



# Negotiating Hegemonic Masculinities and Mutual Exoticization within Grindr Tourism Interactions: “Everyone in Tel Aviv is a Muscle God”

Rachel A. Katz

To cite this article: Rachel A. Katz (02 Jul 2024): Negotiating Hegemonic Masculinities and Mutual Exoticization within Grindr Tourism Interactions: “Everyone in Tel Aviv is a Muscle God”, Journal of Homosexuality, DOI: [10.1080/00918369.2024.2373804](https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2024.2373804)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2024.2373804>



© 2024 The Author(s). Published with license by Taylor & Francis Group, LLC.



Published online: 02 Jul 2024.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 51



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

# Negotiating Hegemonic Masculinities and Mutual Exoticization within Grindr Tourism Interactions: “Everyone in Tel Aviv is a Muscle God”

Rachel A. Katz, PhD 

School of Health and Society, University of Salford, Salford, UK

## ABSTRACT

Dating apps are spaces where masculinities are communicated digitally, affecting inequalities around gender expressions. This study aims to identify the masculinities communicated within Grindr tourism interactions in Tel Aviv and analyze how masculinities shape relations among international tourists and locals. Methods consist of interviews and audio diaries with nineteen tourist, local, and immigrant Grindr users in Tel Aviv. Theories of affordances, hegemonic masculinities, and relational sociology are used to analyze the data. In discussion of the results, the concept of mutual exoticization is put forth to interpret the social dynamics valued within Grindr tourism interactions, thereby revealing oppositional fantasies tied to nationalities and masculinities. The study also explores ethnicity's association with social and erotic capital in digital circulations of a localized Mizrahi masculinity. Findings reveal that while hegemonic masculinities are circulated on Grindr, resistance is also a part of Grindr tourism relations around masculinities. This research concludes by shedding light on masculinity inequalities within digital spaces where different nationalities co-congregate, revealing everyday negotiations of gender regimes. Grindr is the site of both reproduction of and resistance to social inequalities around masculinities.

## KEYWORDS

Masculinity; dating app; Grindr tourism; LGBTQ; gender; ethnicity; sociology

## Introduction

The geolocative gay dating app Grindr straddles two worlds: that of a California tech company that has expanded its wares globally, and that of the local city in which it is used. Strolling the streets of Tel Aviv, one cannot help but notice the flesh constantly on display. Men are marked by tanned bodies, styled beards, and toned muscles. Gay locals comment on this environment, describing Tel Aviv as—sometimes frustratingly—“body conscious.” However, tourists are big fans. Gay tourists perceive Israeli local men on Grindr to be particularly attractive, tied to Israelis' supposed masculinity, exoticism, and ethnicity. This aligns with tourism industry

**CONTACT** Rachel A. Katz  [r.a.katz2@salford.ac.uk](mailto:r.a.katz2@salford.ac.uk)  School of Health and Society, University of Salford, 43 Crescent, Salford M5 4WT, UK.

© 2024 The Author(s). Published with license by Taylor & Francis Group, LLC.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

promotions of Tel Aviv as an ideal destination due to its locals (Hartal, 2019). The Tel Aviv streets offer a glimpse of the masculinities reproduced in the digital spaces of Grindr, as this paper explores. Grindr is a site where masculinity norms are engaged with transnationally through the global phenomenon of “Grindr tourism.” Grindr tourism is the use of Grindr as part of a touristic experience, whether for a quotidian interaction such as getting a one-time restaurant recommendation from a local or a rendezvous for a sexual encounter (Katz, 2023). Grindr tourism is the way some tourists and locals meet, and therefore interactional dynamics between users are mediated within its spaces (Miles, 2017). This paper seeks to answer the question of which masculinities are communicated within Grindr tourism interactions in Tel Aviv, and what this tells us about how digital communication via image-based dating apps like Grindr reconfigures masculinities among relations between international tourists and locals.

Negotiations of masculinities in digital contexts made transnational via tourism—yet localized via dating apps—have ramifications for identity expressions online and offline across countries where Grindr is used. This study aims to identify the masculinities communicated within Grindr tourism interactions and analyze how masculinities are shaped among tourist and local users. More specifically, it seeks to identify the hegemonic masculinity/ies that circulate in Tel Aviv, examine their impacts on experiences of gender, analyze their potential role in social capital within tourist-local interactions, and investigate whether there is any resistance to gender norms and, if so, how this resistance is manifested on Grindr. This paper hypothesizes that tourist-local interactions on Grindr generate insight into how Grindr perpetuates presentations of hegemonic masculinities and— as this paper finds—how such masculinities are resisted.

Tel Aviv is an ideal field site for studying tourist-local social relations on Grindr, as it is a popular destination for gay tourists (Raz-Chaimovich, 2020; Times of Israel, 2017). Three out of four visitors to Tel Aviv are non-Jewish and come from varied countries of origin (Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality, 2018b), meaning that tourists are often different to the local population, which is predominantly Jewish (Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality, 2018a). Grindr practices (especially those around masculinities) can be motivated by users’ physical “presence in particular neighborhoods or towns” (Renninger, 2019, p. 1737). By using Grindr as a way “in” to tourist-local relations, widely applicable assumptions around masculinities, resistances, and negotiations are brought to light. Moreover, studying Grindr in Israel benefits locals who are queer, as they still face discrimination. Protests and homophobic violence occur at Gay Pride events (BBC News, 2016). By understanding locals’ experiences of their Grindr interactions with tourists in Tel Aviv more deeply, this research seeks to enhance understanding of inequalities that affect everyday

lives, thereby offering insights for local LGBT+ organizations into the impacts of masculinity norms.

### **Grindr, masculinities, and tourism**

Grindr has been used as a digital space for expressions of masculinities. Researchers note that Grindr offers gay men opportunities to explore various aspects of masculinities, including physical appearance (Enguix & Gómez-Narváez, 2018; Wu & Trottier, 2022). The platform facilitates the construction of masculine identities by allowing users to curate profiles and present themselves in desired ways through homescreen images (Bonner-Thompson, 2017; Roth, 2016) and language choices via taglines (Evripidou, 2023; Miller, 2018). For example, Evripidou (2023) examines expressions of masculinities, especially those associated with male heterosexuality, through language choices on Grindr in Cyprus. Moreover, studies highlight how Grindr can perpetuate masculine stereotypes, such as hypersexuality and muscularity (Bonner-Thompson, 2017). Through profile pictures, body descriptions, and messaging patterns, dating app users often reinforce or conform to societal expectations of what it means to be a masculine gay man (Miller, 2015, 2018). This highlights the importance of examining how app affordances and gender expressions overlap, as this study addresses.

Grindr is not only about “finding the ‘right kind of person’ but also about . . . structuring yourself in spaces where others can find you” (Brubaker et al., 2014, p. 7). Users give off impressions around masculinities and other identities using Grindr’s affordances of homescreen images, taglines and expressions within digital contexts. Affordances are aspects of technology that “enable or constrain users’” behaviors (Evans et al., 2017, p. 36). Affordances can be utilized, circumvented, or ignored by technology users; they represent “invitations to act, not determinations” (Kammer, 2019, p. 340). Therefore, Grindr users may rely on different affordances and interactional strategies depending on how they express (or resist) hegemonic masculinities.

