WILEY · TIBG · Royal Geographical Society with IBG · Advancing geography and geographical learning

REGULAR PAPER

Anticipating touch: Haptic geographies of Grindr encounters in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK

Carl Bonner-Thompson (iD)

School of Environment and Technology, University of Brighton, Brighton, UK

Correspondence
Carl Bonner-Thompson
Email: c.bonner-thompson@brighton.ac.uk

In this article, I use a haptic geographical framework to explore the embodied, material and spatial anticipations of offline Grindr encounters - or hook-ups – that happen in users homes. I bring haptic geographies in conversation with geographical work on sexuality and the digital to explore how a desire to touch is reconfigured when people meet in 'the flesh'. Grindr is a location-based dating/hook-up app that is used mainly by men looking for encounters – sexual, romantic, friendships, dates, online and offline – with other men. I draw on 30 semi-structured interviews and four participant research diaries from Grindr users in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in North East England. By using haptic geographies, I examine gender and sexuality at the bodily and domestic scale. I explore how touch and place are co-constituted, arguing that men who use Grindr are learning how to negotiate their erotic Grindr practices through anticipations, identities and places that encounters are situated. Focusing on the embodied and spatial anticipations enables an understanding of the ways corporeal and digital practices are co-constituted.

KEYWORDS
anticipation, digital geographies, feminist methodology, geographies of sexualities, haptic geographies, home

1 | INTRODUCTION

When people meet someone "in the flesh" from a dating app, they often question and wonder "what are they going to be like." People build up expectations, imaginations, and anticipations of the people they meet after sharing pictures and texting. These anticipations can be reconfigured when people meet in the flesh, especially when platforms may not allow for voices to be heard and movements to be observed – and we are not able to smell, taste, and touch bodies and places through our dating apps. Grindr is a digital dating app that is mainly used by queer men and has become a popular way of "hooking up." When these men organise their hook-ups, they often describe what they want to "do" to one another – the ways they will touch – and share erotic pictures which lead to the formation of anticipations. When users do meet in the flesh and their bodies kiss, lick, bite, see, listen, smell, and touch, their anticipations, expectations, and imaginations are often remade and with it the desire for erotic touching. Grindr users, then, must negotiate these encounters differently than expected, often learning ways to do so.

This paper explores the erotic encounters that Grindr users have in their homes as a way to examine how sexual and embodied practices emerge as people learn how to use digital dating apps. I focus on the embodied, material, and spatial anticipations, and the importance of domestic spaces in shaping how encounters are negotiated. I adopt a feminist corporeal

theoretical framework that aligns with assemblage thinking to explore how Grindr encounters are assembled through bodies, senses, phones, pictures, objects, and homes, and the anticipations, desires, and emotions that assemble them, that allow for the emergence of sexual subjectivities and practices. Doing so, I understand the digital as a corporeal and embodied 2017 2018 2020. I draw on a particular area of corporeal scholarship – haptic geographies – that is sensitive to the ways touching and place are co-constituted. Work in haptic geographies explores touch as multisensory, experienced through the proximity to other bodies and objects as well as tactile skin encounters that are produced by, and produce, place (Dixon & Straughan, 2010; Paterson, 2009). Johnston (2012) has argued that geographies of sexualities have often jettisoned touch and haptic experiences from their studies, in favour of representation, discourses, and language, while Binnie (2004) and Brown (2008) have called for geographers to pay more attention to touchy and feely sex as a way to continually challenge heteronormative knowledges. For Johnston (2012), haptic geographies can provide alternative ways of conceptualising sexualities through the intimate, emotional, and embodied experience of touching, particularly how gendered and sexual politics may be produced, negotiated, and contested at such an intimate scale. The ways that men who use Grindr negotiate erotic touching may often be shaped by discomfort, anxiety, frustration, and shame, revealing particular marginalising power relations, but also attachments to particular understandings of bodies and places. At the same time, a haptic approach enables a way to explore the sensory, intimate and emotional processes that are involved when people learn how to use dating apps. I argue that men who use Grindr are learning how to negotiate their erotic practices through reconfigured anticipations, sensory expeiences and the domestic places that encounters are situated. By examining the ways anticipations are formed and reconfigured as Grindr users move between online and offline spaces, I reveal how corporeal and digital practices and places are co-constituted.

