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Department of Sociology

"It's a Match!"

A qualitative study of university students' reflections and behaviours when engaging in romantic and sexual relationships

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Abstract

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The dating culture and how one can initiate romantic and sexual relationships have developed and changed over the years. The purpose of this research is to explore the Swedish university students' dating culture. How Tinder is used and how self-presentation looks on Tinder versus offline among the students. The study uses 10 qualitative personal semi-structured interviews with Swedish students, between the ages of 18-24 years. The theoretical framework used in the analysis to help explain the data are Goffman's self-presentation theory and Butler's gender theory. The analysis reveals how social norms and presentation of oneself and others on Tinder and offline works differently. On Tinder the impressions of others are based on only their pictures, bios and sometimes texts, which can be misleading since the possibility of concealing parts that do not fit with the idealize role a person tries to be. While offline one can get a feeling of a person from their whole performance where it is harder to conceal parts of oneself and that makes it feel more authentic. Furthermore, some social norms were more apparent on Tinder than offline; people took more safety precautions meeting someone from Tinder than they would if they met someone from a club and people were shallower on Tinder, they went more on a person's appearance than offline where they went on mostly personality.

Keywords: Tinder, dating, social norms, self-presentation, students, qualitative interviews

Popular science summary

This thesis explores Swedish university students', in Lund, dating lives and how they use Tinder to meet new people for romantic or sexual relationships, but also how they hook up with people in the clubs. Personal interviews were made with 10 students, 5 men and 5 women, where they were asked about their use of Tinder and how the engage in relationships offline as well, to get an insight of the difference between Tinder and offline. The study found that most people felt Tinder to be shallow and that you could easily misjudge another person on the app, since people enhance their idealize parts of themselves on Tinder. Offline, on the other hand, felt more authentic because of the chance to be able to connect with someone's personality and not only viewing a thought-out profile on them. Still, though, the interviewees saw positive aspects of Tinder as well, it gives the opportunity to meet new people you might not otherwise have met, and also it gives a clearer sign that someone is interested in you than it does offline. That is because a match usually means the person you matched with finds you attractive and interesting, while at the club you have to look for more subtle signs, as glances and eye contact. The male interviewees found it easier to initiate contact on Tinder, as they thought a match was clearer. The female interviewees felt that it could be easier to hook up offline, since it usually just happens without thought and they would go by instinct. Even though, women got more matches than men, however the men usually were the ones who send the first message on Tinder. The study did also find that, all of the women took more safety precautions when they would meet someone from Tinder than if they would hook up with someone from a club. They made sure to meet in public and told a friend they were going on a Tinder date. This could be because on Tinder it is harder to really know who the person is before you meet offline. The men also said they took more precautions on Tinder than they would at the clubs, but not in the same extent as the women. Most of the men said they were not worried about their own safety when meeting someone from Tinder. It seems that on Tinder some social norms are more apparent, hence women are more cautious on Tinder than men, which acts out the gender norm of women feeling the need to take precautions when meeting a man for the first time. Furthermore, on Tinder the interviewees felt that people dare to write more things, sometimes even explicit or rude messages, than what they would dare to say offline. This is because on Tinder there are less consequence than it would be offline.

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1. Introduction

Relationships between people have always been interesting to explore, especially for a sociologist. All from family ties, friendships to romantic and sexual relationships, it can give a good insight on how the society looks at the time. It can say something about the culture and social values the society has. This thesis is going to explore the dating culture among Swedish university students. The dating culture and how one can initiate romantic and sexual relationships have developed and changed over the years. Today there are more options to how one can find a partner than it was for only three decades ago. A person is not longer restricted to meeting people within their closest domain or social group. The birth of the Internet opened up new possibilities to meet people and then even more with the launch of social media platforms. Therefore, with people having the option to meet partners via both social media platforms and in the real world, it is interesting to explore how these different ways to initiate relationships behave and what effect social media has on the dating culture today.

Today 45 percent of the world's population use social media and in Sweden that number is more than double, 95 percent (Chaffey, 2019). Interacting with people through media technology have existed since the birth of the Internet and computer-mediated communications have interest scientists ever since (Papacharissi and Rubin, 2000). Exploring how computer-mediated communications differ and how social interactions through technology behaves differently from face-to-face communications, is a question still explored today even more as social media technology develops. The development of social media has gone from only having access from a stationary position to mobile, which have increase users and also changed social interactions even more (Jung, Bapna, Ramaprasad, and Umyaroy, 2019). New media technology has changed the way people, and especially young people, interact with each other; from communicating to sharing information about oneself and meeting new people. New media technology has given a new way to initiate relationships (Meenahg, 2015).

In 1995 the first dating website domain match.com was launched in the United States. Even though Internet from the start has been used by people to find partners, the launched of match.com altered and populated online dating with new ways for people to initiate romantic and sexual relationships (Wiederhold, 2015). Online dating has proven to give people an opportunity to meet more potential partners in a less threating environment, but online dating also has disadvantages. Wiederhold lists in her report on twenty years of

online dating a few things, one of them being that people might have difficulty committing to one person with the constant access to more options of partners and never be satisfied and continue searching for someone better. Furthermore, she also mentions the users can delay of meeting face to face and communicating only through texts which can lead to misinterpretation and end with them never meeting. Although the disadvantages of online dating it is still a popular way for people to meet potential partners and it has developed even further since the first dating website. With the introduction of smartphones, online dating moved from a stationary position to mobile and the access to new potential partners only a click away on one's mobile phone (Jung et al., 2019).

A new way of online dating was introduced with applications (apps) on smartphones to match the evaluation of social media going mobile. Going mobile created a different aspect to online dating because they are not constrained to certain times and places when they can carry around the devices that gives immediate access to the online world. This also created opportunities to come up with new ways to make online dating appealing for people on the go. Thus, Tinder became successful with being one of the most downloaded dating apps in the world and the number one dating app in Scandinavia (BBC, 2016). Tinder is an app marketing itself not only as a dating app but a way to connect to new people for the purpose of friendship, romance or an encounter that can change one's life (Tinder, 2019). Since Tinder's launch in 2012 there has been over 30 billion matches on Tinder (ibid.).

1. 2 Tinder

September 2012 Tinder was launched as a social discovery platform, first trialled at series of American college's campus, which proved to be a full success and Tinder continued to grow. (Iqbal, 2019). Today Tinder has 50 million users in over 190 countries and has 1.6 billion swipes and 26 million matches by day with one million dates per week (Smith, 2019; Tinder, 2019). 85 percent of Tinder's users are between the ages 18 and 34 years old (Lefebvre, 2018).

The popularity to Tinder can be explained by its user-friendly features and that its free to use. Sean Rad and Justin Madtee, the creators, avoided making Tinder a typical online dating platform by modelling the app after a deck of cards, making it into a game-playing format instead (Lefebvre, 2018). Once downloaded a person can create a simple profile, containing of specific pictures of oneself of one's choosing, a maximum of nine, and write a short biography (bio) about oneself up to around 500-characters. First name, age, employment

and education can also be shown in their profile. This have been efficient by Tinder by allowing profile information from Facebook to be uploaded directly to a user's Tinder profile. Furthermore, quite recent Tinder has given their user's the opportunity to integrate pictures from their own Instagram without revealing the user's Instagram username and also uploading an anthem from Spotify.

Tinder shows their users other user's profiles based on their geographically proximity, with range up to 100 miles (161km), gender, sexual orientation and age settings. Tinder will then show their users other users, based on their setting options, allowing their users to choose if the person they get up in their deck is of interest or not. The choice is usually quick and based on snap judgement, first impression or initial attraction, were "typically, women spend 8.5 min and men 7.2 min swiping during a single session" (Lefebvre, 2018: 9). While swiping in the deck of potential partners one stays anonymous and is given the option to swipe left (pass), swipe right (like) or swipe up (super like) on another users. The swiping up feature came 2016 and gives that user a notice that someone *really* likes them. Swiping left means the there is no interest in the person one gets up and the potential to match vanish, swiping right is the opposite meaning that an interest exist for that person and a match is possible. It is possible to swipe right on 100 users per day and give one super like per day on the free Tinder version. If two users swipe right on each other it is a match and they have a possibility to initiate contact via a private chat on the app.

Tinder is a free app, but there are upgrades on it for a cost. These upgrades are called Tinder plus and Tinder Gold, both with almost the same extra functions as unlimited likes, can give 5 super likes a day, can rewind a pass to a like, a boost each month to become the top profile in their area and possibility to swipe all around the world and not just within a 100 miles radios. The only difference between the two is with Tinder Gold the users can swipe through a deck of people whom already swipe right on them (Tinder, 2019b).

1.3 Aim and purpose

The aim of this study is to get an insight on how Swedish university students reflect on their romantic and sexual relationships; how they initiate relationships, if they are looking for a special type of relationships, and what different strategies they use to achieve them. Furthermore, this study aims to see how these different reflections differs via initiate relationships online versus in real life (offline).

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the dating culture among Swedish university students through their use of the dating app Tinder. Furthermore, to explore the students' self-presentations and social norms on Tinder and offline when they are trying to find romantic or sexual partners, researching the differences and similarities. The questions this thesis is going to explore are:

- How does online dating apps affect the dating culture among students?
- How does students' self-presentations online versus offline look like?
- How does social and gender norms affect the students dating culture?

1. 4 Delimitations

This study is conducted at Lund on Swedish Lund University students. The choice of doing a study on university students is for the reason that most of them belong in the age group, emerging adults. Emerging adults are in the ages 18-29 years, between adolescence and adulthood. It is then most common to explore romantic and sexual relationships in a higher frequency and the relationships are often influenced, normative and salient (Lefebvre, 2018). Furthermore, emerging adults are heavily depended on technology and use it in their everyday life. Therefore, assuming their dating life will be heavily influenced by technology and social norms.

1. 5 Disposition of thesis

The disposition of this thesis starts with a short review of prior research within the subject of online dating and the culture of dating. Thereafter, follows the methodology episode and the theoretical framework, where Goffman's self-presentation theory and Butler's gender theory are explained and also a short definition of dating culture. After that is the analysis, which are divided into three main headlines about Tinder habits, self-presentation and social and gender norms. The analysis covers almost half the thesis. Last in the thesis is a discussion of the results from the analysis with a conclusion.

2. Prior research

There are a lot of research on dating culture, and the newer ones have taken an interest in the online world of dating. As the access to the online world have become much easier with only a click on one's mobile phone, more questions on how online dating works and affects people

have been raised. Questions; as what are the effects of mobile apps on online dating (Jung et al., 2019), how does scripts on online dating look like (Hess and Flores, 2018) and what does the dating culture look like today with online dating apps (Lefebvre, 2018; Timmermans and Courtois, 2018; Kuperberg and Padgett, 2016; Meenagh, 2015).

2.1 Strategies, initiation and behaviours on Tinder and similar dating apps

Jung et al. (2019) researched on the effect mobile online dating apps had on people's behaviour from a quantitative study. Their aim was to identify changes of users' behaviours adopting to mobile applications compared to traditional websites, through online dating. Their main focus was on ubiquity; users' login frequency, impulsivity; sending message directly without checking other person's profile and disinhibition; checking wider range of potential partners disregarding of race, education and height. They found that users of online dating mobile apps are more likely to use them more often, send more messages and also gets more matches. Furthermore, they found that the mobile apps' mechanisms of ubiquity, impulsivity and disinhibition increased. However, men where the ones that showed the biggest increase of impulsive actions.

