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TOWARDS AN ENTREPRENEURIAL ETHICS OF DESIRE? LGBTQ LOCATION-BASED DATING/HOOK-UP APPS AND THE CONFIGURATIONS OF SEXUAL-AFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG GAY MEN IN BRAZIL

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to reflect on how changes in digital sociability practices influence on the affective and sexual relationships among gay men in Northeast Brazil. We argue some of these changes are associated with an entrepreneurial ethics of desire, which is a set of desiring and sociability practices influenced by neoliberal imperatives, such as free competition, high selectiveness, meritocracy, economic rationale, utilitarianism, and self-entrepreneurship. In a mediated reality under platform capitalism, we wonder: by taking on market-oriented practices, how do individuals constitute themselves as differentiated desiring subjects? We seek to elucidate this point by analysing seven in-depth interviews conducted with gay men whose affective-sexual trajectories have been impacted by communication technologies' transformations in the last three decades. All respondents were gay men between 25-34 years old, residents in Recife's metropolitan area and were contacted via Grindr. Focused on cultural scripts for sex mediated by digital media and on self-presentation in profiles, we investigate how these individuals negotiate homoerotic sociabilities simultaneously on different social platforms. In an attempt to constitute themselves as "desirable" subjects in digital spheres, these individuals experience several tensions that are triggered by social markers of desire, such as race, class, gender performativity and physicality. Based on an intersectional approach, we aim to identify aspects of what we define as an entrepreneurial ethics of desire. We also propose to investigate whether, in terms of resistance and indiscipline, we can think of an alternative sexual-affective ethics for sociability and desiring practices – namely a queer ethics of desire.

Keywords: Keywords: ethics of desire; entrepreneurial ethics; queer ethics; dating apps; hook-up apps; sociability practices; desiring practices; masculinities.

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1 INTRODUCTION: SEXUAL-AFFECTIVE TRAJECTORIES IMPACTED BY AN ENTREPRENEURIAL ETHICS OF DESIRE

Matthew¹, 26, has had a turbulent relation with his own homosexuality for most of his life. Member of a fervent Catholic middle-class family in Recife², he was taught that his desire was a sin and an abomination. Matthew also had access to the Internet from an early age. At 7, he accessed gaming websites at his father's office. Around 13, he got a computer with dial-up Internet access at home³. More confident about privacy issues, he decided to follow a tip from his classmates to join pornography groups on Orkut, a social networking site ran by Google which was accessed by 91% of Brazilian Internet users in the late 2000s⁴. Instead of searching for heterosexual material, however, he looked for erotic videos between men. As he gradually understood his homoerotic desire, he started to contact other boys online. He strengthened the perception towards his homosexuality by joining sexual chat rooms, where he could interact with distant anonymous men using text, photos, and webcam streaming. The conversations did not progress beyond the online platforms on which they were held. Matthew did not keep those contacts, nor did he consider face-to-face meetings with his interlocutors. This was followed by a long period of denial of his own sexuality. It only changed when he turned 18. By that age, he was introduced to location-based dating apps, which brought him new possibilities of interactions and affective-sexual experiences with other men.

Matthew identifies himself as a white, fat, middle class, effeminate gay man who was born in the Northeast of Brazil⁵. All these adjectives became even more relevant when he started using dating apps regularly and became evaluated by potential partners. A series of situations made him question his perception of himself as a desiring subject. Being rejected, ignored, or blocked in his attempts to meet another man became a recurring experience, whereas he reproduced these same sociability practices⁶ with interlocutors who weren't of his own interest. The rejection he faced didn't make him use these tools any less; rather, it pushed him to

¹ All names have been changed to preserve the identity of the interviewees.

² Recife, where the research was held, is the capital of Pernambuco, one of the nine states that form Brazilian Northeast.

³ The commercial use of the Internet in Brazil started in May 1995, by the then state-owned telecommunications enterprise Embratel.

⁴ Folhaonline. (2008). "Orkut passa para as mãos do Google Brasil; empresa muda diretoria no país". Available in: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/tec/2008/08/430818-orkut-passa-para-as-maos-do-google-brasil-empresa-muda-diretoria-no-pais.shtml>

⁵ The Northeast is the most underdeveloped region in Brazil, with the largest proportion of black and mixed-race population. People from the Northeast migrate regularly to other regions in search for jobs and a better life, facing discrimination and prejudice, particularly from the white communities.

⁶ The "sociability" we refer to in this article is related to Simmel's definition on it, who, as put by Shangwei Wu & Janelle Ward (2020), argues that in "all human associations, regardless of content and interests, there can be satisfaction in the association itself: changing individual solitude into togetherness."

try to use them “better”. To get the results he craved, he developed specific strategies of self-presentation and sociability in each platform he used, in an attempt to manoeuvre his ambivalent relationship with these technologies. From the age of 18 until the moment he was interviewed for this article, he had met several guys on dating apps like Grindr and Scruff and had had a Tinder match turned into a four-year serious relationship.

In six years of systematic use of dating apps, Matthew has developed desiring and sociability practices aligned to the dynamics of information and communication technologies. We argue that these practices are organised, to a larger extent, by an entrepreneurial ethics of desire. That is, a set of practices aligned to neoliberal logics of productivity and self-entrepreneurship (Dardot & Laval, 2014; Brown, 2019; Bourcier, 2020), which is being broadly stimulated by the market-oriented organization of social life deepened by platform capitalism (Srnicek, 2016; Van Djick, Poell, & Martin, 2018). Based on an intersectional approach, we aim to identify aspects of what we define as an entrepreneurial ethics of desire, but also spaces of rupture within its own scope. We also propose to investigate whether, in terms of resistance and indiscipline, our informants indicate alternative sexual-affective ethics for sociability and desiring practices. One possible alternative to an entrepreneurial ethics would be a queer ethics of desire – that is, an ethics based on friendship ties and other cooperative bonds, which may or may not include sexual practices. Even though many topics the participants evoked, regarding their desiring practices, can be related to an entrepreneurial ethics of desire, it doesn’t mean they are reduced to this ethical possibility – or even that this ethical possibility is harmful at all ways. From complex perspectives, informants tended to show some discomfort about an entrepreneurial ethics of desire, but also pointed out some personal advantages it provided them. They also mentioned other ethical possibilities of having sexual-affective relationships that aren’t necessarily entrepreneurial.

