

Article

Fluid Swipes and Solid Care on Dating Apps: Interviews with Midlife Single Parents in Norway

Plata S. Diesen 

Department of Communication, Kristiania University of Applied Sciences, 0153 Oslo, Norway;
platasofie.diesen@kristiania.no; Tel.: +47-97791408

Abstract

This article examines how single parents in Norway approach dating apps as they re-enter romantic life, by asking: How do single parents in midlife approach and anticipate intimacy on dating apps in Norway? The analysis draws on interviews with 10 mothers and 12 fathers, aged 32–51, and applies a reflexive thematic analysis. The findings show that entering dating apps was experienced as an affective hurdle, tied to recovery from family breakup and ambivalence about visibility. Dating apps offered a feasible route to intimacy, as offline encounters were otherwise constrained by time scarcity, limited social networks, and social entanglements through overlapping parental and friendship ties. The concept of *parental filtering* is introduced to describe how participants screened through dating apps for compatibility in custody schedules and parental empathy, using bios and chats as communicative shortcuts. The findings highlight a central paradox of post-separation intimacy: while romantic relationships may be reversible, parenthood is not. Intimate life as a single parent, therefore, requires a particular form of elasticity, as romantic opportunities must continuously adjust to the solid bonds to their children—a commitment that no swipe can dissolve.

Keywords: dating apps; digital intimacy; single parents; liquid love; repartnering; midlife; platformization of intimacy

1. Introduction

In recent years, a growing body of scholarship has examined how dating apps have come to reshape intimate life (Diesen et al. 2025; Konings et al. 2022). Platforms such as Tinder, Hinge, and Bumble have transformed the mechanics of partner-seeking and introduced new modes of perceiving and enacting intimacy (Illouz 2019; Paché 2025; Sharabi and Timmermans 2021). This development has been especially significant for marginalized groups in society, as dating apps broaden their access to intimate connections (Ferris and Duguay 2020; Paché 2025). In this article, single parents are considered to be one such group: a demographic whose opportunities for intimacy are constrained, yet whose experiences have received little scholarly attention. Existing scholarship has largely centered on young adults (Diesen et al. 2025; Konings et al. 2022), which has reproduced a narrow focus on early adulthood as the default site of digital intimacy.

While dating apps do remain most popular among younger cohorts worldwide, nearly one-third of users are now over 35 (BusinessOfApps 2026), which underscores their growing role in broader trajectories of adulthood and relational transitions. Motivations for dating app use have been found to vary more by age than by gender, with younger adults often



Academic Editors: Pan Wang and
William Jankowiak

Received: 27 May 2026

Revised: 4 July 2026

Accepted: 9 July 2026

Published: 13 July 2026

Copyright: © 2026 by the author.

Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland.

This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the [Creative Commons Attribution \(CC BY\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license.

seeking sex and entertainment and older adults pursuing long-term partnership (Roca-Cuberes et al. 2023). Taking into account that dating app practices and motivations are not uniform but shift across cohorts and cultures (Dhoest 2022; Roca-Cuberes et al. 2023), the present study contributes to the literature by examining midlife single parents in Norway, a group for whom digital dating experiences are shaped by both life stage and cultural context. To date, this specific group and their experiences with dating apps have received no academic attention.

The central question guiding this study is: *How do single parents in midlife approach and anticipate intimacy on dating apps in Norway?* In addressing this question, intimacy is understood, following Forstie (2017), not as a static state but as a socially embedded process of affect, knowledge, mutual action, and norms, specifically referring to the digital formation of romantic connections. To situate the inquiry, existing research on single mothers' and midlife adults' engagements with digital dating must first be considered. Although geographically dispersed, this work offers relevant insight for placing this study. There is currently no comparable research on single fathers' experiences of platformed intimacy.

1.1. Single Parenthood, Midlife, and Digital Intimacy in Prior Research

As dating apps have become increasingly normalized as pathways to intimacy, single parents are also turning to these platforms to pursue new romantic opportunities following relationship dissolution. Existing research suggests that digital dating offers single mothers opportunities that may otherwise be difficult to access, given the demands of parenting, limited free time, and broader expectations surrounding motherhood (Ntalla 2024; Stoicescu and Rughinis 2022). While Stoicescu and Rughinis (2022) describe dating apps as sources of liberation, entertainment, eroticism, and temporal justification, Ntalla (2024) shows how mothers negotiate intimacy, self-representation, and sexual capital in contexts where cultural stereotypes cast them as asexual.

Parental status may undeniably shape users' opportunities and perceptions of desirability in online dating. As demonstrated by Plumm et al. (2016) in the US, both parents and non-parents who use online dating sites prefer partners without children, while views on divorce and previous relationships vary with parental status. This underscores how relational histories matter for dating prospects, a theme echoed in Dwyer et al.'s (2021) Australian study of midlife repartnering. Although their participants did not have children, their study is instructive for the purpose of the present article, because it shows how adults in their thirties and forties turn to apps to "thicken" thin dating markets shaped by time pressures and converging friendship networks. Here, the concept of emotional filtering captures how past relationships shape repartnering processes, which includes assessments of whether potential partners are emotionally ready and available (Dwyer et al. 2021). Together, these studies underline how digital dating is intertwined with broader life structures. The present study adds to this landscape by including fathers as well as mothers. It therefore extends the focus beyond single mothers, who have been the primary subjects of the limited research to date, while also examining the underexplored Norwegian context.

1.2. The Norwegian Landscape of Parenthood and Intimacy

Norway provides a distinctive context for studying single parents' use of dating apps, as single parenthood is relatively common in Norway, with around one-third of children experiencing parental separation before age 17 (Bufdir 2026). Ideals of gender equality and individual autonomy are deeply embedded in cultural expectations and personal choices (Jacobsen 2018)—values that pierce into families and intimacies (Aarseth 2018). As Johansen (2018) argues, widespread modern ideals of self-realization and relational satisfaction have lowered the threshold for leaving unsatisfactory relationships. This prevalence means that

being a single parent carries little social stigma. However, the family form is shaped by strong cultural expectations that both parents remain closely involved and emotionally present in their children's lives after separation (Halrynjo and Kitterød 2025; Morbech et al. 2023).

Family life has undergone profound change in recent times: from having had one of the highest shares of stay-at-home mothers in Europe, Norway has since the 1970s moved toward a dual-earner/dual-career model, institutionalized through generous welfare-state provisions such as parental leave with a 15-week mandatory father quota and universal childcare (Aarseth 2018; Ellingsæter and Leira 2006; Rønsen and Kitterød 2012). Within this context, involved fatherhood has become a central cultural and political ideal, closely tied to broader expectations of gender equality and active caregiving (Halrynjo and Kitterød 2025). In late modern societies more broadly, intimate bonds have become fragile and contingent, with parent-child relations increasingly individualized and positioned as bastions of stability (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995).

