DAN BILZERIAN’S “MAN” PROFILE ON SOCIAL MEDIA FOCUSED ON “VEHICLE-MAIDEN-WEAPON” CONCEPTION

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Abstract
Commoditized and commercially blessed female body had become to be presented and used in distinctive forms in daily life. This occasion transformed the conception of “stallion-maiden-weapon” which was associated in traditional societies as a man’s extension of masculinity and property perception, in to “vehicle-maiden-weapon” in neo-liberal and capitalist societies. Social media provides an efficient resource for this modern meta trilogy to be used as a popular masculine image. Dan Bilzerian, who recently arises as a social media celebrity, created a popular masculine image focusing on the conception of “vehicle-maiden-weapon”. Dan Bilzerian reached high numbers of followers by sharing photos of luxury cars, expensive guns and dozens of women photos which expressing sexuality on his social media accounts. This paper examines Dan Bilzerian’s social media performance by using scientific data sets and explains how female body is used and commoditized for building the masculine image.

Keywords: Social Media, Dan Bilzerian, Female Identity, Image

"At, Avrat, Silah" Kavrayışı Bağlamında Dan Bilzerian'ın Sosyal Medyadaki "Erkek" Profili

Özet
Tecimsel olarak kutsanan ve metaalştirilen kadın bedeni, gündelik aktivitelerde farklı biçimlerde sunulmaya ve kullanılmaya başlanmıştır. Bu durum geleneksel toplumlarda erkeğin benlik ve mülkiyet algısının bir uzantısı olarak ortaya çıkan “at-avrat-silah” kavrayışının neo-liberal kapitalist toplumlarda “araba-avrat-silah” kavrayışı olarak değer kazanmasına neden olmuştur. Sosyal medya, bu modern meta üçlemsinin,

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sosyal Medya, Dan Bilzerian, Kadın Kimliği, İmaj

**INTRODUCTION**

Social dynamics which are transformed by the neo-liberal rhetoric, cause the social processes to be characterized as unlimited commercial comprehension. Consumption culture; as a result of commercialized social relations, refers to the individuals who share the values of capitalist doctrine and identify themselves with it; and their social productions to become commercial meta’s. However, the social identity of woman and a certain cost value of her body is progressed in parallel with commercial evolution process. Whereas the women were associated with masculinity in traditional societies, had been started to be associated with a property herewith the spread of commercial practices in social level. This induced the conception characterized as “stallion-maiden-weapon” to be re-valued as “vehicle-maiden-weapon” in the capitalist societies which were configured by neo-liberal policies. Commodified social projections of modern day append a commercial value to the female body by surrounding it via capital to make it an inseparable part of male perception.

In the post-modern era where the dimensions between actual and virtual change, it’s observed that images begun to take place of reality. Social media enabled to build an efficient image and became an attractive center of individual and institutional image activities. In modern societies, sexualized female body has been in demand and been using for building a popular male image. Dan Bilzerian, who has recently became a social media celebrity, can be used as an example for this case. Dan Bilzerian who has much more followers and an efficient social media performance than many celebrities; shares photos of expensive guns, planes, luxury cars and dozens of women photos which expressing sexuality on his social media accounts. Thus, the case of Dan Bilzerian is significant in terms of concreting the concept of “vehicle-maiden-weapon” at building a popular masculine image.
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This paper develops a content analysis in Dan Bilzerian’s Instagram posts in order to explain how the modern “vehicle-maiden-weapon” concept is used to build an effective masculine image and to draw attention to commodified female body’s new area of usage. The analysis allows explaining the usage and densities of “vehicle-maiden-weapon” meta’s with the quantitative evidences. This study holds an important ground in terms of up to date and efficient explanation of the female perception which has been transformed by neo-liberal approaches.

