

**THE BODY AS MERCHANDISE IN THE ADVERTISEMENTS/PROFILES OF GAY MEN IN LÂMPIÃO DA ESQUINA AND GRINDR**

***O CORPO COMO MERCADORIA NOS ANÚNCIOS/PERFIS DE HOMENS GAYS NO LÂMPIÃO DA ESQUINA E NO GRINDR***

***EL CUERPO COMO MERCANCÍA EN LOS ANUNCIOS / PERFILES DE HOMBRES GAY EN LÂMPIÃO DA ESQUINA Y GRINDR***

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper aims to analyze the ads of gay men in the Lâmpião da Esquina newspaper and in the Grindr app, to understand the meanings attributed by these subjects to the mediatization of the body in the search for partners in different historical contexts. As well as to identify the common aspects in the process of searching for partners in these means of socialization and to describe which parameters are most frequently used in the search for partners in these instruments. To achieve the proposed objectives, we appropriated the theoretical and methodological assumptions of netnography. Three profiles were analyzed at Lâmpião da Esquina and three at Grindr. To produce the data, we use the archival data contained in the advertisements of the Lâmpião da Esquina newspaper and in the Grindr application. The results of the research show similarities in the presentation of users of Lâmpião da Esquina, with those of Grindr. We also found connections regarding aspects and parameters used in the search for partners such as physical size, similar tastes, standards of living, race, among others. We infer that the practices used are similar in the prominence attributed to the body and to the mercantile factor of it, therefore, the body being basically physical and aesthetically pleasing, the most attractive in their choice.

**KEYWORDS:** Body. Lgbtqia +. Merchandise. Social media.

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**RESUMO:** *O presente trabalho tem como objetivo analisar os anúncios de homens gays no jornal Lampião da Esquina e no aplicativo Grindr, com o intuito de compreender os sentidos atribuídos por estes sujeitos à mediatização do corpo na busca por parceiros em contextos históricos diferentes. Assim como de identificar os aspectos comuns no processo de busca por parceiros nestes meios de socialização e descrever quais parâmetros são utilizados com maior frequência na busca por parceiros nestes instrumentos. Para alcançar os objetivos propostos nos apropriamos dos pressupostos teórico-metodológicos da netnografia. Foram analisados três perfis no Lampião da Esquina e três no Grindr. Para a produção dos dados, utilizamos os dados arquivais contidos nos anúncios do jornal Lampião da Esquina e no aplicativo Grindr. Os resultados da pesquisa evidenciam semelhanças na forma de apresentação dos usuários do Lampião da esquina, com os do Grindr. Assim como encontramos conexões com relação aos aspectos e parâmetros utilizados na busca por parceiros como porte físico, gostos semelhantes, padrões de vida, raça, entre outros. Inferimos, que as práticas utilizadas se assemelham no destaque atribuído ao corpo e ao fator mercantil de tal, portanto, sendo basicamente o corpo enquanto físico e esteticamente agradável o mais atrativo na escolha deles.*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *Corpo. Lgbtqia+. Mercadoria. Mídias sociais.*

**RESUMEN:** *Este artículo tiene como objetivo analizar los anuncios de hombres homosexuales en el diario Lampião da Esquina y en la aplicación Grindr, con el fin de comprender los significados que estos sujetos atribuyen a la mediatización del cuerpo en la búsqueda de parejas en diferentes contextos históricos. Así como identificar los aspectos comunes en el proceso de búsqueda de socios en estos medios de socialización y describir qué parámetros se utilizan con mayor frecuencia en la búsqueda de socios en estos instrumentos. Para lograr los objetivos propuestos, nos apropiamos de los supuestos teóricos y metodológicos de la netnografía. Se analizaron tres perfiles en Lampião da Esquina y tres en Grindr. Para la producción de los datos, utilizamos los datos de archivo contenidos en los anuncios del periódico Lampião da Esquina y en la aplicación Grindr. Los resultados de la investigación muestran similitudes en la presentación de los usuarios de Lampião da esquina, con los de Grindr. Así como encontramos conexiones con respecto a los aspectos y parámetros utilizados en la búsqueda de parejas como tamaño físico, gustos similares, niveles de vida, raza, entre otros. Inferimos que las prácticas empleadas son similares en el protagonismo atribuido al cuerpo y al factor mercantil del mismo, por tanto, siendo el cuerpo básicamente físico y estéticamente agradable, el más atractivo en su elección.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Cuerpo. Lgbtqia +. Mercancías. Redes sociales.*

## Introduction

This article is part of the objectives of the Study and Research Group on Education and Physical Education at School - GEPEEFE/UFPI, certified by the CNPq Research Directory. The investigation is therefore configured in yet another contribution on the commercialization of the body in the context of modern society. It should be noted that for years we have taken the human body as the object of our investigations and methodological

lever of knowledge, as can be seen in the studies developed by Oliveira (2019) and Silva and Correia (2020).