We may say chat rooms and older social networking sites were already associated with a logic of high selectiveness and abundance familiar to an entrepreneurial ethics of desire, but location-based dating apps certainly developed it even further. For Matthew and other men of his generation, being desired (and, more than that, looking desirable) on these platforms has become a fundamental premise for being recognised as a desiring subject⁷. And being recognised as a

⁷ In a sociological perspective, we define desiring subjects as subjects with agency to experience their affective-sexual desires in order to enjoy the capacity to feel desirable and the possibility of being desired by their peers. Someone becomes a desiring subject when is recognised as such through a process of social recognition (of a desiring nature). We may also call this process a desiring recognition, as proposed by Richard Miskolci (2017) in reference to the concept of social recognition developed by Axel Honneth (1995). It is important to point out that desiring recognition may materialise via a sexual and/or an affective path. Its distribution occurs unequally among the subjects and may even be denied to them. In a distinct sense from “desiring subjects”, we use the term “subjects of desire” employed by Michel Foucault (1990). With this denomination, we refer to the character of historical contingency of desire that understands individuals as relatively subjected –

desiring subject seems to be a decisive step to enjoy good transit in the market of male homoerotic desire. The desiring dynamics are often organized under the logic of contemporary capitalism, which may strongly influence the subjectivities of individuals that, such as Matthew, have built their affective-sexual trajectories almost entirely under the mediation of social networks and dating/hook-up apps. In an attempt to constitute themselves as “desirable” subjects in digital spheres, these individuals experience tensions triggered by social markers of desire, such as race, class, gender performativity and physicality. Influenced by an entrepreneurial ethics, they tend to experience such social markers as indicators of self-worth that may boost or interrupt their sexual-affective achievements.

This article aims to reflect on the impact of information and communications technologies on the affective-sexual trajectories of young gay men in Northeast Brazil. To this end, we investigate how changes in practices of digital sociability have contributed to an engagement in an entrepreneurial ethics of desire. We seek to identify in which ways these changes have impacted on their constitution as subjects of desire (Foucault, 1990). We propose to do such by analysing two central points of the organization of such ethics: cultural scripts for sex and self-presentation in profiles. Cultural scripts for sex refer to the steps respondents take in order to prospect partners within a social media dating circuit, which include dating/hook-up apps but also other social media platforms, such as Instagram and Twitter. The self-presentation in profiles, on the other hand, focus on the strategies respondents take to look more remarkable and desirable in digital platforms. We elucidate these points by analysing seven in-depth interviews (Seidman, 2006) conducted with gay men whose affective-sexual trajectories have been impacted by technological transformations of the last three decades. All respondents were gay men between 25-34 years old and were residents in Recife (capital of the state of Pernambuco) and its metropolitan area.

We argue the constitution of an entrepreneurial ethics of desire is associated with the spread of neoliberal subjectivities that encourage exacerbated individualism and competition (Bloom, 2017), under the coordination of a market of desire that is being redesigned by the articulation of digital platforms. Within an entrepreneurial ethics of desire, we witness a quantification of affective-sexual aspirations and conquests by contemporary subjects of desire that drive them to prospect affective-sexual partners in the most efficient and productive way possible. We believe this is a configuration directly related to platform capitalism, which consists in a culmination of several techno-social processes that have been unfolding over the last decades (Castells, 2009). In the face of a social reality that is increasingly mediated by information and communications technologies (Couldry & Hepp, 2016), we aim to give indications on how individuals constitute themselves as differentiated desiring subjects by taking on sociability and desiring

with the possibility of a more effective agency having been suggested by its author but left open by him - and associated with specificities of their time and culture.

based on an entrepreneurial ethics of desire. We also propose to investigate ruptures within this ethics pointed out by its own agents, that is, alternative and more diverse ways for individuals to engage in homoerotic social interactions possibly less attached to entrepreneurial purposes. If an entrepreneurial ethics of desire may organise dominant desiring and sociability practices, especially when it comes to social media and dating/hook-up apps, we investigate our respondents' speeches in order to identify elements of a queer ethics of desire. By this, we mean a more empowering and autonomous ethics, which values both friendship ties (be they erotic or not) and the desiring potency of bodies and perspectives that are not necessarily under the radar of normativity - in terms of race, class, gender, body, or nationality.

Over the last 15 years, a series of works in diverse fields of knowledge, such as sociology, communication, linguistics, anthropology, and psychology, have been consistently developed concerning studies on dating/hook-up apps and websites. In Brazil, scholars like Richard Miskolci (2017) and Larissa Pelúcio (2019) have contributed greatly to develop this field of studies from a sociological perspective. As defined by Wu and Ward (2017), most of the studies related to dating/hook-up apps are presented through the perspective of mediation, as proposed by Leah Lievrouw (2014), which is a framework able to help us to understand how communication technologies and society mutually shape each other. Wu and Ward point out that communication technologies consist of infrastructures that can be separated into three different axes: artefacts, practices, and social arrangements. Wu and Ward (2017) have also argued that most studies on gay dating/hook-up apps have a strong emphasis on at least one of these axes. The artefacts studies focus on the apps themselves (for instance, their design and functions). On the other hand, practices studies focus on the ways gay men use apps, whereas social arrangements studies focus on gay men's social relations and regulatory and institutional environment. By investigating an entrepreneurial ethics of desire, this article is situated in an intersection between both of these last research lines on gay dating/hook-up apps.

2 RESEARCH DESIGN: INFORMANTS' PROFILE AND ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH

Our main goal is to elucidate the points where the entrepreneurial ethics of desire is expressed by the gay men from Northeast Brazil we interviewed. Gay men whose affective-sexual trajectories were greatly impacted by relatively recent communications technologies, such as broad access to online pornographic content, chat platforms, social networking sites and location-based dating/hook-up apps. To draw the framework we investigate, we conducted face-to-face in-depth interviews

with seven Grindr⁸ users. They were all between 25 and 34 years old⁹ and lived in Recife or in its metropolitan area¹⁰. The interviews took place between the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020, therefore, before the outburst of Covid-19 pandemic. We divided the analytical parts of this article into three different moments, focusing on the informants' desiring and sociability practices: 1) cultural scripts for sex; 2) self-presentation in profiles; and 3) tensions between an entrepreneurial ethics of desire and a queer ethics of desire. We believe this division allows us to investigate how our respondents negotiate homoerotic sociabilities simultaneously on different platforms. We also try to identify their strategies to take part into the regime of desirability that guides most desiring practices both online and offline. We are interested in identifying the ways in which these subjects engage in an entrepreneurial ethics of desire, understood as a set of practices of selectivity and sociability largely shared by users of digital media for affective-sexual purposes, and how they may find other ethical possibilities for interactions with sexual-affective purposes.

The interviewees are part of a generation which attributes different meanings to the use of dating/hook-up apps and the practices of sociability conducted in these spaces in a context of systemic violence towards the LGBTQ population. Although the Brazilian State does not provide official data about this specific population, non-governmental organisations annually release data reports that place the country with the highest level of violence against LGBTQ in the world. In 2019, for example, an LGBTQ individual was murdered every 26 hours in the country (Gastaldi et al., 2020). Pernambuco, the state where our research was held, was ranked third nationally in violence against this population in the same 2019. As put by Miskolci (2017), the possibilities offered by gay dating/hook-up apps, such as the regulation of self-visibility and the supposed control over the choice of partners, offer a relatively safer experience for its users. Thus, it supposedly has a significant importance in making homoerotic sociabilities easier, safer, and more frequent, especially in smaller cities.

