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The current issue is the fourth of the eighth volume of the *Athens Journal of Social Sciences* (AJSS), **published by the Social Sciences Division of ATINER.**

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The Significance of Community for Greek Australians Living in Diaspora

By Maria-Irini Avgoulas [*] *& Rebecca Fanany* [±]

This paper will elucidate the importance of community and the significance of this for Greek Australians living in diaspora. It is based on a series of qualitative research projects undertaken by very experienced researchers, exemplifying both an emic and etic position relative to this diaspora population. Through the application of Narrative Ethnography, the lived experience of this population across the generations will be discussed. This experience will be further highlighted through the presentation of a profile of the Greek community in Melbourne illustrating the lived experience and community identity of its members. This will exemplify perceptions of what 'community', 'community connections' and 'social connectedness' mean to Greek Australians and allow the influence on their emotional health and wellbeing to be examined. This lived experience aims to show how a perception of Greekness influences health-related behavior, especially diet and nutrition, and creates a sense of wellbeing among members of the community. The findings of this study have wider implications for the understanding of the Greek experience in Australia and show the importance of community and the significance of cultural practices to overall psychological wellbeing. They also contribute to a wider knowledge base and will inform interventions intended to address well-being and health for members of the Greek population. This might be of assistance in policy making and meeting the health needs of multicultural communities more broadly.

Keywords: *Community, Greek Australian, Diaspora, Qualitative, Narrative Ethnography*

Introduction and Background

Australia is committed to providing culturally appropriate health care and services to its population, and this principle is incorporated into the service contract of Medicare, the national healthcare system (Department of Human Services, 2012). Achieving this aim requires an in-depth understanding of the cultural needs of all Australian ethnic groups to meet and ehance health and wellbeing for all. This includes the role and influence of the language and cultural background of various communities and how these factors may affect wellbeing and attitudes towards health care and healthcare professionals. One of Australia's major cultural communities is made up of individuals of Greek background. The Greek community has been in existence in Australia since 1827, with the vast majority of its members arriving in the period following World War II and the Greek civil war aboard the many ships that left from Piraeus, Athens (Avgoulas

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and Fanany 2015). Despite their long residence as a community in Australia and high level of integration into the Australian mainstream, people of Greek background have maintained a distinct cultural perspective as well as linguistic patterns and daily practices that reflect their culture of origin. This has persisted among members of the younger generations who were born in Australia and have become English speakers and Australians in terms of overall lifestyle.

The research reported here *(undertaken by Avgoulas, M-I who is one of the authors of this paper)*, which included both male and female participants of three generations, was undertaken in Melbourne, which has one of Australia's largest populations of people of Greek background. The Greek community is dynamic and maintains many social and cultural organizations and institutions that reflect the national and cultural heritage of community members. It's important to note early on that this paper is based three qualitative studies. These are:

1. A 2011 qualitative study entitled *'Cultural Understanding of Health and Adjustment to Cardiovascular Disease among the Greek elderly'*, which involved 13 participants (five male and eight female) aged over 60 over a one-month period. This research specifically examined the health beliefs of elderly Greek Australians and the way they understand health and disease;
2. A 2012 qualitative study that was part of a PhD research project that was entitled *'Health Beliefs and Practices in Three Generations of Greek Australian Women in Melbourne'*. This research investigated the health beliefs and practices in three generations of Greek Australian women in Melbourne. A Total of 48 women took part in this study, representing immigrant, first and second generation members of participating families;
3. A 2016 qualitative study investigating*'Greek dancing as an aspect of cultural identity and wellbeing'*. Nineteen male and female participants aged over 18 from Manasis School of Greek Dance and Culture in Melbourne, Australia, took part in this study that focused on the reasons these individual sparticipated in Greek dancing while living in Diaspora.

The first author of this paper *(Avgoulas)* is a member of this community and occupies an insider position in relation to language and cultural background. This was an advantage in this study as many older individuals are most comfortable using Greek and cannot fully express their ideas and perceptions in English. In addition, an understanding of the cultural assumptions was extremely important in developing a comprehensive picture of the role of food and diet in contributing to overall well-being as understood by the participants.

Narrative Ethnography

The literature describes ethnography as an active relationship between the researcher and the population(s) being studied (Boyle 1994, Marcus and Fisher 1986). In addition, it has been seen as a research activity that is located within the community of interest (Moeran 2007). Goodall (2004) sees ethnography as a form of storytelling where the subject matter is real life. Understood in this way, ethnography shares characteristics with oral history, in that both disciplines focus on the perceptions of the individuals concerned, but where oral history is concerned primarily with documenting the meaning of events internal to the community of study, ethnography strives to offer a comparison with external contexts that may be similar or may contrast with that of the community of interest (see, for example, Leavy 2011, for discussion of this).

The need to understand the specific culturally-based perspective of various communities is well accepted, especially in fields like health, where such perspectives can affect a range of outcomes that have real implications to the people involved. An ethnographic approach is especially suited to elucidating these culturally-determined views. Nonetheless, while traditionally focused on local contexts and the experiences of individuals who are part of small, distinct groups, it is increasingly recognized that ethnography can and should expand beyond place-centered studies (Merry 2000). In an increasingly globalized world, individuals and the local communities of which they are a part, are affected by events and ideas that originate elsewhere. This is very much the case in the Greek community in Melbourne, whose members view themselves as connected to Greek people in Greece as well as in other diaspora communities and whose perceptions of themselves and their culture draw on the memories and interpretations of the original immigrant commnunities but are also supplemented by new understandings that derive from a more global concept of Greekness available through the internet and social media that is growing in importance, even as the community shifts more toward English and away from Greek as a the mediating language of culture and social experience. The way in which the individuals who took part in this study understand their own experience, then, is very different from the kinds of understanding that might have been more traditionally expected from ethnographic study. This underscores the importance of eliciting the same kind of deeper, more nuanced responses from study participants in order to fully depict their experience in a way that can be applied to the relevant contexts, including health and wellbeing.

The Greeks of Melbourne

The Greek community in Melbourne, Australia, is large and dynamic. It has been in existence for more than 100 years since the first migrants from Greece began to arrive in Australia. However, it increased greatly in size and strength after the second World War, when thousands of new migrants hoping for a better life in a new country left Greece to settle in “the lucky country” (Tamis 2005). Today, the original migrants are the parents and grandparents (and even great grandparents) of a community of Greek Australians who are highly integrated into the mainstream of Australian society (Clyne 2011). While these older Greek individuals often do not speak English well and try to maintain what they see as a Greek lifestyle, the first Australian born generation is often bilingual and occupies a position that bridges the Greek orientation of their parents and the lifestyle of the

Australian mainstream. The members of the second Australian born generation, many of whom are now young adults, are native speakers of English; many have only rudimentary Greek and are more like their peers from other ethnic backgrounds in terms of lifestyle than they are similar to their grandparents. This can be seen as a result of the adaptability of the community but also as a reaction to the difficulties of the migration experience that suggested to many members of the community that mastery of the mainstream language and culture of Australia was necessary for successful integration into a new cultural milieu.

Nonetheless, the Greek community of Melbourne has established and maintained several institutions intended to transmit Greek culture to younger people. These include Greek language schools, social and sporting organizations, and Greek Orthodox churches, which continue to be important community institutions despite a general trend away from organized religion in Australia (Bouma, 2006). The elements that characterize membership in the Greek community not surprisingly center on religious perspective and participation as well as in food practices and linguistic behaviour that includes use of Greek terms for family members, events and practices of cultural importance, names of food items, and so forth, even among individuals who do not otherwise speak Greek.

Their Greek Orthodox background often gives members of the Melbourne Greek community a strong and persistent worldview that centres on belief in God and His power and benevolence. This view was shared by members of all genrations, genders and ages in all three studies. – One 2nd generation participant from study 2 expressed this view as follows: "*When someone has cancer, it could be in their genes but it could have started ages ago. God may have given it to a certain person and put it in their genes and decides when it will appear."* This translates into a view of pre-determined fate, especially among older people, that is dependent on God's will. This view is often expressed in terms of a two-fold perspective centering on health and well-being. This conceptualization suggests that the individual has a responsibility to improve his or her health and overall wellbeing through reasonable efforts that are within his or her capability to carry out. This religious perspective also leads to a strong focus on emotional health and wellbeing among all generations of the community. Individuals of all ages recognize the negative impacts of stress and acknowledge a role for religious faith in ameliorating these detrimental effects. Many rely on prayer and religious rituals as a source of strength and use them to cope with adversity, with participation in culturally important events, such as fasting before Easter, serving a source of resilience as well as a marker of cultural identity and community belonging. While even the older members of the community are aware of the health impacts of smoking and diet, for example, and the younger members tend to have to same views on health as the population in general, the social and emotional value of religion is notable across the community, and religious participation is a characteristic feature of the Greek community that sets it apart from other ethnic and cultural groups in Australia (see Watson 2009).

Food is another significant marker of cultural identity and one that members of the Greek community are proud of. The role and importance of food and food practices come from the original migrants. Specific food preferences and eating habits associated with Greece are desirable and serve as clear markers of cultural identity. This extends, not just to a preference for specific dishes or methods of preparation, but also to the maintenance of home gardens. The Australian climate is well-suited to many of the plants that grow in Greece that the original migrants were familiar with. For this reason, it was possible to recreate an aspect of the agricultural life that characterized the background of most of these early arrivals and represents a significant part of their memory culture of agricultural life in Greece. The younger generations, even when they do not have time or an inclination to engage in serious gardening, tend to value growing one's own fruit and vegetables, and many younger people aspire to have a garden like that of their grandparents someday. In addition to the obvious health benefits of gardening as a source of light exercise and psychological wellbeing, water and soil are seen by many Greek Australians as a link to their traditional homeland and a source of strength and perseverance. This has been especially significant in sustaining them emotionally, especially in the harder times of the past. In addition, the presence of a home garden whose produce is familiar and fits with traditional food culture has served to sustain the food practices of the community over time. While the community's diet has, of course, changed in Australia along with its integration into the mainstream culture as well as its rising economic status that allows for greater variety, many Greek Australians believe in the ancient principle of *παν μέτρον αριστον,* 'everything in moderation'. This idea, in combination with continuing adherence to a largely Mediterranean diet, may account for some health advantages enjoyed by the Australian Greek community in comparison with the population as a whole as well as with other ethnic and cultural groups (see, for example, Hodge et al. 2011).

Food is an integral aspect of heritage and responsibility to family, identity and cultural practices that must be shared and maintained, despite the community's situation in diaspora. Members of all generations of the Greek community associate their food choices with what they or their elders knew in Greece, their culture and Hellenic heritage. Many feel an obvious pride at being different in this way from the Australian mainstream and believe their way of eating to be healthier and more beneficial than what they consider to be outside of their cultural purview. This view predominates, even among younger people, who, in fact, tend to be quite similar to their peers in terms of diet. Food items seen as healthier and better overall include white bean (cannellini bean) soup, lentils, wild greens and fish, which members of the community associate with experience in Greece. Older individuals are often disappointed and concerned that their children and grandchildren do not like Greek dishes as much as they hope and, as a result, do not cook these kinds of food. They tend to see a more Australian diet as less beneficial for health in addition to being a poor cultural fit. Younger members of the community perceive themselves differently, however, and often express their attachment to the food practices of their heritage culture. This is often expressed as a dependence on specific items, such as olive oil, that are culturally significant and represent staples in Greek cooking. Like their elders, these younger Greek Australians often see 'Greek' food as more nutritious and flavorful as well as emotionally significant. They also frequently share the view of their parents and grandparents that processed food should be avoided, that everything should be enjoyed in moderation, and it is best to eat the kinds of foods they were raised on, regardless of whether they practice various aspects of their heritage food culture themselves.

The practice of fasting before Easter is an important cultural and religious ritual in the Greek community in Melbourne. Members of the community tend to see this as something that is specifically Greek, despite the more general occurrence of abstinence during Lent among various Christian communities. While clearly a religious act, many Greek Australians believe there is a health benefit associated with giving up certain foods during this period, and younger people especially use the practice as a means to control diet and restrict their food intake. Interestingly, attitudes toward the necessity of fasting seem to be increasingly relaxed. For example, while universally seen as beneficial with in the Greek community, fasting by those who take regular medication is seen as negative. In this, the need to follow medical advice is viewed as taking precedence over religious requirements. Similarly, many members of the community believe that it is appropriate not to fast or to take a break from fasting when in the presence of friends or at a social gathering that involves people from other backgrounds, as the need to be socially appropriate and not stand out in this way is seen as more important than religious observance. This kind of flexibility is an example of the cultural perspective that has facilitated the integration of people of Greek background into Australian society, but, at the same time, the significance and perceived uniqueness of religious fasting cannot be overestimated. For many members of the community, this socioreligious practice is seen as an infallible mark of identity and community belonging.

Overall, members of the Greek community in Melbourne believe in the knowledge and abilities of the modern healthcare system and its practitioners. Greece has a long tradition of medical practice that can be traced back to Hippocrates in ancient times. As a result of this perhaps, the community has comparatively few traditional or home remedies that are in use. Older individuals often know about and have used such methods but generally believe them to be inferior to the medical knowledge possessed by trained practitioners. An exception to this is belief in the evil eye and the efficacy of traditional means to fight this negative influence. While it is mostly the older generation of migrants who are familiar with these traditional practices, younger people often believe in this kind of illness and the means to treat it. Nonetheless, members of the Greek community have few qualms about using the healthcare system and are generally open to health advice and treatment proposed by doctors, including that related to diet and nutrition. In fact, their religious perspective seems to support the use of medical care, as this is seen as obeying God's wishes for them by responding to illness by making an effort to seek appropriate help and accept treatment that is available. This, along with maintaining a healthy and culturally fitting diet and the belief that God will not challenge them beyond their ability to cope, makes for overall high resilience and emotional stability in the Greek community in Melbourne.

