Research Article

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Boys at their Best - Cultural Values and Self-Presentation on Social Networks

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ABSTRACT
Especially on social media, people represent their identity with photographs that are meant to communicate something about the person. In this context, unspecialized dating platforms likek Tinder receive special attention, since a very large quantity of photos is conceivable and the goal of success with potential partners suggests the consideration of socio-cultural values. The article explores the question of which values are communicated through photographs on Tinder and whether Tinder promotes or rather prevents the representation of diversity among heterosexual men. It becomes apparent that the photographs categorised by means of content analysis revolve around three areas of tension: nature, body, and casualness, each of which appears to be associated with certain values, including dominance, authenticity, and coolness. Men present themselves very similarly, there are few (sub)cultural markers in the pictures, which suggests that they place more emphasis on corresponding to socio-cultural values than on expressing their identity.

Keywords: Dating, Self representation, Socio-Cultural Values, Masculinity, Social Media

Mediated forms to connect have a long tradition, having evloved from "newspaper advertisements to teletext to online dating websites" and have culminated in the app Tinder that was launched in 2012 by InterActiveCorp that also owns other dating websites like OkCupid [1]. Even though it refuses to release user demographics, it reportedly came close to 40 million accounts in 2014 following other sources, even above 50 millions [2,3]. It connects people within a particular radius and is based on double opt-in system in which most features are free of charge. "Tinder has many similar features of traditional online dating sites" but transforms online dating to mobile dating and thus "disconnects dating from static desktop machines accessing cyberspace to a hybridized from of dating that collapses physical and digital spaces" [3]. It has been stated that such type of dating "is perfectly suited to a mobile society, to a "world of radical individualism, mulitple identities and dynamic relationships, unfettered markets and consumer capitalism" [4].

For the user, Tinder most prominently presents pictures in a portrait format to fit the typical cellphone's screen. Users can upload up to nine pictures that can be swiped through. Further, a username appears underneath the photograph plus eventually the age the person noted. On a voluntary base, people can also indicate their job, their school or university and the place they live, plus several hobbies out of a list. In addition, users can write a free text about themselves that may include emoticons.

However, the focus is clearly on the photographs, so that a considerable part of the profiles does not write any text, nor selects hobbies, or indicates their jobs or schools. The user thus primarily communicates something about himself with one or a few photos. This work wants to find out which values the user consciously or unconsciously assumes are taken into account and whether Tinder promotes or rather prevents the representation of more diversity.

State of Research
To investigate the topic, various literature on various topics is available: looking at the medium Tinder or similar, a multitude of aspects has been analyzed, e.g. gender representation, the self-representation of migrants and refugees, self- esteem, impression management, hypermasculinity and misogynism, awareness of privacy issues, up to the focus on tourism [1-3,5-9].

Furthermore, there is a large body of literature on (visual) representation. One could start looking at the mirror experiences, in which the identification is first based on an image, as well as on alienation and thus ressembles photography [10]. In this context, the indexicality of photography comes to the fore and with it the question of the connection between a person and her photograph respectively a picture he or she has taken [11]. In this context, the selfie has a special role. An interesting focus "falls on the narrative practices of users' self-representations in social media" [6]. Further, it is inherently linked to the cellphone and the practice of sharing and thus to the reactions of the audience such as empathy, envy, approval, etc. Recently, Rebecca Coleman observed that nowadays, photography does not just serve as described by Barthes to a capture a way of being, but to capture a body as it might [12]. This may lead to presenting various ideals of the body rather than their authentic looks.

In recent decades, the body has also increasingly become the focus of scientific attention [13]. Disintegrating social boundaries and

the disappearance of traditional social classes, which are tied to the social distribution of roles, can explain the increasing emphasis on the body, as it became necessary to differentiate oneself through deliberately developing an individual style, expressed by an active self-marketing [14]. In the process, body ideals also move into the centre of interest: for Facebook, Gilbert Shang notices: "The dominant motif of photography […] is the presentation of the ideal body/self. This ideal body follows, but sometimes deconstructs a repertoire of normalized social body etiquettes popularized by mainstream and showbiz cultures" [15]. Further, it is useful to look at research on masculinity. Tinder is said to carry "notorious reputation for being home to hypersexual and toxic masculine expressions" [3]. So the question here is to what extent research can confirm this assumption.

