹¹	7. Practice Self-Compassion
3. Assume Good Intent.	8. Learn to Let Go
4. Replace “what If” with “We’ll See.”	9. Don’t Believe Every Thought
5. Get Outside and Enjoy.	10. Replace the Thought Loop

Figure 58 – Partial text of article on *How to stop overthinking about your crush*. For the full text see Appendix 2.31

In the text, displayed in figure 58, the author makes clear that overthinking not only does not move us forward, which one should continuously be working towards, but is even moving us backwards and downward (the spiral), as one is spending one’s limited time and mental energy on the same thoughts. Unsurprisingly, the same type of advice is provided here to help one out of this ‘unproductive’ situation, through following the provided 10 tips, which require once again self-surveillance and mental labour.

All the advice provided in the articles under the mind section ultimately provide their audience with instructions on how to improve every psychological aspect in their lives, increasing their productivity so as to cater towards the needs of a neoliberal society. This links with the idea of ‘the perfect’ McRobbie (2015) discusses, as women are again expected to see themselves as an individual project, ‘form of stock’ and/or as an individual ‘brand’ (Rottenberg, 2014), which they need to continuously work on to ‘optimise’ themselves as much as they can, through working on their ‘happiness’ that is also framed as a never-ending project (Cabanas & Illouz, 2019; Davies, 2015). Therefore, women become stuck in an endless spiral of the ‘ever-

¹¹ ...90% self-worth, 10% assigned worth.

becoming', as there is always something that can be improved. However, by treating themselves as a 'form of stock' through self-branding to obtain their 'fullest potential', it is unavoidable that they will eventually fail as, compared to non-human-brands, humans are not able to sustain consistency (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2016). In the next section, the discussion will continue, by focusing on the role consumerist elements play within *Poosh*.

Consumerism as unfulfillable lack and state of 'becoming' in a neoliberal society
 This part of the chapter will focus on the consumerist aspects of *Poosh*, and how their Instagram account allows *Poosh* to not only communicate and sell directly to their audience, but how it enables its audience to play a much more active role within this 'consumer-culture'. Furthermore, throughout the section the focus will be on how consumerism is portrayed as a consistent 'solution' to the audience, as already briefly touched upon in the previous sections. Therefore, next to discussing new material in this section mostly featuring Kourtney Kardashian in relation to consumerism, there will be reference to previous figures in the thesis in order to discuss the consumerist elements present within the articles.

Story linked to	Amount	Percentage
Article	431	76.7
Shop (specific)	49	8.7
Shop (non-specific)	18	3.2
Other	13	2.3
Nowhere	51	9.1
Total	562	100

Figure 59 – Where the link embedded within the story on Instagram linked to.

Figure 59 shows where the embedded links within *Poosh*'s stories lead to, and as can be seen, 90.9% of the stories contained an embedded link, with 76.7% linked to an article.

Thus, this data from the content analysis suggests that promoting the articles on the *Poosh* website is the main function of the Instagram page; considering that only 11.9% of the embedded links led to the *Poosh* shop and 8.7% led to a specific product(s) section.

Specific Themes/Elements	Amount	Percentage
Consumerism (as solution)	106	26.8
Notion of Empowerment	46	11.6
Motherhood	24	6.1
Having it all	4	1
Work life balance	31	7.8
General life balance	64	16.2

Specific Themes/Elements	Amount	Percentage
Consumerism (as solution)	13	27.1
Notion of Empowerment	0	0
Motherhood	4	8.3
Having it all	0	0
Work life balance	1	2.1
General life balance	7	14.6

Figure 60 – Consumerist elements present within the articles collected via Instagram

Figure 61 – Consumerist elements present within the articles collected via Instagram featuring Kourtney Kardashian

Figure 60 contains the specific themes and elements the research looked for during the content analysis in the articles collected via Instagram, while figure 61 contains the results from the articles featuring specifically Kourtney Kardashian. When looking at figure 60 one can see that consumerism was promoted as a solution in 106 of the articles. And while this 'solution' at first was not clearly described and/or labelled, however, from the sub-text it could be deduced, which will be expanded on later. The same percentage distribution was the case in the articles featuring Kourtney Kardashian, as can be seen in figure 61.

Consumerist element	Amount	Percentage
no	98	24.7
Indirect	188	47.5
yes	110	27.8
Total (yes/indirect)	298	75.3

Consumerist element	Amount	Percentage
no	12	25
indirect	20	41.7
yes	16	33.3
Total (yes/indirect)	36	75

Figure 62 – Consumerist elements present within the articles collected via Instagram

Figure 63 – Consumerist elements present within the articles collected via Instagram featuring Kourtney Kardashian

However, when additionally looking at figure 62, which shows whether a consumerist element was present (indirectly) in the articles, 188 articles had indirectly¹² a consumerist element and 110 had a direct consumerist element. Similarly, 75% of the articles featuring Kourtney Kardashian contained consumerist elements, see figure 63. Therefore, showing that *Poosh* is consumerist focused even if only 67 out of 562 stories linked to the *Poosh* shop. It seems that consumerism and/or products are not regularly sold directly to the audience but instead are promoted more subtly. This makes sense as after all *Poosh*, and Kourtney Kardashian, are selling a lifestyle and not 'objects' and/or 'things'.

Therefore, what is being sold by *Poosh* is very selective, as it needs to still fit with the particular lifestyle they are trying to sell. In other words, the objects and/or things *Poosh* tries to promote, arguably do present solutions to the 'modern day problems' they tackle. However, the issue is that these are often short lived, and not long-term and/or permanent solutions. For example, referring back to the skincare routines, which are supposed to differ depending on the seasons, one needs to constantly update and improve accordingly, therefore, one needs to consistently consume to keep up to date. Thus, from the (F)CDA it has become clear that *Poosh* is very much reflecting the postfeminist notion of presenting consumerism and consumption as one of the main, if not the only, solution to women's 'modern day' problems in a contemporary postfeminist culture and neoliberal society. However, these problems are very specific and only serve the interests of a postfeminist culture and neoliberal society. In other words, buying these specific 'things' and/or 'items' comes with a promise to help one manage, for example all three shifts and/or deal with 'modern life' so that one is able to 'live

¹² Things were promoted at the end of the article, instead of in the main body of the text.

one's best life', as discussed in the previous section. Therefore, it really appears to further the postfeminist and neoliberal agenda of growth through trying to consistently improve by consuming the right 'things'.

When looking at the articles which featured Kourtney Kardashian, one could again observe different ways and intensities in which consumerism was being promoted to *Poosh*'s readers. However, it was interesting to see how embedded this consumerist element was throughout almost all articles. For example, in the articles in figure 44, which have been discussed earlier in the chapter and focused on providing workout advice and instructions, consumerist elements were still mentioned, even if briefly. Furthermore, the language used is interesting. In the first article, in figure 44, it says *shop essentials*, which arguably indicates to the reader that they need to have these things to workout. Furthermore, the word *update* again shows the presence of neoliberal elements, which indicates that one should constantly improve, or i.e. 'update', in this context any postfeminist aspects in one's life if possible (Gill, 2007, 2017). In this particular case, one's workout equipment to help improve and update one's workout.

This in turn shows the multiple layers and facets within the articles, when linking back to the previous section. To reiterate, the third shift is often portrayed as something essential to help with aspects associated with the second shift in one's life, and explicitly to help manage all three shifts, even though in the end it is still a time consuming task (Hallstein, 2011). Here, there is another layer added, by claiming that you need these workout clothes to be able to work out. In other words, if you buy these clothes, it will help you with working out, which you need to do to help with aspects related to the other two shifts in your life. Hence, when using

an (F)CDA approach, buying these clothes is portrayed, in a bigger context, as more than just enabling one to ‘workout’. Instead, it is portrayed as a solution to your general issues that are preventing you from ‘living your best life’. However, as this is not an actual quick ‘fix’, it feeds into this never-ending project (Cabanas & Illouz, 2019), where people are convinced that if they buy this ‘item’ it will be the solution to their problem. Hence, this results in a never-ending spiral of consumption.

In the second article, in figure 44, the language used is slightly different from the first one. Compared to the previous one it simply adds at the end of the workout article how/where to shop Kourtney Kardashian’s *sport leggings* and *bra*. As especially female celebrities are an example for ordinary women, and therefore, often copied, products they endorse are viewed as more attractive and trustworthy, which is especially true for online-celebrities (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Nouri, 2018). Therefore, arguably the language does not need to be as insistent to buy these things as in the previous article, since the fact that these are workout clothes Kourtney Kardashian uses should by itself make them stand out from other workout clothes that are promoted more generally on *Poosh*. Thus, for the reader to be able to fully copy Kourtney Kardashian, they would want and/or need to buy these products, as clearly the workout clothes seem to ‘work’ for Kourtney Kardashian. Furthermore, it can also be seen as a ‘stamp of approval’ as otherwise, Kourtney Kardashian would not use and/or admit that these are her workout clothes.

The articles, in figure 29, use Kourtney Kardashian as the standard and/or example to follow and consumerism is presented as not only a way to achieve this, but again as a solution to one’s problems. In the first article, which has been discussed in the last chapter, buying the

right *baskets, clips, and glass jars*, is being portrayed to the reader as the solution to help have a tidier domestic space, which will also look aesthetically pleasing and *feel clean and organised*. Here, these things are classified as *essentials you need* to make your pantry into the aesthetically pleasing and efficient space it should be, which is the same language as used in the first article in figure 44.

In the second article, in figure 29, the consumption element is slightly less pertinent, but certainly remains present. While the article is focused on describing what Kourtney Kardashian has in her medicine cabinet, as discussed more thoroughly in the previous chapter, it still arguably suggests to the reader what they should 'buy', to be able to comply with the lifestyle that is being sold here. To reiterate, Kourtney Kardashian as a female celebrity, via the *Poosh* platform, is to be an example for how ordinary women should try to live (Gill, 2007, 2017), and therefore, what standards they should aim for. In other words, any articles specifying what she uses or owns are arguably simply telling the reader what they should own and what they need to achieve the same standard as Kourtney Kardashian. This is demonstrated with the article finishing by providing the option for the reader to *shop Kourt's medicine cabinet*.

Unsurprisingly, most of the articles featuring Kourtney Kardashian that contained consumerist elements were focused on appearance, especially makeup tips. Some articles, like the second and fourth article in figure 46, provide a 'shopping-list' within the article after explaining why one should update one's own and/or copy these specific makeup routines, as discussed more thoroughly earlier in the chapter. Then there were articles, like the first and third in figure 46, that were slightly less simplified and that contained a more thorough

explanation of why each specific product was essential. In the case of the second article, the products were sold to the readers under the pretence of revealing Kourtney Kardashian's secret beauty tricks, i.e. the products Kourtney Kardashian uses.

The article in figure 35, which has been revisited in detail several times in this chapter, demonstrates how *Poosh* is trying to present itself as a mark of 'quality', by stating that they are providing the reader with a summary and selection of *quality, trusted brands* which are '*Poosh-approved*'. And at the end of the article, after a very thorough explanation of how each of these supplements will help and improve the readers' lives, an easily accessible way to buy all these products is again provided. While one could argue that it is logical to provide the necessary means and things needed to execute the advice given in the articles discussed, the article in figure 64, shows that it is not only about buying the correct things to conform with this lifestyle, but that one also needs to buy the right 'brand'.

9 Things Kourt Always Keeps in her Purse

The **belongings in one's purse are sacred saviors**. You know the feeling when you swap bags and **forget that one item you typically always carry** with you...you **feel a little empty without it**. Everyone packs a **different selection of must-have items**, whether it's a specific type of gum or small things for "just in case" scenarios. It's **comforting knowing you have your trusty on-the-go essentials**.

So what does Kourt keep in her purse? We asked her to **share a peek inside her bag** with the top nine items she almost always has with her. **Read on for her list below**.

Post-Meal Digestive Candy (Pastiglie Leone \$5) - "I love this old classic Italian digestif for after a meal."

Gum (PUR \$14) - "An aspartame-free gum I always have on hand. The pink mint flavor is my favorite."

Lip Oil (Kylie Skin \$22) - "Hydrates with a nice shine. Plus, it's non-sticky, which I love."

Mini Hand Sanitizer (Amass Pseudo \$45) - "A travel-size hand sanitizer is a must."

Face Mask (SKIMS \$8) - "I love how this face mask folds so nicely in my purse and it come in a selection of good neutral ..."

Tea (OLYXIR \$20) - "Matcha on the go – enough said. I keep them in a sleek case so I can travel with them."

Wipes (EO \$24) - "Keepin' it clean every day, all day."

Hair tie (slip silk \$39)- "Never know when you'll need to pull your hair back. ;)"

Mini Hand Lotion (Compagnie De Provence \$10) - "To hydrate your hands post-washing or hand sanitizing."

Figure 64 – Partial text of article on 9 Things Kourt Always Keeps in her Purse. For the full text see Appendix 2.32

The 9 things that Kourtney Kardashian apparently always keeps in her purse, shown in figure 64, are: post-meal digestive candy, gum, lip oil, face mask, tea, wipes, hair tie, and mini hand lotion; a somewhat eclectic, even odd, selection of things one should always have in one's purse. However, on top of this, it is also specified which exact brand of these things she 'always' has in her purse. Hence, it does not seem exclusively like a useful list of items one should always carry, but rather like a list of specific brand-items one should buy. In other words, even when it comes to the same item, it seems one can still choose the wrong one.

While the Poosh shop might have been created to make it easier to provide 'help' and the right things to their 'followers', as can be seen in episode 5 in season 20 of Kourtney

Kardashian's family's (old) TV-show, *KUWTK*, it needs to be kept in mind that it is ultimately a business endeavour and a way for Kourtney Kardashian to make money. Hence, while she might genuinely believe that one should always carry these 9 things in one's *purse*, the specific brands she is advertising are probably promoted here due to sponsorship deals. Nevertheless, they might still have Kourtney Kardashian's genuine seal of approval, as she is trying to sell not only a certain way of life, but also a certain level of quality, as can be deduced from the regular use of *#pooshapproved*. This hashtag as a quality mark reflects again findings like Djafarova and Rushworth's (2017) on in particular online celebrities having an increased 'source credibility', i.e. 'consumer perception of an information source based on attractiveness, trustworthiness and knowledge in the area' (p. 1).

However, this raises questions about the accessibility of this lifestyle, as when looking at the costs of each item and combining them, the amount of money that is needed to comply with this lifestyle is high. For example, for the items listed in figure 38, to acquire all 9 branded items one would need to spend \$187, which is more than some people spend on actual needs, e.g. groceries in a week or two. This is particularly interesting, as throughout the articles there is barely any mention about the first shift, i.e., the (regular) income job which should enable the audience to pay for these items. Hence, it is strange that there seems to be no real mention of how to afford this lifestyle. This raises questions, whether it either says something about the economic and/or class status of the reader, or about the financial status of the subject that is able to live this lifestyle.

Nevertheless, one can observe an interesting dynamic between what *Poosh* is trying to promote as a 'priority' to its audience, and what its audience actually prioritises, as touched

upon in chapter 4. This can for example be seen in the table in figure 65, where the articles that made it in the top 5 most read that week are compared to the articles that were promoted through a post by *Poosh* via their Instagram account. To reiterate, the articles that made it into the top 5 most read demonstrate what the audience actually found most interesting and/or more relevant; while the articles that were promoted additionally to the stories through a post on *Poosh's* Instagram account show what content *Poosh* considered to be more relevant and/or important. When looking at the data one can observe some differences.

Section	Top 5		Posts		
Adulting	1	2.22%	2	1.55%	
Beauty	2	4.44%	12	9.30%	
Body	3	6.66%	11	8.53%	
Décor	0	0.00%	2	1.55%	
DIY	0	0.00%	1	0.78%	
Entertaining	1	2.22%	1	0.78%	
Fitness	6	13.33%	11	8.53%	
Giving Back	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	
Guides	4	8.89%	5	3.88%	
Hacks	4	8.89%	9	6.98%	
Health	7	15.56%	16	12.40%	
Kourtney	4	8.89%	6	4.65%	
Mind	1	2.22%	9	6.98%	
Motherhood	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	
Recipes	3	6.66%	16	12.40%	
Relationships	6	13.33%	21	16.28%	
Soul	0	0.00%	1	0.78%	
Style	1	2.22%	4	3.10%	
Travel	2	4.44%	2	1.55%	
Total	45	99.97%	129	100.02%	

Section/top 5	1	2	3	4	5
Adulting	1	0	0	0	0
Beauty	0	1	0	0	1
Body	2	0	1	0	0
Entertaining	0	0	0	0	1
Fitness	2	0	1	1	2
Guides	1	1	0	1	1
Hacks	0	2	1	0	1
Health	0	2	2	2	1
Kourtney	2	0	1	1	0
Mind	1	0	0	0	0
Recipes	0	2	0	1	0
Relationships	0	1	1	3	1
Style	0	0	1	0	0
Travel	0	0	1	0	1

Figure 65 – Topics of the top 5 most read articles of the week in comparison to the posts promoted by *Poosh* via their Instagram account.

Figure 66 – The ranking of the topics of the top 5 articles read weekly

While *Poosh* through posts promoted articles from the sections relationships, recipe, health, and beauty (in that order) the most; articles from the sections health, relationships and fitness followed closely by guides, hacks, and Kourtney were actually read the most. However, when examining more specifically the top 5 rankings, which are displayed in the table in figure 66, one can observe that articles from the sections body, fitness, guides, Kourtney, actually ranked in first position (at some point), while articles from the sections beauty, health, recipes

and relationships never placed higher than second in the top 5. In other words, *Poosh*'s four most promoted sections never actually placed first in the top 5 most read.

Hence, even though the audience might be controlled through advertisements to a certain extent, they still simultaneously play a decisive role in what becomes popular, i.e., what is successful (Laughley, 2007). And, even though audience feedback has always been crucial since the acknowledgement that the audience is not passive but rather active (Livingstone & Das, 2013); since Web 2.0 this has become much more complex with the emergence of the prosumer (Bruns, 2007). In particular, social media platforms like Instagram allow the audience to be as active as never before, they are no longer restricted to being an active consumer, but can simultaneously be a direct producer. However, this participation often goes unpaid or uncompensated, which is why it is often seen as an exploitative rather than empowering platform (Vesnić-Alujević & Murru, 2016). One can observe this dynamic in how *Poosh* uses its Instagram account to collect information from its audience/followers to help facilitate catering the right content and products to them. The main way they do this is via gathering free data through their story function using a few handy tools. For lifestyle sites like *Poosh* stories are a great way to promote and share a lot of their content or information without overcrowding their followers' feeds (which is where the posts get shown), and to keep promoting new and fresh content.

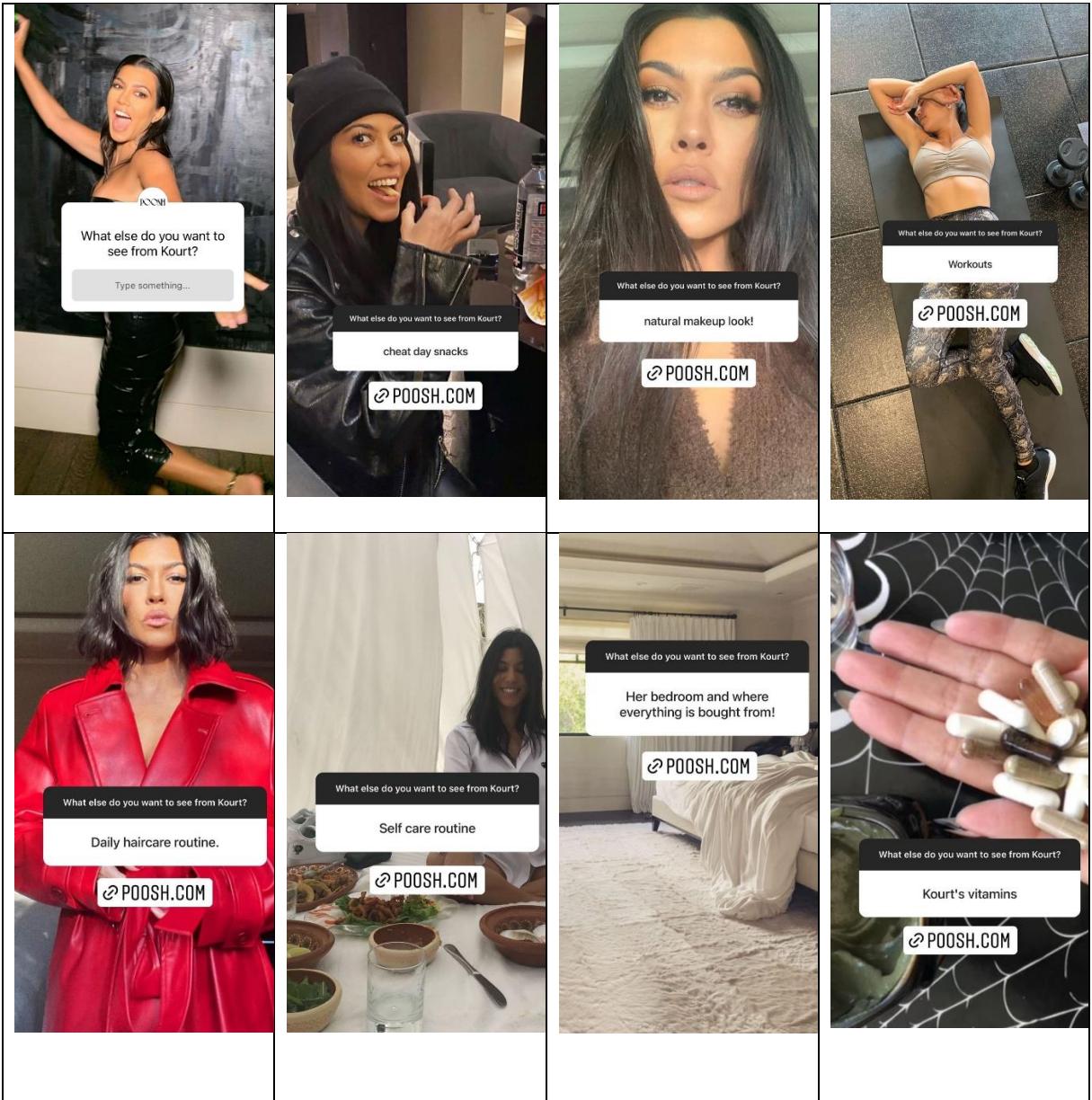


Figure 67 – Q&A Box on Poosh's stories

The story function allows for several useful tools/options, apart from text, to be inserted. In figure 67, one can see an example where a question-box is used to ask the audience what else they are interested in seeing from Kourtney Kardashian. While the audience then has free reign to answer and participate, in the end *Poosh* carefully selects entries they decide to answer to, which lie in their interests. Often, as one can see in figure 67, in the form of being able to link the 'answer' to one of their articles, which in turn, as discussed

earlier, will have consumerist elements. Hence, even though the audience is involved, the content is still ultimately heavily curated by *Poosh*.

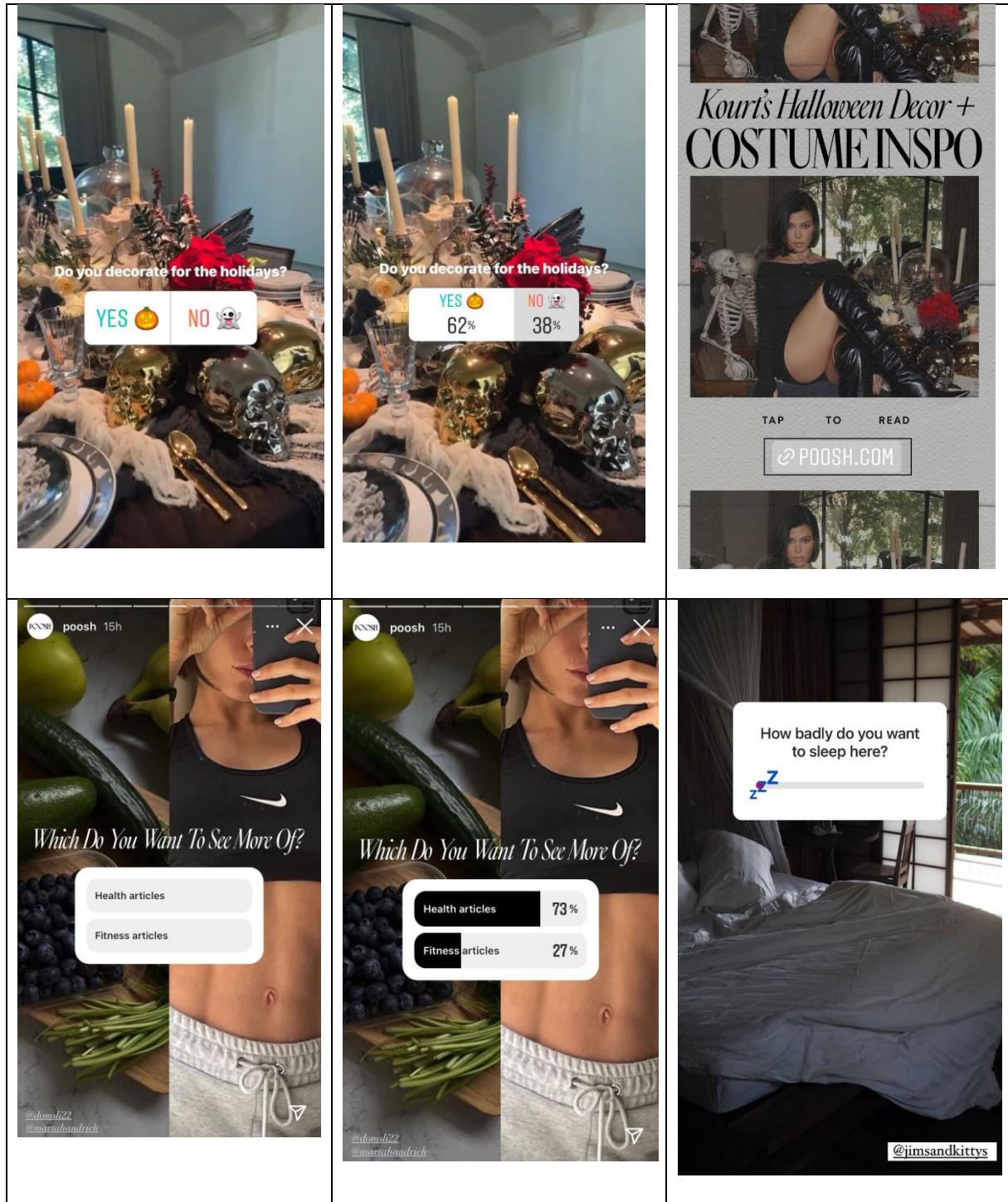


Figure 68 – Various Story functions

In figure 68 you can see other story functions that help *Poosh* facilitate communication with their audience and/or followers, by asking their audience to pick between two options.

This is sometimes followed again by promoting a relevant article, or asking their audience to rate something. This, in turn, then allows for the audience/followers to receive content more tailored to their taste, but at the same time it allows *Poosh* to gather free data on what to provide their audience with to maintain their followers and most importantly what they are able to sell to them. This contributes towards debates about whether Web 2.0 (dis)empowers digital audiences through enabling more active ‘participation’ and/or causes exploitation through the form of ‘free labour’ (Vesnić-Alujević & Murru, 2016). From my findings here, I agree with Vesnić-Alujević and Murru’s (2016) point that it seems to be a complex interplay of the two.

To reiterate, Silverstone’s (1994) ‘consumption cycle’ already encapsulated the idea of consumer practices informing the production process, which then feeds back to the consumer to start the cycle anew. This is comparable to Jenkin’s (2006) ‘participatory culture’ idea that consumers are a part of the production process, and Bruns’ (2007) ‘produsage’ concept, where the digital audience can be seen as ‘a new hybrid form’ that both participates and consumes through ‘simultaneous production and usage’ of this Web 2.0. The consumption cycle, according to Silverstone (1994), has 6 phases: commodification, imagination, appropriation, objectification, incorporation, and the final phase, where the products undergo a conversion that exports the previous, fundamentally personal and domestic meanings to public contexts outside the home, for example within offices or cafés (Laughey, 2007). This final phase in turn then feeds back into the consumption cycle by informing the first production or commodification phase of the cycle.

This cycle can be observed in *Poosh* too, where *Poosh* first presents a product and/or products to the audience. They'll present it in a way which will hopefully encourage the next phase, where the audience then imagines, as Laughey (2007) rephrases it, the 'anticipation of the pleasure that might arise from a prospective purchase' (p. 179); which if successful will be followed by appropriation where the product is assigned a new private meaning post-purchase (Silverstone, 1994; Laughey, 2007) and incorporated alongside existing products. Eventually, however, the product will be fully 'incorporated' within the space and lose its initial charm. Depending on the audiences' feedback and purchase history, it will affect what *Poosh* sells, and therefore, be adjusted accordingly. And the cycle starts again. More importantly, as the initial excitement of the purchased product is now over, it encourages the cycle for the consumer to start again, as they are presented with a new product, and again the promise of a solution to a problem and/or 'happiness' as discussed previously in the case of *Poosh*. Hence, it feeds into this 'ever-becoming' spiral, which reflects the previously mentioned Lacanian ideas concerning the notion of 'unfulfillable lack'. Hence, *Poosh*'s followers are encouraged to seek the fulfilment of a 'false need' through consumption, that will, however, leave them ultimately 'unsatisfied' (Vanheule, 2016). Furthermore, with options like Klarna which enable the consumer to pay later and/or in instalment plans, emerging, it shows how the consumption cycle might even have become more intense and accelerated on social media (Rogan, 2022). This in turn then can expose women to more ways of getting into debt to fuel these aspirations (*ibid*).

From the (F)CDA of the articles, in particular featuring Kourtney Kardashian, it becomes apparent that *Poosh* is portraying consumerism as a solution to 'modern day problems' that can be observed in a postfeminist culture and neoliberal society. Looking at *Poosh*'s stories on

Instagram, one can see that the audience/followers are heavily involved in this process. Even though Instagram allows the audience to play a more active, rather than passive, role within the production of content (i.e. becoming a prosumer), it also enables *Poosh* to engage more efficiently with its followers/audience. Thus, causing their audience to provide free information and labour to enable *Poosh* to improve and tailor their information and products to make them more desirable or applicable for their audience to want to consume.

Conclusion

This chapter focused on how the third shift in women's life is being framed by *Poosh* in the context of a postfeminist culture and neoliberal society, and added to the previous chapter's discussion of how the line between the third and second shift seem to become increasingly blurred within postfeminism. Furthermore, my findings demonstrated how the third shift is being portrayed as an essential part of living the postfeminist lifestyle *Poosh* is promoting. This, however, does not exclusively focus on obtaining a certain physique, but seems to focus more on attaining a certain appearance, 'achievable by all'. Furthermore, the idea that everyone can be 'beautiful' and achieve a 'flawless' appearance has become even more intense. The effort in producing such a natural look, however, cannot show. Nevertheless, even though having a thin physique is not specified as a requirement, if most of the advice focused on body work is followed obtaining it is almost inevitable. Therefore, the body work *Poosh* is promoting helps emphasise gendered body differences, and reinforces differences between the genders, and thus, maintains current dominant norms and structures that are based on the legitimacy of the biological differences of the sexes. Moreover, the postfeminist sensibility of 'focus on the body', which was very present throughout, was intrinsically linked with the 'focus on the psychological' sensibility. Having the right appearance

does not suffice to comply with the standards *Poosh* is promoting, but one also needs to have the right kind of attitude. Specifically, having a confident attitude and ‘being happy’, are portrayed as essential to achieving this lifestyle. Furthermore, consumerist elements are present throughout almost all of the articles, and are portrayed as essential to achieving this ‘modern’ lifestyle. The next chapter will focus on tying up the previous discussion by focusing on the transition of the phenomenon of ‘having it all’ into ‘doing it all’, and then it will explore what is portrayed as the norm for postfeminist-subjects that transition into motherhood.

Chapter Seven

Discussion Part III

Reconceptualising motherhood in a postfeminist culture and neoliberal society

The aim of this chapter is to build on the previous two chapters, by observing how the second and third shift apply and/or change in relation to the concept of motherhood in a postfeminist culture. It will be viewed how the change of the phenomenon of 'having it all' into 'doing it all' is applied in the context of motherhood. The articles aimed at mothers which will be discussed in this chapter clearly reflect that having children should not prevent 'modern' women from doing what they want. However, one can observe a change from traditional attitudes. It seems that while on the one hand the role of the mother is reaffirmed, and women are still expected to be in charge of childrearing, there is a clear attitude that not being 'perfect' is acceptable and even beneficial for the children. This, however, should not stop women from aiming for the 'perfect' (McRobbie, 2015), as will be discussed more thoroughly throughout the chapter. Nevertheless, *Poosh* does seem to acknowledge and even attempts to remove mum guilt, however, as will be discussed, they do not address the root of this sentiment. Hence, the first section of the chapter will revisit the evolved form of 'having it all' into the phenomenon of 'doing it all', and will discuss it in relation to motherhood in a postfeminist culture. The second section will then proceed to discuss the transition into motherhood within postfeminism, and what this looks like especially for women who grew up in a postfeminist culture. The next section will focus on the childrearing aspect of the second shift, and how this seems to have changed in the context of postfeminism within a neoliberal society. The fourth section will view how the third shift is being portrayed by *Poosh* as essential

pre and postpartum. Hence, by dissecting these four points, the chapter aims to (re)conceptualise the notion of motherhood in a postfeminist culture, and to explore the portrayal of 'correct' parenting in a neoliberal society, through the lens of *Poosh*.

[**The cruel fantasy of how to balance it all: having it all vs doing it all**](#)

This section aims to build on the previously discussed material by focusing on the role the evolved phenomenon of 'having it all', into the phenomenon of 'doing it all', plays in maintaining and transforming dominant norms and structures in a postfeminist culture, and how Kourtney Kardashian seems to not only promote this ideal but is also embodying it. The danger and potential harm of the lifestyle Kourtney Kardashian is trying to convey through *Poosh*, is less that it is sold explicitly as 'achievable by all', but as Rogan (2023) points out in the context of her work, that this Kardashian lifestyle might also be perceived as achievable by all who (now) know 'how to get it' (p.132).

Hence, why it is vital to understand what Kourtney Kardashian is conveying as an achievable lifestyle that other women should aspire to, as this might be a standard many women try to live up to. The problem with this is that when these attempts (inevitably) fail, they subsequently blame themselves. Thus, this might not only be harmful in the sense that it causes these women to aim for a 'cruel fantasy' (Orgad, 2017) and adapt a 'cruel optimism' (Berlant, 2011) attitude, as discussed previously, but that it causes these women themselves to contribute towards maintaining the dominant norms and structures that are causing them to be 'second-class-citizens'.

On the website, in the about section, there is a 'note' from Kourtney Kardashian which states:

I decided to launch Poosh because I felt that there was something missing in the healthy lifestyle space. Healthy living gets a bad rap; it's as though if you care about what you put in – or on – your body, then you're not sexy or cool. But this just isn't true, and Poosh is there to prove just that.

People are constantly asking me how I do it all, from being a (single)¹³ mom to working full-time to still maintaining a social life. I get endless questions about food, kids, beauty, and fashion, so I decided to create Poosh, a curated experience and a destination for modern living.

Available at <https://poosh.com/about/>

There are some key words that stand out. Firstly, she makes a statement that there is a 'gap' within the health lifestyle space, which she intends to fill. Therefore, she positions herself and her lifestyle-business within the 'wellness' sector. Secondly, she claims that there is a misconception around healthy living, which she aims to rectify. She emphasises specifically that living a 'healthy' life is 'sexy and cool', which positions her within a postfeminist context, as this feeds into the rhetoric of "girl power" that especially characterised the emergence of a postfeminist culture in the 90s (Banet-Weisser, 2018). This, to reiterate, was a response to feminism. The 'can-do girl power' discourse entailed that women could have and do it all now. However, this included not only work and having a family, but also being (allowed to be) 'feminine' as they were now liberated not only from the patriarchy but also from feminism (Gill, 2007; Banet-Weiser, 2018). The issue with this discourse is that while it portrays women as 'choice-making-agents', it also reinstates their bodies 'as sexual objects' (Gill, 2007), as

¹³ Originally when this text was looked at Kourtney Kardashian was single. However, since the data collection Kourtney Kardashian has gotten married. Hence, during the writeup of this comment it was looked at whether this had been changed. And indeed, the word 'single' had been deleted, which is reflected through the use of the brackets.

discussed more thoroughly in the previous chapter. In the above excerpt, Kourtney Kardashian also states that she constantly gets asked how she does it all, but more importantly there is no mention of her not managing to do it all. On the contrary, she seems to claim that she will provide her readers with answers on how to 'do it all' through *Poosh*.

