On the Grid:
Grindr’s Reconfiguration of Interactions, Relations, and Practices in the Tourism Context

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Rachel A. Katz

School of Social Sciences

Department of Sociology

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ABSTRACT

Gay male dating app users have innovatively adopted Grindr as a means to enhance touristic experiences, a phenomenon coined Grindr tourism. The impacts of this novel set of practices, let alone the practices themselves, are not well understood. Grindr tourism is a product of the dating app's fixture in the landscape of what is often uncritically and broadly called "the gay community." However, discursive imaginings of an essentialized, singular community often used by the gay tourism industry undermine nuanced boundaries and prejudices within LGBT+ spaces. By taking a spatial approach, as opposed to a communities-based one, this dissertation investigates international Grindr tourism's social impacts by inquiring into how it reconfigures interactions, relations, and practices.

The research project examines Grindr tourism through a case study in Tel Aviv, Israel, a popular international gay travel destination. It utilizes a multi-method qualitative interactionist approach. Nineteen tourists and locals in Tel Aviv, Israel were interviewed. Prior to the interview, six also elected to complete audio diaries recording their Grindr routine. Participants were recruited using snowball sampling with multiple entry points: online and via posters displayed around Tel Aviv. Thematic analysis was employed to examine the data.

Following a review of the literature and outlining of the methodology, the PhD dissertation has three empirical discussion chapters. "Coming Out in the Age of Grindr" utilizes Plummer's theory of narratives of life to examine participant biographies of coming out as gay. It addresses how gay selves and identities are formed and built through Grindr. It argues that Grindr allows historical community and travel institutions predicated on physical space to be circumnavigated, and that Grindr also brings about new imagined institutions that people come out into. The chapter "A 'Match Made in Heaven?' Situating Tourists and Locals" outlines practices that constitute Grindr tourism. It analyses tourist-local interactional dynamics of mutual exoticization and eroticization that challenge sociologists' expectations of empowered tourists and exploited locals. Theories of hegemonic masculinities and resistance are engaged to understand how the relations developed between locals and tourists draw on and generate capitals for both groups. The project finds that despite dominant sociological narratives of tourists as only interested in casual, temporary encounters with locals, in reality tourists narrate imagined futures with locals. In turn, locals pursue relations with tourists in order to build on notions of themselves as cosmopolitan. The chapter "Feeling Their Way? Grindr Norms, Etiquette" pinpoints Grindr norms and how they work to create new regimes of online behavior. Users also resist regimes by pushing for a "Grindr etiquette" underpinned by spatial hierarchies predicated on offline space. Theories of context collapse and impression management provide explanations for how people imagine Grindr spatial norms, how norms are negotiated with others, and how these interactions generate affect.

In conclusion, this thesis offers insight into how geolocative mobile technologies impact everyday social relations at transnational and local levels. In the case examined, Grindr tourism perpetuates inequalities by invoking hegemonic masculinities, sexualities, and bodies through the ideal of Mizrahi masculinity. Yet at the interpersonal level, Grindr is availed by users as a site for resistance to norms deemed problematic. Fundamentally, Grindr illustrates how people narrate and negotiate selves within digital spaces that that permeate past online-offline divisions.

DECLARATION

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

1.1. On the Grid: An Introduction

The daily practices of digital communication by gay[1] men on Grindr raise significant questions for the sociology of everyday life. Dating apps like Grindr have far-reaching alternative uses which extend beyond only dating, and the presence of such apps for social purposes ranging from tourism to coming out highlights their unique role in generating everyday social connections. This study investigates social impacts of Grindr, in part analyzed through the case of Grindr tourism: the use of the gay dating app Grindr as part of a touristic experience. Grindr tourism can be a quotidian interaction such as getting a one-time restaurant recommendation from a local, or it can be a rendezvous for a sexual encounter. Such multifarious interactions make Grindr ripe ground for rich and nuanced sociological inquiry into how digital technologies have altered the quality and formation of all kinds of relations.

Given the ubiquity of Grindr use among gay men, contemporary ideas of gay selves may be influenced by conventions on the app. When Grindr is considered with the tourism context as a starting point for inquiry, Grindr's impacts on other arenas of personal life such as coming out as gay, notions of masculinities, and communication are made visible. Among the many possibilities for interactions it affords, Grindr facilitates inexpensive travel experiences that are mediated through the use of digital

[1] **A Note on Language:** Throughout this thesis, the terms LGBT+ and gay are used. LGBT+ is an umbrella term that includes a range of queer identities that fall under the plus sign (Opening Doors London, n.d.; The Proud Trust, n.d.). I also sometimes refer specifically to the sexuality with which participants self-identify. In this research project it happened to be the term gay. When referencing literature, labels utilized by the respective scholars are adopted.

technologies. These technologies enable tourists to independently engage with local people and places with newfound immediacy. As travel destinations respond to a growing influx of outsiders through international tourism, widely popular dating apps pose concerns for locals. This raises the question of how locals respond to outsiders who use gay dating apps as part of their touristic experience, and how these responses illustrate wider areas of social life Grindr impacts. Relational dynamics are potentially negotiated on Grindr, drawing up new lines for how norms and boundaries are expressed specifically in tourism contexts and more broadly in terms of interpersonal communication. Inquiring into Grindr opens up observations about other aspects of personal life Grindr touches on, a range of facets which will be explored in the following pages. This thesis elucidates the ways in which Grindr shapes biographical narratives of coming out, relations between tourists and locals, and conflicting norms on Grindr by investigating the main research question: *how does Grindr reconfigure people's interactions, relations, and practices?*

The research presented in this thesis contributes to sociological understanding of digital technologies' implications for everyday interactions and relations. Grindr is a dating app aimed at gay, bisexual, and queer men launched in 2009 (Grindr, n.d., "About Us"). With over "three million daily users in 196 countries" (Grindr, 2017), Grindr is a notable fixture in the global landscape of dating apps. Many users spend a significant amount of time and energy on dating app interactions, with an average of 54 minutes spent per day on the app" (ibid.). Grindr prioritizes images, geolocation, and mobility; it exhibits a grid of pictures of people to chat with that are displayed based on geolocative proximity (see section 1.3.). As the user moves through space, the options of which people to engage with shift. Grindr potentially impacts tourist and local experiences of physical destinations by introducing virtual spaces. It

reconfigures spatial norms, interactions, and practices because locals and tourists must negotiate potentially different norms in shared Grindr spaces.

The title of this PhD is *On The Grid*, an idiom used to describe the interconnected delivery of energy and electromagnetic signals across a wide area. I take this as a metaphor for the social connections invisible on the ground to non-users, where, unbeknownst to them, a network of rich interactions proliferates through the digital realm.

1.2. Why Tel Aviv?

Tel Aviv is an ideal fieldwork site for examining the nuanced, layered practices of Grindr overall, as well as the specific instance of tourism. Grindr tourism is such a common phenomenon there that it was even referenced during Eurovision 2019 when Tel Aviv hosted the event. Presenter Assi Azar joked about Grindr when promoting the Eurovision app by stating, "As you know we have all kinds of apps on our phones – apps to get around, apps to order food, a certain app which is on fire right now because of all the handsome tourists in Tel Aviv'" (Kelly, 2019). The app "on fire" due to the handsome tourists is clearly Grindr. This allusion to Grindr tourism is obvious to anyone "in the know" watching the program. It exemplifies locals' excitement over potential tourist-local connections on Grindr.

As a diverse city with a multitude of gay establishments such as bars, community centers, and annual events, Tel Aviv is a popular destination for gay tourists (Misgav, 2015: 1214, 1224). At the 2017 Tel Aviv Pride event, there were an estimated 30,000 tourists in attendance (Botterill, 2007). Moreover, large numbers of tourists visit year-round at increasing year-on-year rates, numbering 4.5 million in

2019 (Raz-Chaimovich, 2020). The financial impact of the tourism industry in Israel is huge; tourism is economically significant to the country. In 2017-2018, nine out of ten international visitors to Tel Aviv traveled independently (Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality, 2018a), coming to Tel Aviv on their own rather than through tour groups or organizations. Some of these tourists are using dating apps to arrange their own travel experiences, as will be unpacked in this research project. Additionally, three out of four visitors to Tel Aviv are non-Jewish and come from varied countries of origin (Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality, 2018a), meaning that tourists are often different to the local population, which is predominantly Jewish (Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality, 2018b). The large numbers of tourists visiting year-round indicate that practices of navigating tourist-local relationships at both the personal and societal level are part of everyday experience in Tel Aviv. Much of the initial contact between gay tourists and locals looking to meet takes place on Grindr.

Studying Grindr in Israel also benefits local LGBT+ people and organizations, as they still face discrimination in the country. There have been protests of and violence toward gay people at Gay Pride parades (Sela, 2005), including the 2015 murder of 16-year-old Shira Banki at Jerusalem Pride by an ultra-religious extremist (Sterman and Pileggi, 2015). Yet Tel Aviv is also known to tourists and locals as the "gay capital" of the Middle East (Misgav, 2015: 1214), furthering a global narrative of Israel as an ideal tourist destination for visiting gay spaces. Israel is somewhere where locals may experience hate-motivated violence because of their sexuality: this reality is potentially lost on tourists who come to experience the gay beach and club scene. By understanding locals' experiences of their everyday Grindr interactions in Tel Aviv more deeply, it is hoped that this research will enhance understanding of inequalities that affect everyday lives, whether at the national or international level.

Thus, this research not only contributes to the understanding of how Grindr may affect tourism practices, but it also offers insight for local LGBT+ organizations into quotidian social life in Tel Aviv and the norms that circulate.

Notably, Grindr has been studied primarily from the perspectives of the Global North: in particular, North America (Blackwell et al., 2014; Brubaker et al., 2014; Rice et al., 2012), Western Europe (Bonner-Thompson, 2017; Jaspal, 2017; Licoppe et al., 2015; Shield, 2017), and Australia (Albury and Byron, 2016; Race, 2015). Van De Wiele and Tong, as well as Birnholtz et al., cover unspecified international locations (Birnholtz et al., 2014; Van De Wiele and Tong, 2014). Much is still unknown about how dating app practices may differ across varied national contexts. Scholarship on more diverse and non-Northern contexts of app use, such as Israel, is necessary to gain insight into potential inequalities present in dating app spaces, especially in international or tourism contexts. Countries may have different Grindr norms, which impact relations in Tel Aviv by repeating global country power dynamics on the small stage of Grindr.

Before investigating how Grindr in Tel Aviv shapes interactions, relations, and practices, Grindr itself must be explained. In the next section, I provide a thick description of Grindr's features. As this research examines Grindr as it was in 2016-2018, with data collected in 2017, the following description is specific to this period. Changes may be made to the software in the future; the implications of this are discussed in Chapter 8. Grindr's technological features enable particular social outcomes, as will be further investigated in Chapter 2. Delineating Grindr's features clarifies how the user interface works and what interaction options are available to users. All of these elements work to contribute to an understanding of the layered practices of Grindr use in Tel Aviv.

1.3. Behind the Mask: Grindr Explained

To contextualize Grindr, this section explains Grindr's history and use through example images taken from the app's press kit. Grindr was launched in 2009, targeting gay, bisexual, queer and non-identified men seeking to meet other men. Its creator Joel Simkhai was born in Israel and immigrated to the United States as a child (BBC editorial team, 2018). Grindr was bought by a Chinese parent company called Kunlun Group in 2016, and it fully took control of the app in 2018 (Fox, 2019). Although it was created in the United States, the app is used around the world. On its website, Grindr declares itself "the world's largest social networking app for gay, bi, trans, and queer people" (Grindr, 2019a). While trans women and non-binary people are on Grindr, it is culturally known as an app used by gay men. This was reflected in the study's participant sample, outlined in Chapter 3.

Dating apps are distinct from online dating websites. Many scholars broadly use the term "dating app" to refer to Grindr and other apps like Tinder and Bumble (Albury et al., 2017; Blackwell et al., 2014; Ferris and Duguay, 2020; Wu and Ward, 2018). I argue that dating apps as a whole have similar traits to each other, traits that differentiate them from online dating. Dating apps like Grindr diverge from online dating websites due to their combination of image-basis, geolocation-basis, and mobility. Dating apps were created to be used as smartphone applications, and many do not have corresponding websites where one can find romantic partners. Many older online dating websites relied on compatibility algorithms (Strimpel, 2017), none of which proved successful (Finkel et al., 2012a, 2012b). Meanwhile, dating apps rely on users themselves selecting whom they wish to talk to. Traditionally, online dating

websites require users to be at home on their computers, whereas apps permit users to log on while on the move. Dating websites tend to include lengthy text on profiles, while dating apps usually have only a brief profile tagline text, if any. Grindr should not be confused with online dating websites.

Dating apps also incorporate features that extend beyond dating, such as offering a "looking for friendship" category on profiles. Grindr is used for many reasons such as chatting, organizing dates, or arranging sexual encounters (Brubaker et al., 2014). When creating a profile on the app itself, one can state what one is looking for from a drop-down list of the following: "chat, dates, friends, networking, relationship, and right now" (a euphemism for a casual sexual encounter). A mainstream cultural assumption is that people use Grindr to arrange casual sex. Yet studies indicate people use it for multiple reasons (Albury et al., 2017; Brubaker et al., 2014; Shield, 2017; Wu and Ward, 2018), many of which are evident in the aforementioned "looking for" choices. This project focuses on how Grindr, and the use of it abroad, shapes relations formed through it.

With reference to the images of the app in Figures 1, 2, and 3 as well as my anonymous research profile on the app, which was only used to look at the structure of the app, I will now describe what Grindr looks like from a user perspective. The images from Figures 1, 2, and 3 originate from the 2017 Grindr Press Kit and depict models rather than actual users.

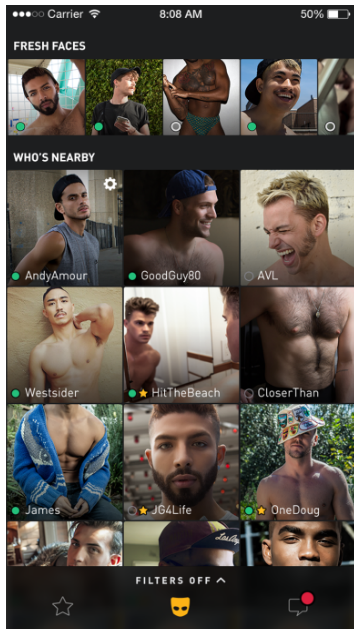

Figure 1: Homescreen Grid

Figure 2: Profile

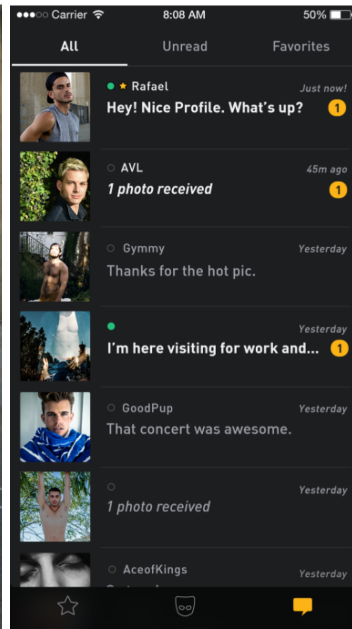

Figure 3: Private Chat

Images from Grindr (2017) Press Kit. © Grindr.

When one initially opens the app, one is met with the homescreen (Figure 1), also called "the cascade" (Brubaker et al., 2014: 376). Both terms will be used interchangeably in this dissertation. The homescreen consists of a grid of other users' profile pictures. The aesthetic of Grindr's homescreen is busy, with many tiny profile pictures creating the appearance of tiles on a black background screen. This "busy" homescreen differs from other popular dating apps like Tinder, which have more minimal and aesthetically "sleek" homescreens that only display a single profile at a time. On Grindr, a round green circle on the lower left of each picture indicates the user is currently online on Grindr. Thus, the possibility for immediate communication is overt from the onset. One can scroll down the homescreen and see more users in the area (the radius of which is set by the user) cascading on to the grid. On the top of the homescreen, there is a banner differentiating new users to the area (termed "Fresh Faces" in Figure 1) from the rest of the main grid. Grindr generally prioritizes profile

pictures according to their proximity to the user. Therefore, there are evolving possibilities of people to look at and engage with that shift as one moves through space.

The visual, immediacy, and novelty cues are core to the experience of Grindr. Brubaker et al. point out that "seeing and connecting with new ties is at the core of Grindr's design" (2014: 376) because the first screen that users see is the homescreen grid revealing numerous new people in the area. Visual images are emphasized initially. Novelty is also prioritized, as new faces are displayed at the top of the screen. Immediacy is emphasized by the green online now button visible from the homescreen, tied in with proximity as one's geolocation is listed as "number of feet away." Grindr's features directly promote the qualities of its spaces.

One can move "deeper" into the homescreen grid of profiles exhibited in Figure 1 by tapping on a user's picture to see their profile (Figure 2). This makes the profile—a single picture—fill the screen and shows how many feet away the profile's owner is. Grindr profiles have both customized "fill in" aspects and also pre-determined aspects controlled by the app's drop-down menus. The categories of information users can choose to reveal on their profiles stem from drop-down menus that indicate age, ethnicity, height, body type, preferred sexual positions, what people are looking for, and relationship status; however, whether or not this information is exhibited on a profile depends on if the user has chosen to include it. Most information categories one can list on his profile, such as ethnicity and sexual position, are selected from a drop-down menu of options created by Grindr. In contrast to choosing among pre-selected options, users can also write a brief statement about themselves that is displayed on their profile. These are custom-written "taglines." The pre-selected options sometimes do not provide useful information in

particular contexts such as Tel Aviv. Tourists will often declare themselves as such through the tagline and include flags to indicate their country or language.

When one chats with someone on Grindr, it opens up a sidebar screen (Figure 3). One can start a private online chat with other users by tapping the chat button of the profile of the person one is interested in talking to. Sliding open the sidebar, one can view past conversations with other users, start new ones, or look at "starred" profiles again regardless of their distance away. In the private chat conversation, users can exchange photos, texts, audio messages, or share their location. It only takes two taps on the screen to begin a private conversation with someone new.

One can choose to "star" a profile by tapping on the star icon (Figure 2). Doing so allows someone to look at that user's Grindr profile any time they like, regardless of his distance away from the other user, in the "favorites" tab of the chat sidebar (Figure 3). Mobility is important to the Grindr experience, as users will have different people on their homescreen grids as they move around. Connections can potentially be lost if a chat is not begun immediately and one user is mobile. If one wants to be able to access someone's profile but has not had the time or inclination to start a chat while the profile is on the grid, one can return to the profile by "starring" it even if the geoproximity changes.

Grindr is free to use and depends on advertising for support. The advertisements can be at the bottom of the homescreen grid as one scrolls or they can be pop-ups. Users can elect to pay for a more exclusive premium version of the app under what is called a Grindr Xtra subscription. Some benefits of Grindr Xtra include no ads, access to more users, advanced filters like being able to filter by "online now," "photos only," (i.e., filter out anonymous profiles indicated by a lack of photos*)* and/or people one has not chatted to yet. As of 2019, the US version costs $19.99 a

month, with discounts if one subscribes to multiple months. There is also an even more premium version called Grindr Unlimited, which offers the same advantages as Xtra but also includes unlimited profiles on the grid (it advertises that with Grindr Unlimited, you can “scroll forever”), being able to see who viewed you, and the ability to unsend messages. Unlimited costs $39.99 a month, with a similar discount for subscribing for multiple months. Notably, it also includes a feature that “detects other users’ language and translates it” (Grindr, 2020), recognizing the app’s use in international contexts. Although the free version of Grindr offers plenty of features, some users choose to pay for enhanced ones.

Grindr’s overall aesthetic foregrounds eroticism. Not only is there a black background, but the icon of the app is a gold and black mask. The homescreen (Figure 1) is peppered with photos of shirtless men, some of whom have cropped their faces out of the picture. These torsos are mixed in among close-up face photos (Figure 1) similar to profile photos on other social media platforms such as Facebook.

Furthering Grindr’s sexual reputation, the app also provides sexual health information. Occasionally, the app presents a pop-up window emphasizing health interventions close to a user’s current location. For example, the pop-up will inform of free testing for HIV and STIs at local clinics, how to recognize abuse, or offer resources to answer sexual health questions. Health information pop ups on Grindr have offerings in multiple languages, showing that they cater to users who may be abroad. The geolocation aspect of Grindr determines which local services will be offered, making it possible for any user, including tourists, to access local health services if needed.

Theoretically, anyone with an email account can make a Grindr profile. Some users choose to maintain anonymity. They select images on their profile of just their

body parts without their face, or they leave their profile pictures blank. People do so for many potential reasons: they may not have come out as gay, are expressing desire for a stigmatized sexual fetish, or may want to have an anonymous sexting conversation. The choice of anonymity or revelation reflects tension over Grindr's use, as will be discussed further throughout this thesis.

Some people use the chat feature of Grindr to have sexually explicit conversations and exchange nude photos (also called sexting). Others just have a friendly chat. Users are also able to choose usernames, something explored as a potential way to broadcast their intentions with names such as "Cuddles," "Let's Play," and "No Names" (these are paraphrased examples selected from my researcher Grindr homescreen grid). Even with features of profiles that reveal intention such as the username or "looking for" categories listed on a profile, the ambiguity and differing motivations can cause a mismatch of relational agendas.

Despite Grindr's facilitation of once-stigmatized practices such as casual sex and once-stigmatized non-heterosexual identities (both of which are arguably still stigmatized), for many Grindr is not synonymous with inclusivity and the freedom to be oneself. Grindr is known for generating boundaries of exclusion and inclusion, and therefore shapes interpersonal relations by the way it socially positions people. A culture of open prejudice is infamous on Grindr (Baggs, 2018; Chan, 2017; Wheeler, 2018). In addition to the aforementioned preferences page where age, ethnicity, body type, weight, and sex position preference can be privately specified in order to modify a better-tailored cascade, users often post preferences on their taglines in ways that are prejudicial. A well-known disparaging phrase is "No fats, femmes, or Asians" (Chan, 2017; Dinh, n.d.; Flores, 2016; Han, 2008; Taylor, 2018). The Grindr environment,

depending on the location at which Grindr is used, highlights the fact that real-world inequalities about bodies and identities also circulate in Grindr spaces.

Grindr, as an app, works in tandem with the materiality of the mobile phone. This alignment shapes what interactions are possible. The mobile phone's materiality incorporates a camera in the hardware, allowing for a photo to be taken at any moment and sent to others in the private chat. Grindr, by way of the smartphone, is portable and can be taken anywhere. It fits into the palm of one's hand and one can use it one-handed while multitasking. The aesthetic configurations of Grindr structure particular layers of use. Brubaker at al. (2014) locate the homescreen cascade of images (Figure 1) as the first layer presented to users, and the settings and profiles of the individual user (Figure 2) as conceptually lower or deeper layers since those features need to be uncovered by tapping buttons on the borders of the main homescreen. The uploaded images on the homescreen cascade are user-created, but the tiled mosaic of profiles, black and gold motif, and app features are designed by the company. Multiple actors are involved in what the spaces of Grindr look like, which will be further addressed in this dissertation.

Grindr has the potential to change perceptions and experiences of space, which has implications for tourism. For example, many people use Grindr while abroad and interact with locals through it, whether that interaction is a conversation in order to find out the best local gay club or an interaction aimed at arranging sex. Additionally, some people use Grindr in straight bars, creating a gay layer to the otherwise heteronormative space. Thus, Grindr affects space by reconfiguring spatial boundaries, with implications for tourism practices. The next chapter will delve further into the literature on tourism and spatial practices in order to ground this research on Grindr.

1.4. Thesis Structure and Main Research Question

Little is understood about the uses of dating apps for social relations beyond dating. These alternative uses may have wider implications for interactions, relations, and practices among Grindr users. Grindr's features as a virtual space (introduced above and discussed further in Chapter 2) where users come together make possible certain interactions and relations within Grindr spaces, including those that can be considered "Grindr tourism."

This dissertation explores how Grindr in Tel Aviv affects relations, especially among tourist and local users, and how Grindr's impact on these relations speaks to wider social issues involved in everyday practices of technology, by inquiring *how does Grindr reconfigure interactions, relations, and practices?* Conflict exists within spaces of Grindr and in the spaces with which Grindr overlaps along the lines of who is present, how people understand the spatial norms, and how understandings might differ. Grindr also reconfigures norms, narratives, and practices by situating them in virtual spaces. If people hold divergent notions of norms, the formation of interactions and relations may be affected. All of this means that Grindr might affect not only tourist-local relations, but also locals' relations with each other within Grindr and within Tel Aviv itself. Therefore, although the tourism context is part of the inquiry, much attention is also devoted to understanding norms and interactions in the context of everyday Grindr use. Grindr potentially shapes identity by influencing relations with others who are gay and ideas of what being gay means, as will be further examined in Chapter 5. New practices may be emerging from Grindr use that are yet to be studied, although they might be bearing on people's everyday lives already. In

the thesis, observations about coming out, the tourism context, and conflicts over Grindr norms lend insight into wider social implications of Grindr use.

Following this introduction to the research and Grindr, Chapter 2 presents a review of the relevant literature focusing on three main areas of inquiry. First, sociology of tourism scholarship is outlined, covering postcolonial theory and the construction of the figure of the gay tourist by the Gay Tourism Industry. Second, boundaries of community and space, relying on distinctions of public/private, physical/virtual, and identity, are debated. Third, theories of technology are appraised in reference to Grindr, including actor-network theory and affordances theory. The literature review grounds the spatial approach to Grindr developed in this project, which counters a community-based one that implies a homogenous global gay Grindr community. The research questions raised by the literature review are discussed at the end of the chapter.

Chapter 3 covers the methodology used in the project. A qualitative, interactionist approach was taken. The theory behind the practices, relations, and interactions that form the basis of the project's research question are outlined. This project used semi-structured interviews and audio diaries to generate data. Thematic analysis was employed to examine the data. Methods, ethical considerations, and limitations are also addressed in this chapter.

Chapter 4 "Participants' Biographical Contexts" introduces five participant biographies that are typical of the study sample. Key biographical contexts such as coming out stories, tourist-local dynamics, and perceived Grindr norms are set up in this chapter and returned to in the discussion chapters. Perspectives of tourists, locals, and immigrants are introduced.

The dissertation has three empirical discussion chapters. Chapter 5 “Coming Out in the Age of Grindr” utilizes Plummer’s (1995) theory of narrative to examine participant biographies of coming out as gay. Based on interview and diary data, it refutes assumptions of coming out as a singular, linear, event occurring during adolescence, and instead asserts that coming out should be conceptualized as a bundle of practices, all of which are emergent. It addresses how gay selves and identities have historically formed and been built through varied practices and interactions enabled by technologies. It investigates contemporary building of gay selves and identities through subthemes of naming, Grindr practices, and myth-making derived from data. Chapter 5 argues that Grindr allows some institutions to be circumnavigated, but different imaginations of Grindr also bring about new institutions and norms people come out into.

Chapter 6 “A ‘Match Made in Heaven?’ Situating Tourists and Locals” looks at tourist-local dynamics from a relational sociology theoretical framework, drawing on Crossley (2010), Foucault (1990), and Plummer (1995). It outlines what practices constitute Grindr tourism and analyzes tourist-local dynamics of mutual exoticization. In the Tel Aviv research context, tourists and locals value a hegemonic Mizrahi masculinity. Theories of hegemonic masculinities and resistance are engaged to understand how the relations developed between locals and tourists draw on and generate different capitals for both groups. Tourist narratives of relations and local narratives of relations are compared.

Chapter 7 “Feeling their Way? Grindr Norms, Etiquette, and Affects” uses theories of context collapse (Marwick and boyd, 2011) and impression management (Goffman, 1959; Ellison et al., 2006) to explain how people imagine Grindr spatial norms, how norms are negotiated with others, and how these interactions generate

negative affect. The chapter outlines the often-controversial interactional Grindr norms of ghosting, transactional language, and unsolicited sexual photos. Distinction is made between norms versus etiquette. Norms are also resisted through a push for Grindr etiquette underpinned by spatial hierarchies based on offline space.

Chapter 8 concludes the thesis. It ties together findings from the previous chapters by arguing that Grindr is a lens to understand society and that Grindr reveals everyday life. It addresses contributions to knowledge and how studying Grindr can lend insight to other social media platforms. Overall, this investigation uncovers everyday use of Grindr in the navigation, development, and configuration of everyday social relations.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

There is no current research that specifically addresses the phenomenon of Grindr tourism. In the absence of a discipline-wide theoretical approach to Grindr tourism, various literatures from multiple subdisciplines, ranging from tourism studies to theories of space, are combined for their applicability to the question of how Grindr reconfigures practices, interactions, and relations. Reconciling these variegated studies with many different methodologies and foci represents an analytical challenge. Therefore when reviewing the literature, tourism was looked at distinctly, then gay communities, followed by literature engaging with technology in general and Grindr more specifically. Such an approach resulted in a literature review that is divided into three parts. In each of these three areas there are competing perspectives to draw upon to interpret the areas of social life impacted by the phenomenon of Grindr tourism.

The first of the three parts of the literature review focuses on tourism. The chapter begins with a discussion of sociology of tourism approaches for studying Grindr tourism. It considers the benefits and drawbacks of the adoption of postcolonial theory in sociological studies of tourism as a way to understand the dynamic between tourists and locals. Literature on sex tourism is considered for its applicability to Grindr tourism, as Grindr is sometimes used to arrange casual sex. However little research in sociology of tourism considers *both* gay tourists and gay locals; the few studies that do operate within a limited community-based framework and are therefore addressed in the second part of the chapter. The discussion then

turns to the theories of homonationalism and so-called “pinkwashing,” which have often been applied to the context of tourism in Israel.

Attention is then directed to the Gay Tourism Industry (GTI). The market research scholarship in this domain helpfully pinpoints gay tourists specifically. The industry generates the discursive figure of a “gay tourist,” predicated on assumptions that such a person has large amounts of disposable income and engages in sexuality-based travel. Literature on the travel motivations of tourists who are gay is drawn on to examine this cultural narrative promoted by marketing research and institutions. The GTI promotes the figure of a transnational gay tourist, predicated on the sense of a global shared gay community. This leads to the second part of the literature review.

The second part of the literature review considers community frameworks that are often utilized to understand both gay tourists and Grindr. Notions of “a gay community” historically tied to physical spaces are framed in relation to Grindr. Scholarly debates over boundaries and norms of community are presented. Taking Grindr into consideration, this part of the chapter examines whether the framework of community, or a Grindr community, is theoretically appropriate for this research. It then considers the merits of a theoretical framework that prioritizes space.

The third part of the literature review debates theoretical approaches to technology that have been used to conceptualize technologies similar to Grindr. Frameworks of actor network theory and affordances are presented, with their merits and drawbacks discussed in relation to the thesis objectives. Literature that hones in on Grindr’s affordances, such as its private chat feature and prioritizing of geolocation, is presented. The details of the spatial approach adopted in this project are outlined at the end of the chapter, along with research questions the literature review leads to.

PART ONE: TOURISM

2.1. Sociology of Tourism's use of Postcolonial Approaches

Postcolonial perspectives are usually mobilized by sociologists to understand international tourism from Global North/Western countries to Global South/non-Western countries (Haldrup and Larsen, 2009; Wei et al., 2018). These perspectives, when used in sociological literature about tourism, often frame the tourist as Othering the local, with the tourist representing the privilege of the Global North (historically termed the West or the Occident) exploiting the Orientalized Other (Spivak, 1988). The way tourism sociology has adopted (a version of) a postcolonial theoretical approach presents both benefits and limitations for the research context of Grindr in Tel Aviv.

In tourism sociology, there are often assumptions that the tourist has more power than the local, leading to a dynamic of exploitation (Aitchison, 2001; Clancy, 2002, 1998; Mansvelt, 2005). The assumption of a unidirectional flow of power based on exploitation in the tourism context stems from the influence of postcolonial critical theory, which will now be briefly summarized. Othering is the condition of difference (Given, 2008) and sociological research has been concerned with the process by which certain social groups become Othered. Said is often deployed as a starting point in tourism sociology to understand tourism from a postcolonial perspective (Aitchison, 2001; Selwyn, 1996). Said describes Orientalism as a particular form of Othering that stems from Occidental (also called the West or the Global North)

representations of the Orient. The Occident creates a distinction between itself and the Orient, framed within a dichotomy imagining a rational, ascetic, Christian West and a barbaric, sensual, exotic, Islamic Orient (Said, 1979). The Orientalist style of thought is a way by which the Global North engages with "dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (ibid.) through Foucault's (1990) notion of discourse as a form of power. Orientalism is a discourse through which European culture was able to discipline, manage, "and even produce the Orient politically, sociologically, …[and] ideologically… during the post-Enlightenment period," according to Said (1979). Said argues that this discourse operated as a function of colonial power (Said, 1979; Turner, 1989: 630) by way of knowledge, and therefore truth claims (Foucault, 1990).

Orientalist discourses extended to the social sciences. Turner argues that "the orientalist paradigm was a persistent feature of social science which construct the orient (as stagnant, irrational, and backward) as a contrast case to explain the occident (as changeful, rational, and progressive)" (Turner, 1989: 630). Using an Orientalist lens, foreign bodies and sexualities were also seen as excessive. The Orient was constructed through stereotypical visual discourses and narratives about sensualism, sexual excess, and fantasy (ibid., 632). Thus sensualism, religious morals, climate, and country were all intermingled in the idea of the Orient. These frameworks came to bear on visual narratives and discourses perpetuated through colonial postcards and paintings, much discussed in postcolonial scholarship (Alloula, 1981; Behdad, 1990; Burns, 2004; Goldsworthy, 2010; Turner, 1989). Representations of these themes in postcolonial images brought together visual narratives of body surfaces and sexual fantasies in the construction of the exotic Oriental abroad. As will be shown later in

the thesis, an Orientalist visual narrative that is particularly relevant to this research is that of the sensual, eroticized Other.

From a broad postcolonial perspective, power relations between the Global Northern tourist and the Other are inherently imbalanced and exploitative, as the tourist will be unable to experience the local in the foreign country without the hand of colonialism and Orientalism shaping his involvement. This avenue of thinking is evident in sociological studies of sex tourism that adopt (a broad interpretation of) postcolonial theory discussed in the following section. Yet examining sex tourism in conjunction with Grindr tourism highlights how postcolonial dichotomies, as they have been used in sociology of tourism, may not easily map on to liminal places such as Tel Aviv (further discussed in Chapter 6). It opens up the complexity of relations that form within contemporary tourism contexts.

2.1.1. Sex Tourism

Within much of the sociology of sex tourism, particular focus has been paid to heterosexual activities and a unidirectional dynamic of exploitation, whereas the potential for sex as part of a romantic tourist experience, or romance as part of a tourist experience, is ignored. Non-users may assume Grindr tourism is sex tourism due to Grindr's cultural reputation as an app to arrange casual sex. Yet research indicates the reality of use is more complex than just arranging hookups (Corriero and Tong, 2016; Goedel and Duncan, 2015; Licoppe et al., 2015; Ong, 2017; Shield, 2017). Although some may assume tourist-local relations on Grindr are inherently sexual and exploitative, scholarship indicates more complex intimacies and dynamics of power can be involved when tourism and sex overlap.

One notable focus of the literature of the sociology of tourism is the exploitative potential of international sex tourism. Trauer and Ryan (2005: 484) evidence the primacy of sex tourism in tourism research, remarking that sex tourism "has attracted past academic concern…particularly with reference to the exoticism of the 'other,'" alluding to the use of postcolonial framing in tourism research. Clancy (2002: 72-73) defines international sex tourism as when people travel "abroad and exchange… something of material value in return for sexual services from members of the host country." Tourism sociology is concerned with how sex tourism exemplifies a broadly postcolonial vision of the flow of power highlighted by Clancy's vision of a unidirectional exchange of resources in exchange for sex from locals.

Perceptions of the tourist-local dynamic as part of an inherently exploitative global commodity chain, shared by Clancy (2002) and Mansvelt (2005), frame tourists' treatment of locals as a form of consumption. Clancy "suggests sex tourism has become the ultimate form of 'modern' tourist consumerism, where the 'sexual conquest of host women, men, or children' becomes another tourist souvenir" (Clancy, 2002: 73; in Mansvelt, 2005: 109). Locals are cast as souvenirs: things, rather than people, to be consumed. Tourists' sexual conquest of locals under sex tourism is considered not only objectifying, but also the ultimate form of tourist consumption, implying that all tourism involving sex is objectifying. Envisioning locals as passive objects to be consumed is a limited view of the flow of power and the dynamics of social interaction. Bauer et al. support this in their work on sex tourism and romance tourism, finding that "the nexus between tourism and human sexual behaviour extends far beyond the narrow confines of the commercial sex trade" (2003: 5). Conclusions about sex tourism, which are particularly "North-South

in nature" (Clancy, 2002: 73) are applied to myriad forms of tourism, thus ignoring possibilities for sexual encounters between tourists and locals to be mingled with other kinds of tourist-local interactions and intimacies.

Sex between tourist and local does not necessarily equate to a relation of unidirectional exploitation. Despite the transactional nature of sex tourism (sex as "being able to be bought," according to Trauer and Ryan (2005: 484)), Clancy points out that it is not as clear cut as it first seems once situational sex tourism is contextually situated. Sex tourism does not only include "travelers who go abroad for the explicit purpose of purchasing sexual services," but also includes "those who might be considered situational sex tourists" (Clancy, 2002: 72-73). Situational sex tourists, according to O'Connell Davidson (1996: 43-44), "often do not consider themselves as sex tourists at all, yet find "girlfriends" (or boyfriends) during their…stay abroad" (Clancy, 2002: 72-73). These situational intimate connections are considered by some to be examples of romance tourism (ibid.). When sex happens as part of tourism, it can be situational and occur as part of a romantic connection. Understandings of locals' exploitation by the sex tourist ignore the fact that many relations tourists have with locals—while potentially still being exploitative—are situational and involve multiple nuanced interactions. Acts ranging from casual sex to friendships formed as a result of happenstance meeting could involve different power dynamics and modes exploitation that simplistic unidirectional models assume. There is a failure to recognize that many tourist interactions with locals are situational, and when sex happens, it often overlaps with other relations between tourists and locals. The complexity of power in these varied relations deserves further attention.

Historically in sociological literature, sex tourism and other types of tourism have been approached separately; the co-occurrence of sex within other tourist-local

relations and interactions is not accounted for. Yet in practice, it can be difficult to separate out clearly exploitative “sex tourism” from other forms of tourism when sex occurs situationally. Bauer et al. (2003) argue that the landscape of tourist-local relations involving intimacy overly distinguishes between sex and other forms of tourism. When situational interactions between tourists and locals are considered, the dynamic of sex can potentially shift away from being merely transactional and exploitative if both the local and tourist have romantic feelings for each other. This of course depends on the tourism context: particularly the resources and capitals at play between the tourists and locals.

The presence of new technologies within tourism experiences blurs boundaries of types of tourism even further. Grindr enables possibilities for many different forms of interaction (Corriero and Tong, 2016; Goedel and Duncan, 2015; Licoppe et al., 2015; Ong, 2017; Shield, 2017). As a mediator for tourism among its many possibilities for different social encounters, it offers sexual-romantic interaction blended together. This is exemplified by the app’s “looking for” category; one can declare he is looking for any combination of “chat, dates, friends, networking, relationship, and right now.” Bauer et al. point out that tourism (particularly the tourism industry) is a facilitator for various sexual and romantic social encounters between partners, claiming that tourism offers a liminal state, setting, context, and even venue (Bauer et al., 2003: 10). With independent travel being commonplace today (in 2017-18, 9 out of 10 international visitors to Tel Aviv traveled independently according to the Tel Aviv-Yafo municipality (2018a)), Grindr is a major way gay tourists encounter gay locals. Grindr allows for the formation of concurrent intimacies between tourists and locals: friendships, sexual flings, or relationships. Depending on the context of nationality, Grindr tourism may

reconfigure tourist-local power in ways that are not consistent with the postcolonial framework of unidirectional tourist exploitation. This idea is expanded upon in the methodology by drawing on Foucault's (1990) theory of power flow. By looking in detail at the spatial contexts of Tel Aviv and Grindr, this thesis opens up the possibility of intimate connection that sociology of tourism's views of sex tourism do not allow for. New resources, norms, boundaries, and relations come into play. Grindr tourism necessitates an analysis of tourist-local power dynamics that is not dominated by assumptions of unidirectional tourist exploitation.

In sum, tourism sociology approaches adopt a broad postcolonial theory to frame the tourist as exploiting and Othering the local, a unidirectional approach which overlooks wider relations at play between tourists and locals. This adoption is exemplified by the large focus in the sociological tourism literature on international sex tourism (Pruitt and LaFont, 1995; Taylor, 2000; Trauer and Ryan, 2005) as a manifestation of postcolonial exploitation. The way the theory has been implemented is arguably un-nuanced, in terms of both the tourism literature's interpretation of postcolonial theory (for example, not highlighting postcolonial scholars' theories of ambivalence (Bhabha, 1984) and double consciousness (Fanon, 1987)) and interpretation of tourist-local social relations. However, the literature raises the important issues of tourism's social implications. Postcolonial theory finds that in general, as a result of postcolonialism tourists have unequal material, socio-cultural, and mobility resources (also called capitals) compared to locals, and therefore the power dynamics are always exploitative to an extent. The issue of unequal economic, social, and cultural capitals (Bourdieu, 1984) is built on throughout this dissertation, particularly in Chapter 6. Postcolonial perspectives attempt to divine the cause of social inequalities, particularly inequalities between subjects from different nations.

Tourist-local interactions and relations brought about through Grindr may highlight reconfigurations of social inequalities worth exploring. Although traditional tourism sociology approaches to Orientalism cannot be straightforwardly "applied" to contemporary tourism and specifically Grindr tourism, the eroticization of the Other and Othering should not be wholly rejected as insignificant. They can provide insight into how desires and fantasies play out among tourists and locals. While we should rightly question a broad postcolonial framing (as it has been used in the sociology of tourism) of the empowered, dominant tourist taking advantage of the local in a display of unequal and unidirectional power, we should also recognize that postcolonial perspectives on Orientalism have much to offer in terms of exotic visual narratives and fantasies of the eroticized Other.

Despite postcolonial theory's useful insights on Othering and capital, many sociological analyses of tourism rely on overly simplified understandings of inherent dichotomous inequalities. Such understandings elide the nuance of locales that do not neatly fit into a Global North-South dichotomy. Looking at Grindr interactions in Israel opens up the liminal locations and touristic experiences in the world that complicate established ideas of an exploiting tourist and disadvantaged local. Adopting the terminology of Orientalism, Israeli society has cultural traits that are similar to both Western/Global North and Eastern/Oriental. Immigrants from both the Global North and South live there, in addition to tourists and locals. It has "Orientalist" aspects tied to its Middle Eastern setting and history, but also Western ones with its ties to Global North countries. It has a capitalist society with *kibbutz* collectivism roots. Multiple religious orientations flourish there, some of which are associated with the West (secularism and Christianity) and others with the East (Judaism, Islam, Baha'i, and more). Tel Aviv's liminal context means that

dichotomous Orientalist understandings of tourism are not always translatable to Grindr tourism despite Israel's Middle Eastern location. The liminal context of Tel Aviv is further expanded on in Chapter 6. The Tel Aviv Grindr context of this research challenges the universality of arguments of tourist dynamics of exploitation.

2.1.2. Homonationalism and so-called "Pinkwashing"

Homonationalism is a concept in postcolonial theory specifically related to sexual identities, national identities, and postcolonialism, first advanced in Puar's (2007) book *Terrorist Assemblages*. The applicability of both this theory and the theory of pinkwashing for the research context will now be analyzed and sociologically framed, beginning with an explanation of the theories and scholarship. This is followed with consideration of "on the ground" actors to whom such theories may arguably pertain. Finally, I step back with a sociological reflection on the discussion.

Those supporting the theory define homonationalism as how, in transnational contexts, neoliberal Global North states tend to increasingly adapt their policies in line with LGBT+ liberal issues/claims in order to frame themselves as progressive, especially in contrast with "backward" Other states. These Others, often Islamic states, are discursively framed as homophobic (Puar, 2007) which is in line with Orientalist depictions of (Global) Southern men as feminized, Othered subjects not in keeping with "progressive" norms of the West (ibid.). This seeming progressiveness is signified by nationalized acceptance of homosexuality through law and State institutions. Puar argues that through homonationalism, Islamophobia is brought into queer politics, especially in relation to queer organizing in the context of the Israeli-

Palestinian conflict (Puar, 2011: 134). Puar claims that there is a rise of xenophobia toward minorities communities within the State, and that this has a relationship with a rise in acceptance of gay rights (136). Taking on a postcolonial and cultural theory approach to consider homonationalism in the Dutch context, Bracke (2012) builds on Puar by considering how political discourses of Muslim women in Dutch society align with and differ from treatment of gay men in both "multicultural" and "civilizing/saving" politics (239, 244-45).

Likewise, Kuntsman (2009) addresses homonationalism in the Israeli immigrant context by looking at how "forms of violence constitute…the sense of sexual, ethnic and national belonging of Russian-speaking, queer immigrants" (2-3) to Israel through analysis of a website forum dedicated to this group, of which she is a member. She is primarily concerned with the State and how individual belonging is framed in relation to it (i.e. homonationalism), taking on a critical, postcolonial approach to her analysis. As a scholar-activist (Prologue, xiv), she is interested in cyberspace as a space for queer immigrants' "community organizing" (1) and how online spaces are made. She does so by using frameworks of discursive "figures" that embody narratives of violence and prompt online discussion (e.g. Shadow by the [Gulag] Latrine, Jewish Victim, etc.). The figures that circulate in such spaces broadly fall under 3 types: "haunting, border, and flaming" (217). She argues that the construction of gay Russian immigrants' senses of national belonging to Israel stems from violence in various arenas, including military service (220) and past traumas of the Holocaust and gulags. There are ambiguities and ambivalences around belonging to different identities, and figurations of each one can involve different, sometimes contradictory, narratives (216).

Some scholars interested in the overlap of sexuality and national contexts

(including Puar) take homonationalism as the starting point for critique of the Israeli State for what they deem "pinkwashing." The term was first coined in the US context in a 2011 New York Times op-ed by humanities scholar Shulman (2011). Pinkwashing is defined as the Israeli State's supposed discursive overstatement of Israel's "gay-friendliness," especially through travel industry advertisements partially funded by municipal and federal governments, as a way to disguise, hide, or distract from state oppression of Palestinians. Hartal (2019) examines homonationalism and the Israeli organizations within the Israeli Gay Tourism Industry (further addressed in the next section) on a municipal scale (Tel Aviv) and a state level (Israel) through "expert interviews" with municipal leaders and fellow LGBT+ community activist organization leaders. She takes a "political economy" (1149) approach and argues that increases in commercial gay tourism brings about fragmentation in Israeli LGBT+ "community" (1150) because the municipality funds the Gay Travel Industry and Pride parade (which bring in huge revenue to the city), while at the same time cutting funding for local LGBT+ organizations. This is in an environment where some legal cases concerning LGBT+ family rights are also unsuccessful for claimants (ibid.). She argues that organizations are forced to abide by a State agenda in order to receive State funding, at detriment to LGBT+ "community" (because she considers the attitudes and interests of the "community" as oppositional to those of the State). Hartal considers this evidence of homonationalism and pinkwashing. When the hypocrisy of economic support for LGBT+ tourism initiatives but not LGBT+ community activist organizations was raised to them, municipal leaders agreed to more funding for local organizations, although not as much as they asked for (ibid.). Hartal offers interesting insight from the perspective of an activist-scholar involved in conventional "LGBT+ community" organizations in Tel Aviv, which will be further

examined later on. However, she implicitly adopts a community framework, the limits of which is—for this research—is discussed in part two of the literature review. Now that the theories of pinkwashing and homonationalism have been explained, the theoretical usefulness of these frameworks for this research, from a sociological standpoint, will be considered.

As a sociologist interested in situated everyday practices, interactions, and relations at a micro-level scale, I am persuaded by arguments made by scholars who critique the applicability of homonationalism and pinkwashing for such concerns. Ritchie and Currah critique the theory of homonationalism based on its "oversimplification" (Ritchie, 2015: 632) and "fetishizing of the state" (Currah, 2013) at the expense of understanding situated, context-specific, and site-specific governmentality (Currah, 2013; Ritchie, 2015). Currah (2013) argues that, as noted above, homonationalism relies on fetishizing the state as "a totalizing logic, an ordered hierarchy, a comprehensive rationality, a unity of purpose and execution." Ritchie builds on this by critiquing both the concept of homonationalism and its manifestation of "pinkwashing" by arguing that they are conceptually flawed due to the fact that they overly rely on their "gay" urban contexts in the US and Europe, and suggests a shift away from "the totalizing theory of homonationalism…to a more complex and contextualized focus on the ways in which ordinary bodies are regulated in their movements through time and space" (Ritchie, 2015: 616), including a contextual focus on "the everyday realities of queerness in Israel-Palestine" (621-22). In his research, he does so by tracing individual experiences of checkpoints and spaces and how they highlight shifting forms of embodiment based on identities, thereby offering nuanced insight on Palestinian-Israeli tensions, and connections, with spaces coded as gay. Ritchie goes on to observe that "how and why images of gay-

friendly Israel—or, their inverse, images of Palestinian homophobia—circulate with such frequency in urban gay centers in Europe and North America…tells us very little about the everyday realities of queerness in Israel–Palestine" (ibid.), unlike his interviews with actual habitants of the region. This thesis is concerned with exactly the gap missed when only looking at visual discourses and narratives about State actors: the everyday realities of being gay in diverse, international spaces like Tel Aviv. Homonationalism is therefore not a fitting theory for this research.

Likewise, accusations of Israeli pinkwashing are refuted by academics such as Ghosh (2019) and Blackmer (2019), as well as some LGBT+ Israeli NGOs and charities. Skeptics of the idea of pinkwashing in the Israeli context argue that accusations of pinkwashing conflate mutually exclusive things—state oppression and sexual rights—and/or that advertising industry focus on gay rights is not the same as hiding the conflict (Blackmer, 2019; Slepian, 2012; Slepian, n.d.). A Wider Bridge, an American-Israeli LGBT+ organization, also critiques the implication within pinkwashing ideology that "learning about and supporting….Israel's LGBTQ communities and their progress in the struggle for equality and inclusion…will somehow…dull people's ability to think about…the Israel-Palestinian conflict" (Slepian, 2012). The tying of the two exemplifies that "Israel's only identity is defined by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict" (Al-Noor and Adelstein, 2016) which negates the contradicting "complicated, messy, inspiring, and exhilarating" (Slepian, 2012) richness of everyday social life on the ground in the country. As Blackmer argues, "accusers toss everything together and assert that one cannot laud queer Israeli rights or any other worthy achievement because of the Occupation, which remains the only meaningful facet of Israeli life" (2019: 176).

Delving deeper into these critiques, Blackmer (2019) directly addresses

perceived fallacies in arguments put forth by Puar (2011) in response to the reception *Terrorist Assemblages* (2007). According to Blackmer, (2019: 176)

> Puar contends that "Israel has simply lied" about its gay-friendliness "to disguise the truth that it is nothing but a nation mired in militarism and invidious conflict with the Palestinians, which it accomplishes through projecting homophobia and "backwardness" onto them while denying Israeli oppression of queer people and the fashion in which colonialist oppression of the Palestinian people render them homophobic by degrading their cultural norms and values.

In light of this abbreviated summary, one cannot excuse a dismissal of pinkwashing as simply a lack of understanding of the concept. Blackmer contends that the argument of pinkwashing is a "fallacious non-sequitur," as "applaud[ing] gay rights in Israel does not mean that one denigrates Palestinian culture or denies "the multidimensionality of Palestinian society" (176). Furthermore, pinkwashing arguments "deliberately" and "unethically" use the straw man fallacy (177), as

> it remains unclear how touting the record of Israeli LGBT rights necessarily involves denying the existence of homophobia in Israel, the ethical obligation to provide more funding for the underserved sectors of the Israeli queer community, or the fact that Israeli organizations engage in outreach efforts to LGBT Palestinian groups and individuals, or help to build independent queer Palestinian organizations such as al-Qaws (177).

To put the point differently, public promotion of Israel's LGBT+ rights, spaces, and cultures does not preclude sympathy for, or activism on behalf of, Palestinian causes.

Building on this, let us step away from the academic discourse to instead focus on actual actors involved in the promotion and rejection of pinkwashing narratives. Accusations of pinkwashing are disconnected from the social reality that many community, political queer organizations in Israel are openly themselves radical,

leftist critics of Israeli state policies toward Palestinians (such as A Wider Bridge, (Slepian, 2012)), in addition to many LGBT+ activist individuals with associations with "community organizations" (e.g. Hartal and Kuntsman). These networks of individuals and organizations are by no means mere tourism marketing puppets, and promoting pinkwashing narratives that such voices are silenced or intentionally covered up by an all-powerful Israeli State does not reflect the field site. A Wider Bridge maintains that pinkwashing relies on "mythic" conclusions and correlations, pointing out that pinkwashing "rhetoric…proceeds from imagined motives to imagined outcomes, projecting invented intentions onto Israelis and North American supporters of Israel, including many non-Jewish allies in the LGBT community" (Slepian, 2012; n.d.). Pinkwashing rhetoric has actually served to silence LGBT+, Jewish, and Israeli voices who are critical of the State but in disagreement with pinkwashing, such as those of leftist LGBT+ activists, when they are forbidden from LGBT+ spaces by BDS activists- an all-too frequent occurrence which has been well-documented (Al-Noor and Adelstein, 2016; Blackmer, 2019; Ritchie, 2015; Slepian, 2012).

Additionally, some Israeli LGBT+ individuals and organizations also reject allegations that increased visibility and acceptance of homosexuality in Israel—and promotions of it in international tourism marketing—is inherently pinkwashing when the history of LGBT+ legal rights in the country are considered. Celebrating the social progress that has been made in terms of LGBT+ acceptance is not exclusive from, nor does it necessarily deny, the fact that there is still progress to be made. As is often repeated in Tel Aviv and elsewhere, "Pride is a protest." That is to say, LGBT+ pride parades, although often treated as celebrations of achieved rights, originate in protest and are still ongoing sites of continued protest for LGBT+ rights (Hartal, 2019: 1159).

This is a point many concede, according to critiques by Hartal (2019) and Puar (2011) of ongoing LGBT+ rights challenges in Israel. Few Israelis would say that LGBT+ legal equality has been achieved (Hartal, 2019). Like many other countries, acceptance of homosexuality in Israel is not yet widespread, with backlash from ultra-religious groups (Blackmer, 2019; Hartal, 2019), among others. This has resulted in violence at Pride parades in Israel, including the murder of 16-year-old Shira Banki at Jersualem Pride in 2015, which caused national outrage (BBC editorial team, 2016; Sterman and Pileggi, 2015) mentioned in the thesis introduction. Nevertheless, Israel increasingly, and Tel Aviv in particular, is a relatively safe place to be gay (which was commented on with appreciation by both local and tourist participants). The picture is complicated, and the nuanced experience of being gay in different spaces and times will be explored in this thesis, especially in Chapter 5. But to summarize the above: the pinkwashing and homonationalism theories, which are subsets of a larger agenda, were not reflected among participant data despite my sensitivity to the issue and listening out for any manifest or latent expression on these topics. This conclusion is independent of whether these theories are valid or not. I will expand on this point next.