Grindr has been infamous for a culture of open prejudice within the app (C. Chan, 2017; Wu & Trottier, 2022) tied, in part, to masculinities. In addition to the aforementioned preferences page where age, ethnicity, body type, weight, and sexual position preference can be privately specified in order to modify a better-tailored cascade, users often post preferences on their taglines in prejudicial ways. A well-known disparaging phrase that used to pervade profile taglines at the time this research was conducted was “No fats, femmes, or Asians” (C. Chan, 2017). This phrasing is now banned (BBC News, 2020). This highlights the fact that real-world inequalities about bodies, gender expressions, and identities also circulate in Grindr spaces.

Little has been observed of how users resist masculinity displays *within* dating app interactions (Light, 2013), especially in different national contexts.

For example, Rodriguez et al. (2016) discuss masculinities but not resistance; Bonner-Thompson (2017) touches on resistance only in terms of age. However, García-Gómez (2020) helpfully discusses Spanish queer men's strategic emphasis of active femininity through profile taglines and images that "push against the ascribed subordination femininity" is associated with. This research aims to fill the gap by understanding of how masculinity displays within dating app interactions are resisted through interactions on Grindr.

Some scholars suppose that Grindr's features prioritize casual sexual hook-ups due to its presentation of images of others conceptually before the users' profile and its prioritization of geolocation, therefore immediacy (Race, 2014, p. 501). However, Grindr is also acknowledged as used for a variety purposes beyond hooking up (Race, 2014, p. 498), such as for chatting, organizing dates, and friendship (Brubaker et al., 2014; Shield, 2017; Wu & Trottier, 2022). These are evident in the aforementioned "looking for" choices in the platform's affordances. This project focuses on how Grindr, and the use of it abroad, shapes relations formed through it. Motivations for using the app may overlap, such as tourism and hooking up. Scholarship indicates many potential audiences and motivations for using the app: the ways in which people express their masculinities on the app may be tied to these goals (e.g. looking a particular way for the sake of tourists, or not).

I now turn to the wider context of tourism and Grindr. Postcolonial perspectives are usually mobilized to understand international tourism from Global North/Western countries to Global South/non-Western countries (Haldrup & Larsen, 2009; Wei et al., 2018). These perspectives frame tourists as Othering the locals, with tourists representing the Global North exploiting the Orientalized Other (Said, 1979) in a unidirectional power dynamic. Paying attention to Othering can be used as a tool for "critical analysis of power structures" (Thomas-Olalde & Velho, 2011, p. 27), especially in contemporary migration societies. Othering emphasizes how wider power structures shape subjects' senses of self and interactions with others. The notion of Othering can provide helpful insight into how desires play out among tourists and locals on Grindr, as will be expanded on in this article. Yet looking at tourist-local Grindr interactions in Tel Aviv also furthers the research agenda on how liminal locations complicate established ideas of an exploiting Global North tourist and disadvantaged Global South local, as Israeli society has traits of both. Many postcolonial analyses of tourism frame relations as dichotomous (Aitchison, 2001, p. 136): Global North/Global South, Tourist/Local, Powerful/Subaltern. Such dichotomous perspectives may not be suitable for liminal locations (Moussawi, 2013). Moussawi analyzes travelogue articles about Beirut published in magazines and blogs, aimed at a gay tourist audience. He argues that representations of Beirut as both progressive yet Orientalist and dangerous, suitable for "adventurous" gay travelers (Moussawi, 2013), reveal Beirut's liminality and hybridity in the context of

tourism. Likewise, from a postcolonial perspective, Tel Aviv arguably has traits of Western and Orientalist societies. Tourism in Tel Aviv, especially manifested through digital practices on Grindr, complicates notions of unidirectional exploitation between tourists and locals often found in sociological tourism literature. Thus the Tel Aviv Grindr context of this research offers nuance to debates in sociological tourism scholarship about tourist-local social relations and Othering.

Gay tourism literature often overlooks how technologies like Grindr may impact tourist-local relations (Vorobjovas-Pinta & Hardy, 2016): most studies focus on either locals or, more commonly, gay tourists (Blichfeldt et al., 2011; Hughes & Deutsch, 2010), but rarely both. While Mitchell (2020) investigates tourists of the Global North and local sex workers in the Global South, this differs from mutually arranged hookups, dates, and other practices of Grindr tourism (Katz, 2023). As L. S. Chan (2021) raises in his analysis of masculinities on dating apps in China, much is unknown about how masculinities expressed on apps in the tourism context may reveal potential differences (or similarities) in hegemonic masculinities across countries. This research offers needed insights into digitally expressed hegemonic masculinities in transnational, liminal tourism contexts from both tourist and local perspectives.

### **Theoretical framework**

A qualitative sociological approach offers a framework for comprehending tourist-local dynamics by focusing on interactions and relations formed through Grindr tourism. Interactionism focuses on bottom up, micro-level processes happening during interactions (Carter & Fuller, 2015, p. 1) to explain social phenomena, drawing on Goffman's (1959) notion of symbolic interactionism. Social rules, norms, and identities are constructed through "repeated, meaningful" interactions (Carter & Fuller, 2015, p. 1) between agentic social actors. Relations are the trajectories of social relations that form as a result of repeated interactions (Crossley, 2010, p. 22). Relational sociology theory involves identifying social "mechanisms which steer interactions," (Crossley, 2010, p.) such as power and resistance. Foucault (1990) asserts that power is not unidirectional, but rather it flows. Power is omnipresent; it "comes from below" (Foucault, 1990, p. 94), as well as above. This is a shift from broad-brush unidirectional perspectives of disempowered locals and empowered tourists. The current research highlights resistance to power within tourist-local relations and interactions by observing how resistance around certain forms of masculinity occurs through Grindr. I also adopt Bourdieu's (1984) general concept of social capital—the accumulated social resources embedded in social relations and interactions. To examine how power flows within social relations, particularly around masculinities, I look at how social capitals form part of the embodied processes of desire,

exoticization, and gender expressions between tourists and locals. It emerged from the data that some of these capitals are erotic capital, which I define as attributes that are sexually attractive to others, influence social status, and generate interactions on Grindr. By examining reproductions of and resistances to masculinity norms on Grindr, this research contributes to scholarship on “networked masculinities” (Light, 2013, p. 254). Networked masculinities are how masculinities are created and reconfigured in networks generated through digital technologies (Light, 2013, p. 245) such as dating apps. The research considers which masculinities circulate in the overlap of the local and transnational context of the Tel Aviv Grindr grid, opening up possibilities for analyzing how masculinities influence digital interactions among tourists and locals.