Moreover, Kourtney Kardashian proclaims that *Poosh* will provide her audience/readers with the necessary tools they need to live a 'modern life', which arguably alludes to the fact that 'doing it all' seems to be synonymous here with living a modern life. Furthermore, through Kourtney Kardashian stating in her note that '*People are constantly asking me how I do it all*', she is setting a precedent for her audience that it is possible to 'have it all', and therefore, there is no reason not to try and 'do it all' as it is simply a question of balancing it all correctly. Her definition of 'doing it all' entails '*being a mom to working full-time to still maintaining a social life*.' And therefore, it conveys to the audience that by following the advice on *Poosh* they will be able to continue to achieve a 'postfeminist lifestyle' too, even if they are mothers.

Specific Themes/Elements	Amount	Percentage
Consumerism (as solution)	13	27.1
Notion of Empowerment	0	0
Motherhood	4	8.3
Having it all	0	0
Work life balance	1	2.1
General life balance	7	14.6

Figure 69 – Specific Themes/Elements found in the articles featuring Kourtney Kardashian.

Specific Themes/Elements	Amount	Percentage
Consumerism (as solution)	106	26.8
Notion of Empowerment	46	11.6
Motherhood	24	6.1
Having it all	4	1
Work life balance	31	7.8
General life balance	64	16.2

Figure 70 – Specific Themes/Elements found in the general Instagram collected articles.

When looking at the data in figure 69 and 70, it can be observed that the phenomenon of 'having it all' is not mentioned in any of the articles featuring Kourtney Kardashian, which is not surprising as she arguably 'has it all': a career and a family (Kornfield, 2014). Hence, she

does not need to question whether she can ‘have it all’. To reiterate, the debate surrounding the phenomenon of ‘having it all’ emerged as a reaction to women entering the workforce en masse, as it was questioned whether they would be able to maintain their domestic duties next to having a career. However, even when looking at the overall data results collected from Instagram directly (so more general advice to women, not specifically just aimed at mothers), it showed that ‘having it all’ was only mentioned 4 times. The notion of ‘work-life’ balance is mentioned only once, while the notion of ‘general life’ balance is mentioned 7 times in the articles featuring Kourtney Kardashian. And when looking again at the overall data results collected from Instagram directly, it was found that the concept of work-life balance was mentioned 31 times, and general-life balance 64 times. While themes/elements of motherhood were only present in 24 articles of the ones not collected directly from the motherhood section.

Therefore, arguably this reflects how this questioning notion of whether one can have a family and a career is disappearing and is being replaced with its evolving notions, ‘work-life balance’ and ‘life-balance’, which do not question anymore whether one can have it all, but instead question how to best balance it all. The former, work-life balance, focuses more on balancing work and family (Rottenberg, 2014), the latter, life-balance shifts away from focusing solely on those two aspects in life. In other words, it arguably confirms how the questioning notion of ‘having it all’ seems to be evolving into the questioning notion of whether one should ‘do it all’ (Nicolson, 2003). Furthermore, the fact that work-life balance was still mentioned around half as much as general-life balance, either reflects the increasing influence of neoliberalism (Rottenberg, 2014), or it could reflect how work and one’s ‘homelife’ can still be seen as two of the main elements in a woman’s, especially a mother’s, life.

Therefore, it is even more interesting that throughout *Poosh* there is barely any mention of the first shift, as already discussed in the previous chapter. Especially, considering the cost and therefore, monetary means that seem to be necessary to comply with the *Poosh* lifestyle. Hence, one would expect to find more advice on how to 'afford' the lifestyle too. It raises the questions whether this is since most of the writers who give advice, including Kourtney Kardashian, are 'influencers'/social media personalities, which do not have clear boundaries between their three shifts, due to their professional and private life blurring together (Archer, 2019). Or if it is because *Poosh* is focused on giving wellness advice, which might clash with the aspects and notions, including e.g. stress, associated with the first shift, and therefore, ignores them.

Even though, '[p]ositive healthy habits and routines are significant contributors to wellness in life dimensions – physical and financial stability, engagement in occupations and purposeful activity that provide a sense of meaning in life, a supportive social network, emotional well-being, and intellectually satisfying pursuits' (Nemec, Swarbrick, & Merlo, 2015, p. 25). Therefore, according to this definition, it might be expected that there would be financial advice provided, or at least advice on how to accomplish financial stability through 'purposeful activity'. This may be because the first shift (i.e. paid work) is just seen as a given, and something that cannot be changed, and therefore, the advice provided focuses on the elements and aspects of the other two shifts outside the 'fixed' first shift. For example, why else become a morning person, if it is not for having to organise your life around a 9-5 job? The reason might even be a combination of all three assumptions mentioned.

Although absences like these might not be intentional, when using an (F)CDA approach, it is exactly these kinds of absences which are sought because they are seen as equally as important (if not more so) than what is written and should be noted. This is especially true in this context, as the first shift plays a significant role in being able to afford the lifestyle that *Poosh* is selling, and therefore arguably being able to 'do it all'. In other words, pointing back to Kourtney Kardashian's note again, being able to 'live a modern life'. For example, even though *Poosh* never explicitly guides the reader to delegate the second shift, it is arguably necessary to delegate the second shift to 'do it all', or at least the other aspects and elements in relation to the third shift that are so central to the *Poosh* lifestyle. However, to be able to delegate the second shift, whether that includes housework and/or childrearing, a certain income is usually necessary (Hochschild, 2012).

Furthermore, referring back to the previous chapter, the products that are sold to the reader as solutions to their 'modern day problems' are luxury products. These are often expensive, and cannot simply be afforded by just anyone. This further highlights how the absence of information and/or advice around the first shift, i.e. paid work, is striking, as having ample monetary means seems crucial to living this 'modern' lifestyle. Thus, using an (F)CDA one can assume from the absence of a discussion on 'paid work', when considering it within *Poosh*'s wider context, that either the lifestyle *Poosh* is promoting is really aimed at a certain 'privileged' group of women who do not need to worry financially, or that the reader is expected to set their financial priorities accordingly. Either way it seems that *Poosh* does not care about the readers profession, but whether they are able to afford the lifestyle.

The article, in figure 71, is an interview with Kourtney Kardashian's sister Kim Kardashian (West)¹⁴ on how she 'manages it all'. It arguably reflects how for *Poosh* the concept of 'doing it all' seems to entail all three shifts, including caring for children as part of the second shift, and neatly brings together the different aspects and elements discussed in the previous chapters to demonstrate how these seem to truly be at the core of living a postfeminist-lifestyle.

Kim Kardashian West on How She Manages It All

We all have the ***same number of hours in the day*** as Kim Kardashian West, but it's safe to say she's accomplishing more than us (raises hand). Here at *Poosh*, we wanted to know how she's ***able to do it all***, so we reached out to ***mom, wife, law student, and founder of KKW Beauty, KKW Fragrance, and SKIMS*** to find out how she manages each role in the span of 24 hours. With a beauty and solutionwear empire under her ~~belt~~ SKIMS, she proves ***determination and hard work have big payoffs***.

Scroll down for the full KKW *Poosh* interview, and get inspired

What does your morning look like, and how do you prioritize what you're going to work on each day?

KKW: On a general day, ***I wake up at 5:45 a.m. for my workout at 6 a.m.*** I'll pick out my workout clothes the night before. I keep it basic and pretty much wear the same thing all the time, and then I work out for about an hour.

Let's say it's a school day. I'll wake the kids up at 7:05 a.m., and we'll all have breakfast together. I'll get the kids ready and then take them to school, come back, and start my day. Usually, we're filming, and we have to get ready in hair and makeup, so I'll have glam at 9:30 a.m. and I'm ready to film by 11 a.m. Or I'll have meetings and just start my day.

¹⁴ At the time of the data collection of the article, featuring Kim Kardashian, she was still married to the artist formerly known as Kanye West. However, in the meantime the two have divorced and she has changed her last name back to solely her maiden name.

In a perfect world, I love to go to bed early, but because I've been studying for law school, I spend my nights reading. The day usually consists of me going into the law office a few times a week, and then I film our show. Most nights I'm done after dinner, and I get the kids ready for bed and read books and put them to sleep. Then it's back to studying for me until about 11 p.m.

Do you have any organizational methods that you swear by?

KKW: ***Everything is super organized in my house—micromanaged*** to the minute. Like I mentioned earlier, I will lay my clothes out the night before so when I sleep in, I'll wake up at 5:53 instead of 5:45, and I just know my outfit is there. I have a toothbrush and my toothpaste all ready to go laid out by my sink. I just have to brush my teeth and go to the gym.

Luckily, everything I do is pretty close by in Calabasas. I try to keep everything as local as possible and ***make sure that I spend enough time doing the things that I really want to do***, like waking my kids up, getting them ready for school, having breakfast with them, and dropping them off at school, because ***those things will keep me sane when I'm overworked***.

How do you handle feeling overwhelmed?

KKW: I've been a ***huge fan of CBD ever since I started feeling overwhelmed***, which came with starting law school and having a fourth baby. It was a combination of feeling like I'm not going to have time for myself and thinking this is going to be too overwhelming and not really believing in myself that I can do it or surrounding myself with the people who can help. Whether that's knowing that my kids are taken care of when I'm studying—***when you're a mom, you're always worried about your kids***—or ***making sure I have time for my husband*** and everyone else who's important to me.

I started taking ***CBD***, and it really changed things for me. It ***calms me down automatically***. Once the baby came and school started, I ***realized I can handle this and it's not as bad as I thought***. I think you have to take it situation by situation and really make sure that you don't overwhelm yourself and ***remember to do things for yourself***.

I know it might sound silly, but I used to get facials and massages once a week. I went months and months without any self-care or doing things for myself. So I booked a facial and a massage and it just felt nice to take time for myself. I made sure the kids were either at my sister's or busy. ***Carving out time for self-care (no matter what it is) is always important.***

Do you ever find yourself unmotivated? And if so, how do you get yourself out of a funk?

KKW: There are times when I feel unmotivated. But honestly, I'm kind of the opposite ... I like to be on my toes. I like a challenge, and I find myself to be extremely mentally strong, but this year I was definitely tested, maybe the most I've ever been, taking on all of these responsibilities. ***Coming out on the other side though, and knowing I can do it, is always an amazing feeling.*** First year wasn't so bad. We finished it. We got through it. OK. Three more to go. The baby is here. And he's the calmest baby I've ever had, so he's really helping me out, and ***everything is just working on my side.***

What do you want to poosh yourself to do more of?

KKW: ***I would like to study more.*** I know that sounds crazy, but when you study the law the way that I do, you have to also work. The ultimate goal in doing it this way is that you can work with the law firm. I work with cut50, which does a lot of justice reform work, and I basically intern with them while someone is there teaching me so hopefully, I can ultimately get a job at the firm. I want to ***poosh myself to study hard.*** I just wish there were more hours in a day, where I can study more and read more.

Shop the photo: SKIMS Sculpting Bodysuit (\$62, join the waitlist or shop the thong version).

Figure 71 – Partial text of articles on Kim Kardashian (West) on How She Manages It All. For the full text see Appendix 2.33

What is interesting is that Kim Kardashian is first of all described, in the article in figure 71, as a mother, then wife, and only then are her several professions mentioned including her law studies; which implied that even in a postfeminist culture women are first identified by

their motherhood role if they have children. Furthermore, the first paragraph focuses on the fact that Kim Kardashian is able to do all these roles, with *the same number of hours in the day* as everyone else. Thus, conveying the idea that there is no excuse to not 'do it all'. In this case, 'having it all' means having a job (or even several businesses), being married, and having children. In other words, Kim Kardashian 'has it all'. The article then proceeds to emphasise the neoliberal element of shifting responsibility onto the individual, by stating that if the reader continues to read the whole interview, it will provide them with the needed inspiration to also achieve the same.

The response towards the first question reflects the elements and aspects discussed in the second discussion chapter. Kim Kardashian states that she works out every morning, which links back to the sentiment discussed earlier, where this was framed as something to give oneself extra energy. Furthermore, she discusses how in an 'ideal world' she would go to bed earlier (if it was not for her law studies), which was also one of the points recommended to not only become a 'morning person', but to be more 'productive'. Furthermore, she uses a 'school day' as an example of her typical morning/day. Hence, showing how her morning, not her and her husband's, revolves around her children. More importantly, it seems almost like the time with her children is portrayed as leisure time.

This is especially interesting considering that in dual-income households it is well documented that it is commonly women who seem to have significantly less leisure time due to bearing a disproportionate share of household responsibilities (Kay, 1998; Jolly et al., 2014; Ciciolla & Luthar, 2019). This includes, childrearing, where it has been found that even in households with both heterosexual partners earning the same, the mother still performs 'a

greater number of childcare and warmth-related behaviors than their male counterparts, even while maintaining an equivalent level of professional and work-related competence responsibilities' (Park, Smith, & Correll, 2008, p. 1164). Therefore, it is interesting that here, and throughout other *Poosh* motherhood related articles, spending time with one's children is portrayed as leisure time. Even though childcare is not *de facto* a leisurely activity for most women, and usually involves multiple, repetitive domestic tasks (Riina & Feinberg, 2012; Ciciolla & Luthar, 2019).

However, it seems that the leisure time with one's children *Poosh* is referring to is again about the 'fun' and/or less labour intensive part of the second shift, and even though it is once more not explicitly stated, the labour intensive side is most likely delegated to nannies and/or au pairs (Macdonald, 1998), in other words, 'other' less privileged women (Hochschild, 2012). This, Hochschild (1989) refers to as the second half of the stalled revolution, where the omnipresent mother became replaced by paid caregivers (Macdonald, 1998). Hence, again the finances required to achieve the *Poosh* lifestyle are not mentioned and are excluded from the conversation, despite being an important element that ought to be considered. The people who cannot afford paid caregivers are either reliant on state-sponsored childcare services and/or reliant on their parents and/or family to perform free caregiving (Du, Dong, & Zhang, 2019). Either way, whether mothers can afford paid caregivers or are reliant on the above-mentioned free caregiving, there is a risk that they might feel like they are failing or not performing well due to not living up to the 'leisure' picture *Poosh* paints of childrearing, which ignores the labour-intensive parts.

Then the second question reflects how being ‘organised’ is portrayed as the key to helping Kim Kardashian manage everything. Kim Kardashian goes as far as to not only be super organised, but to micromanage. This again reflects Charles and James’ (2005) argument that even if women are able to delegate the physical part of the housework, it does not alleviate them from the mental strain of being in charge of delegating the household labour, as can be seen in the case here for Kim Kardashian. Moreover, she once more mentions specific activities in relation to her children, i.e. childrearing tasks, as the things she *really wants to do* and that will *keep her sane when overworked*. Hence, this reinforces the point addressed above, when discussing the first question, how children are portrayed by *Poosh* as ‘leisure’, and in this case even as something ‘grounding’. This remains problematic, as it could cause feelings of guilt to emerge for mothers, when they do not feel the same sentiments of ‘leisure’ and/or ‘grounding’, that are described here, when spending time with their children.

The third question reflects the neoliberal and postfeminist rhetoric of how instead of liberating women from these multiple ‘shifts’, they are being advised on how to deal with them. Kim Kardashian’s answer contains the same elements and aspects previously discussed. For example, she admits to taking CBD, i.e. a ‘supplement’ to help her deal with the multiple demands of contemporary femininity, rather than challenging these ‘modern life’ stressors. There is also a clear focus on ‘mindset’, with Kim Kardashian stating that in the end, having a fourth child while doing law studies, was not as bad as she thought it would be. Arguably, this builds on the previous two questions, as these can be seen as the reasons why she is able to handle it all (the routine and organisation). And of course, the aspect of ‘self-care’ is mentioned as a way to prevent complete ‘burn out’ (which would be even more unproductive). Here, her children are mentioned one more time, emphasising once more how childcare is portrayed as

leisure rather than labour, and how central a role the children and motherhood play in Kim Kardashian's life.

The fourth question's response builds on the aspects discussed in the previous question, where the right mindset and neoliberal elements of constant (self) improvement and shifting the responsibility onto the individual are reflected (Gill, 2017). In other words, the idea that succeeding is up to the individual, as it is possible to achieve it all now given the wide array of lifestyle choices 'available' to women. The interview wraps up with the final question asking Kim Kardashian what she wants to *Poosh* herself to do more of, which is not only a word play on *Poosh* and push, but also reflects the core sentiment of *Poosh*, which is to keep improving any relevant aspects to become the 'best possible version' of oneself. In other words, the question is asking Kim Kardashian how she plans to continue to be the best possible neoliberal and postfeminist citizen. This, again, really reflects McRobbie's (2015) notions of the 'perfect'. Unsurprisingly, Kim Kardashian responds with 'studying more', as this is currently her newest endeavour, and even though the whole article is about how she manages to do it all, in the same 24 hours we all have, even she wishes that the day had more hours, which is arguably an ironic way to finish this 'inspiring' interview.

Nevertheless, the article demonstrates the centrality that Kim Kardashian's children play in her busy life. This reflects Lagerwey's (2017) point on how especially female celebrities embody and are key in conveying this 'new' postfeminist motherhood, by 'successfully' navigating 'the contradictory demands of post-feminism, a neoliberal emphasis on individualism and entrepreneurialism' (p. 3). Therefore, celebrities embodying these contradictions 'successfully' in relation to motherhood and pregnancy, Lagerwey (2017)

argues, are viewed as successful postfeminist subjects, which should be read 'simultaneously as figures of aspiration and derision' (p. 17).

Hence, the demand to 'have it all', a family and a career, which emerged when women entered the workforce in mass numbers, evolved into an imperative of 'doing it all' in a postfeminist and neoliberal context. Therefore, it seems that now the question whether women can 'have it all' has been 'resolved' and that there is an expectation that women should 'do it all' (Genz, 2009). Using *Poosh* as a case study it seems that having children is not simply included in the notion of 'doing it all', but is expected in a postfeminist culture and neoliberal society.

Transitioning into motherhood within postfeminism

Motherhood can arguably be viewed as a new or at least reconceptualised phenomenon within postfeminism. This is because postfeminism emerged as a culture that primarily targeted young women in the 1990s and 2000s. Many mothers of today, therefore, are those that grew up within this cultural context. To reiterate, these are the generation of 'girls' that grew up with the emerging discourse of 'girl power', watching e.g. the PowerPuff girls (Banet-Weisser, 2018), and who were shaped to grow up into 'individual choice making agents' (Gill, 2007; Banet-Weiser, 2018). These women were told, in various ways, that they could (and should) be feminine and 'have it all' as feminism had become irrelevant (Gill, 2007; Banet-Weiser, 2018). These girls then grew up with the evolving postfeminist culture, where the idea of 'doing it all' emerged, now that it was established that one could 'have it all'. Even though, feminism had seemingly regained popularity again in the 2010s, it was, however, a consumerist feminism that emerged which seemed to feed into a general consumerist cultural aspect that was emerging within postfeminism (Gill, 2017; Banet-Weiser, 2018).

Hence, for a generation that grew up believing equality had been reached and that they are in charge of their life (Hallstein, 2011), it is potentially quite a shock when transitioning into motherhood. This transition arguably reveals the dominant norms and structures that remained in place after the second feminist wave (Kay, 1998; Hallstein, 2011). In other words, revealing what Hochschild (1989) refers to as the ‘stalled revolution’: ‘when women have gone to work, but the workplace, the culture, and most of all, the men, have not adjusted themselves to the new reality’ (Kay, 1998, p. 435). Therefore, the aim of this section is to examine how this transition into motherhood is being portrayed to women by *Poosh* and Kourtney Kardashian, and how this helps to maintain this ‘stalled revolution’, and, the dominant norms and structures that are being reconfirmed and maintained in a postfeminist culture and neoliberal society through (wellness) lifestyle practices like *Poosh*. To reiterate, the potential danger with this is that it might be perceived as ‘true’ and/or achievable (Rogan, 2023).

In figure 72 it is interesting to see how even though women are encouraged to ‘do it all’, i.e. maintain their careers even when they have children, career/work is only mentioned 4 times throughout the 52 articles under the motherhood section. Even household work is mentioned significantly more, despite it barely being present in the general collected articles via Instagram. And it is mentioned once less than the third shift. The second shift, in the form of childrearing, is mentioned significantly more throughout the articles with 69.2% occurrence. In other words, being a mother and the role of childrearing seem to still become the most important role in a woman’s life even in a postfeminist culture and neoliberal society. Furthermore, here as well the phenomenon of ‘life-balance’ is mentioned more than ‘work-life balance’ and ‘having it all’. These seems to still reflect the idea that even if you have

children, it is just a matter of balancing it all (correctly) to be able to 'do it all'. Unsurprisingly, consumerism is strongly present as a 'solution' to the challenges of motherhood, appearing in 40.4% of all articles.

Motherhood-elements	Amount	Percentage
Career/Work (First Shift)	4	7.7
Childrearing (Second Shift)	36	69.2
Household Work (Second Shift)	13	25
Body-Work (Third Shift)	14	26.9
Emotional Labour	8	15.4
Mom-Guilt	4	7.7
Having It All	1	1.9
Work-Life Balance	4	7.7
General-Life Balance	10	19.2
Consumerism (as solution)	21	40.4
Notion of Empowerment	2	3.8

Figure 72 – Motherhood elements found in the articles under the motherhood section

Postfeminist-sensibilities	Amount	Percentage
Focus on the body	24	46.2
Psychological	16	30.8
Neoliberal elements	29	55.8
Confidence notion	4	7.7
(Self-)surveillance/monitoring	18	34.6
Irony and Knowingness	0	0
'Sexual Freedom'	1	1.9
'Sexual Differences'	0	0
Double Entanglement'	0	0

Figure 73 – Postfeminist sensibilities found in the articles under the motherhood section

Figure 73 shows how focus on the body, focus on the psychological, neoliberal elements and self-surveillance notions are also the most present postfeminist sensibilities here. However, the only difference to the general collected articles is that neoliberal elements were more present than the postfeminist sensibility of 'focus on the body'. Hence, from this data it seems that in a contemporary postfeminist culture, there is still a shift (of importance) when a woman becomes a mother.

It seems that the women's 'former' postfeminist lifestyle is not allowed to 'suffer' as a result of having had children and the demands of motherhood that come with it, as in the end it is simply a question of priorities and balancing things correctly, as can be seen in the article in figure 74.

Finding Balance being a new mom – by Erica Spiegelman

Seven months ago, I **became a mother** for the first time. It is the **ultimate blessing** and the **most awe-inspiring experience** I have had. There are so many emotions

involved, and ***navigating the waves and waters of motherhood*** provides lessons galore that will surely keep coming as time goes by. I have come to find that ***being a mom looks different to all of us***. It's unpredictable and can be accompanied by challenge or discomfort, but most importantly, it can coexist right alongside deep joy, love, presence, and connection. You may experience all the feelings at the same time, and that is OK!

I have learned that a couple things are a must in order to ***maintain your sense of self*** and your sanity. Here are three things to be mindful of that you can start with:

1. ***Practice good time management skills***, so that you can prioritize and ***carve out some time for yourself***.

2. ***Self-care*** means having non-negotiables.

3. ***Learning to find balance*** is essential.

Learning to prioritize after having a baby is key. There is ***so little time we get for ourselves***, even if we have help. For some people, ***prioritizing tasks*** does not come easy. They see everything as equally important and find it hard to assign a level of urgency to each item on their to-do list. This is the time management equivalent of those people who struggle to block out certain sounds in a crowded restaurant and just hear all noise as equally demanding on their ears.

I often suggest ***making a list of must-dos*** for the day, along with a list of nice-to-dos.

Breaking your day down into what absolutely must be accomplished versus what you would like to accomplish is a ***good way to simplify and prioritize***. Your must-do list might look like, "Take a shower. Exercise. Show up to work. Read to the baby.

Take dog out. Eat." And your nice-to-do list might say, "Get your nails done. Read.

Take a bath. Get a massage. Call so-and-so. Watch a movie."

Everyone is wired differently, but many studies have shown that our ***energy in the morning*** is our "***peak energy***." As the day progresses, we grow less focused and less creative. It's always best to place your most important and creative tasks in the early hours when you are most alert and engaged and when you feel more motivated. But if you can get things done in the evening and feel more energized, by all means get your to-dos done then!

Self-care is my favorite subject for discussion. It's what my whole book, *The Rewired Life*, is about. ***Being a new mom and being mindful of self-care is so challenging because our little babes require so much of our time and energy***. But our ***saving grace is having non-negotiables***.

Non-negotiables are the things, hobbies, and ***acts of service that we can do for ourselves that remind us of who we are***. They are what feels good to us and what ***brings us happiness and peace of mind***. It's just like the non-negotiable of brushing our teeth every day—we don't really consider skipping it. My non-negotiables are movement daily, eating healthy, sleeping (when I can, considering I have an infant), and cooking as much as I can. These are the things that bring me a ***sense of well-being***.

We all need to be aware of how self-care is much more than exercise and eating right. It's sleeping adequately, making sure our mental health is intact, tending to

our emotional well-being, and feeling like we are growing and connected spiritually to ourselves.

Various cultures, religions, and spiritual practices all seek to provide an answer to the question, ***“What is balance?”*** ***Balance means learning to give and receive in equal measure.*** Many healing practitioners believe that imbalance is the root of suffering and disease, and that all things are connected. We cannot be spiritually sick without seeing effects in our bodies and minds. Conversely, if we are physically ill, we will feel it mentally and emotionally as well.

We ***have to find what balance means to each of us individually.*** We need to make time for sleep, work, play, love, hobbies, travel, nature, and connecting with our deepest selves on a daily basis. ***What “balance” means to us will change from one day to the next,*** yet we can ***always strive*** to stay attuned to our inner voice that will tell us when we are shifting out of sync. ***As mothers, if we don’t take care of ourselves, we will not be as present for others and for our children.***

I found out four months ago that I am pregnant, AGAIN! The scales of balance have shifted in my life, reinforcing my non-negotiables. Self-care is going in full swing, and every day I am trying to maintain balance when I can. Having ***two babies*** a year apart will ***require even more of me.***

We could not be more grateful that we are welcoming this little girl into this world and ***will figure it out as it unfolds, feeling confident that with these things in place, it will be just fine.***

Figure 74 – Partial text of articles on Finding Balance being a new mom. For the full text see Appendix 2.34

The article, in figure 74, starts with describing how *becoming a mother* is the *ultimate blessing and awe-inspiring experience*. Hence, demonstrating how women are seen as being 'transformed' due to having given birth. This at first might not seem markedly different from traditional notions of motherhood, where 'fulltime dedication to their children' (Bastos, Uriko, & Valsiner, 2012, p. 402) and their development is not only expected, but framed as the principal facet of women's personal accomplishments and should always be prioritised over the mother's own needs (Bastos, Uriko, & Valsiner, 2012). Moreover, this notion of 'motherhood' is traditionally presented as something that should come 'naturally' (Miller, 2007, Teodorescu, 2018). However, there are some significant differences. First, neoliberal elements can be observed here, which in this case seem to reassure that being a mum is an individually *different experience* and not a universal one. Furthermore, the article states that it is something that is not natural, but rather something to learn and navigate as time goes by. Hence, *Poosh* portrays motherhood as something you learn, instead of something that comes 'naturally'. Although this causes the responsibility to be put on the individual, it does, however, potentially take some pressure off women that motherhood, within postfeminism, is not portrayed as something 'natural' but rather something you learn. This echoes research like Smart's (1996), that motherhood is rather something 'learned', as has been discussed in the literature review. While at one level this challenges essentialist constructions of motherhood (that suggest that there is something biologically wrong with the women for whom motherhood does not come 'naturally'), it on the other hand suggests that if a woman does not learn how to navigate motherhood, it is her own fault and down to her inadequacies. Hence, *Poosh* again puts women in a position where they are at risk of failing.

The rest of the article continues to demonstrate the same postfeminist sensibilities and neoliberal elements already discussed, focusing on ‘balancing’ and ‘prioritising’ to help women ‘do it all’. This raises again the question discussed earlier whether the move to life-balance from work-life balance might be due to the slippage between life and work for lifestyle celebrities like Kourtney Kardashian whose professional and private life are becoming increasingly intertwined due to social media.

There is even an emphasis on how practising *good time management* and *finding balance* are especially important when becoming a mother, which includes being able to *prioritise* correctly. Instead of taking some responsibility off the new mother, tips are again provided on how to deal with it instead. For example, by making a must-do list, which in the case here includes the first shift (going to work) and the third shift (exercising). Again, this presents the third shift as something ‘essential’ (Dworking & Wachs, 2004), by trying to put it on the same level as ‘taking a shower’, and/or making it as punishable to miss as not showing up to work.

Moreover, the article returns to the notion that becoming a morning person will help towards solving one’s issues, as it will give you more energy and, therefore, cause the conditions for the ‘must-do’ tasks to be completed more efficiently. However, again the neoliberal element of individualism is present here, with a comment acknowledging that if you really are an exception and an evening person, to go ahead and *get your to-dos done then* instead. In other words, shifting the responsibility of succeeding and failing onto the individual mother.

Even though there is an acknowledgement of how *little time* mothers *get to themselves*, it promises some time for themselves, as long as they prioritise things and manage to balance everything correctly. This, however, feels like a false promise that cannot be achieved, at least to all. Other research, which included interviews with 'real' first-time mothers certainly did not reflect what *Poosh* is trying to portray as achievable for new mothers. For example, a study by Sprajcer et al. (2023) found that new mothers should 'be considered an at-risk group for fatigued driving' (p. 76), due to more than 50% of their 187 participants being affected by daytime fatigue as they experienced disruptive sleep (*ibid*). Therefore, it seems that if it was as easy as setting 'non-negotiables', this would not be the case in such a large proportion.

Furthermore, the danger in these false portrayals for first-time mothers that grew up in a postfeminist culture is that it can cause 'loneliness' (Lee, Vasileiou, & Barnett, 2017), especially due to them having grown up in a culture that promised them that they can have and achieve it all (Gill, 2007; Banet-Weiser, 2018). Lee, Vasileiou and Barnett (2017) found that transitioning into new motherhood can be associated with loneliness due to the new mothers comparing themselves to unrealistic mothering 'norms'. It has been argued that the popular western representation of the 'glowing and content mother', causes the silencing of new mothers due to them not wanting to admit to negative emotions out of fear of being viewed as a 'sad, non-coping wreck' (Lee, Vasileiou, & Barnett, 2017). Furthermore, instead of feeling this sense of augmented womanhood, which is often associated with motherhood, it was rather found that first-time mothers felt overwhelmed as their other identities were being challenged, specifically their identity at work (*ibid*). And due to these new mothers concealing their feelings rather than discussing them, it often evokes negative emotions due to 'not

managing as [they] should be' (Lee, Vasileiou, & Barnett, 2017, p. 1334). Or at least, due to not managing to conform to unrealistic 'deeply rooted societal expectations about what motherhood means,' (Lee, Vasileiou, & Barnett, 2017, p. 1334). Therefore, causing in particular first-time mothers to feel 'lonely' as they probably do not feel like they can reach out, out of fear of looking like 'failures'.

Moreover, 'self-care' is again being portrayed as essential, even for mothers, to maintain a *sense of self*. In other words, to not completely become engulfed into this new role as a 'mother'. Here mothers are being told that to have that time for themselves, despite the acknowledgement that babies require a lot of time and energy, is by having 'non-negotiables', which are encouraged through the sentiment that if mothers take care of their own wellbeing, they are able to take care of the wellbeing of their family. This demonstrates that it is still the role of mothers to take care of the wellbeing of their children and/or family. This reflects the work of Gatrell (2005) on the 'selfless angel' or 'domestic goddess' as discussed in the literature review. It is clear that childrearing is presented as a woman's role with the emphasis that with the second child it will require even more attention from the mother, not from the father and/or even both parents.

It seems that while the role of 'mother' is encouraged as a central one in postfeminism, it, however, is not supposed to fully take over, as has been the case in more traditional perceptions of motherhood. Nevertheless, it is arguably more easily said than done to have 'non-negotiables', because *exercise, eating healthily, and cooking* are not the same as *brushing one's teeth*, despite it being presented as such. Furthermore, it feels like sleep or resting are

aspects that should be prioritised by new mothers over the formerly mentioned points.

Especially, considering that new mothers often suffer from fatigue as discussed earlier.

However, it is interesting to note that there seems to be an emphasis on how one's former self (before children and/or becoming a mother) is supposed to almost co-exist alongside this new role of being a mother; with reference to these non-negotiables as helping to *keep a sense of self*. Here, 'balance' is described as *giving and receiving the same amount*, but what that exactly entails is not clear, apart from the fact that unsurprisingly it is 'ever-changing'. Furthermore, the notion of confidence is present in relation to neoliberal elements, with statements such as that it will all 'work out'. In other words, as long as you have the confidence that you can manage and balance it all, you will be able to do it all.

The same kind of sentiment and elements can be observed in the article in figure 75, which focuses specifically on work-life balance as a mother and how to navigate mum guilt.

Arielle Charnas Talks Mom Guilt and Work-Life Balance

In our latest Poosh conversation, Kourt's close friend Allie Rizzo sat down with fellow New York City mom-friend Arielle Charnas. You're probably familiar with the name: she's the mastermind behind Something Navy, the incredibly successful fashion and soon-to-be lifestyle brand. Below, Allie and Arielle chat about ***motherhood, building a brand***, and ***balancing it all***. Read the exclusive interview below.

Q: ***Being a mom is the best job***, but it's ***also stressful***. When you add living in New York and ***juggling a career to the mix***, it gets to be ***quite a balancing act***. How do you balance running Something Navy and being a mother of two?

A: I can't say there is one solid answer, which I know isn't what people want to hear!

Every day the answer is different and I take each day as it comes. When I'm in the office ***I try to be 100 percent in the office***, and when I'm ***home with my kids I try to be 100 percent present with them***. Obviously, it's not always perfect, and ***each day is a learning experience***. There are days when I ***feel total mom guilt***, but ***even*** when I speak to ***stay-at-home moms*** I learn the ***guilt is there for them too***. I think it sort of comes with the territory and the ***only thing I can do is be my best***. I also ***made sure my office was close to home*** so I'm able to go back-and-forth quickly, and sometimes my kids pop in.

Q: Ruby and Esme have been featured in your content on Something Navy and in your Instagram posts. How do you feel about their exposure?

A: I go back and forth. For the most part, I'm really okay with it—this is a different day and age. Because it's uncharted territory, no one knows exactly how it will affect them down the road, but what I do know is that ***my husband and I will always love them unconditionally and support them in everything they do***. I recently took down their 'Highlights' channel on my Instagram page in an effort to slightly reduce their exposure on my platform. I usually just post videos of them on Instagram Stories and static pictures on my feed. ***It's my happy medium.***

Q: What are you most excited about with the launch of your own line? What types of products can we expect?

A: I'm so excited to create a fashion and lifestyle brand that I know my followers want. I am ***using all of their feedback, advice, and ideas to help shape the brand***. I

want them to feel included in the fashion world without having to spend all of their money. My goal is to help them achieve that balance of sexy/pretty and chic/highfashion. For the launch in April, people can expect a highly-curated Ready-To-Wear collection that will be available on our website and in our very first store! We will roll out collections every month or so after that, expanding into new categories as we go.

...

Figure 75 – Partial text of articles on Arielle Charnas Talks Mom Guilt and Work-Life Balance. For the full text see Appendix 2.35

While it is obvious that the article/interview, in figure 75, occurred mostly to help promote the interviewee's business, there are still some interesting aspects to pull from it in regards to the norms that are produced around contemporary motherhood. First, just as in the article in figure 74, this article starts by emphasising how 'amazing' being a mum is. However, what is interesting here is that it is considered a 'job', and while it is framed as the *best job* it is simultaneously noted that it can be a *stressful* one. It is also acknowledged that having two jobs, being a mother and a paid job (outside the home), can be *quite a balancing act*. Nevertheless, even though it can be seen as positive that this effort and strain is highlighted at least, it is more important to note what is not said, especially when using an (F)CDA. In other words, while the challenge of the situation is acknowledged, it is not stated that women should not try to balance it anyway. Quite the contrary, it is indirectly saying that one should try to balance it all, as just because it is a 'balancing-act' it does not mean it is not manageable.

The interviewee's response brings forth similar neoliberal elements to the ones found in the previous article, in figure 74, by saying that every day is different and that there is no one solution. However, the interviewee does indirectly advise women that when they are at

work they should be 100% there and when they are at home they should be 100% with their family. This reflects the sentiments discussed in the literature review, how in contemporary society to be an ‘ideal-worker’ one needs to give a 100%, no matter one’s circumstances (Saul, 2003). Furthermore, it begs the question where there is space for ‘self-care’ which was emphasised as so essential in the previous article, in figure 74, when you are supposed to give 100% when at work and 100% to one’s family when home. Moreover, with her stating that her office is close to home on purpose, it does not seem that there is much time for herself between these two entities. Nevertheless, the article seems to convey that you should still strive for, in this case, being 100% present at home and at work.

However, in a social media age, where the private and public become increasingly intertwined (Archer, 2019), as mentioned earlier, it raises the question whether it is easier to be present 100% at work and at home, for social media personalities/influencers, such as the subjects of the article in figure 75. Or whether it is impossible as they cannot be clearly separated, and as such aiming to be 100% present both at home and at work might never be achievable and, therefore, again in a constant state of ‘becoming’ (McRobbie, 2015).