Within this context, it may be illuminating to consider, with the sociological perspective that runs through this thesis, what social objectives and narratives are facilitated by the theory of pinkwashing. Whatever merits there may be in the homonationalism and pinkwashing theories, it is important to situate the viewpoints and metanarratives such theories stem from with regard to the research context of Israel, as that in particular seems to animate use of such theories. State, NGO, and partisan actors exploit topics to foster political ideology aims, and LGBT+ rights are no exception to this rule. Today, in part because of innovations of technologies of

persuasion such as social media, areas of personal life not conventionally political (with the caveat that of course everything can be considered political at some level) have become mobilized as sites for the insertion of ideological agendas, yet this level of politics is beyond the scope of this thesis. Because the field site is Tel Aviv, Israel, people of all persuasions will seek to import their concerns in this domain as well. However, political mobilization of "gay rights" for attacking or defending various regimes for countries around the world are limited and seem to be highly selective in terms of which countries are chosen as targets (Weiss, 2012). To those against Israel (e.g. BDS supporters—see Blackmer (2019)), even a positive shift toward increased gay acceptance (albeit with a long way to go) is somehow inverted to signify something negative: an insidious and intentional cover-up of the conflict. In other words, when it comes to Israel, the thinking goes that anything good is actually just something bad in disguise (Blackmer, 2019: 172). Taking the inverted-negative stance may not serve the interests of gay people who are struggling for their rights, and may in fact have the reverse effect by creating oppositional interpretations. But it does serve objectives of those who are reaching beyond these issues to seek ways to create animosity towards Israel. Not acknowledging this broader objective is a disservice to understanding what is transpiring beneath the words and ideas used in this field.

It is, from a sociological standpoint, worth observing the great attention devoted to Israel when it comes to the use of the theories of homonationalism and pinkwashing, which are viewed as "particularly relevant" to the Israeli context. After all, it is only one small country (and the only Jewish State), which serves as the national homeland for an historically severely repressed minority, with an (albeit recent) positive record on gay rights, and like all other countries still has a long way to go in that regard (Blackmer, 2019; Hartal, 2019; Slepian, 2012). As clear from the

discussion above, this is certainly not denied or hidden by anyone familiar with local Israeli issues, nor any tourists who make contact with local people, local LGBT+ institutional spaces. In fact, as this research will show, Grindr tourism gives tourists opportunities to converse directly with locals about the political situation and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, who have a wide range of opinions. Such exchanges are by no means censored by the Israeli government. Nor was this the case in the past before the advent of Grindr, when gay travel was more institutionalized and involved contact with local LGBT+ charities and organizations, such as in the instance of gay Taglit-Birthright trips. Israel has been focused on so ardently in scholarship of pinkwashing and homonationalism while other countries are not held to the same standard. For example, as Blackmer observes, pride parades in the US are not considered direct, insidious attempts to hide US mistreatment of Native American groups (Blackmer, 2019: 176).

In terms of social science approaches to inquiry, this research takes an open perspective that draws on the themes generated from participants' narratives and approaches the topic at hand with intellectual curiosity (Weiss, 2012), rather than a "social activism" or "action research" approach that is predicated on an activist viewpoint with aims to achieve (overt) political ends, which can arguably close off experiences and directions of inquiry if they do not fit the political agenda (ibid). Returning to my previous discussion of Kuntsman, like many other scholars in the area (e.g. Hartal, 2019; Puar, 2011) Kuntsman admittedly grounds her work from her personal perspective as a "radical left-wing activist" (Prologue, xiv), stating that her research "offers a reading of Israeli nationalism and of queer migranthood that does not necessarily reflect the state of mind of all the participants of the website" (ibid.) she studied. She qualifies her interpretation as "opinion" that "might be neither

popular, nor representative," but rather as an "intellectual endeavor" deriving from a "political responsibility" based on her personal identity as a "queer immigrant" (Prologue, xvii). This is perfectly fair, but it is important to consider the stance and set of values she's speaking from: an anti-normative set of values, and an academia to further activist agenda set of values. This is not my epistemological and sociological empirical approach, and not what I bring into my sociological investigation. Nor is this thesis conventionally political, as I will comment on further later on. Rather, my aim is to reflect the common themes and narratives (with focus on exceptions and counternarratives as well) highlighted by the study participants and fairly present their experiences, then analyze them sociologically based on how they can shed new light on contemporary theories, practices, and social life (further outlined in Chapter 3)

Having given much attention to these theories for several years, it is clear that in the instance of this study they fall outside the main thrust of the research. Theories of pinkwashing and homonationalism imply cohesive intent given to state actions, and consider the State as the primary social actor worthy of focus at the expense of understanding contextualized, situated experiences of governmentality (Currah, 2013; Ritchie, 2015). However, this thesis is not concerned with macro-level state actors; the unit of analysis is micro-level, interpersonal relations and practices among individuals who interact on Grindr, as defined in the research questions. Although some discussion of how tourist-local interactions and relations fit within institutional frameworks like the international travel industry, Grindr the company, or "gay communities," comes forward in participant data and is therefore addressed, State politics and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not the concern of this thesis and therefore this thesis refrains from explicit intervention in debates about pinkwashing and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The concepts of homonationalism and

pinkwashing did not come forward in participant interviews or audio diaries (despite me leaving ample openings during interviews with informants). That confirmed my conclusion that these theories, whatever their merits, do not seem germane to the situation as perceived by the people—the topic at hand. As this dissertation is in the pragmatic area of sociology of everyday life, overtly political narratives are beyond its scope. Just as I do not take on the pinkwashing or homonationalism perspective, I do not take up a Marxist-Feminist approach nor a Functionalist approach as the data from the project do not speak to such frameworks. Plummer notes:

> When I read some of the wilder textual analysis of the queer theorists or hear of the fragmentation of sexual identities championed by postmodernists, I do sometimes wonder just whose worlds I am entering. But I also have gnawing feeling that they are very much removed from the ordinary and everyday lived experiences of sexuality that most people encounter across the world in their daily lives (2003: 521).

This is a field-grounded exploration, and many sage sociologists like Plummer have warned empirical researchers not to go beyond what their data say. Therefore the theories of homonationalism and pinkwashing will not be discussed in this thesis beyond the above analysis and situating. Yet from this analysis lessons emerge: one should be circumspect when addressing claims about the applicability of high-level transnational political strategies of States in terms of their purported effects on quotidian life. In this vein, the next section builds on the review of tourism literature by looking at how the figure of the gay tourist has been framed by the Gay Tourism Industry compared to actual tourism practices outlined in tourism scholarship.

2.2. The Figure of the Gay Tourist

In addition to postcolonial framings of tourist-local dynamics within tourism sociology, the Gay Tourism Industry market studies on gay tourists also promote rigid ideas of tourists. I capitalize Gay Tourism to refer to the complex marketing, travel, and research institutions that overlap to create an industry. In the following section, the discursive figure of the "gay tourist" is unpacked as a historical tying of sexuality to particular travel institutions. The figure of the gay tourist touted by the Gay Travel Industry marketing implies that people are motivated for tourism based on sexuality alone, yet as will be shown, the scholarly literature challenges this assumption.

2.2.1. What is the Gay Tourism Industry (GTI)?

The capitalized Gay Tourism Industry indicates the nexus of tourism and marketing companies, which together espouse narratives of an affluent gay tourist. For example, Community Marketing Inc. is an American company that works closely with other LGBT+ organizations such as the International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association to plan travel based around gay identity. It performs market research on what it calls "the LGBT market segment" (Community Marketing & Insights, 2017). Institutionalized alignments of such research companies, travel companies, and organizations illustrate what I term the Gay Tourism Industry, or GTI. The "traditional" gay travel industry includes gay-themed tours of destinations and gay cruises. Community Marketing Inc., in providing research for other LGBT+ organizations and travel companies, contributes to a self-perpetuating Gay Tourism Industry that prioritizes sexuality as a motivation for travel.

The Gay Tourism Industry historically affected practices of travel, encouraging gays and lesbians to experience travel offerings based on sexuality. In earlier decades this was welcomed because homophobia was rife (Hughes, 2002; Pritchard et al., 2000; Vorobjovas-Pinta and Hardy, 2016). The GTI enabled convenience in determining whether the tour, hotel, or travel destination would be gay-friendly through guidebooks and arranged tours. However, with increasing social acceptance of homosexuality in many societies, gay-friendliness is an implicit expectation and has fallen in tourists' rankings of importance on tourism and hospitality surveys (Community Marketing, Inc., 2016).

The CMI's website front page (as of 2017) declares that "the facts are plain: LGBTs travel more, spend more and have the largest amount of disposable income. Undaunted by events in the news, LGBT travelers make up 5% to 10% of the travel industry—or more" (Community Marketing & Insights, 2017). CMI goes on to declare that they have been part of the longstanding institution of GTI, "helping tourism and hospitality industry leaders master the subtleties of this market since 1992" (ibid.). The CMI exemplifies the Gay Tourism Industry's reliance on particular notions of the affluent gay tourist that emerged in America in the 1980s. On the basis of this notion, marketing companies have run off with the concept of the gay tourist as a way of making money through cruises, tours, and city destinations aimed at people who are gay. Clancy theorizes that the global tourism industry has "become increasingly stratified" and "segmented" (2002: 72), explaining targeted bids for the proverbial pink dollar.

CMI's claim on LGBT+ consumers encapsulates a range of assumptions about LGBT+ tourists, such as the belief that LGBT people "have the largest amount of disposable income." Yet despite their assurance that "the facts are plain," this market

research company relies on assumptions created by questionable research from the 1980s that has constructed the modern profile of the gay tourist as an affluent individual with above-average levels of disposable income. Gay consumers, in particular couples, were abbreviated in the industry as DINK to indicate their supposed dual income and no kids (Trihas, 2018). The claim that gays are wealthier and have more disposable income has proven spurious.

The origins of the debated DINK began as a result of a Simmons Market Research Bureau study in 1988 (Baker, 1997; Badgett, 1997). The bureau conducted a study of readers of gay and lesbian newspapers in the United States and reported "an average per capita income of $36,800, versus $12,287 for the population as a whole," (Baker, 1997: 12) in addition to having more university degrees and more professional or managerial positions than the rest of the American population. Baker points out that further surveys supported this idea, such as the November 1990 one by Overlooked Opinions. Baker (1997) and Badgett (1997) both attribute the Simmons study as "the original source" of the notion that gay people are "unusually affluent and well-educated" (Baker, 1997: 12). However, Baker argues that "in spite of the numerous misuses to which the information has since been put, this survey never purported to say anything about the gay community as a whole" (ibid). Despite the Simmons study not purporting to be representative of all gay Americans, it was taken as such.

Badgett (1997) shows that because the Simmons study and others like it at the time used samples based on readership of gay newspapers, they are biased. She provides two studies with "representative" samples that contradict income myths about gay people; one using data from the US census (Klawitter and Flatt, 1994) and one from her own research in the US (Badgett, 1995). The studies resulted in the

findings that men and women in same-sex couples do not earn more than men and women in heterosexual married couples; in her own 1995 study, after taking out factors that affect income such as race and gender, Badgett found that overall gay men actually earn less than straight men. Baker (1997: 13) argues that studies uphold the pay myth only with white gay men.

Although it is possible to trace the origin of notions of gay tourists as uniquely affluent, there is not much contemporary research on the veracity of this claim. In their 2016 review of the literature on academic gay travel research over time Vorobjovas-Pinta and Hardy identify that "most of the studies pertaining to the gay (travel) market were conducted in late 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s" (Vorobjovas-Pinta and Hardy, 2016: 409), and that "gay tourism in non-Western countries remains a rather unexplored theme" (ibid., 410). Economic research has recently emerged indicating that in Britain, "gay cohabitees and lesbians face a wage premium compared to their heterosexual counterparts" (Bridges and Mann, 2019: 1020), upholding CMI's claim in the United Kingdom context. Variations in nationality could potentially impact earnings (ibid.).

The Gay Tourism Industry's claims of affluent gay consumers are debatable, and so is its assumption that tourists who are gay want travel experiences tailored to their sexuality. The CMI and its nexus of other companies contributes to the self-perpetuating "gay tourism industry" that consumers may not want or feel they need. Vorobyas-Pinta and Hardy (2016: 411) argue that the "majority of research into the gay travel market has focused on gay traveller motivations." Literature supports the notion that there are a wide range of travel motivations for LGBT+ people (Blichfeldt et al., 2011; Hughes et al., 2010; Vorobjovas-Pinta and Hardy, 2016); Clift and Forrest identify multiple key motivating factors such as "gay social life and sex,

culture and sights, and comfort and relaxation" (1999: 620-621). According to Community Marketing Inc.'s own 2016 annual report on LGBT+ travel, the importance of "LGBT popular destinations" and "LGBT events" are lower in travel priority than things like "rest and relaxation, museums and culture, historical attractions, natural scenery, new restaurants, beaches, big city energy, warm weather" (Community Marketing, Inc., 2016: 15). As Blichfeldt et al. summarize, "most interviewees find that they choose holiday destination on the basis of their personal interests and past experiences and not because of their sexuality" (2011: 11). Blichfeldt et al.'s 2011 study, generated from a qualitative study with an international sample, supports findings of CMI's quantitative and US-based study that conceptualizes the decline of sexuality-based travel. Literature suggests that people travel for many reasons, and this is no different for people who happen to be gay.

Given such findings, it may seem odd that gay identity does not impact travel motivation. Many would presume gay tourists would avoid traveling to homophobic destinations. This issue has been studied by Vorobjovas-Pinta and Hardy, who examine tensions around gay tourism between the spheres of the Global North and Global South. In some societies where homosexuality is persecuted, Vorobyas-Pinta and Hardy note that those societies consider homosexuality to be "a Western invention/perversion imposed upon their cultures" (2016: 410). For example, the authors point to a belief held by some in Iran that there were never "native" homosexual Iranians. The authors also bring up the limitation that there is a lack of understanding when it comes to "behavior of gay travelers who do go to homophobic countries or who come from them" (ibid.), acknowledging that it does happen.

The threat of violence may be an issue when travelling to countries deemed homophobic, but research indicates it is an issue for most gay tourists regardless of

travel destination. Hughes et al. report that in their research on UK gay tourists, “nearly all” had reported homophobic “verbal abuse, intolerance and physical attack” while travelling (Hughes et al., 2010: 776; Hughes, 2002). Research with international tourists additionally indicates gay tourists are at greater risk of being harmed when travelling than straight tourists (Brunt and Brophy, 2006). In the end, it is not just about a pleasant vacation—it is about safety, security, and the livability of certain lives (Butler, 1993). Gay tourists are just tourists who happen to be gay. However, being gay may shape their experiences of a tourist destination, especially when it comes to safety and acceptance. This study explores the implications of Grindr for this.

Because of the wide range of motivations for travel besides a desire for what might be considered a typical gay destination, gay identity plays a complex role in travel experiences. It can be an aspect of a tourist’s experience, but does not necessarily define their travel overall. Other factors like generation and gender impact practices around travel, not just sexual identity. Some gay people are still interested in finding gay spaces while travelling (Blichfeldt et al., 2013, 2011; Community Marketing, Inc., 2016). However, sexuality may not be significant to LGBT+ people when planning travel, especially when it comes to older tourists (Hughes and Deutsch, 2010). Blichfeldt et al. (2011: 22) argue that “there is no such thing as a ‘gay tourist’; instead there are gay people who sometimes choose to be ‘gay tourists’ and who, during other holidays, choose to be cultural tourists, adventure tourists…. gastronomy tourists etc.” In its uncovering of heterogeneous travel motivations and experiences, academic scholarship dismantles assumptions about the figure of the gay tourist promoted by the GTI. Such findings show that in practice, people who are gay dip in and out of gay spaces while travelling; Grindr may be a way of facilitating this.

The literature outlined in this section suggests that the figure of the gay tourist does not fit the social reality of tourism undertaken by people who are gay. There are varied motivations for travel, and it is inadequate to assume that tourists choose travel destinations based primarily on their sexuality. Given the literature on travel motivations, reference to "gay tourists" in my own research describes tourists who happen to be gay rather than implying a motivation for travel based on sexuality. Interest in traditional gay travel institutions that prioritize sexuality appears to be waning. Yet the use of Grindr while traveling is commonplace, as is the tendency to use dating apps as part of a travel experience (for example, this is also seen in the case of the Tinder Explore feature that will be discussed later in the dissertation). Grindr disrupts traditional GTI tourism institutions, such as gay cruises and tours, created to cater for sexuality-based travel. It allows users to independently control their travel, as will be further discussed in this dissertation. The idea of gay tourists ought to be complicated beyond the figure promoted by GTI. Instead, one should look for the complex ways being gay shapes everyday interactions in the tourism context.

2.2.2. Perpetuating Notions of a Global Transnational Gay Community

The Gay Tourism Industry relies on the assumption that gay identity is transnational and entails a global belonging to gay spaces around the world (Puar, 2002). Scholars have investigated the impact of tourism on local gay spaces using the lens of "community." In terms of tourism's implications for local gay community spaces, two conflicting perspectives emerge from the literature: first, that gay tourism is positive for local communities; and second, that it is destructive. These conflicting perspectives, which will be elaborated on shortly, are useful because they

problematize transnational notions of gay identity as universal and shared. They also problematize the figure of the gay tourist by shifting the viewpoint to that of the locals. They bring nuance to whether or not tourism is destructive to local spaces; such varied outcomes of tourism mean that the effects of tourism should be considered on a case-by-case that takes into account the travel destination.

Some scholars of gay tourism take on a cosmopolitan approach, with the positive view that tourists, especially tourists from other LGBT+ communities, are needed to combat local homophobia by giving the local community visibility and income (Archer et al., 2005). Cosmopolitanism supports the idea that through cultural conflict and the introduction of new ideas, society is positively influenced. Tourism is viewed as a strategy for progressivism; as Swain (2009: 505) argues, “critical cosmopolitan theory offers ideas that give us hope for the progressive potential of tourism to transform differences into equity.” Cosmopolitanism’s supposed merits are in addition to the political overlay of the local community’s feeling that it has international significance. Rushbrook notes that some argue tourists’ presence potentially “disrupts queer space’s homogeneity” (2002: 184) of class, race, and gender, in some instances (further discussed in section 2.3.4.). According to some scholars, tourism’s disruptive potential could have positive implications for queer communities by introducing diversity.

However, Rushbook goes on to note that despite increased visibility of LGBT+ communities resulting from tourism, this positive aspect “has been accompanied by other forms of urban transformation, notably the commodification of space related to a growth in tourism” (ibid., 183) Gentrification and commodification of space to make it appealing to an outsider tourist can come at the expense of local

spaces. Rushbook is not alone in her critical view of tourism's effect on queer communities.

Others also argue that outsider presences negatively affect local communities. Such perspectives hold that tourism is parasitical on the local community because it disrupts solidarity, introduces ideas that may not be relevant (for example, Global North definitions of trans* identities[2] in areas of the Global South that have their own histories on gender non-conforming identities), and exploits the community by visiting but never returning. These negative aspects are especially felt by distinct, fragile communities, which is ironic because the community's fragility is in itself what attracts tourists (Archer et al., 2005). Additionally, McCool and Martin (1994) find that tourism negatively affects locals' tenure in communities. Tourism's effect on local attitudes, communities, and economics is a fraught area, and it can have mixed impact depending on the context. Balances of power come into play, especially with postcolonial countries or countries with anti-homosexuality legislation. Murray argues that "gay tourism is no different from popular 20th-century 'modernist' tourist narrative as it continues to reproduce…a universe in which white, metropolitan (gay) travelers rearticulate colonially inflected cultural and racial hierarchies of relations on a postcolonial map" (2007: 59). But what happens when the tourists come from countries in the Global South? As mentioned in the earlier, the impact of tourism is not necessarily unidirectional, nor does it neatly fit into a dichotomous postcolonial framework. The two perspectives evaluated in this section show that the impact of tourism brings about a flow of benefit and cost to locals.

What is particularly notable from this discussion is that many of the aforementioned critiques on the social benefits or drawbacks of gay tourists'

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[2] By trans*, I refer to the range of identities such as trans, transgender, and transsexual that may fall under the broad umbrella of a trans* identity (OED, 2018).

presences rely on assumptions about communities. They imply bounded communities, infiltrated by outsider tourists. Yet scholarship on space, communities, and boundaries indicates that boundaries are permeable and communities can be excluding. The next section examines this subject by reviewing literature on how communities have been framed and bounded spatially. Grindr brings about transformation of the boundaries that constitute communities.

To sum up this section, the Gay Tourism Industry relies on the assumption that gay identity entails a transnational connection, and a desire to visit, other gay spaces around the world. Like other tourism industries, the GTI promotes the consumption of transnational spatial citizenship—in the eyes of the industry, one can purchase one's belonging to spaces. When one books a trip, one arranges things such as transportation, hotels, meals out, and entertainment venues. In doing so, one purchases time in spaces (hotels, venues), experiences, and access to geographical locations; Coon considers it "buying time in a space away from home" (2012: 514). The industry sells the idea of global gay tourist for those who can afford to travel. Global gay tourism is structured around presumed mobility between locations, ignoring gay locals who may be static and not have the resources to be mobile.

The Gay Tourism Industry has promoted the figure of a global gay tourist, an identity that supposedly transcends spatial limitations of geographical or political borders. It mobilizes transnational community discourses by structuring travel based on sexuality. Yet scholarship suggests that this discursive figure of a gay tourist does not map on to people's travel motivations. The use of community discourses is also employed in literature on Grindr, which investigates its relationship with the idea of a "gay community" (Roth, 2016; Van De Wiele and Tong, 2014). In the next section, literature on community based-approaches to both Grindr and gay tourism is reviewed

with the aim of inquiring whether they theoretically best capture the social and spatial complexity of Grindr tourism.

Most of the sociological literature that examines gay tourism focuses on the gay tourists, but not gay locals (e.g. Blichfeldt et al., 2011; Clift and Forrest, 1999; Forrest and Clift, 1998; Hughes, 2002; Hughes and Deutsch, 2010; Vorobjovas-Pinta and Hardy, 2016). The relations between gay tourists and gay locals are largely ignored, save for a few studies (Markwell, 2002; Rushbrook, 2002) that do not take into account how new technologies impact tourism and relations. Yet most of the research on Grindr does not consider tourism (e.g. Blackwell et al., 2014; Bonner-Thompson, 2017; Brubaker et al., 2014; Corriero and Tong, 2016; Licoppe et al., 2015). There remains a gap in the literature on how gay male locals and gay male tourists interact on Grindr.

Grindr individualizes travel experiences away from traditional GTI institutions. It allows for a shift to alternative forms of tourism by layering gay spaces on to all other spaces, such as using Grindr at the beach. It also makes local gay people and spaces visible to tourists as they connect on Grindr. But does Grindr reconfigure experiences of tourism in ways that are harmful to locals, as presented in literature outlined in this section? Understanding the impact of tourists who are gay on local people and spaces must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis in terms of location, as the literature suggests many outcomes are possible. Grindr disrupts the GTI transnational identity because it allows for negotiation of identity, norms, boundaries, and spaces. It enables people to be any kind of tourist they want, and to dip in and out of gay virtual or physical spaces in the travel destination through interactions with locals on the app. Local Grindr users can choose to ignore tourists or seek them out, potentially granting agency on behalf of locals as to how much of their

local space (physical or virtual) is shared with tourists co-present on Grindr. Grindr presents an alternative to the Gay Tourism industry by providing an expanded vision of tourism that exists outside the centers, norms, and insitutions of the Gay Tourism Industry. This research aims to investigate whether Grindr, in its reconfiguration of tourism, reproduces tourist-local social inequalities or offers an alternative landscape of social possibility.

PART TWO: COMMUNITIES AND SPACES

2.3. Tracing Community-Oriented Approaches

The idea of "gay community" has framed research on gay tourism (via the GTI) and Grindr. This section critiques the limits of community-oriented approaches undertaken to analyze gay spaces when conceptualizing Grindr. Scholars conceive of community as bounded, but they differ on where to draw the borders. Boundaries distinguish particular communities from each other, and differentiate which bodies can and cannot be part of the community. The boundaries drawn are important because they impact practices within communities and the spaces affiliated with them. By examining how Grindr shifts community boundaries, we can begin to theorize Grindr-specific practices.

The literature presented in this section points to the various, and sometimes incongruous, boundaries that are implicit when using frameworks of "community." First, physical and virtual boundaries are discussed. Scholars debate whether community relies on physical space after the invention of the Internet. Next, public and private space in the history of gay identity formation is outlined. The notion of a public, visible community was contingent on the claim of a shared identity. Finally,

the identity boundaries are addressed using the concept of scenes. The invisibility of some identities in physical "gay community" spaces is critiqued.

In considering community approaches in the literature, spatial boundaries emerge as a key concept for this research. Even when the literature considers community boundaries, often the terminology of space is used. I pull this forward when analyzing how communities have been considered spatially bounded. I argue that a spatial approach is an ideal way to capture the complex situated ways Grindr reconfigures boundaries once tied to dichotomies of public and private, physical and virtual, used to conceptualize "gay communities." After presenting the limits of community-oriented literature when applied to Grindr, a spatial approach is then offered in section 2.4. as an alternative framework for understanding Grindr tourism.

2.3.1. Physical and Virtual Boundaries

Two divergent arguments about communities have taken hold in the literature: one is that community transcends physical space, and the other is that physical space is key to community. These perspectives do not completely account for how Grindr overlaps and links the physical and virtual.

Gay community has been traditionally understood as linked to physical spaces, especially prior to the Internet. Hindle succinctly summarizes this perspective in his declaration that "gay space represents a physical manifestation of gay community" (1994: 11). Hindle's view summarizes the "physical community" perspective. Practices and interactions associated with physical gay spaces, such as cruising, now also occur virtually on Grindr. This technological transformation has led some to perceive Grindr as the replacement, or proxy, of historic physical community spaces

and the cruising practices that took place in them (Brown, 2013; Renninger, 2019). The history of physical community spaces and cruising practices will now be outlined, after which the discussion will then return to Grindr's virtual properties.

Grindr is considered by some to be the new "gayborhood" (Brown, 2013; Renninger, 2019; Dockray, 2019). The term gayborhood is US slang for gay neighborhood, also conceptualized in the UK and US contexts as the gay ghetto, village, district, or mecca, or the "visible zone of the city" that ties sexuality and identity together (Brown, 2013: 457). The zones consist of specific physical spaces coded as homosexual. Examples include gay bars, sex clubs, residences with gay pride flags, and other visibly gay spaces that imply safety from homophobia, according to Brown (2013: 458-459). Brown argues that these physical venues are defined by their public visibility.

Certain practices were known for taking place in the physical, spatially bounded areas of gay neighborhoods, such as cruising. Cruising is the act of looking in a public space for a sex partner (Galop, n.d.). However, visibility of community-affiliated physical spaces and practices that existed in gay neighborhoods are not currently visible in the same way due to gentrification (Doan and Higgins, 2011; Rosser et al., 2008) and alternative virtual private spaces generated by technologies such as Grindr. The argument that Grindr is the new gayborhood implies a transposition of the same sexual practices tied to physical space to a virtual platform. No room is left for theorizing how practices of intimacy and sex may have been transformed through Grindr.

In contrast to the "physical community" perspective, the "virtual community" perspective has been used to understand Internet communities and online cruising. In early days of the Internet, scholars considered the Internet as a utopian, independent

space that transcended physical boundaries of geography (Nakamura and Chow-White, 2013; Turkle, 1995). With the Internet, conceptualizations of community were no longer bound to physical spaces. Under the umbrella of shared interests in cruising and gay identities, gay online forums began to flourish as a virtual cruising site. According to Blackwell et al., men would meet on chatroom communities for sex because "online interaction allowed for meeting others with less risk of outing oneself or having to travel to gay-specific" (2014: 1118) public physical spaces. Often these Internet spaces are discussed by scholars through the language of community (e.g. Tikkanen and Ross, 2000; Woodland, 2000). The "virtual community" perspective contributes to shared notions of a gay identity that dissolves geographical boundaries, an idea that the Gay Tourism Industry relies on.

Yet Grindr is not merely a virtual community comparable to an Internet cruising forum. It is a hybrid of physical and virtual elements (Blackwell et al., 2014; Miles, 2017). Grindr extends beyond the boundaries of the virtual through its reliance on geolocation. It depends on some geographical boundaries, such as proximity, while ignoring others, such as country borders. For instance, a Grindr user in north Israel could see other users located within nearby Lebanon. He would not, however, see users who were located in south Israel because they were geolocatively further, even though they were within the same country. Conceptualizations of gay communities as physically bounded do not allow for how technologies such as Grindr shift and layer spaces. Grindr has implications for physical gay spaces through its reconfiguration. As Roth notes, "coding spaces as 'gay' or 'straight' becomes less important when an application's grids of nearby profiles can be overlaid atop any space where a user has a cellular data connection" (2014: 2127). Grindr incorporates physical location through its geolocation feature, although this ignores boundaries of walls and space

by arranging connections between users based on proximity. However, it also transcends physical space by adding a layer of virtual space. Subsequently, norms and experiences of Grindr's virtual spaces differ depending on physical locations (Bonner-Thompson, 2017). Grindr use entails presence in multiple environments with potentially clashing norms and practices.

Community-based approaches adopt conflicting conceptualizations of where to draw the spatial physical and virtual boundaries of community. When Grindr is considered, these physical and virtual boundaries are further blurred.

2.3.2. Public and Private Boundaries

In addition to physical and virtual spatial boundaries, Grindr also complicates traditional dichotomous notions of public and private space. This section addresses how much of the current tension over Grindr's effect on "the gay community" stems from perceptions that it has privatized what once were considered public or institutional practices. First, historical public cruising practices are contextualized. Second, attitudes that are critical of Grindr's interruption of past practices are discussed. Finally, I explain how transitions from public to private are less regimented then they initially appear—in fact, in order for the political notion of a gay community based on gay identity to form, some privatization was necessary.

Grindr, and the Internet in general, is commonly accused of "killing the gay bar" (Renninger, 2019), privatizing intimacy in "troubling" ways (Dean, 2009: 186, 177) and contributing to a "decline in gay life" (Race 2014: 497). Disappointment about Grindr's supposed contemporary privatization of gay practices stems from the historical context that gay practices, and communities, were once semi-public and

bound to physical spaces such as saunas and bars (Ghaziani, 2014; Renninger, 2019; Shokeid, 2002; Warner and Berlant, 1998). This was explored in Humphreys's notorious ethnographic study *Tearoom Trade* (1970), with tearooms being a euphemism for public sex with strangers. Gay men had to be present in physical public spaces in order to meet others for immediate encounters.

These practices were not necessarily only about sexual intimacy; some networked in the spaces for purposes of friendship and support (Race, 2015). Those of a younger generation may have not experienced tearooms or public cruising may wonder why anyone would want to go back to homophobic times when it was even more dangerous to be gay, they ignore discourses of pleasure in illicit public sex practices. Past cruising practices were risky due to their public nature, but this element of risk, for some, was also wrapped up in notions of pleasure (Leap, 1999; Race, 2015). There were elements of risk that attracted men to cruising spaces' illicit, sex-based organization of sexual intimacy.

Implied in nostalgia for past public casual sexual encounters is the assumption that "the rise of the technical object can be held responsible for the demise of sociability and community…the industrial objects…have demolished authentic community [and] sociability" (Race, 2015: 258). In other words, those who hold the nostalgic view that Grindr has privatized the "golden old days" of cruising blame the technology for shifts in practice; they hold a viewpoint of technological determinism. However, Race critiques the framing of "a romanticised past" against a supposedly "decimated, technologically saturated present" (Race, 2014: 497). Critics of the present assume there is less social meaning within technologically mediated interactions. Such perspectives ignore the varied reasons why people use Grindr and the situations in which it is used (outlined in Chapter 1 and section 2.6.).

The formation of gay identity stemmed from key shifts between public and private. Historically, people mostly engaged in same-sex behavior in anonymized public spaces of parks and docks due to sodomy laws (Rabinowitz, 1995). This kept their sexual practices separate from other aspects of their life, creating layers of public life and private life. Chauncey (1995) points out that only through engagement with public space could people experience sexual privacy. However, the semi-public space of the gay sauna (on private company premises of public sauna businesses) allowed for a new visibility of same-sex practices and the "sheer numbers" (ibid., 254) of people participating in them. In the same vein, Grindr presently facilitates such exploration of sexuality by allowing people to engage in sexual practices of hookups and sexting chats without revealing their identity if they are not out (further explored in Chapter 5). The public to private move of physical gay spaces historically allowed for a movement from *practice to identity*. Chauncey (1995: 254) argues that by seeing how many other people there were, some people felt more comfortable with their sexuality. This may have contributed to the reshaping of sex practices into sexual identities. Thus, notions of visibility meld with notions of public. Without the development of a shared gay identity, there would not be a notion of a shared gay community based on sexual identity.

Additionally, nostalgia for the illicit thrill of cruising elides the fact that not all men had access to public cruising spaces or were willing to participate in them; those in rural locations could not be as anonymous and those in urban environments. Grindr may be used in private at one's home, but it makes gay others visible to those in rural locations. Miles points out in his research that the use of Grindr at home opens up "personal space of the home to stranger-access in new ways" that "reconfigure… sex at home as a new imbrication between domestic and public spheres rather than just

a… retreat into private space" (2017: 1605). Miles notes how inviting strangers met through Grindr to one's home for a sexual encounter is not necessarily foregoing the use of public spaces to interact, socialize, and find sexual partners. Rather, spatial boundaries of public and private weakened and blurred. Miles' study offers interesting integrations of public and private when considering the accessibility of Grindr, especially in personal spaces of the home.

Grindr reveals and layers gay presence in public and private physical spaces. Overall, Race (2014) troubles the fact that the use of Grindr is considered privatized intimacy. Rather, he sees it as a transformed unique mix of private and public, an abstract "overflowing" (2014: 501) of boundaries and space. Grindr's overflow subverts the notion that it is a killer of the proverbial "good old days;" rather, it reconfigures intimacy in ways not articulated by community approaches. It represents a shift from the institutions of gayborhoods, saunas, and organizations to the individual experience (but it is also itself institutional, as discussed in Chapter 5). Boundaries of public and private spaces are made malleable with the influx of Grindr and similar technologies. Technologies like Grindr are "generating new spaces of sexual sociability and redistributions of intimacy" (Race, 2014: 506). Thus in offering an overflowing of public and private space, Grindr can redistribute and reconfigure intimacies and relations.

2.3.3. Identity Boundaries

In addition to the aforementioned tension over the historical shift from perceived public "community spaces" to private virtual spaces that Grindr exemplifies, tensions also exist *within* perceived communities. These tensions are

over the boundaries of who belongs in the scene. Boundaries are based on differences in race, gender, age, sexuality, physical appearance, and other attributes. Moving forward from public versus private boundaries and physical versus virtual boundaries, I now consider identity boundaries within communities. These identity boundaries are overlooked with the essentializing phrase "the LGBT+ community" discursively used in GTI and tourism literature.

In their 2003 work, Valentine and Skelton make a linguistic choice that challenges the conflation of identity and space with the term "community." Rather than using the word community to refer to gay spaces such as bars, neighborhoods, and support groups, the authors elect to use the term "scene" (Valentine and Skelton, 2003). They consider communities and scenes that are tied to physical spaces and to institutions. The institutions range from commercial establishments such as clubs and bars to networked charities and LGBT centers. The term "scene" opens up possibilities for fluid boundaries; people can move in and out of the scene, and the scene is not ever-present.

Valentine and Skelton recognize the importance of gay scenes for many people who are coming out as gay, but they also critique scenes as "paradoxical" in that the scenes exclude some identities (2003: 849). Valentine and Skelton reveal bisexual invisibility and the invisibility of people still questioning their sexuality in gay "scenes" (ibid., 857, 861). Vorobyas-Pinta and Hardy also suggest that there may be a technological divide between younger and older gay men, thus causing revealing tensions in "the gay community" (2016: 410) over boundaries of age and generation (ibid., 413) (generation and coming out is analyzed in Chapter 5). Additionally, many gay scenes such as bars and clubs serve alcohol, thereby excluding young people who are coming to understand their sexuality and may be in most need of connection with

others like themselves. Moreover, race and class boundaries can also be pervasive in gay spaces, furthering inequalities and the stereotypical image of gayness as primarily male, white, and middle class (Han, 2008, 2007).

Little distinction is made in the literature between lesbian and gay practices when discussing gay scenes, spaces, or communities. Valentine and Skelton interrogate identity by examining the practices in the gay scene that shape young people as they develop their lesbian and gay identities. However, they did not unpack "gay" and "lesbian" as paths of identity formation separate or distinct from each other. Lesbian scenes are conflated within that of the gay scene, and in scholarship the gay scene is conflated with the term gay community. Considering sexuality, age, race, ethnicity, class, ability, and gender, it is clear that, like everywhere, gay scenes and communities are troubled spaces with both spatial and identity boundaries.

To critique the essentialism that comes with the homogenous term "communities," some scholars focus on boundaries within community-oriented spaces by looking at "scenes." The term "scene" prioritizes space over notions of community. Understanding how gay scenes have been conceptualized identifies how boundaries operate within spaces, to the exclusion of many. Valentine and Skelton show that tensions exist within perceived "communities" based on identity boundaries of age, sexuality, gender, physical appearance, and other attributes (2003). Additionally, the term "gay community" is used without specification, and often experiences of lesbian women and gay men are conflated- or lesbian experiences are just ignored.

In literature on Grindr, there is not much attention paid to users who are questioning their sexuality, who identify as genderqueer, or who are trans. Lack of visibility of some identities in physical gay scenes, as found by Valentine and Skelton

(2003), is replicated on Grindr. The continued invisibility of some identities challenges the essentialist idea that the gay scene is an open, accepting, global "community." Thus, despite the discourse of a transnational gay community utilized by the GTI, it is clear that boundaries limit participation in traditional notions of "communities." Chapter 5 further examines gay identity formation and entering the space (grid) of Grindr.

In summary, section 2.3 identifies the limits of community-based approaches and the debated boundaries often implicit within notions of community. These boundaries can be physical and virtual, public and private, or boundaries of identity. These boundaries can also be considered as spatial. The Gay Tourism Industry depends on the narrative of a transnational gay community that elides national boundaries. Yet upon closer inspection, notions of community depend on the existence of boundaries. Community boundaries are malleable and often debated; Grindr further challenges these boundaries.

Grindr generates an alternative geography by opening up the panorama of space coded within dichotomies of gay or heterosexual, physical or virtual, public or private. Boundaries around some identities in physical gay communities are potentially replicated on Grindr, especially boundaries of age, religion, race and ethnicity, class, geography, sexual identity, and gender identity. These boundaries will be explored by examining how interactions on Grindr affect (both positively and negatively) identities and norms in virtual spaces of Grindr and the physical space of Tel Aviv.

In the review of literature on "community spaces" and boundaries, the idea of space is pulled out from under the term "communities." "Space" emerges as that which distinguishes and which constitutes boundaries. Indeed, I have demonstrated

that space is what is tacitly focused on in scholarship, rather than the homogenizing notion of communities. For this reason I advocate that space should be prioritized theoretically as a means to understand and explain the practices and interactions occurring on Grindr.

2.4. A Spatial Paradigm

Theories of space will be used in this research as an alternative to community approaches found in the literature. This section first appraises theories of space and place, followed by consideration of some scholars' arguments that new digital technologies disrupt prior space-place distinctions. The section proceeds by outlining the theories drawn on in this research when conceptualizing Grindr in terms of space.

Mainstream narratives about a singular community elide the nuances of the boundaries, roles, and prejudices that exist within LGBT+ experiences of space (Valentine and Skelton, 2003). The notion of "community" or even the pluralized "communities" are too broad for understanding Grindr's impacts on LGBT+ practices and experiences. The geographical location (place) of LGBT+ communities affects people's perception of their sexual identity (Annes and Redlin, 2012; Bell and Valentine, 1995; Binnie and Skeggs, 2004; Kramer, 1995). As Postill and Pink summarize, the concept of community is problematic as "an empirical social unit that is open to analysis" (2012: 127). Therefore, I work within the conceptual framework of a spatial rather than a "communities" paradigm.

Cresswell observes that social norms and behaviors are dependent on their spatial environment. Certain behavior is expected that "relate[s] a position in a social structure to actions in space" (Cresswell, 1996: 3). He provides the example of the

inappropriateness of a boss sitting at a secretary's desk. Thus, the notion of place is important as it combines "the spatial with the social," generating "social space" (ibid.). A spatial approach serves as a route to investigate the nuances of tourism, mobility, and technology at play in the phenomenon of Grindr tourism because it pays attention to norms, practices, and boundaries.

The definition of "space" is often unremarked upon in literature pertaining to this research (Blichfeldt et al., 2013; Miles, 2018); it is implicit. However, where scholars have chosen to define space, it is in terms of its relationship to place. Therefore, the distinction between concepts of "space" and "place" needs to be clarified. Tuan (1977) and Lefebvre (1991) are particularly influential in fleshing out these terms. Tuan (1977) "distinguishes between 'space' as a container for social action and 'place' as a subjective understanding of that space" (in Brubaker et al., 2014: 377). Tuan considers space to be a container that upholds boundaries, whereas place is infused with subjective meanings and context. Lefebvre has also made this distinction, arguing that space is a "physical and social landscape" imbued with meaning through "everyday place-bound social practices" (Lefebvre, 1991; in Saar and Palang, 2009: 6). Lefebvre (1991) theorizes that space emerges and is socially produced through spatial practices, which are dependent on places and temporalities. Space also "contains" the production of practices (ibid.). Dourish (2006: 299) summarizes the traditional view of space and place, stating "'space' describes geometrical arrangements that might structure, constrain, and enable certain forms of movement and interaction, [whereas] 'place' denotes the ways in which settings acquire recognizable and persistent social meaning in the course of interaction." According to Tuan and Lefebvre, space can be considered a bounded container that is

the site of social action and practice, whereas place is specific, meaningful, and already infused with social actions.

Dourish brings a fresh perspective by considering how emerging digital technologies alter traditional understandings of space and place. In his article "Re-Space-ing Place," he argues that new digital technologies challenge the relationship between these two terms. Dourish notes that a "predominant interpretation of the relationship between place and space has looked at space as pregiven and place as a social product" (2006: 301) deriving from social practices and interactions. Space is seen as the natural, "essential reality of settings of action" and place can only come about "after spaces have been encountered by individuals and groups," who then socially produce place (ibid., 300-301). The relationship between space and place "is one in which place comes *after* and is *layered on top of* space" (ibid., 300, emphasis his). This is what Kling et al. (2000) critique as the "layer-cake model of sociotechnical systems" (Dourish, 2006: 300). Yet Dourish points out that conceptually, both space and place are social products that derive from social practices (ibid., 301). The "conceptual resources" drawn on when talking about space are outcomes of "particular kinds of social practice" such as practices of cartography, land management, and commercial exchange (ibid.). Both space and place are socially constituted.

According to Dourish, digital technologies help us understand how space is not natural or pregiven. He notes that although social practices emerge from technological structures, the technologies are "themselves the outcomes of other forms of social practice," such as historical, political, economic, and organizational practices (ibid., 300-301). Technologies were invented as responses to social "needs and opportunities" (ibid.). In other words, digital technologies function as the

structures and containers for place-making practices, but they themselves are also outcomes of social practices. Space-making technologies such as Grindr blur the conceptual distinction between space and place.

When we consider technologies, the distinction between space and place becomes less important; what matters is how spatial practices come about and how technologies shift encounters with spaces. Technologies render "space and spatial practice legible in new ways" by "caus[ing] people to re-encounter everyday space" (ibid.). Investigating this is essentially the aim of this project. How does Grindr shape tourism in Tel Aviv (in terms of practices and relations), and does it make people encounter everyday physical space of the travel destination differently?

We cannot conceive of space without technology, yet technology is already "placed" through social production, social structures, and social practices. This is especially the case when Grindr is considered. When studying spaces created by new digital technologies, they are embedded in virtual and physical spaces. In the instance of Grindr, which prioritizes geolocation, technological practices are inherently spatial. Spatiality drives the use of the app, as one can see who is physically near in real-time and can communicate with him instantly over the Grindr chat.

Dourish argues that introducing new digital technologies in everyday physical spaces "does not simply create new opportunities for sociality (the creation of places); rather, it transforms the opportunities for understanding the structure of those settings (developing spatialities)" (ibid.). Dourish calls for further understanding of how spatiality arises and what role spatializing technologies play in the development of social practices. I aim to heed this research call.

Grindr has features of both spaces and places. The app functions as a container for social interactions, but the norms of interactions and social practices are different

depending on the physical location where it is being used. In light of this, the general term “space” will be used to consider Grindr. Using the term “space” to understand Grindr has scholarly precedence; for example, Miles does so effectively in his geographical tracing of gay spaces across history, including Grindr (Miles, 2018). The details of the spatial theoretical approach to this research are specified at the end of this chapter (2.7.). Considering literature on technology, space, and place, it is clear that Grindr raises questions about how practices are spatially situated. There are also other aspects of technology that need to be considered when exploring Grindr tourism’s social impacts; it is to the theorization of these technological features that I now turn.

PART THREE: THEORIES OF TECHNOLOGY

2.5. Theoretical Approaches to Technology

Examining literature on Grindr’s technological features contributes to understanding what tourism interactions and practices are made possible through Grindr: in other words, what interactions are emphasized and what interactions are structured out by the technology. To evaluate the role of technology in spaces, scholars have inquired into how the technological features shape people’s practices and vice versa. The following two sections look at actor network theory and affordances to see how they may contribute to my own theorization of Grindr’s impact on interactions and practices. Literature is brought in to highlight practices people engage in to circumnavigate technology features. The section ends with an outline of the theoretical terminology and framework for examining the features that will be focused on in this study for their bearing on regimes and boundaries produced, or reproduced, by Grindr. Theories of technology situate Grindr in debates over the

role, and power, of new technologies in determining social behaviors. This aids in pinpointing the practices and interactions that are part of Grindr tourism.

2.5.1. Actor Network Theory

Actor-network theory (ANT) posits that technology is an actor that shapes, and is also shaped by, human action (Latour, 2005; Law, 2009, 1992). ANT considers the entire network of human and non-human actors within a network as equally agentic (Latour, 2005; Law, 2009, 1992). In the example of cell phone use, ANT would suggest that the human, the phone itself, the people available to talk to, and the infrastructure of cell phone service coverage would all need to be considered equally in order to theorize both human and non-human relations. This example is used by McBride to look at mobile phone adoption by Senegalese farmers, and he considers the actors to include "the farmers, the company that provides the pricing services, the mobile phone company, and the phones themselves" (2003: 269) to name just a few human and non-human actors in the network.

Actor-network theory focuses on observing phenomenon on the scale of networks. It uses "the metaphor of [a] heterogenous network" to suggest that "society, organisations, agents and machines are all effects generated in patterned networks of diverse (not simply human) materials" (Law, 1992: 380). All these heterogenous aspects to the network are considered "symmetrical" in that they are actors equally worth studying whether human or not. Wright and Parchoma (2011) and Fox (2005) argue that "the analytical interest" of ANT "is to illuminate the processes, rather than explain end results" (Fox, 2005: 102; in Wright and Parchoma, 2011: 250-251). ANT is best used to describe networks, rather than explain them.

ANT has attracted criticism (Alcadipani and Hassard, 2010; Banks, 2011). Some scholars note that ANT's "vocabulary and analytical tools cannot challenge power structures, it can only describe them" (Banks, 2011). In its egalitarian "ecological" consideration of the landscape of human and non-human actors, ANT can fail to acknowledge how power plays into the relationship of actors. Additionally, in its equal weighting of individuals and institutions such as companies, ANT ignores the fragmentation within institutions. It assumes institutional actors operate as a conglomerate whole, leaving no room for boundaries and divergent directions within corporations. Finally, ANT does not always break down the aspects of technology that potentially are actors, such as phone hardware as opposed to software.

While critical of ANT, Elder-Vass (2015: 4) observes that it offers a needed "attack on dualistic understandings of the social versus the 'natural' world, its insistence that nonhuman actors make a contribution to outcomes that are traditionally treated as social." ANT offers insightful incorporation of external landscapes, such as those of technology, into the social world. ANT points out that "social relations should not be seen in isolation, but as always existing in relations with all kinds of extra-social networks between humans and nonhumans" (Nimmo, 2011: 109); it brings other environmental aspects, including technologies, to bear on social relations and interactions. However despite these helpful perceptions, I refrain from wholeheartedly adopting ANT as the theoretical framework for understanding Grindr tourism. ANT is useful for *describing* networks pertaining to the phenomenon of Grindr tourism, but it does not address the underlying sociological factors that motivate participation in Grindr tourism practices. The next section considers the merits of affordance theory for tracing how technology impacts new social interactions.

2.5.2. Affordances

Platform aesthetics and features frame app experiences. Grindr has unique aesthetics and features that may attract people to make use of the app while abroad. An affordances framework spells out particular features and considers how they influence social practices that occur within the app and in the offline world. In summary, affordances are the features and architecture of a technology that allow, or afford, things to happen. An affordances perspective on the cell phone would be as follows. Not only do the features of the mobile phone enable "social communication," but also "the type of mobile phone…[and] the way in which it is carried on the body" (Ling and Yttri, 2002: 140) serve as self-presentation strategies to indicate class or generation. Different physical features of the mobile phone can produce "function and fashion" (Campbell, 2008: 153-164), therefore altering expressions and perceptions of the self (ibid.).

Scholars have used an affordances approach to Grindr and in doing so yielded helpful insights on how regimes are produced through affordances. However as more scholars adopt the term affordances, there is confusing inconsistency in its use and meaning by technology scholars (Kammer, 2019: 338-339; Evans et al., 2017; Nagy and Neff, 2015; Wright and Parchoma, 2011: 250). Affordances as a concept originally stemmed from Gibson's (1979) anthropological use of the term possible actions that can be undertaken in an environment by an actor. Norman (1988) later applied this to technologies, stating that design implies the way a technology will be used (Evans et al., 2017: 37). I embrace Evans et al.'s definition of affordances—constructed as an attempt to solidify various meanings of the term—as the

"multifaceted relational structure between an object/technology and the user that enables or constrains potential behavioral outcomes in a particular context" (2017: 36). Evans et al., along with many other scholars, think of affordances as the aspects of technology that drive or constrain users' behaviors.

Although succinct, Evans et al.'s definition exemplifies an issue with over-focusing on affordances: namely, ignoring the role of humans who develop the technology, and subsequently its affordances. Examining affordances means fixating only on the users and their relationship with a technology. Yet the affordances, such as listing geolocation as distance away or showing location on a map, are still part of an aesthetic, organized experience presented in formats decided upon by the app creators. These affordances can shape user interactions on the technology. For example, Grindr's numerical "distance away" feature influences people's likelihood to connect with someone based on a quantified proximity summarized by the number. Additionally, a person can change their profile settings to only display people within a certain radius, quantified as a number of feet. As Gillespie observes, "platforms intervene" (2015: 1). The "technical, economic, and political" design of technology company platforms, such as Facebook or Twitter, "shape…the contours of public discourse they host" (ibid., 2). Yet it is not just the design of platforms, but also their continuing re-design and algorithmic interventions, that shape social and relational outcomes. Gillespie warns against treating platforms as static or "simply there" (ibid., 1) when theorizing how platform-based technologies mediate social relations. Considering the larger human networks involved in the creation of technology draws on some of the benefits of actor network theory, without going as far as to consider the technologies themselves as agentic.

Platforms change their features in line with the ways people use them. For example, in her study of "off-label" uses of dating apps, Duguay (2019: 30) shows how "Tinder also responds to disruptive off-label uses with changes in governance and infrastructure." She presents examples of people who used Tinder to politically canvas, in addition to those who would strategically use the app to maximize potential partners. The practice of those who misemploy the app's format to maximize potential partners is as follows. Rather than only swiping right on profiles the user was romantically interested in (indicating a desire to match and subsequently chat with the potential partner), the user would swipe right on every profile to match with everyone interested in him. He would then go through his matches and unmatch with anyone he was not attracted to. This ensures he would know who already liked him and could select from users who had already indicated romantic interest, putting him at a dating advantage. However, if everyone used dating apps in this manner then Tinder would not function properly. Tinder's premise removes the social stakes of rejection. Its premise is that people match with those they are already interested in. Tinder intervened in the practice outlined by Duguay, and the affordance of swiping right, by limiting the frequency one could swipe right per day once it reached an abnormal amount. An unusually high amount of right swipes indicated a user was bypassing the normal matching procedure of only swiping right on profiles he was interested in. Yet the swipe limit also impacts those who use Tinder to politically canvas in private chats with matches. Tinder's swiping intervention altered both the infrastructure of the app and the way people could adopt it for off-label uses. Duguay's observations also apply to Grindr, as people do not necessarily use dating apps the way app developers intended. Affordances are not static; they change depending on user strategies and platform interventions.

Resistance to and circumvention of technologies can involve adapting technologies to different purposes than those they were created for, or what some have termed "technological appropriation" (Duguay, 2019: 31). Geolocation technology exemplifies this, as it was originally developed by the United States military in 1978 (Float Mobile Learning, 2013; Geopointe, 2017) without the anticipation that GPS would end up being appropriated for dating apps. Software developers can observe users and gauge interest in where users want the technology to go. Human users have an influence on what new technological features are introduced to existing ones.

An affordances framework can help explain how platforms change their features in line with use, as long as it takes into account Gillespie's observation that "platforms intervene" (2015: 1). It is also important to consider Nagy and Neff's warning that "affordances may be present for only one individual or a group of individuals but not for others" (2015: 3). Some previous approaches to affordances are limited in that they ignore platform intervention and different availability of affordances according to context and users. Additionally, "traditional positions on affordances…fail" to consider that "social actors can themselves configure the (digital) technologies they use" (Kammer, 2019: 342), configurations exemplified in Duguay's (2019) work. Nagy and Neff resolve these limitations by pushing for the terminology "imagined affordances" (2015: 1-9). The imagined affordances perspective recognizes that the possibilities for social practices and relations that digital technologies afford are not static and based on the material features of the technology (Kammer, 2019: 342). The possibilities "also depend on the social actors' own appropriation" (ibid.) of the technologies. Thus, imagined affordances are "not solely what people think technology can do or what designers say technology can do,

but what people *imagine* a tool is for" (Nagy and Neff, 2015: 5, emphasis theirs). Such imaginations are what make circumventions or "off-label" uses of digital technologies possible. Imagined affordances shed light on how people's use of digital technologies can drive novel social practices, such as Grindr tourism, that are based on new imaginations of what the technology makes possible. Keeping in mind the imagined dimension of affordances improves the fruitfulness of the term.

In this study, the terms "features" and "affordances" will be used synonymously when investigating affordances prioritized by Grindr users in the Tel Aviv context. I recognize that what is viewed as possible depends on who uses the platform, when, and where, heeding Nagy and Neff's point about some affordances only being available for some groups. An affordances framework is useful for understanding how Grindr reconfigures social practices and relations between users. However, it must also take into account dynamic aspects, changing contexts, and platform interventions.

2.6. Grindr's Affordances

I have now outlined the technological theories that are most helpful for contemplating Grindr. This research draws on affordances theory and also considers the influence of actors beyond only Grindr users. An affordances framework can highlight ways users circumnavigate Grindr's features or use them in alternative ways, as will now be shown with some examples from the literature. Grindr's geolocative affordances are first discussed, followed by its chat feature. Overall this section hones in on literature that remarks on Grindr's features and how they enable, and structure out, interactions and practices.

Grindr incorporates physical location through its geolocation feature. It prioritizes physical proximity between users; on Grindr profiles, Grindr shows how many feet away one user is from the other. Yet despite emphasizing physical spatial proximity, Grindr ignores physical boundaries of walls and borders. It also transcends physical space by adding a layer of virtual space.