In socio-economic terms, our informants are residents of Recife and its metropolitan area. Recife is the capital of the state of Pernambuco, and its metropolitan area is the seventh largest in Brazil¹¹ (IBGE, 2019). Recife is located in the Northeast region, which concentrates most (47.9%) of the population living

⁸ The hook-up app Grindr was chosen because it is the most popular platform for LGBTQ people in the world, in terms of accesses and users.

⁹ This age range was chosen because it is a generational cut-off in which digital technologies were supposedly naturalised from an early age. We based our choice on two age ranges from the demographic census of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE): between 25 and 29 years and 30 and 34 years.

¹⁰ This region comprises 14 municipalities besides Recife. Among them, Jaboatão dos Guararapes, Olinda, Paulista and Cabo de Santo Agostinho. In all, it has 4 million inhabitants.

¹¹ Agência IBGE. (2019). "Estimativas 2019 população Regiões Metropolitanas". Retrieved from: <https://agenciadenoticias.ibge.gov.br/agencia-detalhe-de-midia.html?view=mediaibge&catid=2103&id=3109> (Accessed 15 Nov 2021)

in poverty in Brazil (César, 2020). The city of Recife is one of the most unequal capitals in the country in terms of income distribution and access to employment and social services (Santos, 2020). These data contrast expressively with Internet

access in the state, which suggests that online connectivity is seen as a priority by those who can minimally afford this expense. According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), regarding Internet access, 71.4% of the 3.17 million households in Pernambuco have access to the Internet. Mobile-band connection, via 3G or 4G, accounts for 68% of the total of Internet access. The equipment most used for this purpose is the mobile phone, in 99.2% of cases.

Most of interviewees are gay men from middle-class or working-class sectors, which experienced large educational and professional opportunities during the Workers' Party's both national and local administrations between 2002 and 2016. All interviewees were contacted through Grindr, an app that demands a smartphone with Internet access. This may explain the prevalence of men from better-off class segments. However, we managed to interview individuals from different neighbourhoods and cities, encompassing diverse profiles when it comes to race, self-identified body types, gender performance, affective-sexual and techno-social trajectories (Table 1).

After a series of negotiations, we conducted seven in-depth face-to-face interviews with Grindr users, chosen according to the previously established age and location cut-off. The interviews were conducted between September 2019 and March 2020. The interview script included 10 questions of sociodemographic aspects and 50 open questions on various topics. In this article, we focused on questions about the practices of sociability online and the different strategies of building profiles applied by these individuals, as well as how they make use of the dating/hook-up apps in their daily lives.

Four informants identified themselves as white, and three as black. In terms of self-identified body types, five identified themselves as thin and two as fat. Regarding education, one interviewee stated that he had dropped their studies in high school. The remaining interviewees attended or were attending university in different areas, mostly related to the Work Party's recent educational advances. The interviewees lived in the following neighbourhoods: Graças (Recife, middle/upper class), Hipódromo (Recife, working class), Tamarineira (Recife, middle/upper class), Casa Amarela (Recife, working/middle class), Cordeiro (Recife, working class), Pontezinha (Cabo de Santo Agostinho, working class) and Salgadinho (Olinda, working class).

Table 1. Overview of the interviewees

	<i>Age</i>	<i>Profession</i>	<i>Education level</i>	<i>Neighbourhood / City</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Self-identified body type</i>	<i>Parents' occupation</i>	<i>Religion</i>
<i>Matthew</i>	26	Design student	Higher education	Graças / Recife - middle/upper class	White	Fat	Housewife (mother) / Sales manager (father)	Atheist
<i>Luke</i>	28	Artist	High school	Pontezinha / Cabo de Santo Agostinho - working class	Black	Fat	Housemaid (mother) / Fatherless	Agnostic
<i>Peter</i>	29	Information analyst	Higher education	Hipódromo / Recife - working class	White	Thin	State employees	Catholic
<i>John</i>	32	Actor	Higher education	Tamarineira / Recife - middle/upper class	White	Thin	Psychologist (mother) / State employee (father)	Catholic
<i>Andrew</i>	30	Administrator (currently unemployed)	Higher education	Casa Amarela / Recife - working class	White	Thin	Elderly caregiver (mother) / Military police officer (father)	None (raised as protestant)
<i>Joseph</i>	30	Teacher	Higher education	Cordeiro / Recife - working class	Black	Thin	Administrator (mother) / self-employed (father)	None (raised as catholic)
<i>Mark</i>	33	Nurse	Higher education	Salgadoinho / Olinda - working class	Black	Thin	Housewife (mother) / Maintenance technician (father)	Catholic

In methodological terms, we affiliate to the critical perspective of queer ethnography as proposed by Alison Rooke (2010, p. 41), who advocates on behalf of a sociological ethnographic perspective that articulates queer studies about sexual subjectivity to an ethnographic approach, in the sense of investigating the fabrication of identity categories and the practices that enable them. In his view, a queer ethnography does not reject the abstraction aspect commonly attributed to queer theory. Rather, it aims to enhance it by observing concrete everyday life. There are also some other rich approaches to queer ethnography, such as Anima Adjepong's (2017) perception of ethnography as a queer of colour's reflexive practice. Due to the length of this article, we could not explore it more deeply. Digital ethnography was not a priority in this article's design, for the face-to-face in-depth interviews were our main resource to compose this brief ethnographic exercise. Though a digital approach was fundamental to get in touch with informants and invite them to interviews (and it includes the creation of a Grindr profile whereby I introduced myself as a researcher), there wasn't a deep observation of the digital environment the way a digital ethnography demands. Instead of directly studying the digital environment and the relations that took place on it, we thought that face-to-face in-depth interviews would help us to understand the lived experiences of other people and the meanings they attach to these experiences, as Irving Seidman (2006) described this kind of interview. In terms of the interview itself, face-to-face meetings would also offer more concrete and less vulnerable research material, for online interactions could be more easily interrupted by the informant's sudden desistance of cooperation. We also mention the fluidity that face-to-face meetings have in comparison to online interviews, even though the veracity of what the informants say in the presence of the researcher has to be frequently questioned.

3 DESIRING SUBJECTS UNDER PLATFORM CAPITALISM

Like Matthew, the other respondents – Luke, Peter, John, Andrew, Joseph, and Mark – also had access to the Internet in their late childhood or early adolescence. The Internet was the first channel through which they contacted other gay men. It was also through the Internet that they engaged in their first love relationships with other boys. All of them reported a relatively intense use of dating apps and social networking sites for affective-sexual purposes. Although digital media did not exactly invent sexual technologies or entirely new desiring practices, they contributed to reinvent the latter. In our research, we believe that desire is a contingent social construction which produces subjects of desire and desiring practices in line with the specificities of a given socio-historical and cultural context. We agree with Miskolci (2017) when he says that “desire does not come from within a given subject, nor is it imposed by some apparatus external to it”, but it is rather “an articulating axis between the subject and society being shaped in social interaction” (Miskolci, 2017, p. 27 [free translation]). Miskolci's sociological view

on desire relates to the notion of subject of desire developed by Michel Foucault (1978; 1990; 2017), who highlights its sociological layers by encompassing investigations into the ways in which individuals are led to recognise themselves as sexual subjects in distinct historical periods. By identifying the emergence of biopolitical practices between the 18th and 19th centuries, conditioned by the development of liberalism, Foucault (2008) argues that the subsequent consolidation of biopolitics and the permanence of its constant reworking processes were guaranteed by neoliberal governmentality¹.