In the Norwegian context, Aarseth (2011, 2018) conceptualizes the contemporary cultural intensification of parenting as an “infrastructure of intimacy” (Aarseth 2018, p. 93): the relational work required to sustain emotional ties. The primary moral obligations lie in maintaining strong, emotionally meaningful bonds between each parent and child individually, rather than in preserving the family unit. Good parenting is therefore increasingly measured through each individual parent's capacity to invest sufficient time and relational labor in cultivating these intimate connections. Aarseth further underscores that the model of intensive, reflexive parenting is primarily a middle-class project, supported by economic resources and cultural capital (Aarseth 2018). Against this backdrop, where intimacy is institutionalized through welfare-state supports yet individualized through expectations of reflexivity and emotional competence, this article examines how single parents in midlife seek new intimacy on dating apps.

1.3. Platformization, Affordances, and the Mediation of Intimacy

To further address the research question, the theory of *platformization* is drawn upon, building on frameworks that identify how platforms reorganize social and cultural domains by embedding their logics of datafication and commodification into everyday practices (Poell et al. 2019). As Couldry and Hepp (2017) argue, social media (which includes dating apps) serve as communicative infrastructures that shape how people connect and make sense of social reality. In this process, the very meaning of “the social” is reconfigured, as connective infrastructures expand possibilities for interaction while simultaneously subjecting them to quantification (Sujon and Dyer 2020). In this way, digital dating platforms both mediate intimacy and become constitutive of it. According to Ferris and Duguay (2020), Tinder's infrastructure fosters what they call digital imaginaries: routinized practices that allow users to imagine themselves as part of a shared community. Berger (2023) further underscores how Tinder's interface and algorithms produce a distinctive “swipe logic,” marked by speed, visibility, and self-objectification, which both constrains and redefines users' experiences of intimacy.

Drawing on these frameworks, intimacy on dating apps can be understood as enacted within systems of design and data that structure how users encounter one another (Bandinelli and Cossu 2024; Illouz and Kotliar 2022). Yet the impact of these infrastructures depends on how they are interpreted and enacted in everyday life. This is where the notion of *affordances* becomes useful: understood as “the perceived actual or imagined properties of social media, emerging through the relation of technical, social, and contextual factors that enables and constrains specific uses of the platforms” (Ronzhyn et al. 2023, p. 3181).

As Nagy and Neff (2015) point out, affordances are imagined and interpreted through users' expectations and situated practices. This perspective also resonates with Boyd's (2010)

conceptualization of social media as “networked publics,” where the affordances of networked technologies do not determine interaction, but shape the environments in which profile creation and communication unfold, before partially invisible audiences and across collapsed social contexts. This means that in such environments, the boundaries between public and private become blurred, and users must continuously negotiate how they present themselves to imagined audiences (Boyd 2010). Duguay (2017) and Duguay et al. (2020) brings this perspective to dating apps and shows how platforms mediate visibility and authenticity, thereby reconfiguring the conditions of intimate life. In the context of this article, this means that the meaning of a premade tag, a profile text, a picture, a swipe, a match, or a chat cannot be reduced to technical features alone but must be understood in relation to lived anticipation and experience.

1.4. *The Fragility of Intimacy in Late Modern Context*

The implications of the approach described above reach beyond platform dynamics. They are situated within broader sociological accounts of modern relationships that illuminate how technological mediation interacts with late modern conditions of social life and intimate connections. Bauman’s concept of liquid love (Bauman 2003) offers a lens for understanding intimacy as fluid, and thereby increasingly marked by ephemerality and uncertainty, and the weakening of stable institutions. As Bauman remarks: “After all, the romantic definition of love as ‘till death do us part’ is decidedly out of fashion” (Bauman 2003, p. 5). His work highlights a condition in which love is deeply desired yet perpetually precarious.

Other scholars have sought to move beyond Bauman’s binary distinctions of solid versus liquid, such as Torres (2019) who, with her notion of elastic ties, describes durable relations that are neither strong nor weak, yet remain socially significant. Illouz (2012) further adds a complementary sociological perspective, as she shows how intimacy is not only fragile but also shaped by societal processes of commodification and marketization. She demonstrates how digital dating markets amplify hierarchies of desirability, which produce an uneven distribution of visibility and recognition. In her book *The End of Love* (Illouz 2019), she further captures how relationships are actively dismantled through cultural and emotional practices that make detachment appear normal and even expected. Within the sphere of dating app use, these perspectives underscore how intimacy is negotiated in conditions where stability is longed for, yet flexibility is often demanded (Hobbs et al. 2017).

In this article, single parents are seen as those who embody and exemplify the modern fragility of love, as they have already experienced the dissolution of at least one intimate relationship that gave rise to parenthood. For single parents, the liquidity described by Bauman (2003) is therefore not theoretical but acutely lived, and their pursuit of new relationships is consequently marked by the awareness that romantic bonds can be temporary and reversible. Parenthood intensifies this ambivalence, since, as Bauman also observes, “The joys of parenthood come, as it were, in a package deal with the sorrows of self-sacrifice and the fears of unexplored dangers” (Bauman 2003, p. 44). Dating as a parent can therefore seldom be merely about adult desire; it has to be about negotiating the risks of entangling children in new relational configurations (Anderson and Greene 2011).

2. Materials and Methods

The methodological approach in this article draws on 22 interviews with single parents in midlife across Norway, with an aim to examine how they narrate digital intimacy in this stage of life. The study received ethical approval from the Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research (Oslo, Norway) in August 2023. Fifteen participants were recruited through two outreaches via the Norwegian Single Parents’ Association (*Aleneforelderforeningen*)

on Facebook, three through convenience sampling (Golzar et al. 2022), and four through snowball sampling (Naderifar et al. 2017).

The sample included 10 mothers and 12 fathers between the ages of 32 and 51, with an average age of 45 for men and 39 for women (Table 1). The use of *midlife* in this article reflects a life-course understanding of the concept (Infurna et al. 2020), shaped by the intersection of parenthood and biographical transitions rather than by fixed chronological boundaries. As Mehta et al. (2020) note, adulthood between the ages of 30 and 45 is often characterized by established social roles and responsibilities related to work and family life. In Norway, where the average age at first birth is 30.4 years for women and 32.3 years for men (Statistics Norway 2025), the age range represented in this study (32–51 years) commonly coincides with ongoing parenting responsibilities. Given the high prevalence of relationship dissolution in Norway, this life stage may also involve opportunities and challenges related to repartnering (Dwyer et al. 2021).