Despite great pride in their cultural heritage and Greek way of life, members of the Greek Australian community tend to be very private about their cultural practices. One participant from Study 3 explained: *"Even though they [elders] are not dancing when they are audience well it provides them with joy, they are so proud, even when they see their grandchildren but it's the same thing when they see strangers – we are automatically connecting and bonding it could be a song, a dance, a memory – its our culture and where they grew up".*This may be a result of the experiences of older members of the community at a time when discrimination against non-English speaking groups was strong in Australia, and they experienced difficulties finding work and adjusting to the Australian context when they first arrived (Tamis 2005). Family ties remain important as do linguistic bonds, even if the latter are manifested only in names of obvious Greek origin among many of the younger members of the community. Today links to their region of origin are fading in significance as most of the community was born in Australia (Avgoulas and Fanany 2015). Nonetheless, the community remains tightly knit, such that its characteristic diversities may not be immediately visible to outsiders who may overestimate the impact of cultural commonalities of the Australian mainstream on the perceptions and experience members of the Greek community.

Discussion and Conlusion

Despite the efforts at cultural maintenance and the heavy investment made by the original immigrant generation to create a feeling of Greekness in their Australian-born descendants, the Greek community appears to be "Australian" in many ways. This is especially the case among younger people who were born in Australia, and one of the ways in which this cultural shift is visible is in the food choices and eating patterns that are common in different age cohorts. Despite widespread agreement that a Greek diet is preferable and healthier, first and second generation Greek Australians eat more like other Australians of the same age than like the cultural pattern their elders wish they would preserve. Time is a major factor in this, with many individuals noting that Greek food requires a great deal of preparation and cooking time that is increasingly scarce. While many also feel that Greek food is healthier and overall better for one's health and wellbeing, as noted, cultural practices such as fasting are sometimes used for weight management, many individuals also believe that Greek food is very heavy, especially in the very hot Australian summers. Not surprisingly, there are many efforts to adapt Greek food or dishes to the demands of modern life, and food and cooking continue to be topics of interest in the social media created and used by members of the Greek diaspora, both in Australia and elsewhere in the world. There is no doubt that eating a Greek diet (or a diet that is Greek in essence) has been closely associated with cultural identity in Australia, but it is also the case that this identity is shifting because of the experience of younger people that is increasingly "Australian" in nature. One reason for this is that those born in Australia are English speakers and feel themselves to be part of the Australian mainstream, despite an additional identity of Greekness. While this second identity is typically very important to those involved, it exists largely as an emotional dimension, rather than a set of hehaviors that are easily observed.

Greekness can be difficult to see, especially among the younger generations. The brief profile of Greeks in Melbourne presented here illustrates some of the less visible aspects of this cultural identity and exemplifies the way in which food and diet fit into individuals' perceptions. This is the type of phenomenon that a narrative ethnographic approach can effectively address, as has been used in this case. In order to understand the dimensions of ethnic identity in this community, it is necessary to elucidate how individuals see themselves and the meanings they give to the events of their life, which may not appear distinctive to casual observation. In the case of the Greek community, researchers who occupy an insider position have an additional advantage. The historical experience of older family members seems to have created a feeling of caution toward outsiders interested in the Greek experience. In addition, insider knowledge of the way language is used, cultural practices, and the nature of the local Greek communities is helpful in interpreting the contributions of study participants and placing their experiences within the broader Australian context. Such local place-based knowledge is likely to become increasingly important as the presence of outside ideas and perceptions that often derive the online world continues to affect the direct experience of individuals' lives and their perception of their own identity.

In addition, as social and cultural diversity continue to increase, the importance of understanding the specific experiences and eprceptions of various cultural and ethnic communities is likely to grow. In order to provide relevant services, to achieve the best outcomes from health care, and to ensure high levels of satisfaction among users, specific cultural insight is needed by practitioners as well as policymakers and educators (NHMRC 2006). While the approach is generally accepted as a requirement of culturally appropriate practice, it can only be achieved if based on a thorough understanding of the relevant aspects of specific cultures that are part of the community of interest (see, for example, Young and Guo 2016, Henderson et al. 2018). This knowledge can most appropriately come from an interdisciplinary approach to public health and wellbeing that draws on the methods developed in other fields that are applied to specific questions relevant to the health and scial services context. Narrative ethnography is one of these, and there are others, that have the potential to expand our understanding of culture, its impact on identity, and the ways in which this affects the experience of health, illness, and wellbeing.

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Psychological, Social and Imaginary Dimensions of LGB People who use Dating Apps: A Netnography Approach

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Social networks and dating apps increasingly represent a novel way to meet people as opposed to traditional face-to-face communication. Virtual platforms are particularly important for gays and lesbians due to the social stigma related to their sexual orientation and are diversified according to their users: the former use Grindr and the latter Wapa. Our research involved a group of users from Campania, in southern Italy, and employs a mixed methods approach. We first studied users' profiles in both dating apps and then focused on qualitative interviews to reconstruct the psychological (emotional and affective dynamics) and social (sexual script) dimension of the imaginary underpinning online interactions. We aim at filling the partial gap in the Italian research between virtual media and homosexuality, highlighting the communication methods and relational approaches through which gay and lesbian people (and partially also bisexuals) relate through social networks. The first section reviews the relevant literature, connecting it to the relation between new media, affectivity, and sexuality. It explains the notion of sexual identity, an essential epistemological preamble for comprehending the possible phenomenology through which people relate to their own sexuality. The second section explores the apps' social mechanism, showing gay's and lesbians' trends on the emotional, sentimental, or sexual approach. Our purpose is to verify the existence of a different gay or lesbian approach in both applications (in the purpose of its usage and in some of the imaginary dimensions) or if those apps modify the sexual behaviour, thus producing new forms of social and relational homologation.

Keywords: *sexual scripts, app for dating online, gay and lesbian studies, gender models.*

Introduction

The history of the Italian LGBT community (and the related processes of emancipation and self-determination of identities and non-regulatory sexual orientations) has followed a different trend compared to other Western countries. Over the years, Italian society and its main institutions have proved conservative and paternalistic concerning sexuality and sexual practices. According to a naturalistic and heteronormative vision, these had to pertain exclusively to the private and intimate sphere of the individual, under strong pressure from public morals and religious ethics.

This social and cultural framework contributed to the delay and lack of emancipation of the LGBT community, even more evidently in the South of the country.

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However, the advent of the Internet, since the early 2000s, has allowed homosexual people to elect *cyberspace* as a pivotal context in which to take refuge, create interpersonal relationships, draw on information and socialisation processes and practices, talk freely about identity aspects and above all create belonging to a community and a social and collective identity (Bacio and Peruzzi 2017).

The spread of Social Media, such as *Facebook*, *Instagram*, *Twitter*, has created the possibility to "stay connected" regardless of physical distance and to create interpersonal relationships conveyed by immediacy and gratuitousness.

Within the Social Media offer, several online dating applications have been developed and widely distributed, both for heterosexual people (*e.g. Tinder* and *Badoo*), gay men (e.g. *Grindr*) or lesbian women (*e.g. Wapa*, *Greta*), to provide opportunities to meet new people and establish interpersonal relationships beyond traditional face-to-face interactions.

The birth and diffusion of these "dedicated" applications, in addition to the specific advantages we have already mentioned, allow LBG people a further important *benefit*: confidentiality, thanks to which they can control and stem the psychological and social aspects related to the stigmatization of sexual orientation.

The scientific interest in the study of *homosexual sexual scripts* through the internet and social networks represents an innovative strand within Gender Studies, but with many unanswered research questions.

This contribution aims to integrate and compare two analyses on the use of apps for online dating by gays and lesbians and how this use reverberates for the psychological, social and symbolic aspects involved in the process of socialization to sexuality.

The first part, through a literature review, will analyse the concepts of *sexual orientation*, *sexual script* and *sexual market*, fundamental to build an epistemological frame of reference in which to understand and interpret both the results and the conceptual reflections expressed.

The second part will describe the results, related to two research works carried out between 2019 and 2020 in Salerno on young gays and lesbians who make regular use of online dating apps, analysing the psychological, social and symbolic dynamics involved in dating along the online/offline dimension.

Literature Review

The development of homosexual movements and the claims of egalitarian policies in the 1970s favoured the birth and spread of new sociological and psychological theories that undermined the hegemonic vision of sexuality derived from biology and/or psychiatry (Kinsey et al. 1955).

These new theoretical reflections, on the impetus of the processes of normalization of homo-erotic desire, identity self-determination and emancipation from hegemonic heteronormative masculinity, quickly spread both in North America and Europe, giving rise to the Gay and Lesbians Studies (Altman 1974, Hocquen-ghem 1973, Mieli 1977).

A theoretical, philosophical and sociological debate began on the social representation of homosexuality, sexual identity and the concept of sexual orientation.

Based on these studies, *sexual identity* is today defined as the subjective and individual dimension of *the awareness of being a sexual-erotic agent*. This complex process of constructing meanings and symbols is the result of a dialectic between nature and culture within structured contexts (Berger and Luckmann 1969).

Sexual identity is organized through the interaction of three constitutive dimensions: a) ***biological sex***: consisting of the biological and genetic evidence that gives the phenotypical classification of male or female. More specifically, it includes the chromosomal organization and primary and secondary sexual characteristics; b) ***gender identity***: the psychological and inner construction of belonging to one or the other social and cultural category in the binary male-female division; c) ***gender role***: the complex system of models, beliefs, expectations and behaviours, socially shared by a given culture and ascribable to male or female gender roles (Valerio, Scandura, Amodeo, 2014a, 2014b).

Each culture, therefore, develops a series of *sexual typologies*, *i.e.* representing patterns of conduct and symbolic resources that are institutionalized, accepted and shared (Schutz 1996).

The individual *is born sexed*, with a predetermined genetic, biological and somatic connotation, but thanks to the process of symbolization and signification he or she *becomes sexual*; this newly acquired construction makes it possible to establish, emotional, social and affective relationships and exchanges (Gagnon and Simon 2003).

Therefore, within this perspective of symbolic construction, there is not just one human sexuality, but *various sexual perspectives*, in which one can express the ways of acting, saying, expressing and feeling one's *sexual body*.

It is important, therefore, to define the concept of ***sexual orientation*** as emotional, relational and sexual desire/attraction towards people of the opposite sex (*heterosexuality*), of one's own sex (*homosexuality*) or both (*bisexuality*).

Many cultures of modern society are based on *genderist and heteronormative* ideological structures, which regulate relational, social and psychological dynamics on a binary naturalist dichotomous division (male and female), and on a heterosexual sexual orientation, ordered by nature and reproductive function.

In the light of these ideological matrices, LGBT people are often subject to forms of discrimination and social stigmatization and collectively represented as deviant, amoral and unnatural, creating strong psychological, relational and social discomfort.

Gagnon and Simon (1986) have described how interpersonal relationships, and particularly sexual dynamics, are regulated by *sexual scripts* created, consolidated and structured within processes of symbolisation and signification.

The *theory of sexual scripts* was born as a sociological theory of sexuality, harshly criticizing the positivist and functionalist tradition, overcoming the dichotomous view of gender based on biological evidence and recognizing in sexual scripts an articulated range of behaviours, expectations, beliefs and practices to be adopted in social interactions in specific contexts.

Rinaldi defines sexual scripts as: "cognitive structures produced by the union of different complexes of structured concepts configuring a stereotyped, organized and adequate sequence of actions that resort to certain circumstances, in a given context, to achieve a goal" (Rinaldi 2017).

Sexual scripts are articulated through maps of meanings and behaviours established by the social groups of reference and elaborated by each individual to contextualize and decode their relational and sexual experiences.

Gagnon and Simon (2003) argue that sexual scripts are organized on three specific levels: a) *cultural level*: refers to orientations, cognitive maps and systems of norms and beliefs of reference, within which to act and co-construct meaning; b) *interpersonal level*: refers to the application of cultural scripts through behaviours and attitudes in a given social text or contextual situation; c) *intrapsychic level*: refers to the system of values, beliefs, feelings and emotions of the individual.

Later Gagnon, in collaboration with Laumann (1995), expanded and reorganized the theory of sexual scripts, postulating the theory of sexual markets.

The concept of the sexual market analyses the set of cultural and social structures that can aid or inhibit sexual behaviours and highlights the existence of a "social and relational structure" in which to search for a sexual partner.

Laumann (1995) defines five constitutive elements of sexual markets: a) *social networks*: the network of interpersonal relationships, both real and virtual, within which the subject can begin *partnering* processes. Social networks are generally constituted through affinity parameters, *e.g.* ethnicity, religion, ideology, geographical affiliation, elective affinity, sharing a physical space; b) the *physical space*: consisting of geographical boundaries (real and virtual) within which a process of partnering can be expressed; c) the *internal and external sexual culture*: sexual markets generally have an internal sexual culture related to specific social and cultural groups (*e.g.* ethnic group, religious group), and an external sexual culture related to the combinations of rules, roles and expectations established by the macro-culture to which they belong; d) *sexual scripts*; e) *institutional spheres*: which include religious organizations, the educational and pedagogical system, the Welfare State and the control bodies that regulate social norms and rules regarding morals and social and sexual custom.

It is important to note that there is an important gap in the literature and scientific production on *sexual scripts* and *sexual markets*, as the only studies that have considered non-regulatory sexuality have highlighted how homosexuals, for example, *borrow* symbolic and meaningful co-structures from heterosexuals by reworking them and adapting them to their situations, leaving heteronormative and dichotomous male/female parameters in the background (Bacio and Peruzzi 2017).

With the advent of the New Media the symbolic squares in the sexual markets have expanded, articulated and differentiated, helped by the elimination and sublimation of filters and taboos that previously regulated and inhibited the contents and the symbolization processes of communication regarding the body and especially the sexual body (Amato et al. 2014).

Social Media, for example, represent spaces and tools of socialization, which convey and promote communication processes and represent new communication opportunities for sexuality, for the construction of new social representations of eroticism and new sexual scripts.

Within the wide range of socialisation applications and tools, the most widespread Social Media (*Facebook*, *Twitter*, *Instagram*) have been joined by applications for online dating, both for heterosexual and LGBT people.