It is interesting how elements of digital leisure are present within the article, with the interviewee claiming that social media is her *happy place*. This reflects the findings of Mayoh (2019) on how and why digital leisure has increased for women. Furthermore, one can also see here how online brands are using social media to get free information from their audience/followers, with her stating that they use *all of the feedback, advice, and ideas to help shape the brand*, which they collected via social media. Hence, this shows that *Poosh* is not an exception, but part of a wider lifestyle and wellness sector online that utilises these tools for

interaction with their audience. However, this makes one wonder again how this ‘digital leisure’ and information-gathering might interfere with her being 100% with her family at home. Hence, it already seems that her advice is misleading.

Moreover, also here, the centrality children should play in a women’s life is reflected, with the comment of how her children will always be loved unconditionally and be supported in anything they want to. However, at least this time the ‘husband’ seems to be part of the equation. Furthermore, what is different in this article, in figure 75, is that mum guilt is being mentioned. And what is interesting is not only how it is acknowledged, but seems to simply be accepted, with the interviewee basically stating that it is normal to have mum guilt, and that even stay-at-home mothers feel it. In other words, it almost transmits the idea that you might as well work, as you will feel guilty either way, instead of challenging the expectations linked to motherhood. This is interesting as many (privileged) women, it seems from research discussed in the literature review, end up quitting their job over the guilt that they cannot properly manage their paid work alongside the demands that come with childcare in the domestic space (Orgad, 2017). Instead of recognising that it is due to various structures in place making it very hard, if not impossible, for them to do both; they blame themselves for not being ambitious enough (*ibid*). Hence, while this *Poosh* article supposedly aims to help women deal with mum guilt, it does not address the root of this guilt. Thus, causing mothers to continue to measure themselves against these unachievable ‘good motherhood’ standards, which, therefore, does not relieve them of their ‘doubt, anxiety and guilt about their mothering.’ (Riley, Evans, & Robson, 2019, p.136).

While the article, in figure 75, touches on mum guilt, which is being addressed as something that mothers should not feel within a postfeminist context, the article in figure 76 gives a deeper insight into this development.

How to Navigate Mom Guilt

With the current pandemic and a national shutdown, ***mom guilt*** is becoming more and more pervasive. There is ***immense pressure from society for women to be perfect mothers***, beginning with birthing and breastfeeding. With all the recent changes including virtual schooling and the inability for children to participate in extracurricular or social activities, ***children are home more often***, leading to ***fewer breaks for moms to recharge***. Moms are ***stressed*** and ***overwhelmed***, allowing habits that may have been prohibited in the past, such as more screen time and unhealthy diets.

As a result, moms are feeling more guilty and critical toward themselves and all the things they “should” be doing differently. Here are some ways to ***counteract the feelings of guilt*** that come from ***unrealistic expectations*** moms have of themselves ***to be perfect***.

- Redirect negative thoughts to more constructive thoughts. Focus on the value that comes out of the act. For example, “I should spend less time working” can be restructured to “***My children are learning from me how to balance work and home life.***”
- Practice being kind and empathic toward yourself. Remind yourself that how you’re feeling is normal. You are doing the best you can with the resources available

to you, both physically and emotionally. **Practice releasing perfectionism** and acquiring acceptance for yourself. Through this, **you are also teaching your children how to have compassion and self-love.**

- **Increase time for self-care.** Eating healthy, exercising, meditating, and **spending time away from your children helps fill your tank**, improves your mood, and allows you to be **more emotionally available for your kids**. **Feeling guilty depletes your tank**, leading to **more negative thoughts** and **internal conflicts**.

- Talk to other moms. **All moms are in this together**. Most struggle with feelings of guilt and all the “shoulds” that come with parenting. Connecting with other moms normalizes your own experiences and allows you the opportunity to vent and relate with others who are in similar situations.

Putting in consistent effort to work through your guilt will help decrease or even eliminate it. If the feelings becoming overwhelming and you need further support navigating through them, consider reaching out to a mental health professional.

Figure 76 – Partial text of articles on How to Navigate Mom Guilt. For the full text see Appendix 2.36

The article, in figure 76, shows an interesting development in relation to mum guilt. It seemingly criticises the *unrealistic* expectations that society has put on women to comply with a certain standard of being *perfect*. And while at first, this can be read as a positive development that pressure is attempted to be removed from mothers in a postfeminist culture, it is not that straightforward. For example, while on the one hand it is saying that mothers should not feel guilty for not being ‘perfect’, on the other hand they still indirectly state that letting your children have screen time and eating unhealthily is not something that should happen. Therefore, clear examples are still provided that speak to what mothers should

and/or should not do, but nevertheless seemingly taking pressure off by stating that it is ok to not live up to this perfect image. Furthermore, the article again acknowledges how being a mother is not only a time and energy consuming task, but also that there is an immense amount of pressure and expectation on women in this role.

Nevertheless, it is again emphasised here that childrearing is the mother's responsibility, with statements that state that the children being at home more means there is less time for themselves to recharge. This, however, is portrayed as negative as it is also discussed that when one's tank is empty as a mother, you are not able to be as emotionally available for your children. Thus, again demonstrating how self-care and time are painted as necessary to be a better more present mother. Therefore, showing once more how it is expected of women (rather than men) to be responsible for their children's emotional wellbeing (Gatrell, 2005).

Moreover, there are neoliberal elements present that encourage mothers not to be perfect, as it is counterproductive. For example, in this context mothers should not feel guilty, because it simply leads to more negative thoughts and inner conflicts, which as discussed in the previous chapter is equated to being unproductive. Instead, a neoliberal approach is taken where the mother's 'shortcomings' should be turned into a life lesson for the children instead, which will help them to develop in more productive ways. Hence, instead of feeling guilty that one is working, it should be framed as a good example for one's children *how to balance work and home life*. Furthermore, by not being perfect all the time and also failing in between, it is argued that it demonstrates a more realistic image to one's children which teaches them how to deal with something going wrong, a key aspect of neoliberal subjectivity.

In other words, it seems that mum guilt is not being discouraged because the standards set for women are unrealistic and unachievable, but instead because it is not only unproductive on the mother's side, but also much more productive for children to learn from a mother who makes mistakes. This, therefore, produces much better, more productive neoliberal citizens, as it is clear that while mothers are allowed to fail, they should still keep *putting in consistent effort* into aiming to be perfect. This also fuels consumerism as a means to address their failings and help them strive for perfection, which, therefore, still reflects McRobbie's (2015) notion of the 'perfect'. In this article, the aim is not to be 'perfect' as it is acknowledged that this is unobtainable. However, discourses are produced to encourage women to put in consistent effort to try and come as close as possible to 'perfection'. Moreover, elements of horizontal or peer surveillance can be observed here, with mothers being encouraged to talk to each other, as they are all *in this together*. However, while this support network allows you to 'vent', it arguably at the same time compels mothers to *keep putting in that consistent effort*.

The paradigm of 'failing' to create good productive neoliberal adults
When it comes to childrearing, postfeminism seems to encourage a neoliberal approach. Considering that postfeminism is a cultural phenomenon, it is not surprising to see it weighing in on how to 'correctly' raise children. As discussed in the literature review, ever since the acknowledgement that children are not 'little adults' but instead gradually 'become adults' (Ball, 2021), there have been different debates about how to raise children 'correctly'. This is especially the case given that 'improper' parenting is often blamed for society's problems (Ball, 2021), even though parenting alone is not responsible for the social reproduction of a society (Laslett & Brenner, 1989). In other words, there are more aspects than just parenting that

factor into the ‘process by which a social system reproduces itself’ (Federici, 2019, p. 55).

However, it is again not surprising, considering the influence and role neoliberalism seems to play within postfeminism, that postfeminism is encouraging a neoliberal approach in relation to childrearing. In the previous section we already saw how the articles briefly touched upon how ‘failing’ can be positive for child development, depending on how this failure is coped with. Thus, it seems that the attempt at continuing to comply with an ‘ever-becoming’ postfeminist lifestyle after having become a mother goes hand in hand with neoliberal childrearing.

The article in figure 77 arguably demonstrates this ‘new’ neoliberal approach to parenting well.

How to avoid Helicopter Parenting

Parenting our children nowadays can be the most challenging task we have. ***Every parent's goal is to raise happy, healthy, and productive adults.*** As simple as this idea seems, an increasing number of children are moving into adolescence and early adulthood feeling unsatisfied with themselves and their ability to manage their lives. Parents are spending too much time hovering over their children and overprotecting them from the normal stresses and anxieties of life (aka: helicopter parenting). As a result, children are growing up having no idea how to reorient themselves and go through normal processes after experiencing discomfort or distress. It is important that parents begin to see this type of parenting as debilitating our children. As we create more space for our children to fall, grapple, and learn, we

help them create antibodies that will strengthen their “psychological immune system” for their future.

How can we raise strong, happy, and confident adults?

- **Allow your children to experience the normal frustrations of daily life.** Give them the chance to try new things, test the limits, fall, and get hurt so that they can learn how to recompose themselves and see that everything is still OK.
- **Take one step back.** That way, children can experience and learn about the world on their own terms but in the safe and supportive environment that parents have provided.
- **Let children separate and individuate.** Grant them space to explore their own passions and desires rather than being influenced to fulfill your hopes and needs as a parent.
- **Tell kids the truth.** Children oftentimes know the truth anyway and feel confused and conflicted when we tell them lies to protect them from suffering. Telling kids the truth instills confidence by showing them that you know they can handle it, increases the trust and bond between child and parent, and increases emotional security.
- **Be realistic.** Treating your children as though they are the center of the universe may work in childhood but isn't the reality of their life once they enter adulthood. Showing them more realistic perspectives about life will help them once they're older. Saying things like “we don't always get what we want” or “sometimes life is

not fair" shows children the reality of adulthood.

• **Set limits and boundaries.** Many times, parents allow children to get away with a lot because they don't want to see them upset. Children thrive off limits and boundaries. It helps them feel safe and secure knowing their parents have control and are in charge. Saying "you can only have 30 minutes of screen time a day" and following through with the limit will have a much larger payoff for both the child and the parents.

Reference: Gottlieb, Lori. How to Land Your Kid in Therapy. The Atlantic (2011): 64-78. Print.

Figure 77 – Partial text of articles on How to avoid Helicopter Parenting. For the full text see Appendix 2.37

Already in the second sentence of the article, in figure 77, the supposed goal of parenting is mentioned as *raising happy, healthy, and productive adults*. Furthermore, the article makes sure to convey the seriousness of this *task* by first stating that *parenting can be the most challenging task*, and to not think of this goal as something *simple* to achieve. Moreover, the consequences of parenting 'wrongly' are outlined early on. Mainly that it could result in the children, once grown up, not being able to manage their lives well or to feel 'satisfied'. The latter can arguably be linked again with the 'focus on the psychological', where feeling 'unhappy' equals being unproductive.

In other words, as briefly discussed before, the traditional parenting method of *overprotecting* children, involving 'Intensive Parenting' practices which require parents to 'devote their time to actively enriching the child, ensuring the child's individual needs are addressed and ... consistently monitor the child's progress and whereabouts.' (Bernstein & Triger, 2011, p.1221), is condemned as this will result in not as productive neoliberal adults. It seems that children are supposed to learn from a young age onwards how to cope with

'modern life', so that once they are adults they are more resilient towards it. Thus, it is important for children to be taught ways to avoid being affected by *stress* and/or *distress* (which can lead to burnout). The article directly compares this psychological aspect of the upbringing with physical-healthy upbringing, by encouraging the parents to see creating space for their children to *fall*, *grapple* and therefore *learn* from it, to creating *antibodies* (against modern life) that will strengthen these future adults' *psychological immune system*. This arguably demonstrates once more how significant the psychological has become in a postfeminist culture and neoliberal society, as it seems that 'strengthening' this aspect is increasingly important to 'survive' in modern (western) society.

The second half of the article, after explaining why overprotective, i.e. 'helicopter parenting', is prohibiting the children's development into *strong*, *happy* and *confident adults*, gives 6 general points of advice on how to instead raise one's children. This again demonstrates how *Poosh* generalises advice into a certain number of points, in this case into six, even though individualism is pushed so much, just as discussed in the previous chapter. Also here, the third point is about letting children *separate* and *individuate*. And even though it is portrayed as stopping parents from 'forcing' their interest and aims onto their children, arguably it also already instils in them the idea of taking responsibility for succeeding and failing in adult life. In other words, shifting responsibility into the individual away from society (Gill, 2007, 2017), and in this case even onto the individual's parents and/or upbringing (Ball, 2021).

Furthermore, the first point arguably encourages and prepares the future adult to pursue the 'perfect' and not to be frustrated by the concept of the 'ever becoming' (McRobbie, 2015), as it seems to want to teach children to deal with *testing limits* and *failing*, but also to

recompose themselves. In other words, to keep trying over and over again, and to keep trying to reach new limits (which are ever changing and therefore, do not exist as a fixed, static entity) even if they fail (which is their individual fault). Paradoxically, the second point states at first that the parents should take a step back so their children can experience and learn to achieve the first point, while, however, at the same time needing to still provide a *safe and supportive environment*. Hence, it is presented as important to give their children space to fail and learn to bounce back, while simultaneously providing the right environment for children to learn to do this. Moreover, what this safe and supportive environment entails is ambiguous, especially when considering the fourth point, which tells parents to *tell the truth* and not to tell *lies to protect them from suffering*. Again, this is presented with the aim to *instil confidence* in children that they can deal with the modern world as an adult in the future. This shows how 'confidence' is portrayed as the most important attitude to 'succeed' in postfeminism (Gill, 2017).

The fifth point adds to this arguably conflicting advice as on the one hand mothers are told to not interfere in the form of being 'overprotective', but on the other hand they are told to provide a 'safe' and 'supportive' environment. Here, the former is being advised again with parents being told *to be realistic*, by which in this case they mean telling their children that "[they] don't always get what [they] want" or "sometimes life is not fair" to supposedly show them *the reality of adulthood*. The sixth point focuses again on advice, setting limits and boundaries, which is portrayed again as something to provide a *safe and secure* feeling in their children. The article claims that children will thrive off limits and boundaries, even though arguably these are also the required qualities to instil for future law abiding and instruction following adults. In other words, Poosh's article demonstrates how idealised constructions of

contemporary motherhood are used 'to try and guarantee correctly socialised adults' (Ball, 2021, p.2).

This arguably causes more than simply producing adults that are fit to live in a postfeminist culture and neoliberal society. Through raising the next generation in this fashion it also contributes towards reproducing the current society. In other words, this advice feeds into the wider concept of the social reproduction of a society (Laslett & Brenner, 1989). Even though there are more aspects, e.g. schools (Collins, 2009), that factor into the 'process by which a social system reproduces itself' (Federici, 2019, p. 55), parenting certainly plays a vital role within it. Furthermore, when the current society is reproduced, so are its current dominant norms and structures. Therefore, the current class and gender system is being maintained also due to parenting/childrearing practices, as to produce social constructions such as gender and class, they need to be continuously reconstructed (Butler, 2006). Hence, apart from maintaining the current postfeminist culture and neoliberal society, gender inequality is also maintained through reproducing the current society. In particular, it also feeds into maintaining unpaid labour practices like childrearing as a feminine role/task (Federici, 2019).

The article in figure 78 is another good example of the change of childrearing concept that seems to be taking place in a postfeminist culture.

5 toys That encourage creativity for children

Jennie Monness ... an early childhood educator and guru and mom to a 21-month-old (and expecting her second this month!). She took her decades' worth of knowledge in early childhood education and turned it into a blog called Mo'

Mommies. She used her website and social media to show other parents how she educates and cares for her daughter, which turned into meetup groups to connect, support, and empower one another. She went on to co-found Union Square Play, featuring open-ended play materials that help babies engage with each other and learn in the most natural, innate way. Learn her informative insights below.

OK, now help us! How do we play with our babies?

Jennie: I say it all the time, that it truly comes down to what we want our children to get out of their play. Do we want them to be engaged rather than entertained? Do we want them to sit and watch when they play or immerse themselves in learning and fun?

With the right mix of thoughtful toys and “non-toys,” you get engaged, focused, and curious babies. You encourage creativity, imagination, and play that is endless. So many people today have an overabundance of toys that their children don’t even find interesting anymore. That’s why I guide parents on what to get at the right age and even created a storefront on Amazon. I included descriptions to tell you how to invite your child to play with these materials.

To make things even easier to get started, I chose some of my favorites here that will stimulate innovation, imagination, and creativity as your child discovers the ways they can be used. These objects may take a bit of “inviting” on the part of the adult, but most will encourage your child to dive right in!

Figure 78 – Partial text of articles on 5 toys That encourage creativity for children. For the full text see Appendix 2.38

The article in figure 78 focuses on *how to play with your babies*, showing arguably how far-reaching the idea of doing everything as ‘perfectly’ as one can is, considering that mothers

here are even being given advice on how to correctly let their babies play. It also demonstrates that mothers are expected to start educating their children extremely early to ensure that they develop into 'good' (*happy, healthy, confident, strong, and productive*) adults.

This becomes apparent already in the first sentence of the response of Jennie Monness, an early childhood educator and guru who is the subject of the article, on *how to play with our babies*. She immediately starts off by responding that it depends on *what we want our children to get out of their play*. This arguably already indicates that there is a correct, and therefore, also a wrong way of playing with one's children. Furthermore, it suggests that children, including babies, should be 'getting something out of' playing. From the article it seems that what even babies should be 'getting out of' playing is to be engaged and immerse themselves in learning, as this will lead to developing *engaged, focused, and curious babies*, and as such, engaged, focused, and curious future adults. This again supports the point, that a significant amount of responsibility and 'power' is put onto parenting (Ball, 2021). And of course, consumerism is the answer again (Gill, 2017) to the problem of how to correctly 'play' with your children, as to educate and parent them correctly can be accomplished by buying the handily provided toys suggested here and/or on Jennie's Amazon storefront.

Hence, there is a clear shift happening in relation to childrearing within postfeminism. Furthermore, as already discussed, the second shift, including housework and childrearing, has gone through a transformation within postfeminism. Housework seems to now focus on maintaining this labour as an essential feminine role and reaffirming women's position within the private sphere through encouraging glamour labour and beautifying the domestic space (Blackstone, 2003; Elias, Gill, & Scharff, 2017). Discourses around childrearing seem to

discourage mum guilt, but only because ‘failing’ (if done in the correct way) can be good for the social development of the children. Seeing a mother deal with a ‘failed’ situation ‘correctly’, will develop more resilient and productive future adults who can deal with modern society (even more so than if their mothers actually conformed with being ‘perfect’). Nevertheless, this therefore means that it should not stop the mothers from continuously aiming to achieve the ‘perfect’ (McRobbie, 2015), but just that there should be an expectation that they will ‘fail’ along the way. Hence, the root of why mum guilt exists is not addressed. In other words, throughout *Poosh*, the dominant norms and structures that bind women to this second shift, especially housework and childrearing, remain intact and are being maintained through the childrearing practices which contribute towards socially reproducing the gendered and class inequalities of the current society. Thus, while at the superficial level change can be observed, the end result remains that women are responsible for maintaining these traditional feminine spaces that cause them to remain subordinate.

[**The third shift: Pre and postpartum body work**](#)

While it has become apparent that there have been some shifts within postfeminism, its sensibilities, despite having seemingly evolved, remain the same at the core. Furthermore, postfeminism as a culture cannot be seen as an environment in which women are equal or genuinely have been ‘liberated’, instead it seems to mask the dominant norms and structures that still exist within society which are truly responsible for women’s still persistent subordination, and instead shifts the blame for not succeeding onto the individual women. To conclude the discussion, the following section will focus on how body work seems to have become more pervasive and integrated as a required third shift in women’s life, even when transitioning into motherhood, despite research finding how unrealistic this is, as discussed in

the literature review. The first of the two final articles that will be discussed focuses on the body work during and/or before the pregnancy, while the latter one will focus on the body work postpartum. The articles featuring exclusively Kourtney Kardashian were selected for the (F)CDA, due to the sheer amount of body work/shift articles present under the motherhood section.

The article in figure 79 focuses on *Kourt's pregnancy secrets* and contains a lot of interesting aspects and elements in relation to being pregnant in a postfeminist culture.

Kourt's Pregnancy Secrets

Being a mother is my favorite role in life. It gives me purpose, changed me for the better, and made me realize there is nothing else I would rather do with my time. It's been such an *incredibly rewarding experience* to watch my babies grow and cross milestones. I get so many questions about my pregnancies, and *each one was a little bit different*. I personally loved being pregnant and *made it a point to really listen to my body*.

I wanted to share some of my favorite foods and routines that helped me *feel my very best during my pregnancies*:

Staying Active

Throughout all three of my pregnancies, I always tried to stay active. My doctor had told me that if I was active before, I could continue the same level of activity. When I was pregnant with Mason, I ran outside (in Miami on the beach for the first few months, and then in LA in my neighborhood) with music every day for seven months.

I listened to my body, which at seven months pregnant, I felt was telling me to slow down, so then I would go on walks in my neighborhood, and rest when I was tired.

When I was pregnant with Penelope and Reign, I would do yoga or go on walks in my neighborhood, usually with a stroller, and would do a lot of hills. I was very active with the other kids too, which kept us busy!

When I was pregnant with Reign, I was in the Hamptons during the summer and remember doing the treadmill, StairMaster, and swimming a lot in the pool with the kids along with yoga. I had an amazing yoga teacher, Leila Johnson, who taught me all about keeping my body in balance through movement and healthy recipes.

Ayurveda

Before I was pregnant with Penelope, I got really into the practice of Ayurveda — a traditional medicine system from India that focuses on the mind, body, and spirit. I worked with an amazing Ayurvedic teacher, Martha Soffer, to guide me through the panchakarma cleanse. It helps ***detoxify the body*** through cleansing eating practices, massages with warm oil, and healing herb treatments to reset the nervous system and rid the body of what it doesn't need. This is especially amazing to do before becoming pregnant, according to Ayurvedic traditions, to make a "clean egg."

While I was pregnant with her, I continued with much of the food and nutritional things I learned from Martha, like taking ghee every morning, eating raw veggies in the daytime, and eating cooked veggies at night, including a lot of foods with purpose.

After I had Penelope, I continued by doing mommy-baby yoga classes at my home,

having Martha come over for mommy-baby massages, and cooking lots of Ayurvedic foods to nurture my body for after birth and breastfeeding. Applying oil to the body is grounding and relaxing. You ***can give love both to yourself and to your baby, while also helping to reduce stretch marks, restore skin's elasticity, and relieve pregnant belly itching.***

Intention

Leila taught me a really beautiful way of preparing food. She ***encouraged me to make everything with love***, because what you ***feel while you're cooking becomes energy that gets infused into your food and your system***. There was an intention behind every ingredient that went into my meals. She taught me that how I eat my food is just as important as what I was eating, so I always kept in mind that ***food meant love and nourishment for my baby.***

To **help generate breast milk**, we added pine nuts to my meals. In Ayurveda, they are considered to be the **closest thing to mother's milk** in the plant world. Ghee, or clarified butter without dairy, is said to have healing properties.

Martha taught me that a ***baby's brain needs good oils to grow***. We may not realize this, but 60 percent of our brains are made of fat—it's the fattest organ in our body. I made this special rice with snap peas, sesame seeds, and flax seeds because Martha explained that you should “eat seeds to make seeds” (good tip for those wanting to become pregnant). They give our body a strong foundation and vitality to conceive, and keep our babies happy and healthy as they're growing.

Cravings

I stayed away from the typical foods to avoid during pregnancy like sushi, turkey, nitrates, and hot dogs — and I found myself craving frozen yogurt and cheeseburgers.

Every day after yoga, Leila and I would make this ***afterglow smoothie*** together, and every ingredient had a specific purpose. It's both sweet and sour to maintain the ***balance of a healthy mind and body***.

In Ayurveda, the sour taste helps increase the absorption of nutrients, ***energize the body***, and help with healthy digestion. The sweet taste nourishes the body, strengthens the heart, and ***brings happiness to the mind***.

We included dates to boost energy, flax seeds as a source of omega-3 for a healthy brain, goji berries for a dose of superfoods, cardamom as an antioxidant, a couple drops of rose water to strengthen emotions, pine nuts to ***support the baby's nervous system and brain development*** (mother's milk), and kefir or yogurt as a probiotic (at this time I wasn't gluten or dairy free).

Check out the full recipe below that supports fertility and gives a natural glow.

The afterglow Smoothie

Recipe Type: Snack

Dietary Info: Ayurvedic

Serving Size: 1-2 servings

Total time: 10 min.

...

Figure 79 – Partial text of articles on Kourt's Pregnancy Secrets. For the full text see Appendix 2.39

Kourtney Kardashian starts off the article, in figure 79, by stating how *being a mother is her favourite role in life*. Demonstrating again how in postfeminism, as mentioned earlier, it

seems that being a mother should be seen as a separate 'role' instead of something that wholly takes over (as seems to have been the requirement in the past). Nevertheless, the 'role' is still highly regarded with Kourtney Kardashian stating that it *gives her purpose* and that she would rather do *nothing else with her time*, arguably showing the time commitment that is required of mothers. Furthermore, there is a promise that spending this time is worth it as it will result in rewarding experiences.

After establishing how great motherhood will be, Kourtney Kardashian starts expanding on the pregnancies themselves, by stating that she is often asked about her experiences of being pregnant. In other words, she seems to justify here why she is providing and qualified to give advice on being pregnant (just as she did with her note in the about section, where she legitimises why she is qualified to give 'lifestyle' advice). The first element that can clearly be identified is individualism, with Kourtney Kardashian stating how each of her pregnancies were *a little bit different*. She then continued by stating how she *loved being pregnant* (for all three pregnancies), and *made it a point to listen to her body*, before then stating that she wanted to *share some of her favourite foods and routines that helped her feel her very best during her pregnancies*. In other words, even though not stated directly, when considered within a wider context, it still seems to indirectly say that Kourtney Kardashian felt so 'great' and 'her very best' because of the foods she consumed and the routines she maintained. Hence, this again demonstrates how food is being used within *Poosh* as a measure to encourage (self) discipline in women, as discussed in chapter five. To be more precise, to have women survey themselves through restrictive food practices, even when pregnant.

Just as the unspoken promise that if women eat and workout like Kourtney Kardashian, they can look like her; it seems to promise pregnant women that if they follow her advice, they too should be able to ‘feel their very best’ during their pregnancy. However, pregnancies, especially first ones, come with more than only physical symptoms but also emotional ones (Schneider, 2002). It seems that it is especially the loss of control that can cause first time pregnant women to feel anxious (*ibid*). During the early stages of the pregnancy, ‘questions of a more existential nature’ concern women with their transition into becoming a mother, rather than only physical aspects (Carin, Lundgren, & Bergbom, 2011).

Furthermore, to conform with the body standard that Kourtney Kardashian is setting in this article arguably only puts more pressure on women during their pregnancies. Pregnant women are far from excluded from conforming with a certain body type/measurement. Popular representations of pregnant women in movies and/or TV-shows, due to often being portrayed by not actually pregnant women, contribute towards unrealistic body expectations of women, which promote the idea that pregnant women should only be gaining in the stomach area, as the expanding stomach is inevitable, while everything else should remain thin (Dworking & Wachs, 2004). Hence, Kourtney Kardashian’s advice feeds into heightening pregnant women’s already anxious perception of gaining weight and having their body shape change during their pregnancy, even though this is natural (Earle, 2003), by providing advice on how to survey one’s body during pregnancy. Especially, as Liechte et al. (2018) found that even if women are aware of the images being unrealistic, it does not (significantly) reduce the negative effects of them.

Moreover, there is a danger that if the pregnancies do not go as the woman had expected, it seems that they blame themselves for it, instead of putting it down to unrealistic expectations (Miller, 2007). This is particularly dangerous when it comes to women with high-risk and/or difficult pregnancies, who will not be able to experience their pregnancies the same way as Kourtney Kardashian did, simply by eating the right way and following her routine.

Also, it is interesting that Kourtney Kardashian mentions how she listened to her doctor's advice (regarding exercise) and her 'Ayurvedic teacher'. This links back to Tiidenberg and Baym's (2017) work mentioned in the literature review, on how pregnant women, especially on Instagram, perform these three discourses: 'learn it', 'buy it' and 'work it'. Hence, Kourtney Kardashian is showing here how she was a 'good' and 'responsible' mother by preparing for her children through performing here the former of the three discourses. In other words, she is telling others to start showing that they are 'good' mothers by taking care of the baby before the birth.

Unsurprisingly, the first out of the four main points Kourtney Kardashian covers is *staying active*. Interestingly, instead of stating that throughout her three pregnancies she managed to stay active, she says she tried to stay active. However, when reading on, it sounds like she managed to be active throughout her three pregnancies. The word choice is interesting here, as it arguably encourages women to keep trying to be active, even if they (at first) don't succeed. Furthermore, she specifically mentions the point that her doctor had told her that as she was active before, she could continue the same level of activity. Hence, arguably showing the expectation that exercising should already be incorporated into women's lives before pregnancy, and simply be continued during. Otherwise, one would not be able to 'stay' active.

In other words, just because one is pregnant there is no excuse not to continue one's body work. This feeds into the wider literature discussed in the literature review, on body work during pregnancy, where working out/staying active is sold to women as a way to train for not only the birth but also postpartum (Dworking & Wachs, 2004). And here, *Poosh* frames it as something to also make the pregnancy itself more enjoyable, instead of simply easier. The third shift has often been linked to the second shift, whether in relation to household and/or childrearing to try and portray it as necessary to help complete the second shift more efficiently (ibid).

The next point Kourtney Kardashian discusses is the practice of Ayurveda¹⁵. And while at first it seems to be very focused on a more 'holistic' approach towards pregnancy, there seems to be more to it when reading the section carefully. Even though the aim mentioned here is for example a 'clean egg', the way of achieving this in the end simply sounds like a slightly more complicated 'detox'. After all, it literally says that the practice helps *detoxify the body* through e.g. cleansing eating practices, and ridding the body of what it *doesn't need*; which Kourtney Kardashian continued doing throughout her pregnancy and after. This demonstrates the presence of self-monitoring and surveillance before, during and after the pregnancy. Moreover, the section finishes by stating that one 'can give love both to yourself and to your baby, while also helping to reduce stretch marks, restore skin's elasticity, and relieve pregnant belly itching', which arguably not only seems like just a form of body work in relation to the figure, but also involves aesthetic labour (Elias, Gill & Scharff, 2017). In this case,

¹⁵ A traditional medicinal practice which 'involves the use of natural elements to eliminate the root cause of the disease by restoring balance, at the same time create a healthy life-style to prevent the recurrence of imbalance' (Parasuraman, Thing, & Dhanaraj, 2014, p. 73).

this 'aesthetic labour' pertains to reducing or even preventing any 'imprints' of the pregnancy remaining. In other words, to reiterate Hallstein (2011), the aim is to erase that one was ever pregnant.

The third point focuses on *intention*, and the fourth point on cravings. Both points contain elements of self-monitoring and surveillance again in relation to food. While the former one is framed more around nourishing the baby correctly, the latter one equally focuses on the baby's health but also on the mother's body and 'wellbeing'. The former point demonstrates again how at least in relation to children, women are still expected to be responsible for taking care of their wellbeing (Gatrell, 2005), already while pregnant. The production of 'healthy' breastmilk discussed here is interesting, as breastfeeding is often portrayed not only as 'vital to infant development' but also towards developing the 'mother-infant bond' (Schmied & Lupton, 2001).

What is interesting, is that through this article Kourtney Kardashian is promoting breastfeeding as the natural thing to do, and while most of the articles address the neoliberal elements of individualism, it is not addressed here even though it should be. Breastfeeding in particular has been found to be experienced differently amongst women (Schmied & Lupton, 2001). While some women experience breastfeeding as 'a connected, harmonious and intimate relationship between themselves and their baby' (Schmied & Lupton, 2001, p. 234); others do not necessarily experience it the same way. However, due to breast milk being viewed as an expression of 'good' mothering, as it supposedly ensures the best health outcomes, women still continued attempting to breast feed even if experiencing significant difficulties as they considered it their moral duty (Johnson et al., 2009). Moreover, notions of

‘autonomy, independence and control’ are aspects that some mothers seem to struggle with in relation to breastfeeding (Schmied & Lupton, 2001). This is why some counter-discourses have emerged that ‘challenge the highly gendered and oppressive elements of infant feeding and its link to idealized versions of motherhood’ (Símonardóttir & Gíslason, 2018, p. 665). For example, some studies found how ‘high levels of psychological distress [related to expectations around breastfeeding] can undermine maternal-infant bonding and infant development, as well as mothers’ well-being, sensitivity, and sense of competence’ (Law et al., 2018, p. 59).

The later point around cravings focuses more on the mother’s wellbeing. Thus showing, as discussed earlier, how women are supposed to take care of their own wellbeing now too. Here Kourtney Kardashian provides a smoothie recipe that is supposed to help maintain *a healthy mind and body, energise the body, and bring happiness to the mind*. This demonstrates that in a postfeminist culture ‘health’ and the concept of ‘happiness’ have become increasingly central elements to maintain (O’Neill, 2020a, 2020b; Cabanas & Illouz, 2019; Davies, 2015). Furthermore, in relation to neoliberal elements, one can again observe the need to work on one’s energy levels to be as productive as one can be. Kourtney Kardashian’s actions therefore support Riley, Evans and Robson’s (2019) argument that women ‘do’ pregnancy, which involves constant scrutiny and ties in notions of health regulation, and, of course, consumption.

Interestingly, the last point explicitly pointed out how eating ‘correctly’ contributes to the healthy brain development of the child. As already stated, ‘parenting’ arguably therefore, seems to start during pregnancy, by consuming the ‘right’ foods. The article laid out in figure 79 here goes further and suggest that parenting begins even before the pregnancy by making, as mentioned earlier, a ‘clean egg’ through detoxifying one’s body beforehand.

From this advice, how via healthy living one can e.g. ensure a clean, i.e. healthy, egg and improve not only one's own health but most importantly that of one's (future) baby; it becomes clear that *Poosh* is promoting a very 'natural' image of pregnancy. This, however, arguably is troublesome, especially in an age of biotechnological advances, as it fails to acknowledge 'fertility-challenged' women who may not have the option of this (idealised) 'natural' route and experience, thus excluding them from the conversation. This omission is arguably typical again within the postfeminist context *Poosh* is situated in as in particular access to treatments like fertility enhancements are dependent on women's socio-economic background, apart from already being dependent on local regulations (Han, 2013; Whittaker, 2015). This should be acknowledged, as it is (again) the white-middle-class that typically has the best access and ability to afford such treatments (Han, 2013; Whittaker, 2015).

So, arguably, *Poosh*'s type of advice, which focusses on 'natural' aspects of the pregnancy instead of possible complications, and therefore, the required modern biotechnological solutions which only few can afford, encourages a rather (affordable) consumerism in a portion of the population that would otherwise be excluded from the discussion as they cannot financially participate in these biotechnological treatments (Han, 2013; Whittaker, 2015). Furthermore, *Poosh*'s omission of the topic of fertility-treatments, or other biotechnological intervention options, demonstrates their tendency to avoid risky and/or taboo discourses (e.g. 'fat-shaming' as discussed previously) by not mentioning contentious, however very relevant to contemporary pregnancies, topics like prenatal testing for genetic diseases (Sleebom-Faulkner, 2010); let alone even touch the topic of abortion rights (Ginsburg 1989; Petchesky 1990; Murphy, 2012).

Furthermore, by encouraging women to consistently work on their bodies to ensure a good and safe pregnancy, *Poosh* not only further feeds into this narrative of constant self-improvement that is characteristic of neoliberalism, but they also frame the self-work as a choice women can (and should) make to provide the best possible circumstances for the transition into motherhood; this, however, ultimately only creates an illusion of control over their own bodies for women, which *Poosh* arguably capitalises on. In reality, the range of choices a woman can take is heavily dependent on local laws, regulations and social contexts (Petchevsky 1990; Sleeboom-Faulkner, 2010; Whittaker, 2015), which is also subject to constant change. The most prominent recent example of this principle is the overturning of *Roe v Wade* in the United States (Kaplan, 2022). And while social contexts might not ‘forcefully’ prevent women from certain choices, they can still be considered a restricting factor within choice-making processes, since exercising rights on socially controversial topics is often met with resistance by the community, as is exemplified by protestors in front of abortion clinics or being morally condemned by others for disability testing (Boxerman, 1990; Sleeboom-Faulkner, 2010).

One of the driving factors, it seems, behind discussions surrounding women’s reproductive rights is due to this image of the ‘traditional family’ that many existing and persisting societal structures and norms are based upon, still being heralded as ‘superior’ due to its portrayal as ‘natural’. This image has its foundations in heteronormativity, which lays claim on the woman’s body, by normalising certain moralities limited to exactly the members of the ‘traditional family’: heterosexual, monogamous and reproducing, and therefore has been/still is being denounced by feminists (Londoño, 2020).