Grindr is bounded by geography since the app only presents profiles based on their physical geolocative proximity to the user. Yet some users override this trait and attempt to transcend Grindr's geolocative norms. Stempfhuber and Liegl describe a participant who "brought back" someone they saw on Grindr in Copenhagen to Germany by "starring" them, enabling the ability to look at them at any time irrespective of physical proximity (2016: 65). In another case, Licoppe et al. highlight what they term "fishing" among French Grindr users who leave the application open as they move around the city throughout the day in order to receive messages to look at later when they go home (2016: 10). In this instance, users avail themselves of Grindr's proximity function for their personal gain. They receive more interest from others on Grindr by proverbially "casting a wider net" and appearing online in more locations than if they were only on Grindr during moments when they were available to pay complete attention to the chat conversations on the app. Fishing users bring potential virtual contacts "back" to their home in the evenings, when they finally look at the day's catch of messages on Grindr. This is an example of the way Grindr's affordance of mobility is used in combination with its affordance of geolocation. However, Grindr fishing circumvents the immediacy and proximity-based aspects of Grindr communication. Rather than using Grindr in the normative way of chatting with people who are nearby and online at the same time, users create the illusion of being online and available to chat by leaving the app open in their pockets. They

increase the number of people they are proximate to on Grindr, thereby enlarging the number of possible connections. But this way of using Grindr means that fishing users do not utilize the immediacy affordance, as they wait to communicate with others on Grindr. Affordances can be utilized, circumvented, or ignored by technology users; as Kammer summarizes, “affordances represent invitations to act, not determinations” (Kammer, 2019: 340). Different strategies and perceptions of norms of use may lead to clashes between users, as will be analyzed in depth in Chapter 7.

Grindr’s geolocation affordance can also inhibit potential connection. Research indicates that the numerical distance away on Grindr profiles can hinder hooking up if it is regarded by users as too far (Albury et al., 2017; Licoppe et al., 2016). Such inhibitions perhaps motivate circumvention of one’s home location through the fishing technique mentioned. Grindr is not just about “finding the ‘right kind of person’ but also about categorising and structuring yourself in spaces where others can find you” (Brubaker et al., 2014: 7). These cases of using Grindr’s geolocative affordances to one’s personal advantage, often unintended by the proximity premise of the app, reveal how users are potentially agentic in their practice and strategy of Grindr use. Therefore tourists and locals interested in connecting with one another on Grindr may take advantage of or avoid particular affordances.

Geographical location also affects user experiences of Grindr based on whether people are located in urban or rural areas. It is widely noted that experiences of LGBT+ identities as a whole are impacted by urban or rural location (Annes and Redlin, 2012; Binnie and Skeggs, 2004, 2004; Binnie and Valentine, 1999; Kramer, 1995; Weston, 1995). The lack of physical gay spaces in rural locations, such as community centers or gay bars, contributes to this difference. Grindr potentially provides access to others, generating a virtual gay space where a physical one does

not exist; as Blackwell et al. (2014: 1126) note, some found what they considered a virtual community through Grindr's "creation of a virtual place…because there may not be many physical gay spaces." Yet a rural geographical location has a small population, including a small Grindr population. Brubaker et al.'s (2014: 8) research on those who leave Grindr highlights a participant who "described a local gay community that was socially and geographically tight-knit, resulting in a cascade that only showed familiar profiles," boring him and causing him to delete the app. Grindr's most innovative and appreciated trait, its mapping location feature, affects user's experiences of the app depending on the specific situation of whether they are located in an urban or rural location. However, most of the literature on Grindr implies a focus on urban environments without critically analyzing this assumption. Being anchored in a particular urban or rural geographical location affects LGBT+ practices, identities, and experiences; this urban-rural divide overflows to Grindr.

Race's work exemplifies the insights an affordances-based approach can offer for considering Grindr's chat feature. Race writes about the particular affordances of Grindr as a technology that transform practices as well as facilitate them. He considers his approach "speculative pragmatism," or in other words, an "ethnography of affordances" (Race, 2014: 499-500). Race uses the example of Grindr's private chat feature. In order to meet in person, people need to at least minimally communicate through Grindr's private chat area before meeting, if only just to arrange the meeting itself. He argues that the need for text communication also makes it easier to discuss "pre-specification of practices, desires, and prevention identities" (ibid., 503) such as protection, consent, and HIV status. The chat presents a communication opportunity that carries low social risk—if the two people disagree, they can just end the chat without having put forward much effort to get to each

other's location. Race argues that the Grindr chat's affordances to chat "relatively anonymously in real time prior to sexual encounters differs from the affordances of longer standing gay sexual environments, such as saunas and beats" (Race, 2015: 260). According to Race, this difference is not only because verbal conversation did not necessarily occur prior to sex at saunas and cruising beats, but also because people can control their online profile "to their own advantage" and slowly disclose personal and physical information to potential partners (ibid.). The private Grindr chat affords the potential for a more rationalistic, perhaps even explicitly contractual, arrangement rather than one driven by spontaneous affect. It allows for immediacy of communication and arrangement of a hookup, but can also be a tool for slowing down the pace of the relation as users can choose to have lengthy conversations before deciding to meet in person.

Some scholars suppose that Grindr's features prioritize casual sexual hookups due to its presentation of images of others conceptually before the users' profile and its prioritization of geolocation, therefore immediacy (Race, 2014: 501; Yeo and Fung, 2017: 11). Despite this view, Grindr is also acknowledged as used for purposes beyond hooking up (Race, 2014: 498). The private chat feature affords many different interactional, and therefore relational, possibilities. Grindr users may rely on the chat to take their time to get to know one another, or just have some companionship in that moment without intention to meet for a hookup. The chat feature allows an exchange of images, generating another method of communication and intimate practice. Users can sext on Grindr through the private chat; thus the chat interaction may not lead to an in-person hookup, as the chat itself can be sexually fulfilling in that moment. Race (2014, 2015) examines the way sexual regimes and norms of interaction are structured through the app technology itself, but he does not question or theorize the tension

between expectations of casual hookups and how users who do not desire them use the same technology to negotiate relations (further analyzed in Chapter 7). Nevertheless the highlighting of the chat function on Grindr reveals the communicative possibilities for establishing preferred practices and relations between users.

Examining Grindr's technological features reveals how regimes, especially sexual regimes, operate within the app by promoting norms (as pointed out by Race). Does Grindr's technology allow for a transposition of existing practices, or perhaps an exaggeration of certain ones? Technological features of Grindr, such as its geolocation technology and private chat, potentially transform social relations by altering, reconfiguring, and introducing norms of communication and interaction. This will be explored in the thesis.

In sum, this section outlined theories for understanding the relationship between technologies like Grindr and social outcomes, such as tourism. Actor network theory points to technological aspects that influence practices of Grindr use, such as the importance of the portable hardware of cell phones for using Grindr while mobile. A framework of imagined affordances is deemed most useful for capturing the practices Grindr's features impede, facilitate, or introduce within varied spatial contexts. These spatial contexts in themselves come about as a result of Grindr's technological features. For example, the chat area presented in Chapter 1 differs from the homescreen, and the physical location in which Grindr is used impacts what norms are prevalent on the app. This brings me to my spatial approach, which addresses how space can be used to link observations of practices, interactions, affordances, and norms.

2.7. A Spatial Approach

This chapter indicates the merits of a spatial framework, as opposed to a communities-based approach that had often been implicitly undertaken in sociological studies of gay sites and gay travel. Drawing on the literature presented in this chapter, the spatial approach for this research considers space as a site of technological and sociological practice (Cresswell, 1996: 11; Dourish, 2006; Miles, 2018) with negotiated boundaries (Valentine and Skelton, 2003). It is key to consider how spaces impact identity formation, relation formation, practices, and interactions (Carter and Fuller, 2015; Goffman, 1959). A spatial approach means paying attention to spatial norms, rules, boundaries, and resistance within digitally generated spaces, following Dourish's (2006) call for these aspects of new technologies to be further understood. Drawing on the literature regarding technologies' affordances and features, my approach involves special attention being paid to which of Grindr's features are emphasized in the generated data. My spatial approach focuses on Grindr's arrangements of proximity through geolocation, embeddedness within physical spaces, and the spaces created within the app itself. The spatial approach pays attention to how spaces are conceptualized and discussed in the data. This means focusing on aspects like proximity, mobility through space while using Grindr, and considering how spaces of Grindr lead to Grindr tourism practices.

Overall my spatial approach could be thought of as investigating "situatedness," such as how Grindr is situated in physical space and location, how people situate themselves spatially and in terms of identity as tourists or locals, and how people engage with tourist destination spaces through Grindr. This also entails attention to how people engage with Grindr's online spaces. Using a spatial approach, one can examine how Grindr interactions result in a reconfiguration of spatial

boundaries and norms. The following chapter on methodology further describes the approach taken, and data produced, to ascertain how Grindr tourism in Tel Aviv brings about interactions, norms, and practices that impact tourist-local relations.

2.8. Weaving Conclusions from the Three Strands of the Literature Review

The wide-ranging literature discussed in this chapter illustrates the challenge presented by the absence of studies of Grindr tourism. Studies of gay tourism rely heavily on a community-based approach, ignoring the boundaries and exclusions implicit in the idea of community. Yet sociological studies of tourism have not addressed both gay tourists and gay locals who form relations, let alone how new technologies such as Grindr might impact the formation of such relations. To address this and contribute to knowledge of Grindr tourism where there is a dearth, one of the questions investigated in this research is: *What practices constitute Grindr tourism?*

Part one of the three-part review began by investigating how sociology of tourism addresses international travel, finding that a broad interpretation of postcolonial theory was often adopted in the literature. This was critiqued for its use of dichotomies and rigid interpretation of empowered tourists and disempowered locals. However, it offers helpful insights on various capitals/resources at play between tourists and locals, as well as raises concerns about Othering. Such inequalities come forward in this research.

Attention was then turned to the figure of the gay tourist discursively put forward by what I term the Gay Tourism Industry. The assumption of the figure of the gay tourist is important because it promotes idea of transnational community. Much of this literature review has served to show how ideas of community are limited for

understanding Grindr tourism. Even if the idea of transnational community culturally circulates, it is unclear whether the use of Grindr among tourists is based on this cultural perception; this research sheds light on whether this is the case.

Scholarly investigations of the affluent gay tourist were then discussed. It was found to be an inaccurate assumption that people travel based on their sexual identity, despite the GTI framing travel as such. The Gay Tourism Industry has promoted essentialist notions of the global gay tourist, structuring a discourse of implied global community that elides local experiences. This research aims to remedy such elisions by highlighting locals' experiences of Grindr tourism, not just those of tourists. The literature begets the questions of: *How does Grindr tourism shape tourist-local dynamics and inequalities? Are experiences of Grindr tourism mutually productive, and/or exploitative?*

The second part of the review was concerned with how community-based literature could offer understanding of local experiences. Different concepts of community grounded in history were outlined, among them notions of community bounded as public and private, physical and virtual, and boundaries of scenes. A review of the literature indicates that there is a paradox around the theoretical framework of community. Community is used as an implicit, catch-all term to imply a wide, sometimes transnational, collection of people. This is seen in the GTI discourses on the gay tourist consumer. Yet scholars disagree over the boundaries and definitions of community. The idea of "gay community," suggests belonging based on sexual identity, a notion that will be further investigated in Chapter 5. But as the literature shows, there are key boundaries around public and private and virtual and physical tied to histories of social segregation of LGBT+ people. These temporal dimensions create generational differences in conceptualizations of norms and

interactions within "communities," potentially shaping Grindr use. Furthermore, scholars such as Valentine and Skelton point out there are identity boundaries that exclude when we use community to conceptualize spatial practices. This paradox—that community is bounded and regulated, yet also transnational (and potentially able to be participated in through Grindr tourism)—can be theoretically resolved through undertaking a spatial framework to situate Grindr tourism. This dimension of the literature review led to the question of: *How do people imagine the spaces and norms of Grindr? What implications for interactions do these (potentially diverse) imaginings have?*

Correspondingly, literature was brought in in the third part of the review to understand how theoretically approaching social practices through space lends insight to how new technologies shape practices, and vice versa. Grindr has implications for practices and relations through its reconfiguration and layering of space. Theoretical approaches to digital media technologies were considered for their applicability for conceptualizing Grindr's shifting of space. By bringing in an affordances framework, it is possible to foreground how Grindr mediates and configures interactions within its spaces. However, it is also important to consider that human users, software designers, Grindr the company, and the physicality of smartphone hardware are all integrated in dating app use, as pointed out by actor network theory. In this research, affordances of Grindr will be considered when inquiring into the question: *How are Grindr's imagined norms and boundaries negotiated, replicated, and resisted?*

For clarity, I restate the main research question and other questions together here in full:

How Grindr reconfigures people's interactions, relations, and practices?

1. How do people imagine the spaces and norms of Grindr? What implications for interactions do these (potentially diverse) imaginings have?
2. How are Grindr’s imagined norms and boundaries negotiated, replicated, and resisted?
3. What practices constitute Grindr tourism?
4. How does Grindr tourism shape tourist-local dynamics and inequalities? Are experiences of Grindr tourism mutually productive, and/or exploitative?

This dissertation explores how Grindr interactions, configured through Grindr and its subsequent affordances, shape relations in the Tel Aviv context. The three parts of the literature review leads to three facets of my theoretical approach to the research question, as well as to the analysis. First, attention will be paid to Othering and unequal capitals at play between tourists and locals on Grindr. Second, Grindr will be conceptualized along a spatial approach rather than a community-driven one. Third, Grindr’s affordances, along with other actors involved in maintaining the app, will be considered when analyzing how people use the technology. Analyzing Grindr practices, in particular Grindr tourism, can lend nuanced insight to the construction and negotiation of gay identities that are specific to countries and the current epoch.

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

In accordance with my interest on how people navigate technology and its ability to shape their lives, this dissertation considers interpersonal interactions on Grindr that foster practices of Grindr tourism, which in turn transform social relations between tourists and locals. As explained in Chapter 2, I take a nuanced view of participants as people with a myriad of motivations for Grindr use and travel. There are many biographical routes to one's identification as a Grindr user in Tel Aviv. Examining Grindr interactions entails the contemplation of personal narratives that overlap with contemporary technological practices. In order to bring users' personal narratives of Grindr forward, I adopt a qualitative interactionist methodology that considers space as a site of sociological practice (Cresswell, 1996) where norms are defined and developed through interactions.

When investigating interactions, relations, and practices, methodological and theoretical attention will be paid to the three dimensions established in the literature review: tourist-local capitals, spaces, and features of Grindr. The methodological framework is guided by the main research question inquiring into *how Grindr reconfigures people's interactions, relations, and practices*, along with the questions initially outlined in Chapter 2:

1. How do people imagine the spaces and norms of Grindr? What implications for interactions do these (potentially diverse) imaginings have?
2. How are Grindr's imagined norms and boundaries negotiated, replicated, and resisted?

3. What practices constitute Grindr tourism?
4. How does Grindr tourism shape tourist-local dynamics and inequalities? Are experiences of Grindr tourism mutually productive, and/or exploitative?

Following a definition of interactions, relations and practices, attention is turned to how participants have been framed in prior studies of Grindr. As an outside researcher (see section 3.3.1.), I am committed to sensitively and ethically approaching the challenge of understanding potential participants and their narratives. Methods used previously to examine Grindr highlight larger ethical debates in the study of digital technologies, debates that are unpacked in the chapter. As I later establish, understanding the space of Grindr itself is important not only for the sake of theoretical contributions but also because assumptions of Grindr spaces as "public" perpetuate ethically questionable approaches to technologies that can harm participants.

After establishing the methodological strategy, the methods selected for this project are presented. The project relies on qualitative semi-structured interviews and audio diaries to generate data. The study's recruitment, sample, protocol, and data analysis technique are explained. Data generated by the audio diaries and interviews are compared. Attention then turns to the ethical considerations with regard to recruitment and the acknowledgment of complications in the gathering of data. The benefits and drawbacks of being an outside researcher are addressed, followed by reflection on the barriers faced during fieldwork.

The research questions and methodological direction led to descriptive and interpretative understandings of the phenomenon of Grindr tourism that will be discussed in the dissertation. Later chapters explore the personal narratives and

biographies of participants that emerged from the methods, examining what they reveal about Grindr tourism practices, coming out alongside technology, and tourist-local interactional dynamics.

3.1. Contextualizing a Qualitative, Interactionist Methodology

This project adopts a qualitative methodology, as qualitative methods are widely lauded for exploring and "discovering the new" (Hughes and Deutsch, 2010: 457) and for facilitating "insight into behaviour and attitudes" (ibid.), especially around sensitive topics. Discussing Grindr tourism in the Tel Aviv context may foster conversations with participants about outing, safety, or private and sensitive personal narratives. The research may also prompt participants to disclose narratives of sexual practices and intimate relations that are yet to be understood in scholarship. A qualitative approach is appropriate for compassionately getting at personal meanings around intimate topics such as sexuality and relationships that may come up in discussions of Grindr tourism, and it has been employed in previous studies of Grindr (Bonner-Thompson, 2017; Brubaker et al., 2014; Miles, 2019; Race, 2014; Shield, 2019).

As established by the research questions, this research is concerned with the *interactions* between tourists and locals who connect through Grindr, as well as how boundaries and norms are established through them. The interactionist approach utilized in this research is rooted in the work of the Chicago School and in particular Blumer's (1986) and Goffman's (1959) theories of symbolic interactionism. An interactionist approach considers society to be "created[d] and maintain[ed] through repeated, meaningful interactions" (Carter and Fuller, 2015: 1) of individual actors

with each other. Interactionism "conceive[s] the individual as agentic… in creating their social world" (ibid.), considering social rules, norms, and identities to be constructed by people through their interactions with others (Bilton et al., 2002). Therefore an interactionist approach focuses on bottom up, micro-level processes happening during interactions (Carter and Fuller, 2015: 1) to explain social phenomena. In terms of the project, this means investigating communication practices on Grindr as well as potential in-person interactions stemming from initial contact on the app.

Interactions are spatially and contextually situated. Considering space in the unpacking of social interactions and practices deepens understanding; Cresswell demands geography "be read in addition to, rather than instead of, wider discussions" (1996: 11) of social interactions. When inquiring into the repetition, reconfiguration, and resistance of practices, spatial contexts must be considered. Interactions are situated in the layered spatial contexts Grindr brings about: first through its geolocation software, and second through spaces *within* the app outlined in Chapter 1 such as the homescreen and chat screen. This research examines how spatial context of Grindr in Tel Aviv comes to bear on Grindr interactions, particularly ones between tourists and locals.

This project also investigates *relations*, which are precipitated by interactions (Crossley, 2010: 35). Relations, according to Crossley, are a way to term "the way in which the history and projected future of a stream of interaction affect its present" (ibid). Relations are trajectories of interactions over time (ibid.). Tourist-local relations will be returned to and examined in detail in Chapter 6.

As articulated in the main research question, this project looks at *practices* of Grindr and Grindr tourism. Practices are organized, recognizable sets of shared social

understandings and engagements (Warde, 2005). They are co-ordinated doings and sayings (Schatzki, 1996). Practices involve various components such as "understandings (know-how and practical interpretation), procedures (rules, principles, instructions), and engagements (affective and normative orientations)" (Welch and Warde, 2015). Practitioners work within and produce social configurations of norms and appropriate conduct, frameworks influenced by time and country-specific contexts (Evans et al., 2012: 116). Practitioners also adapt, improvise and experiment over time and across space (Welch and Warde, 2015). Thus the new practices of Grindr tourism are specific to the period and spaces in which such practices occur. Dourish (2006) argues that technological practices are also inherently spatial practices. Practices occur in the virtual context of spaces on Grindr, but they are also grounded geolocatively due to the features of Grindr's technology. Examining Grindr in Tel Aviv through a spatial approach lends insight to how the current spatial, temporal, and normative context comes to bear on practices.

As established thus far, context is important for a methodological approach that focuses on interactions, relations, and practices. A case study is an ideal framework for considering the context of this project. This research centered on a case study of Grindr in Tel Aviv, with an emphasis on Grindr tourism. It is site-specific in that it looks at users in a particular city, but also in that it focuses only on one dating app. Findings on Grindr can be applied, if not generalized, to other similar gay dating apps, depending on affordance parallels. Dating apps can also be site-specific; some Tinder interactional norms are different from those on Grindr in part due to its "swiping" mechanism (Timmermans and Courtois, 2018). I have learned from my previous research (Katz, 2017, 2016) that it is difficult to untangle site-specificity when participants discuss dating apps, as they often waver between general

observations across apps to comments on a specific app. Therefore, for research clarity and depth, only the dating app Grindr is considered. Scholarly inquiry into tourists' and locals' experiences of Grindr tourism has not been made. Like the benefits of a qualitative methodology, scholars view the case study as key for putting new research topics on the sociology agenda (Bilton et al., 2002). Thus by bounding my inquiry within the case of one dating app (Grindr) in one physical location (Tel Aviv), original analysis can be conducted that also considers ethical parameters around investigations of digital technologies. In the next section, context is reflected on in greater detail when considering digital ethics and technology users' perspectives.

3.1.1. Methods Used to Study Grindr

Various methods have been previously used to study Grindr, the foremost strategies being interviews, surveys, and content analysis. This section outlines how these methods have been availed of, followed by a discussion on the ethical implications of said methods when applied to Grindr.

Surveys have been frequently employed to study Grindr (Van De Wiele and Tong, 2014). These mostly consist of HIV prevention approaches to Grindr that rely on survey methods common in medical disciplines (Goedel et al., 2016; Holloway et al., 2014; Huang et al., 2016; Landovitz et al., 2013; Mustanski et al., 2011; Rendina et al., 2014). These studies conceptualize Grindr users as MSM, an acronym for men who have sex with men, prioritizing users' sex assigned at birth and sexual practices above all else. Studies of "risky sex" (unprotected sex) among Grindr users have yielded results that challenge dominant cultural "popular press" narratives (Rice et al.,

2012: 2) linking Grindr with unsafe sex (Kakietek et al., 2011; Rice et al., 2012). Kakietek et al.'s study of 1,243 queer men in the United States confirms "no statistically significant association between meeting sex partners online and odds of any UAI," an acronym for unprotected anal intercourse (Kakietek et al., 2011: 121). Kakietek et al. (2011) argue that meta-analyses of similar studies that yield mixed results because they do not account for different practices in urban and rural areas. Rice et al.'s (2012) survey of 195 men in California also shows that Grindr use is not related to risky sex. In fact, young men who have sex with men "who use Grindr practice safer sex with partners met via the application than with partners met elsewhere" (Rice et al., 2012: 1). Rice et al. found that those who choose to engage in risky sex do it regardless of where they met their last partner. Therefore, though few Grindr users engage in unprotected sex, the minority that do are an especially at-risk group (ibid., 1, 6) and their choices to have risky sex are not because of Grindr. The HIV prevention literature that constitutes most surveys conducted on Grindr helpfully indicates that Grindr does not promote a proliferation of risky sex despite cultural narratives to the contrary. However, such approaches unhelpfully medicalize potential participants by conceiving of them within rigid, binary categories of MSM and focusing on their sex practices rather than complex identities and social relations.

Other scholars look to the content of Grindr to derive social insights and utilize methods such as content analysis, walkthroughs, and digital ethnographies of the software (Birnholtz et al., 2014; Bonner-Thompson, 2017; Licoppe et al., 2015; Shield, 2017). Scholars have employed content analysis to study Grindr, using profiles as communication artifacts to be analyzed discursively. Birnholtz et al. (2014) observed Grindr profiles in 12 undisclosed locations. Their method was similar to Shield (2017), who collected 600 Planet Romeo (a gay dating website) and Grindr

profiles in addition to 10 semi structured interviews in Copenhagen. Roth (2016) conducts a cartographic tracing of content on the screen, similar to Race's (2015, 2014) ethnographic observation of the software. Content analysis has been effective for conceptualizing the visual aspects of the app such as profile picture norms (Bonner-Thompson, 2017). Such methods have resulted in findings about affordances of Grindr technology as discussed in the previous chapter.

Most research on Grindr has employed semi-structured interviews and focused on understanding Grindr users (Blackwell et al., 2014; Bonner-Thompson, 2017; Brubaker et al., 2014; Jaspal, 2017; Miles, 2019; Shield, 2019). These studies have shown how the use of Grindr touches on issues that extend beyond dating and hooking up, such as Grindr's role in people's lives as they navigate contemporary social issues of immigration (Shield, 2017) and identity (Jaspal, 2017). Sometimes interviews are conducted in combination with the other methods to study Grindr. Shield conducted interviews alongside content analysis and an ethnography. Licoppe et al. (2015) conducted 23 interviews with participants invited to walk the researcher through the app. They also had a voluntary follow-up component whereby use of the app was monitored by a researcher. Bonner-Thompson (2017) analyzed visually depicted masculinities on the Grindr homescreen in Newcastle, UK. He conducted 30 interviews and had a voluntary component requesting participants record physical diaries. Mixed methods have led to enriched depictions of situated use of Grindr. Studies utilizing mixed methods are able to address more than just what exists within the digital spaces of Grindr (e.g. content analysis). Bringing in interviews with users enhances knowledge of how Grindr impacts offline social life.

The varied methods used to study Grindr indicate differing conceptualizations of the app and of those who use it. Scholars tended to incorporate a primary method

and a satellite secondary method to enrich the research picture. Interviews and mixed methods are popular strategies for those aiming to understand social relations within sociological and geographical disciplines, whereas surveys are associated with HIV prevention and undertaken within health disciplines. Survey methods as used in HIV prevention studies conceive of Grindr users primarily as sex-seekers, and in doing so elides other social practices Grindr facilitates such as tourism. Many "insider" researchers of Grindr elect to undertake interviews and content analysis. Such methodological strategies tend to result in nuanced depictions of Grindr users and the app's social implications. In accordance with the literature presented in the previous chapter, I conceived of my potential participants as people who use the app for a wide range of reasons, including tourism. Therefore it was important to ensure diverse identities and experiences could come forward. This research aimed to uncover what it means for Grindr users to be tourists or locals who are gay, and how such orientations affect their connection with others and with space. Such objectives framed the methods used in this study (outlined in section 3.2.). The next section considers ethics implicated in methodologies involving digital technologies.

3.1.2. Researching Digital Technologies

A public versus private paradigm frames unethical methodological approaches to technology, and Grindr has in the past been perceived of as public. As introduced in Chapter 2, traditional spheres of public and private are employed to understand space, including digital space rendered through technologies. For example, Williams et al. (2017) discuss how scholars have directly quoted tweets without gaining informed consent from participants because they have assumed that the website is

public. Such attitudes are paralleled with scholarship on other websites; some believe that if anyone can make a profile on and then look at people's profiles on a website, it is public (Townsend and Wallace, 2016). Similar actions are possible on Grindr too, as anyone can make an anonymous profile and access the app's homescreen. Grindr's own privacy policy warns users to "remember…if you choose to include information in your Grindr community profile, that information will become public to other Grindr users. As a result, you should carefully consider what information to include in your profile" (Grindr, 2019b). Grindr's company policy is to consider anything put on profiles to be public, whether or not users agree.

Another area of ethical concern is the use of covert and auto ethnographies to study Grindr (Miles, 2019: 74-76). Some autoethnographic studies on Grindr post profile pictures, non-anonymized profile information, or private chat logs where consent has not been given and/or the researcher has not disclosed his research status. Autoethnographies that adopt such methodologies are ethically concerning, according to "best practice" policies of Internet research (Association of Internet Researchers et al., 2020). Scholars reveal digital content in this manner because they perceive Grindr profiles as public and therefore accessible. According to boyd and Crawford, researchers cannot justify actions as "ethical simply because the data are accessible… [or] seemingly public" (boyd and Crawford, 2012: 672). The accessibility of data does not necessitate that it is "best practice" to use said data.

Digital platforms, especially in the case of Grindr, conflate, shift, layer, and overcome such boundaries of public and private. Additionally, a company such as Grindr may consider profiles public, but the users may not (Shield, 2019). People bring assumptions to their use of particular platforms; assumptions about the privacy of a particular site may differ person to person (Beninger et al., 2014), as well as

within different spaces on the same website (Beninger, 2017; Beninger et al., 2014; Eynon et al., 2008: 16-17; Townsend and Wallace, 2016). Beninger et al. research on social media users' views finds that the "type of social media website was another factor that influenced whether our participants thought consent definitely needed to be gained by a researcher, or could just be assumed" (2014: 30). A tweet on a public Twitter profile is considered different from a post in a private Facebook group that a researcher gains access to. Thorson et al., in their study of Facebook, conducted an app-aided interview whereby participants walked the researchers through their Facebook profiles and newsfeeds; despite "anticipat[ing] some hesitation," no participants had objections (2014: 36). However, Miles notes that such a method would be difficult with Grindr, as there is sensitivity around Grindr and similar apps' "imbrication with (largely) privatised sexual practice" (2019: 74). The digital platform context matters for what types of methods are effective at eliciting information. Scholarship indicates that much of ethical "best practice" around the study of digital technologies depends on the platform being studied.

Additionally, changes in technology (Beninger, 2017: 58) alter ideas about what is initially perceived to be private or untraceable. For example, Twitter has recently made it possible to search for tweets by the content, whereas previously one could only search Twitter usernames. Such a change by the company means that tweets that appeared anonymized because the author's name was removed suddenly became identified with their authors. Even when one is cautious about anonymizing, digital content can later become identifiable. Shield (2019: 86) has resolved this in terms of Grindr by creating skeleton profiles whereby profile information is written into an empty "skeleton" profile as a way to store content analysis data that are not screenshots easily linking profile text to personal images. Nevertheless it is

impossible to foresee how traceability of profiles will change, and one must proceed cautiously when deciding what data are collected.

Grindr has spatial layers that affect assumptions of privacy. The home screen space is different from the chat screen space, as the home screen may be perceived as less private than the one-on-one chat space. Shield argues that even though the company Grindr "warn[s] "that the platform is a "public" space accessible to anyone with a smartphone, Grindr researchers must acknowledge that users perceive and expect the space to be private" (ibid., 84). Grindr users expect some privacy even if data are technically public. In their review of organizations' ethical guidelines to digital research, Williams et al. find that more "adopt the 'situational ethics' principle: that each research situation is unique and it is not possible simply to apply a standard template in order to guarantee ethical practice" (2017: 1152). The situational ethics principle recognizes the fluidity of notions of privacy between individual users, across platforms, and between companies and users. It is imperative to consider the social media site specificity and population being studied. There is no definitive template for the best methodology to study Grindr. In the case of Grindr, one should protect the people who may not be out (see section 3.3. in this chapter) or who are discussing private sexual practices. After considering the aforementioned ethical issues of researching digital technologies, the selected research methods will now be presented.

3.2. Methods

The project inquires into how Grindr potentially reconfigures practices, interactions, and relations. Taking into consideration the ethical issues outlined in the previous section, it was important to select a method whereby informed consent can

be directly obtained and data can be anonymized. The methods selected to generate data were therefore semi-structured interviews and audio diaries. These methods fit this study's aims, questions, and methodology, and can be deployed to respect ethical concerns around the study of digital technologies. In this section, the justifications of these two methods are expanded upon. First the interviews are discussed, followed by the audio diaries.

3.2.1. Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were selected as a method for their context-sensitivity and flexibility. Through open-ended and "theoretically driven questions," semi-structured interviews "elicit… data grounded in the experience of the participant as well as data guided by existing constructs in the particular discipline within which one is conducting research" (Galletta, 2013: 45). Semi-structured interviews are defined as both "planned" and "flexible" (Kvale, 2008: 149). Open-ended questions ensure the main topics are all addressed in the interviews by the researcher, and allow scope for people to respond in different ways (or be similar). They enable patterns of common and diverse experiences to be made visible, with individual voices heard (Heaphy et al., 1998: 455-457). Semi-structured interviews can facilitate detailed exploration of a topic. Interviews allow for improvised adjustments and follow-up questions, ensuring deep discussion when appropriate. Semi-structured interviews also promote clarity, as the researcher can communicate with the participant to clarify intent or meaning.

Qualitative interviews have a history of highlighting perspectives of historically "misrepresented or ignored" (Byrne, 2004: 180), people, "including

sexual minorities and their health, behaviours, identity, and online practice" (Miles, 2019: 74). Qualitative semi-structured interviews let participants describe experiences and their social worlds "in their own words" (Kvale, 2008: 11). This is especially important when studying a topic from an outsider position (further examined in 3.3.1). Semi-structured interviews reveal what is important to participants by considering their narratives of the topic being researched. This approach corresponds with conclusions from the literature review: namely that the figure of the gay tourist promoted by the GTI does not align with how tourists who are gay conceive of themselves and their practices. Therefore it was anticipated that interviews were ideal for prompting the emergence of participants' own explanations of practices and relations. Such advantages were evident in this project, as the unanticipated theme of hegemonic masculinities came forward in participant narratives (Chapter 6). Specific interview questions asked in this research project are mentioned in the description of the protocol (section 3.2.5.).

It must be noted that semi-structured interviews generate narrations of practices rather than direct observations of practices. Nevertheless, narrative is of scholarly interest in its own right (Heaphy et al., 1998; Plummer, 1995). Although the intent of the audio diaries was to supplement and add richness to the interviews, the audio diaries confirmed that in real time Grindr practices appeared consistent with how they were articulated in the interviews. This brings me to the development of the audio diaries.

3.2.2. Audio diaries

Audio diaries were also used to elicit data about user's everyday spatial experiences and practices of Grindr. Audio diaries have been used in social research, usually in combination with other methods such as interviews (Bernays et al., 2014; Gibson et al., 2013; Hislop et al., 2005; Worth, 2009), but they have not been applied to the study of Grindr.

Scholarship indicates audio diaries can be accessible and convenient for participants, as seen by their use in studies of people who are disabled (Gibson et al., 2013; Worth, 2009). Worth used audio diaries in her longitudinal study of visually impaired young people, in combination with interviews and a feedback report. Worth argues that the methodological merits of audio diaries extend beyond accessibility. She notes that in her study, "unstructured requested diaries offer highly contextualised experiences that the researcher may not have anticipated" (Worth, 2009: 2.1.), providing unexpected observations of social life. Therefore audio diaries leave room for participants' self-expression in ways not expected or imposed by the researcher.

Audio diaries have precedence for the study of everyday experiences. Scholars who have utilized audio diaries have praised how they highlight sense-making and identity-work in everyday life. This is especially useful for capturing how Grindr is implicated in everyday technology use. Hislop et al. found audio diaries efficacious for "investigat[ing]…everyday life" (Hislop et al., 2005: 7.2.). Among their benefits, they allow for everyday experiences of personal life to be captured "in real time" (Worth, 2009: 2.2.) while events are fresh on people's minds. Gibson et al. (2013) also employed audio diaries to investigate their research questions of everyday practices and identity-making among disabled young Canadian men transitioning into adulthood. They used a combination of audio diaries, photographs, and interviews to

"elucidate how participants establish, maintain, and reform their identities in everyday practices" (Gibson et al., 2013: 383-384). Monrouxe's (2009) research on identity-making among UK medical students found the "discursive think-aloud process is an unintended, yet profound insight into an individuals' sense-making activity" (Monrouxe, 2009: 100; in Worth, 2009). The "thinking aloud" narration aspect of audio diaries open up reflections on everyday events, potentially revealing contexts of Grindr use that extend what interviews capture.

Audio diaries fit the research aims by offering insight into how relations are formed. They provide opportunities to capture everyday practices of Grindr tourism in real time and are useful for understanding sense-making of Grindr, especially in combination with other methods such as interviews. Audio diaries are also convenient and accessible for participants. It was anticipated that audio diaries would be less burdensome for non-native speakers compared to writing a diary, as the linguistic labor required is similar to speaking aloud in an interview. Audio diaries can be recorded anywhere and anytime via one's cell phone. In terms of data management, audio diaries can also be sent directly and securely to the researcher upon recording the audio message, thereby circumnavigating any participants' privacy concerns over someone else encountering their written diary. Audio diaries suit the ethical and research concerns of this project (expanded on in sections 3.1.2. and 3.3.)

Audio diaries required more commitment than meeting once for the interview. In order to make study participation more attractive, they were optional. Participants were asked to record them over the course of the week so that tourists and locals could be easily compared. Tourists typically visit Tel Aviv for short periods, and the period of a week allowed for their inclusion. Flexibility was emphasized at the outset,

and tourists staying for shorter durations were also encouraged to complete diaries. Audio diary protocol and participant retention are outlined further in section 3.2.5.

The methods of the audio diaries and semi-structured interviews offer opportunities to voice narratives of Grindr experiences and biographies of the self. They are flexible and allow for articulation of experiences in participants' own terms. Interviews also allow for the narration of everyday life, which is strengthened by how the audio diaries capture a slice of everyday life on Grindr. The importance of everyday social life underpins this study, as "the practice of everyday life is entangled with digital media, especially mobile media (Goggin, 2006), and this extends to sex and intimate relationships (Light, 2014)" (in Albury et al., 2017). Grindr use is part of people's everyday experience of technology, and in the context of Tel Aviv the presence of tourists on Grindr is an everyday occurrence for locals. The two methods furnish avenues to locate and unpack everyday interactions and spatial practices that constitute Grindr tourism.

3.2.3. Recruitment

Fieldwork took place in Tel Aviv, Israel over approximately two months between 17 August and 26 October 2017. During the fieldwork period, a diary was kept with ethnographic observations.

Participants were recruited using a snowball sampling method with multiple entry points. An online poster was circulated through Twitter, public Facebook groups, and on relevant Reddit threads such as r/Grindr, r/Israel, r/LGBT (see Appendices A and B). Recruitment flyers were also distributed on public noticeboards around Tel Aviv. Local businesses also permitted me to display the recruitment poster

in their windows and bathrooms. Participants were asked to recommend anyone they thought would be interested in participating. No participants were solicited directly by the researcher; all participants contacted the researcher of their own volition after learning of the study.

One would expect that sharing the poster online would be most effective as it has the largest reach. Additionally, Grindr users who are active on their phones may also be active on other social media platforms, lending opportunity to see the poster. Certainly from the number of Twitter impressions and Reddit viewers the online poster garnered, this was the case. From posts on the Reddit threads, as of September 2017 (mid-fieldwork) there were a total of 479 views of the recruitment poster across the Reddit threads (unfortunately the total views at the end of the fieldwork period are no longer accessible, as the thread has been archived). On Twitter, my tweets of my recruitment poster garnered a total of 8712 Twitter impressions and 180 engagements. Twitter defines impressions as the number of "times people saw this Tweet on Twitter" and engagements as the number of "times people interacted with this tweet." However, when it came to those who followed through to the point of being interviewed, a larger number came to be part of the study as a result of having seen the physical posters in public in Tel Aviv or by word of mouth from another participant. Studying the digital space of Grindr does not necessarily entail that recruiting through digital spaces is most effective.

It is difficult to determine why the physical poster was more efficacious at garnering interest in the project. People may be more receptive to being involved in the research when they encounter the poster in other spaces outside of their Grindr use, especially when alone walking down the street or going to the bathroom. Overall the physical poster was a surprisingly effective recruitment strategy.

Recruiting participants to the audio diaries proved challenging. All participants were invited to do the audio diary, but only seven out of nineteen volunteered to do so. Participants were requested to record the audio diary on days they used Grindr. For most, this resulted in daily audio diaries over the course of a week. Yet one of the seven who volunteered to complete the diaries did not end up recording a diary at all, stating that he had not happened to use Grindr that particular week. Retention appears to be a common issue with audio diaries as a method (Gibson et al., 2013; Worth, 2009). Additionally, other studies of Grindr users have experienced similar issues of retention when pairing interviews with another method. In the instance of Bonner-Thompson (2017), who interviewed Grindr users in Newcastle, UK, only four out of thirty participants interviewed elected to create physical diaries as well. Likewise, Licoppe et al. (2015) invited interviewees to participate in Grindr walkthroughs. Only three of their twenty-three participants agreed to this aspect of the study. Issues of retention invite further research into whether this is a result of multi-method approaches, audio diaries, or something about Grindr users as a cohort.

3.2.4. Sample

Participants were tourists and locals in Tel Aviv who spoke English, were over eighteen years old, and used Grindr currently or previously in the past few years. Participants who came forward were aged 18-38, with a mean age of 29. Nineteen people in total took part. Five participants were tourists, seven were "born and raised" locals, and seven were immigrants who spoke to their current experiences as locals and their past experiences of being tourists in Tel Aviv before moving. Of the

nineteen who were interviewed, seven agreed to complete the audio diaries although only six actually did so.

Most of the local Israeli participants identified as Jewish (although they were a mix of Ashkenazi and Mizrahi Jews, different ethnic categories that are meaningful locally), reflecting the local population of inhabitants (Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality, 2018b). Those who were immigrants and tourists came from various destinations: Europe, USA, Philippines, South America, and Russia, to name a few. The tourists were also from a mix of religious backgrounds, as some were Christian, Jewish, or secular/religiously non-identifying. Participants generally identified as gay or queer, if they chose to identify with a label at all (further addressed in Chapter 5).

The recruitment poster explicitly stated “all identities welcome” in order to be inclusive, as the research focus is on practices of Grindr tourism, not identity. Nevertheless identity (and the flexibility in connecting with it, apathy toward it, or biographical history of it) was an important theme in many of the interviews, as will be discussed in Chapter 5 “Coming Out in the Age of Grindr.” No participants identified as trans or genderqueer, although varied gender expressions occasionally came up (see analysis of hegemonic masculinities in Chapter 6).

All participants appeared able-bodied and seemingly came from varied class and educational backgrounds. Demographic information was solicited by asking about what identity categories people felt were significant to them. This was done so that categories and labels of demographics were not imposed on participants; rather, what was meaningful for them came forward. Participants were asked the initial question of “How would you describe yourself in terms of identity?” and, if more prompting was needed, “Can you describe yourself in terms of demographics that you relate to or identify with, for example things like class, race, ethnicity, religion, or nationality?”

(see Appendix E). Participants were also asked about their professions and the jobs of their parents to provide information on class.

The sample did not happen to include anyone who used Grindr anonymously. Additionally, the sample was presumably biased towards the inclusion of people who felt moderately comfortable talking about Grindr and their intimate lives. Although participants were not asked invasive questions or questions about sex and could refuse to answer any questions, the sexual dimension of Grindr use potentially dissuades people from discussing their Grindr practices with a researcher.

The criteria for participation stipulated that respondents had to be 18 or over. This is because Grindr's policy stipulates that users must be over 18. Additionally, the 18+ requirement conforms to university ethical guidelines, ensuring that only adults consent to and participate in this research.

I aimed to obtain a half tourist, half local sample. Although this balance was achieved, many immigrants came forward who could speak to both experiences. I had not anticipated this. The perspectives introduced by immigrant locals ended up furthering the depth of the study in terms of the diversity of experiences addressed. It should also be acknowledged that while this study appears to capture a common cultural narrative of locals and a common cultural narrative of tourists, it cannot reflect the experiences of everyone who uses Grindr tourism in Tel Aviv. When interviewees expressed resistance to mainstream narratives and rejection of norms, their experiences are examined in the analysis chapters.

3.2.5. Procedure

A qualitative multi-method approach was used that includes a semi-structured, in-person interview and optional audio diary component. A pilot interview was conducted before the fieldwork period to ensure interview questions were clear, relevant, and suitable.

If participants elected to only do the semi-structured interview, we met in a public location in Tel Aviv to review the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix C) and sign consent forms (Appendix D). The interview was conducted immediately afterward. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the aid of an interview protocol sheet (Appendix E) outlining broad main questions to open a discussion, such as “What has been your experience of using Grindr?” For some, this was enough to prompt a response that highlighted what they thought was significant or meaningful to discuss. For others who were less forthcoming, specific sub-questions were then asked, examples being “Why do you use Grindr? What are you hoping to get out of using Grindr? Where and when do you think you normally use it?” Interviews lasted on average between an hour to an hour and a half. All interviews were audio-recorded with permission from participants.

Two interviews were conducted over Whatsapp videochat when the participants happened to be away from Tel Aviv during the fieldwork period. Although video chat interviews are recognized as challenging in terms of building rapport (Seitz, 2016), in the case of this research, participants who videochatted were very interested in the research and were merely limited by being temporarily away from Tel Aviv during the fieldwork period. There was no notable difference between videochat and face-to-face interviews in this research, as the two videochat interviewees were highly motivated to participate. From my perspective, there did not

appear to be connectivity issues that impacted the conversation flow; however, as an international doctoral student I often videochat to be in contact with family and therefore may be biased in my comfort with videochat technologies and tolerance of their technological idiosyncrasies. Measures were taken to reduce technological issues, such as videochatting from an empty room with a strong Internet connection (Seitz, 2016).

In the case of those who elected to do the audio diaries, the process began with an in-person meeting to review the Participant Information Sheet, sign the consent forms, and answer any questions. The initial meeting also included an explanation of how to record the audio diary. We then parted for a week, during which the participants sent me their audio diaries detailing their experiences of Grindr each day they used it. After the week of the audio diary collection, a semi-structured interview lasting between an hour to an hour and a half was conducted.

Participants who chose to complete a daily audio diary sent Whatsapp audio recordings from phones to the researcher over the period of one week. Participants were requested to record for approximately two minutes per day, or longer if they desired (most spoke for longer). It was emphasized that the diary content and length of time were flexible. They were given a worksheet with instructions and prompts such as: Was today a normal Grindr day for you? Where were you when you used Grindr today? Did you meet anyone interesting? Did you visit any LGBTQ+ establishments? (see Appendix F for the audio diary prompt sheet). The audio diaries were transcribed by me immediately upon receipt. In the interviews, we discussed topics participants brought up in their diaries as way to prompt thought, along with pre-set questions. The quality of data derived from the audio diaries compared to the interviews is described in the next section.

3.2.6. Data Analysis

Prior to analyzing the data using thematic analysis, the interviews and audio diaries were transcribed. I transcribed all the audio diaries myself, whereas the audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed either by me or by a paid-for transcription service according to my transcription guidelines. While the interviews were being recorded, I avoided referring to participants by name, and therefore all interviews were anonymous. I checked the paid-for transcriptions to ensure robustness and accuracy by comparing them with the audio recordings of the interviews.

Thematic analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) was employed using a staged approach. The audio diaries and interview transcripts were coded on several levels of abstraction, leading to the themes that form the argument in the following chapters. A staged approach entails a staged analysis that divides the data into chunks. The audio diary transcripts and first four interviews were coded in detail, forming the first "chunk." I then stepped back and considered the main ideas and themes across the chunk of data in the first stage. This involved writing reflections on emerging themes across interviews that related to the research questions. It also entailed outlining their context and how different participants discussed them. I proceeded by coding four more and stepped back again, seeing if any new themes were emerging across the next cohort and if they confirmed or contradicted the themes of the previous four. These initial analyses formed the basis of my interpretative analysis. I continued working with four interviews at a time until all had been coded. This "stepping back" entailed that saturation point was reached in which no new themes were mentioned.

The advantage of this approach is that it is iterative. It was also effective for managing the quantity of data.

An interactionist approach (Carter and Fuller, 2015) was adopted when conducting the thematic analysis, the methodology of which was outlined earlier. This entailed paying attention to communication practices via the app or the meeting in person as a result of the app, as well as larger themes prompted by discussion of Grindr interactions. The analysis also drew on the three outcomes of my literature review: paying attention to space, Grindr's technological features, and capitals at play within tourist-local dynamics. In these ways, attention was paid to participants' experiences of spaces constituted through Grindr within the contexts of tourist and local relations. What became evident upon analysis was the importance of stories and narratives as sense-making strategies to process the phenomenon of Grindr. These narrative themes were an unanticipated dimension of the interviews and diaries and formed part of the analysis, as will be addressed in Chapter 5. Narratives were analyzed across-case and in-case.

Audio diaries were incorporated into the analysis as follows. They were coded first, and themes were identified. These themes and narratives were then compared to those found in the corresponding interviews (in-case comparison). Themes derived from the diaries were then compared with those present in interviews conducted with participants who elected not to complete the diaries. In the following discussion chapters of this thesis, data drawn on will be from both the diaries and interviews. Interview data tended to be woven into the analysis chapters more often than the audio diaries because there were more of them.

Overall the interviews and audio diaries yielded similar data and themes that will be discussed in later chapters of the thesis. The differences in the generated data

will be now be highlighted, with two caveats. First, the variations in the data generated by the two methods were minor. Second, it was challenging to draw comparisons when so few participants completed the audio diaries. With these limitations in mind, the main differences between the data generated by the two methods were their temporal and spatial scopes.

Interview data included more biographical and personal history components, further developed in Chapter 5. Interviewees tended to bring up narratives and stories more often as a response to prompt questions. Participants clearly enjoyed the prompt questions and relished the interviews as opportunities to share their thoughts and opinions about Grindr. Questions about Grindr often led to larger discussions about norms, life histories, and tourism. Participants often mentioned how they came to Grindr and their experiences of technology at various points of their lives. The temporal span of the interviews went back years.

In comparison, audio diaries were temporally immediate. They focused on interactions on Grindr "in the moment," as well as the spatial contexts of Grindr use. Most participants also chose to discuss whom they were speaking to on Grindr that day and whether they met offline as a result of the app. The diaries highlighted earlier points that such methods allow for investigation of everyday social practices as they occur (Gibson et al., 2013; Worth, 2009). Furthermore, the spatial context was more present in the audio diaries compared to the interviews. The locations in which the diaries were recorded were usually commented on; these were the same spaces in which participants would also typically use Grindr, such as in their homes, on their commutes, and at parks. The diaries indicated participants were "always on" (Turkle, 2008), constantly moving from the virtual space of their phone to physical spaces and back again.

The data generated by the two methods complemented each other. The audio diaries enriched themes of temporality and space that came forward in interviews by providing examples of immediate contexts. Such consistency was helpful when considering tourism-related experiences in Tel Aviv.

3.3. Ethical Considerations

The research design brings up certain ethical issues around safety in terms of self-protection and the protection of participants. I did not use my personal Facebook, email, or phone to recruit or communicate with participants; rather, I used professional contact information and had a research phone number in the field. As a lone researcher in a foreign country (see Appendix I for the Lone Researcher Policy), I only met participants in public spaces for my safety. Data were stored securely under a data management plan (see Appendix G) to protect participants. All audio diaries were sent to my research phone via Whatsapp, which is end-to-end encrypted. This ensures that the only people able to access the contents are the sender and receiver of the message. The audio clips were recorded directly in the Whatsapp audio feature, circumventing security issues of audio clips being stored on other parts of a phone. Before leaving the field, I transcribed all the audio diaries and re-recorded them separately on my recorder. This was in order to remove participants' phone numbers from the data. Further ethical concerns are addressed on the participant information sheet and the consent form, attached in the appendix (see Appendices C and D).

Addressing LGBT+ identity within the context of smartphone technologies presents unique challenges around outing, anonymity, and consent, particularly at cost

to those located in homophobic regions such as certain villages in Israel and the area surrounding Tel Aviv. In terms of the ethical issues, there are researcher concerns around differing norms of identity and anonymity to consider. A primary driver of this concern is participants' potential fears of being outed as gay. The context of Tel Aviv also comes into play when the assumption is that people are in the closet primarily because of being from a very religious family. The Tel Aviv context affects people's practices and their perception of how cautious they need to be when it comes to issues of identity and anonymity. The Israeli context particularly matters in this case. Concerns about outing people make it even more important that Internet research ethics are considered and that Grindr is not considered "public." Therefore, in this research participants are referred to by pseudonyms and no identifying information is shared. Although it was not anticipated that the interview questions would cause distress to participants, a policy was established in case of this eventuality (see Appendix H).

When designing my research, I considered distributing my call for participants through a Grindr profile made for the study in addition to circulating it online and publicly on poster boards. However, after reflecting on the scholarship outlined previously, I realized that sharing through Grindr was not the most ethical approach because the reasons people go on Grindr are not necessarily for research purposes. As boyd and Crawford astutely observe, "just because content is publicly accessible does not mean that it was meant to be consumed by just anyone" (boyd and Crawford, 2012: 672). Users do not go on Grindr in order to discover research to participate in. They may feel that an unwanted audience is surveying their Grindr profiles unscrupulously. It would, therefore, have been invasive to use a Grindr profile to aid recruitment, even if other scholars such as Miles (2019) and Bonner-Thompson

(2017) had done so. At one point during my fieldwork interviews, a participant asked me if I had considered recruiting through Grindr itself. He asked this as a suggestion to help increase participant numbers. I told him I had considered and explained why I decided against it because of the reasoning above. I then asked him, “How would you feel if you had found my research through Grindr?” He thoughtfully replied, “Rather not.” His response affirmed for me that I had made the most respectful choice by not recruiting through Grindr. Part of my sensitivity toward this and my concern with anonymity, outing, and the ethics of identifying people stem from the fact that I am studying this topic from the perspective of an outsider, consideration of which I will now delve into.

3.3.1. Researcher Positionality: Benefits and Drawbacks of being an Outsider

My positionality as a researcher has been key to my methodological standpoint, particularly my ethical approach to studying digital technologies. One of the first things people comment on when they learn I am researching Grindr, whether a fellow Grindr scholar at a conference or the participants in this project, is that I happen to be a *woman* studying Grindr. As a result of my gender and therefore outsider status, I have been especially sensitive to ethical issues regarding my research topic. Additionally, although I have familial connections to Israel and have lived and worked in the country for several months, I am not Israeli. There are benefits and drawbacks of being an outsider.

One drawback of studying this from a female researcher perspective (and therefore outsider) was the lack of access to some all-male physical spaces, such as all-male clubs and bathrooms, to place the recruitment poster. Additionally, some

scholars argue that it is harder to build rapport and trust as an outsider (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). Insiders share an “experiential base” (Asselin, 2003: 100) that means they may be more easily accepted by the participant (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009: 58). Fortunately I was able to build rapport with participants and found them to be forthcoming. Although some were curious about what led to my interest in this research topic, no one challenged my ability to understand Grindr in Tel Aviv.

Despite some benefits to being an insider, there can be disadvantages too. Dwyer and Buckle point out that if participants assume similarity of experiences with the researcher, they can “fail to explain their individual experience fully” (ibid.). Additionally, the research may be shaped more strongly according to the researcher’s experiences, rather than the participants’ (ibid.). When analysing the data, there is potential for an over-emphasis on “shared factors between the researcher and the participants and a de-emphasis on factors that are discrepant, or vice versa” (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). As an outsider, I do not have direct experience of Grindr tourism and can therefore be open to the ways participants understand it.

Being an insider can make relations messy and make it hard to draw boundaries between the researcher and participant. This is especially the case when recruiting through Grindr itself, as reflected by the work of Bonner-Thompson (2017). Bonner-Thompson used his personal Grindr profile to recruit participants for his research, including a picture of his “smiling face and clothed torso” and a tagline stating “looking for research participants only” (ibid., 1615) alongside information on the research project. Such techniques were attempts to “construct boundaries…to limit the amount of people that may have (mis)read my online presence as looking for sex or dates” (ibid.). Yet despite explicitly stating his “research intentions,” Bonner-Thompson “still received multiple sexually suggestive and explicit messages and

pictures" (ibid.). I similarly found this in my previous experience of conducting dating app research. A researcher profile is viewed by some users as an invitation for "taboo" flirtation. I have even been accused of lying on the research profile in order to drum up romantic interest. Even if one is an insider, it can be complicated to manage separation of scholarship and personal life on a dating app, especially if the same profile is used for both purposes as was the case with Bonner-Thompson. In the event that participants find out about the research in other ways, there could potentially be a sexual or romantic dynamic from participants' perspectives which may influence how forthcoming they are in interviews.

There were benefits to my outsider status. As an outsider, knowledge was generally not assumed, although of course no one is ever wholly objective or neutral (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). Throughout the research, I aimed to be reflexive in my positionality as a female academic outsider to Grindr and Tel Aviv. There was also little concern about participants' misreading the research subject as an opportunity to get involved romantically, as happened in the case of Bonner-Thompson and my previous study on Tinder (Katz, 2017, 2016). I was cautious regarding the ethics of my approach, and I ensured that people had to contact me to participate so that my outsider status was as non-invasive as possible. Some participants commented on how they were pleased that this research was being conducted, but to them using Grindr and experiencing Grindr tourism were, to paraphrase, just ordinary aspects of their everyday lives. A benefit of being an outsider is showing that online interactions that are "ordinary" to those in the know can be "strange" to others because they are subjectively, temporally, and spatially contextual. Such observations lend insight to how norms of technology use are shaped, thereby forming a historical record of communication.