These applications are *new sexual markets* and represent an important turning point in the socialization scenarios for people with non-heteronormative identity and sexual orientation, marking a new perspective both in the construction of meanings and in the birth and consolidation of new relational and sexual practices.

Specifically, two widely used applications, Grindr and Wapa, guarantee, besides the peculiar advantages of Social Media (gratuitousness and immediacy), other fundamental aspects in the new processes of socialization and the new sexual markets: *anonymity*, which allows one not to openly manifest their identity, to assume other identities to preserve their offline privacy; and *geolocation*, which allows one to search and establish affective and/or sexual relationships in their surroundings or a specific area of reference, precisely to regulate the personal level of confidentiality and privacy.

There is a research gap in the scientific literature on the use of online dating apps as a new way of socializing and as new symbolic places in sexual markets. Existing research refers to the study of sexual behaviour of gay men, especially to describe medical-health and epidemiological aspects. Halloway *et al.* (2014) have studied the relationship between the use of the Grindr app and the sexual behaviour and practices related to AIDS prevention and infection in the US.

The data show that a significant percentage of users (about 33%) used the application to search for new sexual partners, while users with an affective and relational purpose were less than 15%. Moreover, the qualitative analysis of the conversation with the research participants showed that there was less attention paid to the measures for preventing HIV infection among Grindr users than non-users (Duncan and Goedel 2015).

Rivière *et al.* (2015) described how using Apps is a way to map and outline the visibility of the LBG community within society, and how the massive use of online dating Apps has diverted the main sexual market for gay men to virtuality, excluding lesbian women from this mechanism. Consequently, the scientific interest in the online sex market in Women Studies represents an innovative field of investigation.

Hancock (2011) in his contributions highlighted how homosexual women, compared to men, find few spaces to express and claim their identities and their principles of self-determination, connoting a hegemonic male presence also in homosexuality.

The reflections on imposed roles and the adoption of gender and sexual identity of lesbian women of the fourth period of Feminism argue that the chauvinist and heteronormative society considers female homosexuality as a sexual practice and not as a recognizable and distinctive sexual identity. Therefore, a devaluation and subordination matrix emerges even within the description of deviance, recognizing an identity state to male homosexuality and relegating female homosexuality to a mere sexual practice (Bunch 2000, Rich 1980, Connell 1983).

Recently some studies have described how social media re-produce the sexual behaviours and sexual scripts typical of the gender models prevailing in real life and the LGBT community.

Corbisiero (2010), for example, through a survey carried out in Campania on a sample of homosexual people, highlighted how sexuality represents a central aspect of life for 75% and how fidelity and affective monogamy represent important values for 73% of lesbian women interviewed while only 34% of gay men refer to a stable and lasting relationship.

In accordance with Corbisiero (2010), Bacio and Peruzzi (2017) have shown, in a recent study on the use of Grindr, how the online can represent a virtual "door" to new connections with an open evolutionary relational trajectory in a continuum that goes from the possibility of sex only to the possibility of a new knowledge/friendship/relation.

In the following section, we will analyse, interpret and compare the psychological, relational, social and symbolic aspects highlighted through the use of online dating apps of young gays and lesbians from Salerno, trying to identify common aspects, similarities and differences on the construction of sexual scripts, the organization and construction of meaning around sexual markets and the concepts of masculinity and femininity (Simon and Gagnon 1984: 2003, Connell 1989, Masullo and Giannola 2017, Bacio and Peruzzi 2017).

Methodology

The research takes into consideration the process of socialization to sexuality, the construction of sexual scripts and how to access the virtual sexual market of two different target groups: gay men and lesbian women living in Salerno and its province, in the Campania Region, in Italy, from October 2019 to February 2020.

The analysis tries to answer the following research questions:

- How do the relationships experienced through virtual sex markets outlined using online dating apps (Grindr for gay men, Wapa for lesbian women) contribute to structuring the experience of one's sexuality, outlining sexual scripts?
- How can these new socializing tools represent resources and opportunities to conceive identity constructions in terms of masculinity and femininity in gay and lesbian people? (Connell 1996);
- what are the main similarities and differences between gays and lesbians concerning the use of online dating tools? Can these similarities and differences be ascribed to different ways of living one's gender and sexual identity?

The analysis is an exploratory survey, highlighting the limits of the methodological approach, including the resistance of homosexual people to be involved and to explicitly argue the dimensions related to their identity, sexuality and sexual practices and experiences.

The strategy used is, therefore, a netnographic approach[1] with a combination of online/offline qualitative techniques, including covert observation of users in a virtual environment and semi-structured offline interviews with privileged witnesses of the examined context.

For the collection of data in covert mode, we built an observation grid taking into consideration dimensions such as:

- chosen nicknames: distinguishing between *proper (first) names* and *pseudonyms*;
- profile pictures characteristics: distinguishing between *identity photos* and *non-identity photos*;
- socio-biographical information: understood as height, weight and place of residence, and distinguishing between *present* and *absent*;
- types of presentations: highlighting recurring themes, ways of representing the Self and the search characteristics of the partner(s).

We analysed 150 users for each the Grindr and the Wapa application.

The semi-structured interview, instead, tried to investigate the *identity dimensions* in relation to the use of the App and the processes of self-definition and sexuality; the *media consumption* in terms of usage mode, frequency and profile characteristics; *sociality* in terms of lived experiences, friendships, love and continuity between online meetings and offline relationships; *discrimination* suffered in the online environment for characteristics related to one's gender and sexual identity; *evaluations* on the use of the App as a vehicle for socializing, on models of construction of masculinity and femininity.

Online dating applications are widely used as a new communicative space within which to create relational possibilities, opportunities for socialisation and intersubjectivity. Within the offer of social networks for homosexual people *Grindr (for gay men)* and Wapa *(for lesbian women)* represent the most used applications. These apps share the fundamental aspects characterizing the diffusion of an application: they are *free* and *geo-localized*, so they allow instant and free access to a *possibility of socialization and relationality* unimaginable before their appearance.

Another fundamental aspect, which represents two sides of the same coin, is the *preservation of memory*, a function that, on the one hand, allows to create a chronology of one's interpersonal contacts, and on the other, undermines the assumption of confidentiality, since this memory, by preserving itself, exposes people to the risks connected to the diffusion of their online/offline data.

Moreover, the use of an App, allows an unlimited number of inter-personal contacts (chat) through the creation of an account or a virtual identity that can be enriched, built ad hoc, enhanced with more and more specific details (photos, preferences, quotes, content).

[1]We can therefore define netnography as a qualitative research approach that transposes the ethnographic research techniques developed for the study of physical communities to that of *audiences in digital spaces* grown through computer-mediated communications in order to study cultures (Kozinets 2015, Masullo *et al.* 2020a).

The peculiar differences of the two applications essentially lie in the different degree of specificity and quality of the information provided. Grindr allows the possibility to include or exclude elements of one's identity such as *ethnicity, body type* or *sexual role*, it has a list of preferences on users' profiles, it allows to block undesirable users, it also dedicates a central position in one's presentation to sexuality and sexual preferences. Wapa, on the other hand, while preserving some features of Grindr, (such as the possibility to block unwanted users), does not provide the possibility to add profile entries related to sexuality or sexually desired practices.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of the profiles, and the comparative analysis carried out between the sample of gay men and lesbian women shows an *early* functional access for gays (18 years) compared to lesbian women who approach the application around the age of 25. This is partly explained by the time gap between gays and lesbians in sexual identity awareness. Women have more difficulty in understanding their sexual orientation, in our opinion, also due to an unavailability of existing and legitimate patterns and models of signification of the lesbian culture in the offline environment, also due to the action of a double social stigma, as women and as lesbians. For lesbians, the dimension of identity and sexual orientation is stabilized at an older age and with a greater experiential awareness (Chetcuti 2013).

There is a greater predisposition of gays to express the *bodily, erotic and sexual aspects* compared to the *character and psychological aspects* that instead represent the prevalent expression of lesbian women, in line with the literature that sees women interested in interpersonal relationships and friendship compared to gay men who use the digital tool (app) as a new mode to access the sexual market (Masullo and Gianola 2017).

Finally, references to external social media are a prevailing practice in gays compared to lesbians, confirming the dimension of invisibility and anonymity of homosexual women compared to gay men (Bertolazzi and Esposito 2015).

Table 1. *Analysis of the Profiles*

Dimension	Grindr	Wapa
Predominant age	55% (18-30)	43% (25-30)
Predominant type of characteristics	Physical	Psychological
References to social profiles (Facebook, Instagram)	Average frequency	Low frequency

The analysis of the Profile Pictures allowed to confirm aspects highlighted by the general profile analysis. Invisibility and anonymity are also central aspects in the analysis of Profile Pictures, in fact personal profile photos comprise 55% of gay users' profiles compared to 33% of lesbian women's profiles. Also the aspect related to physicality and prevalent erotic habitus in gay men compared to lesbian women is confirmed by the analysis of the photos, in fact it is on average frequent in gays (35%) compared to a low frequency in lesbian women (15%). Finally, both categories refer to images that refer to the most widespread homosexual subcultures in the LGBT world (such as the bear culture for gays and the dark culture for lesbians).

Table 2. *Analysis of Profile Pictures*

Type of profile image	**Grindr**	**Wapa**
Face	55%	33%
Body parts	35%	15%
Images related to LG subcultures	15%	15%

In line with the analysis of the profiles, the presentations confirm a series of significant aspects: if gay men emphasize more the physical and bodily aspects, lesbian women highlight the aspects related to psychological characteristics; in the Grindr application the characteristics related to sexual practices (such a*s master, slave, no sex, looking for versatile*) are more evident than in the Wapa application, in order to create *coordinate frames* for sexual scripts, to facilitate the exchange and languages within the sexual market.

Moreover, gays seem more critical than lesbians about how to use and enjoy the application: this data can be read because of the scarce opportunities for L women to have offline meeting spaces. In the examined context, the chat for women, unlike men, represents an indispensable tool for socializing sexuality and learning useful sexual scripts in an online environment.

Table 3. *Analysis of Profile Presentations*

Dimension	**Grindr**	**Wapa**
Physical aspects (description with reference to physical and erotic characteristics)	High frequency (*e.g.: Height, Dark, Blond, Well-endowed, XXL)*	Low frequency (*e.g.: Blonde, Sexy, Curvy)*
Psychological aspects (presentation with reference to emotional and personal dimensions)	Average frequency (*e.g.: Sweet, Strong, Introvert, Cheerful)*	Average frequency (*e.g.: Friendly, Sweet, Affectionate, Lovely)*
Intellectual and cultural aspects	Low frequency (*e.g.: Quotes from books, poems, etc)*	Mid-High frequency (*e.g.: Quotes from books, poems, etc)*
Aspects linked to gender characteristics	High frequency (*esempio: Masculine, Bear, Teddy)*	High frequency (*e.g: Feminine, Dame, Femme, Lady)*
Aspects linked to preferences in sexual practices	High frequency (*e.g.: Looking for versatile, No fenimine, looking for Master, looking for Slave*)	None
Aspects critical towards the application	Average frequency (*e.g.*: *This is a whorehouse; the chat is just for sex*)	Low frequency (*e.g.*: *Wapa Hell; I hate monosyllabic people*)

We interviewed 40 gay men and 40 lesbian women[2]. The analysis of the interviews allowed us to outline the functional accesses through the use of the App, highlighting similarities and differences.

For gay men, the most recurrent sexual script emphasizes the hegemonic masculinity model, a masculinity to be constantly confirmed through more and more sexual intercourse according to the stereotype of the *predator*. The search for sex is, therefore, the main reason for using the dating app, relationships are shorter and often cease if the transition from virtual to offline reality does not occur. Sentences such as "no time wasters" are frequent:

> *"When I want sex, I know that if I open the app and schedule a date for the next day I must be in bad luck. In 80% of the cases I meet and sleep with someone the same evening! Practical and fast!" (Giovanni, 30)*

However, although in a residual form, some gay men, especially young men, use the App as a *testing ground* where they can experiment with aspects related to their sexual identity and create new friendships, role models or where they can find information on protection practices and tools:

> *"I felt the need to subscribe to the App, just to understand more. I was curious to get to know someone, you have to start with someone!" (Luigi, 19)*

Most respondents highlighted a number of long-term advantages of the virtual tool, such as the obsolescence of face-to-face communication strategies:

> *"In my opinion, it's rather difficult today to meet someone in real life. Personally, I met two of my previous boyfriends [through the app]. Is it a must to use apps, where do you find in real life the possibility to meet, date and fall in love with a gay person? Life goes fast, we missed practice!" (Daniele, 29)*

L women, instead, use the App mainly as an emancipation tool in the absence of other physical and real spaces where they can meet and explore the L universe.

> *"It started as a curiosity, for some time I had some strange fantasies, I saw of this app on the internet and downloaded it. I didn't know where to start..." (Sara, 33)*

Women often tend to prefer chats, as in offline reality women in the L community get to know each other through friendship chains, with the limit of greater control over their sexuality and exposure to social judgment by other women, confirming the importance of anonymity:

[2]The socio-biographical characteristics of the respondents, (referring to the users of both applications) they are between 18 and 50 years old. They are residents of the city of Salerno and province. 61% of them has a high school diploma, 22% a university degree or other postgraduate qualification, while 17% is under-educated (no higher than eight grade).

"The app ensures that I remain anonymous, you know, I'm not out of the closet, I don't even know if I'm really a lesbian, why create a fuss without a reason? It's fine for now... then we'll see!" (Gina, 24).

Finally, lesbian women prefer the search for relationships and friendships over sex-aimed relationships. This aspect could also mean adhering to a stereotyped view of *womanhood*, which classifies in a negative way those who freely live their sexuality and detach it from emotional aspects:

"I'm not looking for sex, I'm not a whore! I hate whores, they sleep with everyone. I'm looking for a sincere relationship, I've had too many disappointments... I'd rather be alone..." (Laura, 29)

Virtuality, therefore, represents immediacy, gratuitousness, and offer for gay men, while for lesbian women it represents of reserve-heartedness, anonymity and continuity.