Tinder, the focus of this study, is one of the most popular online dating apps in the world, which have caught the interest of other researchers. An American study explores similar questions as this study and has been made with American emerging adults (18-29 years old) about their dating lives and online dating usage where Tinder is in focus. Lefebvre's (2018) exploratory study done on an online survey with 395 participants through descriptive statistics and thematic analysis, examines how relationship initiation behaviours look on Tinder; how Tinder users engage with others through the app, their strategies and their selections. She points out how Tinder makes it more apparent how their users gather information and have strategies that effects their relationship initiation behaviours. Furthermore, she points out how these pre-interaction process should not be dismissed when exploring face to face relationship initiations. Lefebvre also mentions in her study that most people find Tinder to be a hook up app, and the main reason to why people swipe right is when they find someone attractive.

Another online survey study from Belgian explores 1038 Belgian users' usage of Tinder shows similar results as Lefebvre's (2018) study does, that Tinder mostly was used as a way for hook up; casual sex (Timmermans and Courtois, 2018). However, the study did find more than a quarter of the participants had ended up in committed relationships via Tinder.

Though another resemblance Timmermans' and Courtois' study had with Lefebvre was that users most likely only met with people they found matched their attractiveness. They also found differences between men and women, women were more selective when swiping right even though they still got more matches than men and men were more likely to send a message first just like Jung et al.'s study showed. Another interesting factor they found were that women reported a higher number of casual sexual encounters with other Tinder men users. Timmermans and Courtois thought it could have to do with women having more matches to choose from. They concluded their study with saying that even though most Tinder users meet up to have casual sex they do not know if repeating encounters will lead to a committed relationship. They argue that hooking up have replaced the initiation of relationships formation from dating and that sexual encounters can lead to committed relationships.

2.2 Self-presentation, culture and scripts

Hess and Flores (2018) have also done a study on Tinder though they have not looked on the app itself but instead done an ethnographic study of an Instagram profile called *Tinder nightmares*. Their study is still relevant to this since their study explores a part of Tinder's culture, they analyse photos from Tinder users whom have received unwanted messages that are uploaded on the Instagram profile. As the different studies on Tinder mentions men are more likely to text first (Jung et al. 2019; Timmermans and Courtois, 2018), Hess and Flores study shows men's messages can be received badly by the women they send them to. On *Tinder nightmares* women have shared unpleasant messages they have gotten from men on Tinder. Hess and Flores argue that men use toxic masculinity to hook up, which can be found on other social media platforms, the use of it comes from an ideal self-presentation where men try to discipline women. Even though as *Tinder nightmares* shows they are met with disapprovals, Hess and Flores explain that Tinder men users seem to feel the need to send messages they perceive to be a socially accepted form of masculinity. However, the study showed the women did not answer them at all or could answer with witty comebacks, both a way of showing the men their attempts had failed. Another aspect Hess and Flores make is the existence of *Tinder Nightmares* is used as another tool where women share their disapproval of the toxic masculinity that can be seen on Tinder, a form of counter-discipline which are in public and in digital circulation. Hess and Flores point out and add that the ideal self-

presentation men who adhere hypermasculine and heterosexist codes to hook up with women are not working as well as they think.

Kuperberg and Padgett (2016) have analysed the dating culture from the Online College Social Life Survey, from 2005 to 2011, which collected answers from 22 different colleges with 22 454 respondents. They asked if hook up had replaced dating and long-term relationships on campus and how social norms and scripts affected the culture on campus. The results showed just over 60 percent had engaged in hook up since they started college, similar amount had dated and around half had also been in a long-term relationship. Even though several students had engaged in hook ups they were less likely to only doing that compare to dating and being in a long-term relationship. They found that more men engaged in hook ups than women although men were more likely to want long-term relationships. Kuperberg and Padgett explained these patterns by arguing about the influence culture norms had on selecting romantic and sexual partnering. They saw students who were involved in sororities and fraternities having dense social networks were involved in more hook ups than non-members, although sorority's women wished for more opportunities for long-term relationships. Therefore, Kuperberg and Padgett (2016: 23) ague for "a fully integrated approach to understand patterns of intimate partnering must therefore account for cultural norms and scripts that shape behaviour.".

Meenagh's (2015) paper does also discuss culture among emerging adults, ages 18 – 25 years old in Australia. Her study is based on online discussion board and individual in-personal interviews and focus on how social media is used by young people to mediate their romantic and sexual relationships. Meenagh mentions in her discussion different aspects of how social media is used for finding out information on a potential partner, for example via Facebook stalking, how different forums are used to engaged and flirt with potential partners and also sometimes to be used to break up. These different aspects have their own positive and negative outcomes. Facebook stalking can be a good way to found out information about a person one might find interesting on a safe distance, it is seen as an acceptable part of the courtship. However, people are aware that they probable get Facebook stalked back as well and they make sure to moderate what kind of information they make available. Communicating through social media can be an easier way for people to dare to be more flirtatious said one participant. Although, discourses have discussed that texting online feels less authentic Meenagh disagrees; communicating online is not less authentic but different and young people should be aware what the mediated message they communicate online as well as offline. Meenagh ends her paper saying that even though the study was a small scale it

shows how new social media creates new ways for young people to engage and mediate their relationships. However, since this still is quite new there is no clear culture frame to how young people should navigate through social media when engaging with potential partners.

2.3 Discussion of prior research

There are similarities to the different studies, a few of them found Tinder to be perceived as a hook up app (Lefebvre, 2018; Timmermans and Courtois, 2018) and men have a higher impulsiveness on dating apps, sending more text messages first and being less selective on Tinder (Jung et al., 2019; Hess and Flores, 2018). Kuperberg's and Padgett's (2016) and Timmermans' and Courtois' (2018) studies showed different results on which gender had more hook ups. However, they had different approaches and were conducted in different countries. Timmermans' and Courtois' study were made in Belgian researching how people used Tinder, while Kuperberg's and Padgett's study was made on American campus and did not focus on the use of dating apps.

Comparing different countries with this study can be interesting and seeing if Tinder is perceived mostly as a hook up app as previous studies have. Furthermore, most of the prior studies above that discuss the dating culture online and offline bring up in their studies relevant aspects that this study explores. Hess and Flores discuss the toxic masculinity scripts that exist on Tinder, Meenagh's explore how social media effect how young people engage and manage their relationships and Kuperberg and Padgett view how different social norms effect American students dating habits. This study can answer some of the gaps the prior studies have left as to why Tinder might be seen as a hook up app since it is based on qualitative personal interviews. Furthermore, it will also explore how Tinder users reflect on their own usage of the app, who they swipe right on and why, maybe answering why men are seen as less selective than women.

3. Methodology and Method

3.1 Ontology and Epistemology

This study takes on a constructivism standpoint to gain knowledge. The perception that knowledge is personal constructed by the researcher and not something one discovers (Stake, 2010). To have the standpoint that knowledge is constructed is to believe there is not only one truth (Kratochwil, 2008). This study's epistemology then believes that this study produces one of many truths, since the purpose of this study is to explore a phenomenon, to get an

understanding of something. This epistemology stands, is that it sees this study as one of many truths, but that it still does tell something about the society. Especially a study like this since it wants to explore people's way of initiate relationships and presentation of themselves, which then explore people's experiences and thoughts. Every person has their own experience, therefore, a study which explores people's experiences should have a constructive view since it allows for the researcher to understand the value of multiple realities and therefore also lets the researcher to explain a phenomenon from multiple realities (Stake, 2010).

3.2   Research design

The best approach to answer this study's research questions was through a qualitative research method with an interpretive approach. Qualitative methods are a good way to find out about the complex and subtle aspects of the social life (Denscombe, 2016). To get an understanding of something is typically connected with qualitative research. A qualitative researcher picks out a phenomenon they want to understand, in this study's case it is university students' dating culture and the effect Tinder has on it. Therefore, to get to a deeper understanding of this, me as researcher has to seek out the people with experience to help understand and explain this phenomenon (Stake, 2010). To be able to get to know their experiences qualitative research was the best option, since it opens up for the possibility to access people's experiences, thoughts, reflections and opinions (Denscombe, 2014). Since I wanted more in-depth answers and explanation for students' behaviours when engaging in romantic and sexual relationships, I thought it best to do personal interviews and not as prior studies that have explored the similar subject, who did online surveys (Kuperberg and Padgett, 2016; Lefebvre, 2018; Timmermans and Courtois, 2018).

The analysis for the qualitative data was based on prior thought out theoretical frameworks and prior research, but with an open mind to letting the material speak for itself (Trost, 2010). Hence, I have a constructivist epistemology where there can be multiple truths and therefore, I conducted my analysis by exploring more than one interpretation of what the participants said. This was the best approach for my purpose and research questions, since it is a qualitative study, where different people explain their thoughts and behaviours about their dating lives.

3.3   Data collection method

3.3.1 Overview of the research method

To get answers about university students' dating culture and self-presentation strategies online versus offline I chose to do qualitative interviews with students to gain different perspectives and richer data. I conducted 10 non-standard, semi-structed personal interviews. The choice to conduct qualitative non-standard interviews was because I wanted to gain access to the participants' thoughts, feelings, acts and reasons, which makes these types of interviews the best option (Trost, 2010).

3.3.2 Sampling strategy

After having formed the purpose of this study and choosing to conduct interviews as the way to collect data, a sampling strategy was chosen. The chosen sampling strategy for selecting participants was a subjective sampling to get relevant participants with the required characteristics. The required characteristics were to be a Swedish student at Lund university living in Lund, between the ages 18 to 25 years, and to use Tinder at the moment or had used Tinder in Lund. Furthermore, I wanted an equal part of men and women. This type of sampling strategy is a good choice for when one does a research and want an exploratory sample, and also participants who has relevant experience that can help answering the research questions (Denscombe, 2014). However, my criteria for participants was not that narrow, which opened up for other strategies to find participants still with the required characteristics. Though, two of the participants were found via strictly subjective sampling. I already had a little bit knowledge of them and knew they could give interesting insights and reflections about their Tinder usage; hence I knew they had found their partners via Tinder. The other participants were found via snowball sampling and convenience sampling. These sampling strategies are time efficient because as a researcher one does not have to spend a lot of time looking for participants, which can be time-consuming (ibid.). I started with asking a few people I am acquainted with, mostly because it was convenient and we already had an establish relationship, which therefore made it easier to initiate contact. It was from them the snowball sampling started; I asked the ones who participated in an interview if they could recommend other participants for the study.

The acquaintance between me, as a researcher, and some of the participants, were to an advantage as it created a more open and friendly atmosphere helping the participants feel more comfortable speaking freely and truthfully about their dating lives during the interviews (Sreejesh, Mohapatra and Anusree, 2014). When I conducted the interviews and

where on my last one, I noticed how the participants had answered similar and that I had sufficient information for my study. Hence, this is a small-scale qualitative study, and it is common to use a cumulative sampling method (Denscombe, 2014). This led to my amount of 10 interviews as data for this study.

The required characteristic for the participants were based on being best to answer the research questions. I wanted an equal part of men and women to see if gender played a part in how students conduct themselves on dating apps and when they are flirting offline. Furthermore, the choice to have a certain age was because as mentioned in the delimitations that emerging adults have a higher frequency of exploring romantic and sexual relationships and they are often influence, normative and salient (Lefebvre, 2018), and they are also depended on technology.