The aims of this paper, then, are threefold. They are to: explore sexuality at an intimate scale of the body; understand the ways Grindr users in Newcastle reproduce, negotiate, and contest the multiple ways sexuality is felt, experienced, and embodied; and illustrate how homes and digital technologies are informing one another to produce embodied practices. To do so, I first outline how assemblage thinking frames this paper, which is followed by the work in haptic geographies, and then work on the home. I then move to the methodology, highlighting the role that touch played in research encounters. Following this are three sections of analysis – embodied anticipations, material anticipation, and placing touch. In these sections, I examine the different bodily and spatial dimensions of anticipation and then how the meanings of home are entangled in these encounters. Doing so, I contribute to geographical research by: providing insights into the ways touch and place are co-constituted; arguing that a focus on touch provides nuanced accounts of gendered and sexual politics in and across domestic space; and showing how using corporeal scholarship may enhance understandings of the ways people learn to negotiate and live with digital technologies. Before this, in the next section, I provide further context to this study.

2 | GRINDR AND NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE

Grindr is an online dating application targeted at men. It is a location-based app that enables users within certain proximities to text, message, and meet one another. Grindr can be accessed from most smartphones and is the most popular dating app for men seeking encounters with other men. For a user to sign up, they do not have to verify their identity via e-mail. At the time of research, Grindr allowed users to upload one picture to their profile. A profile is made up of multiple different components: name; headline; age; ethnicity; height; body "type"; weight; relationship status; what a user is "looking for"; Grindr tribes; bio; distance to other users; and links to other social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram). The "looking for" options include: chat, dates, friends, networking, relationship, or right now.

The distance that Grindr extends to is place-dependent. Grindr only shows a user the closest 100/300 men – depending on if the user has a free/paid version. If the location that a Grindr user accesses the app is densely populated with other Grindr users (for example, a city), then the distances between them will be much shorter than if a user accesses the app in a place that is sparsely populated (for example, a rural place). In Newcastle city centre, around midday/evening on a weekday, usually Grindr reaches out from the city centre to around one mile to fill the 100 profile spaces. This does vary depending on the time of day – morning, evening, or night. On a morning there are generally less people online. On a weekend there are usually more people using the app, increasing on an evening.

The platform has arguably become a popular place for fleeting erotic encounters, sexualised behaviours, and "hooking up" (Tziallas, 2015). This is not the only use – people use Grindr for dates, friends, partners, relationships, to sell sex, advertise services, and research. I focus on men who use Grindr for eroticism, sex, and dating. Grindr has generated increased media attention, often being linked to moral panics around HIV/AIDS risk, safety, and casual sex cultures (Crooks, 2013; Raj, 2013). In this paper, I contribute to research on dating apps that examines the emotional and felt aspects of being a Grindr user, and how such discourse can create feelings of anxiety and shame.

Newcastle provides a distinct place to study the experiences of men who use Grindr. Newcastle is a post-industrial city situated in the North East of England. In 2011, Newcastle was reported to have a population of 280,200. This figure excludes Gateshead, and North and South Tyneside, which have reported populations of 200,800, 200,200, and 148,100, respectively (ONS, 2012). These places often become entangled with geographical imaginaries of "Newcastle." I use Newcastle to discuss Gateshead and Newcastle. Newcastle city centre, and the surrounding localities, are connected by extensive road networks, and local bus and train (The Metro) services. The city is predominantly a "white" city, having proportions of other ethnic and racial groups. The west end of the city is usually home to migrants with small diasporic communities gathered there.

As a place still shaped by a post-industrial landscape, white working-class masculinities dominate (Coleman-Fountain, 2014; Nayak, 2003). The non-heterosexual scene remains predominantly reserved for gay men – with a particular form of gay male sexual culture dominating (Coleman-Fountain, 2014). At the same time, cruising spaces are disappearing due to policing and redevelopments of queer spaces. The city is being (re)made and rebranded as a "safe" sexual space, with queer spaces becoming a "spectacle" of the night-time economy. Participants in this study often felt out of place in Newcastle's gay spaces, and Grindr was a way that they could meet men beyond these physical places. As such, the home is a key site for socio-sexual relations to play out. To understand this relationship, I think with assemblage, which I discuss in the next section.