Connell’s theory of hegemonic masculinities (Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) is adopted in this research. Connell argues that in societies, there are hierarchies of gender constituted of dominant masculinities and subordinate ones (1995, p. 71). A hegemonic masculinity is an idealized masculinity at the top of a gender hierarchy. Hegemonic masculinities are impossible to embody; they are aspirational, unattainable standards to which people hold themselves (1995, p. 79). Masculinity practices are fluid and encoded differently in terms of gender depending on environments. Therefore, although this article will discuss a specific Mizrahi form of masculinity, at other times the pluralized “masculinities” is used to talk about masculinity issues more widely.

While hegemonic masculinities have been used to study the Israeli context, there are other factors that must be considered when conceptualizing the dominant masculinities there. Hirsch and Kachtan (2018) find that ethnicity and social status (e.g. occupation or role) overlap with hegemonic masculinities in terms of how masculinities are framed within local hierarchies. Moreover, masculinity is tied to ethnicity, in which “Arab Jews” (Mizrahi Jews descended from Arab countries) are considered more masculine than Ashkenazi men (Jews descended from European countries), despite Ashkenazim holding a more hegemonic social position. Mizrahim (plural of Mizrahi) 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 resettlement in Israel (Aharoni, 2003). Despite their majority in the Israeli population, Mizrahim have been historically marginalized (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2004). Thus, there is a contrast between a hegemonic ethnicized *social* position and an alternative ethnicized hegemonic *masculine* position. Moreover, masculinity in Israel is tied not only to the military (Perez & Sasson-Levy, 2015), but even the role within the military (Kachtan, 2019). Hirsch and Kachtan emphasize that masculinity hierarchies are not clear-cut in Israel, and that people select from a repertoire of ethnic status and social role when enacting masculinities within their practices and

relations (Hirsch & Kachtan, 2018; Kachtan, 2019, p. 1489). Thus attention must be paid to how the hegemonic masculinities occurring within social relations depend on social, national, and ethnic contexts.

## Methods

The research was conducted as part of a 2016–2020 PhD study and received ethical approval from the University of Manchester SoSS Ethics Committee (reference: 2017–2428–3498). Data was generated from qualitative semi-structured interviews and audio diaries with nineteen Grindr users in Tel Aviv, suitable methods for exploring new or poorly understood social phenomena in detail (Hughes & Deutsch, 2010, p. 457), such as Grindr tourism. Participants included five tourists, seven locally born residents, and seven immigrants who shared their experiences as both current locals and former tourists in Tel Aviv. 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. Posters were also distributed on public bulletin boards around Tel Aviv and in local businesses. Given the research's sensitive topic, participants were not directly solicited; all came forward of their own accord after seeing the research advertised. Participants received a participant information sheet and were given at least 24 hours to consider it and ask any questions before signing a consent form. Interviews were conducted in English, as Grindr is in English and English is often used by tourists and locals to communicate with each other.

Previous research on Grindr predominantly utilized interviews (Blackwell et al., 2014; Bonner-Thompson, 2017; Brubaker et al., 2014; Jaspal, 2017; Miles, 2017), sometimes supplemented with content analysis or ethnographies (Licoppe et al., 2015; Shield, 2017). The audio diaries were optional because they required more time and effort. Six of the nineteen participants completed audio diaries by submitting daily WhatsApp audio recordings that reflected on their Grindr usage over the course of one week. Following the audio diary phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted. Informed consent was obtained before commencing interviews or audio diaries. Thematic analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 1990) was used to analyze the data. Participant statements that were relevant to the research question were coded on several levels of abstraction, leading to the themes that form the argument in the wider PhD study. This paper hones in on the theme of masculinity brought up by participants.

The analysis of the findings, presented in the following sections, follows a structured, relational sociological approach. The approach first provides an overview of the argument within each section, followed by representative examples drawn from the data. These examples are then analyzed and linked to the wider critical arguments concerning inequalities, hegemonic masculinities, and capital in order to address the objectives of this paper. The



participants did not employ sociological terminology of hegemonic, capitals, nor directly reference Mizrahim: rather, as I sociologist I interpret their responses to open-ended interview questions within established theoretical frameworks. This approach enhances understanding of how these theories operate across diverse digital and national contexts. Grindr was the starting point of discussion as it was woven into the interview questions posed to participants. While their responses occasionally delved into offline impacts and dynamics as a result of their Grindr use, it is crucial to note that Grindr serves as the anchoring point by which sense-making happened around masculinities, social dynamics, and capitals.

Participant demographics were as follows. Eighteen participants identified as gay men, while one identified as a queer man. They were aged 18–38. Local Israeli participants were mostly Jewish and represented a mixture of Ashkenazi and Mizrahi ethnicities, reflecting Tel Aviv's demographic composition (Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality, 2018a). Immigrant and tourist participants originated from various countries. All names referenced in this study are pseudonyms.

Reflecting on researcher positionality is essential for comprehending how aspects of identity may perpetuate 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 & Buckle, 2009). As a woman and non-Israeli who has lived in Israel for prolonged periods, I navigate benefits and drawbacks to being an outsider, although I also inhabit a positionality whereby this dichotomy is not always clear-cut (Ademolu, 2024). While insiders may share experiential common ground that potentially fosters participant acceptance (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 58), my rapport with participants proved strong. Being an outsider offers advantages; participants might assume an insider researcher shares similar experiences and therefore might "fail to explain their . . . experience fully" (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Additionally, insider status can make drawing boundaries between the researcher and participant challenging, especially the case when researching Grindr (Bonner-Thompson, 2017). As an outsider, I remained receptive to participants' perspectives of Grindr tourism. I attempted to avoid an exploitative power dynamic (Angrosino, 2005) by disseminating research findings through a newsletter to interested participants and charities.

## Findings and discussion

### *Mutual exoticization and hegemonic Mizrahi masculinity: "Muscle gods" on Grindr*

As part of a relational sociology approach, I present the findings by identifying and showing the mechanisms which steer tourist-local interactions on Grindr, particularly the power frameworks interactions are embedded in. The research

finds that they are embedded in frameworks of hegemonic masculinities, mutual exoticization, and resistance. This section will show how embodied processes of desire, exoticization and national identities emerge and are complicated between locals and tourists as they use Grindr. Many tourists perceive Israeli locals as particularly attractive, tied to their supposed masculinity and exoticism, which in this context are inherently linked. The way tourists talk about locals describes a localized hegemonic masculinity- a hegemonic Mizrahi masculinity. I will first discuss hegemonic Mizrahi masculinity before moving on to how this contributes to capitals that are part of the dynamics of mutual exoticization between tourists and locals on Grindr.