Thus, we are aware that in the context of the capitalist social system, the market and consumption are not reduced to the physical plane of material goods. The body itself, both as a physical and symbolic entity, is an agent and a target for consumption in its various aspects. Therefore, nothing seems to escape the market and capital. Furthermore, capitalism in the globalized world uses new strategies. Now, it is favored by new communication technologies and mediated by advertising.

It is important to understand that the arrival and insertion of the internet in our lives is a reality with no return. In all fields, and in different social contexts, the use of the internet and new technologies is a necessity that stimulates and assists in guiding people's way of life. These new facets of modern life provide a variety of facilities in different fields, characterizing daily life and social relations with events in a fast and superficial way, as well as contributing to the process of commodification of bodies (OLIVEIRA, 2019; SOARES, BARBOSA, 2020).

Depending on this understanding, it is possible to infer that in times of veneration of the body, it is not only the body, as a physical entity, that interests capitalism. Images as merchandise are also fundamental objects of appropriation by the market. In this sense, we propose to discuss the theme of the body, seeking to understand how gay male bodies are presented, displayed and described in the socialization offers presented in different periods of our society. Thus, a closer look at the advent of the inclusion of digital media in our daily lives is necessary to understand how the influence of these technologies embraces the lives of individuals as a society.

Thus, we present in this work an analysis of the configurations and virtual impressions about male bodies in the gay dating app "GRINDR". In the meantime, we seek to draw a parallel with the ways of searching for partners carried out by gays in the 70s and 80s through advertisements published in a specific newspaper for this public, *Lampião da Esquina*, to confront these forms of sociability used in these two different contexts. Given the above, our discussion will be based on research focused on the theme of using online social media, as well as on virtual relationships, configuring this study as a netnography, in which we will seek to analyze in the ads of gay men in the newspaper *Lampião da Esquina* and in the Grindr app, the meanings attributed by these subjects to the mediatization of the body in the search for partners in different historical contexts. As well as to identify the common aspects in the

process of searching for partners in these means of socialization and to describe which parameters are most frequently used in the search for partners in these instruments.

### **The advent of the internet and the commodification of gay bodies: social implications**

Just like discussions about the influence of technologies in our lives, the theme of the body cuts across our experiences as social beings. Being in a society that worships the male body framed by standards imposed by society, opens up a series of opportunities for discussions about the different bodies that inhabit the world. In this sense, the body as a social tool is built with the intention of achieving an identity that is considered adequate to the current socio-cultural relations (SOARES; BARBOSA, 2020).

The identity construction of the image of the ideal body can be observed taking into account the social environment in which the individual is present, his body awareness and social relationships with other individuals. In a material context, the body can be seen as a material object separate from the individual, thus giving it meaning (THOMPSON; HIRSCHMAN, 1995b). In this sense, we see in the expansion of the use of the internet an opportunity for exposure and commodification of the body, as explained in the following quote.

With the commercialization of the internet, around 1990, the citizen began to change behaviors and to see transformations in corporations, in communication, and in his own social being. With a primitive and static internet, accessed by browsers such as Microsoft's Internet Explorer, the consumer of the early 2000s had few possibilities for interaction and virtual expansion, which was seen, even if archaic, were the so-called chats, like MSN and ICQ, sketches of what we live today with countless ways of communicating, ranging from social networks to apps. The latter totaled 1.43 million in the Google Play Store and 1.21 million in the Itunes Store (LAU; FERREIRA, 2015, p. 36, our translation).

Within this perspective, we understand the value of the body in affective relationships when the subjects presented here use their own bodies in gay relationship apps and in the newspaper *Lampião da Esquina*. Making the social relationships of each individual reinforce the systematization of meanings and practices associated with the body. For, the body represents a symbolic good, receiving different values from the inserted context (BOURDIEU, 2009).

Thus, the body can start to mean a kind of prison for the subject, which would have the objective of putting pressure on him to adapt to the emerging social standards. For a group of gays, it is not only necessary to have a muscular body, to have defined arms and a youthful

appearance, but also to use the body to reinforce a certain type of masculinity before society and peers. The body desired by this group is not just the body of the other, but its own body, because the desired body is a mirror of yours, that is, a male, heterosexual and dominant male body (PEREIRA; AYROSA, 2012; OLIVEIRA, 2019).

When looking at the ads and profiles of gay men in the search for partners, the perception of the masculinity model presented and desired in the description of the profiles and ads is visible. The standardized and aesthetically biased body to the heterosexual and muscular male incorporated by the subjects in the two fields of investigation results in the subjects' identity composition, each in its time, based on the satisfaction of consumption relations, prioritizing the commodification of bodies in the gay world.