3 | A TOUCHING ASSEMBLAGE

This paper is framed by corporeal feminist theories. In particular, feminist scholarship that aligns with ideas of assemblage and affect offered by Deleuze and Guattari (1987). The paper is informed by scholars such as Grosz (1994), Probyn (2005), Ahmed (2004), and Longhurst (2004), who argue that the fleshy, material, and corporeal bodies should not be jettisoned from feminist thought in favour of representation, language, and discourse. Post-structural feminist conceptualisations of bodies as performative and discursive sought to challenge understandings of gender as natural, stable, and fixed (Butler, 1993; Longhurst, 1997; Longhurst, 2004). However, such understandings can reduce bodies to mere constructions - As Longhurst argues "to understand bodies it is necessary to pay attention to discourses and/in/on flesh" (2004, pp. 10–11).

Thinking corporeally has initiated a turn to assemblage thinking, inspired by Deleuze and Guattari (1987). Thinking with assemblage decentres the body, meaning subjectivities emerge from affective relations with material (bodies, objects, and things) and immaterial (expressive forces, intensities, and affects) elements. For Deleuze and Guattari (1987), an assemblage is not a fixed thing. Instead, assemblages are processual events that are always (re)arranging the multiple elements involved. Assemblage thinking alerts us to the ways spatial formations and relations are momentarily kept together – in working arrangements – by swirling affects that move bodies and shape encounters. It is in these moments and events that subjectivities emerge. I am interested in the ways that gender and sexualities emerge from multiple bodies and objects, and from the ideas, memories, intensities, and affects that assemble them. For example, the anticipations that have formed through online Grindr interactions shape how bodies and homes are experienced, felt, and encountered. Through this, I pay attention to the ways assemblages produce, strengthen, and normalise practices, behaviours, and ways of being.

Thinking with assemblage and affect in geographies of sexualities is increasing (Nash and Gorman-Murray, 2017; Puar, 2007; Tan, 2013; van Doorn, 2013). Nash and Gorman-Murray (2017) have recently called for geographers to rethink ways queer subjectivities and identities are (re)made in and through urban spaces. For Nash and Gorman-Murray, if we think with assemblage,

> we can consider, for instance, capital, gentrification, histories, bus routes, cell phones, apps, law, subjects, coffee culture, rents, new media, community centres, newsletters, organic food, alternative music, or goth sensibilities. We must be attentive to the machinic geographies of bodies as they gather and coagulate, become viscous, become moored within collectivities in places. This might help us to explain what places and why, what subjects and why, and to consider these assemblages as events, non-binding and ephemeral. Identity and subjectivity are not pre-given but are a 'sexuality/gender' coming into being through the viscosity of bodies, non-human actants, objects, ideas, capital and constituting, we can hope, a proliferation of sexualities and genders that are nevertheless unbounded, while tentatively (and recursively) formulated in and through place. (2017, pp. 6–7)

I understand bodies, gender, and sexualities to be always assembled through a myriad of materials (human and non-human, organic and inorganic) and expressive forces (moods, emotions, intensities, and affects). I understand Grindr as an

assemblage of bodies, screens, phones, words, pictures, categories, mobilities, locations, proximities, and distances that are brought into working arrangements by anticipations, desires, knowledge, habits, memories, and emotions, and are always reworked by, and reworking, the spaces and places that Grindr encounters are assembled in. The multiple elements that comprise Grindr assemblages increase and decrease in importance, and shift and change depending on the contexts. In this paper, offline Grindr encounters are processes that are constituted by online Grindr conversations, mobile phones, and fleshy bodies that are brought together by anticipations, disappointments, discomforts, desire, excitement, and enjoyment in/through/across homes leading to the emergence of embodied and spatial practices.