The participants were between the required ages, with the youngest being 18 years old and the oldest 24 years old. Furthermore, they studied in a few different fields; politics, engineering, human rights, law, and economics. In the analysis part I only refer to them by made up names and not their real names. I chose to not include their educations and ages because I did not find it relevant since the purpose of the study is to explore university students in general and it were no significant differences, and also to ensure their anonymity even further.

3.3.3 Interview strategy

To answer the research questions of this study, interviews were conducted. Interviews are a good method to use when the study's purpose is to capture people's opinions, reflections, feelings and experiences, when the researcher wants a deeper understanding of something (Denscombe, 2014). Therefore, the choice of interviews came naturally, it can reach the purpose of this study. The epistemology stands that this study has, made it clear to not use standardized interviews, but instead an interview strategy that let the participants talk open and freely about their experience of Tinder and their dating lives, with little guidance. The choice of interview structure was then personal semi-structured interviews. A semi-structed interview gives the person being interviewed room to elaborate their answers to the questions they get, which is a good approach if one wants to get rich and deep material for their research (Denscombe, 2014). It also gives the opportunity to have a more comfortable atmosphere when conducting the interview, since the person being interviewed has the possibility to lead the order of the questions, which can make the interview feel more like a conversation than a full structured interview would.

I took the approach of making the interviews feel more like a conversation, without making my thoughts on the subject too visible, by having a rather active interview style. The approach of an active interview is that one believes that the person one interviews "must be activated, stimulated, and cultivated" (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995: 17). I wanted my participants to feel comfortable discussing things that may seem private or awkward as one's dating life might be, therefore, to not give a response or encouragement during the interviews felt wrong. Since the aim of the interviews were to gain rich and in-depth data, to take an active interviewer position with an interpretive and reflective approach, felt like the best option. As Holstein and Gubrium explain: an active interviewer does not tell the participants what to say but do provoke answers and sets the parameters for the interviews, in doing that makes sure their questions get answered. However, it was a difference between the participants how many added questions that was needed, some spoke very freely from the few questions I had from the topics on my interview guide while others needed more provocation in form of follow up questions. I felt that an active interview approach gave the participants a trust for me that allowed for the possibility for them to dare to be more open and truthful of their experiences. Although, I did not share my own experiences during the interviews but gave signs of commitment and sometimes repeated what they had said and asked them if they could elaborate to make sure my questions were fully answered and that I had understood them correctly. This is because having the approach of an active interview it is important to not only see the interview as a conversation but also have "a guiding purpose or plan" (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995: 76).

The questions for my interviews were based on my interview guide, though in all the interviews all of the topics from the interview guide (see appendix A) where asked, however they might not be the exact words since as I had an active interview approach. The questions were based to best answer the study's purpose of research questions. The main themes I chose to have on my interview guide were Tinder usage, presentation of oneself on Tinder, initiation on Tinder and offline and safety precautions. The interview guide has been thought of with help of prior studies and my own prior knowledge. The questions during the interviews were about Tinder and the difference between Tinder and offline, where I asked the participants to give example of how one of their Tinder dates had been or how the flirt at the club had been. This because as Trost (2010) explains to ask about behaviours and experiences one does also get the participants feelings about it as well. Furthermore, the interviews were conducted in Swedish and they were also recorded and transcribed. I translated the quotes from Swedish to English which are used in the analysis and since one

cannot make a direct translation between the two languages, it forced me to really make sure I had understood what the participants really meant or wanted to say. Thus, I did find it to be an advantage to having the interviews in Swedish.

3.4 Data analysis

This study has a constructivist epistemology approach with qualitative data where the coding of the data is usually fully open. However, I would not like to say that I had a fully grounded theory approach when I analysed the data from my interviews, since I already from the start had some theoretical framework and prior studies I worked from (Denscombe, 2014). Tinder and dating culture among university students have been studied in different varieties and I had some prior knowledge about it as well thus to conduct a basic grounded theory analysis did not feel right, since my purpose was not to generate new theoretical framework on the phenomenon. Instead I had thought out two theories I found fit with my research after gaining more knowledge of Tinder via prior studies, this was Goffman's (1990) self-presentation and Butler's (2004) gender theory. However, I did not let the prior knowledge and thought out theories to stop me from viewing my material with open eyes, as Trost (2010) would call it. I used the theoretical frameworks to structure my data after themes, but still keeping a grounded theory mindset to let the material speak for itself. Trost explains that already when conducting the interviews analysis of interpretations happen, and again when transcribing and then again as the researcher works with their material. This I did, which helped me during the analysis process and also as I conducted all the interviews myself, I could find my way in the material easily.

I began the analysis process by looking for similarities among the participants' answers of the same questions. I structed the answer belonging to the different relevant themes from the different participants in a table to get a better overview over common discussed things, something Trost recommends. It made it possible to draw conclusions over similarities and differences between the participants and from there see how their answers may contradict or conform to prior research. In that sense I did use some of the typical ideas of grounded theory since I when working with my data I looked for comparison between the participants in the first instance (Denscombe, 2016) and then compared them to prior research and explained them further with the help of my theoretical framework. Furthermore, I used an analysis approach of making interpretations on what the participants said in their interviews, and since I have a constructivist epistemology approach, I took the stand to explore multiple

interpretations of a sentence from the participants answers. Kvale (2014) explains that this does not necessary mean that the different interpretations go against each other, but instead can enrich the analysis.

3.5   Trustworthiness of study

This study is based on constructivist epistemology and a qualitative research study, hence the typical concepts of validity and reliability which usually addressed in quantitative research do not fit this study. Therefore, to ensure the trustworthiness and authenticity of this research other concepts are used. Validity in qualitative research where the data is based on interviews is about to demonstrate that the knowledge produced is valid, and this is done by being transparent with how one's research was conducted, hence using validity as a craftsmanship (Kvale, 2014; Kvale, 1994). In qualitative research, to validate one's research can be done by different approaches, to show how the research was done by showing transparency, to be reflexivity when conducting the interviews, and make an analytical generalisation.

The transparency is shown in the description of how I conducted my interviews and my analysis of them. One of the critics about qualitative interviews are that some think that the results from the interviews are subjective and that the researcher can lead the participants (Kvale, 1994). To be aware of the subjective nature, which qualitative research gets accused of doing, will make the researcher take precautions when conducting and analysing the interviews. The precautions I took during the interviews was to make sure I was emphatic, as Kvale (2014) explains in qualitative interviews is the level of empathy that determines how much the researcher's own judgement is shown. This means that when I conducted the interviews, I made sure that the participants did not feel any judgement and I let them speak as freely as possible. However, I did during my interviews something that qualitative research have been criticized for which was to ask leading question, but not as a way of leading my participants to say something they would not, but instead as tool to validate the knowledge they provided. This was done by repeating a statement the participants had said to make sure I had understood them correctly and to make sure my subjectivity would not interpret something that was not said. Furthermore, another issue some seems to have with qualitative research is how it interprets multiple meanings from one source (Kvale, 1969). This is not anything negative but the opposite as Kvale (1969: 13) explains "different interpretations of meaning are not necessarily haphazardly subjective, but objective in the sense of reflecting the nature of the objects investigated".

3.6   Ethical considerations

This study is based on personal interviews where the participants discuss experiences and thoughts about their private lives, therefore, ethical consideration is a must. Trost (2010) points out the most important aspect of doing a research with qualitative interviews are to make sure that the participants integrity and dignity are respected. This is to be done during the whole research process, from asking for interviews to writing the analysis. Furthermore, when conducting a social scientific study four main requirements most be covered, those are the information, the consent, the confidentiality and the use requirements (Vetenskapsrådet, n.d.). Therefore, to uphold the information and consent requirements, I made sure to inform the participants before the interviews about the purpose of the study, what it was for, their role in it and that they could stop the interview whenever they wanted to. I asked if it was okay for me to record the interviews and assured them that I was they only one that would listen to the recordings (Kvale and Brinkman, 2014). All the participants gave their consent.

A promise of confidentiality was also made from me to the participants, even though some of the participants said it did not matter to them if they were anonymous. However, since some wanted to be anonymous, I found it safest to change every participants name in the thesis to be sure that the confidentiality promises were covered. Furthermore, I have not mentioned the participants ages and what they study, since I deemed that irrelevant after analysing the data and drew the conclusion that specify their age and education did not give anything to the analysis, only a way to easier uncover the participants real identity.

I do share stories though from the participants' lives that if someone knew them well might be able to guess their true identity. However, most of the quotes from the stories are not in great detail, those who stories in this thesis that are more elaborated gave an extra consent to use their specific stories. Therefore, I felt it was okay to have these stories with greater details. Though, I still believe that their identities are truly covered, to be able to guess who it is, a person most firstly be aware that they were interviewed by me for this study and also know them on a personal level and have heard their stories before.

Finally, the data collected from the interviews for this study will only be used for the purpose of this study, which is something I informed and promised the participants to cover the last requirement of use.

4. Theoretical framework

The theoretical views this study will use when analysing the data collected from the interviews will be based on Goffman's theory of self-presentation and Butler's theory of gender norms. Prior studies about online dating showed that other researcher had found differences between genders (Jung et al, 2019; Kuperberg and Padgett, 2010) and also that self-presentation is a key element in online dating (Lefebvre, 2018; Timmermans and Courtios, 2018). Self-presentation is an important aspect when dating, even more online because of the extensive partner options and first impressions being a vital part. Social and gender norms can help explain university's students' dating culture, if there are different social norms online than offline. It can also help to navigate how men and women perceive dating online versus offline, if there are differences between them that can be explained by norms.

4.1 Self-presentation

Goffman's (1990) theory on self-presentation uses descriptions from the world of theatre to explain how people act under social encounters. The essence of the theory is that the social world is a stage where people perform for each other. A performance from a person, or as Goffman says a performer, does not necessarily mean that the performer is aware of their own performance, or their own role they take when they encounter other people, observers or audience. Goffman explains there are two different extremes to take own a role; one is that the performer believes in their own act and they are taken of their own act. The other one is that the performer is cynical, and they are aware of how they play the role they have taken on. These two opposites do not mean a performer will stay at one end, the two extremes can alter, from disbelief to belief and also vice versa; from belief to disbelief. A performer who have been cynical about the role they play may eventually become that role, in that sense they do not longer feel their act, they have become less cynical about their performance.

A person, who is an actor on a theatre stage have props to work with, to help the audience understand the actor's role. It is the same outside the theatre as well. Goffman (1990) calls the stage in the social world where people act their own roles a front. A front is a stage setting to perform one's role in front of an audience, it can be for example one's home or workplace, a place that will make the performance more believable. A performer's home gives away tells about what kind of role the person is or trying to be, for example a big and luxurious home gives the impression to others that the person is wealthy and the things in the

home also have their part to give the right impression. There are other aspects of how a person can add to their role and the impressions they are trying to convey. Personal front, which Goffman explains are parts that are directly identified with the performer. These parts of a person's personal front are their sex, age, racial characteristics, clothing, facial expression, bodily functions and more. Some of the parts of the personal front are fixed, such as racial characteristics, others though can vary depending own the performance such as facial expression. Goffman has divided personal front into appearance and manner to easier explain the function of a performance. Appearance, function tells the audience about the performer's social status at the given time, if the performer is in engaged in work, formal social activity or informal recreation. Manner, then function tells the audience about what can be expected of the performer in an ongoing situation. Thus, an aggressive manner may give the impression that the performer will be the one that initiate a verbal interaction, while a meek manner may give the opposite impression of someone who will follow lead.