Eccel and Saraiva (2009) affirm that although homosexual masculinities refer to masculinities subordinate to the parameter of the representation of hegemonic and heteronormative masculinity, and have this as a basis, it is possible to observe unevenness of power and legitimation among the diverse masculinities in the homosexual environment. In this sense, for each society, or social group, there is an ideal of masculinity; for each ideal of masculinity, a body that thus establishes a relationship between gender identity and body construction (DUTRA, 2007). Thus, conventional models of social action are instituted, which guide people's lives in their daily relationships, as described below for the forms of performance and performances of gay men, especially in their digital interactions.

Thus, the media as an exposition of the perfect homosexual, characterizes the thought built for a long time, such as: intellectual, white, middle or upper class, with refined tastes and good looks. The image of the effeminate man being considered the opposite, with ways that resemble ridicule, bad taste and trivialization. Featuring a reflection of the thought that guided its construction. The opposite of this model image is personified by an effeminate man, not necessarily young, with mannerisms that approach the ridiculous, whose clothes or denounce his little economic capital, or are in bad taste and with banal concerns (SILVA, 2018).

The standards presented as parameters to be followed engender disputes within the socially marginalized groups themselves, causing a dichotomy clearly visible within the group itself, thus we have a clear confrontation between those considered “effeminate” and “standardized”, rich and poor, white and black, among other infinite forms of division in identity struggles. These configurations provide specific and subjective ways of coping with the adversities that gays face in their daily experiences.

The confrontations with social impositions go through a series of issues that cross themes such as class, race and gender within the current social model. Thus, when we think

about the interactions carried out in the virtual world, we understand how everything can be bought and acquired. In this conception, happiness comes to be understood as a social imposition that is shared on social networks, making life a spectacle to be more than lived, to be watched and consumed (ANDRADE; SILVA, 2019).

For this, the subjects when using digital media feel the need to project themselves in the best possible way, exposing in their profiles the best of themselves, presenting a true curriculum, where their best characteristics are exposed in order to obtain from that a relationship. They prepare themselves through a brief script that is offered by the tool itself (application), which does not propose failure and which promises, as a product, good performance (ANDRADE; SILVA, 2019; OLIVEIRA, 2019).

The profiles in apps serve as a showcase for selling the product, which, in this case, is the image itself, leaving the administrator the best way to expose its characteristics. This analogy that we use allows an easy reading of the functioning of the meeting applications, whatever it may be. In this context, some aspects give greater visibility to the profiles displayed in the apps, the image is one of these devices. When analyzing gay dating sites, images are characterized in the construction of a singular masculinity, according to the patterns of virility, considered healthy. In this production, it reads ““The most beautiful men available to you!” Here, there is no trace of a grammar of diversity: men, [...]” (JUNIOR, 2014, p. 45, our translation), in view of this position we see a clear imposition of the aesthetic and social standards required so that one can have a better resourcefulness in virtual interactions.

The exposure of images in profiles is what generates more or less visualization and demand from other users of the application. Soares and Barbosa (2020, p. 234, our translation) highlight the following excerpt on this subject “the focus of the texts and photographs that are in the online profiles is the body, described, photographed and published as if it were subjected to a kind of “photogenic totalitarianism””. Thus, the centralization of the body in the socialization capacity of the sites can comprise a certain part of the history of the bodies, since the body and its performance, its acts and its appearance are the constituent elements of the meetings and interactions offered (ZAGO, 2013).

The transmission of images exposes a series of information within researches in the virtual field that sometimes could not be visible in an offline ethnography. Therefore, we refer to the description made by application users in relation to the characteristics that are considered important in the presentation to their peers, as described in the comment below.



Immediately draw some attention to some "characteristics" common to all: they are users who describe themselves as active (only one of them puts themselves as "versatile", active and passive), who have large penis duly commented and exposed and who present themselves and demand "discretion" and "masculinity". The expression that is most common and that I subscribe to all these attributes is "active male". The identities that touch this "active male" discourse, then, will be engendered from a discursive staging of the body, which appears in text and images materialized in properly measured penises and in the muscles that display a beauty paradigm for the contemporary sexual device (JUNIOR, 2014, p. 318, our translation).

The performances performed in the virtual world cast the subjects in such a way that only profiles with descriptions that fit the desired models have greater access. It is important to focus on the aspects that increase the chances of getting a partner. The photographs presented visibly consider the fact that only their relevant parts are exposed, while others are made invisible. The publication of profiles of pectorals, abdominals, arms, glutes and penis is frequent in profiles. In many of these profiles, users' faces and heads are not as intensely exposed (ZAGO, 2013).

