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More than Physique or Desire: Feeling Constituting Identity in Homosexual Nomenclature

Abstract

This is a preliminary report of work by a Domain Analysis Clinic formed in 2021 to examine homosexual nomenclatures. Prior studies have suggested that self-naming and self-classification in the domain of male gayness and alternative sexualities emerge as a form of resistance against the hegemonic. So, the postulated research question is: what are the reasons, characteristics, and consequences of this type of knowledge organization using as an example the self-representation of gay men in social interaction applications? Our principal methodology was to seek self-identifying nomenclature from social media websites, from each of which we gathered sets of categories or labels used for identifying content uploaded by members. As a form of preliminary analysis all of the data were sorted as keywords or phrases to generate frequency distributions, which can be compared, to some extent, across the sites. Analysis of the terms suggested three classes which also can be considered as facets: sexual desires, physical characteristics and sexual roles or performances. The terms demonstrate how users understand themselves in their individuality, aligning themselves with the social reproduction that occurs in the analyzed social network. The present study corresponds to a first approximation to the development of a classification of male homosexuality, following a pragmatist or domain analysis approach.

Background

This is a preliminary report of work to examine homosexual nomenclatures by a Domain Analysis Clinic $(DAC)^1$ formed by the Institute for Knowledge Organization and Structure, Inc. in 2021. The charge to the group was (Martínez-Ávila and Smiraglia 2020):

In a new scenario of social relationships anchored in the new economy of desire and performance (Pelúcio 2017), sexual-affective interactions use technologies and applications to mediate relationships and represent identities. These technologies and applications also offer new characteristics and opportunities for a social organization of knowledge that determines the possibilities of locating and retrieving information.

Preliminary studies suggested that self-naming and self-classification in the domain of male gayness and alternative sexualities emerge as a form of resistance against the hegemonic norm that was historically constructed upon prejudices, stereotypes, and power relations (Campbell 2000; Keilty and Smiraglia 2016). Thus, the postulated research question is: what are the reasons for, and characteristics and consequences of this type of knowledge organization using as an example the self-representation of gay men in social interaction applications?

Methodology

Our principal methodology was to seek self-identifying nomenclature from social media websites. The team members decided to investigate Grindr, Pornhub, ThisVid, XVideos, TikTok, and Scruf. After initial searches, ThisVid and Pornhub were dropped from the study for lack of relevant data.

¹ The Domain Analysis Clinic is the unique empirical method of the Institute for Knowledge Organization and Structure, Inc. (<u>https://knoworg.org</u>). Essential elements are a team of domain experts, compilation and meta-analysis of an exhaustive corpus bibliography, and generation of core taxonomies, ontologies, etc. for the design of knowledge organization systems. The methodology is described in Smiraglia 2023; examples of clinic research are Smiraglia and Szostak 2020; Smiraglia, Milonas, Zherebchevsky and Pajarillo 2021.

Description of the sites

In Smiraglia et al. (2023) we described the four sites thus:

Grindr is a dating and personals app for gay, bisexual and transgender men. The application uses geolocation to help users find other men nearby who have similar interests. Grindr users create profiles with information about themselves such as age, height, weight, body type and basic interests. Users can also upload photos and videos to help introduce themselves to other users. Grindr was launched in 2009 and has become one of the most popular dating apps for LGBT men. It is used all over the world and is known for its simple and user-friendly interface as well as its active user community. Grindr also offers paid features such as premium memberships, which provide users with additional features such as the ability to see who has visited their profiles and advanced search access filters to make searches for affective-sexual partners more efficient. The common thread is that on Grindr, users create their own name, like a folksonomy.