It is important to examine researcher positionality to understand how certain aspects of identity may further contribute to unequal power dynamics (Angrosino, 2005). Researchers' gender, race, nationality, and class identities may influence their interpretation of participants' narratives if left unexamined (Angrosino, 2005; Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). As mentioned in my introduction, I aim to contribute back to the group I am studying. As an outsider to Grindr users and Tel Aviv, this is even more important to avoid exploiting a group for my research benefit. At the conclusion of this project, a newsletter on research findings was distributed to those who expressed interest in receiving it on their consent forms. They were also welcomed to share information about the project with charity organizations they were involved with. This gives back to participants by addressing their concerns articulated in the interviews and demonstrating the application of academic findings to their lives.

3.4. Fieldwork Barriers

Some identity groups are missing from the data. Christian Arab and Muslim Arab Israeli citizens did not come forward, despite their constituting a large minority in Tel Aviv (Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality, 2018b). Additionally, none of Israel's approximately 38,0000 Sudanese and Eritrean asylum seekers (Lidman, 2018) came forward, most of whom (90%) live in south Tel Aviv (Sokol and Times of Israel staff, 2019). This could be due to numerous reasons such as social marginalization, concerns about deportation, and not speaking English. It could also stem from mistrust of Israeli authorities and therefore suspicion of the research or a female researcher. I attempted to recruit and put posters in neighborhoods such as Jaffa and

South Tel Aviv where the aforementioned groups absent from this research tend to live, but my efforts were ineffective in terms of recruitment.

To access these absent groups, alternative recruitment strategies are needed. However, their experiences of sexuality may be very dissimilar as a result of different levels of stigma against homosexuality. Only 17% of Israeli Muslims are likely to say that homosexuality is acceptable, compared to 53% of Israeli Jews (Pew Research Center, 2020). A benefit of recruiting through Grindr is the potential to reach these absent participant groups directly in a private moment on their phones because they may have been aware of others' social gazes if they examined the Grindr poster in public. Yet recruitment through Grindr comes at a cost for those who provide sources of data generation, as solicitation intrudes on their perceived-as-private Grindr experience described earlier in this chapter. Nevertheless the data collected were very rich, providing insight on discourses and experiences of the cultural majority (Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality, 2018b) in Tel Aviv.

Users aged over 40 did not come forward to participate in this research. The oldest participant in the sample was 38, and the average age was 29. Older users of Grindr are under-studied in general (Bonner-Thompson, 2017; Van De Wiele and Tong, 2014). Although Grindr users tend to be under 40 (Clement, 2019; Van De Wiele and Tong, 2014), from looking at the Grindr homescreen in Tel Aviv it was clear that there will still many users over 40. The fact that older users did not come forward may be due to stigma about being single and older than 40, as pointed out by (Bonner-Thompson, 2017). This was upheld in my research: one 23-year-old tourist told me, "I feel like even the older people who use it, there's a level of immaturity about using it." Additionally, older users may have established partners and might face stigma about being in an open relationship and looking for external sex partners

on Grindr. Such was the case for one of the participants, a 37-year-old local. Older users may not engage in Grindr tourism as often and may not be interested in this research. Like other absent groups, Grindr users of this demographic may benefit from an alternative recruitment strategy that is more direct.

Finding people willing to participate was a challenge for several other reasons. As mentioned earlier, only those who came forward on their own participated in the research; I did not directly approach people. However, 18 people (in addition to the 19 study participants) came forward in response to seeing the research call yet did not respond to my following up with them twice. Some other people I came across were unwilling to participate due to perceived time constraints. My observation in the field was that people were unwilling to do the interviews for free (although I did buy interviewees a coffee out of pocket) during the interview. Those who chose to participate were enthusiastic about the subject and willing to recruit contacts; however, they were not successful. This extract from the fieldwork diary illustrates the dilemma:

> 12 October 2017: Ran into [a participant] on the street today (Israeli). He told me he had asked lots of his friends if they wanted to do the research, but most weren't interested if they weren't being paid. He said he was really disappointed because he believed in the project, and was surprised others didn't want to help. He was with a friend of his and the friend, once we started talking, realized that I was the person doing the posters he'd seen around. I think my participant worked on him and he may volunteer.

Fortunately, the friend of the participant eventually did agree to an interview. Nevertheless the participant was surprised his enthusiasm was not shared by others, and that they needed further prompting and incentives. However, other studies of Grindr that relied on interview methods also yielded a fairly small number of

participants, with Brubaker et al. (2014) interviewing sixteen people, Jaspal (2017) interviewing eighteen people, and Blackwell et al. (2014) interviewing thirty-six people. Reticence may stem from notions of Grindr as private rather than solely due to this project's fieldwork constraints. From my fieldwork experience, future research on the Tel Aviv context will need more incentives to get a larger number of participants.

The language barrier could also be considered a limitation. The aim was to recruit locals who used Grindr to talk to tourists. As the app is in English and often English is the lingua franca used by tourists and locals to communicate on the app, I felt justified in conducting my interviews in English. Doing so excluded people who spoke some English but did not feel confident enough in their English-speaking ability to be interviewed. This has implications in that participants needed a certain level of proficiency or education to speak a foreign language. However, in order to use Grindr one needs a smartphone, which already entails some privileged resources. As I knew from my previous time working and living in Israel, many people speak English in Tel Aviv. This was certainly also the case during my fieldwork. Locals did not comment on my requirement for English-speaking participants as a barrier when I inquired about it. However, the varied accents of participants meant that transcription of interviews took longer than expected.

There were limitations in the field directly resulting from my status as a lone researcher. My physical poster recruitment was work-intensive and slow due to competition with those who professionally put up promotional posters for events on the public notice boards. I would put up a poster only to pass the bulletin board an hour later and see a motorcyclist pull up to the board with a glue roller and box full of posters advertising a concert. He would cover the entire notice board with the eight

iterations of the poster in seconds. Minutes later, a competing promoter would do the same with a different event poster. I therefore frequently had to visit the noticeboards all around the city. In contrast, businesses were very willing to put up my poster in their premises and those remained in place for the most part throughout the fieldwork period. A larger research team or alternative strategy may have more effectively distributed the poster, thereby yielding a larger number of participants.

As a result of the methodology regarding ethics, participants had to approach the researcher to take part in the project. This results in a self-selecting sample which could have resulted in participants who are motivated by strong feelings for or against (Bilton et al., 2002) Grindr. However this was not found to be noticeably the case in the research. The interviews covered wide-ranging perspectives, ambiguity, and reflections on how participants' thoughts about Grindr had changed over time. This may be a result of the method of semi-structured interviews (rather than a survey, for example), which tend to generate more nuanced data.

In the instance of this research project, strategies to mitigate the existing limitations would fundamentally challenge the ethical methodological approach. Although it is methodologically worthwhile to consider how limitations impact the data generated, overall the methods sufficed for generating rich data.

3.5. Conclusion: Context is Key

Highlighting digital and geographical contexts are important for understanding the spatial dimensions of Grindr tourism. To generate data on interactions, practices, and relations on Grindr, methods of semi-structured interviews and audio diary were selected. The project's qualitative interactionist methodological framework and

process of ethics, method design, recruitment, and resulting limitations were described. Additionally, the benefits and drawbacks of my positionality as an outside researcher have been reflected upon.

As an outsider researcher, I aimed to be as ethical and respectful as possible. Tel Aviv is a field site whereby concerns about outing are significant, and Grindr is a digital landscape that is also entangled in digital concerns about outing and privacy. In this context, I argue that treating Grindr as a public space does not exhibit respect for the participants. This position informed the chosen methods of interviews and audio diaries, whereby participants come forward of their own volition and articulate experiences in their own words.

This methodology offers an original take on the phenomenon of Grindr and Grindr tourism by combining audio diaries and semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews offer opportunities to voice narratives of Grindr experiences in an open and flexible manner. Everyday life and everyday experience of mobility and technology underpin this project, which is strengthened by how the audio diaries capture a slice of everyday life on Grindr. It is important to study Grindr using qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews and diaries because these methods highlight embedded interactions within spaces. The selected methods allowed for a consideration of the impact context has on the data generated. Context is key to this study and my methodology, specifically for the consideration of Grindr as a spatial site, for the foundation of interactionist methodology, and for the employment of ethical approaches to digital technologies. To contextualize and situate participant narratives of Grindr that form the data analysed in the discussion chapters, the next chapter explores participants' biographies.

CHAPTER 4: Participants' Biographical Contexts

Biographical narratives highlight the importance of Grindr and gay technologies in shaping lives. This chapter examines people's Grindr "careers" by providing an overview of participants' biographies. The biographies demonstrate the fluid ways people come to Grindr, initially use it, sometimes withdraw from it, and return to it over time and with age. The biographical narratives show how the spatial and temporal experiences of the app consequentially influence how individuals socially navigate Tel Aviv and their lives, and how subsequent relations, interactions, and practices are shaped. By honing in on biographies, this chapter also establishes the themes that are explored in the following analysis chapters.

The five biographies presented are representative of the participants who took part in this research: two are tourists, two are locals, and one is a local who immigrated to Israel but who also used to visit Israel as a tourist before his move. Despite these varied backgrounds, Grindr contributes to the everyday lives of each.

Participants were not asked directly for their biographies; the backgrounds described in this chapter are taken from various parts of the interviews and woven together. The narratives are based on paraphrasing of participants' statements, although some verbatim quotes are interwoven. Decisions about which biographical elements to highlight were influenced by the tri-part framework that emerged from the literature review. First, the stories highlight tourist-local dynamics, touching on tourists' attitudes toward Tel Aviv and locals' perceptions of tourists. Second, attention is paid to people's narrations of their relationships with "community" spaces

and physical spaces. Third and finally, technological dimensions that participants comment on are foregrounded. What participant biographies say regarding the three dimensions will be further unpacked at the end of the chapter.

4.1. The Tourists: Harry and Jake

Harry

Harry is a 33-year old tourist originally from the UK; he is visiting Israel for the first time. At the moment, he is living and working in another Middle Eastern country for an airline. He identifies as white, working class, and from a non-Jewish background (he has not specified any religious affiliation beyond that). He is passionate about athletics.

When prompted, he does not identify strongly with a sexual identity at all. For him, “it’s important to be the same as everyone else…accepted.” Harry emphasizes the importance of fitting in throughout the interview and prefers not to think of himself through labels and categories. Despite this, in our interview he used the word gay to talk about his life, so in this dissertation I refer to his sexuality as gay for clarity’s sake.

Harry’s coming out story followed similar patterns to those of other tourist participants. He grew up in a socially conservative area and was in the closet. Once he went to university, he found it to be a socially liberal place and “instantly was out to everyone,” as it was very accepting. Because of the “supportive” nature of his university town, he said he had not felt the need to seek counseling or support from LGBT+ community agencies. However, Harry is not out to people in his hometown.

His parents know he is gay but they do not discuss it with him: in his words, “not because they’re not comfortable with it” but because he has constructed a “firm mental wall” between his hometown and his life at university. While at university, Harry initially talked to other gay men on a university-specific dating website. This included just chatting online as well as sometimes meeting up in person. He used dating websites until eventually shifting to Grindr around 2011.

Passing as straight is very important to Harry, and it informs his feelings about the need to come out. When asked if he is out in his Middle Eastern country, he remarks that he is “not someone that wants it to be an identifiable part of my personality. I don’t want people to know or necessarily to ask.” He keeps his sexuality private in the workplace, but does not necessarily hide it in his personal life—it just does not often come up. His close friends are aware of his sexuality. Grindr is the main way he experiences his sexuality at the moment, rather than being involved in any organizations or going to gay commercial spaces such as gay bars.

Harry’s attitude towards Grindr reflects his non-engagement with physical gay establishments. As he puts it, “The great thing [about Grindr] is that the need to congregate together is lessening because of acceptance” in countries like the “UK or Netherlands.” Due to wider social acceptance of homosexuality, Harry (like many others) regards separate physical spaces as less necessary. Grindr is seen as symptomatic of wider acceptance in certain liberal countries, enabling people to safely find each other on their own. Yet in the Middle Eastern country where he lives, Grindr also functions as a way to keep his sexuality private and discreet.

The ultimate goal of Harry’s Grindr use is to enter into a long-term relationship. Despite wanting a relationship, sometimes he is also content with just meeting someone “short term for fun” (i.e. sex). His use changes depending on where

he is and what mindset or mood he is in. Harry wishes it were not so “taboo” and “uncool” to express desire for a relationship on Grindr. He feels he is unusual for wanting a long-term relationship to result from his Grindr use. However, this is certainly not the case based on the interviews I conducted with other participants.

While in Israel, Harry uses Grindr to talk to and meet with locals. He always uses Grindr when he travels. He asks locals for tips on where to go, and mentions that the restaurant he chose for dinner the evening before the interview had been suggested to him by someone he was chatting to on Grindr. He finds Tel Aviv to be “one of the most gay cities…[I’ve] been in..[my] life,” and is surprised by all the attention he gets from the locals. Although he really enjoys the gayness of Tel Aviv, his motivation to visit Israel was out of longstanding cultural touristic interest rather than Tel Aviv’s gay reputation.

Often during the interview, Harry stresses his dismay with the “transactional” and objectifying ways people interact on Grindr. Despite frustration with aspects of Grindr, he is not deterred from using it.

Jake

Jake is a 23-year old American tourist from the suburban Midwest. He is in Israel for a summer internship. He identifies as gay and Jewish.

Jake attributes his coming out to “gay-based technology.” He realized he was gay by the age of fourteen, and he “got the idea to go on a gay teen chat room online” after watching a gay character on a television show do so. After about ten days, his mother found him using it and he came out as a result. He said it was “fine” and that his family was accepting. Following this, he was on the executive board of his high school’s Gay-Straight Alliance club and met other gay people through the group and

at gay dances they organized for the larger area. However, when asked if he now participates in any gay organizations that are similar, he said no and that he does not "feel an obligation to participate in things like that." Jake also states that he is too young to have witnessed LGBT+ organizations and establishments before Grindr; the app debuted when he was fifteen. He currently still uses Grindr and occasionally goes to gay bars. In Jake's mind, when it comes to recounting his personal history there is a link between technologies. He transitions from the subject of Grindr to other technologies predicated on interacting online, such as gay Internet chat rooms.

Jake started using Grindr at the age of eighteen. He remembers that at university, he and some of his friends used Grindr to find people to have sex with and would then "share hook up stories" with each other. He was not happy about the "cultural" pressure to engage in these practices, and remarks that "in terms of gay hookup culture, I feel almost obligated as a gay man in my early twenties to use Grindr and use it to hook up." Despite his occasional use of Grindr, Jake has "kind of matured past it" and, like many other research participants, judges older users who are still on Grindr as "immature."

Jake has mixed feelings about the casual sex aspect to Grindr because like Harry, he hopes that his use of Grindr will lead to a relationship. Eventually marrying a Jewish partner is important to him, and in the USA he struggles with finding suitable partners due to the rarity of the "double minority" of gay Jews. He likes that in Israel most of the guys are Jewish, which eliminates some of the issues he faces back home. Jake fantasizes about a relationship with an Israeli because they meet his need for a Jewish partner and he finds them attractive.

Jake has been to Israel several times before, and has used Grindr in Israel on each occasion. During his interview, Jake talked a great deal about the exotic appeal

that locals' military backgrounds have for him. He thinks that "there's something very alluring about that that you don't really get back in the [United] States." The military component of everyday life in Israel is very publicly visible, and Jake comments that he particularly enjoys Sundays in Israel because it is the day the soldiers return to their military bases after a weekend at home. As a result, Tel Aviv is full of "really attractive, young Israeli soldiers going back to base. And they're all wearing their uniforms and… [it hits] you in just the right way." The military is part of Israelis' exotic allure for some tourists, reflected in other interviews as well. Because of Jake's especial attraction to Israeli men, he mostly talks to locals on Grindr rather than other tourists.

Overall Jake has mixed feelings about Grindr because to him it is the emblem of the "gay culture" pressure to hook up. He also feels that it allows for the imposition of "ridiculous body standards," although he distinguishes that this is not the app itself but rather the way people use it. He finds that "if you're not the ideal body type using the app, then you feel bad if people don't message you" and that Grindr made him "more self-conscious of...[his] body image." He has deleted the app before and found the interim between deletions to be a positive period. Yet he has still found himself returning to Grindr and always being peripherally aware of it. Jake has never really experienced gay life without Grindr.

4.2. The Locals: Tomer and Avi

Tomer

As a 23-year-old local currently attending university, Tomer has a story that reflects those of other local participants I have interviewed. He identifies as Israeli, Jewish, gay, and secular. He is from a village on the outskirts of Tel Aviv and moved to Tel Aviv to attend his university.

Tomer came out to his family when he was around eighteen or nineteen years of age. His family was accepting and not very surprised. They told him "this is who you are," a phrase he still recalls. However, his family did express their worries on his behalf, as "growing up as a gay man…can be difficult" in Israel. To paraphrase his words, acceptance within the family does not necessarily reflect acceptance in one's village or country. Tomer does not talk much about being gay to his family, but that is typical of their family dynamic. He points out that his "older brothers are also not talking about their relationships" with him or his parents. He sums up his experience of being gay in his family as "really normal." Many participants hold normativity and social assimilation in high esteem.

Tomer first started using Grindr when he was nineteen and serving in the army. He distinctly remembers his initial impressions of the app. He was surprised by how "sexual" and "provocative" it was. He did not "know that people act this way in…the gay community," or that being openly sexual was "the norm." He was "frightened" because he had not known "what to expect." As a result of this first impression, he was initially critical of the app and "negative" about the gay community. This seemed to have been a difficult period for him of dipping his toes into adult gay life.

Part of Tomer's disappointment with the overt sexual displays on Grindr was because he "knew" he wanted to "meet people…and be in a relationship." The relationship aspect is important to him, as he reflects on it repeatedly throughout the

interview. After discussing his issues with the sexual aspect of Grindr with other friends, he feels that he has come to understand that showing one's body in pictures does not necessarily mean that person is not looking for a relationship. He is also more open-minded now about others "looking for sex" because he "understand[s] that is part of being a human…or being part of the gay community" whether he "like[s] it or not." Tomer's relationship with Grindr, and his subsequent perception of gay life has shifted over time as a result of social interactions with people in his personal life and on the app.

Tomer sometimes talks to tourists, but he is hesitant because he expects that they do not want a relationship. He is not interested, or involved in, community center events or gay bars, as he does not like the "vibe" and feels uncomfortable in such spaces; however, he does do some LGBT+ youth outreach. He is satisfied with using Grindr as his primary way to encounter other gay men, as to him it is "a platform to meet people." He also mentions that Grindr helps him feel less lonely, fulfilling social needs that he considered lacking in physical LGBT+ establishments.

Tomer spoke a lot about masculinity and what it means to him, especially the emphasis of it on Grindr. He is discouraged that people so often ask for masculine men on Grindr, and considers it "disappointing" for the larger gay community as a whole. He does not unpack the idea of community, like many other participants who refer to "community" vaguely. Tomer thinks that the discourse emphasizing masculinity on Grindr excludes people, as Chapter 6 addresses further. Many perceive him as masculine because of his appearance (bearded, tan, fit), and he struggles with this perception because he feels feminine. Those around him assume that because he conforms to physical expectations of a certain kind of hegemonic masculinity, he must be invested in that masculinity. Yet he is aware "nobody fits to this idea," and

that masculinity and femininity are fluid. He describes feeling very feminine at certain times and also notes that people's perceptions of what constitute masculine or feminine attributes are subjective. His thoughts on challenging notions of masculinity come from his biography. He passionately reflects that all his "childhood, people were laughing" at him for being "too feminine," yet now people question his concern with issues of masculinity and femininity by saying things such as "why do you care, you're not feminine." He challenges such ideologies through discourse with his friends and people on Grindr, as he "really cares" about issues of masculinity.

Tomer revisits his ideas and assumptions around casual sex and masculinity because of Grindr. He discusses Grindr with friends and as a result is more aware of the variety of perspectives on it that exist. People's thoughts about the app shift over time as their identities change.

Avi

Avi is a 31-year old local Israeli journalist. He is Jewish and born to an ethnically Ashkenazi family. He grew up in a suburb of Tel Aviv. After serving in the army and subsequently attending university, he moved to the city for his career. For Avi, Grindr is primarily a way of both being political and overcoming political boundaries. The overt political dimension to his use exemplifies a more exceptional experience than the others shared thus far. However, many other aspects of his biography reflect typical narratives from other participants.

Avi has been using Grindr since 2011. He says he never really went to gay parties and did not mention any LGBT+ commercial establishments. He came out to his family three years ago, at the age of 28, which means he was in the closet (with his family, at least) during the initial years of his Grindr use. He feels that he came out at

a fairly late stage, especially considering he “hold[s] very liberal thought[s] about the world” that he expresses to others. When reflecting on why he came out at that time in particular, he said he had not come out before even though he felt his family would be okay with his identity because of fear of “judgment” from his family and concerns that it would make “relationships more difficult.” Avi’s father died three years ago, around the same time Avi came out. Avi also acknowledges that the fact that his “father was about to die…influenced…[his] decision to come out,” although he only chose to tell his mother and siblings, not his father.

Avi is aware that he spends a considerable amount of time on Grindr. He uses it every day, but gives himself a daily limit because he thinks he “was very addicted” to it in the past. He does not log in to Grindr between 2 and 7 PM. Grindr seems to be a big part of his life, and he feels its significant “influence” through the fact that he has his “job thanks to Grindr” and because it has provided somewhere for him to “develop…[his] political messages….and discussion between…[him] and the public.” In the past he also used the app to provoke people politically, in addition to using it to look for dates, which will be examined later.

Like some other participants, Avi acquired his current job through Grindr. This displays one of the various interactions possible from use of the app. He met someone in the news industry on the app and told him that he was looking for a journalism job. They dated and through this connection, he found his current workplace. Such instances show how the social relations one forms through Grindr are messy and layered.

Avi talks about having involved “politics and activism with…[his] Grindr activity.” In our interview, he discussed politics of masculinity and ethnic politics in Israel. Avi is deeply concerned with divisions between some Jewish ethnic groups in

Israel; he focuses on the Ashkenazim (from Eastern Europe) and Mizrahim (from the Middle East and North Africa). He seeks to discuss his perception of deep ethnic division in Israel on Grindr and prompts conversations by using ambiguously provocative nicknames like "Stop the Ashkenazi Regime." He also used a photoshopped profile image of him cuddling a representative of an Arab political party in Israel. Avi challenges mainstream political ideas and invites engagement based on curiosity about his unusual political pictures and messages on his Grindr profile.

When reflecting on what masculinity means in Israel, Avi (like Jake) points to the common affiliation of masculinity and the army. Masculinity is something Avi thinks about when it comes to his politics, including challenging other Grindr users on their perceptions of masculinity by playing with their assumptions over physical appearance and behavior. He would sometimes declare himself to be "a very masculine woman" on his tagline and use a very traditionally masculine photo just to spark conversation. Like Tomer, rigid notions of masculinity in Israel concern Avi. Avi's political provocations eventually led to him being blocked from Grindr because of user complaints. He made a new account and now is less provocative on his profile, or "calmer" as he phrases it. He now has shifted his political engagements from his profile pictures and text to his private chats with other men.

Avi considers himself to be "open-minded in sex and in relationships," and his two serious past relationships were non-monogamous. After these serious relationships, he also "tried to hold" a polyamorous relationship with two other partners at the same time, although it did not work out for him. He is open-minded about what he hopes to get out of Grindr, but states that he is currently looking for "mainly…a long-term relationship and friendships" through his new Grindr profile.

Avi is one of many locals who particularly enjoys meeting tourists. Avi says that he does not usually have sex with tourists he meets on Grindr, and that he is predominantly interested in just getting to know them and their countries of origin. He likes "to go with them around the city of Tel Aviv and to talk," usually about politics or cultural differences. He likes to learn about the LGBT+ rights in their countries and the perspectives they have of Israel. As will be analyzed further in Chapter 6, he keeps "a diary with the things they tell...[him] about themselves." The diary-keeping practice reveals how meaningful these connections are to him. Through Grindr, Avi meets people and contributes to conversation about global and country-specific LGBT+ issues.

Avi atypically uses Grindr as an overt political platform to discuss politics and spark debate. Yet he also uses it more subtly as a way to challenge expectations of gender, similar to other participants such as Tomer. Although Avi has changed his approach from one that provokes through taglines and profile pictures to one that engages in discussion in the chat, he still views the platform as a way to change others' minds. Avi's story exhibits the everyday interweaving of politics, friendships, jobs, and meaningful social connections that occur within Grindr interactions.

4.3. Beyond the Tourist-Local Divide: Sagi

Sagi is 38 years old and originally hails from South America. Sagi is gay, Jewish and now considers himself Israeli. He has made Aliyah (immigrated) to Israel three years ago, but he had been a tourist to Israel on numerous visits before immigrating. He has had experiences from both the local and from the tourist

perspective and, like the other immigrants who participated in the study, spoke about both during his interview.

Sagi travels frequently as part of his work and also did so while growing up. While living in North America (his family moved frequently), he came out to a few close friends in high school "a couple years" before coming out to his parents at the age of 18. His coming out was a "four-year process," and once he had completed university he told "everybody openly all the time" about being gay.

In his many past travels, Sagi would hope to find a local on Grindr who is "good-looking, who seems like he could be charming or we could have a fun time together in bed or out of bed." As someone who had been considering moving to Israel, his story of traveling in Israel was slightly different than in other countries. He mentioned always having a secret hope of finding an Israeli husband to marry and moving to Israel as a result. This in part recalls Jake's comments on the difficulty of finding another Jewish partner in one's home country. On his trips to Israel as a tourist, Sagi met locals by going to gay bars as well as by using Grindr, echoing the experience of other participants.

Although in the past Sagi has used Grindr to seek out varied interactions such as hook-ups or meeting locals to show him around, now that he is settled in Tel Aviv he is looking for a relationship and indicates so on his Grindr profile.

Sagi talks about being exoticized as a foreigner while in Israel, and now being exoticized abroad when he travels while stating on his profile that he is an Israeli. He found it was an advantage to travel and keep Hebrew on his profile, as he got a lot of attention because "in the gay world, Israelis are thought to be very good." He mentions people wanted to meet him more when he declared himself to be Israeli on Grindr. Sagi also notes that "Israelis love when you're exotic." He had interest when

in Israel as someone with an international background, yet also abroad under the banner of an Israeli.

Upon moving to Israel, Sagi also had insights into aspects of Tel Avivian culture of which a born and raised local may not be aware. Sagi has seen things shift dramatically in Israel over his lifetime, and his perspective as an immigrant furthers his awareness of how different social acceptance of homosexuality is in various parts of the world. He notes that people his age were "eighteen when the first Gay Pride Parade [in Israel] happened." He recalls that many Israeli people his age would tell him "that as teenagers they thought they were the only gay person in the world," whereas abroad he would only hear statements like that from his parents' generation. His Israeli counterparts would mention that they had never seen any gay people on television or been aware of other gay people in their town. Such statements are only a few of many anecdotes Sagi divulges when reflecting on how recent Israeli social acceptance of gay people is. Yet despite increased social acceptance, Sagi also sees many people on Grindr who are still in the closet.

Grindr helped Sagi learn Hebrew when he first moved to Israel. He would practice speaking Hebrew in his chats with locals, and made it his personal goal to become fluent enough not to be detected as new to the language (and therefore new to Israel) until he chose to disclose it.

Sagi is happy gay dating apps exist because they make it easier for people to approach each other nowadays, especially "shy" people. He finds it heartening that technology such as Grindr "allows you to see" that gay people are everywhere. He returns to his earlier comments, reiterating how he finds it "hard…to believe" that when other Israelis of his generation were eighteen—the age he came out—they had been unaware of "any other gay people in the world" at that same stage. Nowadays

teenagers "in the middle of nowhere in northern Israel" (a region with isolated villages) are able to open their phones and see that there are people around them. Even if they might not meet them, "it really helps" to know there are others going through the same discovery of their sexuality, according to Sagi.

Sagi's generational orientation, combined with Grindr, gives him a perception of difference between people like him and others who have grown up with Grindr. He talks about his 45-year-old ex who would comment on feeling there "was this new generation that he didn't know but they all knew each other." He believes that they were all "coming of age with the Internet" and had met online through different groups and via Grindr. Sagi finds this a "new reality" which he deems positive for minority identities. Yet he is thoughtful about the effects of it on current younger people, as he thinks they do not know any other way to interact other than through Grindr. Sagi's nuanced perspective on life pre- and post-Grindr is shared by other participants of his generation.

4.4. Themes Going Forward

This chapter foregrounds themes that will be discussed in later analysis chapters by initially presenting them in five participants' life contexts. The biographies reveal the variety of relational outcomes Grindr users hope for. Conversations beginning with reflections on Grindr lead to stories of how Grindr touches other dimensions such as family and coming out. In the narratives told, the role of physical gay institutional spaces in bringing people together has shifted to online spaces. Yet as Sagi expresses, some find Grindr an inhibitor of connection as much as a boon. People's descriptions of "come and go" Grindr careers over time

work hand-in-and with affective ambiguity towards the app. The examples from the biographies touch on how technology can influence life trajectories in significant ways.

The first theme that the biographies touch on – addressed in Chapter 5 – is the significance of *coming out* as gay. In the context of these participants, technologies serve as modes of connection and facilitators of belonging more than physical gay community spaces. For younger participants, Grindr forms an imagined environment one "comes out' into at the age of 18; generation and imaginings are subthemes addressed in the next chapter. As the biographies indicate, identity-building happens through interactions on Grindr. The subtheme of naming identities, including ones in the biographies such as "gay," "Mizrahi," or "foreigner," will be further unpacked. Narratives of coming out are consequential for both biographies of identity and trajectories of taking up new technologies.

Chapter 6 delves into the second major theme of *tourist-local dynamics*. The biographies demonstrate that people casually use Grindr over long periods of time, often years. Tourist presences on Grindr are part and parcel of normal everyday app use for locals. Yet participants' willingness to take part in this research and comment on their tourist-local relations indicates that this facet of interaction also stands out as distinct—hence the coining of the phrase "Grindr tourism." Biographies touch on subthemes that will be addressed such as expectations tourists and locals have of each other. Jake's mentioning of Israeli military men recalls postcolonial theory of Othering in the literature review; the impact for inequalities such statements speak to will be explored. Masculinities and exoticization come forward as subthemes relevant to the navigation of tourist-local dynamics on Grindr. Tourist-local dynamics encapsulate many other research subthemes, including nationality, body, and gender

ideals, which carry social significance beyond the temporal scope of a Grindr interaction between a tourist and local.

Narratives of *norms and boundaries* of interactions on Grindr are investigated in Chapter 7. Participants express hope for a variety of outcomes from Grindr ranging from relationships to sex to guidance on local points of interest. Notably, the biographies indicate many participants hope to find a romantic relationship through Grindr. Affect also emerges as one's feelings toward the app shift over time at different stages of one's Grindr career, along with life events. Communication and impression management are subthemes that emerge from the biographies; they contribute to how norms of interaction on Grindr are replicated and resisted.

The biographies present a tapestry of themes interwoven both within biographical contexts over time and across the biographies of different participants. The following chapters take each of these thematic strands and examine them in turn, along with relevant subthemes. The variety and interweaving of themes reflects the richness of Grindr itself as a facilitator of interactions, practices, and relations.

CHAPTER 5. Coming Out in the Age of Grindr

The social relations that are viewed as possible may shift as people begin navigating the social world under the umbrella of a gay identity. Contemporary technologies are enmeshed in the various practices, interactions, and relations that are tied up in coming out (revealing one's non-heterosexual sexual identity). The chapter offers an original framework of *emergence* to theorize coming out. By using the term emergent, I mean the variety of practices around coming out that are slowly repeated, modified, returned to and away from, and debated with over time.

This chapter illustrates how the theoretical framework of emergence is particularly suited to engaging with participants' narratives around coming out in decades marked by technological change, most notably the advent of Grindr. Beginning with the presentation of one participant's coming out story to illustrate the emergent aspects of coming out, I then appraise traditional models of coming out used in the past. After integrating the historical context of gay men's use of the Internet with literature on coming out, I analyze participants' experiences of coming out using Plummer's (1995) theory of modernist sexual storytelling. Subthemes of naming, Grindr coming out practices, and myth-making shed insight on the spaces and institutions people imagine they are coming out into. Drawing on Plummer (1995) and Anderson (2006), I argue throughout the chapter for an emergence-based approach to coming out that allows for coexisting modernist and postmodern coming out narratives to come to light. By doing so, I link the significance of coming out for how participants perceive Grindr and gay institutions.

5.1. Kevin's Coming Out Story

Kevin, a 31-year-old Australasian tourist in Israel who came out at 27, calls himself a "late bloomer." Initially engaging with other men primarily through technology, his story is a tale of technological progression. His first kiss and first time sleeping with another man happened with someone he met on Grindr as a tourist in Berlin; however, this was just one moment in a story constituting a lengthy series of interactions and technologies that brought him to where he is today. Kevin's story coherently interweaves technology and narratives of sexual identity that many participants touch on. It provides an alternative narrative to academic coming out discourses discussed later in this chapter. The first part of Kevin's story talks about the emergence of his attraction to men and his ambiguity of identifying, especially in his environment at the time. The second part of his story covers technology and relations: whom he spoke to and how interactions occurred as a result of technology.

Kevin brought up coming out of his own accord. When asked about how he would describe himself in terms of identity, he recounted his coming out story. Kevin's continued difficulty of naming his experience of attraction was what prompted him to share a narrative. This was his strategy to articulate what a simple identity label could not sufficiently summarize. He initially came out as bisexual to his family at the age of 27. For Kevin, coming out was an ongoing process of emergence. It took him years to accept his attractions, and years more before he acted on them. Yet when I asked him a follow up question of "how old were you when you came out?" he talked about the age at which he first came out to his family as bisexual, despite going on to identify his sexuality differently as he became older.

Despite not "fooling around with guys" until 25, Kevin recalled struggling with his attractions during his teenage years. At the age of 17, he drove by himself to

a widely known cruising spot at a public toilet at the beach (in 2003). He sat in the parking lot and watched a few men go in, but “chickened out.” At the time, he felt he had “proved” his “masculinity” (to himself) by not going in. That occasion stuck in his mind, as it was the only time he had acted on his attractions until eight years later, at 25. Kevin asked himself how would he be different, “what would [his] life have been if [he] had gone into that place at 17 and had a homosexual experience at that point in time?”

Kevin felt that growing up in the suburbs isolated him from any exploration of his attraction. He mentioned not knowing any gay people his age, and being part of a motorbike-loving friend group who threw around “homophobic slurs…like no tomorrow.” He mentions that in his city of two million people, there were only two gay bars and if he “had wanted to explore, he would have had to go by [him]self.” He also specifically points out “that was before apps or anything like that,” presumably meaning if they had existed at the time they would have provided opportunities for exploration. After school, he worked in underground mining and in offshore oil, environments he calls “very hypermasculine, not like a liberal arts university” where perhaps he would have had room to explore his attractions. As a result of his environment, his attractions to men “didn’t come to the boil,” aided by the fact that he had “thought [he] was fully satisfied…in [his] sex life and …romantic life.”

Kevin’s identification with bisexuality, then gayness and queerness, emerged slowly. It began with reading erotic fiction as a teenager that focused on his particular fantasy of masturbating with other men. It remained a fantasy due to his “internalized homophobia,” as the idea of doing anything further or even kissing another man “actually disgusted” him. He also went on a website during his teenage years called jackingworld.com. “That’s what [his] fantasy stayed at” until 25.

Kevin’s use of technology, particularly the erotic fiction websites, led him to new technologies that furthered his interaction with other men. Kevin was introduced to camming websites during his mid-twenties because it was featured in one of the erotic stories he was reading. His curiosity stoked, he went on a camming website himself and found people to cam with, some of whom he added on Skype. Another story mentioned meeting someone off of the website Craigslist (personals section, now gone), and Kevin proceeded to do the same. The first time he ever met anyone in real life was from Craigslist—this only entailed masturbating together. Eventually, he regularly met people off Craigslist to masturbate and have oral sex with, including a regular hookup partner, yet he had never kissed another man.

By 2013, Kevin had acquired a smartphone, downloaded Grindr while on vacation in Berlin, and had met someone through the app. At the age of 27, having met someone on Grindr, he kissed and had sex with a man for the first time. Summarizing his encounter, he stated, “once I kind of jumped in the deep end, I haven’t been back.” Despite claiming “not to have been back,” to women after this new level of intimate encounter with another man, he later shared that he “had sex with women a couple of times since 2013, but it’s only been with … an old friend with benefits of mine.”

It would be easy to discount Kevin’s continued return to his female friend with benefits (hookup partner) in favor of a clear story of identifying as gay, but this detail is significant. His continued sex with a woman despite his newly accepted sexual interest in men illustrates the messiness of social relations. Coming out is not always a linear pursuit of “true” sexual attraction. People have relational ties to each other based on other connections and established past intimacies, emphasizing the importance of studying practices, interactions and relations in tandem.

Further revealing how back and forth the experience of coming out can be, Kevin compared himself to other "gay guys" he has met. He believes that they have known about their sexuality "from day one," whereas he has had meaningful romantic and sexual relationships with women. He described anxieties around potential future intimate interactions with women:

> Kevin: Yeah, like I still have some level of sexual and physical attraction to women, and sometimes I feel that I want to explore that, have more experiences with women. I'm kind of nervous about it though.
>
> Interviewer: What are you nervous about?
>
> Kevin: …Like, it gets to the point and then I realize, actually no, it's not what I want. I don't know.

Kevin continues to experience ambiguity about what he wants and how he deals with his attractions. He is now in an open relationship with a boyfriend of two years. They met at a house party hosted by someone Kevin met on Grindr, and he attributes meeting his boyfriend to the dating app, declaring, "The only reason I was at that house party was because of an app." For Kevin, Grindr contributed to building diverse relations with other men.

Kevin concludes his story of coming out by bringing it back to his complex and shifting process of identifying, stating, "I started saying gay and it doesn't fit, so I started going with queer. And I would still generally say I'm queer." He hesitates around identity terms, saying "generally" and constantly moving from past to present. For him, naming his attraction in terms of an identity category has been a continuous struggle; the subtheme of naming is unpacked later.

Kevin's coming out story is not a stage-based, linear process of realization; it flies in the face of conventional understandings of coming out (discussed in the next section). His experience reveals how relationships can affect coming out. The narrative invokes his relations with many people: coworkers in the mines, motorbiking friends, family, people on the other end of Skype, hookup partners male and female, and his current boyfriend. The people in his life and the environment he was in influenced how and when he chose to act upon his attractions.

The lens of technology offers some insight into how these relations are experienced, nurtured, and shifted, but it is also key to remember at the other end of the technology, there is a person. The technologies available facilitated, and shaped, the ways in which he had intimate interactions with others. Kevin was not able to enter the physical space of the cruising spot at 17, but he was comfortable visiting websites and talking to others online via Skype. He was introduced to certain other technologies because they were mentioned in the websites he visited. However, he also chose to engage with the technologies in particular ways that he was comfortable with, gradually increasing to meeting people in person. He mentions rejecting any gay porn websites in favor of reading erotic stories online, reinforcing that although technology may lead to a new practice, there is also agency in determining whether or not it will.

Coming out is a process of composition, as opposed to conventional notions of it as a singular event. There is a weaving in and out of interactions and practices, seen in Kevin's story. This weaving is how people link identity to practice. The composition and weaving can also be described as processes of *emergence*. Kevin does not suddenly identify as gay or bisexual based on his initial fantasy of other men. It is the persistent occurrence of this fantasy, and his repeated acting on it by reading

erotic stories or camming with other men, which leads him to a shift in his perception of himself away from "straight." He refers to himself as straight in the past tense, explaining his initial nervousness about his first Craigslist hookup by saying "straight guys tend to get a bit freaked out" by the idea that they are acting on this fantasy or having a sexual interaction with gay men (or a gay couple, in his case as he later realized). Kevin's shifts in language from straight, bisexual, gay, and queer, in addition to his focus on interactions with others rather than identity, displays the limitations of perceiving coming out as a singular moment or and end result for an isolated individual. I examine Kevin's story as a shift away from turning points, and rather conceptualize coming out as an *emergence* of interactions and practices shaped by relations over time.

This chapter develops how an emergence-based approach to coming out suits the narratives shared by the participants in this study. I consider the role of contemporary technologies like Grindr in shaping the coming out practices and interactions that can be conceived producing emergent identities. Throughout this chapter I refer back to Kevin's story as an example of the interactions that shape emergent social and personal understandings of coming out through Grindr.

5.2. Coming Out and the Internet

This section examines theories of coming out that take into account changes in Global North societies brought about by the Internet. Coming out literature has often turned to the framework of stage-based development models that will be described in 5.2.1. They are critiqued for failing to capture the reality of many of participants' experiences in this study, including that of Kevin. Coming out practices may have

altered with the development of the Internet, explored in section 5.2.2. Tracing the history of the Internet shows how new technologies influence transformations and reconfigurations in coming out practices that challenge past understandings.

5.2.1. Coming Out Prior to the Internet: Stage-Based Models

Coming out is typically theorized in terms of stages, which can be traced using a model (Kenneady and Oswalt, 2014; Plummer, 1995). Often, scholarly debate is concerned with creating new models or testing the applicability of old ones (Kenneady and Oswalt, 2014). This leaves no room for the notion that sexual identities emerge non-linearly and by generation. By identifying, I mean ascribing an identity to oneself. Identifying may entail affiliating and understanding oneself as part of an identity, but it is not necessarily fixed. There can be processes of identifying rather than a one-off identification. As will later be expanded upon with reference to my participants, the notion of identifying depends on relations, practices, and emergent experiences. The stage models, published in journals like the *Journal of Homosexuality*, were used by scholars to theorize coming out. The models classify features of identity development and are applied to people broadly across age, gender, and social group. One of the most frequently cited models is Cass's 6 stage model of coming out (Cass, 1984), involving the following stages: 1. Identity confusion 2. Identity comparison 3. Identity tolerance 4. Identity acceptance 5. Identity pride 6. Identity synthesis (ibid., 143). Cass includes gay men and lesbians in her model, but not people who identify as bisexual or queer. Cass's stages inspired others to create similar models (such as Coleman, 1982; Milton and MacDonald, 1984; Troiden,

1985). The stage-based models the literature on coming out focuses on were primarily developed in the late 1970s and 1980s, before the advent of the Internet.

The stage-based models' historical and geographical settings are examined to contextualize thinking on coming out. Scholars who created the models drew from white participants located in the United States (Kenneady and Oswalt, 2014). At the time, gay and bisexual men socialized in segregated spaces such as gay bars, clubs, and community centers (Grov et al., 2014: 393). Additionally, cruising in known areas was a way of meeting others. These locales of social life involved potential risk of being caught, and outed, if found there. They also tend to be located in urban settings (Grov et al., 2014: 393). During the historical period when the coming-out models were initially conceived of, gay spaces involved separation of gay and straight spaces, and therefore of lives. One could live as a gay man in certain spaces and continue to be in the closet at others. Therefore one might feel as if he was living two lives: a secret life "truthful" to who he was and an "inauthentic" life as a straight man. The historical setting influenced how and why the models were initially developed (Kenneady and Oswalt, 2014).

I argue that the models can be critiqued for the following three reasons: (1) implied linearity, (2) implied singularity, (3) implied adolescence. Drawing from my research findings, I further develop Kenneady and Oswalt's critique of Cass's model with my own observations about singularity and adolescence (expanded on in section 5.3.). First, models imply linearity in coming out; one progresses or regresses through the stages, and once one has reached the final stage they have "fully" come out from a psychosocial perspective. Such thinking reflected in the models assumes a "compulsory heterosexuality" (Rich, 1980: 631) and a subsequent veering away from it, with the ultimate need to act on sexual nonconformity. The models' linearity

ignores how gay identities are multitudinous and situated differently depending on the social and national context; what it means to be a lesbian in the UK in 2018 is different than what it means to be a gay man in New York in the 1980s. This is summarized by Weinberg's critique that there are numerous "paths to multiple identities that start at different points" (Weinberg, 1985; in Kenneady and Oswalt, 2014: 235). Second, this research will show how coming out is not a singular disclosure event; rather, it is repetitive. It happens repeatedly over time as the individual comes into contact with new social groups and social situations, such as moving to a new country as in many participant cases. Therefore, one could be comfortable being out in some situations but not in others due to external reasons, not because they have not synthesized their identity (Cass's stage 6). Third, coming out models have usually been applied to those coming out during adolescence. Many scholars take the position that coming out happens during adolescence, and scholars theorize that this is because adolescence is a period during which identity formation occurs (Craig and McInroy, 2014; Corsten, 1999; McMullin et al., 2007). This assumption is usually not questioned in the literature. Yet many of the current study's participants came out post-adolescence, for many reasons ranging from cultural, national, generational, and personal.

These stage-based models are insufficient; they do not, for example, reflect the coming out experiences of Kevin. In the conclusion of their critique of Cass's model, Kenneady and Oswalt (2014) note that since the 1980s there is more social acceptance of homosexuality, fluid identifying, and most importantly, the advent of the Internet. Kenneady and Oswalt conclude by raising the question of how contemporary technology affects these processes, but they do not answer it. I aim to do so by showing how Grindr and other gay technologies shape coming out among the

participant cohort (see section 5.3.). Despite the creation of models to understand sexual identity development generally, their assumptions of linearity, singularity, and adolescence mean they fall short of accurately capturing temporally fluid experiences of coming out. In the next section I turn to literature that incorporates contemporary technologies to theorize coming out.

5.2.2. The Internet Age

There is no study examining Grindr's role in coming out. However, there is some literature on coming out with new media technologies, particularly the Internet. Outlining a history of gay men's adoption of the Internet brings to light the changing ways in which technologies prior to Grindr have been used as part of the coming out process. This aids the theorization of Grindr's role in contemporary experiences of coming out as an extension of earlier practices and as a solution to earlier limitations. In addition to practices, we can also determine which features Grindr has adopted from previous technologies that may aid in coming out.

Initially, scholars focused on media representations of LGBT+ identities, tracking the influence of gay television characters or celebrities (Bond et al., 2009; Gray, 2009; Plummer, 1995). They found that study participants would mention feeling less alone because of having TV characters as role models, the presence of which would break taboos of silence (Bond et al., 2009). However, with the passage of time, others mention feeling said media characters were limiting in their stereotypes (Bond et al., 2009; Gray, 2009). With new technologies available to aid information-seeking of LGBT+ people, create online chat rooms for discussion, and build platforms of community (ex: AOL, chat room websites, YouTube), people

engage with the new technology as part of the coming out process and neglect the old. The scholarly shift from observing the influence of television to observing information-seeking practices in chat rooms illustrates this pattern.

Early scholars of the Internet envisioned that the online world would open up space for sexual experimentation and reformation/formation of new identities (Nakamura and Chow-White, 2013; Turkle, 1995), including sexual and gender identities (Miles, 2018: 3). It has been noted by scholars that gay men have historically been among the first to embrace the use of Internet technologies (ibid., 1). Some scholars attribute this to the "public atmospheres" (Grov et al., 2014: 393) of physical gay establishment spaces discussed in Chapter 2, which put off people who had not come out or who were still exploring their sexuality (Weinrich, 1997; Grov et al., 2014). The perpetual, 24-hour availability of the Internet for those who had access to it contrasted with the limited hours and urban spaces of gay venues (Grov et al., 2014: 393). Concerns over being physically harmed or arrested in cruising areas may have also made the anonymity of Internet spaces appealing (ibid). In other words, the limited safety and limited anonymity of physical gay spaces for those beginning to explore their queer sexuality may have prompted quick adoption of alternative Internet spaces, which eventually extend to Grindr.

Part of gay identity development can involve a coming out process, and in the 1990s coming out process began to take place in Internet spaces. Grov et al. describe the history of gay men's use of the Internet, considering chat rooms to be of particular significance. AOL was a platform for chat rooms and instant messaging in the 1990s. Users had anonymous usernames (also called handles) and could post in the chat rooms or search other users based on their handles. Such "infrastructure…was ripe to foster anonymity" (Grov et al., 2014: 392) as well as immediacy, as users could

"respond to messages in real time" (ibid.). There is a dearth of data from that time about gay men's patterns of Internet use. Despite absence of direct research, Grov et al. point to the fact that in *Wired* magazine's 1994 "Top 10" list of "most populated chat rooms created by members of AOL, three…were gay chat rooms (ibid.). This indicates that there was disproportionately heavy use of the chat room medium by gay men compared to the straight population (Grov et al., 2014: 393; Shaw, 1997). Users could also find other gay users who indicated their sexuality by searching the term "gay" and seeing the usernames that incorporated the word (Bond et al., 2009: 43). Bond et al. discuss the example of a participant who searched AOL profiles for the term "gay teen" to find others like himself (ibid.). Chat rooms, specifically on AOL, arguably comprised a major part of gay men's Internet experiences in the 1990s. The chat room features of anonymity and immediacy are eventually incorporated into Grindr.

The shift from 1990s to the mid-2000s brought forth technological advances such as faster broadband Internet, wireless connectivity in the form of WiFi, and reduced costs of accessing the World Wide Web (Grov et al., 2014: 394-395). This has also been defined as the transition from Web 1.0 (the 1990s) to Web 2.0 (2004 onward), with Web 2.0 involving more social and interactive content (Cormode and Krishnamurthy, 2008). Despite the fact that these technological advances meant the Internet was easier, faster, and more accessible to the general population, the gay population was still using the Internet more (Grov et al., 2014: 394-399). This trend is repeated with the adoption of mobile phones in the mid- 2000s, as gay and bisexual men outnumbered heterosexuals in their use of them (LGBT Market Research and Development Lab, 2012; in Grov et al., 2014: 399). The iPhone was available in 2007, and the app store market came about in 2008 (Grov et al., 2014: 399). Not long

after came Grindr, in March 2009 (ibid., 400). With these developments, the age of mobile, always-accessible, image-based smartphone apps such as Grindr was upon us. The quick arrival of Grindr on the app market illustrates the argument that new technologies allow for different interaction practices with other gay men to occur, even while replicating elements of earlier practices. Grindr has the immediacy of a chat room, but brings in an easy exchange of photos due to the accessible camera on smartphones. Each new era involves a shift of space, from offline spaces to site-specific chat rooms to the perpetually available space of Grindr in one's pocket (ibid).

New technologies facilitate new possibilities for interaction. This means those who are discovering their sexuality have increased opportunities to engage with other gay men. Technologies mediate all online interactions, thereby bearing upon processes of self-discovery and coming out. Craig and McInroy examine how new media shapes identity development that occurs during the coming out process. They point out that the stages in traditional coming out models "are commonly considered solely in the context of offline life" (2014: 97). They therefore use an offline/online spatial dichotomy particularly in their examination of how people "digitally engage in coming out" (ibid., 95). They conducted their study in Canada in 2011 on 18-22 year olds (n=19) who used at least four forms of new media. They focus on youth, again with the assumption that the coming out process typically occurs during adolescence. They conclude "that new media enabled participants to access resources, explore identity, find likeness, and digitally engage in coming out" (ibid.,). This "digital engagement in coming out" entails the "ability to explore, develop and rehearse their LGBTQ identities online" (ibid., 101). In other words, people say to strangers in anonymous online spaces that they are gay, a low social risk situation. Craig and McInroy perceive this as part of a linear coming out process. The rehearsal,

exploration, and development occur by interaction with others. The unexamined "other" at the other end of the interaction is important. This sentiment is echoed in one of Craig and McInroy's participants' feeling that online engagement helps with the coming out process because it stops people from feeling "they're the only gay person in the world" (ibid., 103). Several participants in this research project echoed this sentiment, and Sagi articulates it nearly word for word in Chapter 4. For some, the ability to reach others by way of technology enables coming out practices. The initial moment of talking to other gay people online is itself a coming out practice, and online interactions may support other coming out practices such as a disclosure to one's family.

Besides the work of Craig and McInroy, many of the studies that address technology's role in coming out focus primarily on information-seeking practices during youth (Bond et al., 2009; Hamer, 2003). Studying information-seeking entails examining how people use the Internet to find out more about being gay (a textual search) and to guide them through the coming out process. These investigations are usually done from a health or library studies perspective. Their approach and recommendations generally assume a unidirectional pursuit of information by people, such as going to a sexual health information website or advice website. There is only glancing mention of chat rooms as a source of information. However, this type of literature ignores the dynamic, interactive process of people and groups coming together that other chat room-focused studies entail.

Like its technological predecessors, Grindr has certain features that enable practices linked to coming out. Discursive practices, conducted through features of chatrooms and private chats, are carried forth to Grindr. They form an important aspect of interactions on the app and are frequently mentioned in the interviews and,

more so, in the audio diaries. The feature of anonymity is also present in Grindr. The ability to be anonymous can make practices of exploration possible. Users can virtually meet and talk to other gay people without being outed. They can also "rehearse" and try out new identities (Craig and McInroy, 2014) without social repercussions in their offline life. Additionally, it enables access to information. This can be unconventional information gleaned by talking to others online or conventional health resources Grindr links to. Grindr also presents solutions to earlier limitations of visibility and mobility. Sagi and the literature mention the importance of not feeling isolated, especially in rural areas where one may not encounter gay people or physical gay spaces. Even if prior to Grindr one could chat with other gay people on AOL, being able to see alike people nearby through Grindr's geolocation feature further reduces isolation. Grindr's features can be adopted not only for casual sex and romantic practices, but also for coming out practices.

Data from my interviews suggest there may be an alternative understanding to coming out based on practices that can be characterized as *emergent*, rather than stages attained. Tracing the history of technologies makes visible how coming out practices are varied and change across time and social groups. Coming out practices can involve naming practices that facilitate the courage to say the word "gay" in front of one's family. Coming out practices can include Grindr practices, such as putting an identifiable photo on one's profile for the first time. Coming out can be repetitive, meaning that people rearticulate their sexual identities in different social circumstances throughout their life. I will delve deeper into these varied practices, including the examples mentioned previously, in the following section by discussing the data generated from participants. By stressing that coming out practices are emergent throughout the rest of this chapter, I offer a theoretical alternative that takes

spatial and temporal fluidity into consideration. Referring to coming out as emergent is a linguistic tool. It theoretically drives the analyst to unpack interactions and practices often considered implicit—and as a result often are missed—in coming out narratives.

5.3. Key Narrative Subthemes

Coming out narratives in the age of Grindr tell a story through technology; they also reciprocally, and sometimes implicitly, tell of technology through a story. Affinities with contemporary technologies impact coming out practices. People become sensitized to the possibilities of being gay directly as a result of exposure to discourses and interactions made available by technology. This has already been touched on in section 5.2., as well as in Kevin's references to Craigslist and Grindr. I will now engage with participant data by examining subthemes in coming out narratives, drawing on Plummer's theory of storytelling. The subthemes address how Grindr has impacted coming out practices. Understanding the relationship between coming out stories and technology lends insight to how practices may be changing.

Plummer's (1995) analysis of modernist sexual stories is useful for contextualizing the narration of coming out stories. He argues that "gay worlds came into being through a number of coinciding conditions brought about by modernity" (Plummer, 1995: 91) such as industrialization and urbanization bringing forth fierce individualism. Family was less of a central feature determining people's lives (ibid., 92) and individuals could privately act upon same-sex desire, eventually leading to a separate, novel, social (and sexual) identity that signaled belonging to a new community: gay.

Compared to past historical institutionalization of stories under the umbrella "of religious confession, medical case study, and courtroom testimonies," 20th century narratives were "being told not by the expert voices from above but by the participants themselves from below" (ibid., 60). In addition to the social establishments mentioned, coming out stories were previously institutionalized through television and gay media, particularly books and magazines. Plummer argues that in the late 20th century, personal coming out stories were shared as a form of political display; people were encouraged to publicly share their stories in order to raise awareness and normalize gay identities (ibid). I argue that this was also a form of institutionalization, as individuals fit their life experiences to palatable, common narratives as a form of political organization. They were encouraged to do so by political groups such as the Gay Liberation Front. Plummer primarily focuses on the Gay Liberation Front as the political site around which community-rallying occurred, and he claims that "coming out as a term came out during the late 1960s and early 1970s, with the creation of the Gay Liberation Front" (ibid., 57). He draws a connection between community, politics, and narrative, and he suggests "that for narratives to flourish there must be a community to hear; that for communities to hear, there must be stories which weave together their history, their identity, their politics" (ibid., 87). He emphasizes the historical importance of the presence of (an institutionalized) community when it comes to sharing modernist narratives, although his definition of community is ambiguous and uninterrogated.