The fact of not exposing the face permeates among other factors the question of secrecy, which is most of the time a prerequisite to achieve a real meeting. The rules of interaction between virtual subjects demand application users to adapt to the various norms, among them the way of displaying bodies in profiles has its place of value, as Zago (2013) points out, these bodies gain centrality thanks to muscle tone, the smoothness of your skin, the absence of fat, the sculpted silhouette through physical exercises - something that establishes an 'almost moral' connotation, providing the criteria for individual assessment. As we can see, what is at stake in the search for a partner in the applications is necessarily the compliance with the requirements imposed on the standard of beauty demanded socially. Thus, in front of a showcase where different products are exposed, the subject evaluates which are the best and, consequently, launch their interaction proposals.

These reflections point out that such discourses also propose idealized bodies, generating questions of exclusion for those who do not fit the proposed stereotypes. When assuming and expressing the desire to relate to people who have a certain physical size, stable financial condition, well located residential address and have transportation, we perceive the reproduction of a markedly hierarchical discourse, in which assets and liabilities stage forms of the subject immeasurable (JUNIOR, 2014).

All this tangle of virtual interactions creates the web that makes it possible to understand the way in which virtual societies are built in the field of partner search. Noting

that exposure through photographs constitutes one of these aspects, when physical attributes are exposed in profiles, there is clearly an intention and desire, thus, the meanings attributed to such practices say a lot about the researched subjects, as we can see in the speech below.

Publishing photographs showing only abs, chest and arms worked out in weight training exercises, in which the head is "cut off" from the body, is an operation that aims to translate the pertinent information about the body into the flesh. It is to make the body, or some of its parts, the ultimate embodiment of what is most important in individuals. It is to show body parts worked through what Courtine considers "practices designed to demonstrate integration with the body norms in force, to provide a testimony of communion with the culture of the body" in a context in which, according to the author, "The muscle is a way of life" (ZAGO, 2013, p. 15, our translation).

Among the various aspects that involve this discussion, we still see a great distinction and recurring perpetuation of prejudices in relation to the roles played in sexual practice, thus printing a hierarchy of roles, in the sense of always putting in check the dualities that permeate these relationships, such as, active/passive, effeminate/male, muscular/normal. It is common to discard and refuse partners who have feminine traits or even identify themselves as effeminate, these categories suffer not only in offline experiences when they are the target of jokes and, mainly, of violence caused by homophobia. In virtual spaces it is normal to search for partners who do not identify themselves as gay and who are looking for confidential sex, corroborating the notion of the gay imagery that "there is an assumption that, once out of the "closet", a gay man "loses" his masculinity; whereas if you stay in the "closet", your virility will still be protected" (ZAGO; SANTOS 2011, p. 41, our translation).

Thus, from the social constructions that define roles for each gender, in the homosexual community, attitudes are imposed where the performance of the asset is considered to be a more masculine performance and that in this form of performance, the posture of the male man, who must comply with his active role, as this is the social role for those born with this biological designation. This view of the asset is valued in order to place the subjects who practice it as the most desired in the applications, carrying stigmas and prejudices with those who do not act in such a way, and mainly perpetuating prejudices that involve everything that is linked to the female figure, to the detriment of extolling macho and patriarchal practices.

On the other hand, the active homosexual tends to gain the status of more male, reaching the point that, in rare exceptions, males who "eat fagots" are not classified differently from "real men", since they play the active role. In fact, many men who have



homosexual relations do not consider themselves homosexuals, as long as they do not practice anal sex or that they play an “active” role in sexual intercourse, as the subject who allows himself to be passive in sexual intercourse with another is considered unworthy and to be disqualified as a citizen (ALMEIDA, 2011).

Another stance that is clearly perceived in virtual interactions refers to the practices of racism and fetishes of the body of black gay men. This is a question widely discussed by researchers on the topic, and which currently has great repercussions, but which is still recurrent in the different situations of our daily lives. In the virtual field it is no different, black subjects face a range of situations in which hatred and prejudice to these bodies are distilled, they are situations that go beyond markers, because they are always at the center of discussions involving minorities and marginalized groups.

This socially created situation, which feeds people's imagination about the actions of the Black in sexual practice, allows for a greater rooting of prejudices. And within the gay community, where these prejudices and especially violence caused by homophobia are already experienced, it is essential to discuss these practices and adopt measures that raise the awareness of the LGBTQIA+ community in relation to the discussions involving the guidelines on minorities and their claims.

As pointed out by Barros and Barreto (2018, p. 310, our translation):

"Every black man is good in bed", "Every black man has a big dick." Here the preconception (prejudice) manifests itself in the field of the black body and sexuality. Through these statements every black man would be doomed to the concrete proof of this fantasy imaginary in the eroticized context of sexuality and the body as an object [...] The construction of the social imaginary, objectified as an object and commodity that was bought, rented and sold for the use (in all ways) by its masters and ladies of the plantation, is configured in the production of the fantasies of black bodies.