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics in the Interviewed Sample.

Name	Gender	Age	Residence	Education	Industry	Custody
Sivert	M	47	Capital City	Bachelor	Technology	50%
Lars	M	51	Urban	Master	Law	30%
Mons	M	43	Capital City	Student	Health	50%
Karl	M	40	Urban	Secondary School	Construction	100%
Geir	M	48	Rural	Master	Engineering	100%
Stig	M	47	Rural	Bachelor	Agriculture	50%
Per	M	46	Urban	Bachelor	Law	30%
Nils	M	44	Urban	Bachelor	Sales/Retail	50%
Tor	M	43	Capital City	Master	Administration	50%
Tron	M	40	Rural	Master	Economics	50%
Adam	M	39	Capital City	Master	Management	Flexible
Ole	M	50	Urban	Bachelor	Welfare Benefits	30%
Maria	F	42	Rural	Bachelor	Education	50%
Liv	F	36	Rural	Bachelor	Health	80%
Rita	F	39	Rural	Trade School	Health	100%
Mina	F	42	Rural	Master	Health	100%
Eva	F	41	Rural	Bachelor	Organizational	100%
Hege	F	37	Rural	Secondary School	Welfare Benefits	50%
Runa	F	42	Rural	Secondary School	Welfare Benefits	50%
Lea	F	33	Urban	Secondary School	Sales/Retail	100%
Siri	F	32	Capital City	Undergraduate	Service	100%
Cat	F	46	Capital City	Master	Administration	70%

All interviewees were heterosexual and were currently using or had recently used dating apps. Rather than defining a specific platform, participants were allowed to reflect on their own dating app use. In total, ten different dating apps were mentioned, most commonly Tinder ($n = 19$), Happn ($n = 9$), and Hinge ($n = 6$). Men typically reported using

several apps simultaneously, while women used one or two. Two participants had children who had reached adulthood. However, the children discussed in relation to digital dating were between 2 and 16 years old. Altogether, participants had 38 children under the age of 16 ($M = 9$ years old). The participants had been separated from their child's other parent for between one and seven years ($M = 3$ years). The men in the sample more often held higher education, while the women displayed a broader range of educational backgrounds. Participants lived in both urban and rural areas and worked across diverse industries, and three received welfare benefits as their primary income. Custody arrangements varied, with mothers in this sample generally holding a larger share than fathers. While the sample is too small to draw general conclusions, it nonetheless represents a varied group of single parents across Norway, which provides a broad point of departure for addressing the research question of this study.

Interviews were conducted by the author in late 2023 and early 2024. Participants were allowed to choose the interview setting themselves, which ranged from homes, cafés, and offices. The online platforms Zoom and Teams were used when meeting in person was not feasible. Participants received no compensation for taking part in the study. The interviews were semi-structured. The interview guide covered the following topics: motivations for using dating apps, self-presentation and communication on the platforms, experiences of matching and dating, and the intersections between parenthood and intimate life. Conversations lasted between 37 and 73 min. All interviews were conducted in Norwegian, and quotations were translated into English by the author. All names used throughout the article are pseudonyms, and identifying details have been anonymized to protect participants' confidentiality.

Guided by a social constructivist approach (Holstein and Gubrium 1995), the accounts were treated as situated narratives that revealed how participants made sense of their experiences within broader cultural and technological contexts, instead of transparent reflections of reality. Ethical considerations were integral throughout the interview process (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). All participants gave informed consent. When sensitive issues arose, especially concerning children or former partners, the discussions were redirected when appropriate. In instances where immediate redirection might have interrupted the flow of the conversation, the concerns were addressed afterwards by anonymizing details or omitting material during transcription, which were conducted manually by the author (Hennessy et al. 2022).

Reflexive Thematic Analysis

The transcribed interviews were uploaded into NVivo software and analyzed in compliance with reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2019). NVivo supported the practical work of coding and organizing the material, while the themes themselves were developed through repeated engagement with the dataset and ongoing interpretive reflection. This approach is a flexible analytic framework that enables the researcher to engage deeply with the material and construct themes through an iterative and interpretive process, and positions subjectivity as a resource rather than a threat to validity (Olmos-Vega et al. 2023; Terry et al. 2017). This methodological orientation makes it both appropriate and necessary to adopt the first person when addressing my methodological choices and research position further.

Although I, the author, had no prior relationship with the participants that could influence the data or its interpretation, my dual position as researcher and single mother inevitably shaped my engagement with participants and approaches to the material. Remaining aware of this dual position was an important part of the analytical process. I had prepared by documenting seven months of my own dating app use through memoirs and screenshots.

During the analysis of the interviews, I followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase guide: familiarizing myself with the transcripts, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing and refining them across the dataset, defining and naming them, and finally producing the analytic narrative.

I discussed the interpretations and themes with colleagues throughout the analytical process, which supported ongoing reflexive engagement with the material. In this process, the memoirs functioned as a reflexive tool (Olmos-Vega et al. 2023), as they made it possible to revisit my own thoughts and experiences and consider whether interpretations surfaced from the participants' narratives, my own assumptions, or an interplay between the two. I did not, however, consider myself a participant under study, nor were the memoirs included in the analyzed material. Rather, their purpose was to support reflexive awareness of my own position throughout the analysis.

Being a single mother facilitated access to participants through the Norwegian Single Parents Association, a non-profit grassroots organization, and enabled lines of questioning shaped by experiential familiarity with the relational dimensions of dating as a single parent. During the interviews, it helped establish trust, as participants could be reassured that their disclosures were shared not only with a researcher but with someone who, in significant ways, occupied a comparable social position. These considerations remained part of the analysis throughout the study.

3. Results

In the following section, results from the interviews are presented. The analysis is organized thematically and reflects the approach outlined in the methodology. Empirical material and theoretical perspectives are presented together to highlight and discuss how participants made sense of dating apps in relation to their parental lives. The analysis is structured around three interrelated themes: Entering a New World: Learning the Logics of Dating Apps; When Options Narrow: Dating Apps as the Only Option; and Filtering for Compatibility in Parenthood.