There are, therefore, references to the models of social and mental representations of gender and relational practices, which confirm the hegemonic model of masculinity in which the man is seen as a cunning predator and a stereotyped image of the female universe anchored to relationality, knowledge, temporality and the construction of an interpersonal plot.

The analysis of the interviews also revealed constructions of intra-group discrimination in both gay men and lesbian women.

As far as gay men are concerned, highlighted discriminations refer to dimensions such as *age*: people over the age of 55 are seen as individuals outside the sex market and not selected within it:

"Ah I'll tell you what, I block over-55 a priori, it's not out of malice but I don't like wrinkly skin or white hair, I prefer the 18-35 bracket maximum!" (Roberto, 25)

Moreover, the exaltation of the aspects related to the *gender model of reference* are discriminated, in fact there is an important contrast between extreme machismo and effeminate models:

"I think there has to be some balance, I can't stand fairies! Those gays too effeminate, let's be clear if I wanted someone like that would go with a woman, right? I like balance!" (Silvio, 23).

Finally, a discriminatory component emerges towards transgender people, mainly MtoF (male to famale) because they are considered a voice out of the chorus and not adhering to the context and the peculiar use of the application:

"Honestly, it's not discrimination, but what's the point of a transgender joining Grind? Why doesn't she join Tinder or Badoo? What do you want here? I think they are confused people, they want to be women only when it's convenient" (Vincenzo, 28)

Similarly, the analysis of the conversations of interviews with lesbian women identifies forms of intra-group discrimination. A first discrimination lies in the expression of gender characteristics, for example the too masculine aspect of some categories of lesbians (e.g. Tomboys) is strongly stigmatized:

> *"I don't like women who are too masculine, butches! I honestly find them vulgar and boorish as I find males vulgar and boorish!" (Luna, 24).*

A further form of discrimination is directed towards those who use the application as a means of "procuring" sexual experiences, in line with that social and mental representation of female relationships that sees them disconnected from physicality and sexuality:

> *"The chat room is a whorehouse, they create closed micro-groups that have sexual relationships with each other, honestly it sucks!" (Greta, 20).*

Also in lesbian women there is a discrimination towards MtoF trangenders because they are perceived as non-women, as a separate category, with less erotic habitus and therefore out of the prevailing logic and preferences of lesbian women:

> *"For me a transsexual is not a woman, personally I see them as people stuck between two worlds, I would never be attracted to a transsexual, being a woman is another thing..." (Katia, 33).*

Conclusions

Social Media, current virtual communication tools, online dating applications, represent new communication spaces and, consequently, new sexual markets where new sexual scripts can be *staged*.

The direct observation of profiles in a virtual environment has made it possible to highlight how the same social, mental, logical and cultural representations are reproduced in chats or online as in face-to-face interactions and off-line reality.

The analysis and comparisons of the use of Apps for online dating for gay men and lesbian women in Campania show a different functional use.

Concerning the first research question, we found that if it is true that for gay men the App is mainly an *additional* tool to fulfil the need to live their sexuality, it is also true that it also reinforces some stereotypes related to the *Mediterranean homosexual model*, where sexual roles build coordinates for the selection of partners with respect to gender expressiveness (for example active = male, passive = female) (Taurino 2016).

For lesbian women, no doubt, chats are fundamental in this context due to a double stigma, which hinders women to live their sexuality publicly. The Wapa application, therefore, helps not only in meeting other women, but in learning a language, jargon, sexual scripts, which they cannot intercept elsewhere, since the context on lesbianism has matured a heteronormative stereotyped imaginary (shared by some lesbian women) that confuses the practice of lesbianism as friendship between women or that sees it only as a sexual fantasy. Ultimately, women lack terms to "express themselves" as lesbian and to live as "lesbians" more than gay men (Masullo and Coppola 2020b).

Our contribution would confirm the current the literature (Whitley and Kite 1995, Bacioa and Peruzzi 2017) that underline how homosexuals borrow heterosexuals' sexual scripts, then rework them and adapt them to their situations and "*their rules*".

The future developments of this research can be many, such as to further explore the link existing between the App and the processes of socialization to sexuality for *bisexual* people (who use Apps for heterosexual encounters) and transgender people (both MtoF and FtoM).

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Effects of Interview Training with Simulated Patients on Suicide, Threat, and Abuse Assessment

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Mental health practitioners as often not provided sufficiently effective interview training to assess for suicidality (Schmitz et al. 2012), to evaluate for abuse (Young et al. 2001), or to respond effectively to suicidal risk (Mackelprang et al. 2014). The current study examined the efficacy of general interview training using simulated patients to increase clinician competency in assessing for threats to self or others and abuse. Data were collected from doctoral clinical psychology students, who received weekly instruction for a number of interview-relevant topics. Each participant completed pre- and post-test videotaped interviews with simulated patients. The interviews evaluated using the Skills in Psychological Interviewing: Clinical Evaluation Scales. In addition, all participants completed the Suicidal Ideation Response Inventory, Second Edition at pre- and post-test to assess their skill in responding to suicidal clients. Paired samples t-tests were used to determine differences in trainees' skills before and after the training. The tests revealed significant increases in competence for all assessment skills (p<.001) as well as for response to suicidal verbalizations (p<.001). Present findings suggest broad spectrum training with simulated patients has significant implications for the efficacy of future clinicians. The implications of using simulated patients is also discussed.

Keywords: *Training, Suicide, Abuse, Assessment, Competency*

Introduction

As practitioners of helping professions, psychologists as well as other mental health practitioners have always had the goal of ensuring that their clients/ patients/students and others are safe, particularly from suicidal, violent, and abusive behavior. Yet mental health providers are often not provided with sufficient training to assess for suicidality (Schmitz et al. 2012), to feel confident enough to ask about or to evaluate for possible abuse (Young et al. 2001), or to be effective in responding to threats of violence and suicidal risk (Mackelprang et al. 2014). This is especially concerning, considering that in 2017 in the United States (US), suicide was one of the top 10 leading causes of death across all ages, races, ethnicities, and sexes as well as the second leading cause of death for individuals between 10 and 34 years of age (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC] 2017). The World Health Organization (2019a) has specified that close to 800,000 people die as a result of suicide every year and that many more attempt to die by their own hands. In addition, US estimates

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indicate that at least one in seven children have experienced abuse or neglect in the past year (CDC 2019) and that approximately 10% of the elderly population in the US is abused annually (Lachs and Pillemer 2015).

Typically, psychology training programs have used peer role-playing to allow students to learn and to practice new techniques. The research has even shown that role-playing therapeutic situations can be effective at developing empathy and insight into client experiences for clinicians (Beidas et al., 2014; Meier and Davis, 2011). Unfortunately, using peers in role-play training has clear limitations. Students in the roles of clients often do not take the practice scenarios seriously, and the scenarios may not be presented realistically. Students often create therapy "issues" on the spot and frequently do not accurately portray the diagnoses or real-world situations (Kaslow et al. 2009, Meier and Davis 2011). In addition, there is evidence which suggests that peer role play is not effective, at least not for training future professionals to respond appropriately to suicidal clients (Mackelprang et al. 2014).

A few models have been proposed which focus on training for assessing suicidality specifically. These models emphasize the use of structured interviews and specific suicide-focused measures (Cramer et al., 2013). However, research suggests that most of these studies have focused on interviewing actual clients who have been diagnosed with depression and/or who have a history of previous suicide attempts or ideation, an endeavor which can be very risky for trainees, even when they are closely supervised (Cramer et al. 2013). No studies have been done regarding the efficacy of assessing for threat or abuse individually, much less all three of these topics at once.

The importance of assessing comprehensively for suicidality, threat to others, and abuse has been assumed to be understood by clinicians. Despite this assumption, or, perhaps, because of it, little research has been done to determine effective ways to train future psychologists and other mental health professionals in all of these skills without involving risk to actual clients, such as that which occurs in most practicum assignments. The current study examined the efficacy of utilizing general interview training using simulated patients to increase clinician competency in assessing for suicidality, threat to others, and abuse. The results from this study are directly applicable to doctoral clinical psychology training programs in the southeastern United States and may be further generalizable. However, further research should be done to assess and to expand the generalizability of the findings.

This paper begins by providing an introduction to the need for psychology training programs and research supporting those programs, that focus on teaching interview skills and competent assessments of suicide, threat to others, and abuse. A literature review then examines prevalence rates of suicide and abuse, psychology professional competencies, existing graduate training programs, and the use of simulated patients to enhance realism and to reduce risk. Following this, the methodology of the study, including the participants, procedures, and measures used, is described. Results of the study are explained as well as a discussion of the findings. Finally, the paper ends with a clear conclusions segment.

Literature Review

Prevalence Rates

Prevalence rates for suicide and abuse are concerningly high and continue to rise. In 2017 in the United States, the last year for which data are currently available, suicide was one of the top 10 leading causes of death across all ages, races, ethnicities, and sexes as well as the second leading cause of death for individuals between 10 and 34 years of age (CDC 2017). The World Health Organization (WHO 2019a) specified that close to 800,000 people worldwide die as a result of suicide every year, and that many more attempt suicide. It has been reported that suicide is the third leading cause of death for individuals between 15 and 19 years of age around the world (WHO 2019a). Training mental health professionals who are appropriately prepared to assess clients for suicidal ideation and who know how to respond appropriately to those assessments could help drastically reduce the number of deaths by suicide worldwide.

In addition, US estimates indicate that at least one in seven children have experienced abuse or neglect in the past year (CDC 2019). Globally, it is estimated that up to one billion children between two and 17 years of age experienced some form of abuse within the past year (WHO 2019b) and that one in three women have experienced physical or sexual abuse in their lifetimes (WHO, 2017). Approximately one in six individuals over 60 years old have also experienced some form of abuse in community settings within the past year (WHO 2018). Older adults are frequently hesitant to report their abuse due to fear of repercussions and retaliation, so it is believed that only one in 24 cases of elder abuse are reported (WHO 2018). For this reason, it is particularly important for mental health professionals to be trained in how to assess for abuse effectively across all age ranges.

Currently, wide-scale research does not exist examining the prevalence of threats of violence to others. This is likely due to the failure to report and to track threats as effectively as suicide and abuse are monitored. In addition, threats of violence and violent acts occur in multiple settings and forms, including domestic violence, child and elder abuse, workplace violence, terrorism, school and community shootings, honor killings, etc. It is important not to allow the lack of research result in overlooking the significance of these threats in training mental health professionals. For this reason, the current study includes evaluation of the interview training model in improving students' skills in assessing for threat to others. Further research should be done to increase awareness and to establish prevalence rates of this threat.

Training Competency

In 2005, the American Psychological Association (APA) created the Assessment of Competency Benchmarks Work Group in order to identify appropriate levels of competency for psychology trainees at various points of their training (Fouad et al. 2009). This group established competency expectations for individuals to meet in order to demonstrate readiness for practicum, internship, and practice. Fifteen core competency domains were defined: 1) professional values and attitudes, 2) self-care, 3) scientific knowledge and methods, 4) relationships, 5) diversity awareness, 6) legal and ethical standards, 7) interdisciplinary knowledge, 8) assessment, 9) intervention, 10) consultation, 11) research, 12) supervision, 13) disseminating knowledge, 14) management-administration, and 15) advocacy (Fouad et al., 2009). The Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (ASPPB) reviewed these competencies and surveyed practicing psychologists in order to create a more applied model of competency in professional psychology. This model also recognized that competency levels would differ among individuals in practicum or internship as compared to those licensed or licensed for over four years. The new framework was similar to that of the APA but less comprehensive. It included only six competency domains: 1) scientific knowledge; 2) evidence-based decision-making; 3) interpersonal and cultural awareness; 4) professionalism and ethics; 5) assessment; and 6) intervention, supervision, and consultation (Rodolfa et al. 2013).

The purpose of competency models is to ensure that practicing psychologists are providing appropriate services to the community and to hold them accountable for doing so. A key component of the benchmarks requires that students be monitored by faculty and supervisors in order to ensure that the students are meeting the requirements. The faculty members and supervisors are expected to have ongoing conversations with students regarding their progress toward attaining these competencies and to intervene or to provide additional resources to students who are struggling (Fouad et al. 2009). This implies that universities and training programs should have reliable and valid ways to measure the competencies, to set minimal levels of attainment (MLAs) of each competency, to track student progress toward attaining the MLAs.

Graduate Training Models

Few procedures exist for outlining clear training models for psychology student clinical practices. Even fewer have been proposed offering a standard of training for interview skills, not to mention to assess for suicide, threat to others, or abuse. The limited plans that do exist rely heavily on the use of structured interviews or specific suicide-focused measures (Cramer et al. 2013). The difficulty with depending on structured interviews in training is that it does not teach the students how to ask questions on their own; to probe for more information; to respond to negative reactions from clients; or, most importantly, to use clinical judgement appropriately in situations in which suicidality, threat to others, and/or abuse are present. As a result, these students may go on to become licensed providers who do not feel they have sufficient training to assess for suicidality (Schmitz et al. 2012) or possible abuse (Young et al., 2001), and who, therefore lack the confidence to do so. This in turn leads to inability to respond effectively to expressions of suicidality (Mackelprang et al. 2014), threat to others, and abuse accounts.

The ability to assess clients effectively through initial interviews has repeatedly been considered an essential competency for psychologists; yet, it is infrequently addressed in training models. Interviews are a key part of how clinicians learn about their clients and begin their assessments but may be overlooked or inadequately addressed in the training process. Recent research regarding how to train individuals in tactfully and effectively conducting threat assessment interviews exists for police officers but not for psychologists (Dando and Bull 2011, Dando et al. 2008). Interested readers should refer to the work of Coral J. Dando for more information surrounding threat assessment interview training for police officers.