To do so, I focus on a particular area of corporeal scholarship, haptic geographies, to think about the bodily processes and senses, objects and places that are involved in how touch is interpreted, experienced, and negotiated. Rodaway (1994) argues that touching is central to human experiences, having the capacity to be highly emotive (for example, love, lust, disgust, and hate) as we feel the world through our skin. Following the work of Montagu (1971) and Gibson (1983), Rodaway (1994) argues for the use of the term haptic, and draws on ideas of the "haptic system." Haptic refers to touching that is done with all of the skin, not limited to the fingers (Montagu, 1971). The haptic system is used to speak about the receptor cells and muscles in and on the body. Interactions between skins and environments can arouse receptors (Gibson, 1983). Rodaway (1994) uses haptic to think about touching as an active sense that shapes people's engagements with place.

The body and skin is the initial site that the world is experienced and felt (Longhurst et al., 2008). Focusing on haptic geographies shifts the value that is placed on the visual (Paterson, 2009). When skins are touched it is not just a singular event or moment, it leads to a multitude of relational sensations, that come into being through networks of nerves, pain receptors, flesh and emotions, desires and affects. The "haptic" refers to the bodily sensations that we often find difficult to articulate – how the body responds to the touch of objects, materials, things, technologies, and bodies. It is through the interactions with these "stimuli" that bodies can be affected (Paterson, 2005). For Paterson (2009), the haptic refers to more than just touch on the skin alone – it is a multisensory experience "felt as muscular tensions, movements and balance, along with sensitivity to temperature and pain" (Paterson, 2009, p. 768). This sensory arousal through cutaneous touch, sound, smell, sight, and taste emerges through our engagement with places and shapes our located experiences. Haptic experiences are about our location, awareness, and movement in and through places (Straughan, 2012). Dixon and Straughan (2010) have argued that a focus on touch can further explore the corporeal, particularly bodily intimacies. They argue that touch – who we want/do not want to be touched by and who we want/do not want to touch – can tell geographers how we think about "other" bodies and identities and is embedded in processes of "othering." A haptic approach, then, pays attention to the "embodied experiences of touching and feeling, conjunctions of sensation and emotion" that shapes our understanding of, and connects us to, place (Paterson, 2009, p. 766).

Haptic geographies remain relatively "untouched" in geographies of gender and sexualities, although touch itself has featured in some of this work. Geographers have highlighted how touch is saturated in heteronormative socio-political power relations, shaping claims to sexual citizenships (Binnie, 2004; Hubbard, 2013; Johnston & Valentine, 1995; Prior et al., 2013). Heteronormative discourses are fundamental in shaping the bodies that are enabled to touch, and the types of touch that are enabled, in and across places (Brown, 2000; Hubbard, 2013). Non-heterosexual touching (for example, holding hands or kissing) in public can be policed in both subtle and explicit ways, for example through stares, homophobic violence, or legislations, while culturally normative touching between a man and a woman is usually celebrated (Valentine, 1996).

Heteronormative discourses also enshrine ideas of where and why sex should occur. Sex is constructed as an act of biological reproduction that should be shared between two monogamous bodies of oppositional genders, which celebrates their "love" (Hubbard, 2012). Furthermore, sex has a (hetero)normative spatiality, in that sex is expected to occur in private spaces, for example, the home and the bedroom. Sex and sexual encounters which challenge such normative discourses become entwined with notions of abnormality, (im)morality, and public safety (Bell, 2006). For example, sex between two men in public toilets and parks. Sex and sexualities which do not conform to normative regimes can create "moral" panic, and therefore are attempted to be removed from public spaces, (re)creating landscapes of immorality and morality (Bell, 1995; Hubbard, 2012; Valentine et al., 2013).

On a more intimate scale, some work exists exploring the geographies of erotic touching. Brown (2008) employs an auto-ethnographic and non-representational approach to homoerotic public cruising practices. Brown (2008) highlights how sensual experiences of smells, temperature of air, sinks, toilets, trees, and gazes of others are mechanisms for arousal. He highlights how these experiences can render gender, sexual, racial, and aged identity categories unstable as bodies are mobilised through their sensual awareness of bodies and place. In this sense, the identity of cruiser does not neatly map onto more traditional identity categories. Other auto-ethnographic work by Caluya (2008) in Sydney's commercial gay scene highlights how assemblages of music, bodies, and lights in nightclub spaces can literally bring bodies together. He argues that the assemblages affectively challenge identity categories that seek to separate racialised bodies. Caluya goes on

to highlight how bodies can still become reducible to race in moments of intensities when words and language are used. Caluya (2008) is careful not to romanticise the disruptive potential of touch, highlighting how power relations must not be jettisoned in favour of non-representations. Although works by Caluya (2008) and Brown (2008) are not labelled haptic, they provide useful tools in thinking about how bodies in place are mobilised by haptic experiences.