3.1. Entering a New World: Learning the Logics of Dating Apps

Participants reflected that they had once imagined dating apps as something that would never concern them. Earlier partners had been met through friends, studies, or work, and it was only after separation and the onset of single parenthood that they turned to digital platforms. The rupture of family life created both new everyday routines and an unfamiliar search for intimacy, which embedded their trajectories within platform infrastructures. What younger users may approach as playful exploration (Hobbs et al. 2017; Roca-Cuberes et al. 2023), midlife single parents instead described as an affective and reflexive process. This was well illustrated by Nils (M, 44):

"I had been with my ex for 19 years, and back then, there were no dating apps, no smartphones, nothing. Stepping into that world was a huge hurdle for me. It felt so artificial when I first attempted to describe myself in an appealing way, like selling myself. And all the swiping, left and right, deciding who seemed okay. All you really get is a bunch of photos and a bit of text. But at the same time, I wanted to find something positive in everyday life, something that gave me more than just sitting at home feeling sad."

His account illustrates both the alienation of commodifying the self and the longing for recognition, a duality Illouz (2012, 2019) identifies as central to digital intimacy. For Nils, learning the "swipe logic" (Berger 2023) was not a technical hurdle but an emotional one, entangled with recovery from separation. His effort to recover resonates with descriptions of autonomy and intimacy in Norwegian culture as continuous labor, where the self must be continuously cultivated through reflexive and emotional work (Aarseth 2018). The very

choice to enter dating apps implied acting and adapting to a new communicative culture that reorganized intimacy around superficial profiles and swipes. This reorganization carried moral weight for the participants, who had often sought to maintain common decency in a domain built on swift decisions. Adam (M, 39) explained:

“It’s not a game. I’m genuinely looking for a girlfriend; it truly matters who I like and don’t like. That made it brutal in the beginning, because it felt like I was rejecting people. People who are probably lovely, but for some reason, not a match for me. And swiping no felt a bit like walking up to someone in real life, saying: ‘Hi, you’re sweet, but we won’t talk.’ That was strange at first, though you quickly put it aside.”

Adam highlights how offline interactional codes shaped early experiences: the act of swiping “no” felt like a personal rejection. While this dissonance became normalized over time, his seriousness complicates Bauman’s (2003) notion of liquid connections—bonds easily made, easily lost—for Adam, choices carried existential weight, tied to rebuilding intimate life. Importantly, however, such a response did not appear to stem primarily from single parenthood. Rather, it reflects broader patterns identified among midlife users entering dating apps following long-term relationships, where app use is approached as a pathway toward repartnering (Dwyer et al. 2021; Milton and Qureshi 2022). Most participants shared Adam’s orientation toward long-term relationships. However, two participants acknowledged that they were not presently ready for a serious commitment, given the demands of single parenthood, while still expressing a desire for closeness and sexual connection. This was exemplified by Hege (F, 37), who would prefer a long-term sexual relationship over a more committed partnership to shield her children:

I don’t want to get my children involved in anything new just yet. It feels too soon. Ideally, I’d have someone I could see regularly. Like a kind of ‘fucking good friends’ arrangement. That way I’d avoid all the endless hassle of constantly having to find new people [to have sex with].

What participants searched for, and how they approached their wants and needs, appeared to be shaped more by their life situations than by gender or socioeconomic background. Yet, gendered differences did structure how participants learned the logics of the apps, which underscored the asymmetrical distribution of visibility in digital dating (Illouz 2012). Men would frame their experience in terms of competition and invisibility, and emphasized how age had shaped their chances of attracting attention. As Geir (M, 48) reflected:

“I thought I would get more responses than I did. Age matters, of course, but I consider myself to look better than average for my age. And I have a good job, a good salary, well above average. But I noticed how hard the competition was, and I had to step it up. I didn’t get bitter about it; I understand that women get so much attention on Tinder that it can be exhausting. They just drown in it.”

Geir’s narrative reveals how age and masculinity intersected with platform logics: professional and economic resources, traditionally markers of value, did not immediately translate into digital capital. His account also conveyed empathy toward women, as he acknowledged that their visibility came at the cost of constant exposure and attention. For women, by contrast, visibility was described ambivalently as both affirmation and threat. Liv (F, 36) recalled the initial validation she received:

“When I first downloaded the app, it was overwhelming. There was so much response! After being with the same man for nine years, going through a tough breakup, and not feeling good about myself, I wondered: Who would want a tired single mother of two?”

But there were plenty! I've received so many compliments; my confidence has grown so much since I started with dating apps."

Liv's statement may sound like part of a marketing campaign for dating apps, but for her and several of the other female participants, the encounter with digital dating had undeniably strengthened their sense of self. The flood of attention countered the insecurities tied to age and motherhood, and served as validation that they remained attractive and desirable. Yet the same abundance also pointed to the volatility of recognition: compliments were plentiful but did not guarantee a lasting connection, a realization that soon became evident. For some women, their newfound visibility on dating apps highlighted the more troubling side of female visibility, as Eva (F, 41) noted:

"When I first started on Tinder, I had some bad experiences. There were a lot of guys who were just talking about their penises. I was like: What's going on? It wasn't fun at all."

The contrasts between the two accounts reveal that visibility on apps is never neutral: men narrated scarcity and competition, while women experienced both affirmation and disgust. This ambivalence also reflects what [Boyd \(2010\)](#) describes as the conditions of networked publics, where visibility unfolds before partially invisible audiences and across blurred boundaries between public and private interaction. Importantly, these dynamics are not specific to single parents and are likely recognizable across user groups and age categories ([Adamczyk et al. 2022](#); [De Ridder 2022](#); [Dhoest 2022](#)). What distinguished this cohort was instead the timing of their entry into digital dating, as the participants encountered dating apps for the first time later in life, and often following long-term relationships, which shaped how these experiences were emotionally interpreted. Yet some specifics were evident: both mothers and fathers framed app use with gravity, sought stability in some shape or form, and struggled to align intimacy with parental responsibilities. Their stories charted a trajectory from shock to habit, self-doubt to recognition, as they learned to navigate presentations, swipes, matches, and chats. For midlife single parents, entering dating apps was less about mastering technology than about adjusting to a new communicative culture in which intimacy was reorganized through platform logics.