According to Plummer, other features of modernist tales of coming out are their beginning in childhood, that "they use some kind of causal language, sense a linear progression, …and feel they are 'discovering a truth'" (ibid., 83). There are framing conventions to the narratives. Coming out narratives are also highly

important, because they become "the central narrative of positive gay experience (ibid., 84). Similar conventions are seen in the stage-based coming out models described previously. Within Plummer's modernist model, coming out leads to a shift of social group away from primary communities of origin to friendship networks and political communities mobilized around gay identity.

Are these conventions still present? Plummer thinks not. When comparing modernist and late modernist stories, Plummer finds that "late modernist sexual tales—are, by contrast [to modernist tales], … more aware of the reflexive nature of much storytelling, where the centre cannot hold… and a dispersal of identities … becomes more likely," (ibid., 173) blurring conventions. He sees this in how people "coming of age in the 1980s and 1990s started to have…less pronounced coming out" (ibid., 193) experiences. Contemporary coming out narratives are no longer shaped as linear and causal without room for chance. Yet they form according other conventions. Plummer's prescient vision of postmodernism has turned out to be overly fluid, as will be shown in this chapter with participants' sharing of coming out to their families. There is more to be said about what the features of contemporary coming out narratives are, as well as how they work.

Features of modernist and postmodernist stories coexist in this study's participant narratives. Among the participants there are several modernist conventions, such as linear progression and truth. One occurring pattern is a moment where one becomes "sensitive to difference" (ibid., 88). Another pattern is the textual search, something Plummer considers "a critical component for many" (ibid., 85) in the 20th century. It involves "a scanning of the stories available to help see who one is" (ibid), something the participants practice. The textual search can also be defined as the "information seeking" addressed by library studies of coming out and

technology mentioned earlier (section 5.2.2). Yet despite some narrative conventions, overall the participant narratives are de-institutionalized compared to modernist stories of the past that Plummer remarks upon. This observation of participants' coming out stories may be linked to a wider de-institutionalization of identity, with many participants like Kevin rejecting labels (further discussed later on). This is also linked to de-institutionalization of Grindr, as I have argued previously. Grindr circumvents tourist institutions and commercial institutions such as gay bars. Is its popularity symptomatic of a larger social trend of de-institutionalization as a whole? The next sections develop this idea.

Stories are sense-making strategies that tell us of the social world through frameworks and discursive trends. Participants' coming out stories engaged with the following three subthemes that fell under the larger theme of coming out. Focusing on these three subthemes sheds light on how coming out practices are fluid, multiple, and emergent.

1. **Naming** - Is there a naming of oneself in a category or not?
2. **Reflexivity toward Grindr Social Practices** - How do people reflect on the telling of narratives or the telling of their relationships with technology?
3. **Imagined Belonging and Myth-Making** – What do people imagine they are "coming out" into? How do people frame their connectedness? What myths are narratively perpetuated, and what fantasies are present in them?

I will now go through how these three subthemes have been used in participant coming out stories and consider their implications for coming out emergently with contemporary technologies. Most data referenced in this chapter come from interviews rather than audio diaries, as participants did not bring up past practices of

coming out in their diaries. The diaries focused on Grindr use and relations in the present day.

5.3.1. Naming

When discussing coming out, it implies a coming *out* of something – a straight identity—and a coming *into* something else – a new identity or community. This can differ across time and generations, potentially mediated through technologies. This section shows how some participants resist orienting themselves around narratives of identity by emphasizing the desire for broader labels, such as “queer.” Others express preferences for the absence of a label, feeling the label “gay” is ascribed to them by others. Narratives around naming illustrate tensions between gay as a self-described identity and gay as a social identity that can be attributed.

Kevin’s difficulty with naming his experience of attraction prompts him telling his coming out story and is woven through his story. He mentions that when he first “came out to himself internally” and “accepted the attractions” he was having, he said to himself “I’ve got a bit of bisexuality in me.” In his narrative he uses vague language and past tense, saying he “was bisexual” and “on the spectrum of bisexuality,” as well as referring to himself as having been straight or living a straight lifestyle in the past. His self-naming is partly based on practices, as he started “saying [he] was gay… two years ago, when …[he hadn’t] been with girls for quite a while.” However, he felt queer fits better and sums up his naming journey by stating “I would still generally say I'm queer.” He concludes ambiguously, dancing around a label and saying “generally.” Despite his ambiguity, Kevin’s sexual identity is important to him. He discusses sexual politics in his home country and queer theory during our

interview. Sexual identity is important to many participants in the study, and their continuous revisiting of labels in their lives and coming out stories is part of meaning-making around sexuality.

However, there is a counter-narrative to perspectives that posit naming as meaningful. Many participants stress the importance of normalcy and consider their sexual identity to be a small detail in their lives. They desire assimilation with non-gays, and a few even use the language of homonormativity (Duggan, 2002) to describe their hopes for their lives. They resist external emphasis on the importance of their sexual identity by drawing on narratives of assimilation. In Chapter 4, Harry exemplifies this counter-narrative in his biography in his stressing that he wants to be "the same as everyone else" and does not want his sexuality to be "an identifiable part" of his "personality." For those who ascribe to the counter-narrative, gay identity is attributed to them when they may not identify as such in their own terms. The dominant coming out discourse in the coming out models and the literature structures coming out as a singular declaration of coming out into a new, *named* sexual identity, which does not leave room for ambiguous attachment to a gay identity.

Considering coming out as a series of practices that are emergent allows for recognition that coming out is temporally repetitive, rather than a singular moment of declaration. Jaime's story exemplifies this observation. At first glance Jaime's story reflects the normative discourse on coming out: there is a big announcement to his family. Yet upon further examination, Jaime's story is also about a continued process of naming and breaking family silence over that naming. Jaime, a 34-year old immigrant to Israel from Europe, stated that although he came out to his family at 24,

> It took time until I call[ed] myself gay…I said, 'I'm different. I have other preferences.' But the word gay, it doesn't bother me anymore. [It stopped bothering

> me] at 28, 29 once…I was able to say it in front of my family. Repeatedly say, 'We are going to see a gay movie. We are going to talk about this guy who is gay, gay, gay, gay.'… But the first time we were watching the television (after coming out), there was something gay [on it]. And then [my mother] was thinking about the word gay, but she didn't say it. And my brother thought it, but he didn't say it. Someone can say, '[Oh, gay?]' and it was uncomfortable… And now I say, 'I'm stupid. Why was I thinking like that?'…We can talk about anything with my family now… We talk about Grindr…We make jokes all the time.

Despite his perception of coming out at age 24, he was not able to name what he was coming out into (being gay) until a later age. Kevin's story is one of process and constant becoming, which he reflexively acknowledges with his continued naming and renaming. Jaime's story reveals the implicit aspects of (emergent) coming out, despite its disguise as a typical, singular coming out story conforming to those presented in the literature. He discloses to his family, but his disclosure of his sexual identity is tiptoed around for years. Each gay television show, or neighbor casually saying the word "gay," is a moment where the coming out emerges. Somehow, with no particular moment prompting it, Jaime and his family members are able to name the word "gay." Now the dynamic is jovial, but Jaime recalls times, such as when watching the television show, where his silenced sexuality haunted them. Jaime reflexively considers himself to have come out at 24, but his story indicates that the practice of naming, and therefore coming out, was emergent.

Understanding coming out as emergent allows for the fact that people need to come out repeatedly in different situations. To draw further on examples from participants, some describe needing to come out while in the Israeli army. Eli, an 18-year-old immigrant originally from Russia, was looking forward to beginning his army service shortly after our interview. He mentioned his relief that the "army here [in Israel] is gay friendly." In anticipation of the challenges of coming out, he asked

his gay friends who were in the army to share their experiences, and they told him "they feel accepted." This was welcome assurance for him due to his past struggles against homophobia in his home country. Despite this example of coming out in different social circumstances, participants rarely explicitly discuss other life situations where they must repetitively come out. Instead, they discursively focus on the singular moment of coming out to their families, reflecting the culturally dominant discourse on coming out as singular and linear.

Family always comes up in participants' coming out stories, far more than friends or other social situations. Taking into account the notion that coming out is a repeated, ongoing communicative process, it is noteworthy that participants usually focused on the first time they came out to their families as "the moment" of coming out. Despite some focus in the literature on coming out at work (Ward and Winstanley, 2005), this facet of coming out never came up in the interviews. Additionally, coming out is still discursively structured as a singular event in most cases in this research: the event being coming out to one's family, rather than the sometimes-repeated process of coming out to new friends or in new situations. The dominant "coming out story" discursively is the story of coming out to one's *family* for the *first time*.

Despite this frequent framing of coming out as a singular event in the literature and by participants, coming out to one's family was actually temporally lengthy, repeated, and continuous. The emergent process was considered implicit. This is particularly visible in Kevin's situation, as when I asked Kevin a follow up question of "how old were you when you came out?" he talked about the age at which he came out to his family. Kevin's difficulty in naming his sexual identity to himself is further complicated by expectations to disclose it to his family. He mentions his

initial, first moment of “coming out” to them as bisexual, and shares that story. However despite his acknowledgement of the emergent process and the changing, fluid ways he has identified since that particular moment of disclosure, in his narrative he does not mention if he has come out to them again under the other terms he used in the past, such as gay, or the term he uses today: queer. Even in the rare event when participants do describe coming out as an emergent process with multiple social actors involved, they still discursively frame coming out to the family as the singular coming out experience.

The subtheme of naming brings up issues of ambiguity, temporal fluidity, and repetition of disclosures that involve multiple relations in areas of social life such as work, the military, and family. The practice of naming, as an emergent dimension of coming out, returns me to my earlier discussion of Plummer. He argues that modernist stories about coming out require a community to hear them. Yet some of the stories that the participants narrate are postmodern in that they resist involving themselves in defined communities, considering their experience of being gay to be individualized. For some, being gay in practice means using Grindr and having a same-sex partner, not going to community center events, politically organizing themselves according to their sexuality, or making an effort to attend gay commercial establishments. They distance themselves from such institutions, stressing that their sexual identity is not an important feature in their lives (bearing in mind a counter-narrative to this is also present). They use aspects of modernist stories in their linear and causal tales of a singular coming out to family, but they also incorporate postmodern ambiguity around naming and implicitly tell of an extended repetitiveness of coming out. A postmodern shifting of naming occurs, but this shifting involves modernist discourse of an inner

truth of the individual self. Examining how practices of naming emerge over time lends insight to how naming is a complicated yet meaningful process.

5.3.2. Reflexivity toward Grindr Social Practices: Coming Out on Grindr

Perceiving coming out as emergent allows us to better theorize Grindr's role in contemporary experiences of coming out. Most participants who came out after 2009 (the year Grindr was launched) and were over eighteen (the age requirement to use Grindr) used Grindr before and when coming out. Yet not all participants incorporated Grindr into their coming out narratives, despite the discussion of Grindr often leading to the telling of the coming out story unprompted. Oftentimes although Grindr use clearly occurred during the extended process of coming out, it was not engaged with as a subject during the telling of the story. The Grindr practices are in the background of the stories but not reflexively brought forth in the telling of the narrative.

In Daniel's story, Grindr is attributed as an extension of the coming out process despite its absence from his "main" coming out story to his family. Daniel, a 32-year-old local who emigrated from the UK, started using Grindr in 2010 when he moved to Tel Aviv.

> I just started using Grindr just because … I was in the process of coming out of the closet at the time so for me it was… pretty much the natural thing to do…If you're a gay person living in the big city you just have Grindr….And then- wow, I was a 25 year old guy living in Tel Aviv with Grindr…it's addictive!…*Especially for someone who had just come out of the closet and who was coming to terms with their sexuality and never really dated anyone*… You go on Grindr …and the amount of guys that you have within a…two kilometer radius is insane … It's so easy, 24/7… I was never comfortable with just… going to gay clubs and stuff. And even though I started

> [going]… when I was in Tel Aviv, I never found it easy to speak to people… Dating apps like Grindr were a way to meet people…*Even now sometimes when I go on I still think to myself how amazing it is,* especially in a city like Tel Aviv. (Emphasis added)

Bringing up Grindr in this biographical moment of coming out signifies its role in creating a sense of belonging. Feelings of belonging are a key issue in coming out discourses and also in immigrant narratives such as Daniel's. For Daniel, Grindr was a way forward with "coming to terms" with one's sexuality and entering the dating scene at a key time in his life: the period of initially coming out to those around him. The story he reflexively tells himself about Grindr is that it opens the door to an infinite pool of new social relations, especially romantic ones. For Daniel and others like him, using Grindr as part of the emergent experience of coming out creates opportunities for engagement. Grindr made it possibile to form relations accessible to those with shy personalities and who were not attending physical gay spaces. Daniel's story of gratitude exemplifies the discourse of Grindr as positively enabling new interactions, thereby facilitating a sense of belonging.

I now turn my attention back to adolescence, initially discussed in 5.2.1, and consider the implications of the adult app Grindr for the commonly held assumption in the literature that coming out is a singular, linear process often occurring in adolescence. One must declare that they are eighteen in order to use Grindr. All the participants appeared to have respected this rule. The fact that so many participants mentioned using it before coming out, and the fact that a majority came out in their mid to late 20s, further dismantles the misunderstanding of coming out as a stage of adolescent development. Like many others, Ziv used Grindr before coming out to his family. For Ziv, a 23-year-old local, Grindr shaped his emergent coming out practices. He had downloaded Grindr "three years before [he] came out completely:

> I came out on, I know, February XX, 201X, I think…And a month after coming out, the change was switching from a faceless profile to pictures of …my torso and the face. That's … a pretty big change because it makes …everyone aware to the fact that you're gay. (date anonymized)

Ziv was using Grindr for three years, and a month after coming out to his family he showed his identity on Grindr by revealing his face. At first glance, Ziv's emphasis on the specific date he came out and phrasing of coming out "completely" upholds the dominant narrative of a singular coming out event. Yet the details of his shifting Grindr practices reveal emergent coming out practices. Even though Ziv was using Grindr before coming out, he increased his disclosure as he moved from a semi-anonymous faceless picture to one that showed his face. However, his action extends beyond mere disclosure. It is a step in constructing his experience of coming out. He makes himself identifiable in the gay spaces of Grindr, triggering new interaction potential. Many participants expressed a dislike for faceless photos, and sought out those who did not have anonymous, i.e. faceless, profiles. Making oneself more identifiable on Grindr leaves one open to a wider range of interactions. It creates the potential to form more sustained relations that extend to offline spaces without fear of being outed. A simple practice of making oneself slightly more identifiable on Grindr actually contributes to coming out overall; it is one practice of the many that constitute the more general notion of coming out.

As shown in the examples from Ziv and Daniel, Grindr is interwoven into coming out experiences but not articulated as part of the "coming out event." Some participants use Grindr for years before they begin coming out to their families, and they continue to use it afterward. Unusually, Ziv reflexively details changes in his

Grindr behavior as a part of coming out. However, for most participants Grindr's presence as part of coming out experiences goes unspoken.

There is a simultaneous presence of postmodern and modern dimensions of Grindr use while coming out. The myth of the singular coming out narrative has been internalized, and by sharing coming out stories structured in a modernist way participants are contributing to a larger narrative: the one promoted by the coming out models in the literature. Yet understanding coming out as emergent can highlight the sometimes "invisible" importance of Grindr practices and interactions, and the relations they generate, in shaping "out" lives. Grindr serves as a platform where people operationalize choices of when, how, and where to come out. The fact that Grindr is largely present in the background but not expressly acknowledged in coming out stories illustrates that it is a taken-for-granted aspect of many men's social lives.

5.3.3. Imagined Belonging and Myth-Making

Looking at Grindr's role in the background of coming out highlights stories we tell to ourselves about ourselves. When people come out to others, and by extension Grindr, what are they coming into? There are contrasting discursive myths and expectations around coming out. They stem from a range of assumptions about whether people are coming out into a new identity, a community, or a bundle of unlabeled, non-institutionalized same-sex interactions. The three narrative subthemes reveal processes of myth-making around Grindr in participants' stories. The articulation of the discursive myths is sometimes prompted by participants' telling of their coming out stories. This section discusses generational myth-building about what past practices Grindr has directly changed, myths about Grindr being solely for

casual sex, and myths of the hyperlocal and global community perpetuated by users and by the app company itself.

Participants from "older" generations (within the sample) maintain nostalgic fictions about a golden age before Grindr. Sagi, a 38-year-old local who immigrated to Israel, mentions how "annoy[ed]" he is that nowadays at gay bars and parties, "you see that people are looking into their phones, looking for people." He feels that "especially younger people" have "gone too far." He continues to discuss his frustration with the present based on a perception of the past, declaring:

> I consider myself—I'm sort of the bridge generation. I remember the days before apps and smartphones… *you used to talk to people a little bit more*. And now, it's sad that everyone's hustling their face on their phone instead of going out and talking to people. (Emphasis added)

Sagi disparages against "hustling one's face," or in other words, selling' one's attractiveness to others, in the competitive fray of the Grindr homescreen grid. This recalls the earlier example of young Ziv finally revealing his face on Grindr. Perspectives highlighted by Sagi transform the inclusion of a face on Grindr from a memorable coming out practice to a signifier of "hustling" practices. To those who espouse narratives like Sagi's, seeing a face on Grindr through the screen is superficial compared to the superior in-person encountering of a face. This touches on hierarchies of physical and virtual spaces that are addressed in Chapter 7. Sagi associates a fixation with communicating via Grindr with the present, and he misses the intimacies of a past that entailed more face-to-face engagement.

Sagi's perception of a generational divide with younger users, despite being only 38 himself, shows how new technologies can create generational division where it might not otherwise have existed. Many new technologies bring about social

transformation at an increased pace than previously seen. McMullin et al. argue that "as a harbinger of social change, computing technologies may shape and give meaning to generational boundaries in a more accelerated fashion than in the past" (McMullin et al., 2007: 312). Even though the age range of the study sample is limited (ages 18-38), rapid shifts in technologies from the 2000s to the 2010s contribute to generational boundary formation despite the short period of time. In other words, despite the small age range in the sample, there is clear generational demarcation based on the narratives of technology that participants tell.

Sagi's narrative considers apps like Grindr as replacing ways of experiencing the world, especially in physical spaces like gay bars. His statement echoes fictions, dismantled in Chapter 2, of Grindr as the "killer" of the gay scene. Grindr is blamed for the closure of bars and clubs where people used to meet others. According to Sagi, people now isolate themselves too much on their phones. Sagi links his generational location with the "sad" loss of "going out and talking to people." Generational location determines affinity toward a technology, according to McMullin et al. (2007: 306). Sagi's affinity toward Grindr is mixed. He embraces it as a user but simultaneously feels "annoyed" over its influence on how young people behave in space. Overall, older participants like Sagi mobilize generational discourses when they discuss coming out, particularly highlighting myths about the past and temporal shifts in interactional norms.

Generational identifying is influenced by contemporaneous technologies (McMullin et al., 2007), potentially resulting in generationally specific coming out practices. The technologies featured in stories drawn on by scholars in 5.2.2. range from the influence of television characters, chat rooms, and smartphone apps. This is paralleled in Chapter 4, with 23-year-old Jake discussing coming out by way of a gay

online chat room whereas 31-year-old Kevin's initial interaction with a gay space was sitting outside a gay bar. Their biographies are temporally grounded in the technology available at the time of their coming out. Generational differences lead to different technology-based coming out practices: how and why people come out, to whom they are coming out, and what they are coming into.

As the coming out narratives indicate, there are multifaceted interactions on Grindr. Grindr can be a space of exploration where people begin to engage in coming out practices by talking to others. For participants, interactions on Grindr have led to relationships, friendships, and jobs. Additionally, contextual circumstances limit people's ability to access physical spaces: examples include a rural location or a very religious family. Nostalgic discourses for old communities cultivated in physical spaces, and their supposed conviviality, serve to structure a myth of a homogenous past community. Yet Valentine and Skelton (2003) show that past scenes were often bounded by age, class, race, and sexuality. Grindr allows people to come out into new practices, new virtual spaces to interact in, and new spaces to express one's identity. Generational discourses that disparage Grindr in favor of a fictional "golden age" of interaction elide the profoundly meaningful interactive doors Grindr can open, highlighted by Daniel stressing his continual gratitude.

Another discursive theme found in some coming out narratives is that people use Grindr only for sex. As introduced in Chapter 4, Tomer mentioned that when using the app for the first time, which happened to be around the time he was coming out, he initially thought that Grindr was "very sexual and very provocative…and [he] didn't know this is... the norm." When other participants' narratives are taken into account, such as using Grindr to look for relationships or choosing friendly face pictures over semi-nude ones for their profile photos, Tomer's narration of "the norm"

of Grindr as only for sex is in fact a "myth" indicated by my research findings (Chapter 6) and previous scholarship (Chapter 2). This myth is perpetuated in participant narratives; many consider themselves unusual or uncommon (such as Harry, mentioned in the previous chapter) because they seek out dating and relationship encounters from Grindr rather than casual sexual encounters. Stories of Grindr being used only for casual sex with strangers are refuted by participant experiences and desires, yet these same people assume others use Grindr for casual sex. In order to have the types of interactions they want, they need to engage with or circumvent expectations of the space of Grindr. This is analyzed further in Chapter 7. Despite some narratives that engage with the discursive myth of most people being on Grindr only for sex, overall most participants expressed sentiments that coincide with Daniel's statement that Grindr can be "good way to meet people" for a variety of interactional outcomes.

In showing how some participants narrate the myth of a "better" past physical community space to come out into, I do not mean that there are not negative aspects to the spaces of Grindr. I recognize that many people long for more face-to-face contact and different interactional norms, addressed further in Chapter 7. Grindr's aesthetically sex-laden spaces, described in Chapter 1, can be alienating for people like Tomer. He found himself coming out into a Grindr environment that was too overtly sexual for his liking, and as a result he struggled with larger concerns about what being gay meant to him. Grindr has brought about new norms that users find detrimental, as explored in Chapter 7. I now go on to engage with some legitimate critiques of Grindr by discussing how it can be a space where prejudice goes unchecked. I then consider how differing ideas of Grindr spaces as prejudiced and as

enabling can coexist, finding that they rely on different imaginations of what Grindr is. These different imaginings impact what it is like to come out in the age of Grindr.

Grindr has been known as an app where prejudice is rife. Users' declarations of "no fats, femmes, and Asians" on their profiles have been studied (Han, 2008; Miller and Behm-Morawitz, 2016; Taylor, 2018) and critiqued in popular media (Kornhaber, 2016; Krishnan, 2016; Wheeler, 2018). In September 2018 Grindr launched a "Kindr Grindr" initiative to combat prejudice expressed on the app (Grindr, n.d., "Kindr Grindr"; Baggs, 2018), such as using transphobic language or expressing preferences in a racist manner. Grindr's Kindr campaign implores its users to alter their behavior with each other by highlighting users' voices of hurt over prejudice they have encountered. The choice to show the spokespeople's images with superimposed audio of their voices helped the campaign avoid a top-down tone. The message is that it is not Grindr telling you how to behave: it is other users.

The Grindr Kindr initiative implies an essentialized Grindr community. How Grindr, the company, promotes its community also contributes to a myth-making of a global community. The sentiment in the initiative's promotional discourse is that people should care about what they say on Grindr because they could be hurting one of their own, one of their *global* Grindr own. The "something shared" that this campaign assumes is a belonging predicated on a universal experience of marginalization.

The focus on different minority groups prejudiced against (femme, trans, fat, black) pinpoint the intersectionality of prejudice not only based on LGBT+ identity, but also gender, ability, race and other categories. The campaign implies recognition that the Grindr user has been marginalized as a gay person, and he will subsequently recognize the feeling of marginalization the people in the campaign are experiencing.

From the perspective of the campaign, the Grindr user will therefore be motivated to change his behavior because he feels connected to the victims as fellow members of "the Grindr community." Grindr's Kindr campaign reveals that Grindr the company promotes and perpetuates the myth of Grindr as a transnational community of marginalized people, people who orient around an LGBT+ identity. Their calls for action to help LGBT+ people in homophobic countries by asking for charity donations further exemplify this perception of their users. Yet users themselves clearly have a different vision of what Grindr is, and their relationship to it.

Although most of the participants identify as gay, there is an ambiguity around it for many. Some, such as Kevin, regularly switch between using the terms gay and queer, and have identified with other terms in the past (and may well in the future!). As touched upon earlier, some also heavily criticize the need for labels at all. Avi, a 23-year-old local, captures these sentiments in his remark "we are all human." This biologically essentialist argument emphasizing a shared global sense, rather than one of marginalization based on a specific identity, presents an alternative to the campaign's framework of belonging. This opens up analysis of the alternative Grindr myths to that of Grindr Kindr's essentialized "community of the marginalized."

Two alternative imaginings are those of the hyperlocal and global. I begin with presenting the assertion of the hyperlocal. Local participants in Tel Aviv talk about their gay neighbors and running into people on the street that they had a Grindr encounter with. Daniel recognizes people he sees on Grindr around his neighborhood, and comments "I feel as if I know them because I see them every day." When expressing frustration at perceived snubs, rudeness, or objectification on Grindr (see Chapter 7 on Grindr norms) people bring up discourses of the neighbor. Participants invoke questions along the lines of: how could he be like that when we might run into

each other later, or have a mutual friend? In contrast to the hyperlocal, another notion asserted is that of the global human family. The logic here, expressed firmly by Avi's statement "we are all human," signifies that to objectify someone on Grindr denies someone their humanity and dignity. These two imaginings of Grindr, the hyperlocal and the global, exemplify alternative understandings of the role Grindr has in people's lives. These roles differ from Kindr Grindr's politicization of Grindr use as indicative of a marginalized yet transnational identity.

As one can see from this outline of pervasive Grindr myths, some are contradictory (i.e. being solely for sex while also being part of a global community), highlighting their fictive nature. Of course they can all be truthful in their capturing of individual experiences, but from a larger sociological perspective, each independently falls short of capturing social reality. It is important to look at these myths because they each construct different imagined communities; constructions that influence coming out experiences.

Anderson's (2006) theory of "imagined communities" is helpful for analyzing these Grindr myths. He focuses on nationalism and defines the nation an "imagined political community." (ibid., 6). He argues,

> it is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion…. it is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship (Anderson, 2006: 6-7).

Although these communities are imagined, they are by no means imaginary. They become socially and historically real by "crystali[zing] at a particular historical moment" (Breuilly, 2016: 10) by way of technologies that aid in the construction of

the imagined political community. Sociologists have applied Anderson's theory to other kinds of imagined communities besides nationalism, focusing on his examination of new technologies as a way of solidifying imaginaries. Returning to my discussion of simultaneous co-presence of postmodernism and modernism, Castelló argues that "the concept of 'imagined community' is closely linked to the idea of today's fluid times in which the collective imagination and representation play important roles," enabled by technologies (2017: 60). Technologies also mediate the construction of imagined communities for social phenomena outside of nationalism. Technologies like Grindr underpin constructions of LGBT+ identity and community, in this case generating variations of imagined communities.

Grindr signifies varied notions of community depending on who is narrating. This further supports my point of taking a spatial approach rather than a community-based one. A community approach assumes unity and homogeneity while ignoring the complexity of experiences of identity and practices. The range of imagined communities Grindr represents and enables reflects differing assumptions about what people are coming out into: a new identity, a community, or a bundle of unlabeled, non-institutionalized same-sex interactions.

The concurrent modernist and postmodern attributes that Grindr supports are bound up with the de-institutionalization Grindr aids. Coming out implies coming out of an identity into a new one. Yet ultimately, as Plummer (1995) notes, identity is a story we tell ourselves. Identity implies a belonging to a community of others who share the same identity, yet participant stories highlight how identity is also fluid and changing. It is modernist in our repeated telling of identity through the coming out story and the hegemonic narratives invoked in this telling, yet fluid in the social reality of coming out as emergent. Plummer notes that the telling of coming out

stories requires a community to hear those stories, whereas Anderson considers community as a fiction constructed through discourses and print media. He argues that the effects are real, but the stories are ones we construct *with* others; we would tell different stories to other people. When we examine how coming out stories have changed, we see a narrative of de-institutionalization away from a fixed identity and instead a focus on practices and lack of labels. Yet the social practice of narrating a modernist coming out story remains. Once we include Grindr's role in the background of the stories, we see a process of de-institutionalization, and re-institutionalization, being enabled by Grindr.

Grindr serves the postmodern role of de-institutionalization by providing spaces to virtually convene outside of physical commercial establishments, unlimited by time or physical space constraints. In terms of coming out, Grindr delivers opportunities for new interactions in coming out, such as changing one's profile picture or connecting to others in a rural area without physical gay commercial spaces to convene in. As will be further unpacked in the next chapter on Grindr tourism, Grindr allows for tourists to connect with locals outside of commercial gay tourism companies. However, the idea of a male tourist going abroad to expand his horizons (and self) has a long modernist history. Grindr has democratized an elite experience of travel in the past by allowing for a diversity of instant connections to be made cheaply. Yet the modernist fantasy of the socially transformative role of travel has not changed much. In its postmodern de-institutionalization it still perpetuates modernist social practices. Grindr reifies a re-institutionalizing: through the institutionalization of the "new" norms and practices associated with Grindr outlined in the following chapters.

Grindr becomes a new institution with new norms. The Kindr Grindr campaign evidences norms of prejudice that require top-down intervention from the company. Grindr the company involves itself in small-scale interactions that take place on the app, defending its actions as benefitting the creation of a global Grindr community. The myths that broadly speak about what it is like "on Grindr," or Grindr being for sex, linguistically show assumptions of Grindr as a homogenous institution with consistent norms. The presence of counter-narratives indicate this to not necessarily be the case, but the circulation of myths about Grindr through discourse, including discourses exchanged on the app itself, reveal perceptions of Grindr as an institution. Anderson's theory presents a helpful way to understand Grindr as an institution that is real because it is imagined to be. It is a virtual, imagined institution that crosses space. It is created by discursive exchanges within that space, and between users and the company that maintains that space.

5.4. Conclusion: Institutions and Spaces Implicated in Emergent Coming Out Practices

This chapter has established the importance of an emergence-based theoretical understanding of coming out practices. Despite assumptions in the literature and in mainstream cultural discourse that coming out is a linear process of realization concluding with a singular moment of disclosure in adolescence, the data indicate that it is a bundle of emergent practices that are temporally fluid. Grindr is a helpful point of entry into revealing the messy relations that are part of coming out, yet which contradict commonly held understandings of coming out as linear, singular, and adolescence-based. Technologies provide sites for emergent practices of coming out.

Users can go on Grindr anonymously, interact with others who are gay, have exploratory conversations, and "test" how an identity feels online. All these interactions and practices contribute to identifying as gay. Considering emergent practices of coming out makes it possible to pull out the non-linear, repetitive, and more nuanced practices tied to technology that are part of coming out stories.

Throughout the chapter I have used the term mainstream discourse without interrogating the national and social context of the discourse. Participants came from a variety of cultures and nations, yet the geographical context was surprisingly absent from the coming out stories overall. Most participants came out while in their mid- to late twenties (post-adolescence) and shared similar stories regardless of their nationality. The exceptions were the three participants (Sagi, Jake, and Shane) who had been living in the United States during their teenage years, all of whom came out during adolescence. This raises questions of the applicability of coming out models for present-day and non-Global North circumstances.

Considering coming out as emergent also reveals how technologies, such as Grindr, have altered coming out practices over time. The spatial affordances of virtual platforms shape emergent coming out practices, as they are no longer limited by spatial segregation of physical gay spaces. Historically, the entering physical gay community space was a practice that contributed to coming out. This is seen with Kevin, who had few gay spaces to go to in his hometown and lacked the courage to enter them at age 17. Yet later on with the Web 2.0 era, he could begin to come out as a result of meeting others online. Technologies like Grindr re-spatialize the site of interactions and practices, making it possible to conduct coming out practices online.

Grindr is interwoven, enmeshed, and bound up in emergent practices of coming out. When coming out coincides with the presence of digital technologies,

technologies shape the imaginings of identity and roles of digital spaces. This occurs through practices tied to digital spaces, such as information-gathering and communication with others, or what Plummer calls becoming "sensitized to difference" (1995: 88). Plummer's highlighting of modernist and postmodern storytelling shows that contrary to stage-based models, coming out is not stage-based, nor a linear story. The varied practices, emotions, and difficulty of naming are disciplined into a cohesive narrative. Sometimes the participant does the disciplining by narrating an easily digestible story, especially one that parallels others in mainstream discourses of homosexuality. This is seen in participant narratives, where the coming out narrative told is the story of coming out to immediate family for the first time. Other times, scholars are the ones who are disciplining when they interpret narratives of participants and categorize them according to stage-based models. Considering the emergent dimensions of coming out makes it possible to recognize both the modernist and postmodernist strategies of coming out stories, as well as which institutions are implicated in the disciplining of the story, discussed in 5.3.3 and expanded upon below.

Applying Plummer's theory of narrative to coming out stories brought forth three subthemes to consider: naming, coming out practices on Grindr, and imaginings. Although the stories initially appeared modernist and linear, participants share the implicit ways coming out is emergent by narrating the practices that fall under the subthemes. They tell of how Grindr is present in the backgrounds of the stories. Explanations for the narrative subthemes of Grindr social practices include concepts like generation, which tie the history of technology to attitudes and affinities. There were a range of attitudes toward Grindr in participant narratives. Highlighting

these attitudes inform us of present tensions over technologies and sets up discussions in later chapters of how norms are negotiated on Grindr.

With regard to naming, participants' satisfaction with ambiguity, broad labels, or even a lack of labels at all may be part of a wider social trend away from past institutions that Grindr also contributes to. Coming out prioritizes the idea of an identity that can be named, with the ultimate acceptance of that identity signified through the articulation of it to others. But focusing on the emergent aspects of the practices that contribute to these identities raises questions of *which institutions, and therefore spaces, are implicated in them*. The historical setting of coming out models influenced how and why the models were developed (Kenneady and Oswalt, 2014), and Plummer points out that the coming out story is tied to the history of a politicizing of identity (Plummer, 1995). What do contemporary coming out stories say about institutions now?

In answer to this, I argue that the notion of coming out under "gay identity" has become a battleground between different institutions that are invested in claiming this identity. The discursive myths shared by participants and by the company, via the Kindr Grindr campaign, evidence this. Grindr the company argues for a specific interpretation of that identity, thereby creating belonging to a transnational ideals of a shared sexual identity based on marginalization. This is similar, although distinct, to what has been claimed by the GTI as argued in Chapter 2. Grindr the company reveals its own imagination of the app through claiming itself as a global institution. It has become invested in promoting its disciplining norms within its spaces, therefore creating homogeneity and revealing its grab at power (Foucault, 1990).

Despite the efforts of the Grindr company, participants hold a range of alternative imaginings. Some promote essentialist discourses emphasizing a global

humanity, erasing differences of sexual identity. Others promote hyperlocal imaginings through narratives of neighbors. Furthermore, some express an indifference or fluid ambiguity toward labels; they prefer to carry on with their individual everyday relations, untied to larger networks of gay institutions. As mentioned earlier, Grindr was the main way many participants engaged in gay spaces, rather than through community networks or physical establishments. But participants were not necessarily invested in the company's imagining of what Grindr is (as an institution, and as a space). To them, Grindr is the site to host interactions. It is a tool, rather than an institution in which feelings of belonging are invested. For participants, Grindr is the latest Internet technology in a long personal history of technological adoption. Perhaps Grindr the company is fighting to build itself into something more than a dating app before an up-and-coming competitor overtakes the reign.

Coming out through Grindr brings about new practices influenced by the features of the app. The implication of this is that experiences of being gay are reshaped and reconfigured, and people have a new platform (with new norms) to express their identities. Yet users are still bound by the norms of Grindr and in later chapters I analyze how these norms are perpetuated and resisted by app users and how Grindr tourism allows for these implicit norms to come to light. Technologies are bound up with people's biographies, and coming out is a useful starting point for investigating the way social lives are entangled with technologies like Grindr. Grindr serves as a lens to other practices and interactions that constitute meaningful aspects of everyday lives.

CHAPTER 6: A 'Match Made in Heaven?' Situating Tourists and Locals

The previous chapter examined how socio-culturally and technologically situated biographies shape narratives. This chapter furthers this trajectory of investigation by examining how narratives of relations, interactions, and practices of Grindr tourism reveals the complex ways that tourists and locals are situated. It also builds on the previous chapter's examination of how people imagine the spaces of Grindr by inquiring into who are imagined to be present in the spaces of Grindr in Tel Aviv, and how these imaginings shape the local spaces of Grindr. These imaginings in turn affect Grindr tourism practices. Analyzing the practices of Grindr tourism opens up the complex social dynamics between tourists and locals in Tel Aviv that have implications for other national and technological contexts.

A core area for investigation in this work is that of tourist and local social dynamics, articulated in the research questions. The chapter addresses the research question of what Grindr tourism looks like by outlining Grindr tourism practices and the meaning-making that results from them. There are significant tourist expectations around interactions with the locals, and vice versa, that build on ideas about space and Grindr addressed in the previous chapter. Technological encounters between tourists and locals reveal expectations and fantasies around interactions that result from perceptions of difference. Tourism through Grindr expands the interactions between tourists and locals by allowing them to connect anytime and anywhere. These reconfigurations are not usually accounted for in sociological scholarship on the dynamics between tourists and locals.

A common cultural assumption is that people use Grindr solely for casual sex. This chapter will show that people use Grindr for diverse reasons, all of which are relational. The relations formed through Grindr tourism impact how users see others and themselves. As a result of interactions on Grindr, users view themselves within relational frameworks such as tourists, exotic people, or as men with diminished masculinities. Tourists and locals enter into relations with certain expectations, which are either met or not met. The relations that pan out shape identities and reveal capitals at play. The chapter analyzes tourist-local interactions on Grindr and the relations that form as a result, generating insight into how Grindr perpetuates bounded presentations of masculinity as well as how such boundaries are resisted. Throughout the chapter, tourists and locals are situated in many ways relationally, interactionally, and as subjects.

First, the specifics of the Israeli Grindr context are discussed, followed by an outline of my relational approach to Grindr tourism. Focus is then directed to Grindr tourism practices, followed by Grindr's facilitation of relations and interactions. Tourist and local relational expectations of each other are considered. The negative aspects of the capital exchange present in tourist-local Grindr interactions are then examined, particularly issues of mutual exoticization and eroticization in the context of a hegemonic Mizrahi masculinity specific to the Tel Aviv ethnic context. The chapter addresses the research questions inquiring into Grindr tourism practices and whether tourist-local interactions are mutually beneficial.

6.1. The Israeli Grindr Context

The overlapping Israeli and Grindr context brings about a liminal situation that makes certain interactions, and the dynamics driving them, visible. As explained in the literature review, sociological approaches to tourism often consider subjects based on identities within a postcolonial framework: as Western tourist from the Global North and Othered, exoticized local from the Global South. As a result, many tourism scholars perpetuate narratives of exploitation. Tourists are perceived as exploiting the locals, particularly if the tourists themselves originate from a Western/Global North context. The locals are considered Orientalized Others. As Hartal (2019: 1148) frames it from a homonationalist perspective, LGBT+ locals are “products based on their promotion” of Tel Aviv to other international gay tourists. The tourism sociology literature that draws on postcolonial theory often frames relations dichotomously: the West/Orient, Global North/Global South, Tourist/Local, Powerful/Subaltern. Dualistic thinking is viewed as “inherently related to the construction of the Other” (Aitchison, 2001: 136). The research presented in this thesis blurs these dichotomies. Israel is a distinct blend of Western cultures and Middle Eastern ones. Israel is neither exclusively Western nor Oriental, but rather something that incorporates elements of both. It is liminal.

Many participants in this study are locals but have immigrated to Israel, or came initially as tourists before immigrating. Such varied international exchanges blur the tourist-local boundary (Kuntsman, 2009), complicating the postcolonial narrative of division. Additionally, some tourists to Israel, including those in the research sample, are from the Global South. Some locals have come to secular, cosmopolitan Tel Aviv from isolated, rural, religious backgrounds, whereas others have been born and raised in the city; their geographical background results in diversity among locals.

Overall, the postcolonial approach as it has been used previously in sociology of tourism scholarship struggles to take account of the liminal research setting. In the Israeli Grindr context, the relationships between tourists and locals are ambiguous and far more nuanced than the story of a unidirectional power suggests (ibid.). The usual approach to the social phenomenon of tourism does not take into account the ways in which tourist-local interactions that take place in the Israeli Grindr context resist straightforward dichotomous categorization (ibid.). My research findings, though based on the Israeli context, may apply to other complex and liminal locations that have been overlooked in previous research.

The Grindr context, detailed in Chapters 1 to 3, has aspects that enrich the study of the Israeli context. The homescreen grid of Grindr, a key space within the app, prioritizes images and proximity. Another example of differences that the spatial context of Grindr brings about is context collapse (Marwick and boyd, 2011: 122), that is, the co-congregation of people in digital spaces without contextual differences that are usually present offline; this will be addressed further in Chapter 7. Grindr both limits and expands potential interactions and expectations. This is in part due to its features that prioritize the visual as well as other kinds of immediate chat interactions, such as sending notifications and informing users if people are online. Additionally, there are profile norms of basic information that include quantifying distance and prioritizing demographic information. However, these norms do not fit all users, particularly in the Israeli context. For example, in the drop-down ethnicity menu, the category of "Middle Eastern" does not fully describe the ethnic differences between Ashkenazi Jews, Mizrahi Jews, and Sephardic Jews, nor does it distinguish between Middle Eastern ethnic groups of different religions. Ethnic information is meaningful to some users and will be expanded on later in the chapter. I further

investigate how Grindr makes certain relations, such as relations around ethnicity, visible when I discuss the data.

Studying relations on Grindr opens up relations in the Israeli context. In turn, the relations in the Israeli context reveal contested notions of masculinity and ethnicity that are applied transnationally, as will be shown in this chapter. Studying liminal locations makes relations at play more visible because norms and imaginings brought from non-liminal locations are negotiated and resisted through interactions on Grindr. By using Grindr as a way "in" to tourist-local relations, these widely applicable assumptions, resistances, and negotiations are brought to light.

Extending my interactionist theoretical approach, I consider sustained interactions by focusing on relations in this chapter. Tourists and locals are looked at as relational selves. This opens up possibilities for understanding how Grindr bears on social relations. I analyze interactions sustained over time, shaped by expectations around Grindr relations and fantasies about particular relations. The incorporation of Foucauldian insight is used to understand power dimensions of relations between tourists and locals, which enables examination of norms and resistance to them. My relational approach will now be outlined.

6.2. A Relational Approach

Although the route of examining tourism under the framework of postcolonial and cultural theory is not suited to this research context, I acknowledge that the literature raises the important issues of tourism's social implications. Postcolonial theory finds that as a historical consequence of colonialism, the unequal material, social, and mobility resources (also referred to in this chapter as capitals (Bourdieu,

1984)) that the tourist has leads to exploitation. Material, cultural, and social disadvantages are a real possibility leading to inequality. Issues of capital, inequality, and commodification are addressed in this chapter using a relational framework.

A relational approach offers a framework for comprehending tourist-local power dynamics by focusing on interactions and relations implicit in Grindr tourism practices. This section draws on theories from Foucault (1990) and Crossley (2010) to clarify the relational approach used in this chapter. Plummer's (1995) theory of narratives, described in the previous chapter, will continue to be used to analyze participants' articulations of their relations.

Foucault (1990) argues that power must be thought of in nuanced ways. Power is omnipresent "because it is produced from one moment to the next…in every relation…Power is everywhere …because it comes from everywhere" (Foucault, 1990: 93). It is everywhere, including within relations. Foucault also asserts that power is not unidirectional, but rather it *flows*. Power "comes from below" (ibid., 94), as well as above, and it flows through relationships and discourses. Foucault takes the discussion of power away from the notion of a "binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled" (ibid.) underpinning all power relations. This is a shift from unidirectional perspectives of disempowered locals.

Building on Foucault's argument of power flowing within relations I now bring in helpful insights from relational sociology for theorizing tourist-local social dynamics. Relational sociology focuses on the relations and networks that form as a result of repeated interactions (Crossley, 2010: 22; Abbott, 2020). However, Crossley suggests that relations go beyond mere repeated interaction. The term 'relation' describes "the way in which the history and projected future of a stream of interaction affect its present" (Crossley, 2010: 35). Two social actors have a history of past

interactions. The past interactions and expectations of future ones therefore form the relation. Crossley suggests that relations are constituted of "lived trajectories of iterated interaction" (ibid., 28). There is the temporal trajectory of past interaction, present interaction, and future interaction, but there is also an iteration of the interaction by acknowledging the relation. This iteration could be in the form of narrative, or story told about the relations one is part of. Relations are not just repeated interactions, but meaningful temporal trajectories that involve connection and communication.

Taking relations as a point of focus permits an understanding of mechanisms underlying interactions, such as power and resistance. As Crossley mentions, relational sociology involves an identification of social "mechanisms which steer interaction towards certain outcomes. Power dynamics, for example, make certain outcomes (e.g. compliance of the disadvantaged party) more likely than others" (ibid., 39). Foucault also notes that "where there is power, there is resistance" (1990: 95). Resistance is part of power's flow and ubiquity. However, Foucault also distinguishes that "resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (ibid.). Resistance is not another separate relation that occurs in the presence of power, but rather is within power and therefore within the relation. Relational dynamics of power, including resistance, are immanent in all relationships (and relations). In my approach I will highlight forms of resistance to power within tourist-local relations by observing how resistance occurs through Grindr.

Crossley makes three key theoretical points in his outlining of relations that are applicable to this project's data. First, relations imply past interactions and anticipated imagined futures that affect present ones (trajectories). Second, relations are iterated in narratives. Third, taking relations as a point of focus permits an

understanding of dynamics (or what Crossley terms "mechanisms") underlying interactions, such as power. Many of these dynamics underpinning the interactions can also be considered subthemes that emerged from the thematic analysis. These points offer a theoretical strategy for conceptualizing the Grindr tourism interactions in this chapter.

In this chapter, the differing narratives about tourism, particularly Grindr tourism, are unpacked. A relational approach allows for an examination of narratives and counter-narratives iterated about relations. In the following analysis of the data, Plummer's (1995) theory of sexual storytelling (first employed in the previous chapter) is used to explore the emergence of particular narratives within Grindr interactions between tourists and locals. The focus on narrative stems from Plummer's (1995) work the importance of stories for shaping lives, politics, and communities for for gay men (and LBT+ people). As personal lives are shaped, the relational possibilities people have through repeated interactions are also shaped. This research is additionally guided by Heaphy's perspectives on capital and its relationship to narratives. Heaphy argues that "the potential and power of personal stories are enabled and constrained by access to economic and social resources" (2009: 134-135). Not only do economic, cultural, and social resources (capital) impact the narratives available to draw on, but they also impact the "alternative imagining" (ibid.) of narratives. Heaphy maintains that capital guides relational choices, but also relational imaginings. The alternative possibilities for relations that can be imagined are influenced by the capital available to the social actor. I therefore pay attention to how capital bears upon tourist and local narratives about relations.

My relational approach draws on the above points from Foucault and Crossley to examine narratives and counter-narratives iterated about relations. Looking at

narratives of relations (Heaphy, 2009; Plummer, 1995) helps us understand power, capital, and the complexity of meaningful tourist-local interactions. The following section brings in data to explore the construction of unique tourist-local dynamics on Grindr. In the analysis, I am not applying theory to the data; rather, I work in an iterative way whereby my analysis is driven by the data, and theory is brought in to understand how findings speak to larger sociological issues.

6.3. Practices of Grindr Tourism

Focus is now directed to narratives of Grindr tourism's unique role in facilitating tourist-local interactions and relations. These interactions are conducted independently by app users outside of the traditional travel institutions that form the GTI. Grindr tourism is the use of Grindr as part of one's travelling experience. The data show that Grindr is not only used for arranging casual sexual encounters between tourists and locals, not even by the tourists visiting for a short term, supporting the findings in literature on Grindr (Corriero and Tong, 2016; Shield, 2018; Wu and Ward, 2018). Rather, as noted previously, Grindr is used as a way to connect, communicate, and interact with new people. This section examines how Grindr specifically is used as part of travel-related practices, including online Grindr interactions and in-person interactions. Ultimately, I argue that Grindr tourism cuts through how capital often operates, thereby allowing for alternative experiences of space, time, and vicarious travel.

Grindr facilitates tourist-local interaction, leading to the gain of cultural capital in the exchange. By coming to understand the destination through Grindr, specifically the interactions with locals Grindr tourism enables, tourists obtain capital

based on firsthand knowledge of a space and the people who inhabit it. As I will show, locals likewise learn about other countries from tourists. Experiences of Grindr tourism are presented from tourists' (6.3.1.), immigrants' (6.3.2.), and locals' (6.3.3.) perspectives. Through examples from the data, attention is paid to how capitals (Bourdieu, 1984) underpin tourist-local interactions on Grindr.

6.3.1. Tourists

Shane, a 25-year old American tourist, learned about the culture of the travel destination through meeting local people. He attributed his newfound knowledge to Grindr:

> I love using Grindr abroad to meet new people and to really get to know the culture. I feel like all these guys have taught me so much about Israel. I feel like I've learned so much about countries from Grindr, and… restaurants I never would have known to go to... They'll teach me new words… It's …a lot of learning

Shane's use of Grindr for varied tourism engagements is typical of the study participants. They learn about Israeli culture, including local foods and the Hebrew language. The variety of learning and temporary habitation of the local space is all intertwined within interactions with locals on Grindr. According to participants, talking to locals on Grindr and meeting them is part of the Grindr tourist experience globally, not just in Israel.

As seen in the following quote from Harry, being able to talk to locals about the specifics of their language, culture, and politics enhances relations with locals. This deepens understandings of the country, as Harry, a 33-year-old tourist from the UK, exemplified in his description of his Grindr tourism:

> I'd prefer to meet a local because then they could give me advice on where to go… [It's] maybe a little more friendly or interesting with a local because you can ask them questions politically.

Many participants use Grindr as a way to get to know Israel, including directly asking locals about politics in a destination infamous for its political situation (this can extend to discussion of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as touched on in Chapter 2). Grindr tourism enables a "lived learning" that brings politics to life. This notion of lived learning comes up again later when Grindr tourism is discussed from locals' perspectives. Grindr becomes a way to meet locals and therefore a way to engage more deeply with the travel destination itself. The relations extend beyond friendship, sex, and romance to a multifaceted sensory and educational experience of the travel destination.

This lived learning is done from the ground up, through understanding politics and life from everyday lives and experiences of the local. When thinking about power, the narrative told by the tourists is that they are being "taught," to use Shane's word, by the locals. Thus the locals are valued for their cultural capital and knowledge of larger issues of language, politics, and history. This may be tacit knowledge between locals, knowledge that does not generate capital between them. Yet relative to tourists, locals are "experts" who shape tourist experiences and teach tourists about their country if they choose to interact with tourists on Grindr and build relations with tourists.

Interestingly, participants used the expression "meet new people," as Shane articulates, to refer to interactions on Grindr. It is unclear whether this is just meeting someone online and having online chats, or meeting in person. The notion of meeting on Grindr is tacit; participants articulate experiences of interacting on Grindr whereby

“meeting people” can range in meaning from only communicating via Grindr to meeting in person as a result of the conversation on Grindr. There is no distinction between virtual and physical meeting when it comes to Grindr tourism, in that it is not articulated as a *relevant distinction*. Thus interactional potential is expanded, as the relations between tourists and locals can be developed and are viewed as valuable without differentiation between offline and online meeting.

During the interview, Harry illustrates this point by mentioning that his choice of “where [he] went for dinner last night” was the result of a Grindr conversation where he asked a local for recommendations. Harry later clarified that when he asks for advice on where to go, he does not “need to meet them to do that, [he] can ask someone just by typing to them.” Earlier, he said that he would “prefer to meet a local” and be given “advice on where to go.” In that instance, he meant meeting in person because his expectations of the in-person interaction went beyond advice to deeper conversations about politics, as well as having what he terms “social companionship” while travelling. Harry points out that on Grindr one can just type for advice, or can choose to meet in person. There are a range of levels of spatial engagement and communication that Grindr tourism entails. Grindr is a means to obtain local “social companionship,” as Harry articulates, and the quality of this companionship is not necessarily distinguished as either offline or online. Grindr’s chat feature allows tourists to have local interactions, and therefore potential for social companionship, anywhere and anytime during their trip. This is supported by participants’ statements that they use Grindr for a range of ordinary reasons: just because they are in the mood to chat, out of habit, or because they feel lonely. The various forms of tourist-local “meeting” interactions on Grindr transcend and blur boundaries of space that traditionally structured tourist experiences in the past. People

had to meet other gay locals at a physical space such as a gay bar or community space. Yet now tourists can meet locals virtually through Grindr on their own initiative, regardless of where they are physically.

Grindr brings about a form of tourism pursued outside the guidebook (or for a more contemporary reference, a form of tourism done beyond the Wikitravel webpage). People are eager to have individualized, customized, off-the-beaten-track tourist experiences (Bethapudi, 2013; Future Foundation, 2016; OECD, 2018) and Grindr is a way these are arranged. Market research conducted for Expedia.com by the Future Foundation emphasizes that millennials are more likely to "travel independently" (Future Foundation, 2016: 66) and prefer to "head off the beaten track and 'live like a local'" (ibid., 67). This phrase "live like a local" is often used in the tourism industry (Future Foundation, 2016; Mahadevan, 2017; Paulauskaite et al., 2017; Quartz, 2019). Many participants share these aspirations of having local experiences while they are in Tel Aviv. The tourists themselves usually organize such liaisons independently, through Grindr. "Life as a local" can entail eating at restaurants popular with locals or meeting locals on Grindr. This can be meeting in person or, like Harry says, "getting advice on where to go" to have the most local experience of Israeli life. Grindr provides a means of contact with locals: that can be advice relayed via Grindr chat, the "social companionship" Harry desires, or the knowledge that comes from learning about particular locations from the people who infuse them with meaning.

Although the subject of this research primarily investigates the dynamic between tourists and locals, I acknowledge that there is complexity in categorizing. The categories are not rigid. Seven participants in the sample had immigrated to Israel and have therefore had experiences of using Grindr as a tourist in Tel Aviv before

moving there long-term. Additionally, some tourists were staying several months for internships (I myself was an example of this, as I was in Tel Aviv for three months to conduct the fieldwork for this project). In my analysis of Grindr tourism and tourist-local Grindr interactions from locals' perspectives in the next section, I include insights on Grindr's impact on immigration-related practices that involved interactions with locals.

6.3.2. Immigrants

Grindr is used as part of immigrants' acclimations to the country through encounters with locals, as discussed in the following example of a new immigrant learning Hebrew on Grindr. Sagi, 38, has had experiences of using Grindr as a tourist, then as a new immigrant to Israel, and subsequently as a local. When asked "how has Grindr made a difference in your life, if at all?" Sagi responded with

> You may find this hilarious, but my Hebrew improved greatly…I learned a lot of it on Grindr…and it became a bit of a game for me. Can I get to the actual physical date, and they haven't figured out that I'm not a native speaker? And when I got to that level, I was so proud of myself.

Sagi was already present in the space of Grindr as a local in that he was living in Tel Aviv permanently, but he felt he had not fully inhabited the position of a local until he could communicate without giving away his status as an immigrant. He is "proud" of his linguistic accomplishment, a triumph that congealed his sense of belonging to Israel by being able to communicate virtually on Grindr in Hebrew. Interactions on Grindr between newcomers such as Sagi and locals can sometimes facilitate belonging.