The different parts of front and personal front are usually anticipated to conform to one another, though they can still contradict each other. A performer who have the appearance of someone with high social status may have an apologetic manner and take a small place in a social context, and not conform to what is expected of them. However, coherence between front, manners and appearance are expected to conform. They form an ideal type and the audience know what can be expected from the performer. The ideal type, where the different parts conform each other can be called a social front. Goffman (1990: 36) explains that a social front is "significant characteristics of the information conveyed by front, namely, its abstractness and generality". A social front gives the observer an easier way to respond to a performance since they only need to focus on the abstractness and generalization of the performance and not the different patterns different performers can have. They already know what to be expected and how to respond to the social situation, hence they can recognise abstract parts of the performance from the start. On the other side, the performer may have no other choice than to comply to an already given social front. A social role which can already be an established social role in society with its stereotypical characteristics leaves little room for the performer to go outside it.

Goffman (1990) gives the description of idealization as when a person acts out their role to fit into the social stereotype, to play a role that is idealized. Different idealized roles demand different types of performances and to fit into them a person may hide parts of oneself to fit the idealization. They will exemplify and incorporate the social values expected when they are in front of others and not bring up or show things that do not conform to these

values. Things that they will hide can be secret pleasures, but also mistakes and conceal all forms of dirty work. Goffman mentions how people may want to live up to a standard set by society and when they are observed they give a performance that lives up to that standard, though when not observed they may let go of the good performance. Dramatic realization is a similar to conceal different aspects to give an idealized performance, it is when a performer makes sure to give more of a performance than doing their actual job.

However, when a performance fail, by a performer who accidently makes a small mistake that was not meant to have any meaning the audience can not help to react to it. These minor mistakes can be that a performer does something that in the context seems inappropriate as yawn, say something stupid, seem too much or too little concerned or have not fixed the setting correctly or be prepared for the wrong performance. Therefore, a person must be aware of how they conduct themselves to not get direct criticism, a reality fostered by performance can shatter at any minor mishaps. As Goffman (1990: 63) puts it "the expressive coherence that is required in performances points out a crucial discrepancy between our all-too-human selves and our socialized selves".

There are times a performance is shattered not because of minor innocent mistake from the performer but because of misrepresentation. Misrepresentation is when a person does not have the authority to play the role they have taken on and the audience feel duped by the imposter. An imposter is someone who pretends to be of a higher status or deceives for personal gain, to be an imposter is to make misrepresentations which are not consider okay. However, to hide a character flaw about oneself for example if one has been an ex-convict gives sympathy, and other smaller lies such as white lies are usually deemed fine. Though, to misrepresent one routine in one's life may make people mistrust a person's whole character even though they do not hide anything else. Therefore, a person should be careful with pretending to be a role they cannot play or have no authority to play.

An important aspect to not forget is that a person can take on more than one role depending on the audience. A performer differs their performance to a friend, a boss, their mother or their partner. A person can swift roles and is also expected to fill in and manage a role they are given in any new position in society. Goffman (1990) elaborates this by explaining that all people act better than they know, a person does not know in advance all of the different everyday life performance they are going to do, but they still without realizing their act manage the task to conduct themselves accordingly to their social grouping.

4.2 Social and gender norms

A norm is operated via social practices, it is not the same as law or a rule. However, it does normalize behaviours and structures in society (Butler, 2004). Gender is a norm, according to Butler, who explains this by using Foucault's regulatory power on subject. A subject is shaped and formed by regulatory power and also acts upon the subject pre-existing. Furthermore, any form of juridical power has its productive effect. A subject is by its regulation brought to being a subject, it becomes subjectivated. Gender is a subject being regulated, such as any other cultural and social norm. Butler elaborates that it is not always easy to decontextualize norms' operations since they are usually strongly embedded in society. Gender as a norm even more as it suggests that it must be embodied by any particular social actor. It governs the social intelligibility of action, meaning that the norm sets the parameters and legibility in the social domain, even when one acts outside the norm it is still defined through the norm. However, gender is more complex than saying it is something someone is or has, it is "the apparatus which production and normalization of masculine and feminine take place along with the production and normalization forms of hormonal, chromosomal, psychic, and performative that gender assume" (Butler, 2004: 42). Though, to only use the binary of a man and a woman one uses a restrictive discourse and performs a regulatory power that naturalize binary use in the gender field.

Gender as a norm is a form of social power were the binary gender is instituted and the relation between practise and the idealization are contingent. Although, this also means that the idealization can come into question and be deidealize and divestiture. Butler (2004) means that a norm can only be upheld if it is being acted out in daily social practices and constantly is reidealized and reinstituted. It is by the acts and embodiment of the norm that it becomes idealized and reproduced. Gender norms are acted out thorough bodily practices and thus persons are regulated by gender. These regulations for any person operate through cultural intelligibility. Thus, going against the gender norms is to go against the regulatory powers that upholds the gender norms which may still continue rationalizing them to uphold them. Butler gives a few examples of how medical, psychiatric and legal ways are used to rationalizing the gender norms to uphold the regulatory zeal. One of them being how intersex children get "correction" surgery to achieve the normal, to fit in to the social domain where the gender norms are regulated.

Gender is produced more than through its own regulatory norm, it is also produced through other regulations. Butler explains this by mentioning McKinnon's view on

how sexual harassment in workplaces done by men against women are a consequence on a fundamental sexual subordination of women. Even though, regulations try to constrain these sexually demeaning behaviours it does demonstrate how certain gender tactic norms work in the workplaces. Hence, "the hierarchical structure of heterosexuality in which men are understood to subordinate women is what produces gender" (Butler, 2004: 53). However, the reducing gender to sexuality causes some issues and Butler argues there is a dissonance between gender and sexuality through two different perspectives. One shows the possibilities for sexualities that is not constrained by gender to show its simplified arguments that bind gender and sexuality together. The other is the possibility for gender that is not predetermined by forms of hegemonic heterosexuality. Thus, making the problem of seeing sexual harassment as a form of sexuality were gender is its hidden effect reinforces sexualized subordination. It is to say that sexual harassment becomes the allegory for the construction of gender. This Butler does not believe, she believes that sexual harassment codes are themselves what reproduces gender and are only used as instruments to do so. She elaborates this by explaining how the prohibition of sexual harassment of women by men builds on a logic that assumes heterosexual subordination as the only scene of gender and sexuality, which makes it "a regulatory means for the production and maintenance of gender norms within heterosexuality" (Butler, 2004: 55).

Regulations are to make somethings regular but as well they are a method of surveillance and discipline as Foucault's description of the modern forms of power (ibid.). They are not only a juridical form of power since they do not only constrict and negate. Regulations operate through norms, which are bound up with the social interactions between people and the process of normalization. Some legal operations do regulate norms and produces and maintains the ideal of how certain things or people should be, for example regulations on lesbian or gay and single-parent adoptions uphold a norm on what a parent is and what a legitimate partner is. Therefore, regulations can be said to want to restraint certain activities which then produce another activity that make people to conform to norms.

4.3 Definition of dating culture

Culture is the concept of a shared social meaning, which are generated by signs and language. It is also "'grounded terrain of practices, representations, languages and customs of any specific society'" (Barker, 2008: 32 through Hall, 1969). A culture is socially constructed by representation that are used, enacted, produced and understood in different social contexts.

This study takes the definition of culture based on structuralism, which explains culture as individuals act through social norms and are a product of the social structure in society (Baker, 2008).

Dating culture is then in this concept, how the shared social meaning of initiating sexual and romantic relationships works. It is also how individuals act and understand what is expected in their dating lives under different social contexts. Inside a dating culture there are different forms of courtships; dating on its own is referring to when two people meet to get to know each other for example over a coffee or a drink, usually in the purpose of initiating a romantic relationship. While hook up usually refers to casual sex (Timmermans and Courtois, 2018), and hook up culture is where people meet for the purpose of casual sex and only sexual relationships.

5. Analysis

5.1 Outline of analysis

The analysis is divided into three main parts. First in the analysis there is a short presentation of the participants' Tinder habits; why they use Tinder, how and when they use Tinder, and also what they expect of Tinder and who get their attention. The second part discusses the participants self-presentation and the expectations and impressions of others on Tinder, but also offline, with the help of Goffman's theory of self-presentation. It will explore the participants reflections on their own Tinder profiles, how their impression of a person online can alter when they meet offline, and also the differences and similarities between meeting someone from Tinder versus offline. The last part of the analysis discusses how social and gender norms affects how the participants act on Tinder versus offline, differences and similarities of how one takes the initiate for a hook up or a date and also safety precautions.

5.2 The participants' Tinder habits

5.2.1 Reasons for using Tinder

All the participants gave similar explanations for using Tinder, which was because it is a fun thing to do, their friends use it and they heard a lot of people talk about it. Eight of the participants said the main reason they started using Tinder was because "*it is a funny thing*". Charles did not mention that but gave the reason for using Tinder because "*everyone started to use it […] you get caught up in different trends*". Louis was the other person not saying that

the main reason he started to use Tinder was because of it being a fun thing, but just like Charles that everyone talked about it and he wanted to "*see what was up with it*" (Louis). However, Louis did mention the reason he still uses Tinder is for it being a fun thing to do.

Half of the participants also said the reason they started to use Tinder was because its real purpose; to meet new people and the social aspect of it. Charlotte said the reason for Tinder being a fun thing to use is because of the social aspect of it:

> *"I think is very funny, I think it is a funny way to meet new people. And I love to go out and meet new people and then it is…to get the opportunity, as said, to meet people you otherwise wouldn't have meet."* (Charlotte)

Some of the participants also mentioned the social aspect of Tinder, but not only for meeting new people but something to do with friends. Harry explained that he sometimes let his friends use his Tinder and swipe through the deck of potential matches and Elizabeth mentions that "*it is a little bit of a social thing you do with your friends*". Diana also said she started to use Tinder for the purpose of meeting new people as newly single and that she did it together with her friends. However, today she does not take it as seriously: "*now it is just to pass time and confirmation*" (Diana). Three other participants, Meghan, Charles and William, also mention confirmation of oneself as a reason to use Tinder. "*Then surely it also that it is instant gratification, I feel that you can get a kick of getting a match, at least I do, you get a confidence boost*" Charles explained of his use of Tinder.

5.2.2 The participants Tinder usage

The most common explanation for using Tinder was that it is a fun thing to do. Most of the participant also had similar patterns for when and how they use Tinder. Most of the participants use Tinder when they are bored, a way to pass time and did not give any special thought to how they use the app. For example, as George said, "*it is like a good way to pass time, like to procrastinate*". Except Charlotte, who has a clear structure to how she uses her Tinder, she explained:

> *"Well, you swipe maybe about five, ten minutes per day…I usually swipe maybe during the evening. […] then I answer on all the messages the next day and then I swipe […] I kinda let it take 24 hours. First, I swipe, either I write or I swipe, then I answer on messages and then swipe, write then go like that. Maybe 15 minutes total."* (Charlotte)

The other participants did not seem to have the same level of structure to their Tinder usage as Charlotte. Elizabeth said her Tinder usage swifts from periods of time and guessed that on an average she is on the app about three times a week. Meghan said when she used the app: "*I had some periods of time when I wrote to a lot of people, but I think I mostly were on it when I had time to pass*". However, both Louis and Diana said that their Tinder usage have changed, from the beginning when they were on the app very often and today not as much at all.