Tourists view Israeli men on Grindr as embodying a visible hegemonic masculinity tied to being attractive, muscular, and Mediterranean. For example, Jake, a 23-year-old American tourist, remarks, “Israeli guys are gorgeous, so here [in Israel] it’s kind of a given that guys are attractive on Grindr.” Raphael, a 29-year-old tourist from Southeast Asia, states that he finds it “exciting” to “see some local guys on the app, like hot, sexy . . . Mediterranean guys in the area.” Shane, another American tourist, also observes that “everyone in Tel Aviv is a muscle god.” Such statements exemplify the popular image of Israeli gay men as muscular, attractive, tan, and 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, pp. 256–257), tourist participants unknowingly describe aesthetics associated with the local Israeli Mizrahi ethnicity when they laud muscular, tan, and bearded bodies (Yossef, 2004). While Mizrahim are what many tourists have in mind when they refer to local Israelis, in fact there are many diverse ethnic groups in Israel such as Ashkenazi Jews, Palestinians, Druze, Bedouins, and Ethiopians (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.; Mizrahi & Herzog, 2012). The Mizrahi aesthetic “look” aligns with a common representation of what can be considered hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995) viewed as erotically appealing by tourists. Notably, tourists perceive Mizrahi masculinity as hegemonic through their commentary about Israeli men’s masculine appearance, despite tourists being unaware of Mizrahim and that they are viewed locally as hegemonically masculine (described by Hirsch & Kachtan, 2018). This research finds that overall, the same masculine ideals that are localized also operate within international tourist-local relations, rather than tourists bringing alternative forms of masculinities that are specific to the national contexts from which they come. This will be further addressed in the following section on resistance. In this research, locals are ascribed hegemonic masculinity by tourists on the basis of their physical appearance. Thus this ethnicity, already Othered through exoticization discourse (Said, 1979), also becomes eroticized.

Although tourists appreciate “exotic” locals- in other words, masculine Mizrahi locals—the reverse is also true: locals mutually exoticize tourists within their digital interactions. For instance, Asher, a 23-year-old local,

declares that “locals love tourists, so . . . it’s a match.” In Tel Aviv, tourists and locals are known as “a match made in heaven,” according to immigrant Daniel, emphasizing this mutuality of desire. Sagi, an immigrant to Israel, comments, “Israelis love when you’re exotic.” I deploy the term “mutual exoticization” to name and highlight the interactional *process* by which this social dynamic happens. It builds on previous scholarship of Othering and tourism. Mutual exoticization emphasizes the link between exoticism as the driver of interactions, therefore generating erotic capital on Grindr. Mutual exoticization, and subsequent eroticization that results from it, underpin tourist-local relations and interactions on Grindr in Tel Aviv. By using the term “mutual exoticization,” this is not to say that relations are inherently mutually balanced in terms of power. Rather, the exoticization as part of the social relation is mutual. Mutual exoticization contributes to the capitals involved in the relational dynamics; it manifests in how people situate themselves on Grindr (e.g. denoting themselves by their nationality), who they choose to form relations with online, and how they visually present themselves on Grindr.

I now go on to deepen my discussion of mutual exoticization and show how it generates erotic capital within Grindr interactions, but also potentially furthers stereotypes. The narrative is not a unidirectional perception of Israelis as exotic while tourists are not. Tourists are exoticized for their various cultural backgrounds, as will be discussed. Daniel and Sagi, both immigrants to Israel, offer examples of how dynamics of mutual exoticization underpin their social relations. As immigrants, they are well-situated to describe social dynamics from both tourist and local angles.

Daniel is a 32-year-old immigrant from the UK who has been living in Israel for many years. Like most other participants, 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.” Many tourists shared that this “welcoming” occurs on Grindr, as locals directly message “welcome to Israel” to tourists on Grindr. Grindr’s affordances of the instant chat mean that the welcoming—and thereby, the acknowledgment of the tourist as “different”—occurs soon after tourists arrive and logs into Grindr. This frames their relations with locals within a relational dynamic of difference based on their nationality or status as a “tourist” vs. local, compared to another aspect of identity. Daniel 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.” Local Asher also laughingly states being “blonde” indicates “an 80% ratio that they’re from Sweden or Germany,” revealing the attention “exotic” external characteristics like hair color can garner through Grindr’s image-based affordances through the homescreen grid of pictures. At first, Daniel found fascination with his background “amazing.” 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 . . . 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.

Daniel's comments illustrate the ways in which the mutual exoticization is commented upon and used within Grindr interactions and messages. Exoticism, like masculinity, acts as a form of capital that is mobilized within particular interactional circumstances, such as when one wants to attract a partner. Yet it is also limiting. As Daniel points out, there is more to him than just his country of origin. The exoticism is based on stereotypes and, as Daniel notes, fantasies about people from these countries. The mention of mild-mannered and polite behavior as particularly British is juxtaposed to stereotypes of Israelis as forward, direct, and rude (Sela-Sheffy, 2004). The exoticization is a fantasy based on difference from the familiar.

This mutual 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 he met on Grindr. When asked "what their background is," his date said, "Oh, I'm half-Moroccan and I'm half-Iraqi. So boring, so not exotic [Sagi laughs]." Sagi remarked, "To . . . me, he was definitely exotic. I didn't consider this to be boring." Sagi's half-Moroccan half-Iraqi date also felt Sagi was exotic "because . . . [Sagi] was born far away, and . . . lived in . . . Europe," creating an impression of "sophistication." For Sagi, this exoticization has been a "disadvantage" as well as advantage. Sagi met someone he had romantic interest in and "after one conversation, [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: 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 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 capital within their digital relations based on being perceived as exotic and masculine, if they appear to be of Mizrahi ethnicity. This capital is relative capital; exoticization and the capital it accords is based on difference from the interactional partner. The "match made in heaven" motivates initial tourist-local Grindr interactions.

The examples in this section highlight how mutual exoticization, when applied by tourists to Israeli locals, is tied to notions of hegemonic (Mizrahi) masculinities; however, when locals exoticize tourists masculinity does not seem to be so overt within the exoticization. From the data, the exoticization appears mutual but its association with masculinity may not be; more research is needed on this to further understand masculinity in varied contexts.

Locals also mobilize hegemonic Mizrahi masculinity-associated capital on Grindr to attract tourists. Part of the hegemonic Israeli masculinity is also related to being in the military (Perez & Sasson-Levy, 2015). As Tomer, a 23-year-old local, puts it, in “Israeli society . . . masculinity is very connected to the army.” The masculine soldier is viewed as especially desirable by many tourists and locals, thus emphasizing its hegemonic position among masculinities both locally and transnationally. For example, Tomer notes that in Tel Aviv this connection between masculinity and being in the army is visible on Grindr, especially through profile pictures, as “on Grindr people are taking pictures with their uniforms . . . [so that] people . . . know they are so masculine they are even soldiers.” Here, the image affordances of Grindr solidify the connection between masculinity, erotic capital, and military affiliation by reconfiguring these associated characteristics to a single profile picture. Local participants describe leaning into the military affiliations that contribute to perceptions of locals as exotic and masculine to tourists. Speaking from a tourist angle, Daniel 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 in one breath; they are affiliated with each other and visually depicted together on Grindr profiles. 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 Israeli men, manifested through images circulated locally on dating apps through their image-based affordances. This exotic and masculine appeal is leaned into by locals.