Method

Let us first look at the initial situation: the sample was taken in Western Germany in an urban area around Cologne. At the time of the Corona Lockdown, Tinder use initially increased by 33 percent, which is explained by the new, involuntary free time, but also by the longing for social contacts and lack of alternatives [16]. Therefore, this period is very interesting because one can assume that more people use Tinder who are not otherwise active in online dating, i.e. there is a more heterogeneous user base.

A content analysis was used to categorize 300 profiles of (presumably) heterosexual men on Tinder. The the age group between 25 to 45 was selected, which covers, according to the global web index, more than half of the Tinder users [17]. Unlike with younger users, I assume that people in the referred age group may be more mature than the 39% of very young (16-24 year old) users. Profiles of couples who were looking for another playmate were not taken into account. On the average, the profiles had 4,2 photographs, however, the number varied a lot.

The stress of the study is on pictures, as Tinder clearly puts the focus on the photographs – which is sometimes ironically reflected in a text statement such as "finally I am not reduced to my brains". Putting the focus on the picture means that the text, which was added by 67% of the user, was considered as a supporting element. Even though the foremost method of this study, analysing and categorizing photographs, appears very quantitative, it has to be taken into account that "terms such as 'qualitative' and 'quantitative' are not simple distinctions. A category of image analysis such as 'are they smiling?' or 'are they trying to look hot?' or even 'is this a selfie?' implies that a qualitative judgement underlies the quantitative count. Unless it is taken in front of a mirror, you simply can't be sure that this is a selfie (a self-taken image) even if the subject's arm is outstretched in front of him or her" [18]. Cosequently, content analysis-based categorisation is founded on interpretation in two respects - on the question of what exactly one sees in the image and which category formations make sense. As ethnographic content analysis suggests, some categories, such as camera angle, were predetermined, whereas others emerged after observation, and few during the count itself [19].

The basis for the interpretation was the understanding of culture as a web of meanings. In this context, a semiotic conceptual framework is used, complemented in part by an analytical perspective that proved valuable when dealing with pictures. Different from classical psychoanalysis, this perspective "disentangles it from individual pathology" [20]. Yet, the unconscious plays a central role, as most people may not very clearly reflect for which reasons they choose or stage specific photographs.

The enumeration was supplemented by an ethnographic approach "that assists in simultaneously apprehending the particular interactions and larger contexts of in situ rhetorical performances" [3]. The main element of the ethnographic research was photo shoots I did for eight heterosexual men during the end of 2020 and the beginning of 2021, the results of which were to be used explicitly for Tinder. These men had responded to a post to that effect in a Facebook group for regional dating. I let myself be completely guided by their wishes and ideas and did not specify almost anything myself, except for corrections of alignment to the light. Before the shoots, the men scrolled through other heterosexual men's profiles on Tinder, explaining what they liked and what style they wanted to be photographed in. In the informal conversations, which for my purpose were more interesting than the photo shoots themselves, it also became clear how they wanted to appear. The aim of my study was openly explained to these men before we met and I received informed consent, yet almost none wanted to be named, nor did they want the pictures to be shown as part of this article. This shows that Tinder is a sensitive topic—be it because being single is perceived as unpleasant, that internet dating seems to be embarrassing or that this platform is seen as questionable. At the same time, however, all of them said that Tinder was one of the few options to meet potential partners, especially in times of the Corona crisis.

Motivations for use

As Anne-Kathrin Vitt found out, Tinder was often installed in "emotionally weak moments",e.g. after a break-up, and it tends to be downplayed in its importance by users. Different motivations can underlie the use of Tinder [1]. Pure online use, for example, offers among others entertainment, excitement, social interaction, and information – knowledge about the world [21,22]. Further, it can boost self-confidence if a person gets many matches, which suggest the usage of mainstream photographs to please a higher number of female users. Benefits from resulting real-life meetings include making new friends, attaining sexual satisfaction, experiencing adventure such as trying new sexual practices, and finding a potential partner.