In the scope of such governmentality, the entrepreneurial character of neoliberalism is a central element to its ethics. As put by Christian Dardot and Pierre Laval (2017, p. 134), “the promotion of entrepreneurship, and the idea that such a faculty can only be formed in a market environment, is a component part of the redefinition of the standard subject of neoliberal rationality”. We argue that this entrepreneurial character organises a significant part of contemporary desiring practices, and promotes what we define as an entrepreneurial ethics of desire. The guidelines of this ethics have been deepened by platform capitalism, which we experience through an increasingly integration with digital media. In Dardot and Laval’s (2014) opinion, neoliberalism has extended the logic of capital to all social relations and spheres of life as a normative system. That is, “the capacity to direct from within the actual practice of governments, enterprises and, in addition to them, millions of people who are not necessarily conscious of the fact” (Dardot & Laval 2014, p. 7). According to Dardot and Laval (2014, p. 140), among the strategic paths promoted by neoliberalism, there is a strong emphasis on the market, which is understood not only as an arena of exchanges, but also as “self-educating, self-disciplining subjective process”. In this context, the entrepreneurial subject produces himself guided by competition and rivalry, in search of maximizing the opportunities available on the market.

Peter Bloom (2017) shares similar thinking in arguing that neoliberalism, being as much an ethical-political project as an economic one, constitutes an orchestrated effort to subjectively engineer ‘market subjects’. In Bloom’s view, not only the market dominates social, political, and economic relations, but it also “extends and shapes the way we see the world, the way we reason and the way we make moral judgments” (Bloom, 2017, p. 12). As Bloom (2017) puts it, marketization is transcending its former limits as an economic system and cements itself as the sole basis for organizing contemporary existence, for under

¹ As Fernando Danner (2011) argues, neoliberal governmentality operates on the desires and interests of individuals. Instead of acting directly on the body as sovereign power or reducing the individuals’ capacity for action as disciplinary power - as the first outline of biopolitics proposed by Foucault -, it acts on their interests and the motivation for their actions. In the words of Danner, the less restrictive and less corporal power is, the more intense and more omnipresent it appears. Neoliberalism, therefore, “manufactures and fosters maximum freedoms; however, by submitting them to the dynamics of economic rationality, it demands their subsumption to the imperatives of a market that embraces and pervades individuals and society integrally” (Danner, 2011, p. 44 [free translation]).

neoliberalism, things tend to be judged in terms of their market worth. In Bloom's (2017, pp. 12-13) own words: "Everything is a potential market opportunity. Entrepreneurship now trumps all other values. The epitome of leadership - whether political or economic - is that of a hard-charging, decisive and visionary corporate executive. Ethical value is firmly and almost completely determined by the dominant financial values of the age".

Foucault (2008) already observed the invasive and expansive dimension of neoliberalism in 1979, during the course *The Birth of Biopolitics*, one of his lectures held on Collège de France and published as book posthumously. From the philosopher's perspective, the ideal human model of neoliberalism would be the *homo economicus* (Foucault, 2008, p. 226). The emergence of the *homo economicus* goes back to classical liberalism, but in the neoliberal context it incorporates distinctive features. From an exchange partner in the market driven by his needs, the *homo economicus* became an entrepreneur of himself, "being for himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer, being for himself the source of [his] earnings" (Foucault, 2008, p. 226). Foucault (2008) argues that the consumers through consumption also become a producer – not a regular producer, though, but a producer of his own satisfaction, similar to an enterprise. As Foucault (2008) argues, one could not analyse consumption, regardless of its scope, outside the neoliberal terms of the activity of production. Foucault (2008, p. 175) sees this subject as an enterprise, "in this economic and social regime in which the enterprise is not just an institution but a way of behaving in the economic field - in the form of competition in terms of plans and projects, and with objectives, tactics, and so forth".

Foucault's view on the neoliberal *homo economicus* helps us understand the contemporary subjects of desire, increasingly linked to platform capitalism. In this context, subjects are continually compelled to undertake, produce, and seek to obtain and attribute value within the ecosystem of digital platforms. In Srnicek's view (2017, p. 20), when hit by a crisis, capitalism tends to restructure itself, developing new ways of accumulation. It comes to encompass new technologies, organisational forms, exploitation models and varieties of employment and markets. In platform capitalism, the main resource exploited corresponds to the data extracted from users of platforms that constitute complex digital ecosystems, which encourages an increasingly complete integration of individuals to the regulations of contemporary capitalism (Van Dijck et al., 2018). This system has been delimiting itself since the early 2000s, when an important set of platforms was concentrated by five US corporations²: Google, Facebook, Apple, Amazon, and Microsoft (Van Dijck et al., 2018, p. 12). The consolidation of platform capitalism has been

² In the wake of the monumental crisis, the year 2009 was a milestone for the consolidation of platform capitalism, with the launch of Apple's iPhone OS 2 operating system. This software model incorporated location-based technology and began to stimulate the creation of applications by third parties, based on open-source codes. Among these platforms were Grindr (2009), its similar Scruff (2010) and the private transport system Uber (2009).

continuously monopolising the resolution of our personal demands, from the most prosaic to the most intimate, through a broad process of mediatisation of reality.

The platforms where data acquisition and processing take place are highly enhanced products of a series of ongoing processes of mediation and mediatisation. In line with the definition of platform capitalism, Nick Couldry and Andreas Hepp (2016, p. 9) argue that the basic constitutive elements of social life are shaped by “media”, which encompasses “the contents and infrastructure derived from institutionally sustained technologies of communication”. Couldry and Hepp (2016) situate us in an era of profound mediatisation, which comprise “all the transformations of communicative and social processes, and the social and practical forms built from them, which follow from our increasing reliance on technologically and institutionally based processes of mediation” (Couldry & Hepp, 2016, p. 9).

With regard to affective-sexual relationships, the expansion of platform capitalism reinforces a grammar of desire guided by the primacy of individual choice, as developed by Eva Illouz (2019). Illouz (2019) argues that sexual freedom is increasingly experienced by individuals as the experimentation of the exercise of the choice of partners, similarly to the choice of products on the market. The demand and supply of affective-sexual partners are increasingly mediated by information and communications technologies, resulting in a situation of widespread and pervasive cognitive and emotional uncertainty. In that sense, the market would not be a mere metaphor for the organization of affective-sexual relationships, but a grammar of relationship guided by the “efficiency of the search for a mate (...)” through “(...) scripts of exchange, time efficiency, hedonic calculus (...)” (Illouz, 2019, p. 28). Following Illouz’s argument, we understand contemporary homoerotic subjects of desire as being guided by a strategic ethics for the constant maintenance of capitalist forms in activity. This defines what we see as an entrepreneurial ethics of desire, which demands, from these subjects, high performance, and productivity in their sexual and love-related prospections. As a reward for their effort undertaken, they are offered the promises of a successful participation on the competitive market of desire that they integrate and, as an ultimate aim, the acquisition of an alleged “affective-sexual plenitude”.