Which leads us to understanding, the use of the internet and digital media intertwine with real life and make us understand how new forms of sociability are born in the contemporary world. The struggles of people who do not "comply" with the rules and social requirements imposed regarding cisheteronormative sexual roles are daily struggles, many of these people leave their homes, within the family because they are not accepted, thus, they are forced to prostitute themselves to survive, as is the case with many transgender people. In this sense, some are forced to choose to live in the closet, an expression used by gays to designate those who are not assumed, or to assume their identity and live in a way that brings them

happiness and reveals their true self. In the virtual world, those in the closet use devices that favor anonymity.

When we refer to non-assumed subjects we have a range of possibilities and reasons that make them continue to maintain the option for not revealing themselves. It is worth noting that in some cases, these subjects suffer threats, even of death, from people in their own families and this situation makes them prefer to continue to hide their true identity. In other cases, there are subjects who, for fear of the reaction of friends, family, co-workers, prefer to pass the image of heterosexual, in some cases maintaining heteronormative relationships while having sex with other men. In these situations, the use of dating applications aimed at the gay public meet the needs of these subjects because,

Unlike the “real” spaces, the Internet allows a makeup of the identity of these individuals, with false names, without photos or with other people's photos. This ghetto, therefore, created another possibility for the "closeted ones" who are afraid of being discovered. This fear provokes the rejection of those who assume their sexuality, since, in the company of some of those assumed, it is often concluded that they are only “similar” (ALMEIDA, 2011, p. 42, our translation).

These issues that involve the public/private dichotomy are aspects that enrich the discussions about the roles played in the virtual field. This problematization opens up an infinite number of possibilities for understanding interactions and especially this new model of homoaffective sociability. One aspect that should be highlighted is the issue of subjects' segregation, when they, even today with the opportunity to visit places not exclusively aimed at this type of audience, are unable to feel at ease and, therefore, continue to bring the experience of what in the past were the ghettos, where only those marginalized groups attended and could be who they really were.

It is worth mentioning that even as the advances that the gay community has achieved over these more than forty years of organized struggle, still due to a whole social structure that imposes a model of sexuality to be followed, many people do not feel free to assume their true identities, needing to use devices in applications such as nicknames, in order to be able to relate. In this way, we can visualize different aspects that highlight the senses and meanings attributed by the subjects in their virtual relationships.

The nickname becomes a tag with relevant information about each user of the chat rooms. In an attempt to ensure anonymity, individuals hide their 'real' names by creating fictitious names for themselves; thus, in these nicknames there is information supposedly as 'true' about you as your 'real' names, because in the nicknames there are mentions about their bodies, their

ages and even about their sexual practices. This is how the nickname, inside internet chat rooms, may not be fictitious: it can be quite 'real' (ZAGO; SANTOS, 2011, p. 55, our translation).

The way these subjects hide and seek in the digital means to relate, says a lot about them. These small details are essential to know the dynamics that we seek to analyze and understand, in addition to providing a better understanding of how virtual connections occur in order to provide closer ties between people. The use of these tools also indicates a weakness with regard to the superficiality of strengthening digital relationships, we can notice a greater fluidity in dealing with peers, when starting a conversation with a subject, at a certain point in the virtual dialogue if there is a confrontation of totally opposed ideas or points of view, one of the two involved can simply exclude the other from their contact list, thus indicating a disposable treatment of the other in the virtual field, corroborating with this view that digital media offer a notion of current social actions.

The intensified use of mobile apps for relationships puts us in front of one of the most sensitive social transformations of the present, focusing on how we have constituted new aspirational horizons related to sexual and affective desires marked by challenging sexual and gender negotiations, technological learning. These have a strong impact on our ways of feeling and managing emotions, in addition to requiring a whole learning process to deal with communication modes/etiquette that are being created while they are articulated. That is, we have been driven to trigger these relational codes at the very moment we put them into practice. It is valid for those who are in the applications looking for sex, company or love (PELUCIO, 2017, p. 321, our translation).

These reflections serve to make us think about our own experiences in the current context. Thinking our way of life from a look from the virtual field to the real, is valid because they expose the subjects in their essence, it is in the profiles of applications and social networks that we show our most intimate desires and that only things deemed as good are explored such as: trips, luxurious houses, perfect bodies, best parties, the car of the year, there we feed our ego, involving desires that comprise the economic, social, and sexual aspects that we feed. The field of the virtual thus comprises an extension of the real that says a lot about each one.

## **Methodological procedures**

As we consider the problem and, above all, the objectives that we aim to achieve with the study, we work with a netnographic research, which is a specialized form of ethnography

that uses computer-mediated communications as a data source to reach the understanding and ethnographic representation of a cultural phenomenon on the Internet. Its approach is adapted to study forums, newsgroups, blogs, newspapers, social networks etc. (KOZINETS, 2014).