Scruff is a dating and personal app aimed at gay, bisexual, and transgender men, similar to Grindr. The app uses geolocation to help users find other men nearby who share similarinterests. Similar to Grindr, Scruff users create profiles with basic information about themselves, such as age, height, weight, body type, and interests. Users can also upload photos and videos to help introduce themselves to other users. Scruff was released in 2010 and has become a popular alternative to Grindr. It is used allover the world and is known for its user-friendly interface and its additional features. TikTok is a short video social network where users create, share, and watch videos up to60 seconds long. The platform was launched in 2016 in China, and in 2018, it expanded worldwide. Users can create fun videos, dance, sing, lip sync, create tutorials, and other types of content. TikTok offers a variety of tools to help users create creative and interesting videos. Users can follow other users, like and comment on videos, and share them on other social networks. TikTok has become one of the most popular social media platforms in the world and users can self-nominate and present their interests.

XVideos is a site with adult content that is not suitable for minors or people who do not wish to view this type of content. XVideos is a website that hosts amateur and professional pornographic videos and users can watch them for free. The site is accessed by millions of users around the world and is known for its vast collection of videos, many of which are uploaded by users themselves. The site contains material that is explicit and that might be potentially offensive to some users, so it is important that people use the site with care. Users can title the videos and use keywords so that they can be retrieved. These keywordsreveal self-denomination and common interests.

Methodological importance of site selection

We set out to gather labels used for identifying content uploaded by members. We wanted to make a distinction between "hookup" vocabulary and fetish vocabulary. Team members "joined" the sites under assumed identities and purposely did not interact with anyone present. During data-gathering we used a technique called "pearl-searching" (De Brún and Pearce-Smith 2013; we started with terms in the profiles and by clicking on them followed the links to see what else might be associated with them, using screen captures to record vocabulary as we went. Data were gathered from the sites in mid-June 2022. Subsequently the screen captures were converted from jpg to pdf, then OCRd for data-mining. For the present paper we disregarded any site-provided categories, capturing instead only terms added by members to describe themselves and their content.

Interestingly, despite the divergent milieus and audiences of the sites—dating, social media, pornography—and despite the differences in user interfaces, we were able to generate four sources of user-supplied self-description of content and interests. Essentially this constitutes a form of data-triangulation.

Results

Analysis involved entering the OCRd pdfs into the Provalis ProSuite and using its WordStat module to sort keywords and phrases by frequency of occurrence.

Phrases were easily captured from XVideos and Scruff and indeed, site-specific emphases are visible. For example we see more sexual terms in the pornography-oriented XVideos but more identity-oriented vocabulary in the dating app Scruf.

Table 1	: Frequently Occurring Phrases						
XVideos	Scruf						
GAY MAN	GENDER IDENTITY						
MASTER SEEKING	TRANSGENDERPERSON TRANSGENDERWOMAN TRANSMASCULINE						
	IRANSMASCULINE						
TRANSVESTITE GAYMAN	TRANSGENDER MANTRANSGENDER PERSON						
	TRANSGENDER						
GAY MAN RELATIONSHIP	PERSON TRANSGENDER WOMAN						
	TRANSMASCULINETRANSSEXUAL						
TRANSSEXUAL MAN	MAN TRANSGENDERPERSON						
	TRANSGENDERWOMAN						
TRANSSEXUAL	FEMALE GENDER						
WOMAN	IDENTITY Q SEARCH						
TRANSSEXUAL	TRANS MAN						
COUPLE							
BIG COCK	TRANS EXPERIENCE						
ENGLISH ROLEPLAY	SINGLE HISPANIC						
TRANSVESTITE MAN	PERSON TRANS						
CUM IN MOUTH	MAN TRANS						
LATINO BODY	MALE TRANS						
SLIM HEIGHT							
LESBIAN COUPLE							
BIG ASS							
LESBIAN WOMAN							

Next we arrayed only the most frequently occurring terms across the sites for comparison. Again, we see site-specific differences in emphasis.