4 CULTURAL SCRIPTS FOR SEX: STEPS TO SEXUAL SUCCESS

The entrepreneurial ethics of desire is associated with a series of procedures, strategies, and steps to goal-achievement. If Grindr is often a starting point for interacting with potential affective-sexual partners, it is not used by the interviewees alone: the app is a central component within an elaborate system of platforms, which integrate an adult leisure circuit³. We may say Grindr and other dating/hook-

³ The notion of an adult leisure circuit, for affective-sexual recreational purposes, encompasses digital platforms, but is not limited to them. Although dating apps currently seem to constitute the

up apps function as a gateway to this circuit. The very organisation of an entrepreneurial ethics requires a type of scripting, which intends to optimise users' performances and maximise their "profits". The procedures intuitively followed by individuals to search for potential partners work as cultural scripts for sex. These scripts are constructed from the sexual experiences apprehended and inscribed in individuals' consciousness. For this reason, rather than deliberately premeditated or calculated activities, they tend to occur intuitively. The scripts are modulated from the reiteration of sociability practices continuously repeated in these spaces. They are understood by the subjects as potentially successful ways to achieve the goals associated with the guidelines of an entrepreneurial ethics of desire.

As Illouz (2019) puts it, differently from emotion freedom, sexual freedom is considered in the present time as a realm of interaction where "things run smoothly". Illouz says so because she argues "actors dispose of a large abundance of technological resources and cultural scripts and images to guide their behaviour, to find pleasure in interaction, and to define the boundaries of the interaction" (Illouz, 2020, p. 19). Cultural scripts for emotions, however, follow a quite different path, as emotions "have become the plane of social experience that 'poses a problem,' a realm where confusion, uncertainty, and even chaos reign" (Illouz, 2020, p. 19). Sex, thus, becomes an easier, more concrete and more objective feature, in terms of pleasure and social recognition of individuals as desiring subjects.

"Supplier" and "consumer" subjects⁴ (roles that are not autonomous, but relational) orchestrate their steps in dating apps and social networks from the reiteration of sexual scripts that are continuously (re)interpreted in these social spaces. In that sense, each application or social network site that integrates this ecosystem of platforms provides different functions and stages, which will help the entrepreneurial subjects to achieve the results they aspire. Peter justified the ordered alternation between applications "for the same reason that you end up behaving differently in certain social environments" (Interview with Peter, 12/02/2020), suggesting that each platform delimits distinct internal rules for its good use. He shares the same thought as Matthew, for whom there are certain divisions that need to be respected to get the best affective-sexual enjoyment possible in digital media. The interviewee exemplifies as follows:

With a person who has only sexual intent, like "let's meet up to fuck", I usually start like this: I'm on Grindr, then maybe we go to WhatsApp, to make it easier. When it is really more of a flirting, of having some interest to know the person

central axis of these circuits, we argue that they are also made up of face-to-face activities and places, such as nightclubs, bars, adult movie theatres, gay saunas, cruising areas, etc.

⁴ The term "consumer-subject" derives from consume studies developed in Sociology and Psychology, such as Setiff's (2014) and Xavier's (2016). We use this term, as well as its relational opposite, "supplier-subject", to situate desiring subjects in the market dynamics they adhere. As we highlight here, they are relational roles, and most dating/hook-up apps users may act as both of them, even simultaneously. Based on our informants' stories, "supplier-subjects" and "consumer-subjects" are frequent possibilities of the subject's position within the apps' dynamics, what doesn't mean they are the only possibility of interaction.

better, I see that it starts on Grindr, then goes to Instagram, to see more photos and everything. Then it already starts that story of following each other, so that you slightly spy on his photos, give some “likes”. Then maybe you even start using Instagram’s chat instead of Grindr’s to talk. (Interview with Matthew, 07/02/2020)

From Matthew's perspective, we can infer that a more systematic prospection process tends to start with Grindr and other apps aimed at direct hook-up. Depending on the interests of the interviewee and his interlocutors, the rest of the interactions occur right there or move on to other platforms. The interviewee mentions the instant messaging application WhatsApp - with the purpose of narrowing the guidelines of the face-to-face meeting - and the social network of images and videos Instagram, which would be a possibility for both to evaluate each other in more detail to decide the next steps of the interaction. Depending on the progress of the conversations and the yield of the meetings, both Instagram and WhatsApp may become possibilities of maintaining a closer and long-lasting contact. In the case of Andrew, he chooses to confirm the identity of the interlocutor with a live video call, for reasons that include both his own safety and the confirmation of the veracity and “quality” of the “supplier-subject” with whom he interacts. Joseph, on the other hand, usually does not ask for Instagram in initial interactions, but makes an effort to find this and other social networks of his interlocutors without them knowing that they are being evaluated by him in other instances.

For Luke, however, Instagram is an obstacle to be overcome, because the idea of direct rejection bothers him. Immediately sharing a social network with images with his interlocutor may harm his prospecting process, as it may cause a direct rejection due to the exposure of his figure, as he pointed out. Used to this type of reaction, Luke anticipates these situations to avoid them and get further in his prospecting. The frequency with which his image was rejected made him publish fewer photos on Instagram. A way found to circumvent this type of embarrassment was involving the interlocutor in a humorous conversation that deviates from the script of the more straight-to-the-point Grindr conversations. In that way, his image would acquire secondary importance. When it comes to his investments in the apps, Luke reported that he hasn't been getting the results he wishes. Unlike Matthew and John, who share the privilege of being white and living in middle/upper class neighbourhoods in Recife - which also means a greater supply of potential partners - Luke, who is black and lives in the periphery of Cabo de Santo Agostinho, justified: "as a person whose skin colour is usually no beauty standard, I know it will be more hard-working to get to know someone. But I keep on... trying".

In routes followed by Peter on digital media, he is also used to being rejected and subjected to ghosting practices, that is, when he is deliberately ignored by his interlocutor. He usually uses Grindr and Scruff for more objective contacts, but he adheres to Tinder when he seeks something more stable than a casual encounter.

However, in his opinion, a quicker chat on WhatsApp generally leads to an accelerated disinterest, as well as the accumulation of contacts that do not yield significant interactions or face-to-face encounters, nor serious relationships. For this reason, the premature exchange of WhatsApp from Grindr or even Tinder appears as something negative and far from productive. Peter also said he had no patience for Tinder, for it is not as straight-to-the-point as other dating/hook-up apps. In Peter's experience, the chances of his interlocutor's interest to wane and of him being ghosted are high. The act of deliberately ignoring the interlocutor who no longer arouses one's interest is associated with the logic of productivity common to entrepreneurial ethics of desire: it is necessary to invest in "supplier-subjects" who are worth the effort, who are sufficiently valuable and desirable. Ghosting is not an exclusive experience of Peter's. All the informants have already been subjected to this practice and have practiced it with interlocutors with whom they had no interest in keeping a conversation. In many situations, this practice is evoked as a natural step in the cultural scripts for sex performed on digital media.