Johnston's (2012) work engages with haptic geographies to examine the role of touch for drag queens in Hamilton, Aotearoa New Zealand. Her work argues that the "touching" of drag queens by cisgender bodies is a way for heterosexual men and women to attempt to reaffirm their sexed bodies in spaces and places that present a threat to natural notions of masculinities and femininities. She argues that thinking about how bodies want to be touched, or how they do not want to be touched, and *why*, can assist in disrupting gendered and sexual binaries. Morrison's (2012) work with 14 women in heterosexual relationships in Hamilton, Aotearoa New Zealand, extends haptic geographies of gender and sexualities to the home, specifically. Her work explores how homes are key sites for heterosexual touching, reproducing and confirming what it means to be heterosexual. She argues that touch works to confirm sexuality for heterosexual couples goes beyond the bedroom, and includes kitchens, living rooms, and laundry rooms, with household objects becoming entangled in sex, sexualities, and eroticism (Morrison, 2013). Touching, in and through these spaces, brings sexualised bodies into being. When discussing haptic geographies, she argues:

> Despite this growing interest in the haptic, sensuous and emotive experiences of bodies and place, geographers have had little to say about the everyday realities of gendered and sexed bodies and sexualised touch. Most work on touch even that which discusses its intimate character … does not look at the ordinary practices and processes of embodied sexual experience. Sex itself is a series of touches, feelings and embodied sensations. (Morrison, 2012, p. 11)

Morrison (2012) urges geographers to pay attention to sexual acts, as these involve multiple forms of touch. I develop this by exploring how sexualities emerge for non-heterosexual men when they anticipate and negotiate touching – that has been organised via Grindr – in the home. If arrangements of bodies and objects make and are made by places, then the home is key in how these encounters *work*, as well as the anticipations, frustrations, and comforts that assemble them. I therefore bring haptic geographies in conversation with geographies of the home, which is the focus of the next section.

4 | GEOGRAPHIES OF HOME: PRODUCING HOME-PLACES

Feminist and queer geographers have long challenged fixed and stable understandings of house and home and notions of the home as a "private" space where unpaid domestic labour occurs (Andrucki & Kaplan, 2018; Blunt, 2005; Domosh, 1998; Gorman-Murray, 2008b; Johnston & Valentine, 1995; Oswin, 2010 Madge & O'Connor, 2005). The meaning and experience of home has been contested, revealing the multiple ways that different people form relationships with the home. For many people, the home is the site of intimate, emotional, and everyday relationships with family, friends, and partners, where social relations play out in unique ways (Domosh, 1998) fostering emotional ties to place (Rose, 2003, 2010).

At the same time, scholars have highlighted how the home is not always a safe or comforting place for *all* people. For LGBTQ+ people and those who experience domestic violence, the home can be a place of anxiety, distress, and violence. LGBTQ+ may have to leave their parental home due to the gendered and sexual expectations placed on them. At the same time, for some LGBTQ+ people, their own homes become material and symbolic places that resist everyday heteronormativity (Gorman-Murray, 2008a; Johnston & Valentine, 1995). For gay men, for example, the home is one of the few places where non-heterosexual objects and embodiments can be materialised and queer families and friendships can be formed (Gorman-Murray, 2006, 2007, 2008b).

Importantly, the home is understood as an unbounded, fluid space that is always being remade by multiple processes, both public and private. Blunt and Varley explain:

> Rather than view the home as a fixed, bounded and confining location, geographies of home traverse scales from the domestic to the global in both material and symbolic ways. The everyday practices, material cultures and social relations that shape home on a domestic scale resonate far beyond the household. (2004, p. 3)

Homes are always being redone by the "outside" places that inform them. This can manifest through work, leisure, and care, as public/private binaries are not fixed and stable either. In this way, homes are working arrangements that are being made and remade by the multiple objects, bodies, and technologies, and the emotions, affects, and meanings that bring them together.