Allowing biotechnological advancements, which are providing women with a new level of control over their bodies and possibilities to participate in the reproduction process, previously not accessible to them, threatens these structures, as it would challenge this traditional image (Melhuus, 2012; Whittaker, 2015). Medical intervention in even its most intrusive forms was restricted to a metabolic level prior to the development of practices like especially molecular engineering (Rheinberger, 1996). Nowadays, the advancements in biomedicine and bioscience allow for the manipulation of ‘life itself’ (Franklin, 2000), which leads to the body being perceived less as a natural organic substance and more as a molecular software, that can be decoded, deconstructed and reprogrammed. This process of molecularisation and digitalisation is characteristic of a ‘recombinant biopolitics’ (Dillon & Read, 2001), which simultaneously operates below and beyond boundaries determined by the body.

An example of emerging complications can be found in Melhuus (2012) work on the ramifications of assisted conception within Norway, which demonstrates the disruption to the Norwegian legal system posed by types of family that fall out of the ‘norm’. Whilst the incarnations of the issues nowadays vary due to technological advancements in society, the fight for women’s reproductive rights still faces the same issues at their core as it did in the early twentieth century (Deutscher, 2010), since women are seen as responsible for the reproduction of current society (not solely through raising children) by adequately completing the process of motherhood (as discussed in the previous section) and producing the new generation (through making ‘right’ reproductive choices) (*ibid*). This, however, according to feminists fundamentally turns the woman into a mere reproducer, so a subject without control over their body or their desires (Londoño, 2020). Which is why, feminists from the 1960s

onwards have been advocating for women to have autonomy and freedom over their bodies, by gaining access to e.g. sex education, contraception and abortion (Vaggione, 2018). For women who want to express their desires in a hetero-affective way, abortions for example enable them to separate lust from reproduction, so that they may enjoy their bodies in the same way a man does (Londoño, 2020), free of consequence. Thus, criminalising abortions impedes women's ability to make free decisions over their own bodies, whereas legalisation of abortion proposes a form of citizenship that endorses bodily autonomy for women that men have always enjoyed, allowing an equal freedom for all citizens (*ibid*).

In their portrayal of a heteronormative 'natural' pregnancy, and subsequently motherhood, *Poosh* is arguably reinforcing as natural and the norm this traditional family image that underlies the current structures put into place via biopolitical means, and thus participates in the agenda that reproduction and improvement of current society is a mother's duty.

Ultimately, the largest proportion of childrearing responsibility still lies with the mother and how the demands placed on motherhood are becoming evermore intricate and complex. For example, in the article in figure 79, there is no mention of what the father can do to help produce a 'healthy' baby, even though, there are studies that show how the father's eating and 'lifestyle' choices can have a significant effect on the child's development (Braun, Messerlian, & Hauser, 2017). The entire focus of the article, in figure 79, is on body work including 'aesthetic' labour, with the promise that it will make mothers feel their very best during their pregnancy. However, the end result is still focused on one's appearance, as maintaining beauty standards continues to be a feminine demand that does not cease during

pregnancy. Furthermore, there is a clear responsibility already instilled in the mother to raise her child correctly, starting pre and/or during the pregnancy (Tiidenberg & Baym, 2017).

The article in figure 80 expresses similar elements, but is more focused on Kourtney Kardashian's postpartum journey of getting her 'body back' after each of her three pregnancies.

How I Got My Body Back After Kids

I gained exactly 40 pounds with all three of my pregnancies, but ***my body and my experience after having each of my kids was so different.*** I was in a different place mentally, emotionally, and physically, even if by just a couple years.

How I ***worked on my body after each pregnancy has changed over the years.*** I wasn't into intense workouts when I got pregnant with Mason, and I wasn't using a trainer at the time. I was very into running, usually a quick two- to three-mile run with some good music in my neighborhood, combined with some at-home workouts and uphill walks with the stroller. I was ***breastfeeding for 16 months,*** which ***really helped me lose weight after Mason.***

I recommend breastfeeding for as long as you can, if you can—the first full year. It ***forces you to eat super clean*** for your baby, drink much less alcohol and caffeine, and hydrate with a ton of water. It's ***amazing for the baby's immunity and strength,*** and it ***burns around 700 calories each feeding.*** I especially loved the ***built-in bonding time*** throughout the day, ***especially once I started working again.*** If I was ever at a ***standstill with my weight,*** I would try to ***eliminate something from my diet*** or eating schedule to see how much of a change that made. I know

I've mentioned my sweet tooth before, and it was even more intense while I was breastfeeding. I like to have a little dessert after lunch and after dinner, but if I felt my **weight plateaued**, I would **cut out** the post-lunch snack and monitor my sugar, which really made a difference.

I was still doing mellow workouts and a lot of yoga after Penelope, even mommy-baby yoga together, but it was **harder to get my body back**. After about two years, I **felt really ready to be in the best shape I could be in** and started getting into intense workouts. I did a lot of HIIT workouts, which is High-Intensity Interval Training. It's a lot of short, super intense bursts, like jump lunges, squats, or running up stairs, and it **burns crazy calories** and builds strength.

It was when I finally opened up to working with a trainer that I really **got addicted to this sort of activity**. My trainer, Don, is super motivating. He kept me inspired by switching it up every day, and seeing everything around us as a possible workout obstacle. We would do uphill trail runs, and other times he would just show up at my door and make me drop my bag and start running immediately, or run up and down the stairs in my house. Some days we would switch it up and do boxing.

Everything was a workout, which made **exercising** seem so **much more accessible**. It gave me a new perspective and kept me on my toes. Sometimes, it was killer cardio, like jump roping for 10 minutes straight. I know that may not sound like much, but have you ever tried it? Try jump roping for just five minutes. It's intense. I have now built up to 20 minutes, which I did this summer in Italy.

A couple months after starting with Don and really getting into it, I found out that I was pregnant with Reign. I stopped the intense workouts but continued to do some easy ones like the StairMaster, treadmill, and some Tracy Anderson dance workouts in the Hamptons, where I spent three months of my pregnancy, mixed with a lot of walks with the kids. I ***couldn't wait to get back on my high-intensity schedule after the pregnancy***, and it felt so good to jump back into it. Especially because I was going through the breakup with Scott, I found that ***these workouts helped crush my anxiety***. HIIT workouts are really what made the biggest difference. It's ***hard at first, but I noticed once I became used to that sort of intensity, I craved it.***

The most important thing is to listen to your body and to ***do what you're doing for you, not for society's standards of getting your body back, because they are unrealistic.*** This was my journey. It wasn't until Reign was probably 4 months old that I ***felt this desire to be in the best shape of my life.***

Figure 80 – Partial text of articles on How I Got My Body Back After Kids. For the full text see Appendix 2.40

Notions of individualism can again be identified in the beginning of the article, in figure 80, where Kourtney Kardashian mentions how her *experience after having each of her children was different*, and therefore, her approach of working on her body postpartum has changed over the years. While the article does focus on body work primarily, it does also show expectations towards childrearing. Kourtney Kardashian mentions that she breastfed for 16 months, and recommends that mothers should do this for at least a year. Hence, reinforcing the dominant discourse that 'breast is best' (Schmied & Lupton, 2001), and reinforcing the portrayal of the 'good maternal body' (Johnson et al., 2009). She justifies this by mentioning

both benefits in relation to the mother's figure and the child's health and/or development. The examples she mentions is that each feeding can burn up to 700 calories, and on top of this it *forces* the mother to continue to monitor and survey their diet as mentioned in the previous article, in figure 79, since they need to continue to *eat super clean and drink much less alcohol and caffeine*. However, this simultaneously demonstrates a requirement of being a good mother, by restricting one's diet in this way to benefit the baby's immunity and help strengthen it. Furthermore, Kourtney Kardashian portrays this as bonding time, which she argues was increasingly important once she started working again. This arguably feeds back into the earlier discussion around mum guilt, where mothers try to make up for their 'absence' by being more 'present' when at home.

The article, in figure 80, demonstrates how Kourtney Kardashian went through extreme measures to 'bounce back', which fits into Hallstein's (2011) argument that mothers try to achieve an even 'better' postpartum body to help erase the fact they ever were pregnant. And even though in the article she states that it was about 'getting her body back', the effort to lose the pregnancy weight and her aim to be in the best shape of her life really speak more to this 'better than before' phenomenon (Hallstein, 2011). The responsibility is also placed squarely onto the individual, with Kourtney Kardashian stating that she only started this journey once she *felt the desire to be in the best shape of her life*. And while especially celebrity women's bodies undergo intense scrutiny, as mentioned before 'normal' women's bodies are not excluded from this expectation (Wissinger, 2015). Or, as Riley, Evans and Robson (2019) phrased it, non-celebrity 'women's ability to remove the signs of having been pregnant is also a marker of success.' (p.115).

Poosh therefore tells women that once they really want and/or desire to be in good or the best shape of their life, they will put in the required effort to achieve this. However, this article demonstrates how different Kourtney Kardashian's pregnancies were from most 'normal' people, with her stating for example how she spent three months in the Hamptons doing dance work outs, and having a personal trainer always available. There is no mention of how she managed to juggle this next to her other shifts, like maintaining the household or doing her paid work. Moreover, by stating that once she did feel the desire, she became *addicted* and started *craving* this kind of high intensity workout, she arguably sets women up for failure as 'normal' women are unlikely to have the same opportunities as Kourtney Kardashian. Therefore, they cannot maintain this kind of consistency in the same way, due to the third shift normally being the first one to be sacrificed when mothers struggle to maintain all three shifts (Hallstein, 2011). Furthermore, even though Kourtney Kardashian mentions that she only started 'properly' working out since she got her personal trainer, by framing exercise as something accessible that can be done any time, as everything can be a form of exercise, it again might cause women to feel like it is their fault if they do not succeed since there should be no excuse for them not to exercise. In other words, there is no excuse for women not to get into the 'best shape of their lives', even postpartum.

Conclusion

Transitioning into motherhood is portrayed by *Poosh* and Kourtney Kardashian as something joyful and a way to demonstrate that one is ready and equipped to be a good mother. However, what seems to be different from traditional concepts of motherhood, is that being a mother should be seen as a separate entity; and not replace one's former self. In other words, it demands of 'modern' women to remain their postfeminist self while acquiring this new role

alongside it, and therefore, through balancing things correctly one should be able to do everything one wants to do. While at first it seemed like there was some positive development against the idea of 'mum guilt', this was quite superficial as it did nothing to address the root of the guilt, but rather encouraged women to not engage with it as it is unproductive. Furthermore, it was found that 'failing', if handled correctly, could actually be beneficial for the upbringing of children, as it teaches them to persevere even if they do fail initially. Hence, a primary goal of motherhood, as presented by *Poosh*, is educating children to become productive individual adults, which can be supported through buying the correct toys, that will help shape and encourage the right learning and behaviour to turn one's child into a happy, confident, and productive future neoliberal subject. Moreover, in the last section it was found that body work is still portrayed as essential both pre and postpartum. It is shown how the line between the third and second shift within *Poosh* appears to be blurred, by seemingly combining the two shifts. In the case of motherhood, as presented by *Poosh*, the focus is more on childrearing and 'getting one's body back' or even obtaining a 'better than before' physique.

Conclusion

In this final chapter I share some concluding thoughts, by first summarising the research questions that have guided the research as well as the relevant findings that were laid out in the discussion chapters concerning their respective research question. I will then proceed to highlight the reflexive practices that I engaged in during the research by outlining the limitations and challenges of the research. The chapter will finish with the final section suggesting future possible research based on the findings of the research presented in this thesis.

[Answering the research questions](#)

This section will now revisit the research questions that shaped this thesis and were more broadly discussed and situated in the wider debates in the discussion chapters, five to seven. Gill's (2007, 2017) work, in particular her definition of postfeminism as a series of interrelated sensibilities which form a 'postfeminist sensibility', was central to my research. As Gill (2017) herself demonstrated by noting the differences to her initial conceptualisation in 2007 ten years later, these sensibilities are undergoing constant change to adapt to current socio-economic and cultural contexts, and seem to become more insidious. Therefore, they require regular reevaluation, which this work aimed to participate towards, especially in the fast-changing online wellness context due to postfeminism's increasing intertwinement in this area, as research like O'Neill's (2020a, 2020b) found. In particular, the research was able to add an original contribution by doing an in-depth study on *Poosh*, which is firmly situated within this context, and therefore, also provided a good framework for the research to reevaluate the postfeminist sensibilities. My research not only provided an account on how these sensibilities have evolved, especially within the online (celebrity) wellness sector, but also how these

evolving sensibilities are contributing towards maintaining and intertwining the second and third shift within women's lives. Moreover, the research furthers existing literature on contemporary motherhood, by using a postfeminist lens to view how motherhood was portrayed and how neoliberalism was influencing how 'good' mothering and 'correct' parenting practices were represented differently within this postfeminist context. By providing a detailed account on the (re)conceptualisation of motherhood within postfeminism, I hoped to contribute towards a consensus within the literature on what postfeminist motherhood looks like.

Therefore, to highlight my findings, the research questions will be answered here in a more concise and conclusionary manner.

- **Using *Poosh* as a case study, how have Gill's postfeminist sensibilities evolved?**

Furthermore, which elements of postfeminist subjectivity are portrayed more dominantly throughout the lifestyle *Poosh* is trying to 'sell'?

The postfeminist sensibilities most dominantly present throughout *Poosh* were: 'focus on the body', 'focus on the psychological', neoliberal elements of individualism and constant (self) improvement, and the makeover paradigm. Notions of self-surveillance and monitoring were also found present throughout. While the postfeminist sensibilities based on Gill's (2007, 2017) work have in the context of this research's case study seemingly evolved and adapted alongside an evolving postfeminist culture, it was also found that at the core they remained the same. In the first discussion chapter it was interesting to observe that the increasing aesthetic labour Elias, Gill, and Scharff (2017) identify and what Wissinger (2015) labels glamour labour were found in relation to the second shift, in particular the increasing demands to 'beautify'

the household. This seemed to be driven by neoliberal elements, in particular the neoliberal notion of constant (self) improvement, which highlighted Rottenberg's (2019) work on how neoliberalism is pushing for women to treat themselves as a 'form of stock'. This pushes women to continuously work on themselves through the concept of 'brand me' to increase their 'worth' (ibid). Thus, it was found that this constant improvement of the 'self' also entailed and/or is extended to one's surroundings. While superficially the advice is sold as 'helpful' advice which will help simplify household chores, it instead really entails damaging notions in relation to the makeover paradigm, driven by the neoliberal demand for constant (self) improvement. The damaging effects of this makeover paradigm Gill (2007) finds, as discussed previously in the literature review and discussion, is that it makes women first believe that something is inherently wrong in their current life and/or situation. Furthermore, it seems to have become even more 'damaging' here due to its link with this neoliberal element that pushes for constant (self) improvement, as this causes the makeover paradigm to never cease. In other words, this could cause women to continuously identify and believe that there is something inherently wrong with their surroundings. In this particular case, the household is presented as an 'ever becoming' aspect in women's lives that requires constant attention to confirm to notions of 'the perfect' (McRobbie, 2015). This arguably requires continuous (self)monitoring and surveillance to be able to identify what is lacking and what can be improved in one's life. Moreover, it reinforces in general the principle and centrality of aesthetic and glamour labour in women's lives.

The second half of chapter five addressed the still persistent notions of self-surveillance and monitoring that are linked with food and eating in relation to women. However, what was interesting to find is how because of these notions, food (and eating) is helping to blur the second and third shift within women's life by also promoting 'beauty' from the inside out. In a wellness context like *Poosh*, while 'health' is being superficially represented as the leading reason for eating a particular way and restricting one's diet, the underlying reason seems to really be to help promote heterosexual postfeminist beauty standards. Hence, it was unsurprising to find that the 'focus on the body' sensibility was still the most dominantly present throughout the wellness lifestyle *Poosh* is selling. This became especially more apparent in the second discussion chapter, chapter six, where the first section focused more on 'body work' specifically. While there seemed to be a more 'body-positive' approach (or at least no explicit 'fat shaming' happening), it was found that the body was clearly still seen as a site for building one's femininity. Moreover, in relation to the findings in the previous chapter it was found that this sensibility was becoming increasingly integral and extensive in a contemporary postfeminist culture. As Elias, Gill, and Scharff (2017) argue this can be observed by the increasing 'beauty steps' that are required and more elaborate skincare routines. This is reflected within the articles focused on 'body work' which provided advice on how to adapt one's skincare routine according to changing seasons as well as a detailed make up list to be able to conform with the latest makeup trends.

However, what was interesting was that the findings supported the argument that postfeminism is transitioning from a phenomena that only certain groups/people

were targeted by, to one that starts to increase the target audience to include 'everyone'. This arguably makes sense from a marketing point of view. Everyone can be 'beautiful' nowadays due to these increasing expectations around aesthetic labour and increasingly accessible cosmetic surgery. In other words, no one is excluded or left untouched anymore from these demands and expectations. My findings suggest that while one does not need to be flawless from the get-go, one is not excused from eventually looking the part, however, the effort that is required to achieve this 'flawless' look must not be overtly explicit. Furthermore, while superficially the workouts and 'recipe' articles do not directly state that one should have and/or aim for a thin physique, if the advice and instructions are to be followed, this is arguably an inevitable outcome. This demonstrates that while not explicitly pushed onto women anymore, a thin physique is still desired and aimed for in a postfeminist culture.

Moreover, while a 'focus on the body' remains the most dominant and prominent sensibility within postfeminism, 'focus on the psychological' is increasingly becoming more prominent within a postfeminist lifestyle too. It was found that this was due to its increasing link with the 'focus on the body' through the influence of neoliberalism within postfeminism. This again supports Wissinger's work from 2015, where the 'right look' alone does not suffice anymore, but more is needed with the increasing competition for attention which came hand in hand with the emergence of social media platforms. Hence, having the right attitude and/or mindset is now also required, which was confirmed through the findings in this thesis. Moreover, the 'right mindset' is promised as the solution towards 'managing it all', and helping achieve

one's goals in relation to living a 'modern life'. This links back to the 'body' and being a 'productive' neoliberal subject. It was found that the 'right' mindset was a 'positive' and 'confident' one mirroring much of Gill's (2007) original theorisations of postfeminism. This is particularly true in more contemporary contexts which are underlined by an increasingly pervasive happiness industry, which oversimplifies human emotions by promoting this constant pursuit of 'happiness', while really aiming to mould and produce productive and consuming subjects.

While Gill (2007, 2016, 2017) does acknowledge the centrality consumerism seems to play within postfeminism, it should be established much more as a vital element within postfeminism. The second discussion chapter, chapter six, finishes with a discussion on consumerism, as it was present throughout all other aspects and notions discussed until that point. Throughout *Poosh* it really seemed that consumerism was always present, and was framed as a 'solution' to all 'modern day' problems. While *Poosh* never made any mentions or 'false' promises in relation to feminism, one can still see the notions of a consumerist feminism in the form that women are promised to achieve everything they want by following the advice provided by *Poosh* and consuming the carefully selected and provided items. In other words, throughout the articles, the responsibility clearly lies with the reader to engage appropriately with the marketplace to curate and construct an idealised form of femininity, as the advice given operates on the assumption that the reader lives in a society where equality has been reached.

- **Which dominant norms and structures, portrayed by Kourtney Kardashian via *Poosh*, are being transformed and/or maintained in a postfeminist culture?**

The notions and aspects of the second and third shifts, in relation to housework and body work respectively, were found to be simultaneously transformed and maintained by Kourtney Kardashian via *Poosh* within a postfeminist cultural context, as already briefly addressed in the answer to the previous question. While clearly the type of labour within the second shift, in particular related to household, seemed to have been transformed, it is still maintained as an essential feminine task. Hence, instead of addressing the 'stalled revolution' (Hochschild, 2012), *Poosh* seems to ignore and/or brush over the more labour intensive aspects within the second shift, and rather focuses on introducing an aesthetic and glamour labour aspect within it. However, just because *Poosh* does not mention or provide advice on how to manage the physically intensive labour aspects within the household, it does not 'magically' remove them. Instead, leaving these intensive parts of housework 'unsaid' in the articles themselves is a key point because it overlooks, or even trivialises, the work Kourtney Kardashian herself may not do. While Kourtney Kardashian herself very likely outsources most of this intensive household labour, parts of *Poosh*'s audience may instead be managing their own housework (and childcare). Hochschild's (2012) point on the second half of the 'stalled revolution', where the domestic labour that had been shifted onto the women in the first half is now often being shifted onto 'paid' labour due to women entering the workforce, however, reflects that women who can afford it very likely do delegate this labour. Still, this outsourcing is most likely to 'other' women, who earn less and are often from non-white ethnic backgrounds. In

other words, the household and domestic space are maintained as ‘feminine’ spaces and roles, and as a ‘second’ shift within women’s lives, because even if they delegate the more physically labour-intensive aspects of it, they remain in charge of the task (Charles & James, 2005). Thus, *Poosh* transformed the second shift by introducing new ‘fun’ aspects to focus on, aesthetic and glamour labour, but by no means removed the more mundane elements of the second shift and/or the overall responsibility for the domestic space. Quite the contrary, it rather reinforces their ‘naturalness’ even more by not needing to address the practical and actually labour-intensive aspects of household labour.

The third shift is not so much being transformed as it is being ‘expanded’ within *Poosh*. However, it certainly is presented within *Poosh* as something that needs to be maintained as an ‘essential’ shift/task for women. In other words, it is portrayed as a key part of women’s lives. The main transformation found within *Poosh* concerning the third shift, i.e. ‘body work’, is that it is discursively presented as an essential shift in ‘everyone’s’ life, through the ‘focus on the body’ sensibility adapting to changing cultural movements such as e.g. the ‘body positivity’ movement, by focusing more on ‘exercising’ and ‘eating right’ for the sake of one’s health instead of to fit the ‘heteronormative postfeminist beauty standard’. Furthermore, the body work elements, practices and notions that are being advised and pushed are exactly the aspects that have been found to enable body differences between ‘men’ and ‘women’, which are presented as ‘natural’, and it is this ‘naturalness’ that is used to justify the differences between ‘men’ and ‘women’. Hence, this justifies the norms and structures that maintain gender inequality. Throughout the discussion it has been

shown how within *Poosh* the third shift is all the more being pushed and presented as essential to help with the second shift, and seems to even start blurring the boundaries between the two shifts. Hence, *Poosh* is clearly aiming to maintain the centrality of the third shift, by transforming the meaning and importance of 'body work' in women's lives. Thus, ultimately *Poosh* is helping to maintain dominant norms and structures by reinforcing these shifts as natural and feminine tasks, which keeps women subordinate compared to their male counterparts.

- **What is the normative portrayal of the (re)construction of postfeminist motherhood as depicted by *Poosh*? How has the representation of the idea of being a 'good' mother changed in an evolving postfeminist culture?**

While it is not explicitly stated it can be indirectly deduced that *Poosh* presents motherhood as almost a given. As discussed in chapter seven, there seems to be unspoken aspects present that support the notion of the phenomenon of 'doing it all'.

In other words, *Poosh* supports the idea that as women *can* 'have it all' they *should* 'do it all'. This suggests that one can do it all as long as one prioritises correctly, through the notion of 'life-balance' being more present than the more traditional notion of 'work-life balance'. Therefore, *Poosh* also portrays the postfeminist mother as a postfeminist subject that simply needs to rebalance their priorities once they transition into/become a mother, but this seemingly should not come at the expense of keeping up her previous lifestyle.

Poosh presents a beautiful picture of not only motherhood itself, but also on the transition into motherhood. It is presented as the most fulfilling 'job' and any

mum guilt, while its existence is acknowledged, is basically presented as irrelevant or insignificant. In other words, it is acknowledged and then robbed of any substantial meaning, and the reason behind the existence of mum guilt is never interrogated. Instead, feeling ‘guilt’ is subtly reprimanded as it is ‘unproductive’, and therefore, unnecessary. It is discussed that the mother not being ‘perfect’ and ‘failing’ is beneficial to the child’s development. However, what is specifically beneficial is the child witnessing how the mother deals with the ‘failed’ situation. Hence, while it is conveyed that mothers should not feel guilty for ‘failing’ or not succeeding, this is only if they then proceed to fix the situation and continue to aim for ‘the perfect’ (McRobbie, 2015). In general, the picture *Poosh* paints is as false and unrealistic as (its) staged, brushed and/or photoshopped images. The ‘challenges’ discussed feel at best superficial, and at the worst deeply problematic to first-time mothers. In particular, the ‘non-negotiables’ of motherhood that *Poosh* advises are arguably simply unrealistic, and, therefore, it is problematic to frame them as ‘non-negotiable’. Also here is a clear sense that the third shift is used to help with the second shift, specifically of course in relation to childrearing and even pre/post birth preparation. Body work is presented as a way to demonstrate care for one’s (unborn) child, and therefore, being a ‘good’ mother before birth has taken place.

Furthermore, some of the articles reveal how *Poosh* presents an apparent changing notion in ‘correct’ parenting practices compared to more ‘traditional’ parenting approaches. However, due to the rest of the lifestyle evidently supporting the notion that mothers should mainly be in charge and responsible for the childrearing, it really is another point on how mothers should be raising their children

into 'correct socialised future adults'. Hence, the responsibility is clearly, despite being unspoken, placed on the mother. This changing idea of 'correct parenting' practices is underlined and driven by neoliberalism's increasing intertwinement and influence within postfeminism. The advice provided focuses on practices and education techniques to help raise happy productive future neoliberal citizens that can cope and prevail in modern society. Moreover, it is a vital aspect within social reproduction processes that help reconstruct and therefore, maintain current societal norms, practices and structures. In other words, *Poosh* is encouraging women, in particular mothers, to play an active role in keeping the norms and structures which maintain gender inequality as the dominant ones.

With this research project I wanted to add an original contribution to the existing academic literature. I set out to do this by exploring how postfeminism played a role within the lifestyle *Poosh* was selling to its followers via Instagram. Therefore, I aimed to contribute to the areas relating to social media's role in enabling postfeminist practices, and in particular the online wellness lifestyle that seems to become increasingly prominent. Hence, the aim was to interrogate what online wellness lifestyle sites like *Poosh* run by celebrities promote as the 'norm', and therefore, what they portray as being the 'perfect' postfeminist subject. In other words, what are women in contemporary contexts being told that they should replicate? I have explored and highlighted the portrayal of a 'perfect' and frankly unobtainable postfeminist subject that is being portrayed, in this case, by *Poosh*. Even though I doubt this is an exceptional portrayal (see Conor, 2021). This is an original and new insight into the wellness lifestyle site *Poosh*, whose influence seems to still be growing but is underexplored in the academic space. My thesis further adds an original contribution to a wider context of cultural icons such as the

Kardashians portraying and pushing the ideals of a postfeminist subject predicated upon ‘self-branding’ and self-improvement.

Moreover, the other main original contribution this research project set out to make was to explore how motherhood is presented and discursively produced within postfeminism, and how postfeminism is changing the concept of ‘correct’ parenting and ‘good’ mothering practices. The research found that there clearly is a shift in parenting practices, and consequently in what it means to be a good mother, within postfeminism due to the increasing influence of neoliberalism. Therefore, the research has provided an original contribution within a newer research field in relation to how the concept of motherhood is being renegotiated and reframed within a postfeminist context.

[**Limitations, challenges, and reflecting on the research process**](#)

Considering the timeline during which this research has been conducted, it should come as no surprise that the Covid-19 pandemic presented some challenges for the research project. While I do have to admit that compared to some of my fellow peers, it thankfully did not affect my research too negatively, it did play a significant role in why the research project was changed. Initially, after the intensive initial literature-focussed phase of my PhD, I had planned to investigate ‘real’ women’s experiences. In other words, I initially planned to adopt a survey, interview and/or focus group approach to help me answer my research questions. Furthermore, with this project I had wanted to focus more intensively on mothers and motherhood and how they navigate the demands and expectations placed upon them via cultural outputs such as *Poosh*. However, with the pandemic it seemed unwise to continue with this direction of research. During the initial outbreak of Covid-19, I was still at the stage just before starting the fieldwork. I was also aware that the participants that would be crucial

to my project were also the current demographic that, if they even had a minute of time, would very unlikely want to spend it talking to a researcher, due to mothers clearly having been the most burdened with children staying at home (Power, 2020). Research from the time found that lockdowns had significantly negatively impacted women, even in more 'equitable' countries like Iceland (Hjálmsdóttir & Bjarnadóttir, 2020). Furthermore, as at the time it was unclear how long the situation would last, I felt that, as I was not in the middle of the fieldwork, I would rather reframe the research to best adapt to the circumstances, in order to be able to answer my research questions in a different manner. I realised that I could instead take a 'representation' and 'portrayal' approach, by which I mean I could explore what was being sold to women as the 'norm' and/or practices they should live up to. This would then allow me in the future to build on, by comparing what was being portrayed to women/mothers to their actual lived experiences, which I'll expand on in the next section on future projects.

Despite the research being desk-based, it still came with some other challenges and limitations, although the aforementioned issues relating to Covid-19 were personally the most challenging part of the project. Doing research online, especially on social media, brings with it ethical implications due to the blurring and uncertainty of what is private and public, as already mentioned in the methodology in chapter three. To reiterate, with *Poosh* being a very public Instagram account, it caused less uncertainty about whether the information was publicly available, and could be freely used for the research without gaining explicit consent (as this would have been tricky due to the celebrity status of *Poosh*'s owner Kourtney Kardashian). However, the research still had to tread lightly and consider potential copy-right issues. And while the research was restricted to only the portrayal of a very specific wellness lifestyle site, having one case study did allow for an in-depth study of *Poosh*, which is still

expected to have a wide and, therefore, influential reach due to its celebrity owner. Furthermore, while this only shows the representation-side (rather than how people engage with the representations), it is still a vital aspect to look at due to the impacts these unrealistic/false portrayals can have, especially in relation to the 'silencing' nature that often comes with them (Lee, Vasileiou, & Barnett, 2017). Moreover, this can be seen as a starting point and can be combined with future research into 'real' women and mothers' experiences to enable a bigger picture.

As the research took an (inter)subjective standpoint, I will in the rest of this section focus on reflecting on my influences as a researcher on the project, as part of reflexive practices. I believe, as mentioned already in the methodology in chapter three, that there is no objective truth with research of this nature, and that with this research project I am aiming to provide a part of a larger picture. Therefore, I want to be transparent about my positionality within the research, not because this might have negatively affected the research and/or made the findings any less valid, but to provide a more holistic picture of the research process.

Being a white woman who grew up in a postfeminist culture, and coming from a middle-upper class family background I am part of the demographic identified earlier on in the thesis that *Poosh* seems to target and therefore, the group that feels most compelled to comply with the lifestyle *Poosh* is portraying. I am also part of the generation that will be and/or are potentially newly experiencing motherhood for the first time having grown up in a postfeminist context during the early 21st century. Hence, some of the debates presented and discussed within the thesis, feel very personal. Moreover, I also use Instagram for digital leisure, and have been negatively affected in the past by the various unrealistic images

portrayed on Instagram. Furthermore, the increasing pressure to comply with evermore demanding beauty and/or glamour standards while trying to optimise oneself in any area one can to increase one's 'stock' value also feels familiar. However, arguably being part of this targeted demographic has not caused any negative interference, but instead has strengthened the research. Without my positionality and prior experience of the online wellness and lifestyle sector, I do not believe that I would have pursued the research topic, as my curiosity and interest in the project originated there. This, however, seems to be common in feminist research, and adds me to a long line of feminists who have a personal investment in their own research (see Kirkwood, 1993). This curiosity drove the research and enabled me to ask a particular set of research questions that have not yet been fully addressed in the wider literature. Moreover, I think this research project also enriched my own positionality and development as a person/woman as it gave valuable insights into the working of these lifestyles, and the role postfeminism plays within maintaining dominant norms and structures. In particular, how through the use of neoliberal elements the blame and responsibility is shifted onto the individual, instead of allowing for the actual culprit, the social, political and economic system, to be interrogated and reconstituted. Hence, I hope that this project might give the same valuable insight to other women in my position that I myself gained from it.

Future research projects

Changing the project's nature was eventually seen as a welcome challenge and opportunity as mentioned in the previous section. However, as the project initially had set out to focus on 'real' mother's experiences, it, therefore, seems like an important future research project to undertake. This thesis eventually focused on the portrayal of a postfeminist lifestyle and how femininity and motherhood are discursively produced within a postfeminist and neoliberal

context. Hence, future research should build on these findings, especially as online representations are often unrealistic. I would suggest that two future projects emerge from this one. The first one being to interview 'real' women who, e.g., regularly read and/or are following *Poosh*, and compare their experiences to the findings in this thesis. The second is based on interviewing specifically 'real' mothers who read and/or follow *Poosh*, and compare their experiences to the findings in this thesis. Due to the nature of participant-led research, I would not advise trying to combine these two projects, but instead have them as two separate projects, as this will also allow for a deeper insight by enabling these projects to go into further depths with less participants, and or fewer research objectives.

However, it would certainly be interesting to follow up on both these research projects by comparing the findings between the lived experiences of the women before and after having children. For example, exploring whether the participants who were mothers found it even more challenging to follow the advice of *Poosh* compared to those who were not mothers. This would hopefully shed some light on how much the aspects, elements and expectations linked with motherhood are still keeping women subordinate. Thus, how these dominant norms and structures are revealed more when 'exposed' by motherhood, or whether postfeminism is potentially managing to 'cover' them up due to its tendency to shift the responsibility onto the individual. These would arguably be interesting future research projects that follow on from and develop the findings of this research project.

There are also other potential research avenues to explore based on some of the findings in this project. For example, it seems that more research should focus on the role 'consumerism' plays in an evolving and ever-adapting (western) society. This is, as the thesis

revealed, due to the strong presence of consumerism within a postfeminist culture and neoliberal society as the driving force to help 'cope' and/or solve any issues in relation to/with 'modern society'. It would be interesting to see whether emerging 'lifestyles' that push/promote minimalism and/or sustainability can be viewed as forms of 'resistance' against this 'consumerist' culture or whether just as Rottenberg's (2014, 2019) findings when analysing 'feminist manifestos', it actually still ends up promoting consumerism. Furthermore, it would be interesting to see what particular aspects and elements of 'consumerism' can be seen as damaging in relation to 'gender inequality', and whether it therefore (in)directly plays a role in helping maintain women's subordinate position.

Furthermore, the fast paced and ever-changing nature of social media platforms alone already allows for future possible research projects, which could examine and observe their continuously changing nature in relation to postfeminism and neoliberalism. Therefore, future research could try and already replicate my research on another wellness lifestyle site and see whether similar findings can be observed or not. Changing certain aspects and/or variables by, for example, choosing a non-celebrity run wellness site could garner interesting results, as this might allow for insight into how influential the 'celebrity' association of Kourtney Kardashian is or is not. Similarly, further research could be gleaned from looking at a lifestyle account/site which does not centre itself within the wellness sector. This would allow us to see whether other digital spaces reveal a similar pattern of operation as in the case of *Poosh* and/or the findings in this thesis. Moreover, just as in this case where I felt the need to re-explore and confirm whether Gill's postfeminist sensibilities were still relevant and applicable, research in a few years might want to reconfirm this again due to the changing and evolving nature of postfeminism. While I believe and expect for Gill's sensibilities to remain relevant as long as

postfeminism perseveres, it will be important to track and observe how these sensibilities adapt alongside postfeminism evolving to fit current socio-economic structures in the (near) future. Tracking the expected increasing influence of neoliberalism within postfeminism would be valuable, and so would explicitly exploring how Rottenberg's neoliberal feminist subject seems to become increasingly similar to the ideal postfeminist subject, as discussed in this project.

Moreover, it will be interesting in general to observe the influence of the wellness industry. While currently the wellness industry seems to have become highly influential and widespread, including the promotion of 'beauty and health' from the inside, hence, becoming increasingly linked with beauty practices, it would be good to see in a few years whether this relationship further intertwines, and whether its current popularity remains. And if so, how it is succeeding to maintain its influential position. These are just a few of many future projects within this area that could be explored, and where my research might be a beneficial starting point among other established academic research.

Arguably due to the fast paced and ever-changing nature of the aspects and elements researched and discussed in this thesis, there are a lot of potential future research projects that could build on this thesis and further explore elements and questions that have come to light and have not been covered by this research project. Nevertheless, this project has through a forensic study of the lifestyle site, *Poosh*, furthered arguments about postfeminism, demonstrating its resilience and adaptability, as well as offering an entirely new line of enquiry relating to postfeminist motherhood.

Bibliography

Abidin, C. (2017). #familygoals: Family Influencers, Calibrated Amateurism, and Justifying Young Digital Labour. *Social Media + Society*, 1-15.

Adamson, M. (2017). Postfeminism, Neoliberalism and A 'Successfully' Balanced Femininity in Celebrity CEO Autobiographies. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 314-327.

Ahmad, K. Z., & Rethinam, K. (2010). Mars, Venus and Gray: Gender Communication. *International Business Research*, 24-33.

Archer, C. (2019). Social media influencers, post-feminism and neoliberalism: How mum bloggers' 'playbour' is reshaping public relations. *Public Relations Inquiry*, 149-166.

Bacik, I., & Drew, E. (2006). Struggling with juggling: Gender and work/life balance in the legal professions. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 136-146.