Mark also traces a route among apps in search of more effective yields. Tired of the standardized and slower scripts of Tinder, he usually prospects sex partners in Grindr and Scruff. He reported he does not share Instagram with these interlocutors because it is "a social network for the family". However, to those who want to know more about his physical attributes and his sexual performance, he shares a Twitter profile in which he posts, anonymously, videos having sex with other men. In his opinion, an "supplier-subject" should provide his potential "consumer-subjects" a sample of the sexual possibilities he can offer. In Mark's words, he shares his erotic personal Twitter's profile "so that I don't keep opening photos, seeing galleries, because this wastes a lot of time, so I send the profile right away" (Interview with Mark, 17/02/2020).

When it comes to the platform that initiates the general cultural scripts for sex followed by informants (Grindr), Matthew highlights a feeling of "discomfort" and "self-demanding" that is triggered by the app's socialization environment. It is as if the processes of sociability needed to be faster in this platform, in order to promote a feeling of obtaining actual and concrete results. The time and effort spent on using the application cannot be in vain; necessarily, they must be directed to obtaining fast and guaranteed results. The interviewee also associates Grindr to a "pre-selection step", through which he should proceed his sexual-affective prospectations as if it were a kind of checklist:

Even though I've been using Grindr for a long time - I think it's the one [app] I end up using the most -, it still seems very much to be a very uncomfortable environment, very... So, it seems there's a big feeling of pressure, you know? To talk to more and to more people and everything. There is a demand in this sense, "right, we are here, let's talk fast and decide which way we are going from here", you know? (...) Of course, in general, this happens in all dating apps. I feel a lot this thing of, like, getting to know a little bit, making some checklist. So, I think it ends up as if it were a bridge, a sieve. (Interview with Matthew, 07/02/2020)

From informants' perspectives, Grindr is seen as a space for initial selection, where options will be presented and submitted to a primary diagnosis. The “supplier-subjects” that fail at this phase are disregarded, while those approved under the “pre-selection process” made by “consumer-subjects” are elected for the next “step” – of course, subjects may act as “supplier-subjects” and “consumer-subjects” simultaneously, for these are relational roles. These positions of power are often assigned to subjects in each interactional situation based on the privileges they hold, or those they lack. In Matthew's view, what matters the most are the potential features that each “supplier-subject” can offer a “consumer-subject”. That is, what the former can offer to justify the effort of the latter. The strategies applied in this process are numerous. They are mobilized in an orchestrated, almost automated manner, and reproduce cultural scripts for sex made possible by the continuous and intensified use of Grindr-like apps. This systematic use gives its assiduous users a particular expertise, capable of fostering an entrepreneurial ethics of desire that directly benefits the dynamics responsible for the proper functioning of platform capitalism. The accumulation of this differentiated expertise, one of the promises of the entrepreneurial ethics of desire, is linked to Dardot and Laval's (2014) argument that the market is a process of continuous learning and permanent adaptation. As these authors point out, the market is precisely defined by its inherently competitive character:

Each participant seeks to outstrip others in a constant struggle to become leader and remain so. This struggle is contagious. People imitate the best, become ever more alert, gain increasingly in entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs who seek to sell via all modern methods of persuasion have the most positive impact on consumers. By making them conscious of purchasing opportunities, their endeavours aim at ‘providing the consumers with the “entrepreneurship” which they (at least in part) lack’. (Dardot & Laval, 2014, p. 130)

If we follow their thought, we are entrepreneurs because we learn to be entrepreneurs, and we tend to train ourselves through the play of the market to govern ourselves as entrepreneurs. And through the game of the market, subjects learn to govern themselves as entrepreneurs. Thus, “if the market is regarded as a free space for entrepreneurs, all human relations can be affected by the entrepreneurial dimension, which is constitutive of the human” (Dardot & Laval, 2014, p. 129).

5 PROFILE CONSTRUCTION: PRESENTING ONESELF DESIRABLE

In a similar way to cultural scripts for sex, the process of describing oneself online is rooted in cultural scripts according to “desirable personalities”, as Illouz (2007, p. 176, free translation) defines it. Each digital platform used by subjects of desire demands different expressions of self-presentation and sociability practices. In the digital era, subjects of desire seem to be in constant negotiation with a regime of

desirability that regulates the market of desire in which they aspire to transit in fluidly. We evoke the notion of regime of desirability based on the conceptual apparatus of regime of truth as thought by Foucault (1980, p. 131), who understands truth as the product of multiple coercions that develop regulated effects of power. In the case of a regime of desirability, we are interested in the politics of desire which elect, within a given social imaginary, which bodies are likely to be read as desirable and which are relegated to the condition of undesirable or even abject (Butler, 1990). In that sense, each “supplier-subject”/“consumer-subject”, as the entrepreneur of itself, needs to adorn its own “portfolio” and make it attractive so that they may fit the normative prescriptions of this regime. Aligned with an entrepreneurial ethics of desire, these subjects tend to make use of specific strategies in the construction of their profiles, in order to get more out of their sexual-affective incursions in digital platforms.

In an attempt to constitute themselves as “desirable” subjects in digital spheres, the subjects of desire experience tensions that are triggered from social markers of desire, such as race, class, gender performativity, regionality and self-identified body type. More than in quantitative terms, the “consumer-subjects” are interested in obtaining qualitative results. Therefore, to obtain “supplier-subjects” that fit their conception of desirable subjects, they need to develop strategies aiming at certain “market niches”. For John, for example, it is important that his interlocutors have a level of culture that matches his expectations - for this reason, he presents himself with excerpts from certain books and songs of his preference - and an explicit “anti-fascist” warning (“He might be handsome as a Greek god, but if he tells me he is a ‘bolsominion’ [supporter of President Jair Bolsonaro], there is no conversation at all” (Interview with John, 13/02 /2020).

Despite having already used five dating apps simultaneously, at the time of the interview, John was using only Tinder and Grindr, in which “the law of supply and demand is much greater”, as he puts it. On Grindr, he reported he hardly used face photos for being a “repeated sticker” - which implies a loss of value within the app environment - and also for a matter of protection. The protection that he spoke of is not associated with the possibility of homophobic aggression on the streets, but of embarrassment and offences in the app itself: “It's not because of secrecy - I don't give a shit about that. But it is a question of, in a way, of protection, to avoid - not to avoid -, but to postpone, the rejection” (Interview with John, 13/02/2020).