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Woman phenomenon always possesses an effective position in the historical and cultural memory. Whereas the woman is attributed to goddess qua in some societies, she is marginalized as a secondary form of presence in some. As for the traditional Turkish societies, woman always held a different place. In the male-dominated Turkish societies, stallion maiden and weapon figures were important because of the warrior and nomad life style. The maxim “Stallion, maiden and weapon not to be asked” expresses the masculinity in this form of societies (Aksoy, 1998:42). However in this concept, woman is not stated as a commodity, because woman figure is one of the paramount determinants among Turks. (Suleymanov, 2009:14)

With the emergence and growth of capitalism, the woman has become a part of the capital like all other social entities. Because the premise “capitalism” had been derived from the term “capital” (Wallerstein, 2006:11). Capitalization of all social entities had caused the woman to be surrounded as a “commercial meta” (Kanli and Dikmen, 2012:7). Female labor caged into roles like maternity, maid and sexuality in the capitalist societies. “Woman turned in to unpaid home laborer” (Ozturk, 2010:126) Capitalism has become a non-intervention area with neo-liberalism which defends the free market economy and was formed for the aid of 1960’s financial crisis. However, neo-liberalism is nothing more than the interpretation of the liberal doctrine (Kilinc, 2012:148).

The discourse and policies which was spread to the public have expanded the consumable space. The woman has become an unstoppable commercialized object, in other words a meta, by the time of this process. The woman who is consumed as a commodity, reproduces herself constantly and enjoys this
reproduction. Freedom bias of woman always triggers off the endeavour of becoming a meta. Written and visual media has mostly represents exposed female body (Celenk, 2010:235) and encourages them to expose themselves.

Commodified female image alters the traditional concept of “stallion-maiden-weapon” to become a modern meta trilogy of “vehicle-maiden-weapon” in consumption societies. Woman’s transformation to a consumption meta like a car, plane or gun has enabled the man’s expression over the woman identity. Woman’s position in the modern meta trilogy takes different forms than man’s traditional masculinity. However woman contributes to masculinity quantitatively instead of qualitatively. Therefore, man’s aspect on woman becomes equivalent with the aspect on their commodities such as cars, guns or ties. Perception of woman becoming a consumable meta caused the term “maiden” to be reformulated with capitalist senses.

1.2. Social Media: New Area of Masculine Expression

The conception of masculinity whose lines are drew by capitalist doctrine, dignifies the dominant codes over sexuality. When the individual expresses his existence over his sex in the society, he makes the conditions of his existence innately on sex descriptions. Femininity and masculinity which are described in capitalist doctrine, has influence over the self to be perceived and shared. As a matter of fact, “Self as an inseparable part of an identity, expresses a multi-dimensional structure as formed in social relationship practices. The perceptions of a person towards the self are formed by the presentation of it to the social environment.” (Elitas and Keskin, 2014:180)

Today, the meta trilogy of “vehicle-maiden-weapon” makes sense as a part of the perception of masculinity. This modern perception presents the woman as a commodity to the man’s property in the property centralized capitalism. Man who can express himself by consumption, expresses his masculinity by consumption of female body. The commodification in the process of consumption creates a ‘commodity fetishism’ (Marx, 2003:75-87) and reificates the society.

The concept of “vehicle-maiden-weapon” which is rapidly dominating the public sphere also penetrates the spheres to be articulated to the existing structure. Social media is the most well-known one among the new platforms as it is emerging to transform the quality of the society. The term Social Media which includes many platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube,
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Instagram, LinkedIn, means web based and mobile technologies to be used for an interactive dialog (Baruah, 2012:1). Social Media that individuals frequently use in their daily life practices, offers different ways to be socialized and express the self (Mayfield, 2008:5). Today, the use of social media is highly increased as some of the social media web sites are the most visited domains of the Internet.

Instagram as the focus of this study, is a social sharing platform that users express themselves by sharing pictures. Today, with more than 300 million users, Instagram hosts more than 60 million pictures in daily basis (www.instagram.com). In the post-modern societies where the images are popular, social media which offers a platform to share images, comes into prominence. Thus, postmodernism has two important dimensions as reality turning into images and time falling to pieces as a bunch of infinite nows (Fearherstone, 2013:26). The concept of image described as an individual’s imaginary experiences about an object (Williamson, 2001:31), becomes center point of individual and collective expression ways by social quality losing its authenticity. Social Media which offers the required platform and equipment’s to build an individual and institutional image, eases the transfer with its cyber content. Therefore, individuals express their social existence by associating the imaginations of pop culture with the images. In capitalist societies, the woman who turns into an image of ‘sexual commodity’ is located as an innate object of masculinity. As the case of this study, Dan Bilzerian builds and expresses his masculinity by using “vehicle-maiden-weapon” conception.