Baker, S. A., & Rojek, C. (2020). *Lifestyle Gurus: Constructing Authority and Influence Online*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Ball, E. (2021). The tension between Elias' informalisation of parenting and the reformalisation of parenting interventions. *People, Place and Policy*, 1-18.

Banet-Weiser, S. (2018). Postfeminism and Popular Feminism. *Feminist Media Histories*, 152-156.

Bastos, A. C., Uriko, K., & Valsiner, J. (2012). *Cultural Dynamics of Women's Lives*. Charlotte: Information Age Publishing.

Berlant, L. (2011). *Cruel Optimism*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Bernstein, G., & Triger, Z. H. (2011). Over-Parenting. *UC Davis Law Review*, 1221-1279.

Blackstone, A. M. (2003). Gender Roles and Society. In J. R. Miller, R. M. Lerner, & L. B. Schiamberg, *Human Ecology: An Encyclopedia of Children, Families, Communities, and Environments*. (pp. 335-338). Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO.

Bouvier, G., & Machin, D. (2018). Critical Discourse Analysis and the challenges and opportunities of social media. *Review of Communication*, 178-192.

Boxerman, A. D. (1990). The Use of the Necessity Defense by Abortion Clinic Protesters. *The Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology*, 677-712.

Boyd, M. (1997). Feminizing Paid Work. *Current Sociology*, 49-73.

Boyle, M. (1997). *Re-thinking abortion. Psychology, gender, power, and the law*. London: Routledge.

Bradley, H. (1996). Gender: Rethinking Patriarchy. In H. Bradley, *Fractured Identities Changing Patterns of Inequality* (pp. 80-112). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Braun, J. M., Messerlian, C., & Hauser, R. (2017). Fathers Matter: Why It's Time to Consider the Impact of Paternal Environmental Exposure on Children's Health. *Current Epidemiology Reports*, 46-55.

Bruns, A. (2007). Produsage: Towards a Broader Framework for User-Led Content Creation. In B. Shneiderman, *Proceedings of 6th ACM SIGCHI Conference on Creativity and Cognition* (pp. 99-105). United States of America: Association for Computing Machinery.

Budgeon, S., & Currie, D. H. (1995). From Feminism to Postfeminism Women's Liberation in Fashion Magazines. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 173-186.

Bue, A. C., & Harrison, K. (2019). Empowerment Sold Separately: Two Experiments Examine the Effects of Ostensibly Empowering Beauty Advertisements on Women's Empowerment and Self-Objectification. *Sex Roles*, 627-642.

Butler, J. (1999). *Gender Trouble Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.

Butler, J. (2006). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Milton Park: Routledge.

Butler, J. (2013). For white girls only? Postfeminism and the politics of inclusion. *Feminist Formations*, 35-58.

Cabanas, E., & Illouz, E. (2019). *Manufacturing happy citizens: How the science and industry of happiness control our lives*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Cairns, K., & Johnston, J. (2015). Choosing health: embodied neoliberalism, postfeminism, and the "do-diet". *Theory and Society*, 153-175.

Carin, M., Lundgren, I., & Bergbom, I. (2011). First time pregnant women's experiences in early pregnancy. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, 1-11.

Casey, E., & Littler, J. (2021). Mrs Hinch, the rise of the cleanfluencer and the neoliberal refashioning of housework: Scouring away the crisis? *The Sociological Review*, 1-17.

Charles, N., & James, E. (2005). 'He earns the bread and butter and I earn the cream': job insecurity and the male breadwinner family in South Wales. *Work, employment and society*, 481-502.

Chen, E. (2013). Neoliberalism and popular women's culture: Rethinking choice, freedom and agency. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 440-452.

Ciciolla, L., & Luthar, S. S. (2019). Invisible Household Labor and Ramifications for Adjustment: Mothers as Captains of Households. *Sex Roles*, 467-486.

Collins, J. (2009). Social Reproduction in Classrooms and Schools. *The Annual Review of Anthropology*, 33-48.

Conor, B. (2021). 'How Goopy are you?' Women, Goop and cosmic wellness. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 1261-1281.

Crawford, M. (2004). Mars and Venus Collide: A Discursive Analysis of Marital Self-Help Psychology. *Feminism & Psychology*, 63-79.

Cunliffe, A. L. (2011). Crafting Qualitative Research: Morgan and Smircich 30 years on. *Organizational Research Methods*, 647-673.

Davies, W. (2015). The happiness industry: how the government and big business sold us well-being. London: Verso.

De Wilde, M., Carrier, A., Casini, A., & Demoulin, S. (2020). The Drawback of Sexual Empowerment: Perceiving Women as Emancipated but Still as Sexual Objects. *Sex Roles*, 626-643.

Deutscher, P. (2010). Reproductive Politics, Biopolitics and Auto-immunity: From Foucault to Esposito. *Bioethical Inquiry*, 217-226.

Di Leo, J. R. (Autumn 2015). Review of William Davies's The happiness industry: how the government and big business sold us well-being. London: Verso, 2015. 314pp. *Erasmus Journal for Philosophy and Economics*, 84-93.

Dillon, M., & Reid, J. (2001). Global Liberal Governance: Biopolitics, Security and War. *Millennium – Journal of International Studies*, 41-66.

Djafarova, E., & Rushworth, C. (2017). Exploring the credibility of online celebrities' Instagram profiles in influencing the purchase decisions of young female users. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 1-7.

Dosekun, S. (2015). For Western girls only? Post-feminism as transnational culture. *Feminist Media Studies*, 960-975.

Du, F., Dong, X., & Zhang, Y. (2019). Grandparent-provided childcare and labor force participation of mothers with preschool children in Urban China. *China Population and Development Studies*, 347-368.

Dworking, S., & Wachs, F. (2004). "Getting your body back": Postindustrial fit motherhood in Shape Fit Pregnancy magazine. *Gender and Society*, 610-624.

Dyer, R. (1997). White. London: Routledge.

Earle, S. (2003). "bumps and boobs": fatness and women's experiences of pregnancy. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 245-252.

Eisenstein, H. (2017). Hegemonic feminism, neoliberalism and womenomics: 'empowerment' instead of liberation? *New Formations*, 35-49.

Elias, A. S., & Gill, R. (2018). Beauty surveillance: The digital self-monitoring cultures of neoliberalism. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 59-77.

Elias, A. S., Gill, R., & Scharff, C. (2017). *Aesthetic Labour: Rethinking Beauty Politics in Neoliberalism*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Emre Cetin, B. (2016). Neoliberalism, Food and Women: A Narcissistic Culinary Culture? *Kadin/Woman 2000 Journal for Women's Studies*, 116-132.

Evans, E., & Bussey-Chamberlain, P. (2021). The problems with feminist nostalgia: Intersectionality and white popular feminism. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 353-368.

Fairclough, N. (2001). Critical discourse analysis as a method in social scientific research. In R. P. Wodak, & M. Meyer, *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp. 121-136). London: SAGE Publications.

Favaro, L. (2017). 'Just be confident girls!': Confidence Chic as Neoliberal Governmentality. In A. S. Elias, R. Gill, & C. Scharff, *Aesthetic Labour: Rethinking beauty politics in neoliberalism* (pp. 283-300). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Federici, S. (2019). Social reproduction theory History, issues and present challenges. *Radical Philosophy*, 55-58.

Felski, R. (2006). 'Because it is beautiful' New feminist perspectives on beauty. *Feminist Theory*, 273-282.

Fiske, J. (1989). *Understanding Popular Culture*. Milton Park: Routledge.

Flood, M. (2019). Empowered: Popular Feminism and Popular Misogyny. *Feminist Media Studies*, 1198-1200.

Ford, S. M. (2011). Reconceptualizing the public/private distinction in the age of information technology. *Information, Communication & Society*, 550-567.

Fotopoulou, A. (2016). Feminist activism and digital networks. Between empowerment and vulnerability. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Foucault, M. (1979). *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1. An Introduction. London: Allen Lane.

Franklin, S. (2000). Life itself. Global Nature and the Genetic Imaginary. In S. Franklin, C. Lury, & J. Stacey, *Global Nature, Global Culture* (pp. 188-227). New York: Sage.

Freeman, H. (2020, Oct 10). Nigella Lawson: 'I didn't think I'd be a mended person, but I am'. Retrieved from The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/food/2020/oct/10/nigella-lawson-i-didnt-think-id-be-a-mended-person-but-i-am>

Friedman, M. (2014). Beyond MILF: Exploring Sexuality and Feminism in Public Motherhood. *Atlantis*, 49-60.

Gamman, L., & Marshment, M. (1988). *The female gaze: women as viewers of popular culture*. London: The Women's Press Ltd.

Gatrell, C. (2005). Domestic goddesses? In *Hard labour The sociology of parenthood* (pp. 45-70). Maidenhead: Open university press.

Genz, S. (2009). *Postfemininities in Popular Culture*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Giddens, A. (1994). Living in a Post-Traditional Society. In U. Beck, A. Giddens, & S. Lash, *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order* (pp. 56-109). Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Gill, R. (2007). Postfeminist media culture Elements of a sensibility. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 147-166.

Gill, R. (2008). Empowerment/Sexism: Figuring Female Sexual Agency in Contemporary Advertising. *Feminism & Psychology*, 35-60.

Gill, R. (2016). Post-postfeminism?: new feminist visibilities in postfeminist times. *Feminist Media Studies*, 610-630.

Gill, R. (2017). The affective, cultural and psychic life of postfeminism: A postfeminist sensibility 10 years on. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 606-626.

Gill, R., & Orgad, S. (2015). The Confidence Cult(ure). *Australian Feminist Studies*, 323-344.

Ginsburg, F. D. (1989). *Contested Lives: The Abortion Debate in an American Community*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Goldman, R. (1992). *Reading Ads Socially*. London: Routledge.

Gripsrud, J. (1995). *The Dynasty Years: Hollywood Television and Critical Media Studies*. London: Routledge.

Hall, E. J., & Rodriguez, M. S. (2003). The Myth of Postfeminism. *Gender & Society*, 878-902.

Hallstein, D. (2011). She gives Birth, She's Wearing a Bikini: Mobilizing the Postpregnant Celebrity Mom Body to Manage the Post-Second Wave Crisis in Femininity. *Women's Studies in Communication*, 111-138.

Han, S. (2013). *Pregnancy in Practice: Expectations and Experience in the Contemporary US*. New York: Berghahn Books.

Harris, D. (2016). The Kardashians. *Southwest Review*, 601-613.

Haverland, M., & Yanow, D. (2012). A Hitchhiker's Guide to the Public Administration Research Universe: Surviving Conversations on Methodologies and Methods. *Public Administration Review*, 401-408.

Hesse-Biber, S. N. (2014). *Feminist Research Practice: A Primer*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Hjálmsdóttir, A., & Bjarnadóttir, V. S. (2020). "I have turned into a foreman here at home": Families and work-life balance in times of COVID-19 in a gender equality paradise. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 268-283.

Hochschild, A. R. (2012). *The second-shift: working families and the revolution at home*. New York: N.Y. Penguin Books.

Hollows, J. (2000). *Feminism, Femininity, and Popular Culture*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Hollows, J. (2003). Feeling like a domestic goddess Postfeminism and cooking. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 179-202.

Hookway, N. (2008). 'Entering the blogosphere': some strategies for using blogs in social research. *Qualitative Research*, 91-113.

Hrdy, S. B. (2011). *Mothers and Others: The Evolutionary Origins of Mutual Understanding*. Cambridge: Belknap Press.

Hunter, A. (2016). Monetizing the mommy: mommy blogs and the audience commodity. *Information, Communication & Society*, 1306-1320.

Jenkins, H. (2006). *Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture*. New York: New York University Press.

Johnson, S., Williamson, I., Lyttle, S., & Leeming, D. (2009). Expressing yourself: A feminist analysis of talk around expressing breast milk. *Social Science & Medicine*, 900-907.

Jolly, S., Griffith, K. A., DeCastro, R., Stewart, A., Ubel, P., & Jagsi, R. (2014). Gender Differences in Time Spent on Parenting and Domestic Responsibilities by High-Achieving Young Physician-Researchers. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 344-353.

Kaplan, L. (2022). The overturn of Roe v. Wade Reproductive health in the post-Roe era. *The Nurse Practitioner*, 5-8.

Kay, T. (1998). Having It All or Doing It All? The Construction of Women's Lifestyle in Time-Crunched Households. *Society and Leisure*, 435-354.

Keller, J., & Ryan, M. E. (2018). *Emergent Feminisms: Complicating a Postfeminist Media Culture*. Milton Park: Routledge.

Khamis, S., Ang, L., & Welling, R. (2017). Self-branding, 'micro-celebrity' and rise of Social Media Influencers. *Celebrity Studies*, 191-208.

Kimchi, J., Polivka, B., & Stevenson, J. S. (1991). Triangulation: Operational Definitions. *Nursing Research*, 364-366.

Kirkwood, C. (1993). Investing Ourselves: Use of Researcher Personal Response in Feminist Methodology. In J. de Groot, & M. Maynard, *Women's Studies in the 1990s. Women's Studies at York Series* (pp. 18-39). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kornfield, S. (2014). Pregnant Discourse: "Having It All" While Domestic and Potentially Disabled. *Women's Studies in Communications*, 181-201.

Lagerwey, J. (2017). *Postfeminist Celebrity and Motherhood: Brand Mom*. New York: Routledge.

Lamb, S., & Peterson, Z. D. (2011). Adolescent Girls' Sexual Empowerment: Two Feminist Explore the Concept. *Feminist Forum*, 703-712.

Laslett, B., & Brenner, J. (1989). Gender and Social Reproduction: Historical perspectives. *The Annual Review of Sociology*, 381-404.

Laughey, D. (2007). *Key Themes in Media Theory*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Law, K. H., Jackson, B., Guelfi, K., Nguyen, T., & Dimmock, J. A. (2018). Understanding and alleviating maternal postpartum distress: Perspective from first-time mothers in Australia. *Social Science & Medicine*, 59-66.

Lazar, M. M. (2007). Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis: Articulating a Feminist Discourse Praxis. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 141-164.

Leaver, T., Highfield, T., & Abidin, C. (2020). *Instagram*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Lee, K., Vasileiou, K., & Barnett, J. (2017). 'Lonely within the mother': An exploratory study of first-time mothers' experiences of loneliness. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 1334-1344.

Lee, M. J. (1993). *Consumer Culture Reborn: the cultural politics of consumption*. London: Routledge.

Lemke, T. (2005). Biopolitics and beyond. On the reception of a vital Foucauldian notion. Frankfurt, Germany, Retrieved October, 14, p.2013.

Lewis, P., Benschop, Y., & Simpson, R. (2017). Postfeminism, Gender and Organization. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 1-13.

Lewis, T. (2009). *TV Transformations: Revealing the Makeover Show*. Milton Park: Routledge.

Liechty, T., Coyne, S. M., Collier, K. M., & Sharp, A. D. (2018). "It's Just Not Very Realistic": Perceptions of Media Among Pregnant and Postpartum Women. *Health Communication*, 851-859.

Liff, S., & Cameron, I. (1997). Changing equality cultures to move beyond 'women's problems'. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 35-46.

Liff, S., & Ward, K. (2001). Distorted views through the glass ceiling: the construction of women's understandings of promotion and senior management positions. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 19-36.

Littler, J. (2019). Mothers behaving badly: chaotic hedonism and the crisis of neoliberal social reproduction. *Cultural Studies*, 1-22.

Livingstone, S., & Das, R. (2013). The End of Audiences? In J. Hartley, J. Burgess, & A. Bruns, *A companion to new media dynamics* (pp. 104-121). Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.

Londoño, J.E. (2020). Beyond the biopolitics of reproduction An Analysis of the Abortion Rights Movement and the Feminist Struggle for Sexual and Reproductive Rights in Argentina. Master Thesis, MA Latin American Studies. Leiden University. Available at: <https://studenttheses.universiteitleiden.nl/access/item%3A3139317/view> (Accessed: 12 September 2024)

Lumby, C. (2011). "Past the Post in Feminist Media Studies.". *Feminist Media Studies*, 95-100.

Macdonald, C. L. (1998). Manufacturing Motherhood: The Shadow Work of Nannies and Au Pairs. *Qualitative Sociology*, 25-53.

Mackay, H. (1997). *Consumption and Everyday Life*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Maier, M. (2000). On the gendered substructure of organization. Dimensions and dilemmas of corporate masculinity. In G. Powell, *Handbook of Gender and Work*. London: Sage.

Mäkinen, K. (2020). Resilience and vulnerability: Emotional and affective labour in mom blogging. *New media & society*, 1-15.

May, T. (2011). *Social research: issues, methods and process*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Mayoh, J. (2019). Perfect pregnancy? Pregnant bodies, digital leisure and the presentation of self. *Leisure Studies*, 204-217.

McCulloch, G. (2004). *Documentary research in education, history and the social sciences*. London and New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

McDonnell, A. (2016). Keeping Up the Kardashian Brand: Celebrity, Materialism, and Sexuality. *The Journal of American Culture*, 105-106.

McRobbie, A. (1991). Jackie Magazine: Romantic Individualism and the Teenage Girl. *Feminism and Youth Culture*, 81-134.

McRobbie, A. (2004). Post-feminism and Popular Culture. *Feminist Media Studies*, 255-264.

McRobbie, A. (2009). *The aftermath of feminism: Gender, culture and social change*. London: Sage.

McRobbie, A. (2015). Notes on the Perfect: Competitive Femininity in Neoliberal Times. *Australian Feminist Studies*, 1465-3303.

Meagher, G. (2002). Is It Wrong to Pay for Housework? *Feminist Philosophies of Love and Work*, 52-66.

Melhuus, M. (2012). *Problems of Conception: Issues of Law, Biotechnology, Individuals and Kinship*. New York: Berghahn Books.

Miller, T. (2007). "Is this what motherhood is all about?" Weaving Experiences and Discourse through Transition to First-Time Motherhood. *Gender & Society*, 337-358.

Mills, C. (2017). Biopolitics and Human Reproduction. In S. Prozorov, & S. Rentea, *The Routledge Handbook of Biopolitics* (pp. 281-294). New York: Routledge.

Młodkowska, B. (2019). Influencers on Instagram and YouTube and Their Impact on Consumer Behaviour. *Journal of Marketing and Consumer Behaviour in Emerging Markets*, 4-13.

Moore, K. (Fall 2012/Spring 2013). Gender, Justice, and Neoliberal Transformations. *The Scholar and Feminist Online*. Retrieved from <https://sfonline.barnard.edu/fear-and-fun-science-and-gender-emotion-and-embodiment-under-neoliberalism/>.

Morris, A. (2019). *The politics of weight: feminist dichotomies of power in dieting*. Cham: Springer.

Mulvey, L. (1975). Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema. *Screen*, 6-18.

Murphy, M. (2012). *Seizing the Means of Reproduction: Entanglement of Feminism, Health, and Technoscience*. London: Duke University Press.

Natalier, K. (2003). 'I'm not his wife' Doing gender and doing housework in the absence of women. *Journal of Sociology*, 253-269.

Negra, D., & Tasker, Y. (2013). Neoliberal frames and genres of inequality: Recession-era chick flick and male-centred corporate melodrama. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 344-361.

Nemec, P. B., Swarbrick, M. A., & Merlo, D. M. (2015). The Force of Habit Creating and Sustaining a Wellness Lifestyle . *Journal of Psychosocial Nursing*, 24-31.

Nicolson, P. (2003). *Having It All?: Choices for Today's Superwoman*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.

Nouri, M. (2018). The Power of Influence: Traditional Celebrity vs Social Media Influencer. *Advanced Writing: Pop Culture Intersections*, 1-20.

Nurka, C. (2016). Postfeminism. In N. A. Naples, *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Gender and Sexuality Studies* (pp. 1-10). Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.

O'Neill, R. (2020). 'Glow from the inside out': Deliciously Ella and the politics of 'healthy eating'. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 1-22.

O'Neill, R. (2020). Pursuing "Wellness": Considerations for Media Studies. *Television & New Media*, 628-634.

Orgad, S. (2017). The Cruel Optimism of The Good Wife: The fantastic working mother on the fantastical treadmill. *Television & New Media*, 165-183.

Orton-Johnson, K. (2017). Mummy Blogs and Representations of Motherhood: "Bad Mummies" and Their Readers. *Social Media + Society*, 1-10.

Page, R. (2017). Ethics Revisited: Rights, Responsibilities and Relationships in Online Research. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 315-320.

Parasuraman, S., Thing, G. S., & Dhanaraj, S. A. (2014). Polyherbal formulation: Concept of ayurveda. *Pharmacognosy Review*, 73-80.

Park, B., Smith, A., & Correll, J. (2008). "Having it all" or "doing it all"? Perceived trait attributes and behavioral obligations as a function of workload, parenthood, and gender. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 1156-1164.

Petchesky, R. (1990). *Abortion and Woman*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Phipps, A. (2014). *The Politics of the Body: Gender in a Neoliberal and Neoconservative Age*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Power, K. (2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the care burden of women and families. *Sustainability: Science , Practice and Policy*, 67-73.

Press, A. L. (2011). Feminism and Media in the Post-feminist Era. *Feminist Media Studies*, 107-113.

Reeves, S., Kuper, A., & Hodges, B. D. (2008). Qualitative Research: Qualitative Research Methodologies: Ethnography. *British Medical Journal*, 512-514.

Retallack, H., Ringrose, J., & Lawrence, E. (2016). "'Fuck Your Body Image': Teen Girls' Twitter and Instagram Feminism in and Around School.". In J. Coffey, S. Budgeon, & H. Cahill, *Learning Bodies The Body in Youth and Childhood Studies* (pp. 85-103). Singapore: Springer.

Rheinberger, H. (1996). Beyond nature and culture: modes of reasoning in the age of molecular biology and medicine. In M. Lock, A. Young, & A. Cambrosio, *Living and Working with the New Medical Technologies* (pp. 19-30). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Riina, E. M., & Feinberg, M. E. (2012). Involvement in Childrearing and Mothers' and Fathers' Adjustment. *Family Relations: Interdisciplinary Journal of Applied Family Science*, 836-850.

Riley, S., Evans, A., & Robson, M. (2019). Postfeminism and Health: Critical Psychology and Media Perspectives. Milton Park: Routledge.

Riley, S., Evans, A., Elliott, S., Rice, C., & Marecek, J. (2017). A critical review of postfeminist sensibility. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 1-12.

Roberts, T. (2002). III. The Woman in the Body. *Feminism & Psychology*, 324-329.

Rodman Aronson, K. M., & Schaler Buchholz, E. (2001). The Post-Feminist Era: Still Striving for Equality in Relationships. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 109-124.

Rogan, F. (2022). Digital Femininities: Visibility, Consumption and Celebrity in the Digital Age. BSA Everyday Society, 27 October. Available at: <https://es.britsoc.co.uk/digital-femininities-visibility-consumption-and-celebrity-in-the-digital-age/> (Accessed 29 December 2023).

Rogan, F. (2023). Digital Femininities: The Gendered Construction of Cultural and Political Identities Online. Milton Park: Routledge.

Rojek, C. (2004). Celebrity. London: Reaktion Books, Limited.

Rottenberg, C. (2014). The Rise of Neoliberal Feminism. *Cultural Studies*, 418-437.

Rottenberg, C. (2019). Women Who Work: The limits of the neoliberal feminist paradigm. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 1073-1082.

Saldana, J. (2011). Fundamentals of qualitative research. New York: Oxford University Press.

Saul, J. (2003). The politics of Work and Family. In J. Saul, *Feminism Issues & Arguments* (pp. 5-44). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Scharff, C. (2012). Repudiating Feminism: Young Women In A Neoliberal World. Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.

Schmied, V., & Lupton, D. (2001). Blurring the boundaries: breastfeeding and maternal subjectivity. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 234-250.

Schneider, Z. (2002). An Australian study of women's experiences of their first pregnancy. *Midwifery*, 238-249.

Schwartz, P. (1994). Peer marriage: How love between equals really works. New York: Free Press.

Senft, T. M. (2013). Microcelebrity and the Branded Self. In J. Hartley, J. Burgess, & A. Bruns, *A companion to new media dynamics* (pp. 346-354). Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.

Shilling, C. (2015). *The Body: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Silverstone, R. (1994). Television and everyday life. New York: Routledge.

Símonardóttir , S., & Gíslason, I. V. (2018). When breast is not best: Opposing dominant discourses on breastfeeding. *The Sociological Review*, 665-681.

Sjoberg, L. (2016). Feminist Approaches to the Study of Political Leadership. In M. A. Molchanov, The Ashgate Research Companion to Political Leadership (pp. 149-173). New York: Routledge.

Sjoberg, L., & Gentry, C. E. (2007). Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics. London: Zed Books.

Sleebboom-Faulkner, M. (2010). Frameworks of Choice: Predictive and Genetic Testing in Asia. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Smart, C. (1996). Deconstructing motherhood. In E. Silva, Good Enough Mothering? Feminist Perspective on Lone Motherhood (pp. 37-57). London: Routledge.

Smith, R. K., Yazdani, E., Wang, P., Soleymani, S., & Ton, L. N. (2022). The cost of looking natural: Why the no-makeup movement may fail to discourage cosmetic use. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 324-337.

Smithson, J., & Stokeo, E. H. (2005). Discourse of Work-Life Balance: Negotiating 'Genderblind' Terms in Organisations. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 147-168.

Smooth, W. G. (2013). Intersectionality from Theoretical Framework to Policy Intervention. In A. R. Wilson, Situating Intersectionality. The Politics of Intersectionality (pp. 11-41). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Snyder-Hall, R. C. (2010). Third-Wave Feminism and the Degense of "Choice.". *Perspectives on Politics*, 255-261.

Sørensen, S. Ø. (2017). The Performative of Choice: Postfeminist Perspectives on Work-Life Balance. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 297-313.

Sprajcer, M., Thorne, H., Newman, L., & Gupta, C. C. (2023). Are new mums driving tired? *Transportation Research Part F: Traffic Psychology and Behaviour*, 76-81.

Stewart, S., & Giles, D. (2020). Celebrity status and the attribution of value. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 3-17.

Storey, J. (2015). Cultural theory and popular culture: An introduction. New York: Routledge.

Strinati, D. (2004). An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture. London: Routledge.

Szeman, I., & O'Brien, S. (2017). Popular culture: A user's guide. Hoboken: John Wiley Blackwell.

Tasker, Y., & Negra, D. (2005). In Focus: Postfeminism and Contemporary Media Studies. *Cinema Journal*, 107-110.

Tehranian, J. (2020). Is Kim Kardashian white (and why does it matter anyway)? Racial fluidity, identity mutability & the future of civil rights jurisprudence. *Houston Law Review*, 151-183.

Teodorescu, A. (2018). The women-nature connection as a key element in the social construction of Western contemporary motherhood. In D. A. Vakoch, & S. Mickey, *Women and Nature?: Beyond Dualism in Gender, Body, and Environment* (pp. 77-95). Milton Park: Routledge.

Thrift, N. (1990). The Making of a Capitalist Time Consciousness. In J. Hassard, *The Sociology of Time* (pp. 105-129). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Tiidenberg, K., & Baym, N. K. (2017). Learn It, Buy It, Work It: Intensive Pregnancy on Instagram. *Social Media + Society*, 1-13.

Toffoletti, K. (2014). BAUDRILLARD, POSTFEMINISM, and the IMAGE MAKEOVER. *Cultural Politics*, 105-119.

Vaggione, J. M. (2018). Sexuality, law, and religion in Latin America: frameworks in tension. *Religion and Gender*, 14-31.

Vanheule, S. (2016). Capitalist Discourse, Subjectivity and Lacanian Psychoanalysis. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 1-14.

Vered, K., & Humphreys, S. (2014). Postfeminist infections in television studies. *Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, 155-163.

Vesnić-Alujević, L., & Murru, M. F. (2016). Digital audiences' disempowerment: Participation or free labour. *Journal of Audience & Reception Studies*, 422-430.

Wajcman, J. (2008). Life in the fast lane? Towards a sociology of technology and time. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 59-77.

Walkowitz, J. (1998). Going Public: Shopping, Street Harassment, and Streetwalking in Late Victorian London. *Representations*, 1-30.

Walther, J. B. (2002). Research Ethics in Internet-Enabled Research: Human Subjects Issues and Methodological Myopia. *Ethics and Information Technology*, 205-216.

Ward, J. H. (2012). *Managing Data: Content Analysis Methodology*. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Unpublished Manuscript.

West, C., & Zimmerman, D. H. (1987). Doing Gender. *Gender & Society*, 125-151.

Whelehan, I. (2010). "Remaking Feminism: Or Why is Postfeminism so Boring?". *Nordic Journal of English Studies*, 155-172.

Whittaker, A. (2015). Technology, Biopolitics, Rationalities and Choices: Recent Studies of Reproduction. *Medical Anthropology*, 259-273.

Wilkes, K. (2021). Eating, looking, and living clean: Techniques of white femininity in contemporary neoliberal food culture. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 1-21.

Wilson, D. W., Lin, X., Longstreet, P., & Sarker, S. (2011). Web 2.0: A Definition, Literature Review, and Directions for Future Research. *AMCIS 2011 Proceedings - All Submissions*. 368.

Winch, A. (2013). *Girlfriends and Postfeminist Sisterhood*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Winch, A. (2015). Brand intimacy, female friendship and digital surveillance networks. *New Formations*, 228-245.

Windels, K., Champlin, S., Shelton, S., Sterbenk, Y., & Poteet, M. (2020). Selling Feminism: How Female Empowerment Campaigns Employ Postfeminist Discourses. *Journal of Advertising*, 18-33.

Wissinger, E. (2015). #NoFilter: Models, Glamour Labor, and the Age of the Blink. *Interface*, 1-20.

Wood, H. (2017). The politics of hyperbole on Geordie Shore: Class, gender, youth and excess. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 39-55.

Wood, J. T. (2002). A critical response to John Gray's Mars and Venus portrayals of men and women. *Southern Communication Journal*, 201-210.

Yilmaz, K. (2013). Comparison of Quantitative and Qualitative Research Traditions: epistemological, theoretical, and methodological differences. *European journal of education*, 311-325.

Zell, E., Strickhouser, J. E., Lane, T. N., & Teeter, S. R. (2016). Mars, Venus, or Earth? Sexism and the Exaggeration of Psychological Gender Differences. *Sex Roles*, 287-300.

Appendix 1 – Coding Sheets

<u>General information:</u>					
Coding sheet:		ID-Nr:		Date (collected):	
Day (e.g. 1):		Weekday:		Month:	
Caption					
Is someone tagged in the story?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If yes:	Kourtney Kardashian <input type="checkbox"/>	Other Kardashian <input type="checkbox"/>	A celebrity <input type="checkbox"/>	Poosh Team Member <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Features</u>					
What does the story contain					
An embedded link <input type="checkbox"/>		A poll <input type="checkbox"/>		A Question-box (without answers) <input type="checkbox"/>	
A rating bar <input type="checkbox"/>		Countdown function <input type="checkbox"/>		A Question-box (with answers) <input type="checkbox"/>	
Just picture <input type="checkbox"/>		Post or Reel <input type="checkbox"/>			
<u>Purpose</u>					
Where did the story link to?					
Article <input type="checkbox"/>	Poosh shop (to a specific product/section) <input type="checkbox"/>	Poosh shop (not to a specific product) <input type="checkbox"/>	Other 'non-Poosh' website/space <input type="checkbox"/>	Nowhere <input type="checkbox"/>	
Was the story an original or reposted/reshared?		Original <input type="checkbox"/>		Reposted/reshared <input type="checkbox"/>	
If reposted/reshared, from who did it originate?		A celebrity <input type="checkbox"/>		Non-celebrity <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Is the article being promoted via story also promoted via a post?					
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		No <input type="checkbox"/>		N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	
<u>Style</u>					
What gender pronouns are used to address the audience?					
Female – pronouns <input type="checkbox"/>		Gender – neutral pronouns <input type="checkbox"/>		Male – pronouns <input type="checkbox"/>	

Appendix 1.1 - Poosh: Instagram Stories Coding Sheet

General information:

Coding sheet:	ID-Nr:	Date (collected):
Day (e.g. 1):	Weekday:	Month:

Title		
Author		
Section Under (e.g. Beauty, Fitness, Mind, DIY, Hacks, Relationships, Recipes, Kourtney etc.)		
How was the article promoted/accessible?	via story only <input type="checkbox"/>	via story and post (link in bio) <input type="checkbox"/>

Popularity of Article:

Is the story part of the 'top 5'	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, what place?	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	n/a <input type="checkbox"/>

Sub-genres

Sub-themes addressed/mentioned:		
Health <input type="checkbox"/>	Sex(uality) <input type="checkbox"/>	Food/diet/recipes <input type="checkbox"/>
Romantic-Relationships <input type="checkbox"/>	Other-Relationships <input type="checkbox"/>	(related to) Appearance <input type="checkbox"/>
Exercise(s) <input type="checkbox"/>	(related to) Household <input type="checkbox"/>	(related to) Productivity <input type="checkbox"/>
Mood <input type="checkbox"/>	Anxiety <input type="checkbox"/>	Stress <input type="checkbox"/>

Gill's main-core Postfeminist Sensibilities

What Postfeminist Sensibilities can be found in the text		
Focus on the body <input type="checkbox"/>	"Sexual Freedom" <input type="checkbox"/>	Neoliberal elements <input type="checkbox"/>
"Psychological" <input type="checkbox"/>	"Double Entanglement" <input type="checkbox"/>	Non <input type="checkbox"/>

Sub-sensibilities/themes:

Can any of the following 'sub-sensibilities' be identified:			
Focus on the body	Figure <input type="checkbox"/>	Appearance <input type="checkbox"/>	Sex <input type="checkbox"/>
"Psychological"	Relationships <input type="checkbox"/>	Emotional-labour <input type="checkbox"/>	Irony and Knowingness <input type="checkbox"/>
	(Self-)surveillance/ monitoring <input type="checkbox"/>	Confidence <input type="checkbox"/>	"Notion of sexual differences" <input type="checkbox"/>
Neoliberal elements	(Individual) choice/ determination/ responsibility <input type="checkbox"/>	(constant) Self-improvement <input type="checkbox"/>	"Makeover Paradigm" <input type="checkbox"/>

Other-Aspects:

Can any of the following aspects be identified:		
Consumerism (as solution) <input type="checkbox"/>	Notion of empowerment <input type="checkbox"/>	Motherhood <input type="checkbox"/>
'Having It All' <input type="checkbox"/>	'Work-Life Balance' <input type="checkbox"/>	'General-Life Balance' <input type="checkbox"/>

Celebrities influence:

Is a celebrity mentioned?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If yes, which of the following:	Kourtney Kardashian <input type="checkbox"/>	Other Kardashian <input type="checkbox"/>	Female Celebrity <input type="checkbox"/>	Male Celebrity <input type="checkbox"/>

Consumerism

Is there a consumerist element present? I.e. is something being sold to the reader?		
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Indirectly <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

Style of Article:

What gender pronouns are used in the text?		
Female pronouns <input type="checkbox"/>	No gender-specific pronouns <input type="checkbox"/>	Male pronouns <input type="checkbox"/>

General tone of article		
Positive <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Negative <input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix 1.2 - Poosh: Instagram Articles Coding Sheet

<u>General information:</u>				
Coding sheet:		ID-nr:		Date (collected): 28/09/2021
Title				
Author				
Section under Motherhood				
<u>Sub-genres</u>				
Sub-themes addressed/mentioned:				
Health <input type="checkbox"/>	Sex(uality) <input type="checkbox"/>	Food/diet/recipes <input type="checkbox"/>		
Romantic-Relationships <input type="checkbox"/>	Other-Relationships <input type="checkbox"/>	(related to) Appearance <input type="checkbox"/>		
Exercise(s) <input type="checkbox"/>	(related to) Household <input type="checkbox"/>	(related to) Productivity <input type="checkbox"/>		
Mood <input type="checkbox"/>	Anxiety <input type="checkbox"/>	Stress <input type="checkbox"/>		
<u>Gill's Postfeminist Sensibilities</u>				
What Postfeminist Sensibilities can be found in the text			Non <input type="checkbox"/>	
Focus on the body <input type="checkbox"/>	Psychological <input type="checkbox"/>	Neoliberal elements <input type="checkbox"/>		
Confidence <input type="checkbox"/>	'(self-)surveillance/monitoring' <input type="checkbox"/>	Irony and Knowingness <input type="checkbox"/>		
"Sexual Freedom" <input type="checkbox"/>	"Notion of sexual differences" <input type="checkbox"/>	"Double Entanglement" <input type="checkbox"/>		
<u>Motherhood-elements/aspects:</u>				
Are any of the following aspects-elements mentioned?				
Career/work (First Shift) <input type="checkbox"/>	Childrearing (Second Shift) <input type="checkbox"/>	Household work (Second Shift) <input type="checkbox"/>		
Body Work (Third Shift) <input type="checkbox"/>	Emotional labour <input type="checkbox"/>	'Mum guilt' <input type="checkbox"/>		
'Having It All' <input type="checkbox"/>	'Work-Life Balance' <input type="checkbox"/>	'General-Life Balance' <input type="checkbox"/>		
Consumerism (as solution) <input type="checkbox"/>	Notion of Empowerment <input type="checkbox"/>			
<u>Traditional-motherhood elements:</u>				
Are traditional-motherhood(/parenthood) ideas present or addressed?				
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Indirectly <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>		
If yes, are they discouraged or encouraged?				
Encouraged <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Discouraged <input type="checkbox"/>		
<u>Celebrities influence:</u>				
Is a celebrity mentioned?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If yes, which of the following:	Kourtney Kardashian <input type="checkbox"/>	Other Kardashian <input type="checkbox"/>	Female Celebrity <input type="checkbox"/>	Male Celebrity <input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Consumerism</u>				
Is there a consumerist element present? I.e. is something being sold to the reader?				
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Indirectly <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>		
<u>Style of Article:</u>				
What gender pronouns are used?				
Gender-neutral <input type="checkbox"/>		Not gender-neutral <input type="checkbox"/>		
General tone of article				
Positive <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Negative <input type="checkbox"/>		

Appendix 2 – Full text of articles used in CDA displayed in thesis

DECOR

Everything You Need To ORGANIZE YOUR PANTRY

BY POOSH

Take a peek inside Kourt's pristine pantry and you'll learn a couple things: 1) Snacks, spices, and cereals are all perfectly in place (thanks to affordable baskets). 2) Never underestimate the power of a label maker.