> "*In the beginning it was constantly and then we were a lot of single friends doing it together as a fun thing and now it is more from time to time when you have scrolled through Instagram, so you scroll Tinder as well, but not that often.*"
> (Diana)

5.2.3 Serious or casual looking on Tinder

All the participants claimed that they did not take Tinder that seriously. The most common answer to the question about what they were looking for on Tinder or what kind of relationships they wanted out of Tinder implied that most participants view Tinder as something to take lightly and not to expect much from. However, both George and Harry said they still hope to maybe date someone seriously from Tinder, but still view Tinder as a fun casual thing. Charlotte also viewed Tinder similar, she answered the question if she matches with someone how she feels about it "*if I meet someone, I meet someone*", which gives the impression that she is not seriously looking but is still open for it. William had the same approach when he used Tinder, though he started out on Tinder by having it just as a fun thing to get confirmation, to later when he moved to Lund started to go on serious Tinder dates. However, he did say that "*it was more just to see what happens*", but he did eventually end up with a girlfriend via Tinder. Meghan did also end up in a serious relationship via Tinder, even though her initial thoughts on getting Tinder were not for the purpose of meeting someone. She explained "*I probable most had Tinder to see how many matches I could come up to [...] I did probable not have it for a kind of dating purpose*".

Some of the other participants share Meghan's view of not having Tinder to look for a serious partner. Both Charles and Kate said they were not at all interested in meeting anyone from Tinder, even though both of them have been on Tinder dates. They now have Tinder more out of a habit. At least Charles, who gave the reason "*it is just something I have on my phone*" and also said that meeting someone over Tinder was not for him since he found it awkward. Kate explained that the people she met via Tinder were only short-term hook ups,

because she never looked for anything serious on Tinder, and that she now is dating someone and has no need for Tinder.

The other three participants; Diana, Elizabeth and Louis, did not look for a serious relationship via Tinder. However, Diana had from the start been more serious, but now she takes it casual and have no plans of meeting anyone via Tinder. Elizabeth is more cautious on Tinder and have a habit of pushing up meeting people from the app, she stated she feels "*that you want to meet someone, but you also do not want to meet someone*". Louis, however, have been to several Tinder dates but have not seen them as a start to a serious relationship.

Lefebvre's (2018), Timmermans' and Courtois' (2018) studies state that Tinder was mostly viewed as a hook up app, this study showed similar approaches that the participants did not expect to find serious relationships on Tinder. However, people still did end up in committed relationships because of Tinder, which both Timmermans' and Courtois' study showed, even though it appeared Tinder mostly was considered and used as a casual way to hook up with people.

5.2.4 Who gets the right swipe?

The participants gave a few different and some similar explanations to how they thought when screening the deck of potential partners on Tinder and who they gave a right swipe. Some of the participants have similar demands on the Tinder profiles that get a like. Charlotte and Harry, both have a special type they look for on Tinder. Charlotte wants guys with class; "*classy 22 years old, there you have it*" and Harry swipes right on short and kind looking girls, he explains: "*I think about, because I am not super tall, so if they look short [...] then I like if they look kind*". Others did not have an exact type of person they were looking for, but both George and Louis prefer when people have put an effort into their profiles. However, both of them did also mention that they are not that picky, though George said he dislikes bios where a person seems to take themselves too seriously. Elizabeth would also swipe left on someone who had a dissatisfying bio, for example the one's that come across as rude by listing things they want or do not want in a partner. However, both Charles and William said that they did not care at all about the bios, but only looked at the pictures. Charles stated that he thought bios were only fake and looks at the pictures to see if someone looks genuine. He did also mentation that some girls get a left swipe immediately, the girls that he feels seems boring. Though, he did also say "*there is a lot of beautiful women on Tinder*" and that he did swipe right quite often. Charles is not the only one that have instant left swipes, most of the

participants seemed to have at least one-character flaw they could not stand. Diana even said it was easier to know who gets the left swipe than the right swipe:

> *"I have gotten comments from my guy friends that I am too picky, there is too many left swipes […] I am super sensitive to like, how guys use emojis, if it is the wrong emoji then I am like no, absolutely not! […] it is emojis and half-naked pictures that just goes away, that goes super away. And also like this half-creepy bios where it is like 'call me daddy'. You like NO! (laugh). Everything goes directly to the left"* (Diana)

It is not that surprising that Diana swipes left more than right, prior studies have pointed out that women are more selective on online apps than men (Jung et al., 2019; Timmermans and Courtois, 2018). This study showed all the women view themselves as picky, except Kate who only mentions she looks at a person's appearance and age. However, William did say that he was picky, and as mention before, Harry and Charles had certain criteria on who got their right swipe, which do contradict prior studies (Timmermans and Courtois, 2018, Jung et al. 2019) and my own expectation that said men are impulsive and less selective. The majority of the male participants showed signs of being selective on Tinder, since some characteristics showed on a girl's Tinder profile gave an instant left swipe. Though, most of them did however also say they found most women on Tinder to look good and that they did swipe right quite often. While the women claimed the opposite, which still conform to the studies that claim men are less selective, but not in that sense that they do not care how the person look just that they find more women to look good than women find men to look good.

5.3 Presentation of oneself on Tinder and offline

5.3.1 The participants' Tinder profiles

Goffman's (1990) theory of self-presentation sees the social world as a stage where people perform for observers to maintain the role they want to be. The theory came before social media, but it is even more apparent on social media how people perform and want to give the best impressions of an idealized role. Goffman states, the performance done by a performer may not be something the performer is aware of, but it may also be something the performer can be aware of, it is the differences of believe one's act versus being cynical. These two different aspects can be seen as a spectrum, which have been found with the participants of this study and how they choose to build their Tinder profiles.

Most of the participants had given some thought to how their profiles looked like, however how much thought they put into them varied. Elizabeth, William and Louis said they did not have a special thought to which pictures they choose for their profiles. They answered the question to why they chose the pictures they did with the sense of it being the first time they really thought about it. For example, Elizabeth answered, "*it is probable that I think I want people to find me attractive (laugh), yeah, that's about it*" and William said, "*it was not that planed, but just pictures I thought I looked good and happy in*". The quotes do tell that they wanted to give some sort of impression for people who will see them, but also tell how they did not give it much consideration. Compared to Charlotte's and Charles's, who both gave more elaborate answers to the pictures they had chosen:

> "*I have gone with the classic; you should have one picture where you are cute, one with friends, one on vacation and one were you do something. Because then you show that…that you are a little bit urbane, you have friends. Also, preferably something with humour.*" (Charlotte)

> "*A friend of mine, a girl, help me fix the profile, like 'you have to show more pictures, so you don't just look serious'. She thought I looked to serious, so then I took the picture when I play the guitar like to show that I have another interest, to show that you are all around like. And not just someone's LinkedIn profile*"
> (Charles)

Elizabeth, William and Louis, one can say are more on the belief in one's performance spectrum, since they seem to choose their pictures without a thoughtful procedure, they as Goffman (1990) would say have conform to their role and act on it without thought. While Charlotte and Charles, but also Meghan, were keen on their pictures to give off a special impression; of them having friends, to be urbane or not too serious, could be said to be on the other spectrum, cynical. Hence, they were aware of the impression they wanted to give to others, they chose pictures especially for the purpose of fitting a special type of role. However, this does not mean that they are not the idealize role they perceive to be on Tinder, only that their performance on Tinder is well thought of. This can also be because Tinder makes it clear that people are going to judge one's profile, since the whole purpose of Tinder is to get people to swipe right on one's profile. The performance one acts on Tinder will then be more scrutinise than their performance outside of Tinder, in real life, which probable make people commit to put forward an idealize performance on Tinder.

Instead of putting a lot of thoughts to one's pictures on Tinder, two of the participants wanted to make sure they had good bios. Still within the aspect of being aware of how one's performance gives a certain impression, it is not only a person's appearance that gives the whole performance, but also the front, things around the performer (Goffman, 1990). A bio on Tinder could be seen as requisite to add onto one's performance to make it more believable. George and Harry took help from friends to create their bios, as Charles did with his pictures, which can be argued that they want to be sure they give a special impression but via their bios instead of only their pictures. George said, "*I put a lot of work on my bio (laugh). So it is like a long text or like I got it from a friend, he writes super good bios and then he got a girlfriend so*". While, Harry's bio matches the pictures he had on his profile. His bio reads: "*I am a guy, who likes photograph, golf and cooking. I also have a nice cat*", and his pictures are of him with a camera and one with his cat. Harry's pictures and bio conformed to one another, which can be said that his personal front and front conform, which adds to the performance and help to make the role of a performer to become clearer and more believable (Goffman, 1990).

The other two participants, Kate and Diana, can be said to be somewhere in the middle of the believe one's act and to be cynical. They seem to have put some thought to their choice of pictures and bios, but at the same time they did not seem to care what kind of impression they gave. Diana, as mentioned in previous part have gone from taking her Tinder serious to not serious at all and explained that her profile has changed since she started to use Tinder.

> "*If there is a comment, I always get that I look so extremely happy now on my pictures and that I only have funny pictures, this I think has come because I am not as serious anymore. Because previously maybe, for two years ago maybe so… you were supposed to look very pretty and be like that. […] it is not so serious anymore, so it is not maybe, as fully of an approachable profile*" (Diana)

A person can go from belief in their role to disbelief (Goffman, 1990), one can say that is what Diana did. She went from having a serious approach on Tinder, conform to the role of a pretty girl, to a non-serious approach, which made her profile less approachable according to herself. The role she from the beginning took on Tinder did not longer seem to fit her anymore, beginning as one may argue to belief in the role to disbelief, which eventually made her change her performance on Tinder. Kate said she has a basic Tinder profile, with pictures of herself with a classic bio: "*I like to travel, I like to drink wine, and things like that. Is very*

basic, so it is very silly really (laugh)". Her attitude towards her profile being silly gives the impression, that she does not care about what people may think of it. Her indifference towards her Tinder profile may have to do with her not taking it seriously or that she is not interested in meeting anyone.

However, a little surprising perhaps is that all of participants claimed that they did not take Tinder seriously, but still a few of them were keen on their Tinder profiles to give off the right impression of them. Perhaps it is the realization that people will see their Tinder profiles, and the thought of not to give the impression to the observers that fit with their idealize roles of themselves, make them unconsciously act out the performance on Tinder by making sure their pictures and bios convey the right impressions. As Goffman (1990) said the performer does not have to be aware of his on act, all people act better than they know. By this meaning that the participants have roles they perform when they have an audience and even though on Tinder where they do not see their audience, they are still aware they are being observed. George mention that he was a little bit nervous to start using Tinder because of that reason; "*I barely wanted to download Tinder. Like should I have a profile and then you are going to be judge by people*" Similar to Meenagh's (2015) study were her participants were aware of people viewing their Facebook profiles, even though they cannot know exactly who, they did moderate their profiles accordingly.