3.2. When Options Narrow: Dating Apps as the Only Route to Intimacy

This part of the results examines the meanings participants attached to their use of dating apps and the reasons they gave for using them. If the first encounter with dating apps was marked by rupture and disorientation, the turn to the apps was also grounded in necessity. For most participants, access to offline social arenas where they could hope to meet new partners was highly limited. Reduced access was the first of three constraints participants faced if they wanted to find new intimacy outside dating apps, which echoed [Dwyer et al.'s \(2021\)](#) observation that midlife adults face limited dating markets. The constraint was therefore tied not only to parenthood, but also to age and life phase. A second constraint was time scarcity, since everyday responsibilities of caring for children, usually together with work obligations, required careful planning. This challenge is also identified by [Stoicescu and Rughinis \(2022\)](#) in their study of single mothers. In this study, both mothers and fathers described limited access to social arenas and time scarcity as a dual constraint, as Per (M, 46) explained:

"When I have my son, I am bound to stay at home. On top of that, my network is limited, so I don't get out to meet people as often as I'd like. In that sense, dating apps are a very welcome supplement."

His words illustrate how digital platforms were not merely a convenient alternative but a structural necessity, compensating for the offline constraints of parenthood and midlife social networks. A third constraint introduced by the participants in this study was

social entanglements. At the particular life stage that is midlife single parenthood, potential partners were often already taken. Moreover, it was rarely clear who was genuinely interested and who was merely being polite. Maria (F, 42) described the relief of avoiding this uncertainty:

“There aren’t many places for me to meet new people. And when I do, I find myself looking at men, only to realize they aren’t there to find a partner at all. On a dating app, at least I know they’re single and usually interested. That is a relief, because I’m tired of looking at men who turn out to be elsewhere in life. They’re never single anyway.”

Here, dating apps did not merely connect users but worked as what [Couldry and Hepp \(2017\)](#) term communicative infrastructures: spaces where intentions were explicitly signaled in ways that everyday life no longer guaranteed. This clarity addressed a general uncertainty about availability and intentions, a social complexity that could be intensified in close-knit communities where overlapping ties heightened the risks of offline encounters. Runa (F, 42) highlighted this precariousness:

“It’s difficult when you live in a town this size, because you never really know who is with whom. Are they married, or is it a single dad? And can you flirt with a man who has children, if there is a possibility that his wife might suddenly appear, or if you happen to know his ex? Everything is so closely connected. It feels safer to meet on an app, because then you know the person is single and looking.”

Her words draw attention to the rural and small-community context, where overlapping ties magnified risks of embarrassment or gossip. Her account also illustrates what [Boyd \(2010\)](#) terms collapsed social contexts, where different social worlds, such as parenting networks, former relationships, friendships, and romantic life, become difficult to separate. Moreover, [Aarseth’s \(2018\)](#) analysis is again significant in this setting: Norwegian parenting culture demands reflexive labor, which leaves little room for risks that might destabilize the parent-child bond. However, while Aarseth associates these practices with middle-class values, the participants in this study described them across educational and economical backgrounds. Their emphasis on caution regarding overlapping social ties also intersected with broader cultural changes that further narrowed possibilities and made ordinary arenas feel fraught. For Tron (M, 39), the combination of parental entanglements and shifting workplace norms after #MeToo could possibly turn everyday life into a minefield:

“Dating as a part-time father in suburbia comes with clear limitations. I mean, you don’t really meet people at the grocery store. Most of the time, it’s other parents from the same class [as my children] that you run into in daily life, and getting involved within the same parent group is just not on my radar. That would create too many unnecessary complications. Work is another arena, but that feels like a minefield. After #MeToo, you try to stay away from it, since there are so many ways to make a wrong move. That’s why I just stick with dating apps.”

Tron’s reflection shows how the narrowing of offline possibilities was not only practical but contextual, shaped by cultural parenting norms as well as broader sensitivities around intimacy. What has been described here as the triple constraints of opportunity, time, and social entanglements, thereby converged into a sense that dating apps were not optional but necessary if they wanted to find a new partner. Yet this necessity was also generative. As platformization reorganized the conditions of intimacy in ways that gave single parents access to possibilities they would not otherwise have had, they turned everyday limitations into a space where connection could still be imagined.

3.3. Filtering for Compatibility in Parenthood

If dating apps were experienced as a structural necessity, they were also approached as communicative tools for filtering compatibility. Participants did not want to wait for incompatibilities to surface later; instead, they scanned profiles and engaged in early chats to assess whether a match could realistically fit into the offline structures of single parenthood and custody schedules. In Bauman's (2003) terms, relationships may be fragile and reversible—yet participants made clear that the relationships they had with their children were neither flexible nor negotiable. Thus, the new romantic intimacy the participants searched for could not simply be liquid but required a form of elasticity from the very beginning, as romantic ties had to stretch around the solid bonds to their children without breaking them. Dwyer et al. (2021) capture a related dynamic through their notion of *emotional filtering*, developed to describe how past relationships shape the repartnering process for midlife adults, by highlighting how these experiences inform evaluations of potential partners' emotional readiness and availability. While their concept is useful and relatable for the present study, it does not account for the specificities of single parents' situations. Building on this, this article introduces the concept of *parental filtering* to describe how single parents actively screen for partners whose commitments and availability align with the realities of raising children. Whereas emotional filtering concerns emotional preparedness for new relationships, parental filtering foregrounds the ways in which existing commitments to children structure the possibilities for intimacy itself. This type of filtering is, above all, tied to parental experience and timely logistics.

One particular quality attached to parental filtering was empathy. Empathy was not understood as a general disposition, but as one that was imagined as something grounded in single parenthood itself, an embodied awareness of how this specific life situation reshapes priorities and emotional vulnerability. Underpinning this emphasis was a strong perception that only those who were themselves parents could truly understand and empathize with the demands of raising children across two households or completely alone. This was why the participants described other parents as their preferred online matches, a finding that stands in sharp contrast to Plumm et al.'s (2016) U.S. study, which showed that single parents were often viewed as less attractive partners. This finding illustrates how cultural contexts can shape the desirability of parenthood in digital dating. Cat (F, 46) explained her thoughts on the matter:

"I see it as an advantage if they have children. When you have children yourself, you understand more of the challenges that come with it. What it does to your heart and how vulnerable it makes you. Life is not a bed of roses after a divorce that involves children, even if the breakup was relatively good. And for some, it has been extremely hard. You don't need to dwell on it with a new partner, but there should be an understanding of it."

Cat's reflection illustrates how shared experiences were imagined as more than a practical advantage; it was seen as a distinctive quality. This conviction carried the sense of a shared, digital imaginary (Ferris and Duguay 2020), a tacit but powerful community of mutual understanding, where recognition flowed from shared circumstances rather than needing to be constantly explained. For some, this search for shared understanding also translated into concrete preferences tied to life stage. As Lea (F, 33) put it:

"I've concluded that I don't want more children. I'd rather be with someone who also feels finished with that stage than with someone who still wants children and might put pressure on me. Another parent will understand what that means, which can make it easier to plan life together and to relate to each other."