Exoticization brings about capital within social dynamics, garnering many comments and messages on Grindr. Ezra, a 30-year-old local, remarks 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 from people outside of his country 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 exceptional popularity on Grindr in Tel Aviv (Katz, 2023). Among participants, there was both frustration with exoticization, but also pleasure in being exoticized. Many participants use words like “nice” and “good,” such as Sagi’s comments, to describe being exoticized.

In response to my query about whether he liked feeling exoticized or whether it made him uncomfortable, Shane responded with “I do like being a unicorn” and “seeing a sense of curiosity,” as one of the few East Asians in the area, “even” in Tel Aviv. While numerous participants discussed being exoticized, there is complexity to the dynamic it brings about within their social relations.

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 (Said, 1979) is 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 nonwhite participants of different ethnicities, and even between Ashkenazi and Mizrahi ethnicities within Israel. 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. And this has ramifications when linked to masculinities such as hegemonic Mizrahi masculinity.

Sexual racism on dating apps is an issue previously addressed by academics (Ang et al., 2021; Wu & Trottier, 2022). While I think my findings are useful in further contributing to the landscape of research on Grindr, ethnicity, and inequality, in this article I am unpacking a slightly different issue from sexual racism that emerged from the data. Rather than discriminatory sexual racism (e.g. people stating “no Asians” on dating app profiles, which has been previously studied), I seek here to outline the mutual aspects of this Othering social dynamic, particularly the way it is tied to expressions and interpretations of masculinities and the way it structures desire, underlies digital interactions, and adds social capital within relations. 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 norms around bodies, gender, and race. Mutual exoticization 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 accordant with hegemonic masculinity. Tourists attribute the qualities of hegemonic masculinity to Mizrahim based on a surface reading of bodies represented through images online, 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 through circumventing assumptions founded on mutual exoticization. By examining resistance, the data indicate that Grindr is a space for challenging hegemonic norms as well as furthering them.

### ***Resistance to gender norms on Grindr: 'I can feel feminine and not look feminine to you'***

Grindr tourism 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, this research finds Grindr is a space where they are co-congregated, confronted, replicated, and resisted. As I have established, ethnicity can be a source of erotic capital on dating apps because it can be tied to masculinities associated with hegemonic ideals. Together they form a particular hegemonic masculinity in this research context: the local masculine Mizrahi “muscle gods.” However, as this section shows, a few participants also expressed counter-discourses combatting the narrative of exotic Israelis and the ethnic connotations implicit in the idea of exotic.

The tourist narrative that considers all Israelis as homogenously having an “exotic” Mizrahi look elides the complexity of ethnic identity in the country. Ethnicity is significant in Israel, as there is historically socio-political tension between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim. Yet the depiction and perception of Israeli muscle gods reveals how tourists often ignore ethnic variety among Israeli Jews. Local Yoav, aged 37, addresses the ethnic elision that comes with exoticization on Grindr when he complains about Grindr’s affordances of its controversial drop-down menu where one can filter by physical attributes, including ethnicity. The ethnicity filter was removed as a feature in June 2020 due to criticism that it fostered racism (BBC News, 2020). The filter was active during the research and evidently impacted user relations on Grindr. The category options during the research period were “Do Not Show, Asian, Black, Latino, Middle Eastern, Mixed, Native American, White, South Asian, Other,” reflecting predominant ethnic categories in the app company’s headquarters of the United States. Ethnicity depends on national contexts, and when a dating app such as Grindr is used internationally the meaning behind Grindr’s drop-down categories dissolves (echoed in Shield, 2017). Yoav complains that Grindr “goes I’m 100% Middle Eastern according to [those categories].” He points out that when one is in a Middle Eastern country such as Israel, other ethnic categories are more relevant: for example, whether one is Ashkenazi, Mizrahi, Palestinian, or Ethiopian. The app’s ethnic categories were insufficient as affordances in terms of conveying meaningful information; participants mentioned counteracting this by filling in their ethnic and national identity in the biography section. The preexisting categories were there because the company Grindr assumed that globally, some contribution to the desirability is one’s ethnicity. It shows how ethnicity can be an avenue to gaining capital; this is reinforced by

some participants' writing their ethnicity on their profiles when the drop-down menu did not suffice.

Taking into account local narratives, the tourist narratives of Israeli men as masculine "muscle gods" should be complicated and considered in terms of resistance. Masculinity is a fraught issue among locals in Israel, both in academic discourse (Perez & Sasson-Levy, 2015) and "on the ground," evidenced in this research. Some participants resisted the displays of hegemonic masculinity on the app. Grindr is a site for the resistance of these ideals, as well as the construction of them, supporting the findings of García-Gómez (2020). It is a space where gender presentations are negotiated. Below, I present two examples of resistance on Grindr against the Mizrahi form of hegemonic masculinity: Tomer, a 23-year-old local, and Eli, an 18-year old local who emigrated from Russia.

Even if someone visibly conforms to a hegemonic masculinity, he can still be involved in resistance to it. Tomer recalls how throughout his "childhood people were laughing at" him for being "too feminine, and now people tell . . . [him], "Why do you care" about issues around masculinity, since 'you're not feminine.'" For Tomer, "it doesn't matter" how others visually perceive him. He observed that others on Grindr and in-person might not see him as feminine, but this does not capture his gender experience. He "can feel very feminine and not look to you very feminine." In this part of the interview, Tomer was reflecting on his interactions with others—the "you" he is referring to is directed toward the wider world, not me the researcher. The "to you" in his statement emphasizes how ideas of gender presentation are attributed to him based on his appearance as a man, but the varied opinions of others fail to capture his embodied experience of gender. Likewise, this kind of dynamic was reflected in Ilan's (a 32-year-old local) comments that when he sees "someone online . . . who's buffed . . . I would project stereotypes." I argue that Ilan, like many other Grindr users, projects assumptions around hegemonic masculinity based on a particular display of one's body on a Grindr profile. Tomer, in his relations with others on Grindr, fights against this assumption. Tomer recognizes that when "people say they're looking for masculine men [on Grindr] . . . they're looking for a caricature." He remarks that "nobody . . . fit[s] to this . . . definition" of masculinity. Tomer's comments make salient the argument that hegemonic masculinity is an unachievable ideal. Some locals, like Tomer, may visually conform to a hegemonic Mizrahi masculinity to others on Grindr (including tourists), but actually feel feminine or vary in their gendered expression. They resist hegemonic masculinities by emphasizing their femininity through Grindr's affordances of profile images and/or interactions in the chats with others on dating apps.

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 immigrant from Russia, describes



himself as feminine. For him, this entails wearing “makeup” and “skinny jeans, . . . feminine things that [some say] only girls can wear.” He laughingly reports that people call him “the gender blender.” 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 that his struggle against homophobia in Russia was far worse.