To depend on a single platform to pursuit one’s affective-sexual demands, certainly, is not an attitude stimulated by the entrepreneurial ethics of desire. On Tinder, a network that depends on matches and where anonymity is not frequent or even welcome, John publishes face photos. As interactions occur through matches, that is, mutual choices, users need to “approve” his image before the possibility of an interaction. Based on these dynamics, the chances of someone rejecting his image during a conversation are smaller than on Grindr, once he is only able to interact with the ones who have already approved his profile as a whole. But as Tinder is a “long-term investment”, which requires more patient efforts and

less guarantee of rewards, he is a more assiduous user of Grindr. The chances are higher the greater is the effort of the entrepreneurial ethics of desire's agents. Maybe this explains why John is not very optimistic about Tinder, which he considers to be an app for amateurs: "I don't put much faith in Tinder. I cannot wait to 'match' someone to have sex" (Interview with John, 13/02 /2020).

Unlike John, Peter is not afraid to expose his face on dating app profiles. He is also white, thin, effeminate and lives in a middle-class neighbourhood in Recife, but his self-esteem seems stronger than John's. For Peter, it is important that his public profiles feature a face photo in which he considers himself handsome and highlight a phrase capable of intriguing his potential interlocutors, so that they engage in spontaneous interactions with someone who does not reject him straightaway. As for the images, Peter reported that he chooses them based on the specifics of each application: "Maybe I choose my photos according to a certain app. I like to be varying the photos. Tinder, for me, is where people are most interested in having longer conversations. So, I try to show photos that give people something to talk about. I don't know, I suggest I'm a nerd, that I like *anime*, something like that. (Interview with Peter, 12/02/2020)

For Luke, a frequent strategy aiming adequacy to the homoerotic market he wants to belong to includes the creation of distinct personas for each platform. In his opinion, the acquisition of an expertise in the use of digital platforms enables the subjects to generalise and even categorise the profiles and behaviours performed by other users, so that he can adapt to different demands to get more chances of having satisfactory results in different situations.

I think I create some personas for each app. I think on Grindr I'm more... neutral. It depends on who I talk to. I shape myself to the situation. And on Tinder I try to be funny, I present myself with some clownish stuff. On Instagram, there's a kind of curatorship. (...) I think that, after a while using [social media], you start to mimic a little of the behaviour... not to mimic, but to understand people's behaviour in general. [...] I try hard to understand what the person is like, to adapt and see if anything happens. If I see that I am too much of an outsider, I try... not to talk about Lady Gaga. (Interview with Luke, 02/03/2020)

Luke reported he adapts not only his profile depending on the platform he accesses, but also his sociability practices, according to what he considers to be the expectations of his interlocutors. We can infer that the entrepreneurial ethics of desire demands from the subjects of desire a capacity of adaptation to adverse situations, as well as a differentiated disposition to conquer their goals. And even if it costs the subject to deny himself to have these expectations fulfilled. In the realm of the homoerotic market of desire, in which there is an avid competition for territory, one's commitment to one's own "authentic" and/or "natural self" is not more important than the achievement of concrete and satisfactory results.

Joseph and Mark, both young black men and residents of suburban locations, reported racist attacks while using dating/hook-up apps. Both mentioned offences, ghosting practices, and explicit refusals of their interlocutors to hold a conversation

with them because of their skin colour. The systematic symbolic violence they have suffered has led them to reposition themselves radically in Recife's homoerotic market of desire. To obtain a differentiated valuation in this market, they decided to present themselves as the "cafuçu"⁵ stereotype. "Cafuçu" is a term used by queer local community to identify a hypersexualized and virile black man, generally from the favelas and other peripheral areas – an imaginary associated with the history of Brazilian colonization and the widespread racist condition of the country. For Joseph, the discomfort with the fetishisation of his blackness is almost always present. However, he tends to use it to his own advantage, in order to make his prospections more agile and productive.

Sometimes it bothers me, but I use this thing of being black and people having this fetish. When I really want to have sex, I use this thing, you know? To have something quicker with someone I find interesting. It depends on how I am at the moment. So, sometimes, when I am well, with a good self-esteem, life is all right, I use it to my advantage. (Interview with Joseph, 14/02/2020)

Like Joseph, Mark usually keeps his profiles on dating apps as "neutral" as possible. For him, the path of the conversation, of getting to know his interlocutor little by little, is more fruitful. However, to "guarantee" the interest and attention of the person with whom he talks, he shares his Twitter profile, in which he publishes personal erotic videos, as a "sample" of his own sexual potentialities and attributes. Mark also chooses to appropriate the fact that he is black to optimise his "earnings" on the apps. In his perspective, the erotic profile he keeps on Twitter, besides being a practical and quick "catalogue" for his prospections, contributes to feed the imaginary that he wants to project on those who seek him because of racial fetishisation. He stressed that this attitude is about an "exchange", in which both involved will be satisfied.

I also fit as a "cafuçu" man. Because people with brunette, curly hair, like me, generally attract - not that I'm generalising, or going like "oh, all black people look like thugs" - this fantasy, the black, "cafuçu", peripheral, you know? I don't particularly like labels, but I think this is funny because, anyway, this will be something that will happen today, it won't be something that you will carry on. It's not going to be a relationship; it's just going to be a moment. You know what I mean? A single episode. It's an exchange. Each one will be satisfied in a different way. (Interview with Mark, 17/02/2020)

Both Joseph and Mark reported appropriating a degrading stereotype and using it as a "medium of exchange". This seems a way of engaging in an entrepreneurial ethics, so that they are able to participate more competitively in the homoerotic market of desire. The neoliberal logics from which entrepreneurial derives does not necessarily exclude or invisibilise non-normative subjects within its range; it includes them, but within its own terms. This logic welcomes and instrumentalises

⁵ What Does Cafuçu Mean? (2015) In Contemporary Queer. Retrieved from: <http://contemporaryqueer.com/2015/12/what-does-cafucu-mean/>.

these individuals under the terms that the market identifies as appropriate and productive. In the cases of Joseph and Mark, it occurred under a process of fetishisation. Despite placing them in a “prominent” position in the market of desire, it doesn’t take into account their subjectivities, and dehumanises them. The entrepreneurial ethics of desire does not hesitate to demand from its agents the submission to controversial situations in the name of obtaining what it constantly advertises as valuable, worthy, and desirable. As put by Senthoran Raj (2011), the encounters between bodies made possible by Grindr-like apps “are marked by profiles and conversations which filter and govern intimacy through disciplinary norms around race, masculinity, whiteness, physical aesthetics and geography”. In Raj’s (2011) view, especially whiteness is seen as a privileged form desiring capital, what enables bodies that “pass” as “white”, whereas marks out bodies which do not. As marked in Joseph and Mark’s reports and argued by Raj (2011), “racial ‘others’ become produced in this economy of desire as fetishes or repugnant objects”.