Lea's account shows how parental filtering was about both emotional resonance and shared life rhythms. Indeed, being at the same life stage meant more than having similar

priorities; it implied a shared understanding of how single parenting structures time itself. Having a partner whose children were of a similar age could create an additional sense of being in the same life phase, as explained by Sivert (M, 47):

It would be nice to meet someone who's in a similar stage when it comes to the kids. It doesn't have to be exactly the same; their kids could be a bit younger or older, but being somewhat in the same phase, I think that would be an advantage.

This alignment was imagined as ideal and desirable, yet rarely attainable, and it was not presented as something Sivert or any of the other participants would require. However, it reflected a broader orientation toward relationships that could fit within the practical and emotional organization of everyday life. Single parenthood can feel fragile, with logistics already stretched to the limit, which makes it important to avoid adding further complications. This experience was mirrored among the participants. What was screened for in profiles belonging to other parents was, in addition to emotional recognition, practical alignments with an ability to inhabit the same temporal frame. According to Tron (M, 40), this alignment was just as decisive for compatibility as personality and attraction:

"Half of the time I'm not entirely my own master, because other responsibilities come first. A new relationship must work within those limits. I cannot be a fully dedicated partner when I have my kids, which means that the other week must be used to make up for it. That's what I find challenging: finding a match where things truly align, not only in terms of personality but also in time, logistics, and the ability to accept and understand that I cannot give one hundred percent."

Tron's reflection stood out as a primary filter that determined whether intimacy was at all possible. On dating apps, participants translated their logistical concerns into communicative filtering practices: they scanned profiles and mobilized affordances such as bios and early chats to assess whether custody schedules matched. Unlike offline encounters, these practices show how the digital infrastructure itself rendered logistical compatibility visible and negotiable from the very first interaction. As Cat (F, 46) explained:

"I'd say it's out of the question to start chatting or dating someone whose custody schedule doesn't match mine. If we met at work or through some other setting, it might be possible to make it work differently, although it would be difficult. But on a dating app, you can choose who to start a conversation with, so I filter out those who have their children in opposite weeks. Many people write in their profiles whether they have their kids in odd or even numbered weeks, and I think that's wise. It gets very complicated if the schedules don't align."

Cat's reflection highlights how the platformization of intimacy enabled single parents to translate offline constraints into searchable signals, which made it possible for feasibility and elasticity to become part of desirability. In Boyd's (2010) terms, profiles functioned here as networked spaces for strategic self-presentation, where users communicated intimate and logistical realities to imagined audiences in advance of interaction. However, this did not simply streamline choice; it also introduced a new form of exclusion: matches could be dismissed not because of a lack of attraction but because the infrastructures of single parenting did not align. In this way, digital architectures amplified the fragility of midlife intimacy by turning custody schedules into decisive thresholds for possibility. As Per (M, 46) explained:

"If you match with someone who has opposite weeks, it's almost hopeless to meet. That train has already left the station. And that's a bit sad, because I've had matches that seemed really promising."

What emerges from these accounts is a deliberate effort to pre-empt fragility through parental filtering. Through communicative signals and platform affordances, compatibility was imagined less as something to evolve over time than as something to be determined in advance. As explained earlier, single parents embody the liquidity of modern relationships in Bauman's (2003) terms, since their earlier romances have proven reversible. Yet their practices also complicate his diagnosis: intimacy could not be entirely liquid in this stage of life, because it had to be anchored in the solidity of existing parent–child commitments that no new partnership could override. These accounts suggest that intimacy required a high degree of elasticity, as romantic ties had to be stretched around immovable parental responsibilities without compromising them. Filtering for feasibility and the rightly shaped flexibility thus became a form of emotional labor, reflecting Aarseth's (2018) account of the Norwegian context, where presence in children's lives takes precedence over sustaining adult relationships. Participants enacted this priority directly in their swiping choices. They declined romantic possibilities that might destabilize the parental bond. In this sense, parental filtering illustrates how the platformization of intimacy enables single parents to manage and structure the paradox of late modern relationships: while romance is approached as fluid, commitments to children re-anchor digital intimacy within solid, non-negotiable limits.

4. Conclusions

This study should be understood as contextually grounded, shaped by the Norwegian setting and by the author's reflexive engagement both as a researcher and a member of the target group. The findings reflect how midlife single parents in Norway make sense of digital intimacy within a specific welfare-state and gender-equality framework and are therefore not intended to be valid beyond this setting. The author's position as a member of the group under study offered interpretive depth but may also have influenced how meanings were understood and prioritized. Moreover, the study focuses on heterosexual participants, and future research could explore how LGBTQ+ single parents navigate similar dynamics. Further comparative studies across cultural contexts could deepen understanding of how platformed intimacy intersects with diverse family forms and values.

This article has examined how midlife single parents in Norway approach dating apps and what their experiences reveal about the intersections of age, gender, parenthood, culture, and digital intimacy. By situating participants' accounts in a cultural context where each parent–child bond is prioritized individually and above the traditional family structure, defined by reflexive, emotional, and relational labor (Aarseth 2018), this article contributes new insights at the intersection of sociological and media perspectives on intimacy, digital dating culture, and parenthood.

Empirically, three themes stood out. First, entering dating apps after separation was experienced as an affective hurdle. The process was described as heavy, bound up with recovery from long relationships, and marked by ambivalence about visibility and rejection. These experiences were closely tied to repartnering in midlife following long-term relationships, rather than to parenthood alone. Gendered contrasts sharpened these dynamics: men framed their experience through competition and invisibility, while women described visibility as both validating and threatening. These findings complicate Bauman's (2003) account of liquid connections, since even seemingly casual swipes carried existential weight.

Second, in addition to previously identified constraints that made offline encounters feel unviable, such as time scarcity (Stoicescu and Rughinis 2022) and limited social networks (Dwyer et al. 2021), this study identifies *social entanglements* as a further barrier that has not been discussed in existing research. For single parents, it was not always

clear whether another parent was single and genuinely flirting or merely being polite. Overlapping networks, ties through children's activities, and heightened social sensitivities amplified these uncertainties. These conditions reinforced the value of dating apps as communicative infrastructures (Couldry and Hepp 2017) and as networked publics (Boyd 2010), where visibility and interaction unfolded across overlapping social contexts. They also reflected the broader platformization (Poell et al. 2019) of intimacy, where digital platforms reorganize the very conditions under which relationships can be initiated.