Digital technologies and spaces are increasingly part of these working arrangements remaking the home as they become part of our everyday practices – for example, Alexa, smart homes, mobile phones, and tablets are just some examples of how we *do* home differently (Maalsen, 2020). Longhurst (2017) explores how families who use Skype in Aotearoa New Zealand are becoming increasingly comfortable with this form of emotional mediation, meaning people "feel at home" with Skype. Pink et al. (2017) have explored how homes are experienced differently with increasing digital ways of working, meaning working hours are being slowly extended, creating new atmospheres. At the same time, some scholars question the political agenda of such technologies. Crooks (2013) and Gudelunas (2012) have questioned the subversive political potential of apps like Grindr, suggesting that they risk (re)making gay men's sexualities invisible as they are performed and embodied through private chat spaces and private encounters in the home. Tziallas (2015) argues that men can use apps for self-porn, rather than meeting face-to-face, in ways that can be considered as undermining landscapes of equality and visibility. I am interested in how homes are negotiated when sexual encounters have been formed via Grindr – as bodies enter domestic working arrangements, they can momentarily create new homespaces.

5 | A TOUCHING STORY: TALKING ABOUT SEX

This paper draws on 30 semi-structured interviews with men who use Grindr, in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK. The participants were recruited from Grindr, where I set up a profile that was explicit about my research intentions. The interviews took place in cafes and university buildings. We usually had a tea, coffee, or water while we spoke. The conversations were centred on participants' use of Grindr, the men they met, and how theyfelt when doing this. Twenty-three of the participants were white British, one was white Irish, one was Dutch, one was mixed raced, one was a Pacific Islander, one was a British Pakistani, one was south-east Asian, and one was a Filipino. They aged between 20 and 50.

Interviewing provides a way to learn about participants' stories. Stories are one way that researchers explore the lived experiences of places and the relations with emotions and affects. The stories that the participants told about their fleshy Grindr encounters involved descriptions of what their bodies did to each other, when they did and/or did not want to be touched, where and when encounters happened and how they felt during these experiences. The men in this study felt comfortable in talking about these experiences with me. They were open to discussions about their fleshy, messy, and erotic encounters. At times they were very explicit, others were more implicit in a way that I had to ask for clarification.

These encounters were mediated in particular ways – I had never met these men in the flesh until the interview. I am also a gay man who has previously used Grindr for non-research purposes and therefore was "recognised" as more than a researcher. I was aware how touch could be (mis)read in these encounters – I did not want participants to think these were romantic or erotic. I ensured that I made active attempts not to touch the participants. We sometimes shook hands at the beginning or after the interview, but I tried to avoid hugging the participants. As I argue in this paper, how touch is interpreted and experienced is, in part, shaped by digital interactions. I used the material spaces we were in to help construct boundaries between us – understood by some as feminist boundary-making (Cuomo & Massaro, 2014). In cafes, we sat on opposite side of the table, and I attempted to keep my hands and arms on one side. In university spaces (a small room used for research-related practices), there was a distance between us so we could not physically "reach" each other. In this context, the meaning of touch is shaped through our engagements with digital technologies, our shared identities as Grindr users and as non-heterosexual men. In this research, I was a researcher, an insider (Grindr user), and a young, white, gay man. These identities were at play throughout the interviews, despite my desire to be a "researcher." Therefore, touch had to be negotiated through the data collection in this research to protect my participants and myself from harm.

6 | EMBODIED ANTICIPATIONS

As men travel to people's homes, or host people in their home, they have particular embodied anticipations – of how bodies will look, perform, and feel – that are often formed through digital conversations. In this section, I explore the moments when men's anticipations are reconfigured through sensory engagements with the fleshy bodies. To begin are quotes from Ben and Josh, who discuss the digital conversations – composed of written descriptions and pictures of the body – that lead to the building of anticipations:

Ben: like he was in bed, all he showed was his cock hard, and yeah, that particular guy, it was just a lot of shots of his cock hard, shots of him cumming, and just talking back and forth, what we'd do to each other. (Ben, 33, Pacific Islander)

Josh: but it's like the whole thing of like thinking well, I'm getting aroused at the prospect of what I would be doing later, rather than the prospect of just chat, like that's kind of not, like I would be excited about the prospect of what would happen later, than the actual chat itself, if that makes sense. (Josh, 23, white British)

These quotes reflect the erotic conversations that many users had about the potential of sex. It is in these conversations that anticipation builds – maybe over several days – as users talk about the ways their bodies may touch. James (26, white British) goes on to tell us that he, like many users, often touches himself while doing this: "you'll be there stroking [masturbating] whilst your chatting to them, the odd picture exchange and stuff."