Grindr also serves as a way to make friends, especially somewhere new (Shield, 2017: 244). This can be someone new to the country or just new to the neighborhood. Sagi mentions that "at the beginning" of his move to Israel, on Grindr he would declare "I moved here so I'm also looking for friends" (in addition to sex and relationships) and as a result he "met a couple of …good friends through Grindr." Findings from this study reinforce scholarship on "how online communication between gay immigrants and locals can 'figure in processes of migrant adaptation'" (Boston, 2015; in Shield, 2017: 246; see also Kuntsman, 2009). Many other participants also mention the friends they have obtained as a result of their Grindr use. Not only is this friendship beneficial to new immigrants, but also to tourists. Shane, on his second visit to the country, spent time with people he had met via Grindr during his initial trip. A relational result of the tourist-local exchange on Grindr can be long-term friendships.

6.3.3. Locals

I now move away from addressing immigrants to focus specifically on locals, although there is often overlap between both groups' experiences. Locals gain social and cultural capital by becoming friends with and interacting with tourists. This is seen in the experience of Jamie, a 34-year-old local who emigrated from Southern Europe. Jamie spends a lot of time on Grindr. Although he frequently meets people from Grindr in person, he also spends a lot of time "relaxing," as he terms it, by chatting on the app with people he does not intend to meet with. In his audio diary, Jamie reports on how he likes to open Grindr in his neighborhood "on the outskirts of Tel Aviv, next to the airport." When he opens the app, he "always see[s] tourists and

…jump[s] to them" because he is eager to talk to them, despite "know[ing]" he's "not going to meet anyone" because they are usually in the airport departing. He "just talk[s] to them." Jamie likes tourists because, in his words, he is "multicultural." He has not only had experiences of living in different countries, but also his career involves cultural comparison. He appreciates opportunities to practice speaking the multiple languages he knows. For a fairly quiet Tel Aviv suburb, he can talk to a world of people just by being physically close to the airport, thanks to Grindr's geolocation features. The busy airport overlaps with the quiet space of Jamie's home, when viewed through Grindr. Using Grindr and having access to the world of people coming in and out of Israel grants Jamie completely different experiences of the same location. Locals have the potential to navigate out of the "stuckness" of their physical spaces through Grindr.

This detail of Jamie's use may not have come forward from an interview. It is because he is at home using Grindr near the airport, the same location where he recorded his diary that day, which may have spurred him to comment on his particular strategy of finding "multicultural" people to talk to. The audio diaries offer a window into situated practices through their prompting. Because the diaries overlap with spaces and times when one uses Grindr, the reflection involved in completing them is inspired by recent practices.

Locals and tourists also arrange to meet up in person. In another example of practices of Grindr tourism, I discuss what happens when tourists are "shown around" by locals in person. Shane, a 25-year-old tourist from North America, finds that locals are "very positive" and message him on Grindr saying "oh, you're new, let me show you around, let's meet up." He appreciated his experience of being welcomed by

locals. When he receives offers to be "shown around," they usually entail a tour of the neighborhood.

Some local participants engaged with this practice, including Avi, a 31-year-old local. Although the practice of the tour might be typical, Avi confesses to a unique result from contacting tourists on Grindr. He tells of how he "really like[s] to meet travelers." However, he quickly defends that he is not doing anything "strange"; he follows with an explanation that he is not having "sex with them most of the time." He stresses that the tour is not a seduction technique. Rather, he genuinely "like[s] to go with them around…Tel Aviv and to talk," particularly about "the LGBT+ rights in…[the tourist's] country, …religious issues," and what the tourist thinks "about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict." Avi's description of his tours up to now appears typical and reflective of experiences of some tourists such as Shane. However, Avi also shares that he keeps "a diary with the things they tell [him] about themselves" and their home countries.

Avi uses a diary to keep track of people he meets and stories he hears. Such an intimate, revelatory detail indicates the significance of interactions through Grindr for people like him. Through Grindr, he meets others from abroad and has conversations about political and social issues in detail. He is curious about LGBT+ politics elsewhere, and enjoys comparing different countries and experiences. Avi illustrates a popular desire to share discussions around the political situation with tourists, who according to him are often uncomfortable to ask about it because of taboos in their own country about political correctness. For example, Avi later mentions Germans being shy in particular, alluding to the history of the Holocaust and perceived sensitivity around Jewishness. Israel has its own norms of appropriateness of political talk, with it being arguably more social acceptable and common to do so compared to

other Northern contexts such as the US or UK (Mor et al., 2015: 7-8). Harry's (mentioned in 6.3.1.) and Avi's expressed interest in having tourist-local dialogues about politics show how cultural capital based on political knowledge might be gained by the tourist from his exchange with the local; meanwhile the local has an opportunity to exhibit and benefit from his cultural capital (in relation to the "ignorant" tourist) based on local political knowledge. Thus within their relations with each other enabled by Grindr, tourists and locals are able to enter into discussions of political issues and exchanges of capital that may not come up otherwise.

Personal tours given by locals such as Avi take place in person, but they are arranged by way of Grindr. They are done independently outside of any travel institutions and outside of any "official" tour guide capacity. Additionally, Avi's diary represents a vicarious tourism in itself, as he is able to understand other cultures and countries from the lived experiences of natives. It is a way for him to go beyond the physical boundaries of his country and access ideas from spaces outside of the boundary. Avi's example highlights the meaningfulness of narratives and storytelling woven throughout this project.

The field of tourism sociology studies lacks research on how dating apps transform tourism from both the tourist and local perspectives. Grindr is a key part of people's independent experiences of tourism and has social ramifications for both tourists and locals. Jamie and Avi's stories show how interaction with tourists on Grindr leads to acquisition of knowledge about other locations and the issues within them. These relations foster knowledge, and therefore cultural capital, to the locals. The attainment of social capital reinforces their perceptions of being "multicultural" people who enjoy intellectual and political discussions. Associations with multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism are tied to social capital in urban environments

such as Tel Aviv (Moussawi, 2013). Thus for locals, interacting with tourists on Grindr reinforces existing capital as well.

The ability for some locals to communicate with tourists in English on Grindr indicates capital. Ariel, a 32-year-old local, states that many Tel Avivians have Grindr profiles “in English because they want to explore the tourists.” Proficiency in a foreign language is also a commonplace occurrence in the international cosmopolitan city of Tel Aviv. Association with Tel Aviv’s cosmopolitan culture is already infused with social capital, as it is viewed in Israel as a culturally significant, cutting-edge international city (Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality, 2019a). It must also be noted that there is gay migration to Tel Aviv (Misgav, 2015; Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality, 2018b; “Why Tel Aviv is the ultimate LGBTQ travel destination,” 2019). Many participants left their hometowns for the promises of public gay acceptance and economic opportunities that are associated with life in Tel Aviv. It often helps one’s career to speak English, as many international companies have operations in Tel Aviv (Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality, 2019b). Additionally, one must have a threshold amount of economic resources to be living in the expensive Tel Aviv area (Tress, 2020). Despite this, few local participants seemed particularly wealthy according to their professions and family backgrounds, both of which were asked about in all the interviews. Many of them were students or had precarious jobs. It seemed most participants were only just surviving. This complicates assumptions of wealth by mere virtue of living in Tel Aviv. Nevertheless locals undoubtedly have some capital in order to live in expensive Tel Aviv, in addition to the capital brought about by speaking English.

In sociology of tourism research that adopts postcolonial approaches, locals are perceived as stationary, pinned down by work and stuck within the boundaries of

their locality. Meanwhile, tourists are portrayed as mobile and with economic capital that enables them to travel. Yet this research indicates that the locals who appear to benefit from Grindr tourism are those who are already multilingual and can communicate on Grindr with those from other countries. Additionally, they must have some threshold of economic resources to be living in Tel Aviv. The capital locals already have, by virtue of talking to tourists in Tel Aviv, must be accounted for when investigating tourist-local dynamics. Grindr tourism allows further social and cultural capital to be obtained, as seen in the instances of learning Hebrew on Grindr and making friends when moving to the city. Grindr tourism also enables capital to be reinforced, but only for those who already have some social, cultural, and (in some cases) economic capital to begin with. It allows locals to move beyond the constraints of their physical space and national boundaries by providing opportunities to indirectly experience other spaces via social interactions with tourists.

Yoav, a 37-year-old local, summarizes why he enjoys using Grindr at home and abroad. His use of Grindr "could be hooking up with someone, but it could be just talking to someone or, ideally, both. He finds that it "enables…[him] to travel, to go explore, and then go back home." Yoav captures the feelings of many in his conclusion of Grindr as ultimately enabling for both tourism practices and quotidian interactions with others. Grindr tourism allows for an exchange of interactions, and therefore potentially a gaining of capital if the interactions result in conversations about social issues, politics, or a tour of the city. Both tourists and locals who choose to engage in the exchange claim to benefit from it. From their interaction with tourists, locals gain the ability to cut through physical spatial boundaries and come to know other spaces vicariously through social interactions, whether only virtual or also in-person. Yet it must be noted that this conclusion can only be made about locals

who choose to engage with tourists on Grindr. Not all do, and some, like Jamie, prefer to only engage virtually via chat. However, there are benefits even of interactions that happen only virtually. The varied notions of "meeting" are not usually differentiated, as they are not meaningfully distinct; the outcome of gaining social capital (through feeling welcomed) or cultural capital (through learning about other countries from natives) is the same.

This research finds that Grindr contributes to positive exchanges between tourists and locals. Grindr tourism cuts through spatial boundaries in its facilitation of vicarious travel through tourist-local exchanges. However, it can also be affectively challenging as will now be addressed.

6.4. Relational Expectations and Fantasies

Attention is now directed to tourist-local interactional expectations and fantasies of relations. Two relational perspectives are outlined: (1) locals' relational expectations of tourists, which promote a narrative that only short-term interactions can be expected with tourists; (2) tourists' relational desires and fantasies, which challenge the narrative of short-term relational expectations. Analyzing the dynamics underpinning these narratives addresses the research question about tourist-local relations.

6.4.1. Locals' Relational Expectations of Tourists: The "Nothing Serious" Narrative

What relationships do locals anticipate with tourists, and what does this tell us about power and capitals? As mentioned earlier, Crossley states that a relation

between two social actors implies “a history of past and an expectation of future interaction,” both of which shape “their current interactions” (2010: 28). I argue that the future interaction anticipated may be a cessation of the relation. Within the tourist-local context, the actors may have had a relation in the past but expect no future interaction after the tourist leaves, consequently shaping the current interaction. Thus there is a tourist-particular imagined trajectory of interaction shaping the relation, which is explored in the data below. Interestingly, the imagined trajectory splits when considering tourists’ versus locals’ imaginings.

Two typical local cases are highlighted, Sagi’s and Ezra’s, to illustrate locals’ perspectives of tourists and the narratives they generate. The usual story told about tourists is that tourists do not desire long-term relations, such as romantic relationships, with locals. I label the notion that tourists do not desire long- term relations the “nothing serious” narrative, inspired by Ezra’s comments that “nothing serious is coming out of” conversations with tourists on Grindr.

Ezra, a 30-year-old local, summarizes the perspective of many locals on tourists in his declaration that many do not “like to meet tourists because there's just one way to do it. There’s only sex. It won’t be a relationship.” For those such as Ezra hoping that interactions on Grindr will lead to a relationship, meeting tourists will not lead to their imagined ideal outcome (a relationship). To him and others, it is taken for granted dimension of the interaction with the tourist that a relationship will not be an outcome. To many, taking on this perspective is the practical and realistic viewpoint: how can one enter into a relationship if the tourist will just leave in a few days? Many locals shared Ezra’s perception of what tourists expect out of an encounter; one could say it is the “usual story” of the tourist told by locals and even some tourists.

Additionally, temporal convenience features as an element for the locals when it comes to anticipated relations with tourists. Because there is a limited time, temporal convenience drives locals' willingness to engage with tourists, as seen with Sagi's perspective. Sagi is a 38-year-old local who had immigrated to Israel from South America. He found tourists appealing

> because tourists are very keen to meet as soon as possible because obviously [they] only have a few days. And for example, Sunday through Thursday, it's harder to meet people, even in Israel with people who really want to meet, because people are going to work. And so they're at work or they're tired from work or they have to get up early. So you have less of a chance of meeting somebody [in person].

In addition to these comments, Sagi mentioned strategizing the days of the week when he would "cast [his] net" in order to be able to meet with other Grindr users in person. The local chooses to approach a tourist on Grindr because he anticipates it will be more personally convenient for him. Even if Sagi would prefer to meet a fellow local out of the hope of eventually having the relation turn into a relationship, he strategically targets tourists based on the day of the week in order to increase the likelihood of meeting. The tourist is "keen" to meet, so it is anticipated that an interaction on Grindr (a chat) will soon be followed with an interaction in person, extending the relation beyond Grindr. This anticipated interaction with a tourist is juxtaposed with the anticipated interaction with another local, who is likely to have work and will be unavailable to meet in person. The potential local interactional partner is limited by "having to get up early" or by being "tired from work." The anticipated interaction with the tourist is, therefore, characterized by the potential for relatively quickly transforming the interaction from Grindr to meeting in person. Within this is a desire to extend the relation beyond Grindr. Perspectives that Sagi

exemplifies reveal tourist-local imagined relations are predicated on a temporal dimensions, such as the day of the week and the resulting unavailability of other locals to meet in person despite their being visibly online on Grindr (expressed through the green button on the profile that indicates someone currently has the app open).

Different temporalities operate as dynamics underpinning tourist-local interaction. These temporalities can be in various forms, such as convenience, control over time, and foreshortened time. Grindr serves as a way to interact along with temporal limitations. For example, Sagi talks to tourists on Grindr during the week when locals generally do not control their time because of work, finding that talking to tourists is convenient if he wants to meet up with someone that night. Tourists have more free time available, allowing them to meet quickly with locals. For tourists, the temporality their relations are infused with is immediacy. Despite tourists' possession of more "free time" compared to the locals, their time is also foreshortened due to their planned departure of the country. The expectation is that tourists do not seek relationships because they will soon leave Tel Aviv. Thus temporal limitations frame interactions initiated by Grindr users.

Another dynamic underpinning relations between tourists and locals on Grindr is the subtheme of visual novelty. Novelty is attached to the tourist, making him very popular on Grindr. Capital is generated in accordance with his novelty. The data from this research show that many locals notice and actively approach tourists based on their new presence on Grindr. For example, although he is pleased that there are many gay men in Tel Aviv on Grindr that are displayed when one "moves a couple of blocks," Sagi finds that, especially when using Grindr in regular locations one frequents such as at home,

> after a few months, it's the…. same people, same faces. I've seen [them] all. Every now and then, there'll be somebody new….There's a finite amount of people, and I guess that's the appeal of tourists. And I have had little flings with tourists every now and then… because it catches your eye, like, 'Oh, somebody new.'

For locals, pleasure in the novelty of the tourist is partly the visual novelty of seeing a new face on Grindr's homescreen. The impetus driving interaction is grounded in the visual. However, visual novelty is also predicated on time. Novelty is associated with being new in time and space. Sagi's description of "somebody new" on Grindr implies what is novel is that the face has emerged in a space it has not been before. Shield's work on immigrants using Grindr in their adopted country is even titled "New in Town," (2017) emphasizing the importance of the spatiotemporal dimension of novelty when it comes to Grindr use. Novelty underpins tourist-local interactions; this will be further discussed with regard to mutual exoticization (see section 6.5.).

Tourists catch the eye of the locals because of their novelty, and as a result they receive extra attention on Grindr. As Daniel, a 32-year-old immigrant states, "If you put the word tourist in" your Grindr profile, "you're going to get attention." Raphael, a 29-year-old tourist from Southeast Asia, finds that on Grindr the "local guys… they just welcome you…Like, 'Welcome to Israel, welcome to Tel Aviv, enjoy your stay.' They're…welcoming, very hospitable, [even] though we're just chatting online." Participants who were tourists often remarked on the inordinate attention they receive from locals on Grindr because the tourists find it to be an unusual or exceptional experience. However, the attention tourists receive can come at a cost to the locals instigating the interaction. Ezra, a local, does not meet many tourists because they are not likely to reply to his Grindr messages:

> tourists have even bigger ratios…of replies versus not replying because they are new meat in the market. So everybody usually texts them first just to say, 'Hey…You're a tourist,' but…nothing serious is coming out of it.

Ezra suspects that tourists do not reply to him, much to his disappointment, because they are new and receive a lot of competing attention on Grindr. Ezra's story shows that the usual narrative locals have about tourists involves few possible interactional outcomes: no reply to a message on Grindr, or just being able to meet in person for short-term casual sex. Ezra hopes to find "something serious" on Grindr, meaning a relationship. His reference to "nothing serious" implies that no long-term meaningful relation could possibly come out of an interaction with a tourist. Again, the typical narrative is that there is no relationship possible with a tourist, and the only realistic in-person relation with a tourist is that of sex.

Sagi's and Ezra's attitudes and interactions with tourists on Grindr illustrate the typical narrative locals have about tourists: namely, that tourists are popular and only interested in short-term sex because they have to leave the country. This can sometimes be affectively painful for locals who are disappointed by tourists' high rate of not responding on Grindr due to their popularity. The non-response is a Grindr interactional norm that will be further analyzed in Chapter 7. Tourists' novelty, and therefore capital, drives locals to compete with each other for tourists' attention on Grindr. This can also be affectively painful for locals because despite being attracted to a tourist or enjoying interacting with them, the locals anticipate cessation of the relation. Sometimes the anticipation of cessation causes locals to choose to avoid interacting with tourists on Grindr, as their desired interactional outcome of a relationship is not imagined to be a possibility. Many locals attempt to control

interactions, such as by avoiding tourists, in order to facilitate their ideal relational outcomes.

However, the rigidity of the typical tourist narrative can also be temporally convenient for locals. Some appreciate meeting tourists in person during the week when other locals would not be available due to work. Locals have interactional expectations of short-term relations that exist for the duration of the tourist's journey, or maybe just the night. This contributes to locals' strategizing Grindr interactions based on their own temporal availabilities. The kinds of time (Adam, 1995) one has available is a result of social capital; those who have power control time. Different availabilities of time highlight that some are on Grindr without anticipating an immediate meet-up, whereas others use temporal strategies to take interactions on Grindr to in-person ones within planned timeframes and personal schedules. In order to further understand dynamics underpinning tourist-local relations, narratives generated by tourists also must be examined. As it turns out in the next section, tourists are telling a very different story of interactional outcomes.

In summary, subthemes that drive interactions, identified from the locals' narratives about tourists, are temporality, novelty, and relational imaginings (a term used interchangeably with "fantasies" in this chapter). These subthemes shape the dynamics that underpin tourist-local relations. Locals navigate the dynamics by using Grindr strategically in order to make their ideal interactional outcome happen.

6.4.2. Tourists' Relational Desires and Fantasies: The "Imagined Future" Narrative

In this study, tourists told a different set of narratives about their desired interactional outcomes with locals. This is significant because it opens up relational

possibilities between tourists and locals on Grindr. The data show that tourists often fantasize about long-term relations that can go beyond their trip. Despite the culturally strong "nothing serious" narrative, tourists themselves often articulate another, less culturally strong narrative that will now be addressed: that of the "imagined future."

There are "secret" desires for relational outcomes that go against the usual narrative of short-term relations, as Sagi outlines when recalling his experiences of travelling to Israel before immigrating there.

> When you are the tourist [and] even when I came to Israel as a tourist, you want to hook up with locals and maybe have them spend…time with you. I always had this secret hope that I that I might meet somebody who might turn into something serious, because I always wanted to come live there.

As a tourist, Sagi desires the locals and wanted to hook up with them. He also recalls hoping that the hookup would extend to "spending time" together. His relational imaginings temporally extend beyond the hookup. His desires are formed by his particular relational imagining, or in other words, fantasy: the "secret hope" that he would meet someone and have a long-term relational future with them, facilitating a move to Israel. Sagi and many other tourists like him are motivated by the aspiration to move to Israel. His fantasy underpins his relations with locals on Grindr, and likewise his relational desires mingle with his migration goals. The "imagined future" narrative Sagi illustrates prioritizes the local's capital of citizenship, in this case Israeli citizenship, as a way to fulfill the ambition of moving to Israel. This is in part tied to religious identity as a Jew. As Jake said in Chapter 4, it is hard to encounter the "double minority" of a gay Jew to marry in countries outside of Israel where Jewish people are already a minority. Many non-Israelis imagine that marrying an Israeli is an ideal setup—"a match made in heaven." Despite the narrative that tourists only

want a short fling while they are visiting a country, Sagi's quote reveals tourists' fantasies for further relations, including the development of long-term relationships.

The idea of secrecy is not necessarily part of the "imagined future" narratives. Some tourists express relational desires with locals openly, albeit communicated with humor. Shane, a 25-year-old non-Jewish tourist from the US, echoes the tourist narrative of furthering relations beyond a single interaction on Grindr or a single sexual encounter, joking with people that he is looking for an Israeli husband.

> Shane: I joke [that]… I'm looking for an Israeli husband, and some people will bring it up and they think it's funny. Some people are like, 'Are you serious?' I actually say that.
>
> Researcher: Do you ever worry that you'll attract guys who want American citizenship?
>
> Shane: I mean, if they want it, I want Israeli citizenship for fun [laughter]. They can have mine….I would love to have an Israeli husband. If he wants US citizenship, go for it, but let's do it [laughter]. …I want an Israeli husband. I really do. I love them.
> …
> Researcher: What's the reaction usually?
>
> Shane: They laugh at it. They think it's funny and they're like, 'Yeah. I would love to go to America.' I feel like it's kind of split between people wanting to go and people not wanting to go to The States.

Based on the rest of the interview, Shane's joking about an Israeli husband stems from a genuine desire for an Israeli relationship partner. He expresses admiration for Israeli men and was interviewed on his second visit to the country. Shane's description of his interactions touches on exoticization through his use of bounded language that focuses on difference between Americans and Israelis, which he repeats throughout the interview. Mutual exoticization is further analyzed in section 6.5.

From the tourists' perspective, the locals have desirable capital because of their Israeli citizenship. However, as Shane mentioned, some locals also fantasize about leaving Israel and moving elsewhere, such as the United States. Thus both tourists and locals have capital granted by virtue of their citizenship, depending on the motivations, and therefore perspective, of their interactional partner. Citizenship status becomes capital, and one has power and attracts others as a result of it.

Tourists can find it challenging to navigate their relational fantasies with locals. In an evocative moment, Shane captures the surprising desire for furthering relations with a particular local. His affect is intense as he feels pulled between the impracticality of having romantic feelings for a local and the desire to extend relations temporally and in terms of intimacy. While traveling in Tel Aviv, Shane would sometimes stay overnight with locals he was having sex with during his trip. Most of these were people he met through Grindr. He recorded his audio diary while sitting at a bench in a park. He had three guys he had "met up with before" offer to host that night, but he had been hoping to be hosted by someone he had feelings for. So instead of going around the city or taking up his potential hosts on their offers, he sat on the bench waiting for his sweetheart to respond to his message, and recorded his audio diary during this moment:

> I had … three guys offer to host me tonight. And I've met up with all of them before. And like there's only one that I *really want* (his emphasis) to stay with. And like, I'm basically like sitting here at a park waiting for him to text me back. I feel so *sad* (his emphasis). Like it's like so pathetic. … I want to be with him… I've always used Grindr in the sense of like, these guys are nothing but a dick. Like literally that's it. But it's difficult when you start… having feelings for someone… I'm upset with myself in the sense of like I don't want to have feelings for him.

Shane attempts to objectify his local Grindr hookups partners, considering them "nothing but a dick" to have sex with. Yet Shane's relations with locals are messy. He fails at his self-inflicted attempt isolate himself emotionally, and finds his feelings painful because he has to leave the country. He is sad, he is ashamed of his feelings, and he is upset. He is at odds with himself over his relational desires. Despite the tourist usually being seen as powerful in postcolonial narratives, in this case he lacks temporal capital. He is in anguish over having to leave despite wanting to stay. His desires, expressed in both his interviews and audio diaries, are multifarious; he desires more time and space in Tel Aviv to build a relationship, and he desires to move there. Shane's capital as a tourist is nullified; in this instance the local has capital that limits Shane's capacity to act. Dilemmas shared by those like Shane show that affective ties are limited by capital, and capitals constrain the relational choices made.

The fact that he was sitting on the park bench "waiting" is also of interest in regard to temporality. Temporal lulls and quiet moments were often when participants chose to record their diaries. Likewise, usually participants used Grindr while doing something dull such as commuting, or as part of a routine such as having a friendly chat in the evening if lonely. This ties in to how the mobile dimension of Grindr is usually employed by using the app strategically on the go (Licoppe et al., 2015). Grindr use is often habitual or a way to alter the quality of time, as the data in this project reinforce. Dull time can made more exciting, or lonely time can be turned into social, communicative time. Yet in this case the participant is in the park on the bench waiting for a Grindr contact to respond. Shane's focus is not tourist activities, but Grindr, and he chastises himself as being "pathetic" for having put everything on hold as he waits for his romantic interest to respond. His tourism experience and mobility is literally halted by his relational desires.

When it comes to struggling over the relational choices one has, as seen in the case of Shane and his attachment to a particular local, his lack of time (a form of capital) is laid bare. Knowing he must leave the country, he is pained that his interactions with his local sweetheart are unlikely to lead to a long-term relationship. Time is key to relational choices; capital affects relational imaginings. Does the tourist really have to leave, or can he afford to stay a few more days? If he wants to move to Israel, would it help if his love interest already has citizenship? Different social and cultural capitals grant agency over time and the consideration of alternative relational imaginings that go against the "nothing serious" narrative.

The narrative of looking for a short-term fling is expressed frequently in the interviews, and Shane's brief hook-up interactions with some locals is consistent with this. Yet his imagined relational future of an Israeli husband, and his painfully emotional connection with a local (and desire for a relational future with him), show that other fantasies and affective motivations underpin relations and generate alternative tourist-local interaction narratives. Tourists have different visions than locals of the temporality of their relations; the tourists often narrate a desired future as they emotionally invest in the travel destination and people who live there through Grindr.

What do tourist narratives of relational fantasies tell us about the dynamics that underpins tourist-local relations, particularly from the tourists' perspectives? Some dynamics underpin relations from both tourists' and locals' perspectives: specifically, temporalities and fantasies. Yet tourists have different visions of the temporality of their relations; they desire a future. They do not necessarily fantasize about sexy nights with locals, but rather, Israeli husbands. However, the tourist narrative also introduces other dynamics that underpin relations. Tourists potentially

have immigration motivations, and therefore desired nationality underpins the relations.

In summary, there are two main relational narratives at play within tourist-local relations: the “nothing serious” narrative and the “imagined future” narrative. The “nothing serious” narrative is not a myth; casual sex, hookups, and other “nothing serious” interactions do happen based on the data. Yet the narrative tourist participants overwhelmingly told, that of the “imagined future” with Israeli locals, was a surprising outcome of the study. This is what tourists chose to share about their experiences of Grindr tourism, and this was how they made sense of their interactions with locals.

The “imagined future” narrative is weaker and more individualized than the culturally strong “nothing serious” narrative. How do we make sense of the imagined relational outcomes present in the tourist fantasies of meeting a local husband? These desiring narratives of meeting an Israeli partner can be considered “alternative imaginings” (Heaphy, 2009: 134-135) of tourism experiences. Such imaginings complicate the dichotomous perspective of tourist and local. As noted before, some locals in Tel Aviv are immigrants to the country. Also, some tourists aspire to move to the country or have ties with Israel through their family or religion. This complicates the narrative that tourists are only in the country for a limited time and cannot develop long-term relations with locals. Yet although there is a mutual exoticization between tourists and locals, as will be discussed in the following section, locals do not express much alternative imagining in their narratives. Capitals seem to have clear significance here. The locals are limited in their imaginings and in their relational choices; as Heaphy stresses, “relational choices are determined in part by access to combined economic, social, and cultural resources. Diminished access to

these limits possibilities for self-determination and relational choices" (Heaphy, 2009: 120). A lack of economic or cultural capital could constrain local imaginings. Relations with tourists may bolster locals' capital, as was argued previously (see section 6.3.). The capitals at play in Grindr interactions are shaped by situated tourist and local identities.

Relational choices and imaginings are determined by what one can do and what one has time for. Yet Grindr alters the landscape of possibilities by affording a collapsing of time and space in its immediacy and mobility, thereby bringing about relations that could not otherwise be possible. Adam notes that "time is simultaneously experienced and constituted, abstracted and reified" (Adam, 1995: 15). Part of this constitution of particular kinds of time is done through Grindr. Grindr is something used in a dull moment, changing the quality of time. Routines of Grindr use grant users control over interactions conveniently fitting into their time schedules; the people they interact with are often chosen with time in mind, such as in Sagi's example of talking to tourists during weekdays in the hopes that they would be available to meet in person. Relational choices are in part guided by time as a form of capital, but Grindr also accords some temporal agency.

6.5. Mutual Exoticization: "Everyone in Tel Aviv is a Muscle God"

Mutual exoticization, and subsequent eroticization that results from it, tend to underpin tourist-local relations, interactions, and discourses on Grindr in Tel Aviv. Many tourists perceive the Israeli locals as particularly attractive, tied to their supposed masculinity and exoticism. This aligned with tourism industry promotions Tel Aviv as an ideal tourism destination due to its locals (Hartal, 2019). Jake, a 23-

year-old tourist from the US, remarks that he thinks "Israeli guys are gorgeous, so here [in Israel] it's kind of a given that guys are attractive on Grindr." Shane also iterates this dominant narrative, observing that "everyone in Tel Aviv is a muscle god" and that he feels himself to be in a "sea of muscle men." Such statements exemplify the popular image of Israeli gay men as muscular, attractive, tan, hirsute (in particular, having beards or stubble). Shane finds that Israelis embody the "aesthetic that…[he] look[s] for…like masculine, hairy, older, and bearded." Although these attributes are viewed as masculine, and therefore positive, elsewhere (Miller, 2015: 256-257), tourist participants unknowingly describe aesthetics associated with a local Israeli ethnicity called *Mizrahi* when they laud muscular, tan, hirsute, and bearded bodies (Yossef, 2004). Mizrahim Jews are an ethnic group of "Arab Jews" who have historically settled in Middle Eastern countries like Iran, Iraq, Egypt, and Syria during the Jewish diaspora until their expulsion from those regions and settlement in Israel (Aharoni, 2003; Eyal, 2006: 86; Sasson-Levy, 2003: 320)(the importance of the Mizrahi ethnic context in Israel is further explained in the next section). The Mizrahi "look" aligns with a common representation of what be considered hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995) viewed as erotically appealing by tourists. In this instance of this research, locals are ascribed hegemonic masculinity by tourists on the basis of their physical appearance. Thus this ethnicity, already Othered through exoticization discourse, becomes eroticized. In this section, hegemonic perceptions of Mizrahi masculinity are discussed. I first clarify what I mean by masculinities and hegemonic masculinities before going on to outline how mutual exoticization is part of tourist-local relations in Tel Aviv.

Connell's theories of masculinity and hegemonic masculinities (Connell, 1995; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005) are adopted in this dissertation to

understand tourists' exoticization narratives. While recognizing the fluidity and breadth of the term masculinity, Connell considers it to be a process "and relationship…through which men and women conduct gendered lives" (1995: 71). This can be through practices and "the effects of these practices in bodily experiences, personality and culture" (ibid.). Considering a singular, essentialist masculinity does not take into account how practices are encoded differently in terms of gender depending on national and social contexts. Therefore, although this section refers to a specific Mizrahi form of masculinity, at other times the plural "masculinities" is used to talk about masculinity generally.

Hegemonic masculinity refers to how in society some masculinities are more dominant than other ones, and that masculinities form a hierarchy (ibid.). As Connell points out, "there are specific gender relations of dominance and subordination between groups of men" (ibid., 78). Discussing Connell, Wilcox spells out how power hierarchies of gender occur when a "dominant version of ideal male characteristics [is] defined in relation to subordinate masculinities associated with race, sex, or class" (Wilcox, 2009: 220). The "hierarchy among masculinities" relies on an ideal "hegemonic vision of masculine virtue" (ibid.). In other words, the form of masculinity at the top of the hierarchy, the hegemonic one, is viewed as the pinnacle of aspiration and power. But as Connell remarks, "normative definitions of masculinity…face the problem that not many men actually meet the normative standards" (Connell, 1995: 79); an ideal, hegemonic masculinity is nearly impossible to embody. Thus it is an unattainable standard that people hold themselves to and fail. Hegemonic masculinities function discursively and relationally, in that men interact and locate themselves in relation to hegemonic masculinities.

Context matters when it comes to hegemonic masculinities. Hegemonic masculinity is not static; it is a particular masculinity in the "hegemonic position" (Wilcox, 2009: 220), within a particular society's gender relations (ibid.). Connell argues that gay masculinities are located hierarchically lower than straight masculinities due to oppression (Connell, 1995: 78). However, this research is concerned with hegemonic masculinities operating among subgroup of homosexual men. It considers a specific hegemonic masculinity, termed Mizrahi masculinity, among the social subgroup of gay-identifying men using Grindr in Israel. I will now describe the depiction of the hegemonic masculine ideal through narratives of mutual exoticization, followed by a discussion of resistance to it in the next section.

Israeli locals are exoticized for conforming, at least on the surface, to masculine ideals tied to Mizrahi ethnicity. Part of the hegemonic Israeli masculinity is also related to being in the military (Hartal, 2019: 1153; Kuntsman, 2009; Klein, 1999; Sasson-Levy, 2002). As Tomer, a 23-year-old local, puts it, in "Israeli society…masculinity is very connected to the army," as in other societies (Eichler, 2014; Wilcox, 2009). Yet unlike in many other societies, most Israeli men and women have experienced being in the army due to the draft (Hartal, 2009; Klein, 1999). Kuntsman argues that, for LGBT+ immigrants in particular, the military "carries a particularly tempting promise of belonging through masculinity and homonationalism; the body of the sexy Soldier becomes a ground from which they can claim their belonging as both immigrants and queers" (116). The masculine soldier is viewed as especially desirable from many angles – immigrant, tourist, and local—thus emphasizing its hegemonic position among masculinities. Tomer notes that this connection between masculinity and being in the army is visible on Grindr, as "on Grindr people are taking pictures with their uniforms… [so that]

people…know they are so masculine they are even soldiers." Daniel, a 32-year-old immigrant from the UK, comments that he "always see[s] Israeli guys as exotic," in that they are "Middle Eastern and good-looking and the army and macho and the good bodies and outdoor lifestyle." All of these traits are spoken of in one breath; they are affiliated with each other. Daniel paints a picture of Israeli guys as a summary of connected ideas: the army, good bodies, macho (masculine), and ethnically "Middle Eastern." For many gay male tourists, this Mizrahi military hegemonic masculinity underlies the discursive "exotic" appeal of Israelis.

The exoticization between tourists and locals is mutual: the discourse drawn on is that they are "a match made in heaven," as Daniel summarizes. The tourist narrative of Israelis as exotic is not a unidirectional perception of Israelis as exotic while tourists are not. Sagi, an immigrant to Israel, comments that "Israelis love when you're exotic." Tourists are often exoticized for their various cultural backgrounds. This is not necessarily a postcolonial oppositional exoticization of White Western and Orientalized Other. The tourists and immigrants are not necessarily exoticized as white, but just for being "exotic" as in not from Israel, as expanded upon below. Many tourists to Israel are non-white, including some participants in the sample. From the locals' narratives, the notion of what is "exotic" is not predicated primarily on race. One can be culturally exotic, or have had cosmopolitan experiences that generate assumptions of cultural capital and sophistication. Thus the mobility to navigate out of being stuck in one's country or location contributes to what makes a tourist exotic to locals. I now present the examples of Daniel and Sagi, both immigrants, as they discuss how the dynamic of mutual exoticization happens in their lives.

Daniel is a 32-year-old immigrant from the UK who has been living in Israel for many years. He comments on how "Israelis like people from abroad…and…the

gays in Tel Aviv are very welcoming to tourists from abroad because they're exotic." He goes on to point out that Israelis' perceptions of people from the UK are as "refined and…different-looking," European, "educated…and polite." Yet he "always see[s] Israeli guys as exotic;" in other words, "it works both ways." He summarizes the opinions of many participants in these comments. At first, Daniel found fascination with his background flattering, or "amazing" as he terms it. But "over the years" he

> realized that people make assumptions… all the time. It drives me insane that people will see me as being this polite, well mannered, this intelligent British person … and they think they know me, and it drives me crazy because they don't know anything about me. They just have this fantasy of who I am and they make all these assumptions about me…It's kind of complex because in some ways it's a compliment… it can definitely work to my advantage because people see it as a positive and they love it and it's exotic to them and they say, 'Wow, and how can I marry you and move to the UK so I can live in a beautiful country village and all that kind of stuff' [laughter].

Daniel's comments illustrate the ways in which the mutual exoticization is commented upon and used. Exoticism acts as a form of capital that is mobilized in particular circumstances, such as when one wants to attract a partner. Yet it is also limiting in its stereotypes. As Daniel points out, there is more to him then just his country of origin. The exoticism is based on stereotypes and, as Daniel points out, fantasies about people from these countries of origin. In the case of the UK, the assumption is that people are mild-mannered, polite, and living in beautiful country villages. The idea of a "beautiful country village" is a world away from the cities, desert, and villages of Israel, although of course most British people do not live in verdant Cotswold-style villages. Additionally, the mention of mild-mannered and polite behavior is the opposite of stereotypes of Israelis as forward, direct, and rude

(Berg, 2013; Canada, 2014; Katriel, 2015; Sela-Sheffy, 2004). The exoticization is a fantasy based on difference from the familiar.

The exoticization based on "difference" flows both ways. Sagi, a 38-year-old local who immigrated to Israel, defines what is exotic to Israelis as "if you're not born in Israel …and…if you're of the opposite skin tone, that is exotic." Sagi goes on to tell of a date he went on with someone. When asked "what their background is," as that is Sagi's usual "icebreaker," his date "said, 'Oh, I'm half-Moroccan and I'm half-Iraqi. So boring, so not exotic' [Sagi laughs]. To… [Sagi], he was definitely exotic…[He] didn't consider this to be boring." Sagi's half-Moroccan half-Iraqi (Jewish) date also felt Sagi was exotic "because…[Sagi] was born far away, and… lived in… Europe," creating an impression of "sophistication." This exoticization "has worked to…[his] disadvantage" as well as advantage. He met someone he had romantic interest in and "after one conversation, he [the other person] said, 'Oh no, you are too sophisticated for me. I'm just a simple guy. I don't think it's going to work out.'" The statement caused Sagi to think "You know nothing about me," echoing Daniel's frustration with assumptions based on a perception of exoticism.

Sagi's story illustrates mutual exoticization in that what is ordinary to his date is exotic to Sagi, and vice versa. Sagi's "far-away" origins, connection with Europe, and travel-generated "sophistication" render him exotic, going beyond the typical narrative of exotic as ethnically Oriental (being "half-Moroccan and half-Iraqi") from a Western/Global North perspective. Tourists and locals each have particular forms of temporal capital (discussed in previous sections), but tourists also have valuable social and cultural capital: being viewed as "sophisticated and cosmopolitan" is the basis of a particular framing of them as exotic. Meanwhile, locals are also conferred social capital within their relations based on being perceived as exotic. This capital is

relative capital; exoticization and the capital it accords is based on difference from the interactional partner.

Sagi is exotic in Israel as an immigrant from elsewhere, but also exotic abroad as an immigrant *to* Israel (and therefore being "from" there). Sagi takes advantage of this perception of Israelis as exotic, and therefore especially desirable, on his travels abroad after immigrating to Israel. He recalls that the first time he went abroad after moving, he left his Grindr profile text "in Hebrew. … And it turns out it makes you very popular [laughter] because, in the gay world, Israelis are thought to be very good." He "found it a benefit" to have Hebrew on his profile because it granted him social capital in his perceived exoticism associated with being Israeli, despite Sagi being originally South American. Again, Grindr is the site in and through which these social dynamics are displayed, discussed, and played out. By starting the investigation and interview with a discussion of Grindr, social capitals are revealed; the capitals are part of the interactional exchange on Grindr, but also in the external offline world.

There is participant frustration with exoticization, but there is also pleasure in it. Many participants use words like "nice" and "good," such as Sagi's comments, to describe being exoticized. During our conversation about race in the interview with Shane, a 25-year-old North American tourist, I asked him whether he liked feeling exoticized or whether it made him uncomfortable. He responded with "I do like being a unicorn." He went on to remark about "feeling" and "seeing a sense of curiosity," a perception of "oh, he's different" when he would be one of the few East Asians in the room, "even here" in Tel Aviv. He takes pleasure in being exoticized and identifies with a sense of difference: being a "unicorn."

Exoticization is eroticized, garnering many comments and an increase in attention on Grindr in the form of more messages. Ezra, a 30-year-old local, remarks

that he got “more messages, and people thought…[his] look…[was] exotic in England, which was nice.” He appreciated the increased attention he got on Grindr while abroad. Lior, a 35-year-old local, also commented on how he enjoyed feeling exotic while abroad in East Asia. He “felt like people were really attracted to me just because I’m something different.” Israelis are viewed as desirable and exotic by tourists and those from countries outside of Israel. Similarly, in Israel tourists are seen as exotic and desirable, evidenced from their popularity on Grindr. “Polite” tourists are often juxtaposed with the upfront and loud interpersonal stereotypical Israelis (Berg, 2013; Canada, 2014; Katriel, 2015; Sela-Sheffy, 2004). This perception of Israelis is often locally expressed through the concept of the *sabra* (sometimes known as a prickly pear in English), a cactus prickly on the outside but sweet on the inside. It is known as a “metaphor for the native Israeli, whose rough…manner was said to hide a…sensitive soul” (Almog, 2000: 4). Eli, an 18-year-old local immigrant, illustrates this local understanding of Israelis in his claims that the “Mizrahi… he can be angry, he can be rude and stuff like that. That just shows he loves you.” The *sabra* exemplifies the appreciation for and identifying with difference; being tough on the outside but warm on the inside is the narrative of Israeli characteristics.

In summary, mutual exoticization focuses on difference and reifies the Other based on relative ethnic identity— in other words, what is viewed as an “exotic” ethnicity relative to others. Although Othering is evidently an aspect of tourist-local relations, a unidirectional Othering of the Global South by the Global North is complicated by the fact that many Grindr users are exoticized regardless of whether they are tourists or locals. In this research, Othering often occurred between non-white participants of different ethnicities, and even between Ashkenazi and Mizrahi ethnicities within Israel. The subtheme of novelty returns here, as the novelty of

different people spurs interactions. The aesthetic embodiment of the ethnic Other, whether Mizrahi, Western European, or any other ethnic identity, is eroticized through the increase in attention on Grindr, a space where erotics underpin interactions for those looking for sex and romance. Ethnicity can therefore be the basis of erotic capital.

Mutual exoticization can offer capital, impetus for contact on Grindr, and a source of fantasy. However, it should be noted that mutual exoticization may also perpetuate inequalities of institutional norms around bodies, gender, and race. Mutual exoticism may also draw on problematic positive ethnic stereotypes. When mutual exoticization depends on eroticization of hegemonic norms, as is the case in this research context where Mizrahi masculinity is exoticized, then this can be concerning for those who do not present their genders in ways that accord with the hegemonic masculinity. Tourists attribute the qualities of hegemonic masculinity to Mizrahim based on a surface reading of bodies, but Mizrahim themselves may have relatively little relation-defining power. The next section explores this idea by analyzing resistance to the dynamics of mutual exoticization. Some participants reveal nuanced resistance that involves circumventing assigned categories and assumptions that mutual exoticization is based on. By examining resistance, the data show that Grindr is a space for challenging hegemonic norms as well as furthering them.

6.5.1. Limits and Resistance: "I can feel feminine and not look feminine to you"

Ethnicity can be a source of erotic capital, as can masculinities that approximate hegemonic ideals. Together they form a particular hegemonic masculinity in this research context: that of the local masculine Mizrahi "muscle

gods." Despite their majority in the population, Mizrahim have been historically marginalized (Shohat, 1998: 8; Ducker, 2006; "Israel Central Bureau of Statistics," 2004; Sasson-Levy, 2003). The narrative that considers all Israelis as homogenously having an "exotic" look elides the complexity of ethnic identity in the country. This section analyzes counter-discourses combatting the narrative of exotic Israelis and the ethnic connotations implicit in the idea of exotic.

Unbeknownst to many tourists, Israel has diverse ethnic groups (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.; Minority Rights Group International n.d.; Lewin-Epstein and Cohen, 2018; Mizrachi and Herzog, 2012; Kuntsman, 2009). Yoav addresses the ethnic elision that comes with exoticization on Grindr when he complains about Grindr's drop-down menu where one can list physical attributes, including ethnicity. The category options as of August 2019 are "Do Not Show, Asian, Black, Latino, Middle Eastern, Mixed, Native American, White, South Asian, Other," reflecting predominant ethnic categories in the app company's base of the United States. Ethnicity depends on national contexts, and when an app such as Grindr is used internationally the meaning behind the drop-down categories dissolves. Yoav, a 37-year-old local, notes that Grindr "goes I'm 100% Middle Eastern according to that category [those categories]." Yoav points out that when one is in a Middle Eastern country such as Israel, other ethnic categories are more relevant: for example, distinguishing whether one is Ashkenazi, Mizrahi, Druze, or Palestinian. The app's ethnic categories are insufficient, so people counteract this by filling in their ethnic identity in the biography section since they consider it meaningful. Grindr users' frustrations with the drop-down menu and attempts to counteract it, as well as people pursuing others of a certain ethnicity that they perceive as exotic, reveal that this information is important to users. The categories are there because the company

Grindr assumes some contribution to the desirability of a match is one's ethnicity. Grindr shows how ethnicity can be an avenue to gaining cultural capital and erotic capital, and this is reinforced by participants' choices to write their ethnic categories on their profiles when the drop-down menu does not suffice.

Taking into account local narratives, the tourist narratives of Israeli men as masculine "muscle gods" should be complicated. Masculinity is a fraught issue among locals in Israel, both in academic discourse (Klein, 1999; Lomsky-Feder and Rapoport, 2003; Sasson-Levy, 2003, 2002; Yefet, 2015) and "on the ground" – as evidenced in this project. Many resist the displays of hegemonic masculinity on the app. Grindr is a site to the resistance of these ideals, as well as the construction of them; it is the space in which masculinities and gender regimes are negotiated. Below, I present two examples of resistance on Grindr against the form of hegemonic Mizrahi masculinity discussed so far: Tomer, a 23-year-old local, and Eli, an 18-year old local who emigrated from Russia.

Tomer's case illustrates how even if someone visibly conforms to a hegemonic masculinity, he can still be involved in resistance to it. Tomer, a 23-year-old local, recalls how "all…[his] childhood people were laughing at" him for being "too feminine, and now people tell…[him] 'why do you care [about issues around masculinity], you're not feminine.'" For Tomer, "it doesn't matter" how others perceive him, as he "can feel very feminine and not look to you very feminine." The "to you" in his statement emphasizes how ideas of gender presentation are attributed to him based on his appearance as a Mizrahi man, but the varied opinions of others fail to capture his embodied experience of gender. He recognizes that when "people say they're looking for masculine men [on Grindr]…they're looking for a caricature." He acknowledges that the hegemonic masculine ideal of someone muscular, tanned,

with other general but vague “masculine” attributes is an unachievable ideal. Rather, it is a discursive fantasy. He remarks that “nobody…fit[s] to this…definition” of the ideal, or what he critiques as a “caricature.” Some locals, like Tomer, may be visually masculine to others (including tourists), but actually feel feminine or vary in their gendered expression. They resist hegemonic masculinities by emphasizing their femininity in their interactions with others.

The famed masculine Mizrahi “muscle god” lauded by many gay tourists is a limiting definition that excludes other local non-dominant masculinities and ways of being. Eli, an 18-year-old local who immigrated to Israel from Russia, describes himself as “feminine.” For him, this entails “lov[ing] to put makeup” on and wearing “skinny jeans, ... feminine things that [some say] only girls can wear.” He proudly reports that “sometimes people call…[him] the gender blender (laughter).” However, he also has been told to “stop wearing makeup because everyone knows you are gay,” to which he responds with “I’m not wearing makeup just to show the people I’m gay. It’s something that I like.” He disparages “the whole Israeli community” as “full of stereotypes, [such as] if you like skinny jeans you are a bottom” sexually (implying that the bottom sexual position is inherently feminine). Eli finds these stereotypes and reactions to his “feminine” behaviors of wearing makeup and tight jeans to be something he struggles with in Israel, as the “gay community here [in Israel] is more masculine…compare[d] to Russia.” However, he is quick to acknowledge (of his own accord) that his struggle against homophobia back in Russia was far worse than his current struggle in Israel. (For a more in-depth study of experiences of LGBT+ Russian immigrants to Israel, see Kuntsman (2009)).

Eli’s struggle in expressing his gender and love of makeup in his new country reveals that despite the consideration of Tel Aviv as a welcoming gay environment

among participants, there are social boundaries and normative regimes of masculinities. When people deviate from these norms, there is interaction, negotiation, and exchange over the boundaries of what is acceptable. Physically, Eli fits into some bodily ideals that are hegemonic elsewhere, such as in the US, but not in Israel under the Mizrahi masculine ideal. This highlights how hegemonic masculinities are highly contextualized based on the society they operate in. Immigrant and local participants expressed frustration with how pervasive these gender regimes were in Tel Aviv compared to elsewhere.

As Lior, a 35-year-old local, says, "everybody is very body conscious [here] … I think that people are less body conscious in other places that I've been." The Tel Aviv context matters in terms of participants' experience of embodiment. The space of Tel Aviv has particular implications for enactments of masculinities; all of these experiences of embodiment are heavily contextual. The codes of what is masculine among participants are what operate in the space of Tel Aviv particularly, and they are culturally bound by ethnicity.

Despite the adulation of Israeli "muscle gods," not all tourists are into the stereotypical Mizrahi "look." Kevin, a 31-year-old tourist in an open relationship, exemplifies this in his disappointment that his physical type is not often visually present on Grindr despite the many people online. He notices that "there's not many....guys who are my....type...in Tel Aviv or at least on the…apps. I'm not really into the... traditionally masculine, bearded guys which there seems to be a plethora of." Kevin mentioned that he prefers "slender…fresh-faced…clean shaven youthful looking guys…not big muscled guys [or]…hairy guys." He had trouble finding his "type" in Tel Aviv. This is not to say that being clean-shaven and slender means that one is feminine. Rather, I aim to convey that erotic desires can deviate from that of

the hegemonic Mizrahi masculine aesthetic, such as the one Kevin describes. These desires, although not immediately visible, still operate within spaces and interactions in Tel Aviv.

Kevin's frustration with the visual conformity on Grindr is a reminder that erotic desires are diverse, despite socially hegemonic masculinities. Additionally, different gender regimes exist elsewhere. What is hegemonic in Tel Aviv may not be hegemonic in Australasia, where Kevin is from. Even though femininity is undervalued in many countries and spaces (Miller, 2015; Miller and Behm-Morawitz, 2016), other locations appear to value femininity more than Tel Aviv according to both local and tourist participants. Overall participant narratives exemplified that tourists exoticize locals, and exoticized masculinity is part of the imagined appeal of Israel as a travel destination for some tourists who are gay. However this desired ideal of the exotic masculine Mizrahi is fraught, both for locals and even for some tourists who may prefer counter-hegemonic expressions of gender or may value different hegemonic masculinities as a result of their national origins.

The depiction and perception of Israelis as hot, masculine, and Mizrahi reveals how tourists often ignore ethnic variety among Israeli Jews. Yet ethnicity is significant in the socio-political context of Israel, as there is historically socio-political tension between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim. It also demonstrates how capital operates based on ethnicity, bodies, and fitting into gender regimes that some national contexts have while others do not. Being a tourist means that one has the privilege to cross political, national, and ethnic boundaries. However, the presence of tourists also reinforces existing boundaries and gender regimes through mutual exoticization.

As in this study, masculinities have been found to be privileged within gay relations in other national and technological contexts (Miller, 2015; Miller and Behm-

Morawitz, 2016). Additionally, there is outright discrimination against any attributes considered feminine on social media websites (Miller, 2015) and Grindr (Birnholtz et al., 2014). This has harmful consequences, according to research (Miller and Behm-Morawitz, 2016; Sánchez et al., 2009) and seen among participant narratives in this research. This research offers perspectives on ethnicity and masculinity that extend beyond the Global North focus of previous Grindr research. Highlighting hegemonic Mizrahi masculinity in this research context heeds Connell and Messerschmidt's call for research to geographically locate masculinities within specific local, social, and national contexts (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 829, 839). Yet by investigating local manifestations of masculinity in the tourism context, this research actually contributes beyond the local.

This research directly addresses what Light calls "networked masculinities," which are "the masculinities (co)produced and reproduced with digitally networked publics" (Light, 2013: 245). In other words, networked masculinities are how masculinities are created and reconfigured in networks generated through digital technologies such as Grindr. Light pinpoints technological interfaces as drivers for constructions of masculinities (ibid.). This is interesting in the situation of Tel Aviv because the Grindr drop-down ethnicity menu is insufficient for capturing meaningful ethnic information in Tel Aviv, even though Grindr's visual interface is important for depicting the aesthetic indicators of Mizrahi masculinity. However, the prioritization of the visual and novel on Grindr does contribute to relations that involve production, reconfiguration, and resistance to hegemonic masculinities. There is indeed co-production and reproduction of external ideas of masculinity (for example, muscles and beards) that are transnational through the international network of men Grindr tourism makes possible. Yet local specificity also comes through as a result of

considering the ethnic implications of the masculinities promoted by tourists. Through tourists' presences, local Israeli inequalities of ethnicity are reproduced and resisted.

In sum, mutual exoticization, and exoticization in general, can bring about erotic capital. Capital is also generated by having aesthetic attributes that conform to the Mizrahi masculine ideal, often what non-Israeli tourists conceive of when they imagine the desirable, erotic Israelis. Oppositionality structures tourist-local fantasies around ethnicity, revealing a process of Othering. The mutual exoticization taking place promotes nationality stereotypes and reifies boundaries. These may be boundaries of behavior, aesthetics, and gender presentations. Behavioral boundaries include Israeli locals being loud and aggressive while Europeans are mild-mannered and polite. Aesthetic boundaries can be appearing masculine or ethnically Mizrahi. Gender presentation boundaries can include praising beards and disparaging makeup wearing. These boundaries matter in the politics of masculinity and the construction of hegemonic masculinities, both in Israeli context and transnationally (Light, 2013). The mediation of masculinity happening on and through Grindr reveals how gender regimes are produced and regularly reinforced.

6.6. Conclusion: A Complicated Match

This chapter has situated tourists and locals relationally within the context of Grindr tourism in Tel Aviv utilizing a relational approach. Practices of Grindr tourism were outlined in this chapter, revealing relational possibilities for tourists and locals. This was followed by a discussion of locals' and tourists' relational expectations and fantasies of Grindr tourism outcomes. The latter part of the chapter touched on mutual exoticization, going into detail about the importance of hegemonic Mizrahi

masculinity. Negotiations of different relational imaginings, masculinities, and ethnicities are part of the exoticization and eroticization processes that go along with Othering. Capital is predicated on gender and ethnic norms in the research context of hegemonic Mizrahi masculinity. The research sheds light on the constructions of difference that permeate everyday relations due to tourists' presences.