While this level of organization might seem intimidating, it really comes down to a simple set of essentials. To kickstart your kitchen reorganization process, we're breaking down how you can recreate the poosh-approved pantry below.

Start with finding structured baskets that work for your space. Kourt uses a few different styles throughout her pantry: ones to store snacks that come in bags, like cookies and pretzels, and ones for condiments, like honey and her assortment of nut butter. The baskets are both functional and aesthetically-pleasing (you never actually see the mess, unless you look inside).

Organize the baskets into sections, like baking supplies, snacks for kids, spices, etc. Kourt hangs these chic tags on each bin so she can easily find what she's looking for.

Follow Kourt's lead and use these stainless steel clips to keep your chips and bagged snacks from becoming stale. She also uses this Ikea bin to stock extra clips and reusable straws.

Store foods like cereal, rice, grains, and flour in clear glass jars. Recycle the original packaging and transfer it all to the sleek containers. This way, everything looks really organized and uncluttered. Kourt puts these stickers on the bottom of the jars with the expiration date, so she knows that everything is still fresh.

Keep the items you use on a daily basis on display in the baskets, and other items that you don't use as often in your drawers.

Since Kourt is a tea connoisseur, she keeps her tea selection in an acrylic organizer (similar to this one, but without the lid). You can adapt this trick to store small packets of sugar or spices that you want to keep on hand.

Now that you have all of the tips, shop the essentials you need to make your pantry space feel clean and organized.

Appendix 2.1 - Complete text of article on everything you need to know to organize your pantry by Poosh.

KOURTNEY

What's in Kourt's MEDICINE CABINET

BY POOSH

We all have one lurking in our bathroom. It's hidden behind a mirror, filled to the brim with our unmentionables. Usually, medicine cabinets are an eyesore that we'd like to hide out of sight and pray that no one goes through.

We've even heard of some hosts who put marbles inside their medicine cabinets so if a guest starts snooping, they can catch them in the act.

But medicine cabinets don't have to be this top-secret wasteland. We're only human—we need these little bits and bobs to keep us healthy, happy, and living our best lives. So we're peeling back the veil and giving you a peek inside Kourt's organized essentials.

Kourt's medicine cabinet is filled with everything from immune-boosting remedies like zinc, echinacea, and silver hydrosol to basics like Band-Aids and cough drops. She uses chewable papaya enzymes for digestion and Lypo-Spheric vitamin C, which is vitamin C bound in a layer of fat to enhance absorption and get to your cells faster. She keeps a steam inhaler on hand for any congestion, along with a neti pot to flush out colds and essential oils for her diffuser, which she uses every night.

In addition to her wellness must-haves, Kourt always keeps peppermints on hand, because her dad used to give them to her, Kim, Khloé, and Rob when they were sick. It's a simple and sweet tradition that Kourt has passed down to her own kids.

Shop Kourt's medicine cabinet below

Appendix 2.2 - Complete text of article on What's in Kourt's medicine cabinet by Poosh.

DECOR

HOW TO RECREATE KENDALL'S Living Room for Under \$100

BY POOSH

Kendall recently invited Architectural Digest into her home, sharing a peek inside her impeccable interior taste—which certainly rivals Kourt's mid-century aesthetic. As Kendall told the publication, her sisters and mom taught her that “a house is always a work in progress.” From artwork to accent pillows and trinkets, it's the small details that really make a space feel like a home. Today we're taking notes from K J's living room and sharing 10 affordable ways to achieve her Spanish-meets-farmhouse vibe.

Think mixed textures—like a shaggy rug and lightweight linens—and earthy tones combined with deep wood details. The below home decor items resemble the cozy yet peaceful environment Kendall has created in her living room. Whether you add one or all to your home, each is sure to give a luxurious touch without the steep price tag. Shop our under-\$100 picks inspired by Kendall's living room below.

Safavieh California Solid Plush Shag Area Rug (\$83)

This shaggy rug comes in seven different colors, but we personally prefer the simple beige hue to set a non-distracting canvas for your space.

Threshold Halifax Farmhouse Wood Stool (\$60)

It's never a bad idea to have extra seating options for your guests.

Algreen Athena Planter (\$69)

A little greenery to add a nice balance and great energy.

Keith Haring (Rizzoli Classics) (\$40)

Decorate your coffee table with cool and bright books for a subtle pop of color.

West Elm Upholstered Fabric Pillow Cover – Eco Weave (\$48)

Mix and match pillows in different fabrics for an interesting decor detail.

Burke Decor Structure Black Marble Wall Clock (\$70)

We love the minimal yet luxe look of this clock.

Made By Design Light Filtering Window Curtain Panels (\$20)

Natural light makes all the difference in your living room space.

Burke Decor Lidded Celler in Pink Marble (\$45)

A beautiful container to store small miscellaneous items like matches.

West Elm Tufted Lines Throw (\$48)

Cuddle up in this hand-woven throw blanket.

Threshold designed with Studio McGee Copperton Wood x Base Accent Table (\$99)

We can picture Kendall lounging on the couch with her favorite apple tea on this side table.

Appendix 2.3 - Complete text of article on How to recreate Kendall's living room for under \$100 by Poosh.

RECIPES

Kourt's New OATMEAL RECIPE

BY POOSH

Homemade oatmeal is a morning staple year-round, but with fall right around the corner it's especially comforting as temperatures start to drop. To update your go-to oats bowl we wanted to share Kourt's latest recipe. She likes to add a bit of vegan butter to make it perfectly creamy and just a little salty. Plus, she tops it with a selection of fresh fruit. And you can't forget the final step: sprinkled cinnamon.

Oatmeal is a classic breakfast dish for good reason: it's filling, full of fiber, and fuels your body with healthy nutrients for the day. Read on to learn the step-by-step instructions for Kourt's newest oatmeal recipe below.

Kourt's New Oatmeal Recipe

RECIPE TYPE : Breakfast

DIETARY INFO : Vegan/Gluten-Free/Dairy-Free

SERVING SIZE : 1

PREP TIME : 5 mins **COOK TIME :** 20 mins **TOTAL TIME :** 25 mins

INGREDIENTS :

2 1/2 – 3 cups water or plant-based milk

1 cup of your preferred gluten-free oats

1/2 tablespoon vegan butter

Cinnamon

Dates

Sliced almonds

Blueberries

Bananas

INSTRUCTIONS :

1. Bring plant-based milk or water (your choice depending on

how rich you want your oatmeal) to a boil. Pour in oats and let

cook for 15 minutes (stirring occasionally).

2. Add in vegan butter (the more you add the creamier it'll

be). Stir for the last five minutes.

3. Pour cooked oatmeal into a bowl and let cool.

4. Top with sliced bananas, almonds, blueberries, and dates.

Sprinkle with cinnamon.

5. Enjoy!

Show us how you recreate (or modify) this delicious recipe and use hashtag **#pooshpalate** for a chance to be featured on our social.

Appendix 2.4 - Complete text of article on Kourt's new oatmeal recipe by Poosh.

RECIPES

Kourt's New GO-TO SALAD

BY POOSH

Recently Kourt has been swapping her signature salad with today's plate full of greens. If you follow anyone on the Poosh team, then you've probably seen us post about our weekly edit meeting salads. As requested by our readers, we're sharing the ingredients for the healthy lunch option that Kourt eats each week.

Learn the fresh recipe below.

Poosh Edit Meeting Salad

RECIPE TYPE : Lunch or Dinner

DIETARY INFO : Dairy-free, Gluten-free

SERVING SIZE : 1 salad

PRE TIME: 5 mins. COOK TIME: 8 mins. TOTAL TIME: 13 mins.

INGREDIENTS:	INSTRUCTIONS:
<p>Dressing</p> <p>1/4 cup of fresh-squeezed organic lemon juice (approximately 2-3 lemons)</p> <p>1 teaspoon regular organic mustard</p> <p>2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil</p> <p>1 teaspoon white wine vinegar or rice vinegar</p> <p>Salt and pepper (to taste)</p> <p>Salad</p> <p>1 cup fresh organic romaine lettuce</p> <p>2 fresh organic carrots, shredded</p> <p>2 organic Persian cucumbers or 1 organic fresh cucumber, sliced</p> <p>1 large ripe avocado</p> <p>1/2 cup organic chicken breast, seasoned with salt, lemon pepper, and the juice of half an orange</p> <p>Optional: add sunflowers seeds, fresh cherry tomatoes, shredded almonds, or other toppings</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Grill the seasoned chicken.2) Add greens, carrots, cucumbers, and grilled chicken to plate.3) Mix dressing ingredients and serve on the side.4) Slice avocado to top the salad.5) Serve and enjoy.

Appendix 2.5 - Complete text of article on Kourt's new go-to salad by Poosh.

RECIPES

What Kourt's famous for ZOODLES RECIPE

BY POOSH

Kourt's giving her signature salad(s) a break this fall and swapping in today's healthy lunch option. The crunchy zoodle creation is colorful and full of fresh flavors. Plus, it's super easy to make. She typically eats it two or three times a week and never gets sick of it. Learn the step-by-step instructions on how to recreate her latest lunch recipe below.

Kourt's Zoodle Lunch Recipe

RECIPE TYPE: *Lunch*

DIETARY INFO: *Keto-Friendly, Nut-Free, Dairy-Free, Gluten-Free*

SERVING SIZE: 1

PREP TIME: 5 minutes COOK TIME: 10 minutes TOTAL TIME: 15 minutes

INGREDIENTS:

1 slice turkey bacon, roasted and chopped
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 clove garlic, chopped
1 zucchini, spiralized into noodles
1 cup broccoli, shredded
1 carrot, sliced
1 avocado, chopped
1 tablespoon chopped basil
Pinch of garlic salt

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Cook the turkey bacon.
2. In a heated pan, add the olive oil and garlic.
3. Add the zucchini and sauté for about five minutes. Then add the broccoli and cook for another two minutes and turn off the pan.
4. Add the rest of the ingredients, mix, and serve.

Appendix 2.6 - Complete text of article on What Kourt's famous for zoodles recipe by Poosh.

KOURTNEY
What Kourt Eats in a
Day: THE VEGAN
EDITION
BY POOSH

As you've probably noticed from Kourt's Instagram, she's gone (mostly, like 95%) vegan when it comes to her diet. From keto to intermittent fasting, she's no stranger to adjusting her meals to live a healthier lifestyle. She's been easing into it for the past six to seven months with no meat (and the occasional butter and honey).

Since she's leaning into a plant-based diet (which she's also passionate about given the environmental impacts that eating less meat has on the planet), we wanted to share a peek inside her daily plate.

If you're thinking about becoming vegan, you can make the shift in small waves if that's easier for you. Start by replacing meat with plant-based options once a week and increase from there. Kourt admits when she first started, she couldn't resist and had a baked crab handroll while at dinner during the first few weeks. It's all about balance and finding how and when you're comfortable with incorporating the changes into your lifestyle.

From breakfast and lunch at home to eating out at one of her staple restaurants, here's what Kourt typically eats in a day, the ~vegan~ edition.

Morning options:

- Either her signature avocado shake or banana smoothie. *She subs vegan protein powders.
- Her famous gluten-free and vegan cinnamon toast.
- Blueberry bagel (this one is from Yeastie Boys in L.A.) smothered with peanut butter and jelly.
- Acai bowl (either one at home similar to this recipe or an option from one of her local spots).
- On treat days: Vegan chicken and waffles from Crossroads (the recipe is in their cookbook).

Midday snacks:

- Pickles and tangerines (IYKYK)
- Mindright bars (the peanut butter flavor is her favorite)

*Here's our full vegan snack list.

Lunch options:

- Zoodles (minus the turkey bacon)
- Sourdough bread with vegan butter and topped with pickles. Plus, a side of tangerines.

Dinner options:

- Plant-based tacos
- Vegan sushi night at Nobu. She likes to order crispy rice with avocado, edamame, and an avocado roll. Here's how you can create an intimate sushi night at home.

Up next, discover the latest from the Poosh Shop [here](#).

Appendix 2.7 - Complete text of article on What Kourt eats in a day: the vegan edition by Poosh.

KOURTNEY
**KOURT'S FAVORITE
 VEGAN Meals and
 Snacks**
 BY POOSH

Whether you're looking to slowly transition to a vegan lifestyle or are already on the V bandwagon and need some new recipe ideas, you're in the right place. Since Kourt has adjusted her diet to be vegan-friendly, she's crafted a handful of tasty meals and snacks to add to her daily rotation. From her famous quesadillas (that are perfect for a late-night grub session) to her drooly-worthy cinnamon toast (which is a breakfast staple in her household), read on to learn what else is on Kourt's vegan menu.

P.S.: if you need more convincing on why you should go vegan, read this piece on how it can help save the planet and this Poosh article on the plant-based pros for your pu\$\$y. Take a read at your leisure, and in the meantime, bookmark the below delicious and filling vegan meals and snacks Kourt loves.

Breakfast

Kourt's Gluten-Free and Vegan Cinnamon Toast Recipe

RECIPE TYPE: *Breakfast/Snack/Dessert*

DIETARY INFO: *Gluten-Free/Vegan*

SERVING SIZE: *4 slices*

PREP TIME: *5 mins* TOTAL TIME: *10 mins*

INGREDIENTS:	INSTRUCTIONS:
4 slices of gluten-free bread (or your choice of bread) 1/4 cup salted vegan butter, softened 1/4 cup sugar 1 teaspoon organic ground cinnamon Dash of salt	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Preheat oven to 350° F.2. Add softened butter, sugar, salt, and cinnamon to a bowl and mix together.3. Generously coat the mixture on both sides of the bread (cover the edges too).4. Place on a baking sheet and bake for 10 mins.5. During the last few minutes, turn the broiler on and broil the toast to a yummy golden brown. Let the sugar bubble (your house is going to smell like Christmas).6. Slice and enjoy!

More breakfast favorites:

- Either her signature avocado shake or banana smoothie. *She subs vegan protein powders.
- Blueberry bagel smothered with peanut butter and jelly.
- Acai bowl (either one at home similar to this recipe or an option from one of her local spots).
- On treat days: Vegan chicken and waffles from Crossroads (the recipe is in their cookbook).

Lunch

Kourt's Zoodle Lunch Recipe

RECIPE TYPE: *Lunch*

DIETARYINFO: *Vegan, Keto-Friendly, Nut-Free, Dairy-Free, Gluten-Free*

SERVINGSIZE: **1**

PREPTIME: **5 mins** COOKTIME: **10 mins** TOTALTIME: **15 mins**

INGREDIENTS:

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 clove garlic, chopped
1 zucchini, spiralized into noodles
1 cup broccoli, shredded
1 carrot, sliced
1 avocado, chopped
1 tablespoon chopped basil
Pinch of garlic salt

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. In a heated pan, add the olive oil and garlic.
2. Add the zucchini and sauté for about five minutes. Then add the broccoli and cook for another two minutes and turn off the pan.
3. Add the rest of the ingredients, mix, and serve.

Kourt's Homemade Minestrone Soup Recipe

RECIPETYPE: *Lunch/Dinner*

DIETARYINFO: *Vegan, Gluten-Free*

SERVINGSIZE: **1 bowl**

PREPTIME: **15 mins** COOKTIME: **45 mins** TOTALTIME: **1 hour**

INGREDIENTS:

1/4 cup chopped red onion
1 cup chopped carrot
1/4 cup chopped celery
1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil
1 chopped tomato
1/4 cup gluten-free (or your choice of) pasta
or beans
Salt and black pepper to taste
Basil

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Sauté all the ingredients together.
2. Add water to cut the recipe to desired consistency.
*optional
3. Top with fresh basil.
4. Serve and enjoy!

Dinner

Kourt's Quesadilla Recipe

RECIPETYPE: *Snack/Lunch/Dinner*

DIETARYINFO: *Paleo-Friendly, Can Be Vegan and Gluten-Free*

SERVINGSIZE: **1**

PREPTIME: **2 mins** COOKTIME: **5-10 mins** TOTALTIME: **15 mins**

INGREDIENTS:	INSTRUCTIONS:
<p>Follow Your Heart Vegan Cheese (to your liking depending on how cheesy you want it)</p> <p>Sweet potato tortillas from Potpas or Almond flour tortillas from Siete</p> <p>Butter alternative (like this soy-free one from Earth Balance)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Butter both sides of the tortilla and place in a pan on the stove. 2. Add vegan cheese, fold the tortilla, and then add more butter alternative to each side, continuously flipping until your desired crisp level. 3. Use a pizza slicer to cut and enjoy.

More dinner options:

- Plant-based tacos
- Vegan sushi night at Nobu. She likes to order crispy rice with avocado, edamame, and an avocado roll. Here's how you can create an intimate sushi night at home.

Snacks and sweets:

- Pickles and tangerines (IYKYK)
- Sourdough bread with vegan butter and topped with pickles. Plus, a side of tangerines.
- Mindright bars (the peanut butter flavor is her favorite)
- Dried chile spiced mango
- Kourt got our whole team hooked on these addicting puffs. Beware though, once you open them, it's hard not to finish the entire bag.

Show us how you recreate (or modify) this delicious recipe and use hashtag #pooshpalate for a chance to be featured on our social.

Appendix 2.8 - Complete text of article on Kourt's favourite vegan meals and snacks by Poosh.

RECIPES

Kourt's New Green SMOOTHIE RECIPE

BY POOSH

By now, you know Kourt drinks her avocado (or banana—which she recently started mixing into her rotation) shake every morning after her workout. It's been her post-exercise tradition for years to hold her appetite over until lunch. Lately, she's slightly updated the original recipe to include chocolate protein powder instead of vanilla and a few shakes of cinnamon, in addition to other small tweaks. Find out all the ingredients you need to make Kourt's new green smoothie below.

Kourt's New (Chocolate) Green Smoothie Recipe

RECIPE TYPE: *Breakfast*

DIETARY INFO: *Gluten-Free, Dairy-Free, Can Be Vegetarian*

SERVING SIZE: *1*

PREP TIME: *2 mins* TOTAL TIME: *5 mins*

INGREDIENTS:	INSTRUCTIONS:
1 banana 1 cup fresh almond milk 1 big handful spinach 2 dates 1 big cup of ice 1 heaping scoop chocolate protein powder (Kourt uses a bone broth one) 1 tablespoon MCT oil 1 packet E3live 1 tablespoon almond butter 1 teaspoon bee pollen 5 shakes cinnamon 2 shakes cardamom	Combine all ingredients in a blender. Blend until smooth.

Appendix 2.9 - Complete text of article on Kourt's new green smoothie recipe by Poosh.

RECIPES

Kourt's MATCHA LATTE Recipe

BY POOSH

Aside from a source of caffeine (sans the jitters), green tea has powerful mind, body, and beauty benefits like fighting inflammation and protecting your body against aging (thanks to vitamins B and E, it boosts collagen production), and it has been shown to boost your metabolism so you burn fat as energy quicker. Need more convincing to add the green powder into your daily routine? Below we're sharing exactly how Kourt makes her matcha tea latte at home.

Though there's not much that goes into making matcha tea, Kourt has truly perfected how she takes her latte. It's a staple at our Poosh editorial meetings. Our editor, Michelle Scanga, is borderline obsessed with the recipe. "The first time I had it, I immediately asked for the recipe and exact matcha and syrup Kourt uses. The almond milk and organic maple syrup make it slightly sweet (not too sweet though), and we serve them in these mugs—it's such a treat, and now I'm hooked on whipping one up every morning."

Kourt's Matcha Latte

RECIPE TYPE: *Beverage*

SERVING SIZE: *2*

PREP TIME: *5 min.* TOTAL TIME: *5 min.*

INGREDIENTS:

1/2 teaspoon matcha
2 cups of almond milk
1/4 cup organic maple syrup *lately Kourt cuts this in half

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Boil milk.
2. Melt the matcha with a little boiling water.
3. Add the matcha and the syrup in the milk and beat very well.
4. Serve in Kourt's favorite double-wall mug.

Matcha Purity Powder

PRICE: \$28
MATCHABLOOM

Be sure to share your photos on Instagram using the hashtag #pooshpalate for a chance to be re-grammed on our social.

Up next, shop the newest items from the Poosh Shop [here](#).

Appendix 2.10 - Complete text of article on Kourt's matcha latte recipe by Poosh.

RECIPES

Kourt's Iced CHAGACCINO RECIPE

BY POOSH

What's a chagaccino? If you frequent boutique coffee shops (Postmates orders count), you've probably heard of the blend. So what exactly is chaga, and why are wellness devotees (Kourt included) so into it? Let's break it down.

What is chaga?

Chaga is a type of mushroom that grows on the bark of birch trees and has been used in traditional medicine in Northern Europe for centuries. Over the years, the adaptogenic powder gained hype in the wellness world thanks to its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. It's also commonly known to increase mental focus, reduce fatigue while balancing energy, and improve immune function since it's a natural antimicrobial. Chaga

can be used as a natural caffeine alternative (without all the jittery side effects) to replace your daily brew. That said, some people do like to add chaga powder to their latte or morning cup of joe (aka mushroom coffee) to amplify the mood-boosting benefits.

Now that you know the mind and body health perks of chaga, find out how Kourt takes her chagaccino. Learn the simple recipe below.

Iced Chagaccino Recipe

RECIPE TYPE: *Beverage*

DIETARY INFO: *Gluten-Free, Vegan, Keto*

SERVING SIZE: *1*

PREP TIME: *5 mins* TOTAL TIME: *5 mins*

INGREDIENTS:	INSTRUCTIONS:
1 teaspoon chaga powder 1 teaspoon cacao powder Dash of cinnamon 1 teaspoon monk fruit sweetener or 2 drops of stevia Cup of homemade macadamia nut milk	1) Combine all dry ingredients together plus the sweetener, then mix into macadamia milk. 2) Serve over ice. *If you drink coffee, you can also add 1-2 shots of espresso (but Kourt drinks it without coffee).

Or shop the pre-made powder:

Chagaccino RTD Powder

PRICE: \$29.99

RENUDE

The content provided in this article is provided for information purposes only and is not a substitute for professional advice and consultations, including professional medical advice and consultation; it is provided with understanding that Poosh, LLC ('Poosh') is not engaged in the provision or rendering of medical advice or services. You understand and agree that Poosh shall not be liable for any claim, loss, or damage arising out of the use of, or reliance upon any content or information in the article.

Up next, shop more from the Poosh Shop [here](#).

Appendix 2.11 - Complete text of article on Kourt's iced chagaccino recipe by Poosh.

KOURTNEY

KOURT'S CURRENT Supplement Lineup

BY POOSH

While supplements are a great part of a daily wellness ritual, not every supplement out there is necessary for every person, every day, and certainly not all brands are created equal. In fact, some supplement brands' quality can be so poor that they are actually detrimental to take. Other times, they may be unaligned with our own personal health needs and goals, which can actually create an imbalance.

The right idea is to first assess how we're feeling. Tired? Stressed? Depleted? Coming down with something? Maybe we are keyed up, or working a ton and not getting enough sunshine. Maybe we are vegan, or on a special diet that restricts some nutrients.

If you're unsure, ask a doctor! A blood panel can help determine what vitamins may be deficient, and a naturopathic doctor can help assess what compounds are missing from your diet or being depleted from lifestyle choices, etc.

It's also crucial not to blindly purchase supplements. Research not only the effects and benefits of each supplement before purchasing, but also sourcing, other filler ingredients, and overall brand integrity. Kourt's current supplement lineup is aligned with her diet and lifestyle, but that's always changing and evolving. These are just some quality, trusted brands that are totally Poosh-approved.

Drenatrophin PMG

As weird as it may sound, this daily supplement is made from bovine adrenal glands to support adrenal gland health and function. And, if you're wondering what the hell PMG stands for, it's protomorphogens ... aka extracts of nucleic acids from the nucleus of the cell. Its special blend of minerals, nucleotides, and peptides helps to mitigate our bodies' natural stress response to daily things we shouldn't have to compromise our health over. It's an excellent addition when balancing the nervous system is of utmost importance.

Immunotix 500

Flu season calls for a dose of beta-glucans. This top-notch source delivers 500mg of whole glucan particles in its patented, bioavailable formula that is non-GMO, natural, and hypoallergenic. It works by activating the immune system's front-runner cells for a super quick first-line immune response.

Zinc Citrate

Zinc is absolutely essential for healthy, clear skin, hair, and nails, as well as maintaining a strong immune response. It's crucial for bone density and strength, and even helps maintain normal vision and eye health. While it does need to be bound to citric acid to make it stable (i.e. the kind of research we are talking about when we say "do your research"), zinc citrate is a powerful and bioavailable form of this vital nutrient. Look for copper-free if a copper sensitivity is something you may be worried about (again, checking with your doctor).

MegaSporeBiotic

This revolutionary all-spore probiotic is pharmaceutical grade, soy-free, allergen-free, GMO-free, dairy-free, gluten-free, vegan, and kosher. Say that five times fast. It's the only

product to include *Bacillus indicus*, which is an incredible spore that produces its own carotenoids (lycopene, astaxanthin, zeaxanthin, beta-carotene, and lutein) in the GI tract at the site of their absorption for major antioxidant effect. This probiotic touts 100% survivability in the GI tract and does not need to be refrigerated. Go off.

Tru Niagen

Think total cellular health. This supplement helps increase NAD+, which is essentially our cellular energy source. This can help to boost metabolism, feed the mitochondria for quicker and more efficient detox, defend against metabolic stress (even overeating, yikes), and boost cellular repair from oxidation and stress as well. Basically, it undoes the impact of modern life on a cellular level. It's the ultimate anti-aging supplement.

Reishi Supreme

It's no secret reishi mushroom is a powerful adaptogen that is useful in anyone's herbal supplement lineup. This is the only one we'll say that it won't hurt to try—and that goes for everyone. Known as the longevity herb, or herb of immortality in Traditional Chinese Medicine, reishi has the power to stimulate the immune system, support the liver and kidneys, support sustainable energy, and help our bodies' response to stress.

Thorne Amino Complex

These essential amino acids are the baseline for building muscles and new tissue. They are a great addition to collagen powder for an active workout routine to help restore, build, maintain, and heal muscles that get worked on the regular. They help to enhance cellular energy production so that you can keep up the stamina instead of constantly plateauing. They are for reaching major #goals.

Magnesium

Unfortunately, most of the Western world is deficient in magnesium. This can result in trouble sleeping, heightened stress and anxiety in the body, muscle cramps and soreness, being prone to depression, and a slew of other conditions: migraine headache, metabolic syndrome, diabetes, hyperlipidemia, asthma, premenstrual syndrome, preeclampsia, and various cardiac arrhythmias. It's safe to say it's a pretty important mineral to keep in the lineup, and Kourt takes that seriously.

Vitamin D3/K2

Ideal for both cardiovascular health as well as bone health, this combo is more potent and easily absorbed by the body when taken together. Vitamin D3 is fat-soluble, so only take it with or after consuming a fat-containing meal. It helps to preserve healthy levels of calcium in the blood, making it vital for optimal dental health as well. We cannot absorb adequate calcium without vitamin D3, while K2, also vital for normal bone and cardiovascular cell formation, ensures that the calcium transported by D is actually absorbed into your bones.

Dragon Herbs 8 Immortals

This herbal supplement is the tincture to end all tinctures. It's got cordyceps fruiting body, wild reishi fruiting body, goji berries, prepared he shou wu root, schisandra fruit, snow lotus flower, Tibetan rhodiola root, and wild American ginseng root to support energy, stamina, mood, stress, focus, beauty, immunity, and more. For those who don't want a million tinctures in their cabinet, this one is king.

Shop our daily supplements collection:

The content provided in this article is provided for information purposes only and is not a substitute for professional advice and consultations, including professional medical advice and consultation; it is provided with understanding that Poosh, LLC ('Poosh') is not engaged in the provision or rendering of medical advice or services. You understand and agree that Poosh shall not be liable for any claim, loss, or damage arising out of the use of, or reliance upon any content or information in the article.

Up next, be the first to know our weekly content and sign up for our Poosh newsletter.

Appendix 2.12 - Complete text of article on Kourt's current supplement lineup by Poosh.

KOURTNEY

A Peek at KOURT'S THANKSGIVING MENU

BY POOSH

Curious about what Kourt will be serving this Thanksgiving? We thought you might be. That's why we're giving you a peek inside her Thanksgiving menu with three recipes from the Kardashian/Jenner family.

On the Thanksgiving menu is Kris' famous green bean casserole, candied sweet potatoes, and a special sweet potato soufflé. Read on for the step-by-step directions, and watch Kourt and Sam make two of the recipes in our Poosh Palate video below.

Kris' Green Bean Casserole

RECIPE TYPE: *Side Dish*

DIETARY INFO: *Organic, Vegetarian*

SERVING SIZE: *8-10 people*

PREP TIME: *5 mins* COOK TIME: *30 mins* TOTAL TIME: *35 mins*

INGREDIENTS:	INSTRUCTIONS:
6 cans organic French cut green beans 6 cans organic cream of mushroom soup (or	1. Preheat the oven to 350° F. 2. Open and drain water from organic French cut green

make this vegan-friendly version)
4 cans organic fried onions

beans.
3. Place green beans in an oven-safe casserole dish.
4. Whisk cans of organic cream of mushroom soup in a bowl then layer over green beans.
5. Top with organic fried onions.
6. Place in the oven and bake for about 30 minutes or until hot and golden brown.
7. Enjoy!

Candied Sweet Potatoes

RECIPE TYPE: *Side Dish*

DIETARY INFO: *Organic, Vegan*

SERVING SIZE: *12*

PREP TIME: *5 mins* COOK TIME: *35 mins* TOTAL TIME: *40 mins*

INGREDIENTS:

4 pounds organic sweet potatoes, quartered and peeled
1 1/4 cups vegan butter
1 1/4 cups organic brown sugar
3 cups vegan marshmallows, divided
Organic ground cinnamon to taste
Organic ground nutmeg to taste

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat the oven to 400° F.
2. In a large saucepan over medium heat, combine vegan butter, brown sugar, 2 cups of vegan marshmallows, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Stir occasionally, until marshmallows are melted.
3. Add and stir organic sweet potatoes into marshmallow sauce.
4. Transfer everything to an oven-safe casserole dish and bake for 15 minutes.
5. Remove from the oven and top with remaining marshmallows. Place back in the oven until the top is golden brown.
6. Enjoy!

Sweet Potato Soufflé

RECIPE TYPE: *Side Dish*

DIETARY INFO: *Organic, Vegetarian, Can Be Vegan*

PREP TIME: *20-30 mins* COOK TIME: *1 hour* TOTAL TIME: *1 hour 30mins*

INGREDIENTS:	INSTRUCTIONS:
<p>6 large organic sweet potatoes 2 sticks vegan butter, melted 1/2 box organic brown sugar 2 cups organic sugar 6 organic eggs, beaten (or if you'd like to make it vegan, sub chickpea flour: mix 3 tablespoons chickpea flour with 3 tablespoons water for each egg that is required) 1 can sweetened organic condensed milk (or if you'd like to make it vegan, use organic coconut condensed milk) 1 teaspoon organic vanilla extract 1 teaspoon organic cinnamon 1 teaspoon organic nutmeg</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Preheat the oven to 375° F.2. Cut potatoes into four pieces.3. Boil potatoes for 20 minutes (or until soft).4. Peel and mash until very fine.5. Add two sticks of melted vegan butter.6. Add all other ingredients (except for eggs/chickpea flour, depending on which you decide to use).7. Add eggs or chickpea flour, beaten fine, once all other ingredients have been added.8. Put ingredients into a soufflé dish.9. Bake for 1 hour.10. Enjoy!

Shop our nutrition collection:

Show us how you recreate (or modify) this delicious recipe and use hashtag #pooshpalate for a chance to be featured on our social.

Appendix 2.13 - Complete text of article on A peek at Kourt's thanksgiving menu by Poosh.

KOURTNEY

How Kourt Stays Healthy WHEN EATING OUT

BY POOSH

During our meet and greet with Kourt, the Poosh team, and Poosh Your Wellness ticketholders, attendees had the chance to submit and ask Kourt wellness-related questions. The lovely Christian hopped on and wanted to know how Kourt stays on track while eating clean. Kourt shared her tips for when she would do keto to kickstart her

summer body or intermittent fasting when she's getting ready for an event. If you haven't already read her tricks, here's a recap.

The team also shared different healthy snacks that she's gotten us hooked on, including her signature avocado shake. Pooshie Sam Hyatt chimed in by reminding him of the importance of eating quality food and trying to eat carbs and heavier meals earlier in the day rather than ending the day with a massive dinner.

Kourt wrapped up her answer by giving Christian one last token of healthy eating advice: "When I go to a restaurant, and if I'm really trying to be good, the hardest part is ordering the food. Once it comes, you're going to be happy with it. Even if you order vegetable soup, it's still going to taste good once it comes. Obviously, you'd rather order the french fries and a burger, but it's just about making the wise order, and once it arrives, you're going to be fine," Kourt explained.

This slice of advice was too good not to share. If you're out to eat, do your best to use self-control and order a healthy option off the menu. You'll feel so much better post-dinner, and you'll most likely save money by avoiding over-ordering. How do you stay on track when dining at restaurants? Let us know your hacks in the comments on Instagram.

Shop Our May Drop:

Up next, shop the newest items from the Poosh Shop [here](#).

Appendix 2.14 - Complete text of article on How Kourt stays healthy when eating out by Poosh.

HEALTH

CHEAT DAYS Are Necessary—Here's HOW WE DO IT

BY POOSH

A healthy lifestyle requires balance—allowing yourself to hit the snooze button when you really need it, skipping the gym for quality time with friends, and of course cheat days. Yes, indulging every once in a while is self-care. Whether you follow a strict diet or not, we all deserve days off. No guilt and no boundaries.

With the long holiday weekend around the corner, we wanted to remind you it's OK (and necessary) to spoil your cravings. Do your body and mind a favor this weekend and embrace all your naughty eating habits. All in moderation, right? Below, team Poosh is sharing how we splurge on our cheat days.

"I cheat twice a day with a little something sweet after lunch and dinner. But when I did the keto diet, I was very strict six days a week and my cheat day was on Sundays. I'd go to the farmers market before church and get a matcha latte and chocolate croissant from Alfred's, and then after church, I'd head to Soho House for their buffet (all-you-can-eat waffles with butter and syrup). On my recent trip to Turks, we had a handful of junky foods, like Double Stuf Oreos and Cheetos for all of us to snack on." – Kourt

"Every day is a cheat day for me. What's the point of living if you can't eat what you want? Some things I like to eat that are bad for you in no particular order: Reese's Peanut Butter Sticks, Milk Bar cookie pops, cupcakes (no chocolate, just vanilla), and edible cookie dough." – Sarah Howard

"I go big when I've set my mind on a cheat day. I usually start the morning with breakfast in bed (a la Postmates) and order my favorite bagel from Bagel Broker. For lunch, I'll head to Sunset Tower and devour a Tower burger and their iconic tequila smash (or two) while I soak up some vitamin D. To really round out my day of indulging, I'll pick up pizza and pasta from Jon & Vinny's and enjoy the deliciousness on the couch while I catch up on my shows." – Michelle Scanga

"I try to live a balanced life and practice everything in moderation. While I'm disciplined with my diet 80% of the time, I allow myself to indulge and let loose the other 20%. Usually my splurges include either a good red wine (I usually try to stick to tequila and lime as there is less sugar), a decadent dessert, sneaking a few french fries from one of the kids, or all of the above. I'd rather let myself cheat a little bit whenever I want to than deprive myself and then go crazy. I'm approaching 40, and my body just doesn't bounce back from those over-indulgent days/nights like it used to." – Sam Hyatt

Appendix 2.15 - Complete text of article on Cheat days are necessary – Here's how we do it by Poosh.