Grindr	Scruff	Xvideos	TikTok	
ТОР	TRANS	GAY	GAY	
DISCREET	GENDER	AMATEURS	BEAR	
воттом	MAN	MAN		
NOW	TRANSGENDER	BRAZIL		

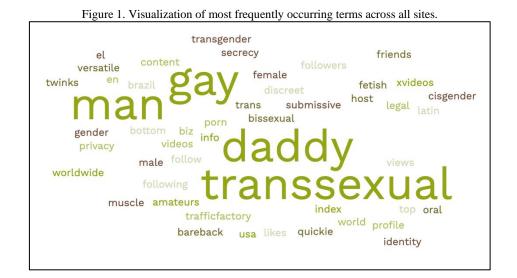
Table 2: Frequently Occurring Terms

DADDY	FEMALE	LATIN	
FETISH	MALE		
ORAL	WOMAN		
TRANSSEXUAL	TRANSSEXUAL		
VERSATILE	MUSCLE		
BAREBACK	PERSON		
QUICKIE	CIS		
TWINKS	CISGENDER		
BISSEXUAL	DADDY		
FRIENDS	PRETTY		
HOST	SINGLE		
SECRECY	TATTOOS		
SUBMISSIVE			
CASUAL			

However, when we array the most frequently occurring terms across all the data in one sort (frequencies are not shown) the outline of a nomenclature is clearly visible.

Table 3: Frequently Occurring Terms Across Sites
GAY MAN
BAREBACK
BEAR
BIG ASS
BIG COCK
BISEXUAL
BOTTOM
CIS
CISGENDER
DADDY
DADDY
DISCREET
FEMALE GENDER IDENTITY Q SEARCH
FETISH
FRIENDS

GAY
GAY MAN RELATIONSHIP
GENDER
GENDER IDENTITY
LATINO BODY
LESBIAN COUPLE
LESBIAN WOMAN
MALE TRANS
MAN TRANS
MAN TRANSGENDER PERSON TRANSGENDER WOMAN
PERSON TRANSGENDER WOMAN TRANSMASCULINE TRANSSEXUAL
QUICKIE
SECRECY
SINGLE HISPANIC
SLIM HEIGHT
SUBMISSIVE
TATTOOS
ТОР
TRANS EXPERIENCE
TRANS MAN
TRANSGENDER
TRANSGENDER PERSON TRANSGENDER WOMAN TRANSMASCULINE
TRANSSEXUAL
TRANSSEXUAL COUPLE
TRANSSEXUAL MAN
TRANSSEXUAL WOMAN
TRANSVESTITE GAY MAN
TRANSVESTITE MAN
TWINKS
VERSATILE
WOMAN



A world cloud visualization of Table 3 shows clearly the coherence of the vocabulary.

To better understand the context we looked next at terms in the lower tier. Table 4 shows this comparison (Tik Tok had too few terms for this comparison). The most frequently occurring key gender identity terms are moderated by more granular behavioral terms (e.g., casual, versatile), subjects' physical traits and/or characteristics (e.g., hairy, walker, submissive, etc.) and specific contexts, such as place names. The difference is perhaps most dramatic in XVideos where the most frequently occurring terms are meta-level operational concepts, but the granular keywords are split between locations and pithy sexual descriptors. With the addition of this contextual second level of terms we can begin to see the extension of the domain of the nomenclature (its outer limits), even as the most frequently occurring terms represent the edges of the domain's intension (the core vocabulary of self-identification).

		GRINDR 2D TIER		SCRUFF TOP		SCRUFF 2D TIER		XVIDEOS TOP		XVIDEOS 2D TIER	
ТОР	2	CASUAL	9	TRANS	1	BEAR	2	GAY	10	CREAMPIE	9
	8				5				10		
DISCREET	2	DOMINANT	9	MAN	1	BLACKLIVESMA	2	AMATEURS	47	INSTAGRA	9
	7				1	TTER			2	М	
BOTTOM	2	OUTDOOR	9	TRANSGEN	1	COOKING	2	WORLDWIDE	32	GERMANY	9
	6			DER	0				8		
NOW	1	NO DRUGS	8	FEMALE	9	EXPERIENCE	2	USA	31	KINGDOM	9
	5								1		
DADDY	1	SPANKING	8	MALE	9	GUY	2	MAN	29	COSTA	9