Capitals within a national and technological context—Grindr in Tel Aviv—shape power and relations, with ramifications for transnational issues of Othering, masculinities, and ethnicities occurring elsewhere in the world. Certain dynamics, such as masculinities, visual novelty, and mutual exoticization, underpin tourist-local relations and therefore the operation of capital. Studying Grindr in the tourist-local Israeli context reveals how key mobilities are to generating capital, which may not have come to light in a "static" study of Grindr use that looks only at local users by way of interviews. Grindr tourism reveals that capital operates in surprising ways that counter expectations of empowered, mobile tourists and disempowered, static locals. This chapter highlights which kinds of capital are valued, generated, and displayed in tourist-local Grindr interactions. Capital is not necessarily predicated on social, material, and cultural resources obtained outside the space of Grindr, but rather dependent on certain temporal and spatial conditions of difference between tourists and locals on Grindr.

Through analyzing tourist-local practices of Grindr tourism and the relations that form as a result, this chapter has shown how Grindr shifts tourism away from traditional gay travel institutions to mobile individuals. As a mediator for tourism, Grindr offers potential for numerous interactional outcomes that must be negotiated between users. This is different from travel institutions in that Grindr cuts through spatial and temporal boundaries by enabling direct, individually instigated tourist-

local contact any time. Although Grindr de-institutionalizes aspects of tourism, this chapter also builds on the conclusions from the previous chapter by showing how Grindr *also* re-institutionalizes. The importance of mutual exoticization and hegemonic masculinities among tourist-local relations reveals that Grindr re-institutionalizes configurations of ethnicity and masculinity.

Grindr provides a platform for tourists and locals to build relations with each other and facilitate learning of countries, languages, and political issues. Such relations therefore lead to gaining cultural capital. But deeper examination shows that these relations, like all relations, are fraught with inequalities around hegemonies, power, and boundaries of self-presentation. Capitals shape power relationships between tourists and locals in the context of Grindr tourism. Capital is not directly transferable from one context to another; Grindr produces agency that brings about relational capitals in the relational context. The capitals valued on Grindr come at the expense of those who do not appear to fulfill hegemonic embodiments of masculinity. Emerging technologies lend insight to how inequalities are replicated or resisted. These ideals can be circulated and communicated by technologies and users in denigrating ways, which will be analyzed in the following chapter. Tourist-local relations stray far from utopian visions of heavenly equality.

CHAPTER 7: Feeling their Way? Grindr Norms, Etiquette, and Affects

This chapter builds on how people imagine Grindr as a space. Grindr norms can create new boundaries—such as the bounded digital presentations of gender and ethnicity discussed in the previous chapter—and boundaries of communication, which this chapter hones in on. By situating tourists and locals relationally, Chapter 6 has scrutinized the external ramifications of hegemonic norms of masculinities and ethnicities for people's understanding of themselves and their relations with others. This paves the way for examining how communication norms impact relations and selves. In this chapter, an examination of selves will be conducted by looking at affect, while an examination of relations will be conducted by looking at how users navigate offline and online worlds.

The chapter addresses the research question of how interactional norms operate within Grindr, as well as the implications of these norms for users. It argues that divergent conceptualizations of spatial norms on Grindr lead to communication clashes and unwanted feelings of objectification. Theories of impression management and context collapse in online spaces are used to support this claim. The next section analyzes differing notions of Grindr norms predicated on spatial hierarchies that have

emerged from the data. This is followed with an examination of emotional responses to perceived objectification stemming from Grindr interactions. Resistance strategies to Grindr interactional norms include pushing for etiquette, communicating spatial and temporal cues, and building boundaries based on understandings of space. Consideration of the affective implications of norms, and resistance to them, reveals how dating apps like Grindr foster new boundaries and norms of online communication.

7.1. Impression Management and Context Collapse

In studies of online dating and social media profiles, the communication theory of *impression management* is often employed to make sense of self-presentation tactics (Blackwell et al., 2014; Ellison et al., 2006). The term originates from Goffman's (1959) work on self-presentation strategies. Impression management involves using communication strategies to convey to others an impression in the social actor's interest (Goffman, 1959: 4). According to Goffman, impressions are strategically given and given off (ibid.). Ellison summarizes impressions being *given* as "communication in the traditional sense, e.g., spoken communication" whereas impressions being *given off* constitute "unintentional communication, such as nonverbal communication cues" which are especially relevant in romantic scenarios (all Ellison et al., 2006: 417). Using Goffman's theory, Mor et al. point out that it is in people's interest to correctly "match their impression management to their audience" (Mor et al., 2015: 2) in order to be socially accepted. However, on social media platforms such as Facebook, the platform Mor et al. focus on, there is "heterogeneity of the audiences' norms and expectations" (ibid.). I argue that there are not only

differing audiences within every social media platform, but also that the multiple spaces *within* platforms contain different norms and assumptions. An example of this is in the instance of privacy on Grindr. As mentioned in the methodology, the home screen is viewed as "more public" than the private chat area, shaping disclosure choices (Shield, 2019). The literature shows it is difficult for users to "select and maintain" impression management strategies across various online platforms (DeAndrea and Walther, 2011; Joinson, 2008; Sleeper et al., 2013; all in Mor et al., 2015: 2), especially compared to offline life (Ellison et al., 2006).

As touched on in the previous chapter, Marwick and boyd argue that the notion of "context collapse" (Marwick and boyd, 2011: 122) in digital media flattens "multiple audiences into one" (ibid.). Digital media overlaps numerous audiences and social contexts and puts social actors into a singular online context, without the same kinds of audience or social cues one would have in other environments. boyd and Marwick contend that context collapse unsettles social boundaries in particular, as "the requirement to present a verifiable, singular identity makes it impossible to differ self-presentation strategies, creating tension as diverse groups of people" congregate on social media (Marwick and boyd, 2011: 122). In other words, being unaware of the social actors at the other end of the digital interaction, in addition to the wide number and variety of actors at the other end of digital interactions, causes tension as people struggle to manage how they appear and act on social media. This makes sense with social media platforms that are relatively public; any person's viewing of the profile can be considered a digital interaction. It is possible for anyone to make an anonymous Grindr profile and then look at others' profiles, making this theory predicated on social media still applicable for dating apps. In the private chat area of Grindr, despite the social actors potentially being aware of the online identity of their

conversation partners, they may still be managing simultaneous conversations with a variety of other people from different locations and with dissimilar expectations on the app. The co-congregation of audiences and spatial layering on digital media platforms such as Grindr means managing impressions is harder for users, as what would work for one audience would not for another. I argue in this chapter that context collapse makes impression management more difficult, and therefore is an explanation for the relational conflict on Grindr that will be outlined. I go on to demonstrate how this sheds light on the issue of differing Grindr norms and subsequent feelings of objectification experienced by participants.

Impression management theory is not only applicable to social media platforms such as Facebook, but also to online dating websites and dating apps. Ellison et al. point out that impression management is especially important when dating. Prior studies of online dating find that impression management is key when "individuals make initial decisions about potential partners…that help reduce uncertainty about the other (Berger and Calabrese, 1975)" (Ellison et al., 2006: 431). Ellison et al.'s seminal online dating study builds on empirical support for impression management theory by demonstrating "evidence for SIP [strategic impression management] in…[the] naturalistic setting" of online dating (Ellison et al., 2006: 431). The circumstances of computer mediated interaction on dating websites mean that social actors (or interactants, as Ellison refers to them) have "greater control over self-presentational behavior" than in offline life, permitting "individuals to manage their online interactions more strategically" (ibid., 418). In other words, the features and affordances of communicating online mean that actors have opportunities to "self-censor" and control impressions more than they would face-to-face. Ultimately, Ellison's study shows that a constraint of computer-mediated-communication is a

"lack of nonverbal cues," such that on online dating websites "the task of interpreting the remaining cues became paramount in regards to both assessment of others and presentation of self" (ibid., 430). Individuals may have some verbal and linguistic control over how they come across on dating websites, but this then leads to intense scrutiny over every social cue when it comes to communication. What cues are employed in this study's Grindr context? I examine this in the data below.

Throughout this project I argue that dating apps are distinct from online dating and ought to be conceptually differentiated. Although much of the literature on dating websites—including Ellison's study discussed above—is applicable to dating apps, the analysis of Grindr requires a more nuanced analytical tool kit than provided by studies of online dating. The offline spatial transformations brought about by Grindr's mobile features entails that user practices are distinguishable from online dating websites. I take the online dating literature further by showing how impression management cues and strategies are expanded by dating apps; in the case of Grindr, users rely heavily on spatial and temporal cues as a result of Grindr's geolocative affordance and affordance for instantaneous communication through the online chat feature. More of this will be discussed throughout the chapter.

Context collapse brings about a unique co-congregation of audiences and spatial layering specific to each digital media platform, such as Grindr. This has consequences in that it interrupts how interactions are situated and alters interactional cues, and therefore shifts the kinds of relations people have. Because of the absence of some social cues on dating apps due to context collapse, negotiation of norms is necessary. People employ communication strategies to negotiate norms; this research finds that one strategy used in the digital context is that of hierarchical spatial metaphors, which will now be discussed.

7.2. Norms and Etiquette within Spatial Hierarchies

Participants viewed spaces dissonantly when describing their app use: their use of Grindr altered their physical experiences and vice versa. This section argues that there are notions of respecting physical space, especially one's present physical location and the people one is physically with, in a way that is hierarchical to the perceived virtual space of Grindr. Pinpointing transgressions makes it clear what the norms are understood to be. Interactional conflict often occurs when spatial hierarchies are transgressed.

Spatial hierarchies underpin notions of Grindr etiquette and norms. Etiquette is the notion of what one "ought" to do in certain contexts. It is the strategies one ought to use to communicate, and the ways one ought to behave, toward others. In contrast, norms are conventions of practices, communication strategies, and behaviors that are commonplace. They may or may not be considered acceptable. However, they are frequent and commonplace. Some norms might align with etiquette ideals, whereas others may go against the understandings of etiquette.

This section begins by showing how the etiquette among participants is that physical space should take precedence over the virtual spaces of Grindr. It then demonstrates how users attempt to negotiate norms and frame others as "in the wrong" in their interactional behaviors by drawing on this spatial hierarchy. When doing so, they make comparisons between Grindr and physical spaces. I now go on to support this argument with examples from data about these spatial and etiquette notions.

Shane, a 25-year-old tourist, discusses in his interview how his friends always call him out for using Grindr too often around them. He mentions how his "friends always give me shit. They're like, 'Stop…Grindring. It's bad.' And it is bad. If my friends are talking to me in the car, I shouldn't be on…Grindr." Shane acknowledges he is unhappy with his "bad" behavior in front of his friends. He uses Grindr frequently, going on to state that "I don't have it on all the time but I will open it if I'm in a new place…I want guys to message me and just to see the new population and who's around. So I do open it often." He realizes that he "shouldn't be on Grindr," he should be paying attention to those around him; however, he is also incentivized to open the app while on the go, such as in the car with his friends, in order to find new people to interact with on his homescreen and messages. Shane illustrates the attitude many share that physical space, and the people present, ought to take precedence.

Like Shane, 31-year-old tourist Kevin shared an interesting experience in his audio diary of using Grindr in a way that transgressed the norm of physical space taking precedence. Enjoying a taste of the Tel Aviv nightlife, Kevin surreptitiously used Grindr while at a nightclub. The audio diary captured this event the day it happened, prompting his choice to mention it. In his daily audio diary reflection, he mentioned "checking" Grindr at the club, and "hid[ing] in the corner where no one could see that…[he] was doing it." He went on to clarify that he hid "'cause, you know, [being] on a hookup app in a club is kinda…a bit embarrassing (chuckles)." Kevin points out that the nightclub he was at "wasn't a gay club, it was just a normal…straight club."

Kevin does not specify exactly why he was embarrassed. It could be because he too was aware of a spatial hierarchy where physical space and the people in them

ought to be prioritized; he should be having a nice time in the moment with the people he was with, rather than sneaking off to go on an app and in doing so "step out" his attention from the physical space to the virtual one. Additionally, using a dating app at a club could be socially stigmatizing because it implies one does not have the interpersonal skills to pick someone up in a nightclub, where doing so is a norm. Although Kevin was embarrassed at his use of Grindr while at a nightclub, his practice of using the app means that he can transform his experience; he can momentarily layer a gay space over a straight one. Grindr allows him to identify those around him who may be gay while lowering the social stakes of rejection that could come from flirting with people in physical spaces.

Kevin goes on to explain his "hid[ing] in the corner just to check who was online," stating that he did so "because of how the software works. You have to be online, and it's location-based, and I was in different area in the kind of peak period of the night so I wanted to see who was online…I just had a quick look, so I didn't see anyone particularly interesting." Like Shane, Kevin felt curiosity about how his physical location in the city center during a peak period of traffic on the app might increase the people available to connect with and enhance his experience of Grindr. However, he also felt embarrassed about his choice to use the app. Grindr users in this study sometimes feel a sense of shame about using Grindr in particular physical spaces due to perceptions of spatial hierarchy and norms of physical spaces. Users must negotiate their desires to take advantage of the time and space they are in to find a Grindr connection that fulfills their relational fantasy (of a hookup, relationship, or someone new to talk to) with the etiquette of physical space.

The examples above reveal how people in the physical world become upset with the Grindr user for ignoring them in order to be on the app. These experiences

touch upon the notion of *phubbing*. *Phubbing* is a portmanteau for the terms "phone" and "snubbing;" it "represents the act of snubbing someone in a social setting by concentrating on one's phone instead of talking to the person directly" (Chotpitayasunondh and Douglas, 2016: 9). 33-year-old tourist Harry displays concern over this in his anticipation of the negative "real life" impression he will give off if he uses Grindr in someone else's presence. He declares that using Grindr is not "a very respectful thing to do it when you're with someone." He remarks that in the instance of using Grindr as a tourist, if he is traveling with someone else "it's quite rude to be … using your mobile phone and texting a lot and being um, bye I'm off for two hours" to meet someone in person off Grindr. Harry's notions of politeness and rudeness signify an established set of spatial norms that reveal concern over impression management in "real" life offline. Despite the occasional use of Grindr in unexpected or inappropriate spaces, the narrative expressed by participants is that physical space, and the people physically present, ought to take precedence over the virtual space and the virtually present people on Grindr. The experiences Shane and Kevin share of phubbing those around them to be on Grindr, although common, are also perceived as transgressive.

I have just outlined spatial and temporal norms of using Grindr with regard to the offline world, i.e. when and where one ought not to use Grindr. This is evidenced by looking at what interactions are considered transgressive in physical spaces, summarized by the idea of phubbing. Some consider Grindr to be subordinate to physical space, as has been shown above. Physical space should come first, and it is considered to be at the top of the spatial hierarchy. I now move on to analyze how notions of space as hierarchical impact interactions *within* Grindr spaces. When focusing on the interactions occurring within Grindr, it is evident some participants

use spatial metaphors as well. The spatial metaphors about spaces within Grindr reveal a belief that Grindr norms ought to be the same norms as the ones circulating in physical space.

When reflecting on "some of the downsides of Grindr," in particular what he calls the "transactional, disposable nature of it," Harry notes that "you tend not to just walk away from someone in the middle of a conversation in a bar." He uses this metaphor of "a conversation in a bar" to explain why he is so unhappy when people stop talking to him in the middle of a Grindr conversation. Harry, like many others, views Grindr etiquette norms as equivalent to those in physical spaces such as bars. He is unhappy with those who think the norms ought to be different from those of physical space and therefore consider it socially acceptable to stop talking to someone online in the middle of a chat conversation. To Harry, this sudden halt is tied to Grindr's "transactional, disposable nature." He implies that disposability is a Grindr norm. In discussing the sudden halt to the conversation, Harry refers specifically to ghosting, the practice of suddenly halting all communication online with someone by "disappearing without notice" (LeFebvre et al., 2019). Ghosting is often employed as a form of "relationship dissolution strategy" (ibid.), much to the dismay of those who are at its receiving end. It is used to halt the trajectory of the relation in a way the other social actor does not expect. The social stakes of disappearing are perceived to be lower in the specific media context of Grindr, compared to real life; as Lior, a 35-year-old local, points out, there are no "consequences" to "ignoring" someone on Grindr. Some users, like Harry and Lior, see Grindr norms as equivalent to those of physical spaces, and they use spatial metaphors to exemplify what Grindr etiquette should be.

Ezra, a 30-year-old local, also discusses the frustration of having people not answer his messages in the private chat on Grindr. He expresses how “people can be really nasty online there” on Grindr. Some of the things people do are “nasty in a passive way, like not answering, not being polite” or even being explicitly insulting by saying “no, you’re too ugly for me.” Even if the conversation partner says they like the way Ezra looks, in the middle of “a conversation they just disappear. And if you just type another question mark, they could say, ‘Oh, you’re too obsessive. Leave me alone.’” Ezra claims that online, people do “nasty” things “that they just wouldn’t do face-to-face,” and these behaviors “developed because of the app situation.” Ezra’s commentary and specific examples of what he labels “nasty” behavior and communication strategies touch upon participants’ main frustrations with interacting on Grindr. Ezra recognizes there are norms specific to the app situation, i.e. Grindr norms. But he considers these “nasty” behaviors and norms a contradiction to what people would do face-to-face. He implies that there should be no dissonance between online norms and offline ones. What strikes him as rude and nasty are behaviors one would not tolerate offline, and therefore should not happen online. These behaviors are specified and explored in section 7.3. People prioritize the norms of face-to-face interaction, and when Grindr interactions fail to be successful for both interactional partners then they look to face-to-face interactional norms to pinpoint where things went wrong.

Many participants consciously partake in an interactional norm of answering to everyone who messages them on Grindr. Eli, an 18-year-old immigrant, comments that no matter what he’s looking for in the moment on Grindr, he “answer[s] to everybody” as a courtesy. Even if he is not interested in the person who is reaching out to him by messaging him, Eli will reply to communicate he is not interested. This

is the interactional etiquette and norm for him as well as many other participants. As 23-year-old local Amit says, “I try to respond to people.” Participants who stress the importance of responding to others emphasize doing so out of kindness and for the sake of clear communication.

In contrast, some participants also ghost fellow Grindr users and ignore their messages. In his audio diary, Raphael, a 29-year-old tourist from East Asia, elucidates why he ghosts people who message him. His use of Grindr right before he recorded his diary entailed going through each message from other users. Raphael explains in his diary that as he looked over each message on Grindr he receives, he would not respond for various reasons of incompatibility. Raphael states the reasons for rejection, depending on the circumstance. Examples of incompatibility Raphael drew on were: incompatible sexual preferences (both were “bottoms”); distance (the man was too far away); language issues (the man messaged Raphael in Hebrew, which Raphael does not speak). In the circumstance of audio diary, Raphael could address why he ignored others on Grindr without anyone judging his reasoning. He was recording while his Grindr use had been fresh in his mind and therefore could recall specific reasons for rejection by ghosting. Raphael’s diary reveals that he never ignored messages out of an intention to hurt. Rather, he was being practical and was busy responding to others. Convenience plays a part in many users’ communication strategies, as has been found in the previous chapter and will be further addressed later in this chapter.

Dissonant understandings of etiquette on Grindr are partly due to whether or not its norms are thought of as equivalent to a physical space, and these discordant views can lead to clashes over the rules of interaction. Spatially, some think the norms of interaction on Grindr should be the same as the norms of in-person interactions in

physical space, as exemplified by Harry. Others disagree; they consider that the norms ought not to be the same as physical space and they therefore promote Grindr norms of ghosting, objectification, and unsolicited sexual photos (discussed in section 7.3.). The varying perceptions of Grindr within spatial hierarchies are important. I argue that differing perceptions of Grindr in relation to physical space, and therefore its position in spatial hierarchies, is what leads to conflict over communication behaviors.

How is this negotiation of presence in multiple spaces and hierarchy of space distinct from frustrations of checking a text at a table of people? The fact that Grindr is geolocative means that it transgresses boundaries of virtual and physical spaces, making its status in spatial hierarchies subjective and constantly shifting. Using Grindr at a nightclub changes experience of presence in a physical space. Grindr is intended to be used while mobile, anywhere and anytime. Because Grindr is geolocative, people are incentivized to use it in different physical spaces so that they have more or new options to link with. This may cause a feeling of "missing out" on an exciting potential Grindr online space of new people to meet when spending time with friends at an ideal, well-populated location such as a city center. In their practice of using Grindr, users fulfill Turkle's (2008) notion of being "always on;" they are constantly engaged with their phone, navigating both a presence in physical space and one in the virtual space of Grindr. Nevertheless, participants struggle with managing their use of Grindr; spatial metaphors and hierarchies of space help them make sense of what to do, where to focus their attention, and what kinds of interactions are appropriate when and where. Spatial metaphors and hierarchies function as a form of sense-making in the modern world of dating apps. They influence constructions of etiquette and norms on Grindr.

7.3. Objectification and Affect

This section examines how some of the differing ideas of norms outlined above leads to interactions some participants find objectifying and therefore emotionally upsetting. Affect theory is employed to understand emotional reactions to interactions on Grindr and how these emotions are resolved through attempts at defining the space of Grindr and promoting etiquette.

Considering affect is part of an interactional approach and therefore appropriate for this dissertation. As Crossley notes, "interactions are affective in the respect that perceptions, thoughts, memories etc. of others are tinged with an emotional hue" (Crossley, 2010: 35). Interactions are inherently affective; they are a "permanent" (ibid.) aspect of how we navigate social life, although at various levels of conspicuousness (ibid.). In addition to being of theoretical interest to proponents of interactionism, affect also noticeably came forward in the interviews and diaries. The following sections outline three interactional Grindr norms that caused participants to feel objectified and therefore upset: 1. language, 2. ghosting, and 3. unsolicited sexual photos. The affective outcomes of these occurrences are now analyzed.

7.3.1. Language

Participants expressed concern over feeling objectified as a result of interactions on Grindr. They pointed to objectifying language as an illustration of distressing Grindr norms. Harry discusses how Grindr users perceive their interactions as "investments." When talking about the benefits of Grindr's geolocative features, he

notes that when getting to know someone from Grindr, “people are going to have to make an investment so the nearer you are…the easier, the more efficient that investment is.” In addition to the phrase “investment,” the term “transactional” (mentioned by Harry in the previous section) was also used by several participants. The terms “ease” and “efficiency” indicate that convenience is considered a norm for most users. Users strategize within interactions by considering all interactions “investments.” If the desired relational outcome does not occur, the time spent is viewed as a sunk cost. By pointing out language that is objectifying, participants show how some take the norm of convenience ‘too far’ and do not treat people kindly on Grindr as a result of their directness.

People use other objectifying terminology to pinpoint their experiences, often with a cynical tone or prompting complaint. As Ezra recounts, when he first starting using Grindr, he “complained” that “nobody wants a relationship. Everyone wants to have sex. [It’s] just a meat market and everyone just say[s] no to one another and I will never find love.” Although Ezra has since found his experience of Grindr has improved and that there are others like him seeking relationships, his initial label of it as a “meat market” reveals the frustration and disappointment with the initial interactions he was having on the app. He found the interactions to be negative, “with everyone saying no to one another.” The interactional outcome of finding love with someone he met on the app felt impossible with the abrupt and sexually direct initial interactions he was having with others. Ezra’s initial disappointment, but eventual shift in perspective on Grindr, is reflected in many participants’ complicated and ambiguous feelings toward Grindr. A frequently articulated drawback of using Grindr is the emotional pain that comes with interactions that seem objectifying and transactional.

As shown in the previous chapter (see section 6.4.2.), Shane uses objectifying language to highlight his experiences of meeting others on Grindr. Shane reflects on his tendency to objectify people he communicated with on Grindr, revealing he's "always used Grindr in the sense of like these guys are nothing but like…a dick. You know. Like literally. That's it." Shane also calls Israeli men "muscle gods," reducing them to their bodies. Shane's objectifying language focuses on the sexual appeal of body surfaces, highlighting his primary interest in using Grindr as a way to arrange casual sex—ideally with attractive Israelis. However, as previously mentioned, Shane goes on to discuss how it becomes emotionally "difficult when you start like, like having feelings for someone after like one hookup." Shane's audio diary reveals he has mixed feelings about this intentional objectification. For Shane, objectifying language also seems to be a coping strategy to counteract emotional ties. In other words, his use of objectifying language is a way to close himself off to further relational outcomes that may involve deep emotions. But as the audio diary indicates, this interactional strategy does not always work because Shane eventually develops emotional attachment to a local. Paying attention to Shane's language of both affect and objectification reveals a surprising desire for a longer-term relational trajectory with a local. Objectifying language is not necessarily a conscious attempt to hurt others. Rather, it can be an interactional strategy. Strategies are also used to counteract it, as will be now be shown.

The initial Grindr interaction and management of the first impression is important to participants. The following account reveals how Harry feels dehumanized by being pushed to talk immediately about sex in many of his initial interactions on Grindr. He complains that his "first question" to people he begins chats with on Grindr "is usually 'What's your name?' The most popular question… I

get back is ‘what are you looking for, top or bottom?’ Actually I want to know your name.” Harry starts the conversation in a conventional manner, one that accords with norms in physical spaces, by asking the person’s name (on Grindr people can either put their real name or a custom nickname/username). He is disappointed that the conversation partner immediately asks him about his sexual position: whether he is a top or bottom. The impression given by his interaction partner makes Harry feel objectified: isn’t his name worth knowing? To Harry, asking for a name signifies personhood. It indicates there is more to him that is desirable than just surface-level appearance or sexual prowess. Harry exhibits resistance to objectification in his insistence names be shared first. Harry’s expectation of a name-based introduction touches on the aforementioned issues of differing ideas around etiquette on Grindr. Even if it is a “norm” (i.e. common) on Grindr to talk about sex immediately, Harry pushes for the etiquette of exchanging names first. This is his ideal of what the norms on Grindr should be.

The language used by participants to narrate their experiences of Grindr highlights the importance of strategic investment of time and energy in order to obtain their ideal interactional outcome. This can result in the use of language considered to be objectifying. The importance of convenience influences interactions deemed by some as transactional. However, despite participants valuing the temporal and spatial convenience of communication that Grindr brings about, they are also critical of the affective outcome of interactions that feel objectifying.

7.3.2. Ghosting

Ghosting (the practice of ceasing contact in the middle of a conversation) was an emotionally painful Grindr practice participants raised. Raphael summarizes the power aspect to it. He mentions how on "Grindr, they ask for your photo, you send your photo, and then they're supposed to send back maybe just one…simple photo but" sometimes they do "not do it." When this happens, he "feels hurt about it, like… [the other person thinks they] are too good" for Raphael. The impression he gets from the communication act of ghosting is that others think him to be unworthy or inferior. Raphael's statement that his conversation partner "is supposed" to send a photo back if they ask for your photo illustrates that the Grindr etiquette is to respond in kind. Yet a norm that goes against this etiquette is ghosting as a response to the photo being sent. Implied in the ghosting is a rejection. This happens so often that Raphael is sharing this example as something that just happens "on Grindr" generally, rather than a one-off instance. Raphael's notion of the etiquette of responding to a picture with a picture is shared by other participants. Yet some who share the same expectation of etiquette still comply with hurtful ghosting norms, as will now be shown.

Participants who complain of ghosting still struggle with the temptation to ghost. This leads to internal emotional conflict. Tomer continues on from a discussion of ghosting to recount the emotions that stem from such practices, emphasizing how painful it is to encounter objectifying language on Grindr and tying it to the way people communicate about sex. Tomer feels that "people sometimes use this app [Grindr] in a very cold way." They forget "that we are all humans." He clarifies that he thinks it is "fine to be… looking for sex." Rather, his issue is that people on Grindr can "be very technical and mechanic about sex," communicating about it "like a business." He is unhappy with the objectifying, transactional language around sex

other participants complain of. Tomer finds that people “really cross the line between being direct to being rude,” and Grindr “allows” it. Tomer acknowledges that this “offensiveness” is not deliberate, “it’s just they are not trying to be nice…they’re careless.” Even if Tomer does not “want to meet them,” he himself always “tries to be nice.” Tomer goes on to explain “a norm in Grindr that if someone is sending you a message and you don’t want to” reply to that person, then you do not reply. In other words, he is talking about ghosting. He admits that he does “this all the time because it’s just that way.” Ghosting is the norm, or “way,” of Grindr. But when Tomer “thinks about it,” which he does of his own accord, he is distressed that his “behavior” is becoming similar to people he does not like. He is always managing himself and the impression he gives off, stating that he is “always trying to control…[him]self and to think about how…[he] acts. Because it’s so easy on Grindr to become…an asshole.” As Tomer becomes accustomed to using Grindr, he adapts to the norms of the space. That includes ghosting. But he is upset with himself for ghosting and he considers it disrespectful to others.

Tomer articulates the gripes of many when he critiques technical and mechanic language—in other words, objectifying language—around sex as contributing to a detrimental experience. Many participants consider ghosting behavior to go against common notions of etiquette, or the norms one ought to follow. Yet despite realizations that ghosting is not “kind” to others, it is a commonplace norm. Despite articulating resistance to it, even these participants occasionally ghost others. Yet although ghosting is increasingly commonplace, it continues to generate negative affect for participants as seen in the following example of Amit.

Like Tomer, Amit recounts feeling guilty over his complicity in contributing to the interactional norm of ghosting on Grindr. He admits that “sometimes when I

don't like how a person looks…, I just ignore him, and I realize that's wrong." He is empathetic and acknowledges that he gets "the same response" when he is "not good looking enough for a person. And it "offends" him, despite his knowledge that he does "the same" so he feels he ought not to be offended. Emotionally he finds this all to be "a bummer," adding that "if you meet that person in real life, you can't just ignore him. It doesn't work like that in real life. It only works like that in Grindr." Amit mentions his own affective response to being ghosted despite having an understanding of why people ghost, and being culpable of it himself. He uses a spatial metaphor that considers physical space at the top of the spatial hierarchy to justify his feelings that it is wrong to ghost people. He explains his feelings that it is "a bummer" with the understanding that "it only works like that in Grindr," not in real life. To him and many others, the implicit etiquette tied to physical spaces ought to be observed on Grindr, yet Amit struggles over the fact that spatial norms on Grindr are often different.

Even those who participate in ghosting, whether ignoring direct messages or disappearing in the middle of a chat conversation, feel conflicted over the emotional harm it can cause. Participants recognize others at the end of their Grindr encounters because they think about their own emotional responses to such practices. Even though ghosting is a frequently occurring Grindr norm, participants consider it to be a transgression of Grindr etiquette.

7.3.3. Unsolicited Sexual Photos

Another interactional clash with emotional implications is linked to explicitly sexual interactions on Grindr. This is important in the research context because many,

particularly outsiders, perceive Grindr as superficial and just for sex (Licoppe et al., 2015: 2). However, participants complained of unsolicited sexual photos. They were sometimes happy to receive them in the context of a sexual conversation, but for many, the moment at which they were sent during the interaction shaped their emotional responses to them. This notion of *when* and how sexual interactions are sought brings in another theme generated from the data discussed in earlier chapters, namely that of time. As Eli, an 18-year-old local immigrant, expresses, "actually I don't like when people, like, write me and in the first message they send me [are]… dick pics. I don't like this." Eli dislikes unsolicited nude photos so much that he says it twice. For Eli, his frustration stems from the fact that it is the first message. No boundaries have been set, and he has not consented or fostered a sexual tone to the conversation.

Jake, a 23-year-old tourist, shares a similar complaint in his audio diary. He mentions that his experience on Grindr that day was "interesting" because he

> received...an unsolicited photograph of a man's ass basically… I don't know, I was kind of not expecting it. I mean, we were talking about sex but we weren't like....I didn't think we were at the point where we were sending like nude photos and it just kind of came out of nowhere…I feel like I receive a lot of unsolicited nude photos on Grindr. It's kind of a pretty common phenomenon, and sometimes- well the most interesting times are when you receive unsolicited photographs without any, like, previous conversation. This at least there'd been previous conversation. There was somewhat of an... implication of sex there but there wasn't necessarily the direct need for a nude photo right now.

Jake highlights the importance of whether there has been a conversation before and whether that conversation had been sexual when it comes to the acceptability of sending a nude photo. His phrasing "at least" there had already been a chat occurring

indicates that etiquette-wise, this is important to him. Yet the sending of the photo crossed his boundaries: he "didn't think…[they] were at the point" of sending sexual photos. His use of the word "interesting" is ambiguous, but his tone of voice and use of the word in the audio diary context appears to imply his discomfort. He seems to be complaining about receiving such photos in his phrasing "there wasn't necessarily the direct need for a nude photo right now." Additionally, his choice to bring it up in the diary contributes to my supposition that he was uncomfortable with receiving the photo. Jake's audio diary indicates that his conversation partner had crossed a boundary for Jake by sending a nude photo. Yet the conversation had been sexual, so presumably from the conversation partner's standpoint it indicated a "normal," appropriate moment to send a photo. When discussing these photos, Jake repeatedly emphasizes the fact that they are "unsolicited." Jake's receipt of the sexual photos exemplifies a common communication clash that occurs on Grindr.

Yet it is not the case that all interactions arranging sex are "transactional," nor that some Grindr users only feel pleasure from receiving sexual photos while others only feel emotionally upset and objectified by the receipt of a sexual photo. For the same user, a similar exchange can be considered objectifying or emotionally upsetting in some instances, and in other instances be eagerly wanted and valued. The temporal and spatial moment users are in dictate what interaction they expect and desire. Are they newly single? Have they recently come out and are looking for support from others? Are they only visiting a location briefly as a tourist? In everyday in-person interactions in physical spaces there are familiar interactional cues to these spatial and temporal contexts. But on Grindr that information can be absent (or conversation partners do not bother to read this information stated on one's profile, a common complaint among participants). Such temporal states frame what types of interactions

on Grindr are desired, and disagreement over the interactional tone of the context, and timing of receipt of sexual photos can foster feelings of negative affect.

Harry's complaints about the first chat conversation being about sexual position, and the aforementioned disgust of Eli and Jake, reveal that others (their interactional partners) consider Grindr to be a sexual space where such actions are norms. If a user believes that Grindr is a sexual space, he may perpetuate norms of immediately communicating about sex via chats and photos. This includes the norm of sending unsolicited nude photos. However, those who are on Grindr for other reasons, like finding a long-term relationship, struggle with such norms. The participants who chose to narrate complaints about this were usually people looking for relationships.

Tomer talks about wanting a relationship and initially being disappointed that the app was a space coded as sexual and oriented toward the norm of a sexual hookup. "The first time" he used Grindr was "really frightening." He "wanted to meet people" and "wanted a relationship." Yet Tomer was "disappointed" at the ways "people treat" each other, such as ghosting or being immediately sexual. He "didn't know this is…the norm" in the "sexual" and "provocative" space of Grindr. He expressed fright, surprise, and disappointment in his narrative. His initial foray into Grindr was clearly an emotional experience for him. As one can see from the feelings shared by participants like Tomer, there are divergent opinions on whether the space of Grindr is too sexual. Tensions emerge from the varied motivations for being on the app. Tomer recognizes that such behaviors are "norms," but they were not what he was hoping to experience on the app. Tomer's language choices of "frightening" and "disappointing" capture his feelings toward his discovery of hurtful communication norms on Grindr.

The sending of sexual photos illustrates a clash between a norm of sending unsolicited nude photos and participants' etiquette narratives of needing to establish a consensual context for that practice. A key term of complaint is the word "unsolicited," as used by Jake. It appears that some users want to communicate about nude photos first. The common narrative, which all participants recognize, is that nothing is bad about sexual conversation. Tomer, a critic of transactional aspects to Grindr interactions, is quick to contextualize his complaints by stating that it is "fine to be…looking for sex." Many participants share the attitude behind his comment. They are fine with using Grindr to arrange sex; they simply would prefer communicating about interactional expectations so that there is no communication clash or negative emotions. The clash comes from two narrative perspectives users adopt. Some consider Grindr to be a sexual space, which therefore makes it acceptable to immediately send sexual photos or be transactional in arranging sex for maximum temporal efficiency. Others find this objectifying and subsequently emotionally painful; they want to contextualize the tone of the interaction and communicate about interactional expectations. These different narratives underpin relational clashes that foster discourse on Grindr norms and etiquette.

In sum, context collapse on Grindr has led to the norms of communication strategies such as ghosting, objectifying language, and sending unsolicited sexual photos. Clashes over these norms are affect-laden. boyd and Marwick state that "technology complicates our metaphors of space and place" (2011: 115). Technology also complicates time, bringing forth a digital temporality. Digital technologies such as Grindr collapse time by overcoming physical spatial distances and making interactions with strangers immediate via the chat feature. Grindr prioritizes proximity so that an in-person encounter has the potential to happen quickly and conveniently.

Many participants also point to convenience as something they appreciate about the app. Such structures reinforce the importance of time in everyday use of Grindr. However, the valuing of speed, time, and convenience may contribute to the use of transactional language, ghosting, and sending of unsolicited sexual photos on Grindr.

7.4. Resistance Strategies: Spatiotemporal Cues and Boundary Definitions

As mentioned previously, tension emerges from differing perceptions of the norms of interaction on Grindr. I argue that this is due to dissimilar perceptions of Grindr's spatial norms and boundaries. Context collapse disrupts previously understood boundaries of many kinds, causing differing expectations of what the space of Grindr ought to be like. This includes spatial and temporal boundaries, in addition to the social boundaries addressed by boyd and Marwick (2011), since "place plays a significant role in the creation of norms of behavior" (Cresswell, 1996: 25). Context collapse is useful for thinking about the operation of temporal and spatial boundaries in determining affect-laden interactions on Grindr.

As discussed in previous chapters, geographic contexts influence norms. When beginning this research, I was expecting a clash between tourists and locals over Grindr norms, based on the broader social norms of their respective countries. However, this notion was not supported by my findings, and I instead discovered conflict over norms even among people of the same "Grindr backgrounds." Context collapse presents a potential explanation for why there are competing expectations of what the space of Grindr will be. Participants work to enact boundaries as a social management strategy against context collapse. Digital contexts, specifically Grindr, allow for the creation of new boundaries as strategies to manage context collapse. The

spatial metaphors are examples of strategies to negotiate norms by attempting to locate Grindr within spatial hierarchies. However, because Grindr transcends past physical and virtual boundaries, there is a lack of consensus about where it fits within these hierarchies. This section builds on the discussion of resistance by outlining further boundaries and strategies evident in the research.

Clashes on Grindr stem from differing expectations about the norms of the space, in particular sexual norms, leading some to feel out of control or objectified when they do not want to be. In order to resist this, 30-year-old local Ezra, strategically chooses not to "put any details of [his] sexuality" on his Grindr profile such as listing if he is a "top [or] bottom." Users like Ezra are trying to re-define the spaces of Grindr as not only sexual, but also for relationships and "meeting people," as Tomer says. Although seeking friendships and relationships from Grindr was commonplace in the participant sample, cultural narratives and the aesthetic norms on Grindr (such as shirtless photos, sexual behaviors listed in the drop-down menus, sexual Grindr emojis, and other aspects discussed in Chapter 1) continue to structure it as a sexual space. Despite this, many users resist the narrative of Grindr as solely for sex through their interactions on the app.

For example, building on an earlier point, participants are concerned with the ambiguity around replying to messages (or lack thereof). When Ezra, a 30-year-old local, reflects on "the characteristics that make the app good or make the app bad," in an ideal world a dating app like Grindr "could show the ratio between…unanswered and answered replies." Ezra says the purpose of such a function is "so I would feel better when a person won't answer me." If someone's profile mentioned that they had a tendency not to respond, Ezra would know not to take it personally and that this was typical communication behavior from that particular Grindr user. However, if the

Grindr user did reply to many people but ignored Ezra's message, then Ezra could understand he was being ghosted (implying rejection). What Ezra is ultimately asking for is a social cue to make sense of the interactional outcome of the chat.

Ellison at al.'s study on online dating found that the "constraint" of "the lack of nonverbal cues" meant that the "remaining cues" on dating profiles "became paramount in regards to both assessment of others and presentation of self" (2006: 430). For some on Grindr, there are not enough other cues to rely on to gain understanding of others' relational expectations and norms of interaction. This is especially the case if a person does not fill out many details on his Grindr profile.

Ezra's comments lay bare the multiple spaces within Grindr and how they operate. Chats are private, meaning that no one will see if your messages get responded to or not. But Ezra envisions a more public indication of rate of replying to messages that could exist on someone's slightly more public profile visible on the homescreen. Such a feature would link a private spatial interaction (the chat feature) to a public one. Doing so would make the norms of interactions that are understood to be subjective - in this case the rate of replies - visible to the potential conversation partner. It would provide a needed normative interactional context for that particular Grindr user and that specific conversation: a form of impression management for the sake of others. In this way users can form a more accurate impression of their conversation partners and rates of replies. They can therefore have a cue as to whether to feel hurt over ghosting, based on if it is common for that particular user, or whether it is an indication of a personal rejection. Cues would help users manage their affect responses to Grindr interactions.

Another strategy was controlling who appeared on one's homescreen grid, especially in a geolocation area one spends a long time in such as one's home. Yoav,

a 37-year-old local, started "blocking" people who are "not relevant" as a way of filtering his homescreen and getting them "out of the grid." However, Yoav is quick to say he blocked people when perusing his homescreen, "not in the middle of conversations" on Grindr. He summarizes this technique as a way to strategize who is "not relevant" and as a way to "save time." As mentioned previously (see section 7.2.), compatibility is implied in the idea of "relevance." If the Grindr user is not compatible sexually, or has an off-putting profile statement, this can indicate relational incompatibility from the participant's perspective. Unlike Raphael's lack of response to people he deemed irrelevant, Yoav preemptively rejects people he deems irrelevant by blocking them and avoiding any kind of communication altogether. The fact that Yoav clarifies that this happens before any contact occurs shows he is sensitive to the etiquette transgression of ghosting. His strategy is a way to avoid the emotional harm of ghosting while still achieving his interactional aims of talking to people he deems relevant. Although it is unclear whether Yoav's strategy is specific to him, most participants share the motivation behind it. Yoav and other Grindr users' interaction strategies on Grindr are driven by the desire for efficiency, temporal convenience, and time-saving.

Participants are reflexive about their Grindr use strategies, perhaps because they have clear relational expectations and hopes (imaginings) for the outcomes of interactions. Some employ interactional strategies to reduce emotional pain. As discussed earlier, these can include examples such as asking other Grindr users their name or responding to everyone as a courtesy, even if to politely terminate the possibility of future interaction. Participants' pushes for Grindr etiquette based on etiquette within physical spaces (and the spatial hierarchies implicit in this push—

namely that Grindr ought to be considered similar to physical space) are resistance strategies to interactional norms on Grindr.

In sum, context collapse means that once-clear spatial hierarchies, with once-clear norms tied to physical space, are now debated in spaces like Grindr. Grindr overlaps physical and virtual spaces through its geolocation software and capacity for immediate communication with strangers. Because impression management is more difficult due to changing cues, and because online daters consider the cues to be more important, the Grindr norms of ghosting, unsolicited photos, and transactional language have negative emotional consequences for users. These norms are, therefore, resisted through a push for etiquette. The etiquette is tied to norms of physical space, which is perceived as "better" and higher in the spatial hierarchy compared to virtual space. These resistance strategies demonstrate that Grindr users seek established context and defined boundaries to know when to send or receive sexual photos, when it is appropriate to ghost, and when to not take ghosting personally. The norms discussed here are those that emerged in the data, but there are likely many more Grindr interactions some users consider emotionally harmful. Future research of interactions in digital contexts should further identify emotion-laden norms and resistance strategies to them.

7.5. Conclusion: Feeling the Tension

This chapter used participant narratives to pinpoint how Grindr norms create new regimes of online behavior, as well as how these regimes are resisted through pushes for etiquette driven by metaphors of spatial hierarchies based on offline physical space. Theories of context collapse and impression management offer an

explanation for what people imagine the Grindr spatial norms to be, how they negotiate these norms with other users who have differing perceptions, and how these interactions can lead to negative affect. Promoting Grindr etiquette may change norms, as will be reflected on in the next chapter.

How users think about spatial hierarchies impacts etiquette around Grindr use in appropriate spaces and times. Notions of spatial hierarchies around Grindr use speak to larger implications of Grindr's technological structure. Grindr's mobile and geolocative affordances encourage people to be using it anywhere, such as while with friends, even if it is considered socially inappropriate or transgressive of the priority physical space ought to have over virtual spaces. Grindr provides the incentive that if one physically moves then the geolocation will shift accordingly, resulting in a homescreen full of new people. Participants struggle with the constant temptation to open Grindr in inappropriate spaces in order to see the new faces around. Grindr differs from other popular dating apps because of its prioritizing of geolocation and therefore its dependent homescreen grid. Other dating apps like Tinder may offer geolocative proximity, but it is not the same main structure of immediacy underpinning the Tinder's function, unlike Grindr. Tinder's draw is the one-profile-at-a-time matching. Tinder does not offer a homescreen grid with many tiled pictures. Users may sometimes see a homescreen with a backlog of people with whom they have not yet matched, meaning that even if they change locations they still may see profiles from their previous location. To the everyday user, it is not obvious how the Tinder dating app algorithm works. Users only see one person's profile at a time, so they are not constantly aware of new faces on the homescreen if they change location. Yet on Grindr, the prioritization of geolocation is significant because how the app "works" (or the illusion of its algorithm) is visible. Users have a sense of the app's

geolocative function, and they strategically open it in certain new locations to get new faces on the homescreen. Users are tempted to transgress spatial etiquette because of the prioritization of new faces in new spaces on the app.

This chapter has illuminated some of the ways in which temporal and spatial contexts influence interactions on Grindr. Communication is underpinned by motivations of temporal efficiency and convenience. Participants' narratives show that Grindr users do not want to waste time on "irrelevant" incompatible people. This drives Grindr communication norms, such as ghosting, that are perceived to contribute to transactional and objectifying Grindr interactions. However, emotionally painful Grindr norms are also resisted by users through their push for Grindr-specific etiquette. By pushing for "Grindr etiquette," participants attempt to re-establish spatial and temporal boundaries within the fluid spaces of Grindr.

The reflexive negotiation of norms is necessary in the context collapse Grindr brings about, and that negotiation happens on Grindr itself. The negotiation can take an emotional toll on Grindr users. Experiences of relational expectations and disappointments, discussed in the previous chapter in regard to tourists and locals, lead to *negotiations* of relational expectations. Tourist-local dynamics in Tel Aviv open up discussion of the larger issue of affect around seeking relationships on Grindr. Participants narrate the tensions around and difficulties of wanting long-term relations on Grindr, stemming from assumptions about the tourist situation (in that tourists want "nothing serious") and assumptions that Grindr is solely a space to arrange hookups. Relational assumptions in past Grindr interactions make visible communication strategies such as negotiations or ghosting practices. Affect around objectification as a consequence of particular communication strategies highlights social tensions between different Grindr users and their relational desires.

CHAPTER 8: Reproduction, Resistance, and Transformation

What can Grindr teach sociologists about what it means for a social actor to be entangled in the web of quotidian technology? This thesis contributes to scholarship about people's everyday relationships with technology and the new connections it can foster. Observations of the Grindr tourism phenomenon confirm the many ways Grindr transforms social life for the millions (Grindr, 2017) who use the app daily. From the practices involved in everyday living to the emerging gay identities discussed in Chapter 5, Grindr shapes users' engagements with offline worlds and can even influence life trajectories. Chapters 6 and 7 demonstrate how the virtual spaces within Grindr also reveal how norms are shaped and resisted. Offline norms, such as hegemonic masculinities, are bound up within Grindr. People bring their offline practices, ideas, and meanings to Grindr use. However, interactions within spaces of Grindr also involve reconfigurations, as seen from hegemonic displays of Mizrahi masculinity specific to Grindr in Tel Aviv. This research shows how Grindr can be a medium for reproduction, transformation, and resistance of norms and identities. For some, Grindr symbolizes social problems such as rigid hegemonic boundaries of gender, nationality, and ethnicity. Yet at the same time it can also be seen as the place for solutions to these problems.

The dissertation investigated the phenomenon of Grindr tourism by inquiring into how Grindr shapes people's interactions, relations, and practices. Four research questions underpinned the study, examining (1) how the norms and spaces of Grindr are imagined, and the implications of these imaginings, (2) how Grindr's norms are negotiated, replicated and resisted, (3) what practices constitute Grindr tourism, and (4) how Grindr tourism shapes tourist-local dynamics, and whether Grindr tourism contributes to mutually productive and/or exploitative experiences.

The first three sections of this conclusion chapter tie together the analyses of earlier chapters by considering key findings for the research questions as a whole. It considers what this thesis has to offer in terms of illuminating the value of Grindr as a lens to understand society, how Grindr is a battleground between social actors, and what Grindr reveals about ever-emerging modes of interaction in everyday life. Each section builds on the previous one, further bearing out the implications of this research for understanding Grindr's potential reproduction, resistance, and transformation of the interactions, relations, and practices articulated in the research questions. Following this, the chapter considers future research directions, addresses the applications of this project for other technologies, and summarizes the contributions to knowledge.

8.1. Grindr is a lens to understand society

As this project has established, a spatial approach brings to light how Grindr works as a space where social categories are replicated, resisted and transformed. I argue that Grindr functions as a spatiotemporal intersection, across social strata and among physical and virtual spaces, which makes it a lens for understanding how

interactions, practices, and relations are borne out in societies. In answer to the research questions, the spaces Grindr intersects can tell us about which norms circulate, which in turn informs us how technology transforms imaginings of selves, identities, and relational possibilities.

This research developed an original spatial approach to Grindr, drawing on theoretical understandings of space and practice put forward by Cresswell (1996) and Dourish (2006). This challenges a community-based approach commonly found in tourism literature and some Grindr literature (Blackwell et al., 2014; Community Marketing, Inc., 2016; Hughes et al., 2010; Roth, 2016). As described in Chapter 2, the spatial approach first entailed paying attention to norms, rules, boundaries, and resistance tied to spaces distinguished as either online spaces or offline spaces. Second, it meant examining "situatedness," such as how Grindr is situated in physical offline spaces and how people situate themselves as a result of Grindr, affecting their engagement with offline tourist destination spaces. Third, the approach considered Grindr's spatial underpinnings, which included its geolocation software that prioritizes proximity, as well as the spaces within Grindr such as its homescreen grid and private chat area. A spatial approach reveals the importance of the spatial underpinnings of Grindr to the resulting practices and relations formed.

Having applied the spatial approach, I conclude that Grindr can and should be considered a *spatial intersection*. Doing so emphasizes how Grindr is a lens to understand society; it offers a way to apply that lens to various social strata. This in turn can be used for other new media technologies that push traditional spatial boundaries of online and offline by layering the two, as Grindr has done. The term spatial intersection is adopted from Dourish (2006), who argued long before the advent of geolocation-based dating apps that practices occurring through novel

technologies are not limited to the virtual spaces of the technology itself. Rather, technology supports new practices to emerge "not by creating a distinct sphere of practice but by opening up new forms of practice within the everyday world" (Dourish, 2006: 304). He observes that technologies "intersect" (ibid., 301-306) spatialities and mobilities by intersecting physical and virtual social worlds. I have innovatively developed Dourish's insights to address my research interests by emphasizing that in the instance of Grindr, this intersection is a spatial one. Dourish intended the term "intersection" to indicate that practices online have offline ramifications. Dourish developed his thinking during a time when technologies had limited virtual spatial spheres and clear-cut uses, unlike fluid Grindr. Yet now technologies are enmeshed and bound up in offline relations; users are co-present in virtual and physical spatial spheres. In using the notion "spatial intersection," I emphasize the spatial transformation features integral to the affordances of emerging technologies. Attributes such as geolocation and proximity indicators facilitate new interactions immediately and on the go, which can swiftly turn into offline relations. These spatiotemporal features of technologies reflect contemporary interaction trends. It is even more urgent that particular spatial intersections of dating apps are considered sociologically because they offer insight into the complex ways dating apps impact social life. Claiming Grindr to be spatial intersection invites investigation into what unexpected spatiotemporal boundaries it is embedded in and/or infiltrating that extend beyond only dating.

Virtual spaces within Grindr deepen understanding of the physical world the app spatially intersects with. For example, Grindr tourism extends beyond the digital spatial boundaries of technologies. The spatial intersection of Grindr with Tel Aviv leads to understanding of social intersections that occur within the app, and therefore

within the real world. Grindr has implications for the physical location it is used in and upholds inequalities that characterize local societies. A benefit of studying Grindr tourism is that it makes visible identities of masculinity, ethnicity, and nationality that proliferate in societies in the locale of use. Whereas in the physical world these social categories may be implicit or go unchallenged, Grindr is a space where they are co-congregated, confronted, replicated, and resisted.

Grindr is also an intersection of many different spatial configurations once deemed separate: public and private; physical and virtual; heteronormative and gay. Traditionally, public space has been understood as physical and heteronormative. Private virtual space, made accessible through Grindr, has presented opportunities to reshape spatial contexts. Spatial boundaries of public and private weaken and blur, especially when used in one's home (Miles, 2017). As the audio diaries showed, Grindr is often used habitually and everyday, including while at home or commuting. Private spaces are opened up through Grindr. Yet as Chapter 7 showed, searching Grindr for new people to form future relations can harm present relations with others in the same physical space, partly because these people sometimes feel snubbed. Even if some users dissolve traditional spatial boundaries with their technology use, other social boundaries are firmly intact—and can be transgressed—when people engage with the new spatial and temporal possibilities of new technologies.

The research shows that physical (public) space is reconfigured by, and alongside, the virtual spaces available through Grindr. When describing spatial intersections, Dourish notes that the alternative spatialities of new media technologies bring about "encounters with everyday space…which, in turn, become ways in which spaces, their extents, their boundaries, and their capacities become legible, understandable, practical, and navigable." Grindr tourism makes the physical space of

Tel Aviv, and the context and inequalities at play, more legible as a result of the intersecting spatiality of Grindr.

Grindr is an example of how geolocative technologies can reconfigure past online/offline spatial boundaries and enable new connections with strangers. Considering Grindr as a spatial intersection of offline and online relations also reflects participant narratives of the multiple capacities of Grindr that have influenced their lives: as a way to find a hookup, meet a boyfriend, learn a language, or experience a location more fully by talking to locals while travelling. The advent of Grindr has brought about Grindr tourism practices such as new avenues for tourists and locals to interact on the app. This has shaped forms of "environmental knowing" (Dourish, 2006: 304), or everyday understandings of the world around. For local Israelis, this may be an awareness of ways to gain capital and foster a cosmopolitan self by interacting with the perpetually present category of people as tourists. Even if tourist individuals themselves leave, the possibility to reach a tourist via Grindr is constant. For tourists, Grindr enables forms of environmental knowing by creating an educational pathway to locals who inhabit and create the spaces of Tel Aviv.

Although Grindr contains its own internal virtual spaces on the app, it is always intersecting with other spaces through its geolocation software and subsequent presentation of potential users to interact with. Grindr is part of users' experiences of both physical and virtual spaces around them. Arguably this is because Grindr users often meet the others they communicate with on the app. For example, since the outcome of meeting in person is always a possibility, there is not a social separation or compartmentalization of Grindr interactions as wholly bounded within virtual spaces as might have been the case with prior technologies. Grindr brings about new

practices, in everyday social and physical environments, such as the phenomenon of Grindr tourism. This in turn can generate new possibilities for relations to be formed.

As I have established, Grindr is a lens to view other kinds of connections that extend spatially, temporally, and relationally outside the boundaries of what many would consider a "mere" dating app used to arrange sex. This research establishes Grindr as a way to acquire knowledge, such as knowledge of a travel destination (Chapter 6) or knowledge about being gay (Chapter 5). Expanding this idea further, it is clear that using Grindr can create new knowledge about people and spaces, friendships and networks, and sexual relationships. Rather than looking to see if dating apps "reflect society" or are their own bounded "superficial" spaces, scholars should aim to analyze how they are embedded in society through variegated spatial intersections. As seen through this study of Grindr tourism, dating apps incorporate external norms and inequalities. Yet through interactions, norms can be both created and resisted. Dating apps, as spatial intersections, are an underutilized lens to better understand society.