However, when it comes to love, online dating is still seen as hurting cultural specific ideals of love in the German-speaking countries, as shown by Julia Dombrowski (2011: 70f.): there still seems to be a social consensus that love cannot be planned and cannot be forced, that one cannot specifically look for love. This is also reflected in some profile texts where men write, for example, "We can just say we met at the grocery store", "I am sceptical but thought why not try it here" or "I use Tinder untypically, because I'm looking for love".

The different benefits of Tinder can all be important for the same person: many matches increase the self-esteem, some of them are eligible for meetings because of their photos, the spatial proximity or the quality of the communication, and different possible outcomes can play a role. Furthermore, "these motivations also change[d] over time. I heard from users who revealed a hope for finding love, after initially using it for entertainment or ego-boost" [1,23].

However, these different benefits may suggest the use of different pictures: those who primarily want matches should choose photos that are as mainstream as possible, those who are looking for sexual adventures should stress their physical attractiveness, while those who are looking for a life partner should reveal more about themselves and not present themselves in an unrealistically attractive way. Thus, different ways of impression mangagement

make sense: following Erving Goffman (1959), who argued that people want to control or guide their fellow human's impressions through the manipulation of setting, appearance and behaviour, Tinder offers a stage for users who are highly motivated to engage in impression management [24]. Yet, there are some people who may not want to give a clear impression: some profiles do not show any photographs of the person but either a monochrome or blurred picture, a picture of objects, landscapes etc. or just present body parts.

Looking at my own experiences, it is difficult to determine what the motivations are, since the "social desirability" factor is likely to play a significant role in profile texts as well as in chatting after a match. This is certainly also true for the men I photographed. Five of them said they were looking for a relationship per se, but were also open to "friendship plus", hook-ups or one-night stands, one man said he was primarily looking for friendship plus or one-night stands, and two men were looking exclusively for serious relationships. None of them said they preferred to leave it at chat friendships—meeting in real life was important to all of them. Due to the small sample and social desirability, however, generalized statements can hardly be made here. Furthermore, when I asked these men for their picture preferences, they mostly just expressed likes or dislikes for certain motifs but could not really give any reasons for their opinions other than "I think this looks good/cool/stupid/attractive". This was quite astonishing for me as they used "I" as a reference point, but one could assume that the pictures should be liked by the recipient in first place. However, it may be that the men assume that their taste would be similar to the recipients, or, that they are actually looking for a partner who shares the same taste as them.

Types of Photographs

Furthermore, it has to be acknowledged that photography has always been the "art of the person" and of identity and in the context of dating, it seems obvious that photographs should communicate identity which is not only connected to the way we dress, pose, and stage ourselves but also to the way we take pictures, what we consider as a suitable sujet, and how we compose it or the criteria that guide of photo selection [11,25]. Closely connected to identity, photographs serve a representational function, they are "a surface, a ground, on which presences that look out toward the viewer can be built" [26]. With our pictures, we want to clarify who we are and/or how we want to be perceived.

Yet, the categorization of the photographs on Tinder achieved by content analysis faces some difficulties: first, it is not clear whether the images actually show the person or just a friend or even a stranger—this may be especially the case if only a singular portrait is used and if the main motivation is to collect matches or if online dating is unpleasant for the person in question. In addition, in many cases it also remains unclear whether, for example, atmospheric photos were taken by the person herself or show something created by the person, display a typical emotion, or are intended to be more general eye-catchers. Some categories may be difficult to distinguish from each other—in which case double entries have been made. The following categories are based on what is shown in the photographs. However, there are also few (less than 1%) pictures, that are extremely blurred or monochrome and are used to fully anonymize the user.