Table 4. Upper and Second Tier Contexts Across Grindr, Scruff and Xvideos

	4								2	RICA	
FETISH		VERSATILE BOTTOM	8	GENDER IDENTITY	7	HAIRY	2	TRAFFICFACT ORY	26 7	NETHERLA NDS	9
ORAL	1 3	BIG DICK	7	TRANSSEX UAL	7	HIKING	2	PORN	22 5	NIGERIA	9
TRANSSEX UAL	1 3	BOYS	7	MUSCLE	6	HISPANIC	2	PRIVACY	22 5	PORTUGAL	9
VERSATILE	1 3	CLOSET	7	CISGENDE R	5	ITAP	2	WORLD	22 5	RUSSIA	9
BAREBACK	1 2	CRUISING	7	DADDY	3	LATINO	2	PROFILE	20 0	SPAIN	9
QUICKIE	1 2	MUSCLE	7	PRETTY	3	MASCULINE	2	BRAZIL	18 5	GMAIL	8
TWINKS	1 2	BEAR	6	SINGLE	3	OLD	2	LATIN	16 6	CATHOLIC	8
BISSEXUAL	1 1	CAR	6	TATTOOS	3	POPULAR	2			FUCKING	8
FRIENDS	1 0	DIRTY	6			PRONOUNS	2			SLUT	8
HOST	1 0	FEMININIT Y	6			QUESTIONING	2			DEEPTHRO AT	7
SECRECY		FRIENDS WITH BENEFITS	6			SUBMISSIVE	2			GAPING	7
SUBMISSIV E	1 0	KINK	6			TRANSMASCULI NE	2			GROUP	7
		KISSES	6							SOLO	7
		ASS	5								7
		CONDOM	5								7
		COUPLE	5								7
		EDGING	5								7
		LEATHER	5								
		PISS	5								
		POPPERS	5								
		RAW	5								
		RELATION SHIP	5								
		UNCUT	5								

Three classes

The terms can be grouped epistemically into three classes: a) sexual desires/orientation desire (including types, gentile and local), b) physical characteristics, etc., and c) sexual roles or performances (Table 5).

Table 5. Three Classes represent the terms from the applications.

SEXUAL DESIRES / ORIENTATION DESIRE	PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS	SEXUAL ROLES OR PERFORMANCES
BARBIE BLACK MAN CREAMPIE CUM FETISH (IN GENERAL) FURRIES MILITARY OLDER MAN OUTDOOR PANTYHOSE QUICKIE	BEAR BEARD FAT MUSCLE NIPPLES UNCUT	ANAL PLAY BAREBACK BOTTOM CROSSDRESSER CUMDUMP FEMBOYS FROTTAGE ORAL SUBMISSIVE TOP
TWINKS SECRECY		

Facets of Feeling and Identity

Terms collected from user profiles in the applications may be used and/or attributed freely and spontaneously. These are terms that are used and circulated in the LGBTQIA+ community. Apps limit characters.

According to the terms collected, the facets verified for the three categories are: *1) Sexual desires:*

Types of sexual desires (e.g., heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, pansexuality, etc.) Genders involved in sexual desires (e.g., attraction to men, women, non-binary people) Locations or contexts related to sexual desires (e.g., preference for sexual intercourse in public, private, in certain situations) Physical characteristics:

2) Physical characteristics (e.g., primary and secondary sexual characteristics)

Physical appearance (e.g., aesthetic features such as body type, hair, and face) Other physical characteristics related to sexuality and gender (e.g., body modifications, tattoos, piercings)

3) Sexual roles or performances:

Gender roles (e.g., male, female, non-binary)

Sexual behaviors (e.g., dominant, submissive, versatile)

Specific sexual activities or practices (e.g., BDSM, polyamory, monogamy)

It is important to emphasize that these facets may vary depending on the theoretical approach adopted, the culture, and the specific context of the study of sexuality and gender. These facets are just examples and there may be other relevant facets that can be considered.