2. RESEARCH
2.1. Purpose and Importance
The main goal of this research is to reveal how the conception of masculinity which is associated with “vehicle-maiden-weapon”, influences the process of building an image on social media and during this process it will use scientific data sets.

The significance of the research is to bring up the case Dan Bilzerian who builded a popular man profile by the usage of “vehicle-maiden-weapon” conception with expressing himself over a ‘man’ image on social media.

Population and Sample
Social media users who make an effort in building a popular man profile with the usage of conception “vehicle-maiden-weapon” are forming the population of the study. As for the sample, Dan Bilzerian’s social media profile is selected with the method of purposive sampling which is a type of improbable sampling.

In the improbable sampling, sample units do not share an equal chance to designation. As for the purposive sampling, sample units are chosen by the analyst for serving the purpose of research in the optimal capacity (Erdogan, 2007:174,176). Recent popular icon Dan Bilzerian had been chosen because of high number of followers on his social media accounts, density of interaction and the creation of man image to be applicable for the content of the study.

2.2. Scope and Limitations
The study contains image performance of Dan Bilzerian’s Instagram account. Social media performance of Dan Bilzerian is limited with Instagram which is his most efficient platform. Yet another limitation is the time period of research. Based upon the similarity of content, the study is limited with three months of time which covers between 1st of December 2014 and 1st of March 2015.

2.3. Methodology
Theoretical structure was established with the data sets acquired by literature review method within the conceptional framework of the study. Dan Bilzerian’s Instagram posts were recorded for the content analysis of the research. Acquired data sets of the research is analyzed with the content analysis method. Classical definition of content analysis which was described by Berelson is; unbiased, quantitative and systematic analysis of the communications visible content (Bilgin, 2006:2).

2.4. Findings
Dan Bilzerian who becomes a phenomenon with the pictures he shares on Instagram, is one of the most famous persons among today’s social media users (milliyet.com). Bilzerian often becomes the subject of traditional media as an Instagram Celebrity and Instagram Phenomenon. (hurriyet.com). Bilzerian, who describes himself as a professional poker player and actor, has reached high popularity over the fictionalized masculinity with the “vehicle-maiden-weapon”
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images he shares on social media even though there is not any known filmography of him neither he does not take part in traditional media often. Bilzerian expresses his masculinity with the photos of intense wealth indicators, luxurious vehicles, planes, money, guns and sexuality centralized women. In this sense he can be considered successful as he got at high numbers of followers. With the popularity he gets, he also includes posts of some pictures taken with the world stars (Justin Bieber, Beyonce, Miley Cyrus). Bilzerian who has a big beard and muscled body fits the masculine profile of ‘wild’ and ‘vulgar’ and he becomes a strong representative of modern meta trilogy comprehension. With more than 6.8 million followers on Instagram, Bilzerian also has high numbers of followers from Turkey as well.

![Image of Dan Bilzerian with friends](image)

**Picture 1: An Example from the pictures on Dan Bilzerian’s Instagram Account**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cars-Planes</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Guns</th>
<th>Celebrities</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21,9%</td>
<td>36,5%</td>
<td>19,6%</td>
<td>4,9%</td>
<td>17,1%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chart 1: Dominant images in the pictures of Dan Bilzerian posts on his Instagram Account**

In the analysis of Dan Bilzerian’s Instagram account, it is urged upon the content and intense of the posts. The findings of Chart 1 reveals which images fictionalize Bilzerian’s masculinity.
There are 41 posts on Dan Bilzerian’s Instagram account which is examined in the study. While 36.5% of the dominant images were women (15 photos), 21.9% of them are planes / cars (9 photos), 19.6 are weapons (8 photos) 17.1% are sports activities, nature etc. (7 photos) and 2.9% are celebrity photos like Miles Cyrus and Patrick Schwarzenegger (2 photos).