FITNESS

Kourt's JUMP ROPE ROUTINE

BY POOSH

True story, Kourt is a jump rope beast. During a recent Poosh meeting, we asked her for her exact routine, and as she was telling us, the team was truly impressed at her roping stamina. Mainly because the rest of us are just now picking up on the old-school activity (well, reintroducing it into our fitness rotation) and needless to say are a little rusty. Kourt, on the other hand, is a pro and is helping us set our jump rope goals so we can (hopefully ... yes, mild wishful thinking here) get on her level. Turn on our at-home workout playlist and learn Kourt's jump rope drill below.

This is a great activity the Poosh team has gotten into during quarantine. You can do it in the driveway or in the backyard.

The Routine:

4 sets of 5 minutes jumping rope (for Kourt this equals around 500 jumps)

Between each set, alternate:

- 25 push-ups (you can do these on your knees if you need to)
- 25 dips
- 100 crunches

Poosh Edit: Best of Fitness Gear

Up next, be the first to know our weekly content and sign up for our Poosh newsletter.

Appendix 2.16 - Complete text of article on Kourt's jump rope routine by Poosh.

FITNESS

KOURT'S #1 AT HOME WORKOUT to Tone Lower Abs

BY POOSH

If you watched Kourt's recent video with Khloé where they discussed all things fitness, then you heard Kourt share this nugget of great workout advice. She explained that one of the best at-home exercises to tone your lower abs is the old-school trick of lying down on the floor, having someone stand behind you, and holding the other person's ankles while they push your legs down. You know which one we're talking about—it's a classic for good reason. Repeat this as many times as your core can take it.

Since we're still in quarantine and social distancing, you can rework this move without another person. Instead of using a partner, you can hold onto the side of your bed or a heavy chair and perform the leg lifts. You can even wear ankle weights to up the intensity.

Watch Kourt and Khloé's fitness conversation below, and shop essentials to update your at-home workout gear.

Up next, be the first to know our weekly content and sign up for our Poosh newsletter.

Appendix 2.17 - Complete text of article on Kourt's #1 at home workout to tone lower abs by Poosh.

FITNESS

Kourt's HIIT WORKOUT

BY AMANDA LEE

Ready to learn Kourt's high-intensity interval training (HIIT) workout? Below, our in-house Poosh trainer, Amanda Lee, is breaking down the HIIT routine she does with Kourt. If cardio's your thing, this is the workout for you. Intensify your next fitness session with these four moves, and shop Kourt's leggings and sports bra at the end.

The Routine:

Jump Squat into Jumping Lunges
Mountain Climber with Push-up
Burpee + 180 Squat Jump
Jumping Jack into Jumping Jack Plank
*Repeat entire circuit three times.

The Move: Jump Squat into Jumping Lunges

How to: Start with jump squats. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Do a regular squat, then jump up explosively. When you land, lower your body back into a squat position. After three reps, immediately begin to perform three jumping lunges. Start with your feet staggered, your left foot slightly in front of your right. Push off the bottom of both feet into a jump, switching the position of your feet in midair, landing in a basic lunge with your right leg in front. Repeat this movement without rest, alternating which leg is in front. Then go back to the three jump squats.

Repeat for 30 seconds.

The Move: Mountain Climber with Push-up

How to: Start in a push-up position with your arms straight and your body in a straight line. Raise your right knee toward your chest, then switch legs, raising your left knee toward your chest. Continue for four reps and then bend your arms while lowering yourself down to perform a push-up.

Repeat for 30 seconds.

The Move: Burpee + 180 Squat Jump

How to: Squat down and put your hands on the floor in front of you. Jump both feet back so that you're now in plank position. Then jump your feet back in toward your hands. When you are back to standing, explosively jump into the air, reaching your arms straight overhead. From there, land into a squat position and perform a 180-degree turn jump squat. Perform another burpee facing the opposite direction.

Repeat for 30 seconds.

The Move: Jumping Jack into Jumping Jack Plank

How to: Start with 10 jumping jacks, then drop down into a plank position. Like the motion of a jumping jack, jump your legs wide and then back together. Repeat for 10 reps. Stand up and continue with 10 jumping jacks.

Repeat for 30 seconds.

Shop Kourt's photo:

Be sure to share your fitness photos on Instagram using the hashtag #pooshtthemoves for a chance to be regrammed on our social.

Appendix 2.18 - Complete text of article on Kourt's HIIT workout by Amanda Lee.

KOURTNEY

How Kourt is Managing HER NEW SHORT HAIR

BY POOSH

With a new chop comes a new haircare regimen. Since Kourt recently revealed her short cut, we wanted to share how she's updated her ~mane~ maintenance. We're revealing what's changed in her daily routine, the vibe behind her new hairstyle, and how it's so much easier to maintain during her workouts.

Read on to see what Kourt's learned since having short hair (again). Fun fact: the last time she had short hair was in high school (and it wasn't quite this short).

Way less maintenance.

After you wash it, it doesn't require any styling. Kourt barely even brushes her hair anymore. Since it's so much shorter, she's noticed that she's touching her hair more, which can make it look and feel greasy. She shared that she typically washes and conditions her locks daily now using this clean and good-for-you haircare set.

Fragrance Free Essential Bundle

PRICE: \$50
SEENHAIRCARE

And with exercising, she mentioned just the other day that she forgot a hairband and then realized she didn't even need one. She could continue her workout with her hair down, and it remained out of her way.

Instantly cooler.

She's obsessed with the chop, and said she'll put on an outfit and instantly feel cooler with the new hairstyle. Kourt also reminded us that the last time she had short hair was in high school and that she definitely feels the nostalgic '90s vibe with the chop.

It's still super functional.

When or if she does want to pull it back, she currently has two styles she's rotating. She'll either pull it three-fourths up (a sort of half up/half down situation), with a few strands placed around her neck and face. Or she'll do a low pony and strategically leave two front sections out to frame her face (again, a very '90s aesthetic). We love.

She also mentioned that this throwback hairband has been a game-changer. She recently purchased it at the mall after getting her ears double pierced. Now that she owns the zig-zag band again, she said she'll use it when she's working out if her hair ever gets in her face.

Shop our haircare collection:

Up next, be the first to know our weekly content and sign up for our Poosh newsletter.

Appendix 2.19 - Complete text of article on How Kourt is managing her new short hair by Poosh.

BEAUTY

Kourt's Hairstylist Spills The SECRETS TO SHINY HAIR

BY POOSH

Honey, don't let anyone dull your shine — especially when it comes to your mane. In the summer months, it can feel like humidity has a personal vendetta against us all — turning our locks into frizzy, untamed monsters. Couple that with breakage and dull, dry hair and it can feel like a losing battle. We tapped Andrew Fitzsimons, Kourt's longtime hairstylist, to detangle the truth around shine, and give us the tricks of the trade behind her smooth-as-glass hair.

The Root of the Problem

“Generally, people who have shiny hair have a very healthy diet. It’s the fundamental factor of great hair and skin.”

Our hair is made of protein, so it’s important to consume high-quality sources of meat, fish, eggs, nuts, seeds, beans, and lentils as the building blocks of healthy hair. Adding a daily dose of collagen helps build hair protein itself.

Incorporating iron in your diet will ensure that oxygen and nutrients can travel through the blood supply into the scalp. Iron can be found in leafy green veggies, nuts, seeds, and whole grains. Vitamin C is another key to shiny hair, as foods like blueberries, broccoli, oranges, papaya, and sweet potatoes help the body absorb iron.

Rinse, Don’t Repeat

“Having a good shampoo and conditioning regimen is a close second behind diet. It’s important to figure out the longest you can go without shampooing your hair. For some, your hair becomes greasy more quickly, so you have to wash your hair more often, but over-washing your hair can leave it looking dull.”

“A couple of years ago, Kourtney and I created a hair mask that was inspired by her morning avocado smoothie. That’s a great at-home, zero-chemical approach to natural hair care.”

The recipe contains honey, olive oil (which protects hair from curling irons and blow-dryers), avocados (which hydrate hair with vitamin E and antioxidants), and lemon juice (which is naturally antibacterial).

Watch a step-by-step video [here](#).

Flick of the Wrist

“Before blowing out the hair, I distribute a smoothing cream like Bed Head After Party from mid-lengths to ends and then dry it into the hair. It leaves the hair feeling super, super smooth and gives it a really glossy finish.”

Between round brushes, paddle brushes, and the like, it’s hard to know which brush will work best for you. How can you tell which is right for your ‘do? Andrew prefers a round boar-bristle brush, because it distributes the natural oils and products in your hair, reducing dryness and providing extra shine.

Beat The Heat

There’s a myth that shiny hair comes from intense heat and styling, but Andrew sets the record straight: “In order to maintain shiny hair, you don’t want to over-process your hair or heat-style your hair too often.”

"A trick to adding volume to your hair but keeping as much shine as possible is cold setting. This is a technique where you give the hair a blast of cold air after you finish styling. Use the cold air button on your hair-dryer to cool the hair down quickly and promote shine."

"Shine comes from the hair being smooth and free from any kind of breakage. If you're blowing out your hair, take care to blow down any baby hairs, because they will interrupt the light reflection process."

Andrew notes that your favorite styling products may be the culprit stealing your shine: "Styling products that promise extra volume or extra hold will actually make the hair look duller. My go-to product for that glass shine is the NatureLab Tokyo Perfect Shine Oil Mist. It's vegan, sulfate-free, and cruelty-free.

Up next, be the first to know our weekly content and sign up for our Poosh newsletter.

Appendix 2.20 - Complete text of article on Kourt's hairstylist spills the secret to shiny hair by Poosh.

KOURTNEY

Kourt's No-Makeup GLOW ROUTINE

BY POOSH

A day in the (non-glam) life of Kourt. To clarify, when we say non-glam, we're referring to the days she doesn't have her hair and makeup squad. Other than that, her life is always slightly glamourous because it's Kourt and pretty damn fabulous ofc.

So what's the secret sauce to keep her skin glowing with little to no makeup? Let's walk you through it.

Kourt starts her day with The Beauty Chef's Collagen Inner Beauty Boost. A vegan elixir to plump the skin from within and nourish your gut. Still with bio-fermented papaya and grape seed extracts, now with added pomegranate peel extract, gotu kola, organic goji, acai and maqui berries, plus more vitamin C to support collagen production and zinc to support skin structure and healthy hair and nails.

Collagen Inner Beauty Boost Supercharged

PRICE: \$50
THEBEAUTYCHEF

Pre-workout, she washes her face and applies just sunscreen. Then she'll usually oil cleanse post-workout (you can learn her full oil cleansing process here) followed by her

simple skincare routine for the day, which includes the Hora x Poosh Hyaluronic Halo + CBD Serum from our collab with Hora Skincare.

Best Skin Ever Seabuckthorn Cleaning Oil

PRICE: \$31
LIVINGLIBATIONS

After her workout, she'll have her avocado smoothie/shake/pudding (she likes to change up what she calls it). Avocados are high in good-for-you fat, which helps keep your skin healthy and naturally moisturized.

Random fun fact: on most days, she takes a shower AND bath in the same day.

Kourt's hair dries naturally straight, so she doesn't ever use hot tools unless she's having her hair done. She also uses a hair towel turban to help protect her strands.

Now for the very light makeup routine.

First things first, Kourt never leaves the house without brushing her brows and curling her lashes. This is a non-negotiable for her.

And then for just a dash of makeup, it's concealer (or a light application of foundation) and bronzer—that's it. She's currently using this for coverage, which she'll dab on with a sponge. Then she uses bronzer on her eyelids for some definition for the most no-makeup-makeup look.

To maintain a natural look with minimal makeup, Kourt uses this face stamper once a month. You can read all about the benefits [here](#).

Ritual Set

PRICE: \$225
THE THINGS WE DO

Poosh Product Picks: Kourtney Kardashian

Up next, be the first to know our weekly content and sign up for our Poosh newsletter.

Appendix 2.21 - Complete text of article on Kourt's no-makeup glow routine by Poosh.

BEAUTY

Shop KOURT'S
NUDE-ISH Makeup
Look

BY POOSH

Summer time calls for a fresh makeup routine that doesn't require too much time or effort. Enter: the nude-ish look. We tapped Kourt's makeup artist, Wendi Miyake, to walk us through just how to achieve a natural glow this season (inspired by Kourt's recent Ellen Degeneres Show appearance). Get your glow on below with the step-by-step-instructions and shopping list at the end.

"First, I always start with prepping Kourt's skin—I use Skyn Iceland Eye and Face Gels (that I let cool in the fridge until ready to use) under the eyes and on the smile lines to hydrate and plump while I start on her makeup.

For her brows, I use Kelley Baker Brows Pencil in Brown to fill in any sparse areas and finish off with the brow powder on top.

Next for the eyes, I base out her lid with MAC Paint Pot in Soft Ochre and blend all over the lid. With the KKW Beauty Mrs. West Palette, I use the mid-tone color in her crease and along the bottom lash line, followed by the medium tone in the outer corner for definition.

Next, I go in with the deepest shade of the palette along her lash line, top and bottom, and smudge it out to create a sultry smoke effect. For the brow bone, I use the matte soft pink and the shimmer y pink popped in the inner corner. I finish the eyes with KKW Beauty's Glam Bible Mascara for beautiful full lashes.

Now that the skin is prepped and ready, I mix Beautyblender Bounce foundations in colors 3.75 and 4.10 for a base all over her face. I conceal and highlight with Make Up For Ever Ultra HD Self-Setting Concealer in 31 and 34 and set everything with Kett Sett Translucent Loose Powder.

To contour and bronze, I use Benefit Cosmetics Hoola bronzer on her cheek hollows, top of the forehead, and temples to create depth, topped with a swirl of KKW Beauty's Classic Blossom Blushes on the apples of the cheeks, and the highlight shade from the eyeshadow palette on the top of the cheekbones.

Lastly, on her lips, I use a combo of the KKW Lip Liners in Nude 2 and 1 to line and define, the KKW Nude Creme 3 lipstick to fill in, and finish with KKW x Mario Gloss in Juicy on the center of the lips."

Shop the essentials:

Beauty tools: BeautyBlender (\$20); Surratt Beauty Relevée Lash Curler (\$34); Lashify A Gossamer Lashes (\$20)

Skin Treatment: Skyn Iceland Face-Lift-In-A-Bag (\$20)

Foundation: BeautyBlender Bounce™ Liquid Whip Long Wear Foundation in 3.75 and 4.10 (\$40 each)

Concealer: Makeup Forever Ultra HD Self-Setting Concealer in 31 and 34 (\$28 each)

Brows: Kelly Baker Brows Pencil Duo in Brown (\$44); Benefit Cosmetics kabROW! #3 (\$12)

Eyeshadow: KKW Beauty Mrs. West Eyeshadow Palette (\$30); MAC Paint Pot in Soft Ochre (\$22)

Lashes: KKW Beauty Glam Bible Mascara (\$18); Lashify A Gossamer Lashes (\$20)

Bronzer and Blush: Benefit Cosmetics Hoola Matte Bronzer (\$30); KKW Beauty Classic Blossom Blushes (\$18)

Powders: Kett Cosmetics Ultra Translucent Setting Shine Control Face Powder (\$22)

Lips: KKW Beauty Nude Crème Lip Liner in 2 and 1 (\$12 each); Nude Crème 3 Lipstick (\$18); KKW x Mario Gloss in Juicy (\$18)

Appendix 2.22 - Complete text of article on Shop Kourt's nude-ish makeup look by Poosh.

BEAUTY

KOURT'S Fall Skincare Routine

BY POOSH

Our vibe right now? Fresh for fall. Wellness, beauty, wardrobe, and of course our skincare selection. Since skin tends to freak out as the seasons change, the post-summer, pre-fall transition calls for slight alterations in our skincare regimen. Think brightening products, hydrating masks, and serums to enhance that natural glow.

Since Kourt likes to alternate what she uses in her skincare routine, we asked her to share the top items in her fall lineup. It's a mix of tried-and-true products she swears by year-round, plus a few new additions she's using to boost her skin for the upcoming season. Keep reading for a peek inside her fall skincare essentials and to find out why she likes each item.

Oil Cleanser

"If you're a Poosh reader then you know how much I love oil cleansing. I'm currently using this cleanser."

DR. ELSA JUNG MAN

Begin Again

Gentle Cleanser

\$40

With only four ingredients, the plant-based oil cleanser removes makeup and dirt without over-stripping or disrupting the acid mantle. It's the perfect reset for stressed summer-to-fall skin.

Masks

FARMHOUSE

Fresh Guac Star

Mask \$26

KORA ORGANICS

Turmeric

Brightening and

Exfoliating Mask

\$48

Kourt loves her masks, and these two are currently in her rotation. The guac mask hydrates, which is ideal for in-between seasons, while the turmeric mask helps with post-summer sun damage. “I like how it leaves my skin so glowy,” she told the team.

Peptides

TAHNYC

Niacinamide 5%

+ Peptides for

Antiaging \$36

The entire Poosh team has become obsessed with adding peptides to our skincare routine. Kourt opts for Tahnyc’s niacinamide 5% + peptides for antiaging, and she mixes a few drops in with her serum in the morning. “I like being able to mix and layer my products.” Peptides inhibit the loss of collagen and elastin and promote healing (which results in major plumping action).

Face and Eye Serum

FURTUNASKIN

Por te Per La

Vitalità Face and

Eyes Serum \$98

Kourt usually doesn’t apply a separate eye cream, so this eye and face serum is the perfect hybrid product. It’s calming and hydrating and leaves skin refreshed. “I love how this works for eyes and face, and its lightweight consistency.”

Gua Sha

SACHEU

Stainless Steel

Gua Sha \$35

Once serum is applied, it’s gua sha time, a skin selfcare ritual that Kourt wholeheartedly endorses. “This gua sha is cooling and nonporous, so it doesn’t clog pores.” Gua sha can also help ingredients penetrate deeper into the skin. Here’s our step-by-step tutorial (you can also use gua sha tools to help define and tone your arms).

Light Therapy

DM HAESTHETICS**Anti-Acne Light****Shield \$190**

"I still use the original LED mask, but now I alternate with our new anti-acne one," says Kourt. The antiacne mask specifically targets breakouts (another side effect of in-between season skin).

So what makes this anti-acne blue light shield the best new tool to add to your skincare routine? It's a one-step, at-home acne treatment. The anti-acne blue light helps to reduce and treat blemishes and repair skin with an increase in power from the original mask. The wavelength of the blue light helps kill acne-causing bacteria while also working to improve the environment of skin health. And the wavelength of the red light helps to promote blood circulation, increase metabolism, produce collagen, and aid in the anti-aging process. Together, the power ful anti-acne LED light targets current acne and prevents future breakouts. All while multitasking, of course!

"I love these masks because I can use them while doing other things, like watching movies with the kids."

Microneedling Stamper**THE THINGS WE DO****Ritual Set \$225**

Kourt uses this monthly to brighten and tighten her skin. Stamping is a form of microneedling that involves the use of fine needles to gently puncture the top layer of your skin, which tells your body it needs to heal those micro-wounds, so it sends in collagen. The new collagen-rich tissue helps to minimize the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles and reduce scars caused by acne. Microneedling also helps your skin to absorb products (postneedling), which means faster and better results. It's great for anti-aging and more even skin tone and texture. Plus, the set comes with four months worth of serum. You can read how to use the face stamper [here](#).

Up next, be the first to know our weekly content and sign up for our Poosh newsletter.

Appendix 2.23 - Complete text of article on Kourt's fall skincare routine by Poosh.

KOURTNEY

The Makeup Tips Kourt Recently LEARNED FROM KYLIE

BY POOSH

Glam by Kylie. In her recent YouTube tutorial, the makeup queen taught her oldest sister a few new application tricks. Kourt said after the session that it made her appreciate the process more because Kylie truly doesn't skip a step—she goes all out. Ahead, we're sharing the tips Kourt picked up from the cosmetics guru and the ways she'll apply her makeup differently from now on.

Use a foundation mixing palette.

Kourt shared that Kylie and all her friends use a mixing palette, like this one, to apply foundation. She puts a few pumps of foundation on the plate and then applies from there with either a brush or blender. It makes for a much smoother application.

The triangle undereye concealer trick.

With concealer, draw a triangle under your eyes. Make the point of the shape right above the top of your cheek. Then blend it in and use a very light pink powder under your eyes to set your concealer.

Get creamy.

Kourt typically uses powder bronzer and blush, but since Kylie did her makeup using cream options, she's decided to make the switch.

Nose contouring.

When she contoured Kourt's nose, she powdered her entire nose with translucent powder (after foundation was applied) and left the dust while she drew two lines down the nose and blended. Then she brushed the powder off at the end.

Highly recommend highlighter.

Kourt mentioned that Kylie applied highlighter down the center of her nose and a touch on the inner corner of her eyes, which is something Kourt didn't do before.

Brow power.

After she filled in the brows, she applied a clear brow gel, which Kourt admitted she usually skips but made such a difference. Kourt also said brushing her brows and curling her lashes are the two things she never skips.

Little lip lift.

To take overlining (a trick Kourt already uses) to the next level, Kylie drew a straight line but not connecting the bow of her lips, which made it look like they were lifted a bit. She used a darker shade to line and a lighter hue to fill in the lips. She also added a high-shine gloss, which Kourt typically doesn't wear.

Mascara.

She put brown mascara on her bottom lashes and black on the top lashes. Kourt thought this was interesting but said she's a black mascara girl for life so probably won't use this trick in her everyday makeup routine.

More contouring.

Kylie contoured her jawline with creme sticks and then finished off Kourt's gorgeous glam with setting spray.

Shop Kourt's "Glam by Kylie" look below.

Kylie Skin Hair Clips \$12

Temptu Pro Mixing Palette \$24

Anastasia Beverly Hills Luminous Foundation \$38

Giorgio Armani Luminous Silk Perfect Glow Flawless Oil-Free Foundation \$64

Kylie Cosmetics Toasty Pressed Bronzing Powder \$18

Kylie Cosmetics Almond Pressed Bronzing Powder \$18

Kylie Cosmetics Winter Kissed Pressed Blush Powder \$18

Kylie Cosmetics We're Going Shopping Pressed Blush Powder \$18

Kylie Cosmetics Medium Brown Kybrow Pencil \$16

Charlotte Tilbury Shade 2 Airbrush Flawless Finish Setting Powder \$45

Kylie Cosmetics Coconut Lip Liner \$12

Kylie Cosmetics Candy K Matte Lip Kit \$29

Kylie Cosmetics Snatched High Gloss \$16

Too Faced Better Than Sex Volumizing Mascara \$26

Up next, discover the latest from the Poosh Shop [here](#).

Appendix 2.24 - Complete text of article on The makeup tips Kourt recently learned from Kylie by Poosh.

KOURTNEY

Kourt's Sauna DETOX ROUTINE

BY POOSH

There's nothing quite like sweating it out (big exception: when you're wearing a silk top ... pit stains are everyone's enemy). Whether it's a tough day at the office, blowing off steam from a text conversation with an ex, or simply carving out alone time for self-care—situation aside, sweating is one of the healthiest ways to detox and reset your body.

As part of Kourt's wellness routine, she uses sauna bathing to detox five days a week. Here's her exact pattern: 10 minutes in the sauna, a cold rinse, wait 3 minutes, and then 10 minutes again in the sauna, repeated five days a week. Tip: wear a hair wrap if you don't want your hair to get sweaty—Kourt wears our Aquis x Poosh turban when she wants to keep her hair in place.

As we mentioned in Kourt's Finland travel guide (where sauna-ing originated and is a way of life), bouncing back from hot to cold temperatures shocks your system and is said to be great for lymphatic flow.

Benefits from traditional sauna usage and deep sweating include:

- flushes toxins
- promotes healthy skin
- can reduce stress and release endorphins (aka make you feel good post-sweat)
- burns calories
- soothes aches and pains
- helps balance sleeping patterns
- can help lower blood pressure

If these health advantages aren't enough to convince you to add the habit to your wellness routine, consider the time spent in the sauna as glorified "me" time where you clear your head and mentally reset while sweating out the day's noise.

Here's to a happy after-sauna body and mind glow.

Poosh Product Picks: Kourtney Kardashian

The content provided in this article is provided for information purposes only and is not a substitute for professional advice and consultations, including professional medical advice and consultation; it is provided with understanding that Poosh, LLC ('Poosh') is not engaged in the provision or rendering of medical advice or services. You understand and agree that Poosh shall not be liable for any claim, loss, or damage arising out of the use of, or reliance upon any content or information in the article.

Up next, be the first to know our weekly content and sign up for our Poosh newsletter.

Appendix 2.25 - Complete text of article on Kourt's sauna detox routine by Poosh.

KOURTNEY

Kourt's De-Bloating MASSAGE ROUTINE

BY POOSH

Whether you're bloated from your period or perhaps a heavy dinner from the night before—it's never a good feeling. Your clothes fit a little tighter, your belly feels full of gas, and it's nearly impossible not to think about how uncomfortable your body feels—we've all been there and know the discomfort all too well.

Luckily, there are remedies, like this list of supplements and these exercises to help reduce the excess buildup. To add to our helpful solutions, we tapped Detox Massage Creator,

Rebecca Faria, who recently worked on Kourt, to give us the lowdown on everything we need to know about the power of a detoxifying massage.

Keep reading to learn the technique, benefits, and how to re-create the results of the treatment from the comfort of your home.

What is Detox Massage by Rebecca?

“Detox Massage is a patented technique created by me. It’s a unique combination of manual lymphatic massage and different types of equipment. It works effectively on the root cause of the main inflammations in the body.”

How is it done?

“Each client has a different root cause that is causing the inflammation. It stems from our habits. Therefore, we can be inflamed for various reasons, such as stress, diet, anxiety, gut problems, pregnancy, surgeries ... The body speaks! We just have to know how to listen to it.

The treatment is done by finding areas of congestion in the body and optimally guiding the lymph flow by releasing toxins. We have to identify the root cause and work in that area of the body to eliminate the inflammation. The patient has to work with me by improving their daily habits to solve the problem permanently.

Thus, we use various equipment customized for each client’s needs, such as:

Ultrasound: waves emitted by the device penetrate the fat cells and make them implode, directing them to be drained by the lymphatic system.

Radiofrequency: raises the temperature of the skin and the muscles, promoting collagen contraction and improving the production of elastin fibers, providing more support and firmness to the skin.

Endermologie: stimulates dormant cells using blood suction technology, enabling fat cells to mobilize deep tissue, reducing cellulite’s appearance.

Finally, we perform a Brazilian manual lymphatic drainage to move toxic fluid through the lymphatic system and body contouring to make the client feel lighter.”

How does it work on our body?

“The method aims to kick-start the lymphatic system by driving out toxins, minimizing water retention, and cleansing the body. The toxins are directed to the urinary tract so they can be eliminated.”

What are the benefits?

"The most significant benefit is boosting the immune and digestive systems. With the body de-bloated and the lymphatic system clean, our body can easily get rid of bacteria and toxins."

Is it possible to perform a treatment at home?

"Although it's not possible to perform a Detox Massage at home, adopting a self-lymphatic drainage routine helps reduce swelling in the body and promotes the removal of toxins from the body.

I recommend performing the treatment consistently two times a week or weekly. You can watch my self-drainage massage tutorials below."

Facial:

Legs:

Tummy:

Shop our cream and oil picks to use during your next at-home self-drainage massage.

The content provided in this article is provided for information purposes only and is not a substitute for professional advice and consultations, including professional medical advice and consultation; it is provided with understanding that Poosh, LLC ('Poosh') is not engaged in the provision or rendering of medical advice or services. You understand and agree that Poosh shall not be liable for any claim, loss, or damage arising out of the use of, or reliance upon any content or information in the article.

Up next, be the first to know our weekly content and sign up for our Poosh newsletter.

Appendix 2.26 - Complete text of articles on Kourt's de-bloating massage routine by Poosh.

MIND

The 100-Day HAPPINESS CHALLENGE

BY POOSH

The 100-Day Happiness Planner

PRICE: \$26

WHY WE LOVE IT:

Simply put, it encourages us to not live on autopilot and instead take inventory of our daily habits, thoughts, and emotions. The result? A happier and more mindful life. It's about making change and doing the work to live your best life.

How does it work? It opens by walking you through an assessment of what makes you unhappy and guides you on how and if you can change these things. If you can't change something, it encourages you to change how you think about the thing that makes you unhappy. Because friendly reminder, perspective is a powerful tool that only you have control over.

Then it kicks off the 100-day journal section where it prompts you to write "what you're excited about, your main focus for the day, and your schedule." You'll do this every day and then at the end of the week, you'll complete weekly reviews. These include a rating scale of how happy, productive, tired, stressed, etc. you felt overall during the past week. Plus, what you learned, when you felt happy, and what you were most proud of.

It's essentially like free therapy all in one sacred notebook.

The other cool thing about this 100-day exercise is that it includes the 29 rules to live by for a happy life, like appreciating what you have, self-reflection, expressing your gratitude, being understanding, and living with passion (to call out a handful of examples), which are all great reminders to feel fulfilled throughout your day, week, month, and beyond.

If you're in any sort of funk or simply looking to expand on self-development and live a more positive and happy life, this inspiring journal is for you.

THE HAPPINESS PLANNER

100-Day
Happiness
Planner in Best
Friends \$26

THE HAPPINESS PLANNER

100-Day
Happiness
Planner in Peach
and Mint \$26

THE HAPPINESS PLANNER

100-Day
Happiness
Planner in Pink
and Gold \$26

THE HAPPINESS PLANNER

100-Day
Happiness
Planner in Waves

of Joy \$26

Up next, be the first to know our weekly content and sign up for our Poosh newsletter.

Appendix 2.27 - Complete text of article on The 100-day happiness challenge by Poosh.

MIND

How to Feel Your HOTTEST

BY POOSH

To be clear, we're not referring to physical features here. It's a mindset—read that again. Feeling "hot" is all about your mindset. One person can feel their hottest or most confident after accomplishing a big task or trying a new hobby. For others, it's when they feel connected to others or simply wake up having an amazing hair day. It's different for every single person, and that's the beauty of what makes everybody on this planet truly unique.

Feeling hot—whatever that means to you—shifts your energy, which is the important thing here. When you feel on your A-game, you feel happy, you smile more (the kind of grin where you genuinely can't stop smiling), you're oozing with positive energy, and people pick up on this spirit. When you feel good about yourself, you make better decisions. When your vibes are high, you're more open to putting yourself first (in the best way possible) and setting boundaries that are good for you and, as a result, create a path to live your best life. They say misery loves company (which is so true), and on the flip side, happy and optimistic people are just as contagious and a delight to be around. It's a win-win for everyone. So yes, when you feel hot, your mindset is in a place to attract the life you want and deserve.

Keep reading for things that can help shift your mindset to feel your hottest.

When you feel connected to others.

Schedule a FaceTime call with a long-distance friend or go on a walk with a close neighbor.

When you take time you do a skincare treatment.

Try a soothing DIY bath session or test out a new at-home face mask.

When you have a good hair day.

Take the selfies and hype yourself up.

When your skin is glowing and clear.

Clear skin can come in waves, so when it's in its prime, appreciate it and again, take all the selfies.

When you feel strong and sweaty after a workout.

Carve out time each week or day if you can to enjoy a Pilates class or whatever exercise gets you going.

When you do an unexpected favor for someone.

Send a friend a handwritten letter or check in on a coworker going through a hard time. It's the little things that can feed your soul and make you feel good.

When you've finished a daunting task.

Work or personal project, there's nothing better than the feeling of accomplishing a big task that's been lingering on your to-do list.

When you have a sun-kissed tan.

We've shared healthy ways to soak up vitamin D here, and we're also saving you if you're dealing with a botched spray tan or self-tanner situation.

When you wear a new outfit.

Everyone should have that one outfit that never fails to make you feel dynamite. Could be a backless top or something that shows your shoulders or even your comfiest athleisure set with your hair up looking kind of messy.

When you have the self-control to leave a toxic relationship on read.

Specifically, that person you hook up with and who only texts you late at night. Feels good when you totally ignore it and leave 'em on read.

Shop essentials for a 'me' night:

Up next, be the first to know our weekly content and sign up for our Poosh newsletter.

Appendix 2.28 - Complete text of article on How to feel your hottest by Poosh.

MIND

10 Ways to GET OUT OF A BAD MOOD

BY ROXIENAFOUSI

Some days, you just find yourself in a funk that you can't seem to shake, whether it's because you stayed up too late watching Bridgeton, you had a fight with your mom, or your damn hormones just got you again. So here are 10 tried and tested ways to get you back in those high vibes for the next time you find yourself in a bad mood.

1. Go for a Walk

Honestly, there aren't many problems a long walk can't solve. I don't know if it's the fresh air, the physical movement, the feeling of sunshine on your face, or the combination of it all, but whatever it is—it works. When you find yourself in a bad mood, just put on your trainers, grab your headphones, then get outside and GO.

2. Scroll Through Funny Memes

There is no better antidote to a bad mood than laughter. Whenever I'm in a funk, I get on Instagram, search my favorite meme accounts (@dudewithsign is always a winner), and just scroll. Ten minutes later, and after tagging my friends in approximately 103,784 posts, I always feel better.

3. Journal

Journaling is one of my favorite self-development tools. This is the journaling exercise I recommend to clients for whenever they need a pick-me-up (and it only takes five minutes!): Start by writing down five things you love about yourself (i.e. I am kind), then write down five things that you are grateful for about your life (i.e. I am grateful for my friends), and then five good things that happened in the last 24 hours, no matter how small (i.e. I am grateful for my morning coffee). Finally, write down five things you are looking forward to.

4. Call Your Best Friend

Vent, let it out, and then allow them to give you a new perspective while reminding you what a badass queen you really are.

5. Meditate

When we are in a bad mood, it is so easy to allow our minds to race with negative thoughts and imagine worst-case scenarios. Take a moment to find stillness so that you can give yourself the opportunity to simply reset. Even a couple of minutes of mindful breathing, feeling your belly rise and fall as you inhale and exhale, can be enough to give you the opportunity to think differently.

6. Have a Dance Party for One

Woke up in a bad mood? Shake it off. Play your favorite album on full blast and then just allow your body to move to the rhythm of the music in whatever way makes you feel most empowered, liberated, and alive.

7. Have a Candlelit Bath

Sometimes we just need to change the scene, let go of the day, and embrace some time for self-care. Light some candles, put on a face mask, soak in a bubble bath, and allow yourself to melt into a space of relaxation.

8. Book Something In

We all need something to look forward to, and that feeling of excited anticipation can often be enough to pull us out of a funk. Get online and book dinner at your favorite

restaurant, a facial at the spa, or tickets to a show, or even spend 15 minutes making a Pinterest board for your next holiday.

9. Visualize

When ever ything feels like too much, use your mind's eye to take you elsewhere. Close your eyes, and just imagine yourself living through your perfect day. Take in every detail, every smell, every feeling. Live through the day from start to finish. This is step one to manifesting your perfect day, and a great exercise to raise your vibe.

10. Make Banana Bread

Seriously, what is more relaxing than making your favorite banana bread recipe, your whole house smelling like a slice of heaven, and then sitting down to enjoy a slice of homemade baking. It is a sure way to pull yourself out of any bad mood!

Shop essentials for a 'me' night:

Roxie Nafousi is a self-development coach, manifesting expert, yoga teacher, and host of the podcast "The Moments That Made Me" Head to her website to book a spot on her next self-development webinar, schedule a one-on-one advice session, or download one of her meditations or affirmation playlists designed to help you on your manifestation journeys. Follow her on Instagram.

Up next, shop the newest items from the Poosh Shop [here](#).

Appendix 2.29 - Complete text of article on 10 ways to get out of a bad mood by Roxie Nafousi.

MIND

How to Become a MORNING PERSON

BY POOSH

Some people simply aren't born as a natural "morning person" (ourselves included). That said, you do have the power to change your mindset and become an early bird—though it will take practice and a positive attitude. If you're truly up for the lifestyle adjustment, we're sharing 11 ways to shift your outlook on waking up early and to officially become an a.m. individual.

-Try Kourt's tip and sing her "Good Morning, Good Morning" song to brighten your day.

-Motivational speaker and author, Gabrielle Bernstein, shared her advice with us. "The morning is a sacred time—it's when we choose how we want the rest of the day to go. Set yourself up to win by starting your day with a practice I call the Daily Design Method. I teach it in my new book, *Super Attractor: Methods for Manifesting a Life Beyond Your Wildest Dreams*. It's easy to do. Each morning when you wake up, open your journal and answer these four questions:

- How do I want to feel today?
- Who do I want to be today?
- What do I want to receive today?
- What do I want to give today?

When you make the DDM a morning habit, you'll start to notice that things begin to work out exactly as you planned—or that something even better happens."

-This tip should go without saying, but set an earlier bedtime so you can wake up feeling refreshed and rested.

-Keep your cell phone and laptop out of reach (and definitely not in your bed). This will also force you to hop out of your sheets to turn your phone alarm off.

-Instead of leisurely lying around in the morning, get out of bed right when you wake up. Easier said than done, but once you get in the habit of it, you'll see the productive benefits payoff.