In the given conditions, we understand that the referred type of research substantiates the production of answers to the problems raised in this study. Thus, the data were produced by capturing archival data from three profiles in the *Lampião da Esquina* newspaper and three in the Grindr dating application.

The information captured from the archival data of the three profiles in the *Lampião da Esquina* newspaper and three in the Grindr dating application were analyzed using the interpretive approach when the focus of the investigation is the meanings of human action in the face of specific cultural contexts, proposed by Gaskins, Miller and Corsaro (1992). Thus, a synthesis analysis of the data was carried out in order to obtain the main key messages. Then, the profiles were analyzed and information relevant to understanding the objective and problem of the investigation was extracted.

### **Interweaving homoerotic forms of socialization at *Lampião da Esquina* and Grindr**

We will analyze here three ads in the column "*troca troca*" of the newspaper *Lampião da Esquina*, which was the first homoerotic alternative Brazilian newspaper that circulated during the years 1978 and 1981. It was born within the context of the alternative press at the time of the political opening of 1970 the easing of years of censorship promoted by the Military Coup of 1964 (BANDEIRA, 2006). In tabloid format, the newspaper had fixed editorials such as "*Cartas na Mesa*", where readers' letters were published and answered, "*Esquina*" where news was gathered, "*Reportagem*", where the cover story was always located, and from number five the column "*Bixórdia*". In addition to these, there was always space for cultural information, such as book recommendations, exhibitions, concerts and films; and for interviews. The production of the content was done by the editorial advisors and by guests who varied with each edition (MOTTA, 2009).

The column "*troca troca*" was designed in the format of classifieds, however, its purpose was to enable newspaper readers to meet other people with the same tastes, hobbies and preferences. In the column, which charged a small fee for the advertisement, they could write both men and women, displaying their characteristics that they considered most important for other readers to know about. Below we present a fragment of the newspaper that we highlight for analysis.

Figure 1 – “Troca/troca” Edition 021-February-1980



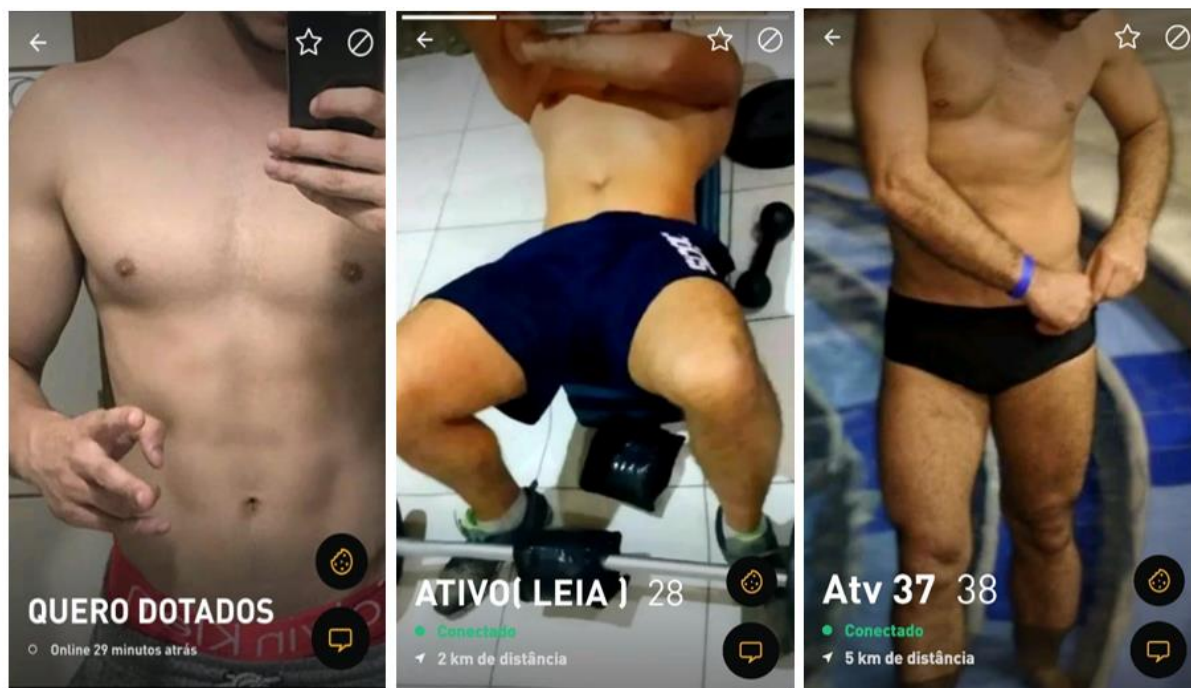
Source: Grupo Dignidade (2020)