Third, the concept of parental filtering has been introduced to capture how single parents assessed compatibility online through the lens of caregiving. Custody schedules, temporal rhythms, and embodied understandings of vulnerability became decisive filters in choosing partners. In this sense, bios and early chats illustrated what Nagy and Neff (2015) term imagined affordances: possibilities that are not fixed in the technology itself but interpreted and enacted by users in line with their parental responsibilities. These practices made it possible to anchor potentially fragile intimacies in the solidity of parent–child bonds, while also demanding a certain elasticity, since new ties had to stretch around but never break these commitments. In doing so, they again complicated Bauman's (2003) narrative of liquidity and exemplified the emotional and relational labor Aarseth (2018) associates with Norwegian parenting culture. The concept of parental filtering thereby highlights how feasibility and recognition were prioritized above attraction alone, which made shared parental experience a resource rather than a liability. In the Norwegian egalitarian accounts, parenthood became meaningful when both parties were parents, as the recognition of shared responsibilities and emotional labor fostered a highly valued sense of mutual understanding.

To conclude, dating app practices need to be understood in relation to their cultural and familial contexts. For midlife single parents in Norway, the apps were simultaneously indispensable and constraining tools, reinterpreted through the intersecting demands of parenthood, age, gender, and culture. More broadly, the findings underscore that the use and meaning of dating apps cannot be reduced to their technical affordances or to abstract accounts of intimacy, as they are always filtered through the historical and cultural context in which they are used; the social positions of those who engage with them; and the life experiences that shape how intimacy is understood in the first place. This study, therefore, highlights the importance of situating digital intimacy not only within platform logics but within the lived conditions and priorities of those who navigate them.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and approved by the Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research (reference number: 823492; date of approval: 1 August 2023).

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study. Written informed consent has been obtained from the participants to publish this paper.

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are not publicly available due to privacy and ethical restrictions, as the material contains sensitive qualitative interview data that could compromise participant confidentiality.

Acknowledgments: The author would like to thank the participants for generously sharing their experiences and reflections. Gratitude is also extended to Lene Pettersen at University of Oslo and Faltin Karlsen at Kristiania University College for their valuable guidance and insightful feedback throughout the work on this article. Free Grammarly was used for language editing during the preparation of this manuscript. All content was reviewed and approved by the author.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflicts of interest. The author’s positionality and membership in the Norwegian Single Parents Association are discussed reflexively in the methodology section.

References

- Aarseth, Helene. 2011. *Moderne Familieliv: Den Likestilte Familiens Motivasjonsformer*. Oslo: Cappelen Damm Akademisk.
- Aarseth, Helene. 2018. Families and intimacies in transition: Sociological perspectives (Familie og intimitet i endring—Sosiologiske perspektiver). *Fokus på Familien* 46: 84–102. [CrossRef]
- Adamczyk, Katarzyna, Kamil Janowicz, and Marta Mrozowicz-Wrońska. 2022. Never-married single adults’ experiences with online dating websites and mobile applications: A qualitative content analysis. *New Media & Society* 26: 3614–37. [CrossRef]
- Anderson, Edward R., and Shannon M. Greene. 2011. “My child and I are a package deal”: Balancing adult and child concerns in repartnering after divorce. *Journal of Family Psychology* 25: 741. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Bandinelli, Carolina, and Alberto Cossu. 2024. Bye bye romance, welcome reputation: An analysis of the digital enclosure of dating. *Sexualities* 27: 1247–60. [CrossRef]
- Bauman, Zygmunt. 2003. *Liquid Love: On the Frailty of Human Bonds*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.
- Beck, Ulrich, and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim. 1995. *The Normal Chaos of Love*. Cambridge: Blackwell.
- Berger, Viktor. 2023. Mediatized Love: A Materialist Phenomenology of Tinder. *Social Media + Society* 9: 20563051231216922. [CrossRef]
- Boyd, Danah. 2010. Social network sites as networked publics: Affordances, dynamics, and implications. In *A Networked Self*. London: Routledge, pp. 47–66.
- Braun, Virginia, and Victoria Clarke. 2006. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3: 77–101. [CrossRef]
- Braun, Virginia, and Victoria Clarke. 2019. Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health* 11: 589–97. [CrossRef]
- Buudir. 2026. Barn som opplever at foreldre går fra hverandre [Children who Experience Their Parents Separating]. Buudir [The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs]. Available online: <https://www.buudir.no/statistikk-og-analyse/statistikk-om-familievernet/barn-og-samlivsbrudd/> (accessed on 8 July 2026).
- BusinessOfApps. 2026. Tinder Revenue and Usage Statistics (2026). Soko Media. Available online: <https://www.businessofapps.com/data/tinder-statistics/> (accessed on 8 July 2026).
- Couldry, Nick, and Andreas Hepp. 2017. *The Mediated Construction of Reality*. London: John Wiley & Sons.
- De Ridder, Sander. 2022. The Datafication of Intimacy: Mobile Dating Apps, Dependency, and Everyday Life. *Television & New Media* 23: 593–609. [CrossRef]
- Dhoest, Alexander. 2022. Dating in Motion: Online Dating Through the Lives of Different Generations of Men Who Have Sex with Men. *Sexuality & Culture—An Interdisciplinary Journal* 26: 1981–99. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Diesen, Plata S., Lene Pettersen, and Faltin Karlsen. 2025. The Overlooked and the Overstudied: A Scoping Review of Qualitative Research on Pursuing Sexual, Romantic, and Loving Relationships Through Online Dating. *Behavioral Sciences* 15: 247. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Duguay, Stefanie. 2017. Dressing up Cinderella: Interrogating authenticity claims on the mobile dating app Tinder. *Information, Communication & Society* 20: 351–67. [CrossRef]
- Duguay, Stefanie, Jean Burgess, and Nicolas Suzor. 2020. Queer women’s experiences of patchwork platform governance on Tinder, Instagram, and Vine. *Convergence* 26: 237–52. [CrossRef]
- Dwyer, Zack, Nicholas Hookway, and Brady Robards. 2021. Navigating ‘thin’ dating markets: Mid-life repartnering in the era of dating apps and websites. *Journal of Sociology* 57: 647–63. [CrossRef]
- Ellingsæter, Anne Lise, and Arnlaug Leira. 2006. *Politicising Parenthood in Scandinavia: Gender Relations in Welfare States*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Ferris, Lindsay, and Stefanie Duguay. 2020. Tinder’s lesbian digital imaginary: Investigating (im)permeable boundaries of sexual identity on a popular dating app. *New Media & Society* 22: 489–506. [CrossRef]
- Forstie, Clare. 2017. A new framing for an old sociology of intimacy. *Sociology Compass* 11: e12467. [CrossRef]
- Golzar, Jawad, Shagofah Noor, and Omid Tajik. 2022. Convenience sampling. *International Journal of Education & Language Studies* 1: 72–77. [CrossRef]
- Halrynjo, Sigtona, and Ragni Hege Kitterød. 2025. Child-Centered Versus Work-Centered Fathers’ Leave: Changing Fatherhood Ideals Versus Persisting Workplace Dynamics. *Social Sciences* 14: 113. [CrossRef]
- Hennessy, Marita, Rebecca Dennehy, Jennifer Doherty, and Keelin O’Donoghue. 2022. Outsourcing transcription: Extending ethical considerations in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research* 32: 1197–204. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Hobbs, Mitchell, Stephen Owen, and Livia Gerber. 2017. Liquid love? Dating apps, sex, relationships and the digital transformation of intimacy. *Journal of Sociology* 53: 271–84.