8.2. Grindr is a battleground between social actors

By investigating Grindr in Tel Aviv, this research has generated insights into how users, Grindr the company, and material structures co-shape the "Grindr tourist" experience; these reshapings have implications for relationships with technologies as a whole. Grindr is a battleground between social actors, one that incorporates both social and material dimensions. Expectations of what Grindr is depends on how one is situated: whether as a user or company, or as a Tel Avivian or tourist. Identifying the different actors involved in the creation and repetition of norms, in answer to the first

and second research questions, also highlights the frameworks in which user resistance takes place. The practices of Grindr tourism, in answer to the third research question, alerts us to the transformative extension of the interactional goals of dating apps for tourism purposes. Different social actors are responsible for the reproduction and transformation of Grindr spaces and norms. I argue that recognizing the materiality of Grindr, and who creates it, is key to understanding clashing notions of norms and the affective toll of such clashes. By materiality, I mean the material experience of Grindr's software, impacted by the user interface, software affordances, location, hardware, and infrastructure. Materialities affect how and which norms are reproduced, as well as offering junctions of opportunities within which transformation is possible.

I will first explain the materialities of hardware, software, and how corporate and civic actors are implicated in Grindr's material characteristics. Second, I discuss how users intersect with, and shape, the materiality of the app. Third, I reflect on how Grindr the company both responds to and imposes upon user practices, thereby exhibiting a push-and-pull between actors. All of these intersections contribute to how Grindr manifests materially and socially. Actors interact with the materiality of Grindr, leading to the creation of new practices such as Grindr tourism.

Grindr can be understood not only as a spatial intersection, as outlined earlier, but also as an intersection of hardware and software materialities. The virtual space the software of Grindr creates relies upon the physical technical infrastructure it runs on. In the instance of Grindr tourism, the municipality of Tel Aviv supports the technical infrastructure that Grindr depends on by providing free public Wi-Fi throughout the city, including the beach. For tourists who may not have purchased data plans abroad, Wi-Fi is an important enabler of virtual communication on

smartphones. Grindr is the intersection of a tourist's virtual smartphone experience and WiFi provided by the municipality of Tel Aviv, or in other locations the technical WiFi provisions of the travel destination. Thinking of Grindr as an intersection (in multiple ways such as spatially and technologically) alerts sociologists to the profound social alignment of actors, hardware networks, narratives, ideals, and imaginings that this thesis has addressed. This is significant because I argue that the literature tends to focus on a singular technology platform (Blackwell et al., 2014; Corriero and Tong, 2016), often in a vacuum.

The material aspects of Grindr's technology intersect with the social. Anyone can chat with anyone else in the geolocative area at any time, creating constant potential for new interaction. Grindr changes wherever one goes, encouraging people to constantly be checking it in novel spaces and times to see who is around. This is blatant in the tourism context, as tourist and locals are mutually interested in the novelty of each other. The potential variety of relations formed and sustained through Grindr keep users interested in the app, as one never knows what interactions on Grindr will lead to.

Grindr's material software structure fosters open engagement between users. This differs from other features of globally popular dating apps such as Tinder. Tinder presents users with potential matches one at a time, with users only being able to communicate with each other through the chat feature if they both choose to match with each other. The potential matches presented to users are determined by a secret algorithm no one outside of the technology company knows. Tinder the company holds the power in this dating app scenario. Yet the way Grindr works presents users with the illusion of openness, creating an egalitarian sense between the app company and users. Users themselves perform the labor of finding others to talk to by exploring

the profiles of those located nearby. People can talk to each other in the private chat at any time within a certain radius, rather than having to wait for a match. The burden of regulating who can talk to whom is through users blocking or ignoring others they do not want to communicate with. Because the spatial environment on Grindr is "open" or a "free-for-all," users have opportunities to negotiate with others about what the norms and etiquette ought to be, explored in Chapter 7.

Grindr's materiality also relies heavily on the users who promote norms and contribute their profile pictures and information; in doing so, they collectively make and curate its spaces. Rather than the users being consciously collective, I argue that the making of Grindr is a collaborative endeavor involving various social actors. Although Grindr opens up observations of collaboration, users do not describe themselves as part of a "collective Grindr community." Investigating the research question of practices of Grindr tourism has shown that Grindr tourism is a collective set of practices created by users. Emergent, user-driven practices become Grindr norms, such as indicating one is a tourist by including a flag emoji indicating one's country of origin. Another example is directly mentioning whether one is a tourist or local in a Grindr username or profile tagline. The possibility for open interaction, as discussed above, determines the local "flavor" of the material Grindr homescreen grid. Tourists notice how the Tel Aviv hegemonic Mizrahi masculine aesthetics pervade the local Grindr grid, furthering the city's reputation of being full of the memorable "muscle gods." These examples of practices derived from the tourism context show how users can transform what the software and homescreen of what Grindr looks like in Tel Aviv, and therefore shape material interfaces. Grindr interactions facilitate a larger connectedness to others because the spaces of Grindr are created collaboratively. Some norms are institutionally configured and present

through features of the app, such as through the drop-down menu. But norms are also collectively reproduced within the spaces of the app by users, such as by articulating desire for hegemonic masculinities. Many participants expressed disappointment with Grindr spatial norms and alienation brought about by interactions they found objectifying. Participants' resistance to norms they were unhappy with reflects possibilities for changing collective creations of what Grindr might be.

Grindr's materiality is also tied to the actions of those that maintain the software of the app: the company. The apparatus of the company involves numerous actors such as the corporate officers with their long-term visions of the direction of company and the developers who create and maintain the software, to name a few. The company has entered into a role as the gatekeeper for "Grindr community" boundaries of behavior. As seen by the recent Kindr Grindr campaign and Grindr Explore feature, a 2018 feature whereby users can change their geolocation and therefore see homescreen grids somewhere outside of their current location (Gay, 2018), software changes are sometimes made by the app company in response to how users counteract software-imposed norms. The fact that Kindr Grindr came out during the course of writing this dissertation is significant because it shows how the company views itself as the regulator of a global Grindr community. Grindr markets itself as a "community" and "social network" ("social network" was listed on its webpage until 2019, although the webpage has since changed). Alongside providing the software for the app, Grindr also offers information about local HIV testing. It occasionally displays pop-ups about global LGBT+ issues, and it provides an LGBT+ general-interest online magazine called *Into*. Nevertheless, participants did not often remark on Grindr as a community or its *Into* offerings. Their complaints were the norms other

users were imposing, with the view that they preferred more etiquette-based interactions.

This research displays the push-and-pull of tech company institutions and users; the company of Grindr imposes software frameworks (impacted by the material physical technology infrastructure), but people resist or use the app in alternative ways, seen in Chapters 6 and 7. This is not just users negotiating selves powerlessly within frameworks. Rather, there is resistance through discourses that question norms. These discourses take place through the material features of Grindr created by the company: via the chat, through taglines and pictures, and by pushing for etiquette.

Implicit in these debates are notions of who is responsible for *regulating* the space. Some users responsibilize other individual users for perpetuating norms of "rudeness," as analyzed in Chapter 7. Others demand corporate regulation of the app, using language like "Grindr allows this." These debates are worth further investigating in future research because, as seen in Chapter 5, Grindr is a major gay space newly out people enter, and it is the primary way most participants in this study engaged with spaces that could arguably be coded as "gay." Participants were unhappy with emotionally upsetting norms on the app. Should they continue to bear the burden of resistance, or should companies make changes to mitigate user emotional pain? Yet only considering top-down interventions from the company elide the important ways users shape the technology on the ground, ways that vary in different nation and social contexts. It is impossible to blame a single actor for the reproduction of problematic norms since the reproduction of norms happens through multiple actors' shaping of the materiality of the app. The fact that people are involved in a labor of regulation through discourse, as seen in Chapter 7, shows that users are actively engaged in the creation of virtual Grindr spaces rather than being

passive users of a service. Nevertheless users interact within systems that have features imposed by other actors.

The research findings call for recognition of users' contributions and labor involved in everyday Grindr use. Labor is involved in negotiation of interactions through technology. This was especially evident in Chapter 6, where locals navigated expectations of tourists and would apply strategies to achieve their desired interactional outcomes. Labor is also implicated in creating the spaces of Grindr, argued earlier. Labor is involved in coping with the norms promoted on Grindr, such as managing affect that results from ghosting. Labor is embroiled in resisting norms that participants identified as wider social ones, such as hegemonic masculinities, as described in the discussion chapters. This can entail interactions of pushing for etiquette or explicitly embracing "feminine" identities. Labor is part of constructing their online presences and profiles, conforming their bodies and profile appearances to norms and conventions. Recognizing users' labor in materially shaping Grindr's spaces invites collaboration between actors to transform norms for the better.

In sum, this research adds to scholarship by showing the relationship between various technical systems and the practices, relations, and spaces of Grindr use. Varied imaginings of who creates and regulates spaces of Grindr confers responsibility on different social actors. Some institutional norms Grindr (the company) exacerbates through its affordances, such as the drop-down racial category menu, should not be ignored. The constraints of software-imposed binary categories indicate that external identity notions are reproduced on the app. Yet there is also open exchange via the homescreen grid, unlike every other popular dating app today such as Tinder, Hinge, and Bumble. Additionally, some users do not choose to patronize the drop-down menu features and elect to put everything in the open text tag

line. These norms are initially constructed through Grindr the company by virtue of its software, but are also reshaped by users through interactions. Individual users contribute to the creation of spaces, boundaries, and norms involved in Grindr use. Identifying the interlock of spaces, material features, and social actors lets us conceptualize how, when, and where users encounter norms. This is applicable to other social technologies, especially ones with "open" structures where users have control over who they talk to and where strangers are encountered. Understanding how norms are reproduced through technology has implications for transformation, as different actors can be involved in reshaping digital spaces.

8.3. Grindr reveals everyday life

Grindr reflects everyday life through everyday relational formation, everyday repetition and resistance to norms, and everyday practices. Entangled in these are wider issues for tourism, masculinities, and time. Grindr is a path to users' everyday spatial understanding of the physical world around them, or what can be considered "environmental knowing" (Dourish, 2006: 304). As mentioned in Chapter 7, participants prioritize physical space and make sense of Grindr practices through spatial hierarchies and metaphors. Grindr is not always conceived of as separate from other spaces and experiences of spaces; people treat Grindr as a normal part of their everyday life, rather than an app they experience in segregated temporal moments. Use of Grindr is fluid, continuous, quotidian, and implicit rather than something used in strictly bounded ways, such as during very specific times or in specific spaces. Grindr is embedded in everyday social life for participants. This section reflects on: first, how Grindr tourism reveals everyday life; second, how Grindr reveals everyday

reproduction and resistance to masculinity norms; and third how Grindr reveals technologies' impacts on everyday temporalities by prioritizing intimacies of convenience.

I begin by discussing the first major way Grindr reveals everyday life by looking at Grindr for tourism. Grindr tourism and the new Grindr Explore feature (and its parallel in the form of Tinder passport feature) illustrate an increased demand from users to be able to enjoy dating app features as part of tourism experiences. In answer to the third research question about what practices constitute Grindr tourism, it was demonstrated in Chapter 6 that Grindr tourism constitutes multiple everyday practices such as local-guided tours, flirty lessons on Hebrew words, and having conversations about LGBT+ rights in other countries. Many of these everyday dating app practices constitute Grindr tourism if they involve tourist-local relations. Answering the research question about whether experiences of Grindr tourism are mutually productive revealed that Grindr tourism practices can be mutually beneficial for tourists and locals in terms of knowledge-building, obtaining capital, and feeling desired. However, tourist-local relations in the research context also repeat norms of Othering and mutual exoticization. The mutual exoticization found in answer to the fourth research question is informative of how technologies replicate inequalities of gender and masculinity; technologies proliferate aesthetically bounded presentations of bodies online. Mutual exoticization can be part of everyday life for both tourists and locals in Tel Aviv.

Despite common perceptions that tourists' interest and time is bounded temporally, as seen through the "nothing serious" narrative in Chapter 6, this research indicates that Grindr tourism practices can result in relations that extend far beyond the temporal limitations of the vacation. They lead to new social relationships, such as

sexual partners and long-term friendships. For immigrants they also foster belonging to a new location. Locals like learning from tourists, as mentioned in Chapter 6. Avi's testimonial record-keeping of the tours he has provided for tourists reveals a reliving of what he has learned, temporally extending his encounters. Relations formed through Grindr tourism practices temporally extend beyond the brief. Grindr tourism generates relations that may not have occurred otherwise; the interactions that lead to relations are distinctly embedded in the materiality of Grindr itself and the norms of connection in our present digital age.

In addition to fostering long-term meaningful relations, Grindr tourism also fosters everyday connectedness. People can experience local people and spaces on their own through their use of Grindr, facilitating independent travel. They can connect with locals anywhere and anytime while on vacation according to what is convenient for them. This convenient way to form relations may be meaningful to those who are isolated, whether it is a local who is up late at night when all the other locals have gone to bed because they have work in the morning, or a tourist feeling isolated in a foreign country. Convenience is further considered later in this section.

Tourist conversations on Grindr also led to discussions of norms, showing that users regularly negotiate norms via Grindr. Additionally, this research indicates that Grindr tourism was the extension of everyday Grindr use. For example, participants mentioned opening Grindr while abroad predominantly out of habit. Their audio diaries reflected their habitual practices. For tourists, their frequency of use was also similar to home. As previously argued, everyday use of the app is a way to experience one's presence in the physical location more deeply by looking to see who is on Grindr in that novel space. Thus Grindr practices are part of the everyday creation and habitation of situated virtual and physical spaces.

I now address the second major way Grindr reveals everyday life by looking at how the use of technologies involve everyday negotiations of gender regimes. The dissertation shows how on Grindr everyday masculinity inequalities are reproduced, transformed, and resisted. They are reproduced by profile pictures that conform to local Israeli visual aesthetics of Mizrahi masculinity through tans, beards, and muscles. They are reconfigured by the addition of the tourist-local element and the dynamics of mutual exoticization on Grindr. They are resisted by communicating emphasis on one's femininity (by locals) or by communicating an alternative preference, as seen by tourist Kevin.

Looking solely at the materiality of the Grindr homescreen grid (highlighted in section 8.2), it initially appears that complaints around strict hegemonic visual norms of masculine bodies are upheld. Yet this dissertation complicates the common view that Grindr unilaterally promotes "toxic" hegemonic masculinity by prioritizing superficial hypermasculine images, building on my finding emphasizing the importance of examining how the materiality of Grindr intersects with other social actors. Through engaging directly with participants via interviews, it is found that some of those who visually fulfill the Mizrahi hegemonic masculine norm themselves narrate resistance to masculinity norms and highlight their own femininity. They still feel bounded and oppressed by rigid masculinity norms contextual to Israel, such as the military aspect analyzed in Chapter 6. Hence it supports the theory that hegemonic masculinity is an ideal no one fulfills, even if some users have the perception based on profile pictures that others are able to meet masculine ideals. The presence of tourists, and therefore their promotion of exoticizing discourses of muscle gods, may exacerbate hegemonic norms; yet tourists' presences also bring resistance to the spaces of Grindr. Tourists who are used to more varied gender expression and may

prefer more “feminine” bodily aesthetics bring a diversity of tastes to what some participants consider a homogenous local Grindr visuality. Using Grindr is a way people encounter and resist gender regimes of masculinity in their everyday lives.

I argue that negotiating and resisting masculinities involves erotic labor through navigation of ideals and constructed visual displays on Grindr profiles (see section 8.2.). What does not appear to have been observed much by scholars is how dating app users actively resist masculinity displays *within* dating app interactions (Light, 2013). For example, Miller and Behm-Morawitz (2016) and Rodriguez et al. (2016) discuss masculinities but not resistance; Bonner-Thompsonm (2017) touches on resistance but only in terms of age. This research project found that users negotiated their masculinities by sharing that although they aesthetically conformed to Mizrahi masculine ideals, they expressed narratives of feeling “feminine” to me and others they chatted with on Grindr. Additionally, some users resisted hegemonic masculinities by intentionally playing up their femininity through dress and wearing makeup, as shared by Eli. This would contribute to changing visually “masculine” aesthetics on the homescreen grid.

By examining everyday reproductions and resistance to masculinity norms, this research contributes to scholarship on “networked masculinities on a global scale” (Light, 2013: 254). The project considers masculinities in both the local but also the transnational context of tourist-local co-congregation in Tel Aviv. It extends beyond the Global North perspective on dating apps which tends to be the focus of Grindr research (Albury and Byron, 2016; Blackwell et al., 2014; Bonner-Thompson, 2017; Brubaker et al., 2014; Licoppe et al., 2015; Race, 2015; Rice et al., 2012). Grindr, as a dating app technology network, is a site where norms of masculinities are engaged with transnationally through tourism. Technology interfaces are pinpointed

as drivers for "transmission, presentation and repurposing" (Light, 2013: 258) of masculinities. This is particularly interesting in Tel Aviv because the drop-down ethnicity menu, created by the American company for global use, is insufficient for local use. The visual interface is important for aesthetically depicting Mizrahi masculinity, but the ethnicity options of the interface are inadequate. Thus diverse spaces within the app itself reinforce different ideals of exoticized masculinities. The specific local spaces of the Tel Aviv Grindr scene intersect with the global company of Grindr and its homogenizing transnational "community" ambitions. Users must not only negotiate masculinities in their everyday lives, but also negotiate the applicability of certain features of Grindr technology in their everyday lives as well. Some global North social norms of masculinities are surviving within the spaces created by a global company, but norms are also shaped by local Grindr users as seen in this research's emphasis on hegemonic Mizrahi masculinity. Considering the ways local users navigate Grindr masculinity norms in their everyday lives helps sociologists understand the negotiation of power and norms between various social actors involved in the reproduction of Grindr spaces.

I now turn my attention to the third major way Grindr reveals everyday life by looking at how it impacts everyday temporalities. This research suggests that convenience is a major aspect of Grindr use and underlies Grindr interactions. This builds on the findings of other scholars (Albury et al., 2019; Miles, 2017; Rodriguez et al., 2016; Yeo and Fung, 2017). I argue that spatiotemporal norm of convenience on Grindr is so significant to user experiences that one can consider the relations formed through Grindr as *intimacies of convenience*. Intimacies of convenience are relations that are predicated on individual spatiotemporal ease. The temporal norm of convenience is part of nearly every Grindr interaction, furthered by the materiality of

Grindr's instant chat feature and geolocation software. When it comes to convenience, it is important to highlight the positive aspects of accessibility for Grindr users. Intimacies of convenience are not necessarily bad. They involve individual agency and can be a source of social connection in lonely moments, as mentioned earlier. Forming relations through the influence of convenience is not necessarily superficial, nor does it involve ambivalence in the quality of relations. Intimacies of convenience are how people navigate temporality in their everyday interactions on Grindr. The convenience of connection through Grindr is what makes Grindr tourism possible.

Narratives of participants indicate there is perpetual potential of a Grindr interaction anywhere and anytime, whether that is in-person or the in-app chat. This is especially evident from the audio diaries, which capture the constant flow of Grindr use within surprising physical spaces and times. For example, participants would share that they used Grindr while they ate breakfast in the mornings, while at work, and as they walked along the beach. The always-on aspect of the technology results in people opening the app frequently once their phone is out (for other purposes). Most participants used Grindr constantly throughout the day, and many spoke about needing to put boundaries of use in place such as only using it for a certain number of daily minutes. Many settled for a conversation on Grindr due to an inability in that moment to talk to someone in person. There is also the desire to talk to someone at odd hours, which may derive from feelings of social isolation, not only boredom. The convenience of Grindr reduces loneliness during temporal and spatial moments during which people feel especially alone, such as *in* their homes *at* night. This way to connect does not necessitate meeting in person but can stem from just using the chat feature of the app itself. The digital temporality on Grindr, in particular its convenience, results in positive social implications for some participants. Various

constant uses of Grindr shift temporal norms from in-person interactions limited by spatial boundaries and appropriate hours to use of the app based on the individual's situation, desires, and fantasies at the moment of his use.

However, there are also negative emotional outcomes of the convenience Grindr enables. The narrative of Grindr as convenient stems from the perception of the quick temporalities Grindr brings about by connecting people digitally instantly and providing a platform to exchange messages. The brief temporal attributes of spaces within Grindr, such as the chat feature, lead to short, to-the-point interactions. When sex is a part of this, this can have an affective toll on users as described in Chapter 7. The immediacy in arranging sex through conveniently brief and direct interactions on Grindr can also be intimidating for people new to Grindr and/or new to identifying as gay, as seen in some coming out stories shared in Chapter 5. Grindr's convenience results in newcomers' perceptions that temporally brief norms of interaction (stemming from convenience) are interactional norms of "the gay community" as a whole, or as indicative of equivalent norms in offline in-person interactions between people. Therefore the temporal norm of convenience in Grindr interactions has implications for emerging gay identities.

Notions of Grindr as convenient are predicated on its manipulation of spatiality and temporality. Grindr's features of geolocation and its chat service facilitate interactions perceived as convenient. Grindr "compress[es]…space and time" (Miles, 2017: 1602) by allowing users to instantly connect with others in a certain radius. This study adds to scholarship on Grindr by revealing how notions of convenience are also implicated in relational Grindr experiences in multiple contexts, including the tourism context. The research shows the affective tolls this convenience has for tourists, those new to Grindr, and those seeking relationships among norms of

“transactional” chat interactions. By paying particular attention to the spatial elements in everyday Grindr experiences, understood through narratives shared in interviews and audio diaries, this study explores ideas of convenience and their implications for affect, norms, and masculinities. The relational ties Grindr enables are underpinned by convenient connections. Grindr reconfigures everyday connections with local strangers, making it possible to interact at any convenient moment, anywhere without the barrier of physical boundaries separating people. It enables relational possibilities that range from tourism practices to personal mitigation of loneliness to learning new languages, predicated on convenient communication.

Grindr tourism reveals how contemporary intimacies can be formed independently and privately through the virtual co-congregation of different social groups, including nationalities and ethnicities. Grindr tourism practices differ from those which characterized the traditional tourism industry. Grindr tourism interactions are individually arranged through the app. Unlike motivations put forward by the Gay Tourism Industry as discussed in the literature review, gay tourists travel for various reasons. When they are interested in engaging with LGBT+ spaces or people, they then use an app to do so when they want to instead of basing an entire vacation around this interest, as was done in the past (Hughes et al., 2010; Vorobjovas-Pinta and Hardy, 2016). Thus individual convenience, temporality and agency drive engagement in virtual queer dating app spaces. I was initially seeking to investigate the impacts of Grindr on local commercial spaces, but in the field it was clear that neither tourists nor locals took much interest in local spaces. Most participants stated that they had little to no engagement with traditional gay community physical spaces such as community centers or gay bars. For most, the primary way they engaged with gay spaces was through Grindr and through their personal individualized friendship

networks. Grindr intersects various different social identities and inequalities that come into play in tourist-local interactions.

This project contributes to understandings of situated localities in transnational contexts. International presences occur within the local case of tourists in Tel Aviv. Liminal locations such as Tel Aviv make norms and resistances on Grindr more visible because there are participant narratives and interactions that engage with conflicting ideas of masculinities or nationalities. Tel Aviv is a liminal physical location that itself embodies conflicting ideas. It exists along the boundaries of the Global North and South. It is a gay-friendly city in a religious country, full of different nationalities and ethnicities. This project not only addresses tourist-local Grindr relations, but also untangles implicit relations of ethnicity, nationality, and masculinity that affect quotidian local social life in Tel Aviv.

Studying Grindr informs sociologists about the contemporary benefits and difficulties of living among technology as it becomes increasingly enmeshed in our social actions. Rather than upholding a homogenized globalized gay community, this thesis argues for the importance of understanding nuanced local Grindr relations through examining Grindr spatially. Grindr speaks to larger functions of digital media as embedded in different social worlds simultaneously. Examining digital media as spatial intersections untangles the different social aspects they touch on. As mentioned earlier, Grindr intersects social strata along the lines of ethnicity, capital, and nationality, to name a few. Yet this goes further; Grindr's material interface intersects image and word. Grindr's geolocative premise and instant chat connection intersect space and time. Grindr is space making, time making, and is implicated in struggles of power over different identities and hegemonies. In its repetition,

resistance, and transformation of norms, Grindr shapes orientations to technology, to interaction, and to intimacy.

8.4. Grindr has relevance for other digital technologies

Attributes of dating apps in general have implications for other forms of digital technologies such as social media. Grindr practices outlined throughout this thesis offer insight into how dating app technologies extend possibilities for new relations and intimacies. The (1) geolocation and (2) expansion of purpose features of Grindr exemplify particular convergences that are increasingly adopted by other digital technologies.

Most dating app algorithms rely on geolocation software to present potential matches. However, now they have added features to alter one's geolocation in anticipation of upcoming travel (e.g. Grindr tourism or Tinder Explore features). Even though geolocation forms the core of location-based dating apps that are typical of the current period, flexibility in geolocation enables further uptake of the tourism and travel affordances of dating apps.

Building on my first point, dating apps have expanded their purposes to offerings beyond dating. Bumble offers not only dating, but also a "networking" mode of the app to match people in business. Others, like Chappy, incorporate users looking for friends by offering a separate section for this purpose. They emulate social media platforms such as Facebook, with Grindr (in 2017) preferring to term itself a "social networking app" rather than a dating app. In the "looking for" drop-down menu on profiles, users can declare that they are looking for friendships, networking, relationships and other connections.

Many dating apps appear to be shifting their models from isolated entities with anonymous customized profiles to ones based on convergence. Convergence is the tendency for different technologies to converge together and unify as they advance. For example, the original iPhone embodies the convergence of a music player, telephone, and Internet device. Facebook, Google, and iPhones indicate that convergence is a tendency that occurs across diverse technologies over time. Like social media websites, dating apps have begun to brand themselves as communities. Dating apps increasingly link to other social media platforms, such as Instagram and Spotify. Although Grindr still utilizes customized usernames and profiles pictures, it also has a profile area for users to include their "social links" such as Instagram, Spotify, Facebook, and Twitter information. This follows the trend of tying one's profile to one's "authentic" digital footprint, and thereby increasing trust among users (Katz, 2016). Linking to real-life identities while maintaining the possibility for anonymity is good for the specific queer user base of Grindr. It provides anonymity for those who need it for safety, such as those who rely on the anonymity of Grindr to explore their identity as seen in Chapter 5 regarding coming out. Yet it also links to "real life" identities for those who want to use Grindr for many of its range of purposes, such as to find a long-term relationship, a priority for most participants in this research.

Grindr embodies a convergence of a tourism device and a dating app. In the past decade of its reign, Grindr has become a combination of a tourism book, a health organizer, a friendship network, a dating app, a hookup app, and a language learning device. Similar patterns of convergence may follow with other technologies, in particular dating apps. However, it is important to think about the problems that arise when notions of community are brought into convergence strategies. This research

indicates that many users do not adopt community language and that perceptions of a "global Grindr community" elide regional and local differences. By examining the case of Grindr tourism in Tel Aviv in detail, this thesis shows how Grindr intersects many social stratifications, enabling capital along the way: the physical and virtual; tourist and local; ethnic and national; and gender regimes. It must be recognized that these stratifications are influenced by the local site of Grindr use. This research improves understanding of the range of uses for dating apps that extend beyond dating, lending insight into how convergence may occur in future manifestations of technologies.

8.5. Contributions to Knowledge

The phenomenon of Grindr tourism has not been explored in sociological literature before. The recognition of it as a phenomenon to be studied underscores the need for a paradigm shift away from conceiving of digital technologies as communities to framing them spatially. This shift must entail realizing the homogenizing assumptions implicit in notions of global gay communities and Grindr communities. Instead, situated spatialities of mobile digital technologies like Grindr must be recognized and further explored. In this vein, this research develops understandings of space and uncovers tacit spatial hierarchies. The spatial approach employed in this thesis shows how Grindr can be a spatial intersection that is useful for understanding other online and offline interactions, practices, and relations in multiple arenas of social life. In terms of the qualitative multi-method approach, the creative method of the audio diary, although not undertaken by all participants, demonstrates potential for elucidating the important spatiotemporal aspects to Grindr

use when used alongside semi-structured interviews. By illuminating the importance of space theoretically and methodologically, this research extends understanding of: how contemporary digital technologies reconfigure travel; shape coming out; re-situate intersecting dynamics of sexuality, ethnicity and masculinities; and perpetuate dynamics of exoticization, eroticization and Othering.

This research extends understanding of why gay men travel. Grindr tourism enables gay men to travel inexpensively and more independently, countering Gay Tourism Industry assumptions that people travel to particular countries and spaces based on their sexual identity. It supports scholarship that suggests gay men travel for a variety of reasons. However, the study goes further by showing that Grindr allows users to engage in gay life and gay space with new immediacy, as and when they want to, furthering independent travel experiences that overlap with other domains of social life. It emphasizes how ideas of convenience and temporality are key in the formation of individualized Grindr tourism experiences. Thus, this thesis contributes to understandings of contemporary individualized tourism strategies occurring through technology.

The research adds to sociological understanding of the implications of visual digital technologies in facilitating quotidian romantic and intimate interactions as well as coming out. Conceiving of coming out as numerous *emergent* practices makes a contribution to theory. The findings shed light on how dating apps affect the way people perceive their own individual sexual, gender, and ethnic identities, as well as how new intimacies are navigated locally and transnationally. The research indicates that, unexpectedly, everyday knowledge exchange occurs through dating apps, whether as a way to know of a travel destination or a way of learning more about being gay. Grindr technology is representative of its era through its features of

hybridized online-offline components, prioritizing proximity, real-time geolocation, and visual images. All these aspects contribute to its ability to immediately connect strangers and shape relations.

This research contributes insight into the situated and intersecting dynamics of sexuality, ethnicity and masculinities in the case of Tel Aviv, with relevance to other liminal contexts where international gay men congregate. It enriches sociological understandings of the dynamics of exoticization, eroticization and Othering in contemporary digital media contexts. The dissertation considers affective implications of interactions on Grindr, and how such interactions shape life trajectories in terms of coming out and long-term relations. It also examines tourism interactions, revealing narratives of tourist-local relations in the age of Grindr and how locals respond to tourist outsiders who use gay dating apps as part of a touristic experience. It discusses how hegemonic masculinities are negotiated, in particular the exoticization of localized Mizrahi masculinity. The research finds Grindr to be a space of mutual exoticization, but also mutual learning.

The research shows not only how digital interactions form, but also how resistance takes place within them. This thesis identifies several areas of user conflict derived from the interviews and audio diaries. Two particular issues were: first, consent and the norm of sending unsolicited sexual photos; and second, hegemonic masculinities. Since the research was conducted, Grindr has rolled out the Kindr Grindr campaign in autumn of 2018 and a profile drop-down feature in late 2019 that allows users to indicate if they will "accept NSFW pics" (accept Not Safe For Work pictures, a euphemism for nude photos). Users who elect to indicate this on their profiles have the options to choose from "never," "not at first" and "yes please." These two moves from the company recognize sources of conflict and resistance to

norms occurring among users. Yet users do not necessarily read each other's full profiles closely, a complaint articulated by participants in this research. It is necessary to further investigate the separation between what occurs "on the ground" among users versus what the company prioritizes in its software. This research shows that users actually influence local Grindr spaces and negotiate norms within frameworks created by the company. As argued before, users' labor in this must be acknowledged.

Despite its relative longevity as a media platform, Grindr has changed over time. This thesis evaluates Grindr as it was in 2016-2019, which covered the period of fieldwork and data collection. Grindr may make further changes to the app, along the lines of Kindr Grindr, which may alter app experiences and practices. This research shows that users have the power to bring about those changes, in line with other social actors involved in the perpetuation of Grindr. The fact that the app company has made changes that address concerns like those made by participants in this thesis indicates that research can help predict what technological developments occur and whether or not they will benefit certain users.

Findings from the project raise several things to be followed up in future research. First, coming out practices should be better studied in non-Northern countries, where traditional coming out models fail to capture the social experiences of many. An emergence-based framework may better encapsulate how identifying as gay shapes lives and could be applied in other countries. Second, future research could compare contexts of Grindr tourism to see if it affects locals in other countries differently. Grindr may be a powerful tool for locals located in homophobic environments without access to other locals who are gay. Grindr tourism could enable knowledge acquisition and meaningful in-person connections to those in difficult circumstances. Third, a longitudinal study to deepen understanding of tourist-local

relations over time would build on the findings of this study by addressing whether the relational imaginings reported in this research bear out to measurable changes in life trajectories, such as moving countries. Doing so would enable institutions, such as governments, to recognize the economic and social changes influenced by Grindr tourism and subsequently view the promotion of local LGBT+ issues as in their interest. Fourth and finally, tracing company changes to Grindr features over time in response to "on the ground" use would lend insight to the present relationships between users and global companies, if any. It is important to take into account which "on the ground" contexts are considered. Are American ones prioritized, as seen from the drop-down ethnicity menu? What about the Global South, or liminal locations like Israel? This exploratory study uncovers norms, boundaries, histories, and stories that confront mainstream narratives. A larger sample size and different methodology could build on these initial observations of Grindr tourism.

Logging Off

Years ago when I began on my path as a scholar, the study of dating apps was initially questioned by many. Why study a digital "trend" likely to fade in a few years' time? Yet many young people today do not know what it is like to be gay in a world without Grindr. In that time, dating apps have gone from being an ephemeral artifact—a curiosity that can be immediately uninstalled—to something that is culturally central to contemporary gay life.

Studying Grindr allows for a deepening of understanding of human communication. By focusing on Grindr tourism, the thesis highlights the range of potential meaningful relations that can be formed through Grindr. This happens through both the architecture of the technology itself and people's resistance to it.

Spaces of Grindr influence who meets whom. It is the way tourists and locals initially interact with each other. Grindr is regimented—literally, gender regimes and regimes of norms are involved—but also radical in that it is a space for resistance to regimes. Grindr has been seen from the outside as a dating app that is superficial, image-based and sex oriented. Yet there is inordinate richness to it. If we want to make sense of everyday relations in a technology-driven world, we need to better understand the world of dating apps across varied national contexts.

Grindr intersects many aspects of society. Investigating Grindr brings to light the complicated and temporally shifting overlaps of ethnicities, nationalities, masculinities, sexualities, and identities. Grindr tells a story of contemporary relations, struggles, and new connections in space. Observations from Grindr tourism in Tel Aviv extend to the social role of Grindr in everyday life all over the world.

Returning to the thesis title, to sociologists the "Grid of Grindr" is currently a secret. But it need not be. Dating apps remain an understudied field, and the sooner we get sociology On the Grid, the better. The Grid is not its own realm or domain; it is a digital layer that exists above, and intersects with, the analog world. Layers of technology permeate the everyday in unexpected and rich ways.

But the data (not necessarily the apps themselves) within digital layers are ephemeral and quickly change. The social information created through apps reflects the temporal context. If one were to embark on this research in 2020, it is impossible to go back to study how Grindr was in 2017-2018 when data were generated for this project. If we fail to grasp the layers and spatial intersections presently, we miss out on how they connect and intersect social spheres in the current epoch. Going back would mean the complex, interlocking parts of life technology touches would only be understood in isolated, limited ways. The way Grindr was in 2017 influences how

technology will be in the future; each layer grows on another layer. If we do not study dating apps now, we lose knowledge. Scholars must urgently pay attention to the sociological significance of dating apps as they continue to shape how people connect, communicate, and live.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Online Poster

DO YOU USE GRINDR?

How do tourists and locals in Tel Aviv use Grindr?
Ever hear of "Grindr Tourism"?

If YOU are interested in this research project on Grindr, I would like to hear about your experiences!

All nationalities, religions, ages, orientations, and identities are welcome to participate as long as you are over 18!

For more information, email rachel.katz@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk or Whatsapp/call 058-7680613.

All communication will be in English.

Conversation-style interviews will take place August 17- October 25, 2017 in Tel Aviv. The research is for a PhD in Sociology and has been reviewed and approved by the University of Manchester, U.K.

Appendix B: Recruitment Material

Sample social media text:

DO YOU USE GRINDR? If you're aged over 18 and are a local or tourist user of Grindr in Tel Aviv, I would like to hear from you about your experiences! Adults of all nationalities, religions, orientations, and identities are welcome to participate. For more information, email rachel.katz@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk or call 058-7680613.

(n.b. The above text is only to be distributed through professional social media profiles on Twitter and Facebook, as well as in emails sent to establishments for help with recruitment.)

Sample email text:

Hello,

I am undertaking a project on tourist and local Grindr users in Tel Aviv.

I am interested in people's experiences of Grindr and would be grateful if you would (1) post the attached flyer in your establishment and/or (2) circulate the text calling for volunteers on your social media?

All nationalities, religions, ages, orientations, and identities are welcome to participate as long as the individual is over 18. Conversation-style interviews will take place August 10- October 31, 2017 in Tel Aviv, and people will be invited to complete an audio-diary if they are interested.

The research is for a PhD in Sociology, and has been reviewed and approved by the University of Manchester, UK. Please feel free to ask for more information about the project; I am happy to answer any questions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,
Rachel Katz

Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a study to identify and examine the potential effects the Grindr app has on tourist-local relationships, experiences, and everyday practices of LGBT+ people in Tel Aviv. Before you decide whether or not to participate it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Feel free to discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

Who will conduct the research?

The research will be conducted by Rachel Katz, a PhD research student at the University of Manchester. Her contact information is at the end of the leaflet**.**

What is the purpose of the research?

The research aims to explore the effects Grindr has on tourist-local relationships, experiences, and everyday practices of LGBT+ people in Tel Aviv. It is hoped that this study will contribute to more social acceptance of LGBT+ individuals in Israel and other countries.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you are either (1) an inhabitant of Tel Aviv who uses Grindr or (2) a tourist in Tel Aviv who uses Grindr.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?

If you decide to take part, I will ask you to keep an audio-diary chronicling daily Grindr use for 7 days and then to discuss this with me in an interview. Before beginning the diary, we would meet so that I could (a) address any questions you have about the research before you sign the consent form and (b) explain how to record the audio diaries and provide a prompt sheet to guide you on how long the audio diaries should be (at least 1-2 minutes per day) and what to talk about. You will only be asked to make one audio recording once per day, but you can record more entries if you wish.

After the diary collection period ends, I will interview you face-to-face for about an hour. This interview will be informal and address the content of the diary, your various experiences of Grindr, and being LGBT+. You do not have to answer any question you would prefer not to; it is up to you what you choose to disclose. The interview will be audio-recorded but you can request that this be paused or stopped at any time.

What happens to the data collected?

The interview and diary data will be anonymized, and personal information such as your consent form or contact details will be filed separately from the data. The audio diaries and audio-recordings of interviews will be transcribed into text and analyzed. Anonymous quotes may be used in the PhD thesis and resulting publications. Data will be stored temporarily on a password-protected computer until it can be uploaded to a secure University of Manchester server. The anonymized interview and diary data will be retained on the University's server potentially indefinitely and at least for a minimum of 10 years; personal identifying information will be deleted after 10 years.

How is confidentiality maintained?

Confidentiality will be maintained by securely storing all data collected with password protection, in addition to using a secure university server for long-term storage. You will not be linked to your data as this will be anonymized and stored in a separate file from identifying information. Identifying information such as contact details will be destroyed after 10 years.

Collected data will be analyzed by me and discussed with my supervisors in private with no third party involvement. However, if you tell me something in the diary or interview that is against the law I will need to report this to my supervisors who will notify relevant authorities; I will discuss this with you first.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw without giving a reason and without detriment to yourself. You can fully withdraw until 2 weeks after the interview takes place. After that, you can withdraw your personal information but not the interview itself.

Will I be paid for participating in the research?

You will not be paid for participating.

What is the duration of the research?

The study involves (a) a preliminary meeting of 30 minutes (b) keeping an audio-diary for 7 days, which will take roughly 5 minutes per day, and (c) a 1 hour interview.

Where will the research be conducted?

The research will be conducted in Tel Aviv, Israel between August 10, 2017 and October 31, 2017. Meetings with the researcher will occur at your convenience in public places such as community centers, museums, and libraries during normal business hours.

Will the outcomes of the research be published?

The research may be published in academic journals and books. Anonymized quotes may be used in publications.

What if something goes wrong or I want to make a complaint?

If there are any minor complaints or issues related to the research, your first point of contact should be the researcher. The researcher's contact details are as follows:

Rachel Katz: rachel.katz@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk or 058-7680613.

Your second points of contacts are her supervisors. The supervisors' details are as follows:

Prof. Brian Heaphy: brian.heaphy@manchester.ac.uk
Prof. Penny Tinkler: penny.tinkler@manchester.ac.uk

If you wish to make a formal complaint or if you are not satisfied with the response you have gained from the researcher, please contact the Research Governance and Integrity Manager: Email: research.complaints@manchester.ac.uk; Telephone: (+44) 161 275 2674 or (+44) 161 275 2046; Writing: The Research Governance and Integrity Manager, Research Office, Christie Building, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL, UK.

What Do I Do Now?

If you have any queries about the study or if you are interested in taking part, then please contact the researcher at rachel.katz@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk or 058-7680613.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Manchester School of Social Sciences Ethics Committee. Ref no: 2017-2428-3498 Date approved: 25/07/2017

CONSENT FORM

If you agree to participate please complete and sign the consent form below.

	Please Initial Box
1. I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet on the above project. I confirm that I have had the opportunity to consider the information and have had any questions answered satisfactorily.	
2. I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.	
3. I am aware that interviews and diaries may be audio recorded and that I am free to request the audio recording be turned off at any time. I understand that interviews and audio diaries will be transcribed and fully anonymized.	
4. I am aware that the results of this study, including anonymous quotations, may be used in the thesis, publications, and presentations relating to the research.	

I agree to take part in the above project.

____________________	____________________	____________________
Name of participant	Date	Signature

____________________	____________________	____________________
Name of person taking consent	Date	Signature

If you would like to be updated about the project's findings via an email newsletter, please write your email below:

____

Appendix E: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

The following are sample questions used to guide the interview that touch on topics to be addressed. A broad open-ended question will be asked. The researcher will see if some of the bullet point topics are addressed in the participant's answer to the main question. If more prompting is needed than the bullet point questions will be asked.

Not every question is appropriate for every interviewee; some may be more directed toward tourists or people with travel experience, or older interviewees who were adults before Grindr's invention. Participants will also be asked about specifics of their diaries, as well as to elaborate on things they themselves bring up. It is not anticipated that these questions particularly will be invasive or upsetting, but a distress protocol has been established in case of the unlikely event.

Sample Questions and Protocol

Welcome the interviewee and thank them for taking the time to be interviewed. Remind them that they can withdraw at any time and that they do not have to answer any questions they do not wish to. Also remind them that the interview is audio recorded, and they can request the audio recording be stopped or paused. Begin by asking them generally about themselves and ask about their "stories" for being in Tel Aviv. Slowly move to slightly more personal questions as appropriate, and check in at any signs of distress or severe discomfort.

Question 1: Tell me about yourself.

Possible prompts

- o How long have you been in Tel Aviv for?
- o Where are you from originally? (urban or rural) (country)?
- o What was your family like? Did you have any siblings? What are your parents' professions?
- o What is your profession?
- o How old are you?
- o How would you describe yourself (in terms of identity)?
- o Can you describe yourself in terms of demographics that you relate to or identify with? (look out for indications of categories such as class, race, ethnic identity, religion, nationality)

Question 2: What has been your experience of using Grindr?

Possible prompts

- o What is Grindr to you?
- o Why do you use Grindr? What are you hoping to get out of using Grindr?
- o How long have you been on Grindr for?
- o Is there anything you tend to look for particularly on others' profiles?
- o Is there anything specifically you aim to convey with your profile? How did you choose what to put on their profile?
- o Do you have any demographic information on your profile?
- o What filters do you use on Grindr?
- o How often do you normally use Grindr? Where and when do you think you normally use it? Did keeping the diary change or confirm what you thought about your use?
- o Do you usually use Grindr alone or with other people?
- o What do you like and dislike about the app?

- Has your Grindr use changed over time?

Question 3: How has Grindr made a difference to your life?
Possible prompts:

- Do you remember how things were before Grindr? How did you contact and meet people (especially tourists or locals) then?
- Did you go to any LGBT+ bars or community centers before Grindr? Has Grindr had an effect on the frequency or enjoyment you have at those kinds of establishments?
- Do you feel like things are any different at LGBT+ establishments now compared to before Grindr?
- From your observation, how did locals and tourists meet before Grindr?

Question 4: What has been your experience, if any, of how tourists and locals interact on Grindr?
Possible prompts:

- When do you use Grindr when travelling? Do you talk to anyone? Are they tourists or locals?
- Do you use Grindr more, less, or the same while abroad?
- Do you meet anyone in person while abroad? Are they usually tourists or locals?
- How would you describe the locals/tourists on Grindr here in Tel Aviv? Do you notice a difference?
- Is tourist/local a useful way of classifying people on Grindr? How would you classify it, if at all?
- What do you look for on a profile when travelling? Is it different from when you're at home?
- What role does the number of feet away option play on your likelihood to engage them by starring them, chatting them, or meeting them?
- How do you feel about Tel Aviv in terms of the gay 'scene'?
- As a result of your sexuality or any other aspects of your identity, what is your impression of Tel Aviv in terms of feeling (1) welcomed and accepted, (2) unaccepted and uncomfortable, or (3) a mix/ neither
- What do you like about using Grindr (abroad)? What do you dislike?

Question 5: How significant is your sexuality to your life?
Possible prompts:

- How do you identify in terms of your sexuality? Have you ever identified differently in the past while using Grindr?
- Are you out to your family? Your friends? Your hometown?

Question 6: Did you find completing a Grindr diary an easy or difficult thing to do?
Possible prompts:

- What did the diary show you?
- Do you think you will change your use after keeping the diary?
- What were some things that stood out to you because of keeping the diary?
- Were there any challenges with keeping the diary?

Conclude by thanking the participants again for discussing their story with you and reminding them about the newsletter you will publish with study results. Also remind them to tell their friends who may be interested in the study.

Appendix F: Audio Diary Prompt Sheet Text

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in the study!

You can record on your smartphone, preferably through Whatsapp, and send me the audio file directly from your phone to me. You can do the same from your computer if you prefer to do it that way.

If you have forgotten my explanation from our initial meeting on how to send the audio, let me know as soon as possible and I am happy to help. If you do not have a smartphone or the capability to record audio on your computer, I can lend you an audio recording device.

If you could record for 1-2 minutes every day for 7 days, that would be ideal. You are welcome to record for longer or more often than once a day if you want to. It is okay if you do not record because of other circumstances; just do your best to record daily.

Please try to record in a quiet room to avoid background noise, and try to speak clearly and naturally. As a reminder, please record the diaries in English.

After 7 days of diary-keeping, we will have our final interview about your experiences and the contents of the diary. You can contact me at any time if you have any questions, comments, or concerns at rachel.katz@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk or 058-7680613.

If you notice some of the following themes in your daily use please mention them: the more specific the story, profile, or comment is, the better! Please add your own thoughts and comments- I am very interested in what is important to you.

Themes:

Tourists and local relationships, dynamics, and interactions through Grindr
Spaces (physical and virtual)
Overlapping of Grindr and the 'real' world
Ideas about what Tel Aviv is like for locals vs. tourists

Here are some questions to prompt you on what to talk about in your diary. You can answer as many or few as you like.

- How much did you use Grindr today? Where and when did you use it? Were you alone or with people when you used it?
- Did you see anyone particularly interesting on Grindr? Who stood out to you?
- Did something funny happen on Grindr or because of Grindr today?
- Did you meet with anyone in real life off Grindr today or plan to?
- How did you feel about the messages you received today?
- How are you feeling in terms of people being interested in you or vice versa today?
- Did you go to any LGBT+ bars or community centers today?
- Is today a normal 'Grindr' day or different? Why?
- Did you see something that bothered you on Grindr today?
- Did you change your Grindr filters today? Why?
- Is there anything in particular you were looking for on Grindr today?

Appendix G: University of Manchester Data Management Plan
(approved 25 July 2017)

University Of Manchester Data Management Plan: This template should be used if your funder does not provide a template or specify a format for a data management plan, or if your research project is unfunded.

1. Project Context

1.1 What is the purpose of your research project?
The research aims to bring to light effects Grindr has on tourist-local relationships, experiences, and everyday practices of LGBT+ people in Tel Aviv. It looks at how LGBT+ tourists and locals interact through Grindr and in real life. It pays special attention to how space is experienced, such as when people go to “gay” spaces like bars or community centers and what they do there. It also looks at how people use Grindr in public and at home, and whether practices’ meanings are transformed by the use of Grindr in certain spaces. It is the hope of the researcher that the data collected from this study will positively contribute to increased social acceptance of LGBT+-identifying individuals in Israel and potentially other places in the world. It is also hoped that said research will encourage others to study Grindr and dating apps’ potential for social impact through new communication strategies.

1.2 What policies, requirements and guidelines on data management, data sharing, and data security are relevant to your research project?
The data management plan has been prepared in accordance with existing research data management policies of The University of Manchester and associated research governance framework and research policies.

2. Responsibilities and Resources

2.1 Who will be responsible for data management?
The Principal Investigator, Rachel Katz, will have overall responsibility for data management, which includes the data management plan, throughout the lifecycle of the research project.

2.2 What resources will you require to deliver your plan?
No charges will be applied by data repositories, as the researcher will use an encrypted USB and the University's data long-term online data storage facility. No additional expertise is necessary. NVivo software may be used to analyse the data; the software is already present on university computers. Some NVivo training may take place in the future, but it is not required for data analysis. An audio recording device may be used, in addition to the participants' own phones, to record audio data. The audio recording device is already owned by the researcher.

3. Data collection

3.1 What data will you collect or create?
To enable long term accessibility and validation, data will be stored in formats that are open, non-proprietary, and in common use by the research community. These

formats will include audio files, which will be transcribed into Microsoft Word files. PDF and JPEG copies of consent forms will also be stored.

3.2 How will the data be collected or created?
Methods for data collection have been discussed and agreed upon in conversation with the researcher and her PhD supervisors. Consistency and quality of data collection will be controlled and documented through processes that are robust, with representation with controlled vocabularies. Data will be peer-reviewed prior to submission for publication.

4. Documentation and Metadata

4.1 What documentation and metadata will accompany the data?
Metadata will help secondary users to understand and re-use the data, and will include: contextual information about data structure, formats and file types; definitions of variables; units of measurement; data collection and control mechanisms; methodologies, models and experimental platforms used; analytical and procedural information; documented analyses and results. Metadata will refer to published information relating to the research project.

5. Ethics and Legal Compliance

5.1 How will you manage any ethical issues?
Before giving consent, all project participants will be aware that data will be kept securely on systems which only the project's researchers can access, and will be coded in such a way that individual participants cannot be identified. Anonymised data will eventually be made open access and this will also be made clear to participants before they consent. All data will be anonymised as early in the study process as possible. Study identifiers will be kept separately in a secure place from the anonymised data. The anonymisation key will be kept securely and separately from the anonymised records.

5.2 How will you manage copyright and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) issues?
The data and IP will be owned by the researcher. Any data that is published in the future will be anonymized. Intellectual property and copyright are held across all institutions (partners and international collaborators). All relevant data created by each institution, and the intellectual property rights therein, are subject to the intellectual property policy of that institution. The data created by each institution will generally be the property of the respective institution (and / or, where relevant, a subsidiary company), unless agreed otherwise. The data management plan will be used throughout the duration of the programme as a tool to manage the ownership of research data.

5. ***Storage and Backup***

6.1 How will the data be stored and backed up?
The project will make use of The University of Manchester's Research Data Management Service (RDMS), which provides robust, managed, secure, replicated storage. The RDMS allows researchers to store, manage and curate their data, as well as preserve data after project completion. An encrypted USB will also be used for

backup storage in conjunction with a personal computer that will be used to temporarily store and manage data. This is so that work may be conducted offline.
All electronic data are stored and backed up on secure University of Manchester (UoM) servers.

6.2 How will you manage access and security?
To ameliorate potential security risks (e.g. theft), no data will be permanently retained on any data capture equipment (e.g. laptops) used on the project. At the end of data capturing sessions, data will be securely transferred onto The University of Manchester's Research Data Management Service for managed, secure and replicated storage (contingent on Internet access). All source data will then be securely deleted from the data capture equipment. Where possible, all data will be collected in a paper-free method directly onto encrypted laptops or devices. Sensitive data in non-digital formats (e.g. consent forms) will be stored in stand alone, locked cabinets in secure facilities located in a school, institute or centre in the relevant academic institution. These cabinets will also allow storage of laptops, audio recording equipment, and external storage drives.

7. Selection and Preservation

7.1 Which data should be retained, shared, and/or preserved?
Identifying data (such as participant names and contact information) will be destroyed after 5 years. Anonymized data will be retained and may be shared in the future.

7.2 What is the long-term preservation plan for the dataset?
The Principal Investigator [Rachel Katz] will oversee the archiving / preservation of the research data in accordance with University of Manchester guidelines. This will include appropriate metadata to make the data discoverable, and to enable other researchers to understand how the research was undertaken, how the data was created or acquired, and how the data might be re-used. The project will make use of The University of Manchester's Research Data Management Service (RDMS), which provides robust, managed, secure, replicated storage. The RDMS allows researchers to store, manage and curate their data, as well as preserve data after project completion.

8. Data Sharing

8.1 How will you share the data?
Anonymized data will be shared through the thesis, publications, and presentations relating to the research. Participants are reminded of this on their consent forms.

8.2 Are any restrictions on data sharing required?
None anticipated at this time.

Appendix H: Distress Policy

There is always a possibility when conducting personal interviews that participants may become distressed by memories and their reflections on topics discussed.

All interviewees will meet with the researcher to sign the consent form and discuss questions before the data collection begins. Interviewees will be aware of the range of topics that will be discussed in interviews for the project before they consent to participate and have multiple opportunities to raise any issues. It therefore thought to be unlikely that the topics discussed will lead to disclosure or cause elevated or sustained distress. However, disclosure (e.g. of a crime) remains a possibility and changes in the interviewee's circumstances (perhaps a recent bereavement or illness diagnosis) may alter how they think and feel about what was previously either unproblematic or managed memories, experiences and reflections.

Participant distress

Researchers must be attentive, and respond, to signs that the interviewee is distressed through verbal and body language.

If there are noticeable signs, the researcher should propose pausing the interview and/or changing the subject (perhaps revisiting it later if the interviewee wishes). Interviewees should be reminded that they have the option to terminate, possibly reschedule, the interview. If this is the first of two interviews on the same day, it may be appropriate to cancel or reschedule the second interview.

Even if the interviewee does not choose to terminate an interview, the interviewer can opt to do this in the unlikely event that the interviewee is very distressed. In the case of elevated, or sustained, interviewee distress, the interviewer should

- advise the interviewee to contact their general practitioner for help and for advice about further support if necessary.
- ask the interviewee if there is a friend or family member they would like us to contact.
- follow up with a courtesy call
- notify the interviewer's PhD supervisors for further support on how to handle the situation (Brian Heaphy and Penny Tinkler).

Participant disclosure of abuse, personal protection concerns, criminal activity

In the event of disclosure, the interviewee must be reminded that the researcher is obligated to, if appropriate, report the disclosure to relevant contacts from both legal and support perspectives (social services, police). The PI will discuss this with the interviewee before acting.

Researcher support

In cases where an interviewee has become distressed or disclosed to the researcher, the researcher should debrief with her supervisors as soon as possible after the interview (within two days).

Appendix I: Lone Worker Policy

Interviews will be undertaken in public locations. The following procedures apply:

- Where possible, interviews will be undertaken during normal office hours.
- The researcher must have a mobile phone on her when conducting interviews.
- The researcher must inform a volunteer contact in advance of the time, location and expected duration of the interview and ensure they have the phone numbers of the researcher and participant.
- The researcher must agree a time to confirm they have left the interview location safely.
- If the researcher does not phone/text/email the contact person within 2 hours of the arranged time, the contact person will phone or text the researcher to check on the researcher's safety and reason for delay.
- If the researcher is not contactable, or the contact person is concerned about the researcher's safety, they will alert the University Security Services and if appropriate the police.