Our second object of study is the Grindr app - an online gay communication and sociability environment launched in 2009, operating in the location-based-real-time (LBRTD) logic (LANDOVITZ *et al.*, 2012). This application has about 3.6 million users in 192 countries. The platform is a simple interaction tool, in which it is possible to obtain information about the closest users, such as their distance, photos, height, weight, “tribes” to which they belong and chat. It is used for the most diverse purposes, such as social interaction, sex, social inclusion, entertainment, dating, having received attention in studies on sexual behaviors considered risky (RICE *et al.*, 2012; LANDOVITZ *et al.*, 2012). It presents characteristics of “gay villas”, in which the subjects use their own symbols and signs to make themselves visible among themselves and invisible in society (AHLM, 2017). It was chosen because it is one of the most popular dating apps for gay men.

Below we present the image of the three profiles that we will analyze.



Figure 2 – Grindr user profiles



Source: Grindr (2020)

Based on the selection of advertisements and profiles, we started the construction of analysis categories, for this purpose, we structured the speeches of the selected subjects, in order to organize the categories and discuss each one of them in relation to the readings carried out on the subject. In the chart below, we highlight the ads of the three subjects chosen at *Lampião da Esquina*. It is important to emphasize that the moment and reality of these subjects was totally different from the current one, however, it was already possible to perceive the existence of parameters considered valid for the placement of advertisements that sought to provide social interaction. Aspects that describe behaviors, tastes, desired intentions, markers such as race and generation are clearly identified in the profiles presented below, corroborating the understanding of the symbolic value attributed to the subjects at that historical moment (BOURDIEU, 2009).

Chart 1 – Selected ads in the *Troca-Troca* section at *Lampião da Esquina*

**SUBJECT 01** - Discreet, 21 years old, 1.80m, I like music, I play sports, I am joyful. I want to make *troca-troca* with boys and girls up to 30 years old who are joyful, from any corner of the world. MR Baxter. PO Box 3945, 01000, São Paulo, SP.

**SUBJECT 02** - Black, from São Paulo, 20 years old, 1.79m, wants to correspond with boys from all over the planet, who are very liberal, for a sincere and unprejudiced friendship. Willis Ferreiro, Alameda Nothmann 643, 01216, São Paulo, SP.

**SUBJECT 03** - BRAZILIAN living in the STATES, 30 years old, 1.71m, educated, romantic and understanding, wants to correspond with patricians of good culture. I change photos in the first letter. Write in English if you wish. A. M. Box 6585, Modesto, Calif. 95355, USA.



Source: *Lampião da Esquina* (1980)

In the profiles selected in the Grindr application, we noticed a greater variety of information that presents several markers to think about the interactions carried out in this tool. The selected subjects clearly present their preferences and display in their profiles photos of their worked bodies. The markers that signal the aspects that talk to the analyzed categories are easily perceived when we observe the profiles, generation, physical size and race, in addition to the preferences that are highlighted in these profiles. The information exposed in the profiles of Grindr users, in addition to corroborating with our research, impresses a series of other provocations that we will not stick to in this work, but that are important to highlight. Profiles that present subjects that highlight aspects such as thinness, old age, fat, effeminate, assumed, among others are discarded instantly.

### Chart 2 – Selected profiles on Grindr

**SUBJECT 04 - ACTIVE [READ] YOUNGS, ACTIVE**, no photos, smokers, gouines, effeminate, skinny, fakes and drug addicts.

I'M NOT INTO MAKING OUT BETWEEN ACTIVES

Discreet, good looking, relaxed and polite, looking for similars

1.72, 72 kg. Latin, ripped, active, discreet, single, negative.

**SUBJECT 05 - Active. 37**, Active wanting to enjoy something cool, be it a date, chat, beer, sex, a walk or everything together. Come on!

x Actives wanting to making out

x effeminate

1.70, 75 kg, white, ripped, man, active, discreet, single, dating, friends, now, negative.

**SUBJECT 06 - I WANT WHO IS PACKING BIG, JUST INTO:** young, who work out, skinny or ripped, male, discreet.

X NOT INTO: effeminate or all out, fat, old.

I DON'T SEND A FACE PHOTO!

DO NOT ANSWER PROFILE WITHOUT PHOTO!

I HAVE NO PATIENCE!

1.82, white, male, worked body.

Source: Grindr (2020)

Faced with the confrontation of ads and profiles, we chose two categories to analyze, so we try to emphasize the sense of understanding the place that the body occupies in these forms of socialization, and how from these tools this body becomes an object of commodification, in the search for a partner. In this way, we divide the markers that represent each category and organize them in analytical Chart to enable the readers to understand.