Psychology training programs have long used role-play experiences with peers in order to aid student development, particularly in reference to utilizing micro-counseling skills. These role-plays allow student peers to take on the role of the client or therapist in order to practice and to learn new skills. Research suggests that role-playing provides the opportunity for the student clinician to develop empathy and to gain insight into the experience of the client (Meier and Davis 2011). Unfortunately, when student peers play the parts of clients, this often results in variable and inaccurate portrayals of diagnoses, resulting in diminished effectiveness (Kaslow et al. 2009, Meier and Davis 2011). Furthermore, the practice sessions are often not taken seriously by students, and interaction with one's peers often reduces or precludes objectivity during the role-play (Kaslow et al. 2009).

Use of Simulated Patients

While role-play with peers has clear limitations, research suggests that using simulated patients (SPs) helps to eliminate these problems. SPs are actors and actresses who are trained to portray a set of symptoms consistently across various clinical interactions (Barrows 1993). This training allows the SPs to provide training experiences that are more representative of actual client interactions than role-playing with peers' permits. Medical schools have been using SPs to train their students since 1963 (Barrows 1993) and other professions, including nursing (Cangelosi 2008), nutrition (Beshgetoor and Wade 2007), pharmacy (Mesquita et al. 2010), and occupational therapy (Giles et al. 2014), have begun to do the same. In addition to its use in all of these fields, practice with SPs has been viewed as a potentially useful tool for training early in mental health clinicians' clinical training programs, assisting in the clinicians' competency acquisition as well as the evaluation of those competencies (Kaslow et al. 2009, Masters et al. 2015, Yap et al. 2012). At least 80% of medical schools in the United States are currently using SPs for both training and assessment of their students' competencies (Clay et al. 2000). Further research has been needed to verify the effectiveness of a training model utilizing SPs for graduate psychology programs.

The interactions clinicians have with SPs have been found to be comparable to those with real patients in genuine settings, they can be standardized, and they provide trainees with feedback from an impartial party (Kaslow et al. 2009). Having the opportunity to practice with an SP who does not actually experience the symptoms they are presenting lessens any immediate risk of harm to an actual client, reduces the probability of ethical dilemmas which might be handled poorly in a real practicum setting, and makes it more likely that the student will be adequately prepared to handle the stress of interacting with clients who are actually suffering from psychopathology. Although novice therapists report a high level of empathy for their clientele, they express considerable uncertainty over the boundaries of their newfound roles (Williams et al. 1997). Fortunately, the experience of role-playing with SPs in a safe environment increases students' confidence in their skills (Kaslow et al. 2009, Masters et al. 2015).

Methodology

Participants

Data were collected from first year doctoral clinical psychology students at a large university in the southeastern United States. One hundred doctoral psychology trainees participated in a four-month (one semester) interviewing course, during which they received instruction in general interviewing skills with specific modules detailing how to probe for and to respond to expressed concerns about possible suicide, violence, and abuse. In addition, they role-played 15-minute diagnostic interviews with simulated patients, received feedback from their classmates and session facilitators, observed classmates doing similar role-plays, and provided feedback to classmates on their role-plays. As first year students, these individuals had little or no prior clinical experience interviewing clients. This made them ideal candidates for evaluating the effectiveness of a novel training program, without the potential for prior experience or training to influence initial assessment and development of their skill. Using this sample, therefore, improved the internal validity of the study by avoiding an extraneous variable mediating the outcomes.

Participants identified their gender as female (n = 78), male (n = 17), or not specified (n = 5). Ages of participants ranged as follows: 20-24 (n = 73), 25-29 (n = 20), 30-34 (n = 4), 40-44 (n = 2), and not specified (n = 1). Participants reported identifying as Caucasian (n = 63), Hispanic/Latinx (n = 21), African American (n = 7), Asian (n = 3), other (n = 3), and not specified (n = 3). Among these participants, 85 identified English as their first language, 11 reported Spanish as their first language, one noted Creole as the first language, and three did not specify their first language. Nine participants classified themselves as being trainees in the Ph.D. clinical psychology program and 91 participants were trainees in the Psy.D. clinical psychology program. Of both programs, 22 began their respective psychology training with a master's degree, 77 began with a bachelor's degree, and one participant did not specify.

Procedures

All first-year doctoral psychology trainees were enrolled in a required introductory pre-practicum interviewing course and received instruction in a broad variety of interviewing skills, including specific training in assessing for suicidality, threat, and abuse. Each participant was randomly assigned to a course section with 10 other students, and all sections met at the same time for approximately three hours each week for 10 weeks. Course facilitators were doctoral psychology interns and post-doctoral residents. These instructors rotated among sections so that each instructor taught a different group of students each week. As a part of this course, participants completed two 15-minute videotaped interviews with simulated patients. The first interview (the pre-test) took place prior to receiving any course instruction, and the second interview (the post-test) was conducted at the end of the course. Simulated patients portrayed a client with major depressive disorder (MDD) for both the pre-test and the post-test. Participants were assigned to a simulated patient at random for both the pre-test and the post-test.

Prior to each of the 10 course sessions as well as the pre-test and post-test, simulated patients were sent a detailed description of the case they were to portray. The descriptions included the client's name and age, clinical setting, initial body language and affect, presenting problems, responses to probable questions from clinicians, level of openness to be displayed, personal background information, and a timeline of relevant events (noting that the timeline might have to be adjusted based on the actual age of each SP). In addition, the simulated patients were provided with a two-hour, face-to-face training session regarding characteristics of each disorder to be portrayed and how it was to be displayed with opportunities provided for the SPs to ask questions. The training sessions were conducted by a psychology faculty member who was an expert in each of the five disorders to be simulated, i.e., one for the pre-test and post-test (MDD) as well as one disorder for each two consecutive course sessions (MDD and four others). Each disorder was portrayed for two consecutive sessions so that there would be adequate time for each of the students to complete a 15-minute practice interview with the SP followed by feedback from the facilitator and peers. In addition, the SPs completed a Simulated Patient Assessment of Clinician Effectiveness Scale (SPACES) feedback form for each student based on the SP's reactions to the interview. These forms were distributed to each student prior to the next class session. The SPACES scale was developed by the researchers in an effort to allow the SP to provide feedback on interviewer performance. The researchers modeled the inventory on the Arizona Clinical Interview Rating Scale, an instrument commonly used to evaluate the interviewing techniques of medical students (Stillman et al. 1977). Integrity (fidelity of implementation) checks were conducted for each portrayal by designated simulated patients who observed the others via closed-circuit television and used checklists designed by the course faculty.

The two videotaped interviews of the pre-test and the post-test were reviewed and evaluated by two randomly assigned interns and/or post-doctoral residents using the Skills in Psychological Interviewing: Clinical Evaluation Scales (SPICES). Items regarding competency in assessing suicidality, threat to harm others, and risk of abuse were pulled from the total SPICES scale for the purpose of this study. In addition, all participants completed the Suicidal Ideation Response Inventory, Second Edition (SIRI-2) prior to receiving instruction and at the end of the course to assess their skill in responding to verbal expressions of suicidal clients.

During the course, and between the videotaped sessions, participants received 30-45-minute instruction sessions once a week. A number of interview-relevant topics and skills, including assessing for suicide, threat, and abuse, were covered. Following instruction, participants engaged in 15-minute role-play interviews with simulated patients. Simulated patients rotated every two weeks and participants role-played once with each simulated patient. The cases presented by the simulated patients also changed every two weeks, and the simulated patients were trained in each case as described above. After completing the 15-minute role play, the participants then received feedback from peers and the instructor regarding their role-play. The instruction and role-play courses continued for 10 three-hour sessions over the course of the four-month semester.

Measures

Skills in Psychological Interviewing: Clinical Evaluation Scales (SPICES)

SPICES is a measure designed and devised to assess basic clinical interviewing skills. The measure consists of a total score and five subscales: ethical and legal standards and policy, professional values and attitudes, individual and cultural diversity relationships, and assessment. Developed by the researchers to evaluate clinical interviewing skills, SPICES currently consists of 26 questions which are rated on a four-point, Likert-type scale. Within each item, anchors using behavioral descriptions are provided to aid raters in accurately evaluating each participant and to reduce misunderstandings about the intent of the item. During the development of the SPICES measure, university faculty researchers generated a list of essential clinical competencies that have been identified in the literature, including such variables as the skills of reflecting, imparting genuineness, mirroring the client's expressions effectively, making appropriate eye contact, responding to nonverbal cues, and empathically normalizing the client's concerns, using the APA's Competency Benchmarks as a guide. Once the initial inventory of competencies was created, the skills were simplified into component parts and operationalized to enhance the ease with which the participants were to be evaluated.

The measure was subsequently distributed to faculty members, both in school psychology and in clinical psychology, who have been identified as expert interviewers based upon number of years of experience in the field, to evaluate the items. The researchers requested that the experts identify the items that they judged effectively assessed the outlined competencies, as well as those items that they viewed as redundant, unhelpful, or invalid. They were further asked to provide any other relevant feedback. Revisions were made based on their responses to increase the sensitivity of the rating scale, to eliminate items that were deemed ineffective, to increase the clarity and specificity of items, to modify factor names as recommended, and to eliminate any complex items that would not likely be observed in the target audience of beginning clinicians. The measure's utility, ease of use, and validity were subsequently evaluated by additional piloting of the measure by clinical psychologists and graduate students, within both clinical and school psychology programs. The measure was then modified based on the pilot data. Initial piloting of the data yielded internal consistency coefficients ranging from $\alpha = .84$ to $\alpha = .86$. Inter-rater reliabilities ranged from $r = .63$ to $r = .81$.

Suicidal Ideation Response Inventory, Second Edition (SIRI-2)

The SIRI-2 is a measure used to evaluate responses to suicidal clients' verbal expressions of distress and suicidal ideation, intent, and/or plans. Participants rate standardized responses to suicidal expressions in terms of appropriateness and are scored based on the degree to which their ratings match those made by expert suicidologists (Neimeyer and Bonnelle 1997). Lower scores on this scale indicate greater agreement with expert responses.

Results

Changes in competency in assessing for suicidality, threat, and abuse during pre- and post-test interviews were analyzed by comparing pre- and post-test SPICES scores on items used to rate those three competency areas. Ratings by each evaluator on the relevant items were averaged to create single pre- and post-test scores per participant. Evaluator scores at pre-test were compared and found not to be significantly different from each other ($p>.05$), justifying averaging these scores for analysis. Post-test scores for threat and abuse assessment were significantly different between the two evaluators ($p = .001$, $p = .021$ respectively) but not significantly different when evaluating suicide assessment ($p>.05$). For this reason, a third, more experienced, evaluator's ratings on the post-test were also used to calculate the averages in order to mediate these differences.

Paired samples t-tests were used to determine differences in trainees' skills in assessing for suicidality, threat of harm to others, and abuse before the beginning of classes (using the pre-test scores) and at the end of the semester's training (using post-test scores). Ninety-eight of the participants (two did not complete the post-test) received pre- and post-test scores for suicide, threat, and abuse assessment. Pre-test scores and standard deviations from SPICES four-point scales for each of these competencies varied (suicide $M=2.95$, $SD=.79$; threat $M=2.18$, $SD=1.13$; abuse $M=1.46$, $SD=.81$) as did the means and standard deviations for the post-test scores (suicide $M=3.70$, $SD=.35$; threat $M=2.85$, $SD=1.21$; abuse $M=2.11$, $SD=1.08$). Note that higher scores reflect better functioning on these means as well as on total SPICES scores. The paired samples t-test revealed significant increases in competence from pre-test to post-test for all skills ($p<.001$).

The greatest improvement was found for assessing suicidality (t[97]=-8.438, p<.001). Significant improvement in ability to assess for threat (t[97]=-3.756, p<.001) and abuse (t[97]=-4.792, p<.001) also indicated clinically relevant changes in trainee competence. See Table 1 for a graphic of these scores. The aforementioned t scores represent an increase in participants' competency scores over time, rather than a decrease in some problematic characteristic, as typically expected in clinical studies, resulting in negative t scores.

A paired samples t-test was also used to evaluate differences in participants' knowledge of how to respond appropriately to expressions of suicidality. Pre- and post-test scores for 99 participants (one did not complete the final SIRI-2 measure) were compared. The average pre-test score was 53.65 with a standard deviation of 15.93, while the average post-test score was 44.91 with a standard deviation of 10.71 (See Table 1). This change in scores was found to represent a significant improvement in rating responses to expressions of suicidality (t[98]=5.314, p<.001). Note that total scores indicate differences from experts' rating, so that lower scores reflect better judgment of possible responses to suicidal clients' expressions of concern and, therefore, greater competency.

Table 1. *SPICES and SIRI-2 Competency Scores for Suicide, Threat, and Abuse Assessment Pre- and Post-training. Note that for SPICES Higher Scores Indicate Greater Competence on the Four-point Scale. For SIRI-2 Lower Scores Indicate Greater Competence*

	Pre-Test	**Scores**	**Post-Test**	**Scores**	**t-**	**Test**
	Mean	*Standard Deviation*	*Mean*	*Standard Deviation*	*t-Score*	*p Value*
SPICES Suicide Assessment	2.95	.79	3.70	.35	-8.438	<.001
SPICES Threat Assessment	2.18	1.13	2.85	1.21	-3.756	<.001
SPICES Abuse Assessment	1.46	.81	2.11	1.08	-4.792	<.001
SIRI-2	53.6513	15.93	44.9108	10.71	5.314	<.001

Discussion

The results of this study demonstrate significant improvements in student clinicians' skills in assessing for suicidality, threat, and abuse as well as in rating various responses to clients' suicidal expressions following a brief, broad interview training course. These findings support the efficacy of a training program that consists of brief instruction and repeated role-play involving simulated patients as well as feedback opportunities from peers, facilitators, and SPs. The use of simulated patients in the training program provided student clinicians with the opportunity to employ the skills they learned in the classroom in a realistic appearing but relatively risk-free environment.