5.3.2 Shattered of self-presentation: mishaps and misrepresentation

If a Tinder user get up a person in the deck of potential partners on Tinder, they find interesting and attractive they can swipe right on that person, and if the person swipe right on them as well there is a match. A match between two users implies that both have an interest for each other and they have the possibility to chat with each other. The participants in this study had some different approaches to Tinder and who they swiped right on, what impressions of others they found attractive. The impressions of other Tinder users were based on their pictures and bios, and if a match happened and they started to communicate with each other, impressions were made from these conversations as well. However, the impression the participants could get from a person they match with could sometimes turn out to be wrong. Sometimes the first impression one gets from only a Tinder's profile can be proven to be misjudged. Kate explained that it happens that she sometimes matches with men she finds attractive, and to find out when they start to chat, that it was a completely mismatch. Other participants mentioned that they could have an impression on someone until they met and then feel they had misjudged the person.

Both Charlotte and Louis have had Tinder dates that did not go at all as they had expected them to go. Louis told about a Tinder date he went to, expecting it to be only him and the girl he had planned to meet on a date, however when he met up with her at the bar a few of her friends where there as well. Louis impression of the girl that he got only via Tinder was shattered when he met her in real life and got to see more sides of her, when getting to observe more of her performance. A role can be shattered by mishaps of the performance, the impression that one first gave can be altered if the performance stops to conform with the role they taken on (Goffman, 1990). In Louis case he had the impression of the girl he was going to meet shattered when her performance by bringing her friends to their date did not match with his initial thought of how she would behave. Charlotte has similar stories of Tinder dates not gone as she had hoped because the person, she met turned out so differently then she expected. The role a person has taken on Tinder, which ideally should be a role that attracted a lot of people since it is a dating app, can be easier to uphold and make believable on Tinder. Thus, Tinder let one build up their profile in their own time and also through chats there it is no pressure to have to answer someone immediately. A person on Tinder have the chance to think about their performance and it is easier to conceal mishaps that do not conform to the role they want to be. As Goffman explains mishaps can shatter a performer's role it could be smaller things like yawning at the wrong time, saying something stupid or not being prepared for the right performance. These smaller mishaps or mistakes can be easier conceal on Tinder since the audience do not watch the performance one put on in real time. The pictures or bios a Tinder user chose can have been long thought to perfect an idealizing role, but when they then met with people in real life and their performance is judged directly it can be harder to keep up to that ideal role. As Louis puts it:

> *"When you talk to someone face to face then is like in the now [...] on Tinder you*
> *can like think about over 10 years and then send the message. So, it becomes*
> *another thing when you write than when you actually talk. You don't see the body*
> *language and stuff like that"* (Louis)

However, to enhance an ideal role on Tinder it does not necessarily mean a person lies about themselves, it can be as in any other social context, that a person wants to show their best self. Harry said, "*I think Tinder is a little bit that you enhance the ideal parts of yourself*", and being aware of this himself he said that the Tinder dates he had been on the conversation often were a bit of a repeat of what already had been said on Tinder. This can be because Harry wanted to be able to see the person when having the certain type of conversation that

had already been said on Tinder, to perhaps see the date's performance without filter to see if his impression of the person stayed the same as the initial impression. This can also, nevertheless, depend on Harry and his date being unsure what to talk about and then bring up a topic they both know they can discuss. Though, William, Diana and Kate, all believed one cannot completely trust the impression one gets of a person from Tinder, it is not until one meets them offline that one can get a real sense of a person's role, if the two of them are a match or not.

> *"When you meet it was a little bit like 'oh okay this was not at all the same person I had in mind', like that. A lot does play into the personal, like maybe that is something that does not come out on text or that that person who reads it gets another image in their head, that you interpret something completely different than what the person meant and then I absolutely believe it can be a crash sometimes of course" (Kate)*

Kate does explain in a good way how misinterpretation of a person on Tinder can act out, when texting with someone one adds different impressions of a person and builds up a role for that person. This role which a person has built up for someone else based on their interactions on Tinder may only be in the person's mind. This role will then easily be shattered by a mishap in the performance as saying something stupid and the observer have no other choice than to react on it and make the realization that the role they gave to the person does not conform to reality (Goffman, 1990).

There are situations when a person does not mean to deceive another person on Tinder and they do not mean to give an impression of themselves, which can be shattered by small mishaps. But there are times that do happen on Tinder, that a person on purpose give a false impression of themselves to try to conform to social values. Goffman (1990) explains that a person may try to fill up a role that is idealize and conforms to the social values in society, and by doing that concealing parts that do not fit in with the role. It does not have to be anything wrong to try to fill an idealize role and conceal parts that do not conform with it. However, Goffman points out to take on a role a person has no authority to take on and deceive someone for personal gain is to misrepresent a role and this is not deemed as an acceptable thing to do by society.

Elizabeth has only met two people from Tinder. One of them made it clear from the start that he was only interested in a casual hook up. The other one though seemed to be more serious saying that "*we are going to the beach and going to have a date*", although the next time they met he only wanted casual sex. Elizabeth said she did not mind the casual hook

up on both parts, but she did not understand why one of them felt the need to lie about his initial intention and found it to be stupid. That is because he misrepresented his role for a personal gain, instead to take a more honest role closer to his intentions, he gave a false impression to seem more likable and people as Goffman mentioned do not like to be duped.

5.3.3 Online versus offline: impressions

When swiping through the deck of potential partners on Tinder is all about initial attraction and snap judgement (Lefebvre, 2018). The participants said they swiped right on people they found attractive and also some said seemed funny or genuine. The judgements the participants make on Tinder are based on their first impression of the people they get up. All of the participants agreed on Tinder being shallow, that they judged people first of all on their looks. Most of the participants also said they were pickier on Tinder than offline. Diana explains that Tinder have a format that makes it shallow in itself and that opportunities to meet people one had not consider vanish; "*the downside with Tinder, and the upside as well is that you can really handpick what you want*". However, she does see the appeal with being able to be selective as she says that the downside of Tinder is also its upside. Elizabeth also sees the appeal of being able to see pictures of a person before she decides to show if she is interested or not. She explains, "*It feels like Tinder gives you that possibility really when you swipe you can see if this person looks good, while on the club maybe you do not really see how the person looks*". Tinder, she means gives a person time to think about the person that comes up in the deck, while out in a club "*you just go on instinct*" (Elizabeth).

However, both Diana and Kate did say that Tinder can give a false impression of a person and one cannot know how the person really is until meeting offline, which all of the other participants also believed, as said a performance can shattered when a person goes offline. Charles explained that on Tinder the first impression one gets is usually made from a stereotypical image of the person one gets in their deck, while offline impressions are built on a feeling one gets from the person. Similar statements were made by all the participants when asked what they found to be the biggest difference of meeting someone on Tinder versus offline. Kate said that she preferred meeting people offline, which she explains in the quote below.

> *"I would like to say that you can see a person for who they are. When you are out you can get that personal connection, on the phone it is a little like, of course you can connect when you write and talk to each other, but you at the same time you do not get that same personal connection as when you met them. […] I think that is*

> *the biggest differences, I think, it is the personal contact so you can understand a*
> *person."* (Kate)

This personal connection Kate talks about or that feeling Charles mentions, which is something they mean one can only get offline is probable because they cannot see a person's whole performance on Tinder. To get a feeling of someone or to get that contact to understand them, which according to the participants was something one did not really get on Tinder. I believe, that feeling, is what Goffman (1990) would describe as viewing all the different parts of a performance; the front, the appearance and the manner. People are not always aware of their performance and they act out a role without thinking of every aspect of it, the same can be said for the observer. The observer may not understand completely what it is they actually pick up from a performance, what the impressions they get comes from. They just react on these small acts, for example the appearance of a person tells how the person engage in the social context, they are in. When meeting someone for a date, do the person give the impression to be engaged in a friendly social context, as one would be on a date, or does the person give the impression to be engaged in a formal setting, hence giving off an impression that does not suit an appearance of someone on a date. Furthermore, the manner of a person does also tell something about a person's performance, when meeting someone offline one can give an impression on how they will act in an ongoing situation (Goffman, 1990). An example from one of Charlotte's bad Tinder dates; "*it was a guy who was 15 minutes late because he had to finish watching Formel 1. Like, he had his bike with him the whole walk. It was so awkward*". In this example, the person being late and also bringing his bike along on date where the purpose was to have a walk together might give the impression that he does not want to be there. He did not say he wanted to leave, but Charlotte got the feeling that the date was awkward based on him bring his bike and being late. Hence, the appearance of him bringing a bike gave the impression of him not connecting to the social context of a romantic walk, and also his manner of showing up late gave the impression of him wanting to be somewhere else. Charlotte's reaction to it was that it was awkward, she based the date on the feeling she got from his performance. These different aspects; appearance and manner, an observer take in from a performance, though they might not think about it when they meet a person and only think about the feeling they get from them. However, that feeling is based from seeing a person's whole appearance and mannerism, which can be why Meghan state "*it is not until you have met each other, you get to know each other*".

However, what impressions the participants look for to see if someone is interested in them offline is different than on Tinder, since on Tinder a match usually means that the two people are interested in each other. Both Louis and William said that when they are in a club it is eye-contact and glances that tells if someone can be interested in them or how they themselves show if they are interested in someone. George said similar things that he would look for clear signals before he would try to flirt with someone in a club. Some of the other participants said they do not really know why and how they hook up with someone from a club. Diana said, "*it is very rarely that it is a conscious thing*". It might be because of what Elizabeth said that one goes on instinct when they meet people offline. The reason for that might be the chance to take in a whole performance, which makes it easier for people to read the impression people give offline and they do not have to second guess what a person's intention really is, as they might have to do on Tinder.

5.4   How social and gender norms affect the dating culture

5.4.1 What happens when there is a match?

Prior research on Tinder have said that women get more matches (Timmermans and Courtois, 2018), this can be because men are less selective on online dating forums than women (Jung et al., 2019). However, this study showed that some of the male participants could be picky on who the gave a right swipe, the same way the women were, but they did at the same time say they found most women on Tinder to be beautiful. This can be because the different social norms that exist for men and women, and put different expectations on them (Butler, 2004). The female participants explanation to their chosen pictures they had for their Tinder profiles were that they wanted to have pictures where they looked their best. Even though, Diana said that she had more funny pictures of herself now, she said that when she took Tinder more seriously her focus was on having pictures where she looked pretty. While, when the male participants described their Tinder profiles most of them mentioned that they wanted to show what interest they had, for example Charles wanted show he played the guitar and Harry that he like photography. Beside showing an interest they also said they tried to show they were funny, with focus on a witty bios. However, William did say that he chose the pictures he looked good and happy in. The differences in how the female and the male participants chose to display their profiles can be argued to have to do with gender norms where women are judge by their looks and the men judge by their personality. However, all the participants said that Tinder is shallow and the first thing they notice is someone's look. Though, the fact that

women swipe more left than right and men doing the opposite can have to do with women being more adapted to an app as Tinder, where someone is judged by their looks since the imply that women also offline are judged more by their looks than men are.

This leaves women being the ones having more luck on getting matches on Tinder, which prior studies have proven (Timmermans and Courtois, 2018). This is something the participants are aware of and can be one of the reasons to why men initiate the conversations when there is a match. Both William and Louis, said they are usually the ones who message first and that they often tried to relate to something in the person's bio or pictures. Louis explained that he did that "*so they know you did not just throw away a message, that it is a little bit of a thought to it*". The reason behind it for Louis and William might be to be able to make themselves stand out amongst all the other men the women have matched with. Charlotte for example did say she found it boring when people just wrote "*hi*", she explain that "*it feels like maybe you write 'hi' to everyone*". However, William did say he thought people might not take Tinder that seriously and therefore he thought he had to be clear he was truly interest. Hence, he explained he usually write first and often asked for a date quite quickly. George, who said he did not write first often explain he felt it was awkward and that he was afraid to be misunderstood on Tinder since he liked to use sarcasm and jokes. He was aware of women having a lot of matches to choose from and to write something that could be misunderstood and be taken badly, meant that one lost one's chance.