When comparing the ads/profiles, we do not notice a considerable difference between the aspects that print these markers. If we look at the body category, we will notice that the

same aspects highlighted by advertisers at *Lampião da Esquina*, are still considered relevant in their profiles on Grindr. The highlights reported by the subjects are equal when they present aspects such as height, common to all ads/profiles, weight, highlighted in two of the profiles on Grindr, in addition to sports practices or physical size, thus printing a notion of the body as marketing object (THOMPSON; HIRSCHMAN, 1995a), as shown in the table below.

**Chart 3 – Category – Body**

<b>BODY</b>	<p><b>S 01</b> - 1.80m, Play sports.  <b>S 02</b> - 1,79m.  <b>S 03</b> - 1,71m.  <b>S 04</b> - 1,72, 72 kg, nice looking, ripped.  <b>S 05</b> - 1,70, 75 kg, ripped.  <b>S 06</b> - 1,82, worked body.</p>
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Source: Devised by the authors

In the commodification category there are more attributions to other aspects than specifically to the body. Especially for users of *Lampião da Esquina*, there is an appreciation of personal preferences, such as tastes and hobbies, which define this category very subtly. Contrasting this view of the advertising subjects of *Lampião da Esquina*, Grindr users clearly expose aspects that present this commercial connotation of the body, presenting markers such as height, weight, preferences and as highlighted by Subject 06, who point out what does not attract him.

**Chart 4 – Category – Commodification**

<b>COMMODIFICATION</b>	<p><b>S 01</b> - I like music, I play sports, I am joyful.  <b>S 02</b> - wishes to correspond with boys from all over planet earth, who are very liberal, for a sincere and unprejudiced friendship.  <b>S 03</b> - educated, romantic and understanding, wishes to correspond with patricians of good culture. I change the photos in first letter. Write in English if you wish.  <b>S 04</b> - Discreet, good looking, relaxed and polite, looking for similars, 1.72, 72 kg. Latin, ripped, active, discreet, single, negative.  <b>S 05</b> - 1.70, 75 kg, white, ripped, man, active, discreet, single, dating, friends, now, negative.  <b>S 06</b> - I WANT WHO IS PACKING BIG, ONLY INTO: young, who work out, skinny or ripped, male, discreet.  X NOT INTO: effeminate or all out, fat, old.  I DON'T SEND A FACE PHOTO!  DO NOT ANSWER PROFILE WITHOUT PHOTO!</p>
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I HAVE NO PATIENCE!

Source: Devised by the authors

The drawings we make from the analyzes and reflections carried out here lead us to perceive a similarity between the subjects of the two tools, with regard to the forms of exposure of the bodies and the meaning given to the commercialization of these. The main markers that indicate this proximity between the ads and profiles analyzed are aspects such as height and physical size, mainly related to the body, and tastes, appearance, personal preferences, regarding commodification. Thus, the analyzed profiles have shown a greater exposure and consequent desire for perfect and worked bodies, when compared to those considered non-standard. Depending on the discussions proposed so far, we can see the configuration of the dynamics of social interactions through the tools in the two contexts presented.

### Final considerations

Currently, technological tools allow us to be connected all the time, this is the new social and virtual configuration of contemporary times, being considered impositions because the non-use of one or the other of these tools makes us be considered outdated, old and ancient. The social context in which we are inserted shapes and guides us in the sense of being aligned with current practices that enable us to participate effectively in the social ways of life of that time.

Considering the forms of sociability for gay men at different times, we try to understand how the issues that affect body issues are treated, identify the most common aspects in the process of finding partners in these environments and describe which parameters are used most frequently in the search partners in these instruments. Looking closely at the profiles presented, both from users of *Lampião da Esquina* and Grindr, we can see similarities in the ways they present themselves, where most aspects are described that exalt and highlight the body and consequently their preferences and tastes.

Specifically, when dealing with the categories presented here, namely, body and commodification, the subjects observed present aspects that are intertwined and confused, regardless of the time. When we take a close look at the results, we observe the body in the two cases studied, it is crossed by categories that imply a need to make it perfect, desirable, and these body models are the most sought out by the subjects in search of partners. In

relation to the aspects and parameters used in the search for partners, we again have a tangle of connections that are interconnected, for that, aspects such as physical size, similar tastes, standards of living, race, among others, are considered of paramount importance in the search for a partner, whether in the newspaper, or in the virtual environment, through applications, where we perceive in addition to a great exposure of the body, the intention of presenting this as a form of merchandise, in the sense of exposing its best attributes and qualities.

Thus, when reflecting on the meanings attributed to the forms of socialization of gay men at two different moments in history, we can infer that the practices used are similar in the prominence attributed to the body and the mercantile factor of it, therefore, being basically the body as physically and aesthetically pleasing the most attractive in their choice.

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