If specific paths between certain apps and social networks sites constitute roadmaps that must be respected for the optimization of performance on these platforms, most of public profiles shared on these networks show specificities for this same purpose. Nonetheless, according to our informants, each subject has its own strategies to move successfully within the market of desire in which they are eager to integrate. Their remarks suggest that these strategies can be modulated directly by normative prescriptions associated with the desirability regime which drives sociability practices in the apps (such as the use of certain images or words that are more erotic), but can also be constructed in different ways, from the expertise acquired by the intensified use of different platforms.

6 TENSIONS BETWEEN ENTREPRENEURIAL AND QUEER ETHICS OF DESIRE

By proposing to understand the ethics of desire as historically contingent, we observed other possibilities of constructing the self beyond a strict entrepreneurial conduct. In terms of a queer ethics of desire, scholars such as Judith Butler (1999), Paco Vidarte (2007), Jack Halberstam (2011) and Paul B. Preciado (2018) have been producing remarkable collaborations in moving towards non-deterministic perspectives of subjects of desire and technology. We do not aim to prescribe conduct or offer consolidated answers, but we propose an intellectual provocation: could we consider new desiring practices within a queer ethics of desire? That is, an ethics of desire in which neoliberal assumptions are minimised, such as compulsory happiness, the quantification of our affective-sexual performances and impersonal affections (Illouz, 2019). An ethics in which we could explore the subversive potency of failure and dismantle the logics of compulsory success (Halberstam, 2011).

In one of the interviews, Peter provided clues that suggest small, although important ruptures, in the dominant entrepreneurial logic of desire. He highlighted

some sociability strategies that he performed on Grindr to try to set up not only casual sex dates, but situations in which he could establish more consistent and lasting bonds - and this did not imply engaging in a monogamous relationship, as he reiterated. Peter said he started proposing intimate meetings for drinks, smoking weed and watching TV series. Having sex was still under his radar, but not as the organising centre of his interactions with other men. He highlighted the potential of apps to promote less volatile human bonds - from making new friends to finding jobs and expanding worldviews. But for him, this idea is still a utopia because people aren't interested in it, not even him, as he doesn't have "the disposition for being like this all the time" (Interview with Peter, 12/02/2020). Peter's view on other sexual-affective ethical possibilities relates to Todd May's (2012) perspective on friendship as a powerful resistance to neoliberalism. In one of his late interviews, Michel Foucault (as cited in May, 2012, p. 123) states against a view of homosexuality as purely sexual, once friendship ties may annul "everything that can be uncomfortable in affection, tenderness, friendship, fidelity, camaraderie and companionship, things which our rather sanitized society can't allow a place for without fearing the formation of new alliances and the tying together of unforeseen lines of forces".

Relating to May's (2012) observation, Peter criticizes one of the most latent characteristics of the entrepreneurial ethics of desire, which is the difficulty of deepening human bonds between the subjects of desire, as Eva Illouz (2019) points out when she describes the negative structure of contemporary relationships. Peter seems to suggest, though, that Grindr-like apps have potential to transform relationships between gay men: through friendship bonds and professional contacts, for example, beyond strict sexual interest. He suggests the possibility of creating a group of "fuckbuddies", a practice identified by Race Kane (2015) that disrupts the quantitative and ephemeral sexual relationships associated with the entrepreneurial ethics of desire. In Peter's view, a queer ethics of desire would not necessarily demand the end of apps like Grindr, but the reappropriation of its uses. And this change only seems to be possible if aligned with a series of broader social transformations. If we take the thought of Preciado (2018), particularly his epistemological counterproposal to the binary sex-gender system and to a heterocentric and phallogocentric politics of desire, we may observe some elements of a possible queer ethics of desire. Even in terms of a reappropriation of technologies and identities - identities, it is important to highlight, that technologies invariably collaborate to produce and reiterate through subjects' practices. Preciado (2018, p. 88) cites Michel de Certeau to stress that "every form of technology is a system of objects, users, and uses open to resistance and *détournement* (diversion, perversion, appropriation, and queerization)". The author goes further when he defines a queer praxis as a "method of turning certain domination technologies into technologies of the self, including what could be called identity-construction techniques" (as cited in Preciado (2018, p. 88).

In Preciado's view (2018, p. 108), “every technique that belongs to a repressive practice is liable to be cut off and grafted onto another set of practices, reappropriated by different bodies, reversed, and put to different uses, giving rise to other pleasures and other identity positions”. Although the author refers to body and sexual technologies, we may consider a transformation of the uses and practices engendered by digital media. The logics of dissolution of sexual and ontological “truths” proposed by the author may contribute to weaken the technological “truths” that we have discussed so far, since “it is possible to reverse and reroute (change course, morph, set adrift)” the practices of production of sexual identities and other “truths” related to desire and technology (Preciado, 2018, p. 29). In a similar vein, Race (2015) suggests hook-up apps enable users to co-construct fantasies and pleasures as well as to participate in the elaboration of a “specific sphere of sociability and amiable acquaintance among men in urban centres that prioritizes sex as a principal mechanism for connection and sociability” (Race, 2015, p. 271). This sphere could be seen as an alternative to contemporary discourses on gay desire increasingly hegemonized by heteronormative ideals, such as marriage and compulsory monogamy. Grindr-like apps could also be instruments for remapping some locations into queer spaces, whose properties could be creatively reworked to accommodate diverse sexual pleasures, as put by Shaka McGlotten (2013, p. 13), and cooperative bonds between queer people other than entrepreneurial drives.

In line with the debate of what elements could define a queer ethics of desire, Halberstam (2011) investigates alternative routes to a heteronormative idea of success that drives desiring practices in the scope of the entrepreneurial ethics of desire. For the author, failure has a subversive power capable of damaging the political trenches of the idea of compulsory success to which we are continuously subjected through the discursive-mediatic apparatuses. The author sees failure as a “way of refusing to acquiesce to dominant logics of power and discipline and as a form of critique”, and, as a practice, “failure recognizes that alternatives are embedded already in the dominant and that power is never total or consistent; indeed failure can exploit the unpredictability of ideology and its indeterminate qualities” (Halberstam, 2011, p. 88). In that sense, a queer perspective of an ethics of desire could offer us “one method for imagining, not some fantasy of an elsewhere, but existing alternatives to hegemonic systems” (Halberstam, 2011, p. 89). If we take on Halberstam's argument, a queer ethics of desire embraces failure and treats it as dejection the compulsory success of the hegemonic system that has become the entrepreneurial logics. Beyond failure, perhaps a queer ethics of desire can be thought through the logic of cooperation, through the formation of bonds of friendship, affection, and care. In a moment of severe humanitarian crisis, in which inequalities in all areas have acquired obscene levels, the formation of diverse alliances and the engagement in revolutionary micro-politics seem to be a possible path to follow. To be able to overcome the entrepreneurial ethics of desire, a queer ethics of desire presupposes the mobilisation of different parameters of representation, visibility, and desirability. It is necessary to dynamite the dusty

regimes and ally with processes of political reconstruction that start from new epistemologies. Epistemologies that aim to undermine exclusions and exterminations. Epistemologies that encompass, guarantee and value diverse and powerful forms of being and desiring in the world.

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