Car-plane and gun photos are the second most dominant use of image right after usage of women photos in the posts. This situation is quite a sign that Bilzerian expresses the masculinity over the modern metatrilogy. He particularly locates the image of woman over an implicit consumption meta of his self. Luxurious cars, planes and expensive weapons as elements of wealth, finalize this imagination.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cars</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Guns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chart 2: Frequency of “Vehicle-Maiden-Weapon” images on Dan Bilzerian’s Instagram Account**

The frequency of “vehicle-maiden-weapon” images is as important as the dominant images among posts. Chart 2 presents the findings of this frequency.

The highest numerical amount of the image among 41 photos that Dan Bilzerian posts on his Instagram account is women. In those photos, there are totally images of 59 women, 10 cars and 13 weapons. By fictionalizing the masculinity over these three images, Bilzerian locates the woman as a consumable meta. The woman gets commodified by losing its qualitative characteristics but standing out the quantitative ones and it reifies. Findings show that commodified woman images contribute the masculine image of Bilzerian only qualitatively. Dozens of women accompany Bilzerian in many pictures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexuality in the Foreground</th>
<th>Sexuality in the Background</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71,2%</td>
<td>28,8%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chart 3: The Presentation of Woman Image in the Shared Pictures**
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It is also very significant which characteristics are in the foreground while the presentation of commodified woman image. In this context, Chart 3 shows the findings on sexuality.

The women who get stuck in sexual identities of capitalist system and associate the social existence with their material (bodily) features, are presented in Bilzerian’s Instagram account in a similar way. Among 59 women in the photos, 42 of them (71.2%) presents their sexuality in the foreground while 17 of them (28.8%) have their sexuality in the background. The woman images in the pictures are positioned to feature their sexuality in general and this way contributes the masculine image of Bilzerian. Dan Bilzerian expresses the sexual masculine image over the woman images which are loaded with sexuality. Instead of building a sexual perception over himself, he chooses to create a sexual perception by associating his sexuality with sexuality of women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appeared</th>
<th>Absent</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60,9%</td>
<td>29,1%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chart 4: Dan Bilzerian’s Appearance in the Shared Pictures**

It is also important if Dan Bilzerian includes himself in the pictures or not in terms of expressing his masculinity. Chart 4 shows his appearance in the pictures.

Dan Bilzerian builds a correlative connection between the images which he positions in the pictures and the masculinity. He appears in 25 pictures of 41 (60.9%) while he does not in 16 (29.1%) of them. While in the most of the pictures, he locates himself in the center of the women or vehicle images, in some of them, he does not include himself at all. However, even the pictures he chooses not to be appeared in, the feeling of ‘property’ is highly felt. Even though he does not appeared in the picture, his property over the images can be easily felt with the fact that he shows off the commodities he owns including women. By presenting the images of the photos which he does not appear in, there is an implication of “belongs to me”. Thus, many users expound the intention in this desired way.

How the followers of Dan Bilzerian interpret the masculine image he tries to build, is also very important. In this context, ‘likes’ and ‘comments’ on Instagram are the features which provides followers to participate.
The interaction between Dan Bilzerian and his followers can be seen as the numbers of likes and comments on the Chart 5. The relationship between the numbers of likes and comments and the dominant images in the pictures reveals the attitude of followers towards Dan Bilzerian’s masculinity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Likes</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cars-Planes</td>
<td>+2 Million</td>
<td>+44.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>+3.5 Million</td>
<td>+142.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guns</td>
<td>+1.7 Million</td>
<td>+32.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrities</td>
<td>+400,000</td>
<td>+14.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>+2 Million</td>
<td>+39.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>+9.6 Million</td>
<td>271.000 +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chart 5: Likes and Comments on Shared Pictures**