Eli’s struggle with expressing his gender and love of makeup in his new country reveals that there are social boundaries and normative regimes of masculinities in the localized area of Grindr users. His sense that the gay community in Israel is more masculine compared to Russia highlights how hegemonic masculinities are highly contextualized based on the society they operate in, which in turn affect the visibility of gender expressions on Grindr’s profile images. Immigrant and local participants expressed frustration with how pervasive these gender regimes were in Tel Aviv compared to elsewhere, and how real-life issues also manifested on Grindr. Raphael even strategized his Grindr use to navigate the minefield of masculinity. He had two separate Grindr profiles, one of which was a feminine profile and one of which was a masculine one, that he could use depending on how he was feeling and how much attention he was getting. This exemplifies the complex labor users undertake to negotiate gendered relations on Grindr in Tel Aviv. I suspect my female presence perhaps added to participants’ willingness to be vulnerable about their femininity—acknowledged as culturally inferior to masculinity—without fear that I would inherently devalue it since I embody femininity myself by virtue of my gender.

I now focus on an exception to the norm of tourist-local interactional dynamics centered around mutual exoticization and hegemonic Mizrahi masculinity. Despite wide adulation of Israeli “muscle gods,” not all tourists are necessarily into the stereotypical Mizrahi “look.” Kevin, a 31-year-old tourist, 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 what scholars would consider his counter-

hegemonic (subordinate) “type” on Grindr 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 Grindr interactions in Tel Aviv. It is not just the visual display of femininities that can characterize resistance to hegemonic masculinities, as seen in the examples of Eli and Tomer; resistance can also be the overt seeking of counter-hegemonic desires on Grindr, as was the case with Kevin.

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 on Grindr in Tel Aviv may not be hegemonic in Australasia, where Kevin is from. Even though femininities are not valued as much as masculinities in many places (García-Gómez, 2020; Miller, 2015), other locations potentially value femininity more than Tel Aviv, according to both local and tourist participants.

The mutual exoticization taking place through Grindr promotes nationality stereotypes and reifies 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 in profile pictures. Gender presentation boundaries can include praising beards and disparaging makeup wearing. 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. The literature review revealed the need for better understanding of how users resist masculinity displays within interactions; the research project addresses this by finding that users negotiated their masculinities by sharing that although they aesthetically conformed to Mizrahi masculine ideals, they expressed narratives of feeling “feminine” to others they chatted with on Grindr. Additionally, some users resisted hegemonic masculinities by intentionally playing up their femininity through dress and wearing makeup, and expressing this through profile pictures. Some tourists may also prefer counter-hegemonic expressions of gender or may value different hegemonic masculinities as a result of their national origins. These forms of resistance contribute to changing visually “masculine” aesthetics on the Grindr homescreen grid.

## Limitations

While this research has a small sample size, other studies conducted on Grindr that use interviews also result in a comparable, relatively small sample size (Blackwell et al., 2014; Brubaker et al., 2014; Jaspal, 2017). This may be because of feelings that Grindr use is private (Beninger, 2017). Users who elected to participate were aged under 40, although this reflects the average age of Grindr (We Are Flint, 2018). Nevertheless, experiences around masculinities are intersectional (Crenshaw, 2017), and while this paper explores intersections of masculinities, ethnicity, and nationality, it is also of interest to consider how age factors into inequalities experienced when forming intimacies online. Some minority ethnic identity groups who live in Tel Aviv are missing from the data despite bespoke attempts to recruit them. This could be due to numerous reasons such as social marginalization, concerns about deportation, and mistrust of Israeli authorities, leading to suspicion of any research even though this study was conducted through a UK institution. These groups' experiences of sexuality may be dissimilar as a result of different levels of stigma against homosexuality. For example, only 17% of Israeli Muslims are likely to say that homosexuality is acceptable, compared to 53% of Israeli Jews (Pew Research Center, 2020). The data presented here only sheds light on the experiences of the cultural majority in Tel Aviv (Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality, 2018a). Future research should consider alternative recruitment strategies or methods to access these absent groups in light of the concerns raised.

## Conclusion

Digital communication via image-based dating apps like Grindr shapes masculinities among tourists and locals. This paper offers mutual exoticization as a way to understand the circulation of local and transnational masculinities within Grindr tourism interactions in Tel Aviv. Intersecting identities such as ethnicity and nationality influence how masculinity is experienced and expressed on the app. Mutual exoticization is especially valued within tourist-local interactions on Grindr in Tel Aviv. In the Tel Aviv context, oppositionality structures tourist-local fantasies around ethnicity, revealing processes of Othering. The masculinities valued on Grindr come at the expense of those who do not appear to fulfill hegemonic embodiments of masculinity. Yet this research complicates the view that Grindr unilaterally promotes a "toxic" hegemonic masculinity by prioritizing superficial hypermasculine images. Through participant interviews, it was found that some of those who visually fulfill the Mizrahi hegemonic masculine norm themselves narrate resistance to masculinity norms and highlight their own femininity within dating app interactions. In doing so, they emphasize that they feel bound by rigid masculinity norms. It supports the theory that hegemonic masculinity is an ideal no

one can fulfill, even if some users have the perception based on profile pictures that others are able to meet masculine ideals.

Highlighting hegemonic Mizrahi masculinity in this research context heeds Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005, pp. 829, 839) call for research to geographically locate masculinities within specific local, social, and national contexts. In examining everyday reproductions and resistance to masculinity norms, this research contributes to scholarship on "networked masculinities" (Light, 2013, p. 254). This paper addresses how local dynamics function within global relations: international tourists, global Grindr categories, and frameworks structure the affordances by which digital interactions between tourists and locals occur. 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, p. 258) of masculinities. This is particularly interesting in Tel Aviv because the drop-down ethnicity menu, created by the American company with the aim of global use, was insufficient for local use. The visual interface of Grindr was important for aesthetically depicting Mizrahi masculinity, but the ethnicity options of the interface were inadequate for effective communication. 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. Some Global North social norms of masculinities are circulating 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 shed light on the negotiation of power between various social actors involved in the reproduction of Grindr spaces. The research findings, though based on the Israeli context, may apply to other complex and liminal locations that have been overlooked in previous research.

In a world of increasingly globalized societies with perpetual tourist presences, future research could entail a longitudinal study of masculinities to gauge whether local hegemonic masculinities are transformed by tourist presences, and whether that is viewed as beneficial or not by locals who resist. It would also be beneficial to further study whether mutual exoticization contributes negatively or positively to self-perception.

In the opening of this paper, I outlined features common to so many of those bodies on the streets of Tel Aviv: the bare flesh, toned muscles and scruff. Through dating apps, bodies are reconstructed in digital contexts. Offline norms are bound up within Grindr, including expectations and norms associated with hegemonic configurations of masculinity. People bring their offline practices, ideas, and meanings to Grindr. However, interactions within spaces of Grindr also involve reconfigurations. Addressing the research objectives, masculinity inequalities are reproduced, reconfigured, and resisted on

Grindr. They are reproduced by Grindr profile pictures that conform to local Israeli visual aesthetics of Mizrahi masculinity through tans, beards, and muscles. They are reconfigured by the presence of tourists in the Grindr scene as well as the dynamics of mutual exoticization on Grindr. They are resisted by communication emphasizing one's femininity and alternative preferences. 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" aesthetics bring a diversity of tastes to what some participants consider a homogenous local Grindr visuality. Grindr is a way people encounter and resist masculinities in their everyday technology use. The mediation of masculinities happening on and through Grindr reveals how gender regimes are produced and regularly reinforced.

### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

### Funding

This research was funded by the University of Manchester PhD Studentship.

### ORCID

Rachel A. Katz  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3521-8291>

### References

- Ademolu, E. (2024). Birds of a feather (don't always) flock together: Critical reflexivity of 'Outsiderness' as an 'Insider' doing qualitative research with one's 'own people'. *Qualitative Research*, 24(2), 344–366. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14687941221149596>
- Aharoni, A. (2003). The forced migration of Jews from Arab countries. *Peace Review*, 15(1), 53–60.
- Aitchison, C. (2001). Theorizing other discourses of tourism, gender and culture: Can the subaltern speak (in tourism)? *Tourist Studies*, 1(2), 133–147. <https://doi.org/10.1177/146879760100100202>
- Ang, M. W., Tan, J. C. K., & Lou, C. (2021). Navigating sexual racism in the sexual field: Compensation for and disavowal of marginality by racial minority Grindr users in Singapore. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 26(3), 129–147.
- Angrosino, M. (2005). Recontextualizing observation: Ethnography, pedagogy, and the prospects for a progressive political agenda. In N. K. & Denzin, Y. S., Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 729–745). SAGE.
- BBC News. (2016). Jerusalem gay pride: Ultra-Orthodox Jew convicted of murder over stabbing. *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-36081114>

- BBC News. (2020, June 1). Grindr removes 'ethnicity filter' after complaints. *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-52886167>
- Beninger, K. (2017). Social media users' views on the ethics of social media research. In L. Sloan & A. Quan-Haase (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of social media research methods*, (Vol. 57). Sage.
- Blackwell, C., Birnholtz, J., & Abbott, C. (2014). Seeing and being seen: Co-situation and impression formation using Grindr, a location-aware gay dating app. *New Media & Society*, 17(7), 1117–1136. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444814521595>
- Blichfeldt, B. S., Chor, J., & Milan, N. B. (2011). 'It really depends on whether you are in a relationship': A study of 'gay destinations' from a tourist perspective. *Tourism Today*, 11(1), 7–26. [https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/33503171/Tourism\\_Today\\_No\\_11\\_Strajnak-libre.pdf?1397879041=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DGeotourists\\_health\\_risk\\_management\\_in\\_th.pdf&Expires=1719829645&Signature=Hhiap5OdsNIMnvIrgv6Rccs6BUJUE-Pb1WFpvgOSDUyjqJEOMZqgemTCHHexCAjvtYrSy2CAvKa9PVoPyjz12oBt8sSdSve6E8sX5MFzIGR4cXGG7wWtBuLHzKCSv9cJPLGgIQaOZ1fKOKqMItQsG~wUam-1MRa7bif~5mpspY27OGNIEQEFsKGI3RidEVO6Q5yi-9StMJ-5EOjVfUB2X5ZZFYLxMiO4-FY39u~BcR6i4SB-HVOjfiQ6vkgQ5lsvIzXoQKLQjn5YI0spuca-D~EHKVAndG5Cub93pfl~T-QIt9Qq4beZLQmA~wybWkKL6B4ApIDZegmevnb60aA\\_\\_&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA#page=8](https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/33503171/Tourism_Today_No_11_Strajnak-libre.pdf?1397879041=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DGeotourists_health_risk_management_in_th.pdf&Expires=1719829645&Signature=Hhiap5OdsNIMnvIrgv6Rccs6BUJUE-Pb1WFpvgOSDUyjqJEOMZqgemTCHHexCAjvtYrSy2CAvKa9PVoPyjz12oBt8sSdSve6E8sX5MFzIGR4cXGG7wWtBuLHzKCSv9cJPLGgIQaOZ1fKOKqMItQsG~wUam-1MRa7bif~5mpspY27OGNIEQEFsKGI3RidEVO6Q5yi-9StMJ-5EOjVfUB2X5ZZFYLxMiO4-FY39u~BcR6i4SB-HVOjfiQ6vkgQ5lsvIzXoQKLQjn5YI0spuca-D~EHKVAndG5Cub93pfl~T-QIt9Qq4beZLQmA~wybWkKL6B4ApIDZegmevnb60aA__&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA#page=8)
- Bonner-Thompson, C. (2017). 'The meat market': Production and regulation of masculinities on the Grindr grid in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 24(11), 1611–1625. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2017.1356270>
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste* (R. Nice, Trans.). Harvard University Press.
- Brubaker, J. R., Ananny, M., & Crawford, K. (2014). Departing glances: A sociotechnical account of 'leaving' Grindr. *New Media & Society*, 18(3), 373–390. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444814542311>
- Carter, M. J., & Fuller, C. (2015). Symbolic interactionism. *Sociopedia.isa*, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1177/205684601561>
- Chan, C. (2017). *Absence: No Fats, no femmes, no Asians - Frameline Voices [Video]*. Frameline. URL <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vig8CBQIFPI>
- Chan, L. S. (2021). *The politics of dating apps: Gender, sexuality, and emergent publics in urban China*. MIT Press.
- Connell, R. W. (1995). *Masculinities*. University of California Press.
- Connell, R. W., & Messerschmidt, J. W. (2005). Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the concept. *Gender & Society*, 19(6), 829–859. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243205278639>
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Sage Publications.
- Crenshaw, K. (2017). *On intersectionality: Essential writings*. The New Press.
- Crossley, N. (2010). *Towards relational sociology*. Routledge.
- Dwyer, S. C., & Buckle, J. L. (2009). The space between: On being an insider-outsider in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 8(1), 54–63. <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690900800105>
- Enguix, B., & Gómez-Narváez, E. (2018). Masculine bodies, selfies, and the (Re)configurations of intimacy. *Men and Masculinities*, 21(1), 112–130. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X17696168>
- Evans, S. K., Pearce, K. E., Vitak, J., & Treem, J. W. (2017). Explicating affordances: A conceptual framework for understanding affordances in communication research. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 22(1), 35–52. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcc4.12180>