Facets are distinct elements or aspects that make up a facet classification. They are used to divide and organize knowledge in a more granular way, enabling a multidimensional approach. The main epistemic characteristics for the formation of these facets are:

1) Sexual desires:

a) Sexual orientation: This facet focuses on people's preferences and sexual attractions, such as heterosexuality, homosexuality, and bisexuality. It considers the direction of desire towards the opposite sex, same-sex, or both.

b) Specific preferences: This facet addresses particular preferences and interests within the realm of sexual desires. It can include categories such as BDSM (Bondage, Discipline, Domination, Submission, Sadism, and Masochism), specific fetishes, or other forms of sexual expression.

2) Physical characteristics:

a) Biological sex: This facet considers the biological differences between males and females. It recognizes that primary and secondary sexual characteristics vary based on biological sex.

b) Age: This facet takes into account people's age, acknowledging that different age groups may have distinct physical characteristics and different sexual needs or interests.

c) Physical appearance: This facet encompasses aspects such as height, weight, eye color, hair color, and other physical characteristics that may be relevant to sexual attraction or how individuals identify themselves.

3) Gender roles or performances:

a) Gender: This facet considers people's gender identity, including categories such as male, female, and nonbinary. It recognizes that gender identities influence sexual experiences and expectations.

b) Top/Bottom: This facet is related to the dynamics of sexual interactions. In some contexts, it may be relevant to identify the role of each person involved in terms of activity (who is performing the action) and passivity (who is receiving the action).

c) Social roles: This facet encompasses expectations, behaviors, and social representations related to gender roles. It may include categories such as dominant, submissive, partner, or others.

It is important to remember that facets may vary depending on the context, the purpose of classification, and the system used. These are just some possible facets for the mentioned categories, and other combinations or subdivisions can be explored for a more comprehensive classification.

It is possible to group some self-identification terms used in dating apps into the mentioned facets. These terms can reflect people's sexual preferences, physical characteristics, and gender roles or performances. Here are some examples of how these terms can be associated with each facet:

Sexual desires:
Sexual orientation: Gay, heterosexual, bisexual, pansexual.
Specific preferences: Top, bottom, versatile, dominant, submissive, specific fetishes (e.g., feet, leather, bondage).
Physical characteristics:
Biological sex: Male, female, transgender.
Age: Age range (e.g., 20-30 years old, 40+ years old).
Physical appearance: Height (tall, short), weight (slim, athletic, chubby), eye color, hair color.
Gender roles or performances:
Gender: Male, female, non-binary, transvestite.
Top/Bottom: Top, bottom, versatile.
Social roles: Bear, twink, daddy, boy, jock.

These are just some examples of how self-identification terms used in dating apps can be grouped into the mentioned facets. It's important to note that self-identification is personal and can vary widely. Additionally, language and terms used may evolve over time, reflecting the diversity and fluidity of sexual identities and preferences.

Conclusion: Anchored in Desire

In the virtual world, a spectrum is created, a performance that is anchored in desire. Such understanding encompasses self-understanding, where such understanding is certified by glimpsing the representation of the terms that make up the sample.

The terms demonstrate how users understand themselves in their individuality, aligning themselves with the social reproduction that occurs in the analyzed social network, being reduced to the terms of this universe.

This understanding is revealed through the terms adopted by the subjects to identify themselves in the application, where the way of labeling of the classificationist who develops the indexing/classifying system that applies it is vivified, reflecting structures of values imposed

by the norm. The use of terms, by the subjects who name themselves in the application, aims at social acceptance, in a process in which the individual identity is shaped to be assimilated by the collective identity (Nascimento, Massoni, Shirakava, Pinho and Martínez-Ávila 2020).

Each term used by the subjects reveals more than just a description of their physique or their desires, as it is the way they understand themselves and it is the source of the feeling that constitutes their individual identity.

The present study corresponds to a first approximation to the development of a classification of male homosexuality, following a pragmatist or domain analysis approach, informed by the theoretical knowledge of specialists and by the participation of individuals in the domain. This classification can be applied at a later stage in the development of knowledge organization systems, such as taxonomies, thesauri, glossaries, and dictionaries, which can be used in specific information units, intrinsically and extrinsically strengthening the domain and the objectives and interests of the individuals who form it.

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