The implications of this study include evaluating the efficacy of a novel framework for training clinical psychology students which may generalize to other mental health students and to established clinicians who want to refresh their most critical assessment and interviewing skills in a safe environment. It would be inappropriate to license clinicians who do not feel competant in assessing and responding to topics as vital and prevalent as suicide, threat, and abuse; yet, it happens every year (Mackelprang et al. 2014, Schmitz et al. 2012, Young et al. 2001). This training model provides a safe and practical way to train future clinicians in these skills and to improve their competence significantly in these critical areas. It is also important for seasoned clinicians to remain up-to-date on new methods of assessment and treatment, as evidenced, for example, by most states' requirement to obtain continuing education credits in order to maintain licensure for independent practice. This model may provide a safe way for these already credentialed clinicians to practice novel skills and/or to refresh basic interviewing competencies that are too often overlooked.

One key limitation of the present study is the lack of a control group. All participants received instruction sessions regarding assessment for suicide, threat, and abuse as well as specific training in how to respond to these issues, and all participants engaged in role-plays with simulated patients. It is possible that participants' improved competence was a result of one of these factors, alone or even other aspects of their curriculum, rather than the combination of the instruction and the role-play. Future studies should be designed to isolate these factors and to determine which is or are the active component(s) in the training or if they are additively beneficial.

In addition, future research should examine the long-term implications of this training program. Conducting a follow-up study with the current students or a unique longitudinal study would allow for a better understanding of the applicability of the training program. Such research would indicate whether improvments in assessment and response to expressions of suicidal ideation, intent, and/or plans are maintained over time and to what extent.

Conclusions

In 2017, suicide was one of the 10 leading causes of death across all ages, races, and sexes as well as the second leading cause of death for individuals between 10 and 34 years of age in the United States (CDC 2017). Yet few models have been proposed to train mental health professionals in assessing clients for suicidality. These professionals are frequently not provided with enough training to assess for suicidality adequately (Schmitz et al. 2012), much less to be confident and effective in responding effectively to expressions indicating suicidal risk (Mackelprang et al., 2014). In addition, no studies have been conducted analyzing a training program for clinicians that incorporate teaching clinicians to assess for threat or abuse. As a result, providers frequently do not feel confident enough to evaluate for possible abuse (Young et al. 2001) and may ignore these topics altogether. The programs that do exist regularly use students and peers as practice clients, which is not representative of true clinical experiences (Kaslow et al. 2009, Meier and Davis 2011).

The current study evaluated a novel training approach's ability to increase doctoral psychology trainees' competence in assessing for suicidality, threat, and abuse as well as their skill in responding appropriately to expressions of suicidality. This training model included one 30-45-minute instruction session for each of the variables of interest respectively as well as a number of other topics. Participants then engaged in 15-minute role-play interviews with simulated patients and feedback to peers for 10 sessions over the course of four months. The present findings suggest broad spectrum training in interviewing skills has significant implications for the efficacy of future clinicians. Despite the fact that suicidality, threat, and abuse assessments were each only discussed briefly during the course, they were practiced with simulated patients, and improvements persisted throughout.

Future research should expand on this study and assess its generalizability to licensed psychologists and other practicing mental health professionals as a way to refresh these skills, to learn new ones, and/or to gain confidence in utilizing either or both. These studies should also examine generalizability to other health care professionals such as medical doctors, who are frequently the first point of contact for individuals with suicidal or violence risk or for those who suffer from or are aware of someone who suffers from abuse. Increasing overall competence in assessing for and responding to these issues will, hopefully, lead to their reduction.

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Virtual vs Digital: Examples of Netnography and Digital Ethnography in Tourism Studies for a Comparison between Methods

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With this paper our goal is to formalize the main differences between the applications of ethnographic techniques when they are framed in Virtual or Digital Methods. To be more systematic in presenting these differences, a synoptic table is offered. This table examines the main breaking points between the methods and is used to organize a marked comparison between two tourism studies chosen as being representative; one for the ethnographic application of Virtual Methods, and one for the ethnographic application of Digital Methods. In addition to testing the effectiveness of the proposed classification scheme, the purpose of the comparison conducted between the two tourism studies is to highlight where the changes that have occurred can lead to advances in the method and where these changes have become new limits on which it is necessary to continue to reflect in order to develop the methods involved and place them clearly in line with the evolution of the digital scenario.

Keywords: *Virtual Methods, Digital Methods, Netnography, Digital Ethnography, Tourism Studies.*

Introduction

The Internet logic has drawn spaces and languages for relations, actions and practices and social research examines these in order to understand the complexity of social change: the digital scenario, without doubt, has shown itself to be a not insignificant frame for social science in the last 20 years. This is due to its power of identity building, information and knowledge sharing in the architectures of relations and networks made by users via Computer mediated communication (CMC). So today it is useful to retrace its reshaping steps, looking at the breakpoints of the adapting and arising capacities of social researchers in web (Internet)-based methods, taking digital technologies into account. For Arvidsson and Delfanti (2013: 14), today social researchers are involved in the actual pervasive presence of internet and digital technologies in daily human life and they consider this presence as a manifestation and a direct element of social change. In fact, the main purpose of social science is focused on social change, so the first question that launched our study regarded how today social scientists can study it in the digital scenario. Through the digital scenario, according to Natale and Airoldi (2017:11-18), the application of new methods starts by focusing on

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four potential units of analysis as objects by which to develop any empirical digital research:

- The media context, fundamental in discussing socio-technical features of data and its effect on results. Society reflects itself through media and it is necessary to be confident with the media environment in order to understand the reflected phenomena correctly.
- Public Opinion, when it becomes necessary to study the socio-identity breakpoints of the symbolic sphere.
- Digital behavior, not only interactions, but also the practices are fundamental to study social change. A log-in on a web site, as well as a streaming play or a geo position allow researchers to study cultural consumption thanks to the traces organized as metadata and left on the web.
- Users, but studied as an aggregate. Because of privacy reasons socio-demographic data are in fact not always available or time friendly, so much that, for this type of study, we talk about post-demographic research, in which the subjective component is studied in the aggregation of the actions it produces and of which it leaves traces on the net.

Several studies related to the field of Science Technology and Society (conducted i.e. from Observa Science in Society research Centre[3]), or related to the socio-political sphere have followed the path of new methods and described trends for electoral studies (Pentecoste 2013, Consolazio 2017), cultural processes or epistemological examination (Digital methods initiative[4]). Mostly previous works define the web in a double epistemological way: as object, useful for developing research due to an online transposition of traditional techniques or as source, in the way the web has its own ontological objects and is possible thanks to the hybridization of techniques to study these objects through the devices. These ways have led to significant implications for social science regarding the concepts of substitution or addiction among traditional and new methods.

Starting from the observation "Web-mediated research [...] is already transforming the way in which researchers practice traditional research methods transposed on the Web" (Amaturo and Punziano 2016: 35-36), with this contribution we intend to retrace the main differences that substantiate the strands of *Virtual methods* and *Digital methods.* In the aftermath of several literature reviews about the adoption of new methods related to various research fields, we realized that many scholars have been arguing about the application of online ethnography techniques connected to tourism studies (Leopold 2011, Adams 2012, Wijngaarden 2017). For this reason the tourism cases proposed have been

[3]Observa Science in Society is a non-profit, independent, legally recognized research centre promoting the study and discussion of the interaction among science, technology and society, with the aim of stimulating dialogue among researchers, policy makers and citizens. Available at: http://www.observa.it

[4]The Digital Methods Initiative (DMI) is one of Europe's leading Internet Studies research groups. Available at: https://wiki.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/DmiAbout

chosen to better explain how the change in society has led to a direct change in the methods to study the societies.

In doing this, we recover Hine's viewpoint (2000), of *Virtual Methods*. He affirms that the classic techniques of social research can be transposed onto the web and theorizes that the web can be interpreted as an object of study. This is how the survey becomes web survey or the interview becomes web-interview or, again, the participant observation becomes netnographic practice.

To this point of view, which keeps the object of study separate from the methodological practice, we intend to contrast another viewpoint, linked to *Digital Methods*, in which the object of study and the methodological practice come to merge into an integrated whole, so as to coin the motto *follow the medium* as a cognitive and methodological imperative together. This is Rogers' vision (2009), for which classical techniques cannot be of help in their only transposition, but it is necessary to hybridize the techniques with the means (the Net) to find the methodological key that allows a deeper, dynamic and truly fitted knowledge of the digital environment. And here, the classic techniques, with which there are directly produced data (survey, interview, observation), leave room for techniques that make use of the data already existing on the net, the natural metrics inherent in digital platforms and the information that indirectly covers the spectrum of knowledge that moves the interest of the social researcher in the digital age.

In order to formalize these differences in approach and highlight the limits and advantages in the use of the two perspectives, examples of research related to the study of tourism (Mkono and Markwell 2014) will be examined.

In particular, the attention will be focused on: a netnographic study, following Kozinets' approach (2010: 8) for whom netnography immediately suggests an approach adapted from the authentic and traditional ethnography techniques to the virtual communities studies in the idea of a «Social aggregation that emerges from the Net when enough people carry on […] public discussion long enough, with sufficient human feeling to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace», and one calibrated on the digital ethnography approach, following, this time, the approach of Murthy (2008) for whom digital ethnography suggests a fully digital approach, sometimes covered, but always linked to the use of already existing information examined with the help of other specific techniques, such as content or network analysis.

In this way, the methodological reflection will leave space for a broader reflection linked to ontological and epistemological questions at the root of the separation of the two presented approaches.

From the Origin to the Digital Era: the Ethnographic Method

The Starting Point

"Ethnography usually involves the researcher participating, […], in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal and formal interviews, collecting documents and artefacts" (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007: 3). This is one of the most widely shared definitions of the classical ethnographical method that brings the attention to some important features that nowadays are being gradually challenged by the fast-paced advent of the digital age.

Ethnography is a method based on direct observation. Of course, when doing ethnography, it is also essential to listen to the conversations of the actors 'on stage', read the documents produced in the field under study, and ask people questions. Yet what most distinguishes ethnography from other methods is a more active role assigned to the cognitive modes of observing, watching, seeing, looking at and scrutinizing (Gobo & Marciniak 2016).

Ethnography is a method with more than one hundred years of history. It arose in the Western world as a form of knowledge about distant cultures (typically non-Western ones) which were impenetrable to analysis since we had only fleeting contact or brief conversations (Gobo 2011).

Since the 1980s – and even more with the advent of the Internet – the meaning of ethnography has been expanded to such an extent that it encompasses forms of research that are extremely diverse from a methodological point of view. The stretching of the term 'ethnography' has emptied it of its original meaning. Ethnography was born as a technique based upon direct observation. By contrast, interviews and surveys are mainly based upon listening and asking questions. Of course, it is also essential in ethnography to listen to the conversations of the actors 'on stage', read the documents produced by them and ask people questions but they are ancillary sources of information because what most distinguishes ethnography from other methods is the active role assigned to observation (Gobo & Marciniak 2016).

Classically, the observation can be covered or uncovered, participating or non-participating. The form of participation largely determines the contents of the experience of the researcher in the field and the empirical basis that will be available. Spradley (1980) distinguishes participation into four ordered classes: passive, moderate, active and complete.

Table 1. *Level of Participation in Ethnographic Practices*
on the field, according to Spradley (1980)

Level of participation				
Not participant	Passive participation	Moderate participation	Active participation	Complete participation

on the net, according to Kozinets (2010)

Lurking						**Participation**
Content Analysis Approach	Informing members about the research purposes	Asking clarifying questions	Posting comments	Getting involved in the community activities	Taking a leadership role	Auto-ethnography

Nevertheless, if all the ordered classes of participation have been the domain of the classical ethnographic method, with the advent of digital the styles of participation have become distorted and are increasingly hybridizing with unobtrusive forms of research. You certainly stray very far from the ethnographic style and increasingly dangerously close to another family of methods that has its particular soul, history and set of techniques, completely different from ethnography: let's talk about the content analysis.

The internet revolution has had a profound impact on ethnography. For the first time, it has become possible for any researcher to simultaneously access online information, actions, interactions, communities, and cultures located in different places. "Online ethnography" designates variations regarding above all the conduct of fieldwork (Gobo & Cellini 2020). Online ethnography breaks with the traditional methods of the discipline because all the data is usually collected online without meeting the people concerned face-to-face. The problem raised by online ethnography is both theoretical and methodological: can online cultures, communities or interactions ever be sufficiently understood if the ethnographer is not in the field? Does ethnography depend upon the physical presence of the ethnographer while the people are being studied? (Hammersley 2006).

As we will see, online ethnography is a highly differentiated and rapidly evolving field. The different proposals for conducting online ethnography are the result of the ways in which different scholars conceptualize the internet, which ranges from a culture to an instrumental context for social interaction.

Recent examples of online ethnography are evidence that ethnographers can be active observers and participants in the field, even though the field is not physical; or they can have a passive role of indirect not participant observers of the field, by studying it without complete immersion but only through extracting meaning from existing secondary data spread on the net. In the following paragraphs we will examine these changes and new differences in the way of doing ethnography in the digital scenario in order to clarify some interesting but not always such explicit points.

The New Scenario

Internet studies located the turning point for social research in 1990: thanks to the rise of the Web as an environment for mediated interaction and emerging new empirical approaches. First, these approaches tried unsuccessfully to totally replace the traditional ones, by adapting (and then revolutionizing) the classical techniques to the new emerging paradigm.

The first kind of identification of a specific type of method born around Internet Social Research Studies was represented by the formalization of *Virtual Methods*. They were born starting from the idea of cyberspace intended as a place to store large amounts of useful information for discovering how much social culture is present online and considering internet not only a cultural context, but as well a cultural artefact, a flexible, dynamic and pervasive object (Woolgar 1996).

Following these requirements, the vision of Hine (2005: 2) where «the theory of research methods become meaningful only when you start to try them out for yourself, and it has always had to be adaptive» conducts social research to a path where cyberspace, focused on as a new place for methods, has been shaped as a cultural context where traditional methods could be adapted and transposed online by Computer mediated communication.