When high numbers of likes and comments are taken into consideration, it can be stated that there is a quite effective performance on Dan Bilzerian’s Instagram account. Instagram is a platform where self and images are presented and among the followers of Bilzerian, it is detected that the female users are the most interested ones in the images he associated with the masculinity. The photos with women images get more than 3.5 million likes and are commented more than 142 thousand times. Car-plane images get more than 2 million likes and are commented more than 44 thousand times. As for the other circle of the modern meta trilogy; weapon images get more than 1.7 million likes and 32 thousand comments. The interesting point is that this effective performance continues even for the posts which do not contain car, plane, woman or weapon images. The pictures that Bilzerian expresses sport activities or images from the nature get more than 2 million likes and 39 thousand comments. As for the

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1 The numbers of Likes and comments that Chart 5 reveals have been enregistered in the analysis under date of 27.02.2015. The numbers are continuously updated.
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pictures with worldwide known celebrities, they get more than 400 thousand likes and 14 thousand comments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Guns</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chart 6: The Dominant Images in the Shared Videos**

It is also possible to share videos on Instagram even though it is not a common practice as the pictures. Chart 6 shows the videos of Dan Bilzerian which this study analyzes.

Dan Bilzerian did not share as much videos during this study. Among 3 videos he shares, two of them (66.7%) have the image of weapon in the foreground and one of them (33.3%) has the image of woman. Generally, Bilzerian shares the videos of test-fire with the expensive weapons he owns. He expresses his masculinity over the weapon and women in these videos. Similar to photos, women in these videos are in the foreground with their sexuality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likes</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guns</td>
<td>+418.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67.8%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>+198.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>+616.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chart 7: Likes and Comments on Shared Videos**

Chart 7 reveals the numbers of likes and comments that Bilzerian gets for the videos which has the same types of expression with his photos.

There is also an effective performance in the videos of Dan Bilzerian, although the amount of the video posts are relatively lower than the photos. There are 3 videos in total. The videos with the image of weapon in the foreground get more than 418 thousand like and 18 thousand comments. The video with the image of woman gets more than 198 thousand like and is commented more than 25 thousand times.
CONCLUSION

Scope of the study shows a popular masculine image built with patterning of “vehicle-maiden-weapon” images on Dan Bilzerian’s social media platforms. The conception “stallion-maiden-weapon” which is an inseparable part of masculinity in traditional societies, gained importance as “vehicle-maiden-weapon” with the commodification of commercialized woman meta in modern day. Dan Bilzerian is one of the most popular male models which reflects this comprehension of modern meta trilogy. With his possession of this concept, Dan Bilzerian acquired a large-scale fan base and reputation. Dan Bilzerian reproduces his masculinity by using images of money, guns, planes, cars and commoditized woman.

Results of the screening on Instagram account of Dan Bilzerian show masculine image of Dan Bilzerian is fictionalized by female images whose their ‘sexuality is in the foreground’. Quantitative images of woman represented as a meta which satisfy Bilzerian’s masculinity with losing its qualification. Presentation of woman on traditional media, with producing an effective result in a new sphere like social media and especially on the individual image output reveals the present situation of social change and reification.

Individuals can become celebrity with their masculinity expressed on the social media without having a significant traditional media career. Moreover they can possess a higher performance further than many celebrities. Although Dan Bilzerian does not have any success in cinema, music or science in his past, he overtakes the media performances of many well-known Hollywood and pop stars, only by using his masculine image built on his luxurious life and his usage of the “vehicle-maiden-weapon” image.

Findings of this study reveal that the social media followers of Dan Bilzerian show interest in mainly sexual woman images, luxurious vehicles and weapons. High amount of comments and likes reveals the participation of followers on the consumption process of woman.

Social media enabled a wider and efficient way of expansion to the capitalist doctrine which enures all spheres of daily life by media. As it is seen that profiles like Dan Bilzerian’s, get increased right after his successful performance in several countries including Turkey. Social media does not provide liberty as thought. Because women serve the masculinity and they are stalemated in social media as well as they get stuck in between the metas of
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daily life and get caged into their bodies. As for men, they bless their masculinity over the devaluation of women.

The process which is explained over Dan Bilzerian, clearly reveals the present situation. Woman gets more commodified and devalued every passing day. The interesting point is that masculinity also gets devalued as much as it’s fictionalized over the devalued image of woman.

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