Self

By far the most featured photos (around 90%) present a portrait, whether it is an image of the face or the user's half or full body. In 29% the picture was taken from a lower angel which suggests a tall

figure, but eventually also dominance. On the opposite, 10% were taken from a higher angel. Often, the portrait is associated with an action, for example, hiking, climbing, cycling or the like (8%), making funny faces or wearing funny dresses (2,5%), working out (3,6%) etc. In some of these photographs, the location takes a lot of room and therefore, seems to be of specific importance, for example, if the persons show themselves at a beach, in front of a car or in the landscape. 3% of the pictures are group photographs in which one usually sees the user with people who are presumably his friends, and sometimes it is not even clear which of them is the user. Photos with children appeard few times, sometimes the text identifies them as own children, godchildren, nieces, nephews or the like.

Furthermore, backside or detail pictures can be found in more than 4%, among them photographs of tattoos that thus show a feature the user "owns". "Tattoos" are also quite often mentioned as a field of interest and in self-descriptions and users often state „I am tattooed". Whereas pictures of tattoos are usually not meant to anonymize, this is the effect of pictures that show just parts of the body or just the back or a silhouette, which make sense if the user is generally ashamed of his Tinder profile, suspects professional or personal disadvantages, and/or reveals something about particular sexual preferences. For the recipient, anonymized pictures can enable the projection of dreams. In very few cases, anonymized pictures are combined with usual portraits, for example in atmospheric photographs such as a sunset with a silhouette. Pictures just showing a black or blurred image, in the sample less this refers to less than 1%.

Activities

16% of the photographs show activities that can be classified as hobbies or job-related—thus not including something like walking around or lying. Among these activities, sport or physical exercise was the by far the most common (about 90%). However, looking at a statistic about the most popular free time activies in Germany, shopping and visiting cities is the favourite, followed by working in the garden, photography, going to restaurants, solving riddles, computer games and only on 7th place there comes "fitness" [27]. This statistic relates to the entire German population from 14 years onwards and it is assumable that men between 25 and 45 years are more into sports than other segments of society, yet it suggests that sport is quite overrepresented in the sample whereas other activities seem to be underrepresented. Only around 1% of the photographs were clearly job-related, showing either a man who wrote that he was an architect doing construction work, a man in corporate surroundings, men who seems to work as a doctor or nurses, and firefighters—which in Germany can be done as a volunteer as well.

Self-made and own Things

This quite small category (around 8%) refers mostly to pictures that focus an object. However, it is usually not clear, whether pictures of sketches, (artistic) photographs, food, etc. show something that the user created or just something he relates to. Sometimes the text gives an explanation and if yes, the focus is on the user's abilities. Some photos also show something that belongs to the user, especially pets—however, sometimes identified in the text as ex-pets or somebody else's pets—or a car that apparently is owned by the user, though in this case, the text never gave any information. No real estate or collectibles were shown in the sample.

Atmosphere and Emotions

Another, partly overlapping category (6%) shows atmospheric images, mainly photographs of landscapes or, to a lesser extent, of

food, but also scribbles, picture jokes or poems. The relationship to the user remains unclear, but in several cases it becomes obvious that it is a screenshot or an artwork by another person. Apart from serving as eye-catchers, one can assume that these pictures express something about the user, e.g. typical emotions or something he considers as beautiful, romantic or interesting.

A life of Casual Leisure

Looking at these categories, it is striking that some areas of life are relatively lacking: these photographs show a life of leisure, but only seldom pictures related to the job or corporate life. This matches Jorgen Christensen's observation referring to private snapshots: "the selection of photographs structures the memory of personal lives, and snapshots construe history and reality. This construction of personal history is characterized by exclusion. Only a few, if at all any snapshots depict the workplace and colleagues. It is a history of life as leisure" [28]. One explanation could be that Tinder users are less likely to have prestigious professions and therefore less likely to want to communicate about their profession. However, if we look at the optional indication of professions, we see that although only a few indicate their occupation, by no means are only particularly prestigious occupations to be found among the entries.

So the focus is on leisure, but not all areas of leisure are mapped: it is very rare to see the men in interiors or interiors only, just as one finds photographs of nothing but landscapes in the sample. Popular activities like watching TV, reading books, playing board or video games, playing an instrument or taking photographs are largely omitted. Above all, leisure activities in nature, on the other hand, occur very frequently.