-Avoid hitting snooze. It's a slippery slope, end of story.

-After you get moving, practice deep breaths: our in-house life coach, Ryan Haddon, recommends, "Set your timer for five minutes, sit wherever you are, close your eyes, and just focus on the breath coming in and going out. You can repeat a phrase or mantra on each in/out breath, or focus on the space between breaths. If the mind wanders, simply notice it and, without judgment, gently bring the mind back to the breath."

-Before you go to sleep, make a mental or physical checklist prioritizing plans for the next day. This will help you visualize what you need to accomplish in the a.m.

-Another Poosh contributor, Erica Spiegelman, suggests, "Reward yourself. Give yourself a nice reward when you've achieved a small goal or milestone." Once you've hit a week of waking up early and popping right out of bed, be sure to acknowledge the new healthy habit you've accomplished.

-Schedule a morning workout (even if you're feeling lazy) and encourage yourself to show up and sweat it out. Exercising in the a.m. increases energy and improves productivity for the day.

-Draw your curtains back and let in the natural light first thing in the morning.

Poosh Edit: Best of Bedroom Essentials

How do you get up and at it in the a.m.? Share your tips with us in the comments on Instagram.

Up next, be the first to know our weekly content and sign up for our Poosh newsletter.

Appendix 2.30 - Complete text of article on *How to become a morning person by Poosh*.

MIND

HOW TO STOP OVERTHINKING About Your Crush

BY ERICASPIEGELMAN

Whether it's a dating scenario like today's reader submission or a conversation you can't get off your brain—some situations call for reinforcement (like the 10 suggestions I'm sharing below) to really clear your mind and think about literally anything else besides what's consuming your headspace due to a case of obsessive thinking.

"How can I stop my mind from obsessively overthinking about whether my crush is going to text/call me back?"

Over thinking causes us to spend too much time on the same thoughts, getting stuck in a loop of inaction and turning positive reflection into debilitating worry. Not only does it not move us forward, but it also moves us backward and downward. I find this comes up a lot in dating. Worrying and over thinking about whether someone will call you or text you back, whether they like you, and did you say too much or too little are all common topics that come up when working with my clients.

I like to use DBT (Dialectical Behavioral Therapy) techniques to create awareness and provide my clients and you with the tools you will need to stop the worrying and over thinking. Here are my top 10 tips.

1. Look at the Bigger Picture

How will all the issues floating around in your mind affect you 5 or 10 years from now? Will anyone really care that you bought a fruit plate for the potluck instead of baking a pie from scratch? Don't let minor issues turn into significant hurdles.

2. Remember the 90-10 Rule.

This is a formula, a ratio, for how you should calculate how you value yourself, based on 90% self-worth, 10% assigned worth. Ninety percent should come from your self-acceptance and self-appreciation, and just 10% from that occasional sliver of external validation we all need.

Over thinkers distort the formula, even reversing it by acting like 90% of their worth comes from what others think or say.

3. Assume Good Intent.

Over thinkers read too much into things. Why? They're assuming something bad lies underneath, something like a bad perception, someone wishing them ill, or an unfavorable outcome. When you catch yourself doing this, switch your assumption to believe what you're reading into was well-intended, or at least neutral. Most of the time, it really is, so why not act like it?

4. Replace "What If" with "We'll See."

Over thinkers keep asking themselves "what if," which is an impossible question to answer. If you catch yourself asking "what if," quickly switch it to "we'll see," which is a way of moving past analysis paralysis to acceptance.

5. Get Outside and Enjoy.

By this I mean stop spending so much time in your head. Get outside it and switch gears to connect with what's going on around you so you can take joy in it.

6. Acknowledge Your Successes

When you are over thinking, stop and take out your notebook or your favorite note-taking app on your phone. Jot down five things that have gone right over the past week and your role in them.

These don't need to be huge accomplishments.

When you look at it on paper or on-screen, you might be surprised at how these little things add up.

7. Practice Self-Compassion

Dwelling on past mistakes keeps you from letting go. If you're beating yourself up over something you did last week, try refocusing on self-compassion.

8. Learn to Let Go

Some things will always be out of your control. Learning how to accept this can go a long way toward curbing over thinking.

9. Don't Believe Every Thought

Don't believe the lies your own mind tells you.

It seems like a simple enough statement, but it's hard to do for people who are chronic worriers or who tend to over think everything.

10. Replace the Thought Loop

Instead of focusing on a problem, whether in the past or the future, replace the rumination with a positive outlook. Focus on the outcome coming to a favorable end. Imagine the best intentions in others.

Flip the negatives into positives. Assume the best in people and visualize your successes.

We are all worthy of peace of mind, true happiness, and love.

So, remember this when you are taking things personally, over-analyzing, and worrying. Life is short, and we have to do our best to enjoy it!

Shop essentials for a 'me' night:

Erica Spiegelman is a wellness specialist, recovery counsellor, and author of the new book *The Rewired Life* (2018) as well as *Rewired: A Bold New Approach to Addiction & Recovery* (2015), the *Rewired Workbook* (2017), all published by Hatherleigh Press. Erica holds a bachelor's degree in literature from the University of Arizona and is a California State Certified Drug and Alcohol Counselor (CADAC)-II from UCLA. For more information, visit Erica's website or follow @Erica Spiegelman on Instagram.

The content provided in this article is provided for information purposes only and is not a substitute for professional advice and consultations, including professional medical advice and consultation; it is provided with understanding that Poosh, LLC ('Poosh') is not engaged in the provision or rendering of medical advice or services. You understand and agree that Poosh shall not be liable for any claim, loss, or damage arising out of the use of, or reliance upon any content or information in the article.

Up next, be the first to know our weekly content and sign up for our Poosh newsletter.

Appendix 2.31 - Complete text of article on *How to stop overthinking about your crush* by Erica Spiegelman.

KOURTNEY

9 THINGS KOURT Always Keeps in her Purse

BY POOSH

The belongings in one's purse are sacred saviors. You know the feeling when you swap bags and forget that one item you typically always carry with you ... you feel a little empty without it. Everyone packs a different selection of must-have items, whether it's a specific type of gum or small things for "just in case" scenarios. It's comforting knowing you have your trusty on-the-go essentials.

So what does Kourt keep in her purse? We asked her to share a peek inside her bag with the top nine items she almost always has with her. Read on for her list below.

Post-Meal Digestive Candy

PASTIGLIE L E ONE

Mixed Digestive

Candy \$5

“I love this old classic Italian digestif for after a meal.”

Gum

PUR

100% Xylitol

Chewing Gum

\$14

“An aspartame-free gum I always have on hand. The pink mint flavor is my favorite.”

Lip Oil

KYLIESKIN

Lip Oil \$22

“Hydrates with a nice shine. Plus, it’s non-sticky, which I love.”

Mini Hand Sanitizer

AMASS PSEUDO

Citrine Hand

Sanitizer Set \$45

“A travel-size hand sanitizer is a must.”

Face Mask

SKIMS

Seamless Face

Mask \$8

“I love how this face mask folds so nicely in my purse, and it comes in a selection of good neutral colors.”

Tea

OLYXIR

Matcha Latte Tea

Strips \$20

“Matcha on the go—enough said. I keep them in a sleek case so I can travel with them.”

Wipes

EO

Hand Sanitizing

Wipes \$24

“Keepin’ it clean every day, all day.”

Hair Tie
SLIPSILK
St Tropez Large
Scrunchie Set
\$39

“Never know when you’ll need to pull your hair back. ;)”

Mini Hand Lotion
COMPAGNIE DE PROVENCE
Travel Hand
Cream - Velvet
Seaweed \$10

“To hydrate your hands post-washing or hand sanitizing.”

Poosh Product Picks: Kourtney Kardashian

Up next, be the first to know our weekly content and sign up for our Poosh newsletter.

Appendix 2.32 - Complete text of article on 9 things Kourt always keeps in her purse by Poosh.

KIM KARDASHIAN WEST on How She Manages It All

BY POOSH

We all have the same number of hours in the day as Kim Kardashian West, but it's safe to say she's accomplishing more than us (raises hand). Here at Poosh, we wanted to know how she's able to do it all, so we reached out to mom, wife, law student, and founder of KKW Beauty, KKW Fragrance, and SKIMS to find out how she manages each role in the span of 24 hours. With a beauty and solutionwear empire under her belt SKIMS, she proves determination and hard work have big payoffs.

Scroll down for the full KKW Poosh interview, and get inspired.

What does your morning look like, and how do you prioritize what you're going to work on each day?

KKW: On a general day, I wake up at 5:45 a.m. for my workout at 6 a.m. I'll pick out my workout clothes the night before. I keep it basic and pretty much wear the same thing all the time, and then I work out for about an hour.

Let's say it's a school day. I'll wake the kids up at 7:05 a.m., and we'll all have breakfast together. I'll get the kids ready and then take them to school, come back, and start my day. Usually, we're filming, and we have to get ready in hair and makeup, so I'll have glam at 9:30 a.m. and I'm ready to film by 11 a.m. Or I'll have meetings and just start my day.

In a perfect world, I love to go to bed early, but because I've been studying for law school, I spend my nights reading. The day usually consists of me going into the law office a few times a week, and then I film our show. Most nights I'm done after dinner, and I get the kids ready for bed and read books and put them to sleep. Then it's back to studying for me until about 11 p.m.

Do you have any organizational methods that you swear by?

KKW: Everything is super organized in my house—micromanaged to the minute. Like I mentioned earlier, I will lay my clothes out the night before so when I sleep in, I'll wake up at 5:53 instead of 5:45, and I just know my outfit is there. I have a toothbrush and my toothpaste all ready to go laid out by my sink. I just have to brush my teeth and go to the gym.

Luckily, everything I do is pretty close by in Calabasas. I try to keep everything as local as possible and make sure that I spend enough time doing the things that I really want to do, like waking my kids up, getting them ready for school, having breakfast with them, and dropping them off at school, because those things will keep me sane when I'm overworked.

How do you handle feeling overwhelmed?

KKW: I've been a huge fan of CBD ever since I started feeling overwhelmed, which came with starting law school and having a fourth baby. It was a combination of feeling like I'm not going to have time for myself and thinking this is going to be too overwhelming and not really believing in myself that I can do it or surrounding myself with the people who can help. Whether that's knowing that my kids are taken care of when I'm studying—when you're a mom, you're always worried about your kids—or making sure I have time for my husband and everyone else who's important to me.

I started taking CBD, and it really changed things for me. It calms me down automatically. Once the baby came and school started, I realized I can handle this and it's not as bad as I thought. I think you have to take it situation by situation and really make sure that you don't overwhelm yourself and remember to do things for yourself.

I know it might sound silly, but I used to get facials and massages once a week. I went months and months without any self-care or doing things for myself. So I booked a facial and a massage and it just felt nice to take time for myself. I made sure the kids were either

at my sister's or busy. Carving out time for self-care (no matter what it is) is always important.

do you get yourself out of a funk?

KKW: There are times when I feel unmotivated. But honestly, I'm kind of the opposite ... I like to be on my toes. I like a challenge, and I find myself to be extremely mentally strong, but this year I was definitely tested, maybe the most I've ever been, taking on all of these responsibilities. Coming out on the other side though, and knowing I can do it, is always an amazing feeling. First year wasn't so bad. We finished it. We got through it. OK. Three more to go. The baby is here. And he's the calmest baby I've ever had, so he's really helping me out, and everything is just working on my side.

What do you want to poosh yourself to do more of?

KKW: I would like to study more. I know that sounds crazy, but when you study the law the way that I do, you have to also work. The ultimate goal in doing it this way is that you can work with the law firm. I work with cut50, which does a lot of justice reform work, and I basically intern with them while someone is there teaching me so hopefully, I can ultimately get a job at the firm. I want to poosh myself to study hard. I just wish there were more hours in a day, where I can study more and read more.

Shop the photo: SKIMS Sculpting Bodysuit (\$62, join the waitlist or shop the thong version).

Appendix 2.33 - Complete text of article on Kim Kardashian West on how she manages it all by Poosh.

MOTHERHOOD

FINDING BALANCE Being a New Mom

BY ERICA SPIEGELMAN

Seven months ago, I became a mother for the first time. It is the ultimate blessing and the most awe-inspiring experience I have had. There are so many emotions involved, and navigating the waves and waters of motherhood provides lessons galore that will surely keep coming as time goes by. I have come to find that being a mom looks different to all of us. It's unpredictable and can be accompanied by challenge or discomfort, but most importantly, it can coexist right alongside deep joy, love, presence, and connection. You may experience all the feelings at the same time, and that is OK!

I have learned that a couple things are a must in order to maintain your sense of self and your sanity. Here are three things to be mindful of that you can start with:

1. Practice good time management skills, so that you can prioritize and carve out some time for yourself.
2. Self-care means having non-negotiables.
3. Learning to find balance is essential.

Learning to prioritize after having a baby is key. There is so little time we get for ourselves, even if we have help.

For some people, prioritizing tasks does not come easy. They see everything as equally important and find it hard to assign a level of urgency to each item on their to-do list. This is the time management equivalent of those people who struggle to block out certain sounds in a crowded restaurant and just hear all noise as equally demanding on their ears.

I often suggest making a list of must-dos for the day, along with a list of nice-to-dos. Breaking your day down into what absolutely must be accomplished versus what you would like to accomplish is a good way to simplify and prioritize. Your must-do list might look like, “Take a shower. Exercise. Show up to work. Read to the baby. Take dog out. Eat.” And your nice-to-do list might say, “Get your nails done. Read. Take a bath. Get a massage. Call so-and-so. Watch a movie.”

Everyone is wired differently, but many studies have shown that our energy in the morning is our “peak energy.” As the day progresses, we grow less focused and less creative. It’s always best to place your most important and creative tasks in the early hours when you are most alert and engaged and when you feel more motivated. But if you can get things done in the evening and feel more energized, by all means get your to-dos done then!

Self-care is my favorite subject for discussion. It’s what my whole book, *The Rewired Life*, is about. Being a new mom and being mindful of self-care is so challenging because our little babes require so much of our time and energy. But our saving grace is having non-negotiables.

Non-negotiables are the things, hobbies, and acts of service that we can do for ourselves that remind us of who we are. They are what feels good to us and what brings us happiness and peace of mind. It’s just like the nonnegotiable of brushing our teeth every day—we don’t really consider skipping it. My non-negotiables are movement daily, eating healthy, sleeping (when I can, considering I have an infant), and cooking as much as I can. These are the things that bring me a sense of well-being.

We all need to be aware of how self-care is much more than exercise and eating right. It’s sleeping adequately, making sure our mental health is intact, tending to our emotional well-being, and feeling like we are growing and connected spiritually to ourselves.

Various cultures, religions, and spiritual practices all seek to provide an answer to the question, “What is balance?” Balance means learning to give and receive in equal measure. Many healing practitioners believe that imbalance is the root of suffering and disease, and that all things are connected. We cannot be spiritually sick without seeing effects in our bodies and minds. Conversely, if we are physically ill, we will feel it mentally and emotionally as well.

We have to find what balance means to each of us individually. We need to make time for sleep, work, play, love, hobbies, travel, nature, and connecting with our deepest selves on a daily basis. What “balance” means to us will change from one day to the next, yet we can always strive to stay attuned to our inner voice that will tell us when we are shifting out of sync. As mothers, if we don’t take care of ourselves, we will not be as present for others and for our children.

I found out four months ago that I am pregnant, AGAIN! The scales of balance have shifted in my life, reinforcing my non-negotiables. Self-care is going in full swing, and every day I am trying to maintain balance when I can. Having two babies a year apart will require even more of me.

We could not be more grateful that we are welcoming this little girl into this world and will figure it out as it unfolds, feeling confident that with these things in place, it will be just fine.

If you have any questions on motherhood, in any capacity, please email me at erica@ericaspiegelman.com. We will try and answer them on Poosh soon.

Erica Spiegelman is a wellness specialist, recovery counsellor, and author of the new book *The Rewired Life* (2018) as well as *Rewired: A Bold New Approach to Addiction & Recovery* (2015), the *Rewired Workbook* (2017), all published by Hatherleigh Press. Erica holds a bachelor’s degree in literature from the University of Arizona and is a California State Certified Drug and Alcohol Counselor (CADAC)-II from UCLA. For more information, visit Erica’s website or follow [@Erica Spiegelman](#) on Instagram.

Appendix 2.34 - Complete text of article on Finding balance being a new mom by Erica Spiegelman.

MOTHERHOOD

Arielle Charnas Talks MOM GUILT AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE

BY ALLIERIZZO

In our latest Poosh conversation, Kourt's close friend Allie Rizzo sat down with fellow New York City mom-friend Arielle Charnas. You're probably familiar with the name: she's the mastermind behind Something Navy, the incredibly successful fashion and soon-to-be lifestyle brand. Below, Allie and Arielle chat about motherhood, building a brand, and balancing it all. Read the exclusive interview below.

Q: Being a mom is the best job, but it's also stressful. When you add living in New York and juggling a career to the mix, it gets to be quite a balancing act. How do you balance running Something Navy and being a mother of two?

A: I can't say there is one solid answer, which I know isn't what people want to hear! Every day the answer is different and I take each day as it comes. When I'm in the office I try to be 100 percent in the office, and when I'm home with my kids I try to be 100 percent present with them. Obviously, it's not always perfect, and each day is a learning experience. There are days when I feel total mom guilt, but even when I speak to stay-at-home moms I learn the guilt is there for them too. I think it sort of comes with the territory and the only thing I can do is be my best. I also made sure my office was close to home so I'm able to go back-and-forth quickly, and sometimes my kids pop in.

Q: Ruby and Esme have been featured in your content on Something Navy and in your Instagram posts. How do you feel about their exposure?

A: I go back and forth. For the most part, I'm really okay with it—this is a different day and age. Because it's uncharted territory, no one knows exactly how it will affect them down the road, but what I do know is that my husband and I will always love them unconditionally and support them in everything they do. I recently took down their 'Highlights' channel on my Instagram page in an effort to slightly reduce their exposure on my platform. I usually just post videos of them on Instagram Stories and static pictures on my feed. It's my happy medium.

Q: What are you most excited about with the launch of your own line? What types of products can we expect?

A: I'm so excited to create a fashion and lifestyle brand that I know my followers want. I am using all of their feedback, advice, and ideas to help shape the brand. I want them to feel included in the fashion world without having to spend all of their money. My goal is to help them achieve that balance of sexy/pretty and chic/highfashion. For the launch in April, people can expect a highly-curated Ready-To-Wear collection that will be available on our website and in our very first store! We will roll out collections every month or so after that, expanding into new categories as we go.

Q: I've followed you on Instagram since we met nearly 10 years ago, and just recently started following Something Navy's brand page! What was behind the decision to launch Something Navy's own page?

A: I wanted my followers to have a place for the inside scoop on all things Something Navy, as opposed to Arielle Charnas. My Instagram provides a look into my life, but

Something Navy gives followers a look into my brand. If you want to be the first to know about the new line or our day-to-day in the office, following @somethingnavy is a must!

Q: I'm dying to know more! How can people get the inside scoop on your new line?

A: Honestly, follow @somethingnavy on Instagram! I love sharing the behind-the-scenes stories on everything we have going on, from design and product development to partnerships. I also publish personal stories on our website, www.somethingnavy.com, covering everything from dating advice to how I evolved from a small fashion blogger to an entrepreneur. It's a fun mix of me and the girls who make Something Navy so great!

About Allie Rizzo: Mother, model, creative advisor at @babyzeneUSA, and founder of @themotherofdogs rescue.

Appendix 2.35 - Complete text of article on Arielle Charnas talks mom guilt and work-life balance by Allie Rizzo.

MOTHERHOOD

How to Navigate MOM GUILT

BY JENNIFER GALVAN, PH.D.

With the current pandemic and a national shutdown, mom guilt is becoming more and more pervasive. There is immense pressure from society for women to be perfect mothers, beginning with birthing and breastfeeding. With all the recent changes including virtual schooling and the inability for children to participate in extracurricular or social activities, children are home more often, leading to fewer breaks for moms to recharge. Moms are stressed and overwhelmed, allowing habits that may have been prohibited in the past, such as more screen time and unhealthy diets.

As a result, moms are feeling more guilty and critical toward themselves and all the things they “should” be doing differently. Here are some ways to counteract the feelings of guilt that come from unrealistic expectations moms have of themselves to be perfect.

- Redirect negative thoughts to more constructive thoughts. Focus on the value that comes out of the act. For example, “I should spend less time working” can be restructured to “My children are learning from me how to balance work and home life.”
- Practice being kind and empathic toward yourself. Remind yourself that how you’re feeling is normal. You are doing the best you can with the resources available to you, both physically and emotionally. Practice releasing perfectionism and acquiring acceptance for yourself. Through this, you are also teaching your children how to have compassion and self-love.

- Increase time for self-care. Eating healthy, exercising, meditating, and spending time away from your children helps fill your tank, improves your mood, and allows you to be more emotionally available for your kids. Feeling guilty depletes your tank, leading to more negative thoughts and internal conflicts.
- Talk to other moms. All moms are in this together. Most struggle with feelings of guilt and all the “shoulds” that come with parenting. Connecting with other moms normalizes your own experiences and allows you the opportunity to vent and relate with others who are in similar situations.

Putting in consistent effort to work through your guilt will help decrease or even eliminate it. If the feelings becoming overwhelming and you need further support navigating through them, consider reaching out to a mental health professional.

Jennifer Galvan, Ph.D., is a licensed clinical psychologist in private practice in Woodland Hills, California. Dr Galvan has several years of training and experience in psychoanalytic psychotherapy and has been part of many podcasts and seminars around diverse topics. For more information, visit Dr. Galvan's website at www.galvanpsychology.com or follow @dr.jennifergalvan on Instagram.

The content provided in this article is provided for information purposes only and is not a substitute for professional advice and consultations, including professional medical advice and consultation; it is provided with understanding that Poosh, LLC ('Poosh') is not engaged in the provision or rendering of medical advice or services. You understand and agree that Poosh shall not be liable for any claim, loss, or damage arising out of the use of, or reliance upon any content or information in the article.

Up next, be the first to know our weekly content and sign up for our Poosh newsletter.

Appendix 2.36 - Complete text of article on How to navigate mom guilt by Jennifer Galvan, Ph.D.

MOTHERHOOD

How to Avoid HELICOPTER PARENTING

BY JENNIFER GALVAN, PH.D.

Parenting our children nowadays can be the most challenging task we have. Every parent's goal is to raise happy, healthy, and productive adults. As simple as this idea seems, an increasing number of children are moving into adolescence and early adulthood feeling unsatisfied with themselves and their ability to manage their lives. Parents are spending too much time hovering over their children and overprotecting them from the normal stresses and anxieties of life (aka: helicopter parenting).

As a result, children are growing up having no idea how to reorient themselves and go through normal processes after experiencing discomfort or distress. It is important that

parents begin to see this type of parenting as debilitating our children. As we create more space for our children to fall, grapple, and learn, we help them create antibodies that will strengthen their “psychological immune system” for their future.

How can we raise strong, happy, and confident adults?

- Allow your children to experience the normal frustrations of daily life. Give them the chance to try new things, test the limits, fall, and get hurt so that they can learn how to recompose themselves and see that everything is still OK.
- Take one step back. That way, children can experience and learn about the world on their own terms but in the safe and supportive environment that parents have provided.
- Let children separate and individuate. Grant them space to explore their own passions and desires rather than being influenced to fulfill your hopes and needs as a parent.
- Tell kids the truth. Children oftentimes know the truth anyway and feel confused and conflicted when we tell them lies to protect them from suffering. Telling kids the truth instills confidence by showing them that you know they can handle it, increases the trust and bond between child and parent, and increases emotional security.
- Be realistic. Treating your children as though they are the center of the universe may work in childhood but isn't the reality of their life once they enter adulthood. Showing them more realistic perspectives about life will help them once they're older. Saying things like “we don't always get what we want” or “sometimes life is not fair” shows children the reality of adulthood.
- Set limits and boundaries. Many times, parents allow children to get away with a lot because they don't want to see them upset. Children thrive off limits and boundaries. It helps them feel safe and secure knowing their parents have control and are in charge. Saying “you can only have 30 minutes of screen time a day” and following through with the limit will have a much larger payoff for both the child and the parents.

Reference: Gottlieb, Lori. *How to Land Your Kid in Therapy* . The Atlantic (2011): 64-78. Print.

Jennifer Galvan, Ph.D., is a licensed clinical psychologist in private practice in Woodland Hills, California. Dr Galvan has several years of training and experience in psychoanalytic psychotherapy and has been part of many postcasts and seminars around diverse topics. For more information, visit Dr. Galvan's website at www.galvanpsychology.com or follow @dr.jennifergalvan on Instagram.

The content provided in this article is provided for information purposes only and is not a substitute for professional advice and consultations, including professional medical advice and consultation; it is provided with understanding that Poosh, LLC ('Poosh') is not engaged in the provision or rendering of medical advice or services. You understand and agree that Poosh shall not be liable for any claim, loss, or damage arising out of the use of, or reliance upon any content or information in the article.

Appendix 2.37 - Complete text of article on How to avoid helicopter parenting by Jennifer Galvan, Ph.D.

KIDS

5 Toys That Encourage CREATIVITY FOR CHILDREN

BY ALLIERIZZO

Jennie Monness is a friend of mine who opened my favorite NYC play space, Union Square Play, where I often take my son Henry. She's an early childhood educator and guru and mom to a 21-month-old (and expecting her second this month!). She took her decades' worth of knowledge in early childhood education and turned it into a blog called Mo' Mommies. She used her website and social media to show other parents how she educates and cares for her daughter, which turned into meetup groups to connect, support, and empower one another. She went on to co-found Union Square Play, featuring open-ended play materials that help babies engage with each other and learn in the most natural, innate way. Learn her informative insights below.

OK, now help us! How do we play with our babies?

Jennie: I say it all the time, that it truly comes down to what we want our children to get out of their play. Do we want them to be engaged rather than entertained? Do we want them to sit and watch when they play or immerse themselves in learning and fun?

With the right mix of thoughtful toys and "non-toys," you get engaged, focused, and curious babies. You encourage creativity, imagination, and play that is endless. So many people today have an overabundance of toys that their children don't even find interesting anymore. That's why I guide parents on what to get at the right age and even created a storefront on Amazon. I included descriptions to tell you how to invite your child to play with these materials.

To make things even easier to get started, I chose some of my favorites here that will stimulate innovation, imagination, and creativity as your child discovers the ways they can be used. These objects may take a bit of "inviting" on the part of the adult, but most will encourage your child to dive right in!

Chains that hang low

Children of all ages love to make noise, and they love to cause the noise, am I right? A plastic chain is amazing for this. They can shake it (a movement they love to do), and it makes noise depending on the surface they are using. It's a long object they can easily move around, drag, or wrap. The opportunities for play are endless.

Shop: Chain Toys Parrot Multicolor Plastic Chain (\$10)

Pebbles of the Rainbow

I love smaller objects (as long as they aren't choking hazards!) for children because they are choking hazards! for children because they are rare to come by. Part of what they love when they are young is sorting, collecting, and dumping. With this set of colored pebbles, they can do any of that and more. Older children can create patterns with them (you can order pattern cards with them too) while younger children will just enjoy exploring them. Throw them in the bath for added fun.

Shop: Edx Education Junior Rainbow Pebbles (\$25)

Spin it like it's hot

Young children love to see the effect of their actions. Using a salad spinner is a "non-toy" version of a cause-and-effect toy but more open-ended than an electronic or "jack in the box-esque" toy. You can put smaller objects (shells from the beach, rocks collected, or colored pebbles listed above) inside, show your child what pressing down on the lever will do, and watch the magic. Your child will take things in and out and push down over and over to watch it all spin. You can even add mini flashlights inside for an added sensory experience.

Shop: Oxo Good Grips 5 Quart Salad Spinner (\$42)

Spice up your playroom

This spice rack is not only aesthetically pleasing, but it's also a great tool for sorting and fitting things inside. Lay it flat on the ground and invite your child to play by putting a basket of the colored pebbles or any objects that have assorted sizes next to it. Your child will enjoy seeing what fits and what doesn't.

Buddha Babe

What I love about these buddha boards is that they are actually meant for adults too. They automatically calm down both adults and children. For younger children, just skip the brush altogether and let them explore the ways their hands can make marks on the board with just a bit of water. Older children will love practicing fine motor skills by using the brushes. You can just use it on the DL and thank me for adding some calm to the chaos of parenthood all in one purchase.

Appendix 2.38 - Complete text of article on 5 toys that encourage creativity for children by Allie Rizzo.

MOTHERHOOD

Kourt's PREGNANCY SECRETS

BY KOURTNEY KARDASHIAN

Being a mother is my favorite role in life. It gives me purpose, changed me for the better, and made me realize there is nothing else I would rather do with my time. It's been such

an incredibly rewarding experience to watch my babies grow and cross milestones. I get so many questions about my pregnancies, and each one was a little bit different. I personally loved being pregnant and made it a point to really listen to my body.

I wanted to share some of my favorite foods and routines that helped me feel my very best during my pregnancies:

Staying Active

Throughout all three of my pregnancies, I always tried to stay active. My doctor had told me that if I was active before, I could continue the same level of activity. When I was pregnant with Mason, I ran outside (in Miami on the beach for the first few months, and then in L A in my neighborhood) with music every day for seven months. I listened to my body, which at seven months pregnant, I felt was telling me to slow down, so then I would go on walks in my neighborhood, and rest when I was tired.

When I was pregnant with Penelope and Reign, I would do yoga or go on walks in my neighborhood, usually with a stroller, and would do a lot of hills. I was very active with the other kids too, which kept us busy!

When I was pregnant with Reign, I was in the Hamptons during the summer and remember doing the treadmill, StairMaster, and swimming a lot in the pool with the kids along with yoga. I had an amazing yoga teacher, Leila Johnson, who taught me all about keeping my body in balance through movement and healthy recipes.

Ayurveda

Before I was pregnant with Penelope, I got really into the practice of Ayurveda — a traditional medicine system from India that focuses on the mind, body, and spirit. I worked with an amazing Ayurvedic teacher, Martha Soffer, to guide me through the panchakarma cleanse. It helps detoxify the body through cleansing eating practices, massages with warm oil, and healing herb treatments to reset the nervous system and rid the body of what it doesn't need. This is especially important to do before becoming pregnant, according to Ayurvedic traditions, to make a "clean egg."

While I was pregnant with her, I continued with much of the food and nutritional things I learned from Martha, like taking ghee every morning, eating raw veggies in the daytime, and eating cooked veggies at night, including a lot of foods with purpose.

After I had Penelope, I continued by doing mommy-baby yoga classes at my home, having Martha come over for mommy-baby massages, and cooking lots of Ayurvedic foods to nurture my body for after birth and breastfeeding. Applying oil to the body is grounding and relaxing. You can give love both to yourself and to your baby, while also helping to reduce stretch marks, restore skin's elasticity, and relieve pregnant belly itching.

Intention

Leila taught me a really beautiful way of preparing food. She encouraged me to make everything with love, because what you feel while you're cooking becomes energy that gets infused into your food and your system. There was an intention behind every ingredient that went into my meals. She taught me that how I eat my food is just as important as what I was eating, so I always kept in mind that food meant love and nourishment for my baby.

To help generate breast milk, we added pine nuts to my meals. In Ayurveda, they are considered to be the closest thing to mother's milk in the plant world. Ghee, or clarified butter without dairy, is said to have healing properties.

Martha taught me that a baby's brain needs good oils to grow. We may not realize this, but 60 percent of our brains are made of fat—it's the fattest organ in our body.

I made this special rice with snap peas, sesame seeds, and flax seeds because Martha explained that you should "eat seeds to make seeds" (good tip for those wanting to become pregnant). They give our body a strong foundation and vitality to conceive, and keep our babies happy and healthy as they're growing.

Cravings

I stayed away from the typical foods to avoid during pregnancy like sushi, turkey, nitrates, and hot dogs — and I found myself craving frozen yogurt and cheeseburgers.

Every day after yoga, Leila and I would make this afterglow smoothie together, and every ingredient had a specific purpose. It's both sweet and sour to maintain the balance of a healthy mind and body.

In Ayurveda, the sour taste helps increase the absorption of nutrients, energize the body, and help with healthy digestion. The sweet taste nourishes the body, strengthens the heart, and brings happiness to the mind.

We included dates to boost energy, flax seeds as a source of omega-3 for a healthy brain, goji berries for a dose of super foods, cardamom as an antioxidant, a couple drops of rose water to strengthen emotions, pine nuts to support the baby's nervous system and brain development (mother's milk), and kefir or yogurt as a probiotic (at this time I wasn't gluten or dairy free).

Check out the full recipe below that supports fertility and gives a natural glow.

The Afterglow Smoothie

RECIPE TYPE: *Snack*

DIETARY INFO: *Ayurvedic*

SERVING SIZE: *1-2 servings*

TOTAL TIME: *10 min.*

INGREDIENTS:

1/2 cup organic kefir (or 1/4 cup water and 1/4 cup yogurt)
10 organic dates, pitted
1 tablespoon organic flax seeds, ground
1 tablespoon organic goji berries
1 tablespoon of coconut oil or hemp oil
Pinch of cardamom
Pinch of saffron
Handful of pine nuts or blanched organic almonds (optional)
1/2 cup ice
Pinch of vanilla bean powder
4 drops of rose water

INSTRUCTIONS:

Place all ingredients in a high-speed blender and whiz away. You can also add mantra work here. Humming or singing mantras in the kitchen is like setting the intention for your food. This Ayurvedic practice also encourages you to think of someone you love when cooking, otherwise you are just making food.

Appendix 2.39 - Complete text of article on Kourt's pregnancy secrets by Kourtney Kardashian.

KOURTNEY

How I Got My BODY BACK AFTER KIDS

BY KOURTNEY KARDASHIAN

I gained exactly 40 pounds with all three of my pregnancies, but my body and my experience after having each of my kids was so different. I was in a different place mentally, emotionally, and physically, even if by just a couple years.

How I worked on my body after each pregnancy has changed over the years. I wasn't into intense workouts when I got pregnant with Mason, and I wasn't using a trainer at the time. I was very into running, usually a quick two- to three-mile run with some good music in my neighborhood, combined with some at-home workouts and uphill walks with the stroller. I was breastfeeding for 16 months, which really helped me lose weight after Mason.

I recommend breastfeeding for as long as you can, if you can—the first full year. It forces you to eat super clean for your baby, drink much less alcohol and caffeine, and hydrate with a ton of water. It's amazing for the baby's immunity and strength, and it burns around 700 calories each feeding. I especially loved the built-in bonding time throughout the day, especially once I started working again.

If I was ever at a standstill with my weight, I would try to eliminate something from my diet or eating schedule to see how much of a change that made. I know I've mentioned my sweet tooth before, and it was even more intense while I was breastfeeding. I like to have a little dessert after lunch and after dinner, but if I felt my weight plateaued, I would cut out the post-lunch snack and monitor my sugar, which really made a difference.

I was still doing mellow workouts and a lot of yoga after Penelope, even mommy-baby yoga together, but it was harder to get my body back. After about two years, I felt really ready to be in the best shape I could be in and started getting into intense workouts. I did a lot of HIIT workouts, which is High-Intensity Interval Training. It's a lot of short, super intense bursts, like jump lunges, squats, or running up stairs, and it burns crazy calories and builds strength.

It was when I finally opened up to working with a trainer that I really got addicted to this sort of activity. My trainer, Don, is super motivating. He kept me inspired by switching it up every day, and seeing everything around us as a possible workout obstacle. We would do uphill trail runs, and other times he would just show up at my door and make me drop my bag and start running immediately, or run up and down the stairs in my house. Some days we would switch it up and do boxing.

Everything was a workout, which made exercising seem so much more accessible. It gave me a new perspective and kept me on my toes. Sometimes, it was killer cardio, like jump roping for 10 minutes straight. I know that may not sound like much, but have you ever tried it? Try jump roping for just five minutes. It's intense. I have now built up to 20 minutes, which I did this summer in Italy.

A couple months after starting with Don and really getting into it, I found out that I was pregnant with Reign. I stopped the intense workouts but continued to do some easy ones like the StairMaster, treadmill, and some Tracy Anderson dance workouts in the Hamptons, where I spent three months of my pregnancy, mixed with a lot of walks with the kids. I couldn't wait to get back on my high-intensity schedule after the pregnancy, and it felt so good to jump back into it. Especially because I was going through the breakup with Scott, I found that these workouts helped crush my anxiety. HIIT workouts are really what made the biggest difference. It's hard at first, but I noticed once I became used to that sort of intensity, I craved it.

The most important thing is to listen to your body and to do what you're doing for you, not for society's standards of getting your body back, because they are unrealistic. This was my journey. It wasn't until Reign was probably 4 months old that I felt this desire to be in the best shape of my life.

Poosh Product Picks: Kourtney Kardashian

Up next, be the first to know our weekly content and sign up for our Poosh newsletter.

Appendix 2.40 - Complete text of article on *How I got my body back after kids* by Kourtney Kardashian.