- Holstein, James A., and Jaber F. Gubrium. 1995. *The Active Interview*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Illouz, Eva. 2012. *Why Love Hurts: A Sociological Explanation*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Illouz, Eva. 2019. *The End of Love: A Sociology of Negative Relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Illouz, Eva, and Dan Kotliar. 2022. Capitalist Subjectivity, Tinder, and the Emotionalization of the Web. In *The Routledge Handbook of Digital Consumption*. London: Routledge, pp. 229–40.
- Infurna, Frank J., Denis Gerstorf, and Margie E. Lachman. 2020. Midlife in the 2020s: Opportunities and challenges. *American Psychologist* 75: 470. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Jacobsen, Christine M. 2018. The (In)egalitarian Dynamics of Gender Equality and Homotolerance in Contemporary Norway. In *Egalitarianism in Scandinavia: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*. Edited by Synnøve Bendixsen, Mary Bente Bringslid and Halvard Vike. Cham: Springer International Publishing, pp. 313–35.
- Johansen, Hanne Marie. 2018. The History of Divorce Politics in Norway. *Scandinavian Journal of History* 43: 40–63. [CrossRef]
- Konings, Femke, Sindy R. Sumter, Ilse Vranken, Rebecca Dredge, and Laura Vandenbosch. 2022. Behind the Screens: A Systematic Literature Review of Quantitative Research on Mobile Dating. *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 51: 2969–3020. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Kvale, Steinar, and Svend Brinkmann. 2009. *Interviews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Mehta, Clare M., Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, Carlie G. Palmer, and Larry J. Nelson. 2020. Established adulthood: A new conception of ages 30 to 45. *American Psychologist* 75: 431–44. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Milton, Sarah, and Kaveri Qureshi. 2022. Reclaiming the Second Phase of Life? Intersectionality, Empowerment and Respectability in Midlife Romance. *Sociological Research Online* 27: 27–42. [CrossRef]
- Morbech, Maria, Kristin Gustavson, and Tonje Holt. 2023. Characteristics of parents living apart in Norway: Comparing four residence arrangements. *Journal of Family Research* 35: 433–52. [CrossRef]
- Naderifar, Mahin, Hamideh Goli, and Fereshteh Ghaljaie. 2017. Snowball sampling: A purposeful method of sampling in qualitative research. *Strides in Development of Medical Education* 14: 67670. [CrossRef]
- Nagy, Peter, and Gina Neff. 2015. Imagined Affordance: Reconstructing a Keyword for Communication Theory. *Social Media + Society* 1: 2056305115603385. [CrossRef]
- Ntalla, Irida. 2024. Single Motherhood, Sexuality, and Mediated Intimacies on Dating Apps. *EthnoScripts: Zeitschrift für Aktuelle Ethnologische Studien* 26: 108–34. [CrossRef]
- Olmos-Vega, Francisco M., Renée E. Stalmeijer, Lara Varpio, and Renate Kahlke. 2023. A practical guide to reflexivity in qualitative research: AMEE Guide No. 149. *Medical Teacher* 45: 241–51. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Paché, Gilles. 2025. Dating Apps: A “Logistics of Desire”. *Journal of Social Science for Policy Implications* 13: 1–8.
- Plumm, Karyn M., Shannon Sommer, Carolyn Uhl, and Kaylee Stone. 2016. Single parent seeking single parent? The effects of parental and previous relationship status on perceptions of online dating profiles. *Journal of Relationships Research* 7: e9. [CrossRef]
- Poell, Thomas, David Nieborg, and José Van Dijck. 2019. Platformisation. *Internet Policy Review* 8: 1–13. [CrossRef]
- Roca-Cuberes, Carles, Arnau Roig-Mora, and Priscila Álvarez-Cueva. 2023. “As a rule, I don’t have sex on the first date”: Gender and age differences in motivations, perceptions, and experiences on Tinder. *El Profesional de la Información* 32: 1–16. [CrossRef]
- Ronzhyn, Alexander, Ana Sofia Cardenal, and Albert Batlle Rubio. 2023. Defining affordances in social media research: A literature review. *New Media & Society* 25: 3165–88. [CrossRef]
- Rønsen, Marit, and Ragni Hege Kitterød. 2012. *Entry into Work Following Childbirth Among Mothers in Norway. Recent Trends and Variation*. Oslo: Research Department Statistics Norway.
- Sharabi, Liesel L., and Elisabeth Timmermans. 2021. Why settle when there are plenty of fish in the sea? Rusbult’s investment model applied to online dating. *New Media & Society* 23: 2926–46. [CrossRef]
- Statistics Norway. 2025. Births. Available online: <https://www.ssb.no/befolkning/fodte-og-dode/statistikk/fodte> (accessed on 8 July 2026).
- Stoicescu, Maria, and Cosima Rughinis. 2022. Swiping as a Single Mom: A First Look at the Experiences of Single Mothers Who Use Tinder. *Sociological Research Online* 27: 964–83. [CrossRef]
- Sujon, Zoetanya, and Harry T. Dyer. 2020. Understanding the social in a digital age. *New Media & Society* 22: 1125–34. [CrossRef]
- Terry, Gareth, Nikki Hayfield, Victoria Clarke, and Virginia Braun. 2017. Thematic analysis. In *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research in Psychology*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, vol. 2, p. 25.
- Torres, Stacy. 2019. On elastic ties: Distance and intimacy in social relationships. *Sociological Science* 6: 235–63. [CrossRef] [PubMed]

Disclaimer/Publisher’s Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.