Looking at the image composition, one hardly finds any photographs that use oblique cropping, that show a small depth of field, bokeh effects or somewhat more complex editing. The few black and white photographs in the sample appear to have been converted with a simple filter and the few more professional-looking photographs probably have been taken in photo studios or against a monochrome background, thus are quite ordinary. Classic application photos, however, are almost non-existent.

All in all, it can be said that only a certain spectrum of possible motifs tends to be selected and that these are shown in a certain way, mostly as casual snapshots. These pictures obviously represent something that the depicted user considers relevant for the way he wants to be seen and understood. Therefore, it is not always important whether there is a visual congruence to the user and his everyday life, but that the right meaning is conveyed—there are not only photographs of users, but also photographs about users.

Expressed Values

The photos shown are, similar to advertising photos, pictures that aim to create a certain effect, a "like" from suitable potential female partners, in a very short time while they are swiping through the profiles. According to the halo effect, people are inclined to infer other, unknown qualities in a stranger from a known quality. Visible characteristics that can be depicted in photos therefore lead to conclusions about characteristics that are not directly apparent, such as friendliness, intelligence or creativity. In this way, a lot of information can be conveyed in a very short time through the visual impression. With online dating, as with advertising, there is no pressure of immediate necessity for the other person, a.o. because of competing offers [29]. The profile must attract attention like an advertisement and make efficient use of the usually short viewing time, but at the same time it must be understood. Persuasion succeeds by addressing needs that can be traced back to values, defined as the widely shared perceptions in a society of what is desirable and worth striving for [30]. Values influence the selection of possible courses of action and goals and "have profound, although partly unconscious, effects on people's behavior [31]. The goals we pursue, as well as our more general ideas about 'the good life,' are influenced by the values of the culture into which we happen to have been born or raised".

However, if one infers certain values from Tinder photos, one must first acknowledge that in some cases, the photos are certainly selected quite unreflectively or unconsciously and that the selection is naturally also based on availability. For example, vacation photos may simply be more readily available than photos from the user's everyday life, as most of the photographed men told me. On the other hand, photos are so easy to create today with a smartphone that one can easily take new photos of yourself at any time. Futhermore, we cannot be sure if a picture was—consciously or unconsciously—rather selected to attract attention or to please in order to generate likes, or if it should communicate something to lead to matches with women that really suit the user's character. However, in both cases, they communicate something about socio-cultural values, the values a person has or assumes (some) others are likely to have.

Nature

Nature played a role in 39% of the photographs throughout all the categories, far more than e.g. interior (8%) or citylife and urban monuments (6%). This may be surprising because city life is a significant part of people's everyday lives, especially in the rather urban region where the sample was collected, and further, taking a selfie in the own flat would be probably the easiest option. So there must be other reasons why nature is such a popular setting or even single motif (self-made and own/ atmosphere). In some cases, it can be an expression of wealth and experience, of having travelled a lot. This is obvious if natural sights are shown, e.g. recognizable as Bali's rice terraces. Beach photographs usually put also stress on the barely dress body—so provide an opportunity to show off one's body without being too obvious. However, probably due to the season of the study—winter—and the preceding corona lockdowns, which made travel largely impossible, there were few beach photos in the sample, just around 4%. The by far biggest part of nature-related photographs showed presumably domestic nature. Nature is often associated with leisure, so one can assume that leisure and "outgoing", perhaps also an outgoing personality, are associated with photographs of nature. Political statements in the sense of environmental awareness might well be implied here or there, but one also finds nature photos in portfolios that otherwise show car pictures, so that it is probably less likely that nature pictures more often involve political aspects.

