



Psychological, Social and Imaginary dimensions of LGB People who use Dating Apps: A Netnography Approach

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Research questions

- How the relationships lived through the virtual sex markets outlined by the use of dating-online applications (Grindr for gay men, Wapa for lesbian women) help to structure the experience of their own sexuality?
- How can these new tools of socialization represent resources and opportunities to conceive the identity constructions in terms of masculinity and femininity of gay and lesbian people?
- What are the main similarities and differences between gay and lesbian compared to the use of online dating tools, and whether these similarities and differences are attributable to different ways of living one's gender and sexual identity?



Theory references – I

- Queer theory applied to the use of new technologies of communication;
- Sexual Scripts' Theory (Gagnon e Simon, 2005);
- Sexual Market Theory (Laumann e Gagnon, 2010).



Theory References - 2

- Intersectional theory, in highlighting the double stigma condition that homosexual people live, as for the case of lesbian women (Crenshaw K.W, 1989, Wittig, 2001, Chetcuti 2013)
- Masculinity and femininity hegemonic and emphasized (Connell, 2005, Demetriou 2001, Jefferson 2009)



Research Design - I

- The analysis is characterized as an exploratory investigation, highlighting the methodological limitations of those who do research in this field, among the main resistance of homosexual people to be interviewed and to explicitly the dimensions related to their identity and sexual practices and experiences.
- The strategy used is therefore a netnographic approach with a combination of online/offline qualitative techniques, that is, providing a covert mode observation of the users of the two app in a virtual environment, and some semi-structured interviews to privileged testimonials of the context under consideration.

Research Design – 2

- Direct observation of 150 profiles in the Grindr application for G-dating;
- Direct observation of 150 profiles in the Wapa application for L-dating;
- Interviews with 40 men and 40 women contacted directly on the app through an approach in which the researcher revealed himself;
- The context of references is Salerno from August 2019 to February 2020.

Valutation Grid

Profile Analysis

→ *Nickname chosen*

(first names, pseudonyms, including acronyms, names referring to emotions and affectivity)

→ *Profile Picture*

(own face, body parts, stylized photos unrepresentative, no photos)

→ *Socio-biographical informations*

(age, weight, height, distance, residence, etc.)

→ *Types of presentations*

(quotations, general information, news on psychological, social and intellectual aspects).

Semi-structured Interview

Semi-structured interview has highlighted the following features:

- **Identity dimensions** in relation to the use of the App and the processes of definition of one's own self and one's own sexuality;
- **Media consumption** in terms of use, frequency and profile characteristics;
- **Sociality** in terms of lived experiences, friendships, loves in the connection between online and off-line reality;
- **Discrimination** suffered in the online environment for characteristics related to their gender and sexual identity;
- **Judgements regarding the use of the App** as a vehicle of socialization, with regard to the main male models and the most common femininity.

Profile Analysis

Dimension	Grindr	Wapa
Age	55% 18-30 years	43% 25-30 years
Characteristics	Bodily	Psychological
Link of Social Profile (Facebook, Instagram, Youtube)	Average Frequency	Less Frequency

Profile Pictures

Dimension	Grindr	Wapa
Photo Picture	55%	33%
Parts of Body	35%	15%
Other images (tattoo, piercing,)	15%	15%
Subculture Photo	Less Frequency	Average Frequency

Central aspects of the presentations-I

Dimension	Grindr	Wapa
Bodily Aspects	Very Frequency (for example: Hight , Brown, Blonde , XXL)	Less Frequency (for example: Blonde Sexy, Lady)
Psychological Aspects	Avarage frequency (esempio: Sweety, Moony, Sunny, Funny)	Avarage Frequency (for example: Nice, Funny, Sweety)
Intelletual and Culturl Aspects	Less Frequency (for example: Book quotes)	Less Frequency

Central aspects of the presentations - 2

Gender and Sexuality Aspects	Frequency	Frequency
Gender preferences aspects	Very (for example: No feminitiy, no faggot)	Very (for example: find femmninity , No butch)
Jugdments releted use of app	Avarage (for example: chat is used for only sex)	Avarage (for example: Hell Wapa, no monosyllabic)
Sexuality preferences aspects	Very (find master, find slave)	Nothing

Functional Access Gay vs Lesbians



From the analysis of the conversations of the interviews both gay men and lesbian women have emerged different types of functional access to the app:

- For gays the most recurrent sexual script is that which expresses an emphasis on the model of male hegemony, a masculinity that must be constantly confirmed through more sexual intercourse according to the model of the man "hunter".
- The search for sex is the main aspect, therefore in the dating app relationships are less long-lasting and often cease if the transition from virtual reality to online reality does not take place. There are often phrases such as "don't waste time" "just decided". In women on the contrary, the transition from online to offline is lengthened, showing impatience towards intrusive and hasty people.
- However, in a form even if it is residual, some gay men especially young, use the App as a testing ground where to experience aspects related to their sexual identity and create new friendships, reference models or where to find information on sexual practices and protection tools.



- Instead lesbian women, use the app mainly as an emancipatory tool in the absence of other physical and real spaces, where to meet and confront the universe L.
- Women often tend to prefer chats, since in offline reality women in the context know each other through friendly relational chains, this has the limit of greater control over their sexuality and exposure to social judgment, which doesn't happen in chat. Another hypothesis is that this choice may be linked to not wanting to attend groups of women in order not to expose themselves socially and therefore evidence of an internalized homophobia.
- They prefer to find relationships and friendships compared to relationships with sexual purposes → this aspect can represent the adherence to stereotypical view of women, who sees in a bad way those women who freely live their sexuality free from the affective aspects.

Discriminations

Gay



- **Aging** → Youngs vs elder, the elderly is seen as a subject out of the sexual market and therefore above an age range an individual lives a relational, sexual and affective discrimination.
- **Gender Models** → Effeminati vs Macho , Passive vs Active- based on the coordinates established in the sexual scripts.
- Discrimination against **Transgender**

Discriminations

Lesbians



- → ***Female Exaltation vs Male Exaltation***
- → ***Sexuality vs Relationality***
- → Discrimination against ***transgender*** people who are seen as “non women” as “another category”.

Conclusions and Future prospects

Future prospects may include:

- The link between the App and the socialization process to sexuality.
- Sexual scripts and sexual market, use of Apps for transgender people.



THANK YOU FOR ATTENTION



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