> "*It is super hard on Tinder, then it is done, especially as a guy, when girls have a whole load of people and you are just someone in the pile. So, if you make a little misstep then it is onto the next guy.*" (George)

In this study most of the women did not initiate contact on Tinder, but they did usually answer if someone wrote to them. Diana had however during her time when she used Tinder in a dating purpose often started the conversations, the reason she explained: "*Because I am so selective so if I match with someone, I have really felt that 'I think you are nice'*". Although, today she just like the other female participants rarely send a message first via Tinder, they gave different answers for that. Kate, Meghan (when she used Tinder) and Diana explained that they were not that interested in meeting someone from Tinder and therefore they did not feel the need to initiate contact, though Meghan said if someone had an unsual picture, for example with an celebrity, in their profile her curiosity could make her write first to get an explanation. Elizabeth said she, like George, felt to scared to send a message first though she

did not know why that is, but she did answer the men who texted her if she found them attractive. Charlotte said she did not take as much initiation on Tinder as she does offline because *"on Tinder then they can just like ignore you"*. However, the women on Tinder do get more matches than the men and men do also usually send the first messages, therefore there are not the same need for the women to send a unique message to stick out in the same way as it is for the men. The culture on Tinder, in the sense that men initiate contact after a match, can be compared to the gender norm of the hierarchical structure of heterosexuality which make out women to be passive and men active (Butler, 2004). However, the participants behaviour to initiate contact via sending a message first or not on Tinder can also be a personality type and do not have to do with their different genders, only if they are a passive person or an active person. Though, most of the participants did conform to the gender stereotype, which might still say something about gender norms have an impact on their behaviour.

5.4.2 Offline versus Tinder

Norms set the parameters and legibility in a social domain, it governs the social intelligibility of action (Butler, 2004). How one acts in different social domains depends on social norms and as gender is a norm which is produce via bodily practices, gender is as well govern to fit into the set parameters. One can see Tinder as its own domain with its social norms that govern the users' actions on the app. These social norms that exist on Tinder can also be found in the real social world, offline, hence they were produced there first. Though, regulations of the norms may look a bit differently offline than online. Different social rules can be found in the different domains of the online and the offline, people behave a bit differently when they are online than when they are offline. This can be found among the participants of this study when they discussed their different approaches to meeting people on Tinder versus offline; for example, in a club.

First of all, the participants, as discussed above, found that impressions work differently online and offline. Offline a person goes more for a feeling when judging a person, this, as discussed, is because they have the possibility to take in the whole performance of a person. While on Tinder where that is not possible they have to rely on pictures, bios and perhaps if they match with the person via text messages. Some of the participants thought the biggest difference on Tinder versus offline, were that Tinder felt more unpersonal than offline.

"It is a little bit more unpersonal on Tinder, everything is a little bit more unpersonal on Tinder. Hum, and that you do not know how the person real look like when you swipe. That you especially base it on appearances, you have not talk to anyone before or anything when you swipe on them." (Harry)

In the real world, at clubs, initiating contact with people or showing an interest for a person happens without much thought, that at least most of the female participants thought. Elizabeth and Meghan said, that at clubs were alcohol is involved it is hard to know who took the initiative, *"I do not think about it, it just happens"* (Meghan). Charlotte said, that she was much more likely to take the initiative offline than on Tinder, though she said she could use similar short ice breakers as one could do on Tinder to have a good way to struck up a conversation in a club with someone, which she found interesting. However, most of the male participants said that Tinder was easier in that aspect that the confirmation a match gives one, makes it clearer that it is okay to ask for a date. Both, William and Louis said, that it can be hard to flirt in clubs because *"you do not want to seem too eager"* (William) and *"you do not want to be 'that' guy"* (Louis). Harry and George also said they did not go out to clubs and tried pick up someone and liked how Tinder made it easier because it takes away the pressure of face to face contact and one can dare a little bit more. The way the men speak of how they do not want to seem *"too eager"* or "*be 'that' guy*", while the women did not mention anything about the difficulties or things they thought about when they hook up with people at clubs. This can be because the norms surrounding men's and women's different roles in society, where men have a stereotype of being more sexual and having a predator behaviour, which might make the male participants think more about how they flirt offline and usually waits for a sign of interest. The sign of interest on Tinder is clearer since a match usually means an interest exist, they male participants thought.

Although, even though the female participants found it easier to hook up and flirt offline, they said they saw the advantages with Tinder. Diana said it helped her when she was a newly single to get *"a gateway to meet new people [...] making it very clear at the same time."*, Meghan also had similar thoughts on Tinder that it opens up for possibility to meet new people. Even though, some of the participants could dismiss Tinder for its shallow nature they still said that they did not dismiss it completely for the reason that it got people to meet others, who they might not have done otherwise. Charles, who have said Tinder is not for him in that aspect of meeting people, still gave it some praise:

"A great idea with Tinder, I think, is that we do not date that much in the Swedish society, so it a good thing that opens up for a lot of people to meet in a new way to get a partner" (Charles)

Kate had similar thoughts about Tinder on what social impact it has, she pointed out that she did not dismiss it, but it was not for her and that the set up on Tinder and offline was different, though she did not elaborate on what that differences were only saying that it is hard to pin down. Diana said that Tinder has a set up for hook up culture since it is very shallow, contradicting Charles who said it helps people to date. However, prior researches have said that Tinder is more viewed as a hook app, but do not dismiss that people still can get serious relationships via Tinder (Timmermans and Courtois, 2018, Lefebvre, 2018). The statement conforms with the thoughts and reflections of the participants of this study.

Hess and Flores (2018) described in their study how toxic masculinity exists on Tinder and that some men write messages to women which is based on the stereotypical hierarchical structure of heterosexuality were men try to submiss women. This was something one of the most active female participants had experiences. Charlotte explained how some men could write explicative messages to her and she was tired of some men having no filter only because it was on Tinder. She stated that the things people could write to her on Tinder would never be anything someone would come up and say to her in a club. Charlotte's experience conforms with Hess' and Flores' study and also show how gender norms are reinforced on Tinder when some men sexual harass women on Tinder (Butler, 2004). Since Charlotte claimed that the types of comments she received on Tinder, was something she did not receive offline in such directness says something about how the social norms work on Tinder. It seems people take more chances on Tinder since they will not meet a direct consequence as they might have done offline. George did mention that he does believe that some people dare to write more on Tinder because they will not face any real consequences. This is a big difference between Tinder and offline, that people do not take full consideration to that they are talking to another person when they text explicative or rude messages than they would offline. Charles also, mention that he had an interaction on Tinder with someone that was plain rude to him without any provocation, which he stated would never happen if they met face to face. Hess' and Flores' study did though only discuss how men wrote impropriate messages to women, something Charlotte had experience which does conform to a gender norm (Butler, 2004). Though, what was a little surprising was that William also said he had received messages with a sexual undertone, which he said he did not know how to

respond to, since he himself had not given an implication of wanting them. This goes against the gender norm where men are the ones using sexual harassments to subordinate women (Butler, 2004), though it confirms that Tinder has another culture that behaves different than offline as the participants have stated. That there is another set up on Tinder, however I believe that behaviours on Tinder that is govern by social norms can also be found offline, but that they appear differently on Tinder since they are more apparent, like an explicit text message. Furthermore, the way the participants had their profiles and how they swiped do give arguments to how gender norms are produced on Tinder, perhaps even clearer than offline.

5.4.3 Safety precautions when using Tinder

When asking the participants what they usually did the first time they meet someone for a Tinder date, all of them said they meet them in public, in bar or café. Most of them also stated that this was because they wanted to feel secure the first time, they met someone they had not met before. All of the female participants said they took safety precautions when they were going to meet someone from Tinder. They all at least told a friend that they were going on a date and made sure they met them in public, some looked up the person and also made sure they had talked a bit before they met to get a better idea of who the person was. Diana stated, when mentioning the safety precautions she took that "*I think as a girl that is something you most do, which is something I am going to mourn forever, but that is how it is*". While all the female participants found it obvious to make sure to take safety precautions for their own safety, most of the male participants said they did meet in public but it mostly had to do with that they wanted both themselves and their companion to feel comfortable and it not being for their own safety. This is evidence to how gender norms make women think about how they can feel most safe when meeting a man, they never met before, while a man does not have the same thoughts on safety precautions at all. This as explained by Butler (2004) is one of the ways gender norms are regulated and reinforced into daily social practices. One expects women to make sure to take precautions when they meet someone from online, considering social norms that exist in the society as Diana's statement saying as a woman *"you most"* think about it. However, both Louis and George said the reason they wanted to meet in a public place was because of their own safety as well: "*I had not been comfortable with going home to someone first [...] You have heard stories of people being tricked to a place and things like that and then attacked and robbed*" (George). Louis said he rather be sure to be

safe than risk anything, he also like all the female participants told a friend if he was going to meet someone from Tinder.

The participants were more cautious when they meet someone from Tinder than if they meet someone in a club. Kate said that she takes more safety precautions when she meets someone from Tinder than when she hooks up with someone from a club, even though she stated that it might not be that smart to not take precautions as one does on Tinder when hooking up with someone from a club. Though, as Elizabeth said that meeting someone in real life it is easier to get a feeling of their personality. The female participants seem to trust their instincts when they hook up with someone from a club, even though they did state that alcohol was involved which might make them think less about the consequences. However, Charlotte said that she felt that Lund is a safe environment and at the clubs in Lund, that is only open for students, it feels safer than meeting a stranger from Tinder.

> *"I feel that people see us together, people know where I live, they know the person I go home with. Either we have friends in common, which it usually is, and then it feels safe in a way. And then I know he is a student since he is in the club. [...] in the club people will be able to do something, I think."* (Charlotte)

Kate agreed with Charlotte¸ "*In Lund everyone like know everyone [...] the rumour spreads quickly if something would go wrong, but also it is a lot of people who actually know the person you are going home with*". Louis also said that he did not feel that he needed to take the same precautions in the club as what he did when he meet someone from Tinder; "*the biggest risk then is to get beat up by a random guy [...]it feels like a less exposed situation*".

One of the things the participants did as a precaution before meeting someone from Tinder, but also to get other impressions of the person they matched with, were to use other social media forums. Other social media forums open up for the opportunity to view more impressions of a person, hence they may show more of their performance on different social media forums. There one can gather more information on a person's real role than what they might show on Tinder, where it is easier to conceal some parts that do not fit with the idealized role they want to seem to be (Goffman, 1990). Some of the participants said they sometimes try to find the person they match with on other social media, to get a better idea on who the person is, to view more of a person's self-presentation. This is something Meenagh's (2015) study also showed, that young people gather information about others via social media forums. Furthermore, a typical transition after two people have talked for awhile on Tinder is that they add each other on Snapchat. Charlotte said she often added people from Tinder to

her Snapchat "*so I know it is them*", and Meghan said she added the person she eventually went on a date with on Snapchat for similar reason as Charlotte.