The adaptive mood allows, in fact, the transformation of traditional ethnography in its virtual vocation: the *netnographic* practice intended as the *cocktail* that Hobbs (2006) describes as the repertoire needed to understand a particular culture, conducting traditional research actions and most of the observation, in a switch to the web environment where real communities become web-communities preserving, or creating, substantive networks and relations into the cyberspace in the way where netnographic object is the social aggregation that "emerges from the Net when enough people carry on […] public discussion long enough, with sufficient human feeling to forms webs of personal relationships in cyberspace" (Rheingold 1993:18).

In the 2000s, social research wondered if and how the heritage of traditional methods was exposed to the opportunities of new medium gains (largely in efficiency, costs and breadth of geographic reach) and threats (response rates, loss of representativeness of population and quality of data). The air of innovation and changing, in fact, provided for a sense of anxiety created by the perception that "nothing can be taken for granted" (Rheingold 1993: 5), because of the ontological level of this approach based only on the aspects of the medium that entails high limits to produce reliable and consistent sets of data.

The digital era has been in fact an unquestionably moment of change. Going further from the field of study that identifies awareness, identities, citizenship, policy and corporeal social structures via the exclusive social research path characterized by the human-machine relationship, year per year the idea of connection between internet and territories strengthened, thanks to tailor-made information produced by users' history, geolocation, etc., and left online.

Starting from the own media infrastructures and techniques, in the 2000s science, social and technology trends drove social research to a revolutionary model made up of the hybridization of classical techniques and digital environment (the net), replacing cyberspace *second life* and refusing the online/offline, virtual/ real coexistence. The vision of Richard Rogers (2009) of *Digital Methods*, the second way used to try to explain a new class of methods in Internet Studies, in fact, suggests a dimension focused on a whole dichotomy of *digitalized/digital native* information about social action, relations and practices. In particular, it only considers the perspective of web native elements that, adequately analyzed, permit to recreate a *new internet story* from the inside of the device and its own agency (Rogers 2013:14): "the digital context has become such an additional and integrated social participatory place of people's daily life where the researchers take account not only the web as the object of study, but the role they play in relation with it as well".

Digital methods, in this way, does not work as an approach which is useful for confirming the online environment results, but instead it uses the web as a source and not only as the object of study, following the medium evolution and thinking how to rearrange digital objects, going further from the research that "is limited to the study of online cultures" (Rogers 2007: 28). It was no longer important to understand how much culture was online, but instead how to "focus the cultural change and social conditions through internet" (Ibid.: 48-49). Lazer et al (2009) confirms that digital methods are not simply a series of techniques useful for analysing available web data that describe social actions: the researcher actually works as an investigator through data available on 2^{nd} sources but moves through the labyrinth of media as well, understanding the information produced by users or best by social platforms. Working through reading and observing actions, in fact, this information is translated into data and analyzed approaching several (potentially mixed) methods typical of content analysis, which refers to any kind of analysis that attempts to derive new mining from existing content (Krippendorf 2018).

The ethnographic approach derived from digital methods called *digital ethnography*, differently from *netnography* that is directly connected to the spaces within the subjects movements, arises simultaneously with the environment within it works, and is capable of enlarging and analysing every relations cluster not concerning the subjects in a place as the virtual world (Consolazio 2017: 81), but rather in a temporary association of strangers made for mutual purposes in a cooperation that will lose its properties even after few hours of its highest density moment of sharing (Arvidsson & Caliandro 2016).

Excluding their succession in time, in social research virtual methods have not fallen into disuse, while digital methods are still going through the process of gaining increasing success.

This background marks several differences between these two families of methods, explaining the main break between them that rests on the switch from the ontological to epistemological identities of the methods and stressing the debate about an important clarification regarding the distinction of data identities: *virtual*, *digitalized* and *digital*.

Provoked and User-Generated Data

For virtual data we mean all the information that needed to understand a social setting in fieldwork switched to online so that, for example, a survey becomes a web survey or an interview becomes a web-interview, with a difference for the observation actions that can find a proper use also with a non-intrusive configuration.

For digitalized data we mean all the information that before the transposition online comes from any sources such as books, TV programs, movies etc. and that becomes useful for online content analysis, in a way that is quite different compared to offline not only due to the economic savings and faster elaborations, but also considering more specifically the processes of entry, storage and management of such data.

For digital data, on the other hand, the plentiful literature of digital sociology (see among others Marres 2017, Lupton 2014) intends all the traces left by users during their online activities which produce original empirical elements not attributable to previous approaches, but produced by the natural structure and dynamics of the net and thus connected to the new idea of *grounded web*[5] within which the researcher can move *following the medium.* Therefore, the virtual/ digitalized data stand out as «*provoked data*» and digital ones as *«user-generated data»*: both portrayed by the spontaneity value during their production (Natale and Airoldi 2017, Rogers 2009).

The Involvement in the Post-demographics Approach

The constitution of these research methods is also reflected properly by their web-ethnographic approach which defines the related level of involvement of the subject observed.

The migration of information, from offline to online, outlines a dissimilarity compared to Rogers' hybrid viewpoint: the virtual data, in fact, not only can't be persistent in the scenario like the digital data (Boyd 2011), but in addition, "the digital data are natural, spontaneous and not forced by the researcher's requests due to the lack of cooperation between the observer and the observed" (Cardano 2011: 25).

Netnography, in its participant version works on provoked data and involves a not negligible direct involvement of individuals who have to spend time interacting with the researcher, in a way which is quite different for the digital ethnographer who works via querying and reading techniques on already existing digital contents, i.e. social network scraping, spheres compared analysis, source distance analysis, internet as archive, etc., that leaves the authors of the web traces left unaware of the research.

The paradigmatic revolution made by social research through the application of digital methods causes the crossing of the *avatar* concept and is no longer

[5]Richard Rogers (2007:46) proposes a research practice that can learn from device methods, reworking it for new purposes in order to confirm the assertions about cultural change and social conditions throughout web data and introducing the expression of *online groundedness*.

considered as a unit of analysis of the individuals, but rather the users' activities that open to post-demographics opportunities: social research indeed widens its *spectrum* passing over the main focus of the social-demographics properties of subjects (age, location, gender, job, etc.) being also vigilant today of the users' relations, networks and social practices shown via new media platforms in terms of reactivity, behaviour, and preferences.[6]

Data Construction and Data Collection: the Base Models to Set a Comparison between Netnography and Digital Ethnography

The last 20 years of paradigmatic change have clearly reshaped the way how social stories are communicated through the own reshaping of ethnography.

Cultures are still today studied in their natural state, even if they are adapted or discussed within innovative and experimental frameworks.

The research field, described by Bailey (2007: 2) as the «systematic study, primarily through long-term, face-to-face interactions and observations, of everyday life» for example, has switched to different new clear or latent configurations useful for joining the description of cultures «as they really are respecting the aspiration of any methodology» (Hine 2000: 42) permitting researchers to do a proper ethnographic study, following Hammersley & Atkinson's basic definition (2007) regarding the possibility of an overt or covert participation in people's daily life.

The identification of different properties connected to the fields of research connected to netnography and digital ethnography defines and summarizes the breakpoints between them and, then, between their family of methods.

The main question is about the available data needed "to throw light on the issues that are the emerging focus of the inquiry" (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007: 3). It leads the netnographer and the digital ethnographer to different models for research planning and action: the first one, in fact, constructs their own data, reaching for information and translating it simultaneously to the approach of the analysis in a gradual building of interpretation of results.

This way is quite different from traditional ethnography that separates procedures providing the collection of field and methodological notes useful for analysis processing. The digital ethnographer is closer to the traditional model than the netnographer, at least as far as the non-synchronic research and analysis phases are concerned: the hybridization of techniques and the environment of the digital scenario gives the opportunity to the researcher to collect data regarding concepts non imposed *a priori* on 2^{nd} sources, then to organize it by the proper instruments, then to experiment many analytical models, choose the best one(s), and finally to discuss the interpretation of results. This model, moreover, may allow the possible fragmentation of the research mechanism in such a way that a professional actor,

[6]Purposing the partition of the society and social context in groups aggregated by socio-demographic properties, post-demographics could be thought of as the study of the personal data in social networking platforms, and, in particular, how *metaprofiling* (Rogers 2004) is, or may be, performed with findings as well as consequences (https://digitalmethods.net/Digitalmethods/PostDemographics#Post_45demographics_63).

such as a computer engineer can collect the online data, a different one such as a data scientist can organize and evaluate it by techniques, and a social scientist can interpret the results.

Methodology

With this paper our goal is to formalize the main differences between the applications of ethnographic techniques when they are framed in the *Virtual* or *Digital Methods.*

To be more systematic in presenting these differences, a synoptic table is offered below. This table examines the main breaking points between the methods in order to be used to organize a more marked comparison between two exemplary "Tourism studies" chosen as representative, one for the ethnographic application of *Virtual Methods*, and one for the ethnographic application of *Digital Methods*.

In addition to testing the effectiveness of the proposed classification scheme, the purpose of the comparison conducted will be to highlight where the changes that have occurred can lead to advances in the method and where these changes have become new limits on which it is necessary to continue to reflect in order to develop the methods involved and place them clearly in line with the evolution of the digital scenario on which they try to intervene.

Table 2. *Systematization of Breaking Point Occurred in Time and with the Advent of Digital Era on the Ethnographic Approach*

From the level of definition and conceptualization			
Breaking point	**Classical Ethnographic Method**	**Virtual Method with Netnography**	**Digital Method with Digital Ethnography**
Principal definition of the method and kind of understanding actions required to the researcher by level and kind of participation	*In-depth understanding* of social scenario and social life using different levels of *direct participation* in this scenario.	*Web transposition* of the classical method to construct understanding of digital scenario using different levels of *direct or indirect participation* in this scenario.	*Innovation* of classical method to extract understanding from digital scenario using the Net as object and as methodological tool using *lurking techniques* not necessarily connected to direct participation.
Conceptualization of the field	Physical place in which communities, their cultures and social and daily life take place. The social scenario can be useful to detect the culture of a specific community regardless of its aims, objectives, and purposes.	Internet as scenario in which pieces of daily life, communities, cultures, etc. are proposed. Cyberspace is intended as a place allowed to store large amounts of useful information for realizing how large the part of the social culture present online could be and	Internet as object/place to study and as a methodological tool for studying. It is considered the only perspective of web native elements that, adequately analyzed, help to recreate a *new internet story* from the inside of the device and its own agency. The digital context thus

		considering internet not only as a cultural context, but as a cultural artefact, a flexible, dynamic and pervasive object as well.	becomes an additional and integrated social participatory place of people's daily life where the researchers take into account not only the web as the object of study, but the role they play in relation with it as well.
From the operational level			
Breaking point	**Classical Ethnographic Method**	**Virtual Method with Netnography**	**Digital Method with Digital Ethnography**
Main technique	Ethnography usually involves the researcher participating in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal and formal interviews, collecting documents and artefacts.	*Netnographic* practice intended as a repertoire needed to understand a particular culture, that conducts the traditional research actions, most of the observation, in a switch to the web environment where real communities become web-communities preserving, or creating, substantive networks and relations into cyberspace in the way where netnographic object is the social aggregation that emerge from the Net when enough people carry on public discussion long enough, with sufficient human feeling to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace.	*Digital ethnography* uses the web also as a source and not only as the object of study, following the evolution of the medium and thinking how to rearrange digital objects, moving further away from the research that is limited to the study of online cultures or web-communities. It is no longer important to understand how much culture is online, but how to focus the cultural change and social conditions through internet instead.
Research actions and their level of importance	*Observing* as main research action + a series of research actions that produces ancillary sources of information such as *passive listening + querying + reading* (the actions of observing and listening are functional to extrapolating	*Observing* as main research action + a series of research actions that produces ancillary sources of information such as *passive listening + querying + reading* Here the transposition on the web of the classical methods by adopting all the heritage of actions and	*Observing also by reading + asking second source digital materials + active retrieval instead of passive listening*, all these actions are considered to be of the same level of importance. The researcher works as an investigator through data available from 2^{nd}

	knowledge from the participant experience; the action of asking is functional to asking clarifying questions about the way in which the researcher is interpreting the situation; the action of reading is also functional to informing the interpretation of the phenomena which the researcher reaches).	the inequality in level assigned to their importance is valid.	sources but also moving through the medium labyrinth understanding the information produced by users or best by social platforms: working through reading and observing actions, in fact, this information is translated into data and analyzed approaching several (eventually mixed) methods typical of content analysis.

From the technical level			
Breaking point	**Classical Ethnographic Method**	**Virtual Method with Netnography**	**Digital Method with Digital Ethnography**
Involvement of the observed	Possibility to inform or not to inform the members about the research purposes.	Possibility to inform or not inform the members about the research purposes.	Not necessary to inform the members about the research purposes.
Involvement of the observer	Getting involved in the community activities.	Getting involved or not involved in the web-community activities.	Not involved in the community activities.
Level of involvement by time	Direct involvement in people's daily life for an extended period of time in order to better understand the community.	Direct or indirect involvement in people's daily internet life for an extended period of time in order to better understand the web-community.	Indirect involvement for a brief period of time, generally functional to confirm the main interpretation of the research.
Kind of data used	Not digital	Virtual or Digitalized	Digital
Kind of access	Face to face access to information actions, interactions, communities and cultures located in the same place.	Online access to information, actions, interactions, communities and cultures located in different places.	Online access to information, actions, interactions, communities and cultures located in different places.
Way of collecting secondary data	*Collecting* documents and artefacts by asking the community's permission.	*Collecting* documents and artefacts by asking the web-community's permission.	*Construction and extraction* of data, documents, artefacts just deposited on the net and with free access for the researcher to extract the material to analyze.
Way of collecting/constructing primary data	Construct field-notes, diaries, mind maps and all the material necessary to	Construct field-notes, diaries, mind maps and all the material necessary to organize	Web scraping and API's use to extract material from the net directly connected to

	organize the knowledge construct process.	the knowledge construct process.	the social phenomena that the researcher will analyze making primary use of secondary data.
Where is the ethnographer?	Ethnographer is in the field.	Ethnographer is in the online field.	Ethnographer is not in the field.
Level of intrusion	Intrusive and unobtrusive: the data is usually collected meeting the people concerned face-to-face.	Intrusive and unobtrusive: the data is usually collected meeting the people concerned virtually.	Unobtrusive: all the data is usually collected online without meeting the people concerned face-to-face or virtually.