Picturing people in nature or just nature could be meant to link characteristics of nature to the person, such as the wild and untamed, which can imply sexual attractiveness. Nature may be meant a mirror of the soul, especially when photographs are used that only show nature or just the person's backside in the nature. This is also reminiscent of the historical era of Romanticism. Romanticism was a counter- movement to classicism, which, together with the Enlightenment, demystified the world. Romanticism, on the other hand, indulged in the wild and untameable nature and the mystical endlessness—things, that may be missed in our present and putting stress on nature might refer to a "new Romanticism" that again focuses on feelings instead of rationality, but also on leisure [32]. It is also conceivable that the allusion to nature compensates for the strong rationalisation of feelings that online

dating entails due to filtering according to criteria and the writing down of emotions [33].

At the same time, the conquest of nature may also play a role, for example, when men present how they conquer mountains while climbing or biking. This does not only offer the possibility to show athleticism or physicality, but also implies the expression of (male) strength and dominance, which may be reminiscent of the dualism of woman-nature and man-culture that "is used as justification for exploitative attitudes and actions of men toward women" as "in Western patriarchal culture, both women and nonhuman nature have been devalued alongside their assumed opposites— men and civilization/culture" [34,35].

With the focus on nature, the tension between nature as a mirror of the personality, as an expression of wildness and naturalness on the one hand, and the mastery of nature on the other, can be identified.

Body
When it comes to one's own person and its attractiveness, images of the body are naturally obvious. A high percentage of the photos is related to sporting activities. Here, there is a much stronger connection to the body than in other activities such as shopping, playing music or reading. While some images, especially topless photos, only show the result of physical activity—an athletic body—photos of sporting activities show physical skills on top of that. Furthermore, „it is possible (and perhaps even common) to enjoy some aesthetic appreciation of sporting activities. Such appreciation even leads some theoreticians to treat sport as form of art, and—logically enough—atheletes as artists" [36]. This type of body art implies discipline and consequently, these men show a high level of self- control. From this it can be concluded that they also have discipline and determination in other areas of life. Possibly dominance can also be derived from this—masculine, well-trained bodies as the epitome of the alpha male. It fits in with this that almost 30% of the photos in the sample were taken from a low angle, which makes the men look taller and more dominant, but only 10% used a higher angle. In addition, 7% show the man in a car, almost exclusively in the driver's seat, and in another 6% men pose with motorbikes—while only 0.3% of the pictures are related to public transport, which shows that it is not about general mobility. This phenomenon may be explained by the suggested ownership of a vehicle, thus by wealth, but also by the skill of driving—being the navigator—and having power over a horsepowered machine, over speed and space. Similarly, sport is associated with perfection and power, and often with risky physicality—sometimes also with power that goes beyond the purely sporting— beyond physical decay, beyond time [37].

This fits in with the observation that in photography and film, body ideals are promoted and that healthy, fit and athletic body also essential for the way managerial identities are constued, linked to self-control that not only touches exercise but also eating habits and resting [15,38] . Looking at society as a whole, the effect of such values is questionable: "The muscular male body ideal, often promoted in the media, is associated with male body dissatisfaction and increasingly problematic attempts to attain unrealistic body shape by young males" [39]. Of course, with a view to physicality, it is also about sexuality. Eva Illouz assumes that sexuality plays a major role for men to document their status and power. Traditional masculinity is called into question—men are no longer necessarily the head of the family, there is less solidarity in male societies due to increasingly mixed-gender leisure activities and men are no longer typically bosses but work under other men or women [40].

This leaves the area of sexuality where men exercise autonomy and authority through detachment and through emotional distance they can live out a serial sexuality.

Thus, presenting the body is again in a field of tension: on the one hand, it objectifies the man and he submits to the ideal of beauty of the athletic body, on the other hand, he can also demonstrate power with it.

Casualness
Looking at the motifs, but also at the camera technique, one notices casualness: the motives mostly show leisure, but not the person's job life, which is remarkable, as theoreists like Illouz see online dating as a new rationalized and capitalized version of love (2011: 198), which would suggest showing career- related pictures.