- Evrpidou, D. (2023). The interrelationship among Cypriot Greek, Standard Modern Greek, and masculinity: *Doing straight* (-acting) masculinity on Grindr. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 44(2), 96–108. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2020.1800020>
- Foucault, M. (1990). *The history of sexuality: Volume 1*. Vintage.
- García-Gómez, A. (2020). Discursive representation of masculinity and femininity in tinder and Grindr: Hegemonic masculinity, feminine devaluation and femmephobia. *Discourse & Society*, 31(4), 390–410. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926520903523>
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Anchor.
- Haldrup, M., & Larsen, J. (2009). *Tourism, performance and the everyday: Consuming the orient*. Routledge.
- Hartal, G. (2019). Gay tourism to Tel-Aviv: Producing urban value? *Urban Studies*, 56(6), 1148–1164. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098018755068>
- Hirsch, D., & Kachtan, D. G. (2018). Is “hegemonic masculinity” hegemonic as masculinity? Two Israeli case studies. *Men and Masculinities*, 21(5), 687–708. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X17696186>
- Hughes, H., & Deutsch, R. (2010). Holidays of older gay men: Age or sexual orientation as decisive factors? *Tourism Management*, 31(4), 454–463. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2009.04.012>
- Israel Central Bureau of Statistics. (2004). CBS Site. <https://www.cbs.gov.il/en/Pages/default.aspx>
- Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (n.d.). *PEOPLE: Minority communities*. <https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/people/pages/society-%20minority%20communities.aspx>
- Jaspal, R. (2017). Gay men’s construction and management of identity on Grindr. *Sexuality & Culture*, 21(1), 187–204. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-016-9389-3>
- Kachtan, D. G. (2019). Challenging hegemonic masculinity by performance of ethnic habitus. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 26(10), 1489–1505. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12401>
- Kammer, A. (2019). Researching affordances. In J. Hunsinger, M. M. Allen, & L. Klastrup (Eds.), *Second international handbook of internet research* (pp. 337–349). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-024-1555-1\\_7](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-024-1555-1_7)
- Katz, R. A. (2023). Grindr tourism among tourists, locals, and immigrants: Dating app impacts for social relations, gay tourism, and digital convergence. *Social Media + Society*, 9(3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051231192033>
- Licoppe, C., Anne Rivière, C., & Morel, J. (2015). Grindr casual hook-ups as interactional achievements. *New Media & Society*, 18(11), 2540–2558. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444815589702>
- Light, B. (2013). Networked masculinities and social networking sites: A call for the analysis of men and contemporary digital Media. *Masculinities & Social Change*, 2(3), 245–265. <https://doi.org/10.4471/mcs.2013.34>
- Miles, S. (2017). Sex in the digital city: Location-based dating apps and queer urban life. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 24(11), 1595–1610. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2017.1340874>
- Miller, B. (2015). ‘Dude, Where’s Your Face?’ Self-Presentation, self-description, and partner preferences on a social networking application for men who have sex with men: A content analysis. *Sexuality & Culture*, 19(4), 637–658. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-015-9283-4>
- Miller, B. (2018). Textually presenting masculinity and the body on mobile dating apps for men who have sex with men. *The Journal of Men’s Studies*, 26(3), 305–326.
- Mitchell, G. (2020). *Tourist attractions: Performing race and masculinity in Brazil’s sexual economy*. University of Chicago Press.
- Mizrachi, N., & Herzog, H. (2012). Participatory destigmatization strategies among Palestinian citizens, Ethiopian Jews and Mizrahi Jews in Israel. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 35(3), 418–435. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2011.589530>

- Moussawi, G. (2013). Queering Beirut, the 'Paris of the Middle East': Fractal orientalism and essentialized masculinities in contemporary gay travelogues. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 20(7), 858–875. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2012.753586>
- Perez, M., & Sasson-Levy, O. (2015). Avoiding military service in a militaristic society: A chronicle of resistance to hegemonic masculinity. *Peace & Change*, 40(4), 462–488. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pech.12143>
- Pew Research Center. (2020). *The global divide on homosexuality persists [Report]*.
- Race, K. (2014). Speculative pragmatism and intimate arrangements: Online hook-up devices in gay life. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 17(4), 496–511. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2014.930181>
- Raz-Chaimovich, M. (2020, January 1). Record year for Israeli tourism despite high prices. *Globes*. <https://en.globes.co.il/en/article-record-year-for-israel-tourism-despite-high-prices-1001313237>
- Renninger, B. J. (2019). Grindr killed the gay Bar, and other attempts to blame social technologies for urban development: A democratic approach to popular technologies and queer sociality. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 66(12), 1736–1755. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2018.1514205>
- Rodriguez, N. S., Huemmer, J. T. T. U., & Blumell, L. E. (2016). Mobile masculinities: An investigation of networked masculinities in gay dating apps. *Masculinities & Social Change*, 5(3), 241–267. <https://doi.org/10.17583/MCS.2016.2047>
- Roth, Y. (2016). Zero feet away: The digital geography of gay social media. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 63(3), 437–442. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2016.1124707>
- Said, E. (1979). *Orientalism*. Vintage.
- Sela-Sheffy, R. (2004). 'What makes one an Israeli?' Negotiating identities in everyday representations of 'Israeliness'. *Nations and Nationalism*, 10(4), 479–497. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1354-5078.2004.00178.x>
- Shield, A. D. J. (2017). New in town: Gay immigrants and geosocial dating apps. In A. Dhoest, L. Szulc, & B. Eeckhout (Eds.), *LGBTQs, media and culture in Europe* (pp. 244–261). Routledge.
- Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality. (2018a). *City in numbers [Report]*. Tel Aviv Yafo Municipality. <https://www.tel-aviv.gov.il/en/abouttheCity/Pages/CityinNumbers.aspx>
- Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality. (2018b). *Tel Aviv tourism in numbers report. Report*. Tel Aviv Yafo Municipality. [https://www.tel-aviv.gov.il/en/contactus/Documents/Tel%20Aviv%20Tourism%20in%20Numbers%20\(2017-2018%20edition\).pdf](https://www.tel-aviv.gov.il/en/contactus/Documents/Tel%20Aviv%20Tourism%20in%20Numbers%20(2017-2018%20edition).pdf)
- Thomas-Olalde, O., & Velho, A. (2011). Othering and its effects—Exploring the concept. In H., Niedrig & C., Ydesen (Eds.), *Writing Postcolonial Histories of Intercultural Education*, (Vol. 2, pp. 27–51). Peter Lang.
- Times of Israel. (2017, June 9). Over 200,000 attend Tel Aviv Gay Pride Parade, some 30,000 from abroad. *Times of Israel*. <http://www.timesofisrael.com/over-200000-attend-tel-aviv-gay-pride-parade-30000-from-abroad/>
- Vorobjovas-Pinta, O., & Hardy, A. (2016). The evolution of gay travel research. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 18(4), 409–416. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2059>
- We are Flint. (2018). Percentage of U.S. internet users who use Grindr as of January 2018, by age group [Graph]. *Statista*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/814764/share-of-us-internet-users-who-use-grindr-by-age/>
- Wei, L., Qian, J., & Sun, J. (2018). Self-orientalism, joke-work and host-tourist relation. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 68, 89–99. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2017.12.003>
- Wu, S., & Trottier, D. (2022). Dating apps: A literature review. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 46(2), 91–115. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23808985.2022.2069046>
- Yossef, R. (2004). Ethnicity and sexual politics: The invention of Mizrahi masculinity in Israeli cinema [in Hebrew]. *Theory & Criticism*, 25(Fall 2004), 31–62.