From the organizational level			
Breaking point	**Classical Ethnographic Method**	**Virtual Method with Netnography**	**Digital Method with Digital Ethnography**
Propensities and extremes in ethnographical practices	*Auto-ethnography* in which the identification, the "being part" of the investigated community prevails and is approached through a collection of pieces of knowledge produced by the direct sense of the researcher.	*Virtual endo-ethnography* in which the identification, the "being part", of the investigated community prevails and is approached through a collection of pieces of knowledge produced by the direct sense of the researcher jointly with a collection of documents and artifacts that are analyzed directly and indirectly leading to ethnographic style to be defined as a endogenous.	*Digital exo-ethnography* where there is the absence of identification, of that "being part", of the investigated community which is instead approached through a collection of documents, contents and artifacts that are analyzed indirectly, leads the ethnographic style to be defined as a exogenous.
Evolutive framework of research	Circularity among all the phases from the research design to data collection to interpretation to the return to the analyzed actors and scenario.	Circularity among all the phases from the research design to data collection to interpretation to the return on the analyzed actors on the internet scenario.	Separation of the collecting and interpreting phases. Different subjects could be responsible for the different actions so that the research design becomes an integrated path of analysis, disciplines and capabilities.
How to reach the interpretation?	More active role assigned to the cognitive modes of observing, watching, seeing, looking at and scrutinizing, in order to reach a total interpretation of the investigated	More active role assigned to the cognitive modes of observing, watching, seeing, looking at and scrutinizing, in order to reach a total interpretation of the investigated phenomena on the Net by analyzing provoked and	More active role assigned to the capacity of interconnecting different kinds of data coming from the net, generally user-generated that indirectly talks about the observed under-investigation

	phenomena by analyzing provoked and not-provoked data.	not-provoked data.	phenomena.
From the reflection level			
Breaking point	**Classical Ethnographic Method**	**Virtual Method with Netnography**	**Digital Method with Digital Ethnography**
Gains	Long-term in-depth studies of communities circumscribed in space and data sets that are not too large. Strong control over representativeness of population and quality of data.	Medium gains largely in efficiency, costs and breadth of geographic reach.	Medium gains largely in efficiency, costs and breadth of geographic reach.
Threats	Long period of time, costs, geographical weight, as well as the fact that the researcher is alone and must develop and take charge of all the research phases by themselves.	Impossibility of having control over response rates, loss of representativeness of population and quality of data.	Impossibility of having control over response rates, loss of representativeness of population and quality of data.

Following all the recalled differences among the Classic, Virtual and Digital approaches to the ethnographical method, the following paragraph will offer an application of this framework to better understand the introduced differences in applying ethnographic research on the digital scenario. According to the common interests of the authors, the following paragraph refers to two example of Tourism studies, the best found in literature that lent itself to the comparison aim: one by A. Rageh, T.C. Melewar, and A. Woodside, in 2013 on "*Using netnography research method to reveal the underlying dimensions of the customer/tourist experience*", used to explain the main breaking point involving the netnographical practice; and one by M. Muskat, B. Muskat, A. Zehrer, & R. Johns, in 2013 on *"Generation Y: evaluating services experiences through mobile ethnography"* used, on the other hand, to recall the main differences with the digital ethnographical practice.

Findings: Studies on Tourism and Comparison of the "Virtual Netnographic" and "Digital ethnographic" Perspective

Culture, choices, experiences, and consumption are often the properties elected by social science to study the change of societies from several perspectives such as political, sociological and anthropological points of view. As mentioned in the introduction, this prelude of elements is the basis for ethnographic research and finds many examples in the literature focused on tourism studies chosen this paper as the preferred field of investigation from which we have selected our case studies. Also, apart from the common interest of the authors for the topic, the following cases have been selected because of their precise approach in the application of netnography and digital ethnography occurring appropriately for comparison purposes.

In 2013 the research group composed of Rageh et al. worked on the study "*Using netnography research method to reveal the underlying dimensions of the customer/tourist experience"*. This study was focused on the *customer tourism experiences* and aimed to identify *its underlying dimensions* through the validation of concepts isolated *a priori* and dealt with the tourist industry in Egypt.

The authors based the research method in a way that was useful for focusing the reflexive narratives that people publish online about their experiences, so clearly stated in the netnographic approach deriving from Kozinets' vision of the "adaptation of ethnographic research techniques to study the cultures and communities that are emerging through computer-mediated communications" (2010: 131). The authors consider the web as a flexible, dynamic and pervasive object, where, throughout cyberspace, it is possible to study the visitors' experiences thanks to their online reviews: the chance, indeed, to capture offline phenomena via online activities. This is perfectly in line with the aims and the delineated perspective on the side of the ethnographical practice in the framework of the *Virtual Methods,* where the identification, the "*being part*" of the investigated community prevails and is approached through a collection of pieces of knowledge produced in a collection of documents and artifacts that are analyzed directly and indirectly, causing the ethnographic style to be defined as endogenous.

They adapted ethnographic techniques starting from transposing a traditional structure of investigation on the online research field. First, they accessed the most important online groups composed of tourists from all over the world via the best platforms on which to gather data (TripAdvisor.com and holidaywatchdog.com), then they selected needed contents discarding off-topic reviews, short messages with no information, and promotional messages, then they analysed data with the help of an IT tool called Nvivo[7] and finally they respected research ethics stating that the websites utilised for this study are "established as public forums of communication and that consent has become unnecessary for the analysis of public postings" (Rageh et al. 2013: 135).

The research action adopted was the observation in a non-participant way that and, even if not expressed in the methodological description of the article, is hybrid-shaped with reading techniques. These are useful to approach the unit of analysis (reviews) first constructing field notes and maps, i.e. as for the kind of review chosen for the analysis (ibid 134), and then collecting only the necessary data from a second source (the websites) with the permission of community admins. This research has therefore not concerned the involvement users, who were unaware of their participation, and obviously the researcher participation was

[7]This study analyzed the informants' experiences from the journal entries by following the principles for the analysis and interpretation of qualitative data as recommended by Spiggle (1994), Strauss & Corbin (1990) and Arnould & Wallendorf (1994). Relevant themes to research hypotheses were identified and then the emergent themes were compared with preconceptions derived from the literature (Rageh, Melewar, & Woodside, 2013:135).

not intrusive. The latter is not such an obvious feature since generally the classical ethnographic observational practice transposed online should also include the full involvement of the observed community. However, it is clear that for the type of community observed this would have been impossible. The authors' choice, therefore, was to hybridize the method by choosing a curvature towards non-intrusiveness instruments and the secondary digital data already present on the network, in a way more close to the rationale of the ethnographical practices in the framework of *Digital Methods*.

The study, in any case, respects the active role assigned to the cognitive modes of observing, watching, seeing, looking at and scrutinizing, in order to reach a total interpretation of the investigated phenomena on the Net and exploiting the potential gains in efficiency, costs and breadth of geographic reach. In this case, being based only on virtual non-provoked data, this entails some threats to the reliability of findings: the trustworthiness of users' networks, relations, habits and identities, in fact, urges the researchers to be reassured by long-term indirect engagement with the participants for an extended period of time in order to better understand the web-community. The participants, in any case, can't produce feedback to the researcher because of the unobtrusive research action that stops the classic netnographic circularity among all the phases from the research design: to data collection to interpretation to the return on the analyzed actors on the internet scenario.

The study conducted in 2013 by Matthias Muskat, Birgit Muskat, Anita Zehrer, Raechel Johns entitled *"Generation Y: evaluating services experiences through mobile ethnography"* is also based on the *concept of experience.*

The exploration-study aim was to understand how museums are experience-centered places and how they are perceived by Generation Y[8] thanks to the identification of the customer journey , providing an insight into service experience consumption and deriving managerial implications for the museum industry on how to approach Generation Y.

The method is based on the innovated idea of *mobile ethnography* that sees the individuals dressed simultaneously as consumers and as active investigators capable of giving back opinions about their personal view of a product, a service or an experience. The absence of identification, of that "being part", of the investigated community which is instead approached through a collection of documents, contents and artifacts that are analyzed indirectly, leads the ethnographic style to be defined as exogenous. *Digital exo-ethnography* is the closer style to the post-demographic approach that no longer pays its attention to the individual characters, but rather to the users' relations, networks and social practices shown in this case via the digital device in terms of reactivity and preferences.

The empirical basis has been built concerning only the digital native elements: data are not in fact transposed from other media sources, but directly produced,

[8]Generation Y, which is often referred to as Generation Next, Millennials or the Net Generation, usually refers to people born between 1982 and 2002, distinguishing three generation units: Generation Why (born 1982-1985); Millennials (born 1985-1999); iGeneration (born 1999-2002).

and then collected via digital connected technologies[9]: thus extracting material from the net directly connected to the social phenomena that the researcher will analyze making primary use of secondary data.

The process concerns the information delivered from the user and the data collection from the researcher at the same time, and in the real time of the action: the reporting of the evaluation of the visitor's experience, at the same time as the experience. This leads to considering the web no longer only as an object but also taking into account the role the actors (users and researchers) play within it in a context that becomes a social participatory place in people's daily life. The "user-centered design of this method" (Muskat et al. 2013:59) is based on the user's spontaneous and generated content. Here is, in fact, the customer who decides how, when, and what to evaluate of his experience: all through a device that, thanks to its open manner configuration, brings to the researcher translated data that could not be intended as the result of a singular research action, but rather a new kind of output that involves observation, querying and reading action all together in an unobtrusive way.

Taking into account these specifics, different threats for the application of the study and its further evolution emerge.

Firstly, not perfect control over response rates, a potential loss of representativeness of the population and the quality of the data: the software used was developed to also capture GPS signals allowing the creation of maps that are useful to look at to see the participants' journey in their service experience, but during the experiment it was not possible to capture GPS data exploiting the benefit of the technology feature at the museum.

Secondly: the limits to the exploratory nature of the study. There is a necessary involvement of the awareness of being observed because of his/her spontaneous participation during the process, but at the same time a non-involvement of the researcher who is not in the field and has no identity for participants. The indirect involvement over only the time of the exploration study was not sufficient to confirm the interpretation of the main results of a study that needs more in-depth work beyond the limit of the single case study conducted in the only museum of Canberra (ibid, 60).

[9]MyServiceFellow is the result of multiple publicly funded research projects and is one of the first prototypes of a mobile ethnography app (see www.myservicefellow.com). The app enables users to capture touchpoints right now of an experience. It allows adding and evaluating touchpoints on a five-point Likert scale (ranging from +2 to -2) and documenting touchpoints with text, audio, photos or videos, which can be each individually flagged as positive or negative. Participants can download MyServiceFellow to their smartphones (i.e. Android phones, iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch, etc.) from the Android Market Place or the AppStore. The caption of date, time and GPS data of each touchpoint allows the construction of a customer journey based on either route or time sequence of the user, even for complex tourism products. The data of each user is then uploaded to a web-based analysis software called ServiceFollow, which visualizes the touchpoint sequences of different users as a touchpoint matrix. While the rows visualize each customer journey as a horizontal sequence of touchpoints, columns can be used to represent the same touchpoints of different users. The users' touchpoint assessments are aggregated to mean values to identify critical incidents immediately. These critical touchpoints (positive or negative) and their consolidated documentations can be the starting point for further in-depth research. (Muskat, Muskat, Zehrer, & Johns, 2013:59)

As has emerged in the description of the case studies, there are several threats among the two ethnographic approaches that mainly do not offer an acceptable helpfulness of results to the research. The cases have also demonstrated that it is possible to utilise a hybridization of methods, so now it is important to ask how we can reduce these threats while avoiding the exclusive and separated use of methods, but rather approaching them in a well-adapted and defined case by case cross adoption exploiting their singular gain powers.

Open Conclusions and New Challenges for Ethnography to Test the Digital Scenario and the Introduced Method Revolutions

The evidence discussed highlights a particular suggestion for the proposed theoretical classification framework: although the understood practices can be used as extremes, netnography and digital ethnography can no longer be thought of as placed on a continuum that allows gradualness in the intermediate choices to be made by firmly fixing the starting points, the cognitive objectives and the results to be achieved.

This specific reflection leads us not to close this paper with a canonical discussion and conclusion, instead it moves us to a plane on which it becomes decidedly more appropriate to conclude the discussion by leaving room for the questions that remain open regarding the reflection that needs continue to be developed around the future of ethnographic practice in the digital age. Without claiming to be exhaustive, some of the lines of research on which to continue the reflection could be drawn from the questions that we leave here at the end.

Considering what has been shown, can it still be said that ethnographic practices are always so appropriate to the new scenario? Do these really work better than their classic version? What classic structures could, instead, be recovered/re-assessed? What is the scope of exclusivity of the two methods and to what extent can they coexist or merge? What happens to ethical issues? Can they really be shelved without particular reflection? How much will it be necessary to use digital or digitized data instead of shifting the research to the data produced by sensors completely reversing ontology and research actions?

The reply to these questions is not an easy nor fast task, but initial answers are already available in the results of our comparison: it becomes appropriate to draw partial conclusions and will become surely useful for required further in-depth advancements for the object of this study. The comparison shows for example, how unobtrusive observation can be valid for netnography as well for digital ethnography: in this way a partial reassessment of the structure of the traditional ethnographic research actions seems clear. Furthermore, in the study conducted by Rageh, Malewar and Woodside where there the application of the netnographic logic is clear, the partial hybridization of the method by choosing the secondary digital data already present on the network is equally clear, in a way that is closer to the rationale of the ethnographical practices in the framework of Digital Methods.

These are just some of the questions that can be brought to the reader's attention, and certainly do not cover the vastness of the semantic field touched upon. However, they clearly reveal the concerns and possibilities that the digital scenario is opening up for ethnographic practice and digital ethnographers.

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