Instead, many pictures seem to be snapshots from everyday life. This may also come as a surprise, since one can assume that professionally shot and edited images are more likely to be successful. Of course, costs certainly play a role for many user, however, photo shoots are usually not very expensive and there are countless online tutorial that explain how to inscene oneself, how to work with available light and editing software for cellphones is often free. Even apart from professionalism, one sees little originality in the pictures unlike described by Laura Maleyka for selfies [41]. Even simple techniques such as black and white conversion, contrast enhancement or cross procession, which numerous mobile phone cameras already offer, are very rare. One explanation for the phenomenon may be that men do not want to raise high expectations when it comes to a real life meeting or that they want to be accepted the way they are by a potential date.

Considering the connection between image and values, one should assume that original images stand for an interesting person. On the other hand, causualness also suggests coolness: Kristen Lauer explains that a lack of investment into coolness, an "apathy to cool" is actually perceived as cool [42]. Similarly, Nick Douglas talks about the "Internet ugly aesthetic" referring to memetic content and states, that "it telegraphs the practitioner's casualness, capacity for irony, and internet savvy" [43]. Very ordinary, casual photos thus communicate that the person concerned does not need to go for a special pictorial effect, as it should already have an effect as such – thus, communicates self- confidence. However, with regard to self-esteem it was stated that male Tinder users scored significantly lower than either male or female non-users [7]. So the question here would be whether Tinder users took and selected corresponding pictures before they became active on the platform or whether they exchanged the pictures in the course of their time on Tinder and how their time on Tinder has influenced their self-perception. Casualness is in the area of tension between perfection, creativity and beauty on the one hand and authenticity and coolness on the other.

Conclusion: Tensions and Homogeneity
The analysis has clarified three areas of tension: on the one hand, the nature included in many photoraphs can be understood as a mirror of the personality, but on the other hand, the users often appear as conquerors of this very nature. The presented bodies submit to the ideal of beauty and commodify themselves, but at the same time also express dominance. On the one hand, causalness stands for authenticity and coolness, but on the other hand, the images are supposed to come close to certain ideals.

This reveals values that play a role in the image of men—or at least in men's self-image. Social desirability is certainly

important here. It is striking that in the Tinder sample, men rarely present themselves in the context of a (supposed) job, but almost exclusively in leisure contexts. Together with the focus on nature, this contradicts to some extent the observation that men usually tend to be presented as career-oriented, sober, and rational in photographs, e.g. in stock photography [44].

Furthermore, it is noticeable that the pictures appear quite homogeneous overall being shot in similar ways and also the bodies shown look quite similar—those who do not have an athletic body for example are obviously more likely to forgo either full-body photographs or a Tinder profile. (Sub)cultural identity—communicable through clothing, hairstyles, jewellery or settings—is almost never expressed in the photographs. There are also hardly any references in the accompanying texts, with the exception of usernames, that may refer to a certain geographic area or religion, and flags (in the sample mainly Turkey, Poland, Italy, Spain and South Africa), although this may simply convey travel preferences or spoken languages. Walter Leimgruber described that the focus on the body resulted from a blurring of traditional cultural boundaries, similarly argued Anthony Elliott: "One general line of consensus in […] recent social theory is that—in conditions of intensive globalization— individuals are increasingly required, or called upon, to become the 'architects of their own lives', to engage in continual do-it-yourself identity revisions" [29,45]. However, with regard to Tinder, this apparently did not lead to differentiation, but rather to quite uniform ideals. A reason may be that there are some specialized platform such as "schwarzes-glueck" for the gothic community or "elitepartner" for academics—however, in view of the very high user numbers alone, it is unlikely that only few people from special cultural contexts register on Tinder. The homogeneity is particularly striking, as male heterosexual users usally do not see the accounts of their male competitors at all. It can be concluded that they probably present themselves so similarly in the sense of assumed social desirability and that certain socio-cultural values, among them nature, body and casualness, are— consciously or unconsciously— quite present to the individual. This reminds on Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim's analysis: "The earthly faith of religionless, seemingly rational contemporary people is the you, the search for love in the other. [...] Love is religion after religion, fundamentalism after overcoming it" [46]. It should be added, that it is similar with sexual activity, the search for the ultimate distraction or event, and self-esteem: these aspects could be so important that in the search, one's own identity is downplayed in favour of assumed socio-cultural values [47-50].

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