> *"I think it was because I wanted to see a little bit of who this person was before I met him. It is a little scary to meet people you never met before, like just go on a blind date so it was a little bit of a safety precaution"* (Meghan)

Diana said it usually was a natural step to change to Snapchat, though she did not really know why she assumed that it was for the reason Meghan stated, to get more impressions of the person. Louis said it felt that it is Tinder standard to change from Tinder to Snapchat and that it is usually on Snapchat one asks the other one on a date. However, Harry said he did not want to give his other social media contacts to someone until he met them: "*I usually go by if the first date goes well then you swift to other social media*". Even though, Harry said he did not give his Snapchat or any other social media on Tinder directly but wanted to know if the match offline as well, it seem that the participants agreed that only to chat on Tinder seems less serious.

Tinder seem to have some social rules about how one should act: where to go on the first date, which is a public place, to change social media forum when to show one wanted to know more about the person and show a greater interest. Tinder also seem to have an unspoken rule how and when to use the super like function, how to use it seem to be by accident and when to use it seem to be never. It was only two of the participants who had super liked someone without it being an accident, and that was William and Kate. Kate said that since she does not take Tinder seriously, she thought it was okay to super like someone. William explained that he had tried to super like some women, but he never got a like back, he guessed it was because "*people get a little bit scared*". That statement seemed to be correct, Meghan said she never super liked someone and had some conflicted feelings to get super liked.

> *"If I am not super interested in the person then it feels a little scary, a little stalkerish, it feels like that person really loves you and I am like we not really there yet, but at the same time it is fun to get super liked"* (Meghan)

Charlotte, though, found it only scary and would *"Never! Never ever!"* super like someone, the only exception would be her best friends. Diana state the same thing as Meghan that it felt "*someone is a little too eager*" and she had as a rule to never like someone back, who had

super liked her. George said he always assumed it was by accident if someone had super liked him, which Louis also said and that *"there is a normal like"*. Even though, Tinder introduced the super like to make Tinder more appealing and help their users with getting a match with someone they find extra nice, it seems as the users on Tinder did not feel the same. Tinder then, if judging from this study, seem to have its own rules and meanings though the intent purpose was something else, for example with the super like. And also, what is expected to happen when two people have talked awhile on Tinder, that it is time to change social media forum.

6. Conclusion

This qualitative study explored university students' behaviours and reflections about their dating lives and their use of the app Tinder. The study was done with the purpose to shed light on how Tinder, the most popular dating app in Sweden (Chaffey, 2019), is used by students and how social norms and presentation of themselves on Tinder versus offline appear. The result based on the personal interviews showed similarities to prior studies (Timmermans and Courtois, 2018; Lefebvre, 2018), the participants did not take Tinder to be an app where one searched for serious relationships, though two of them had found their partners via Tinder. Tinder have an impression of being shallow and the participants used Tinder mostly for the fun of it when they had time over. Tinder was used more than only for its purpose of meeting new people, it was also a way to pass time, get confidence boosts, as a game to collect matches and to get confirmation. Even though, most of the participants used Tinder for an entertainment purpose and not to meet people, they all seem to make sure that their Tinder profiles matched with the right impression of themselves. The participants' thoughts on their self-presentations on Tinder via their profiles were a bit different, some gave it a lot of thoughts while some not much at all. About half of them wanted to make sure their Tinder profiles gave a certain impression which matched with the role they wanted to uphold (Goffman, 1990), while the other half did not seem to give much thought to what impression they gave, only that they looked good. Even though, all the participants did not elaborate on their thoughts on why they chose the pictures or bios they did, they still conformed to some norms. Most of the participants, except one of the male participants, conformed to typical gender norms when they created their Tinder profiles. The female participants said they mostly chose pictures of themselves were they looked their best, while the male participants chose pictures and bios that showed their interest and something with humour. Even though,

the men probable chose pictures they looked their best on as well, since all participants had stated that Tinder was shallow and that they swipe right on people based on their appearance first and foremost. However, the men did not mention it as the women did, it can be argued that the gender norms where women are more judged on their appearances than men are acted out on Tinder.

All the participants said when they swipe right on someone, their appearance were the first thing they judged. They gender differences were also something apparent on how the participants swiped, how many they matched with and who initiated contact first. Prior studies showed that men were less selective, but women got more matches and the men where the ones who send messages first (Jung et al., 2019; Timmermans and Courtois, 2018). This study showed similar results, the female participants all said they were picky, and most of the male participants said the usually swiped right. This can be because of how the Tinder's format does it that people swipe based on other's appearances and since the gender norms where women have more beauty standards to live up to (Butler, 2004), the app might work in their favour. Furthermore, most of the male participants initiate contact after a match, even though some female participants said they could send a message first if they found someone really interesting. This could also be because of gender norms where men are deemed more active in pursuit of women and women are more passive. Though, it may also be that women get more matches than men, which men are aware of and then they need to initiate contact to have a chance to make themselves notice on Tinder.

These gender stereotypes were more apparent on Tinder than offline. The participants said they were more selective on Tinder, especially the female participants. The participants felt that on Tinder the format made it shallow and also that Tinder could feel unpersonal, since one only saw a few parts of a person and not the whole performance. The whole performance is referring to Goffman's (1990) self-presentation, a person can see the performer's appearance, manners and front in the same time and also at real time. This is why meeting someone offline can feel more personal and authentic, most of the participants agreed on that one could not for sure know the person and know if they really match until the meet in real life. On Tinder, people put up an idealize role of themselves, this they also can do offline. However, it is harder offline to conceal the parts of the idealize role one tries to live up to since a person's whole performance is at display at the same time. There is an easier risk for mishaps offline as one does not have the same control as on Tinder, this has been something most of the participants hade witness. They had been on Tinder dates where they realized the person they had matched with on Tinder, did not live up to their impressions when they met

offline. The biggest difference for the participants meeting or hooking up with someone from Tinder or someone in a club, was that in a club they went on instinct. The participants said that when they met someone offline it was more about a personal connection with the other person, a feeling of their personality, while on Tinder it was mostly their appearance which had sometimes been misjudged. This was also one of the reasons the participants, especially the female participants said they took more safety precautions when they were meeting someone from Tinder the first time than when they hooked up with someone from a club.

The safety precautions all the female participants took were that they made sure to meet in a public place the first time they met and also told a friend they were meeting someone. This was an expected result since gender norms regulate that women feel they must take precautions when the meet a man for the first time, however there were also two male participants that took similar precautions as the women did for their own safety, which was a little unexpected. Another safety precaution the participants took and also for the reason to find out more about the person the matched with on Tinder, were to change social media forums, usually to Snapchat. A prior study showed how young people look up others on Facebook to get more information about someone they were interested in (Meenagh, 2015). This was something the participants also mentioned, they looked on other social media forums to get a better idea who the person is. However, changing to another social media app was consider the next step on Tinder if one wanted to meet or give the impression of being more serious, since Tinder has an impression of being casual. Though, not everyone changed social media before they met.

The results showed that there are some other rules on Tinder than offline, the way people initiate contact and present themselves. Tinder seems also to uphold and regulate gender norms in a bigger variety than offline. This can be argued since men where more active on Tinder in their pursuit of women and women put greater effort in their appearances. While, in a club the female participants explained they could often initiate contact first and it was something that happened without much thought. Furthermore, explicit text messages are something the women on Tinder receive as a prior study has shown (Hess and Flores, 2018). One of the female participants said she had noticed how some men take greater liberty on saying explicit things via Tinder than what they would do offline. However, one of the male participants had also received unwanted explicit messages from female users. Hence, writing unwanted messages to other Tinder users can be more than a gender norm being acted out, but evidence show how social norms work differently on Tinder since there are less consequences.

Hooking up or meeting someone from Tinder or offline, have different social norms around them, but they do seem to be similar in that aspect that most of the participants seemed casual in the way they initiated contact. Even though, two of the participants are in serious relationships after meeting on Tinder, it seemed it happen by chance and that it was not an active decision. The university students seemed to have a casual attitude in their pursuit of sexual and romantic relationships. Tinder is seen as a hook up app for most people as prior studies and this study showed, though it does not seem to have affected the dating culture outside of Tinder. The hook up culture that exist on the student clubs in Lund does not seem to come from Tinder, since the participants said the reason it happens is because alcohol is involved, and it just happens.

This was a small-scale qualitative study based on personal interviews, the purpose was to give new insights and interpretations on how students reflect on their dating lives and their use of Tinder. This study did shed some light of the reason to why men initiate contact first on Tinder and why they are less selective, as prior studies have claimed. Though, the study only gives some interpretations, I do believe there can be other ways to broader knowledge of university students dating lives and the influence of dating apps. I conducted interviews, which went well, and I got the sense that this subject is something people enjoy discussing. Therefore, I see no problem for continue studies about this subject, furthermore since technology and social media evolve constantly it can be an important aspect to come back to. This study did not take inconsideration the participants' age, education or affliction with student nations, student corps and sections. This could have been done in this study, though it would have demanded a larger sample size to be able to draw any relevant conclusions. Kuperberg's and Padgett's (2016) study did compare students who were active in fraternities and sororities with non-members and they found differences in how they engaged in relationships, this would have been interesting in doing in Lund comparing active members of a student nation, student corps or section with non-active members. This could explore if the active members compare to the non-active members have other social norms around engaging in romantic and sexual relationships as in Kuperberg's and Padgett's study, if they also hook up more. This could perhaps give answers to if different social norms are produced in bigger social student networks, where there is more festivity with alcohol, than for students who do not engage the same way. It could instead of as in this study only exploring students as generic group, dived students into different social groups and explore if different social groups and activities produce different types of opportunity for initiate romantic or sexual relationships. However, this would as been said demand a larger size

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sample, which would be more time consuming and therefore it was not done for this study. A continue study to this one could also explore the different student towns with each other and see if the dating cultures are similar.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide

- Background

  Gender, age, education
- Why do you use Tinder?

  What you looking for? Partner, hook up etc.?
- How often do you use Tinder?

  Often, sometimes etc.
  When?
- Your presentation

  On Tinder: Profile?
- Who gets your attention?

  On Tinder: Who gets the right swipe?
  Offline: In the club?
- After a match what happens then?

  Who writes first?
  What does the interaction on Tinder look like?
- Safety precautions

  Meeting someone from Tinder?
  Offline: do you think about anything then?
- Biggest differences between Tinder and offline for you?

  What is easiest?
- What do you feel about Super like?
- Do you use any other social media app so meet people?
- Anything you want to add?

Table 1: Definitions of social media applications

Term:	Definition:
Snapchat	Snapchat is an app that lets it users send instant text, picture and video, that only can be viewed once since it vanishes after one opens the snap. One can though save some text in a chat, but that the other person will be aware of it, the same thing if someone takes a print screen of something one sends.
Instagram	Instagram is a social network app where one can share photos and shorter videoclips with other people, who can comment and like one's content. There is also a possibility to chat with other users via private chats, which are usually referred to as DMs.
Facebook	Facebook is a social network, where one adds friends to follow and share information with. It can also be used to make and share events and not only private people are on Facebook, companies and brands as well can have their

	own Facebook pages. On Facebook a person can be tagged in photos and posts, which can show up on the person's wall. It is on the person's wall people can find information the person has shared; like their education, employment, birthday and things they like. Facebook have their own messenger app, where people can chat with each other as well.
LinkedIn	LinkedIn is a social network where one handles their professional network. One's LinkedIn profile are a description of one professional background and goals, more like a CV.
Spotify	Sportify is a music platform, where one can stream music, make different playlists that one can share with friends if one wants to.