In the following examples, Zak and Jon speak about meeting men after the online conversations.

Zack: We even set out a scenario [over a Grindr conversation] to make the situation more hornier. Anyway, so he opened the door, naked and first thing I noticed was his stomach, it was massive, I looked at him and thought 'okay, it's definitely you in that picture, [but] the picture is quite old, like four or five years old.' So, I went inside and I thought 'what can I do to get out of here?,' and I simply made an excuse and I said, 'oh I left my oven on, I need to go,' and I just left the flat straight away. Now the fact that he didn't message me after to say, 'are you okay? what happened? was your oven?' he must have realised that, you know, that I wasn't happy with the fact that it was an old picture and that everything that he'd planned was not evidently going to happen. (32, British Pakistani)

Jon: Number one, it was the smell inside his car, it was like wet dog, that was one thing I didn't like [shakes his head, wrinkles his nose, and lowers eyebrows]. He was very gropey and very sort of over the top, which I didn't like. So, as we were driving back [to my house] I remember thinking he's really letchy, you know. And we could be easily driving down the street now and see one of my colleagues and I'd have to wave at them, 'hello.' And I don't know, and I was just saying to myself 'this is not gonna happen, this is a no, this is a no, this is a no,' and then when we got down to the nitty gritty [undressing, touching, and kissing], he's definitely not the person I've seen in the photograph, whether it was when he was younger, whether it was the impression in my mind, either way it wasn't what I expected, you know. And it took all of my, you know, this is ridiculous, but it took all of my strength of character to say 'sorry, but bye, bye.' (50, White British)

Zack and Jon both say that they had formed expectations of these embodied encounters through Grindr conversations. In these examples, the anticipated touch is reconfigured when these men see, smell, and are touched by the user they are hooking up with. Price (2013) has argued that touch can be "done" with the eyes. The eyes have a way of approximating touch and they are used to understand how, or if, we want to touch/be touched. In Zak's, the folds and creases of "fat" or "out of shape" bodies – that can cause visceral feelings of disgust for some people (Colls, 2007) – reconfigure his desire to be touched. Jon was also expecting a different embodied encounter – with a person who was younger and an environment that smelt differently. Smell is rooted in cultural identities, memories, and practices, while also being tangled up in emotion (Rodaway, 1994). Longhurst et al. (2008) argue that smells give rise to visceral, gut reactions. For Jon, the smell of "wet dog" does not create an erotic or sexualised atmosphere; instead, from his facial expression, Jon felt disgust – a gut response that urges us to prevent objects/bodies/things from touching, or moving within, skin boundaries (Probyn, 2005).

As well as smell, Jon raises issues of cutaneous touch. The public nature of this touching makes Jon feel uncomfortable. Although Jon was "out" to his colleagues, he wished to keep his sexual practices separate from his professional life. The type of touching is rendered "gropey" and "over the top" and "out of place." Heteronormative regimes that resign non-heterosexual and overly sexualised touching to private homes spaces are operating here (Brown, 2000; Valentine, 1996) and touching is policed by the potential gaze of others (Hubbard, 2013) understood as "out of place." As Jon goes on to say, "it was pretty obvious, I realised that what happened was, the fruity [erotic] conversations we'd had, the anticipation, we had built it into the conversations." These digital conversations therefore shape how these encounters play out. When these people meet offline, the sensory engagement shifts in a way that reveals different aspects of a person's body.

Due to the shifting anticipations, they both end their encounters, but in different ways. Jon asks the user to leave, whereas Zak, like many other participants, creates an excuse. Zack specifically highlights how creating excuses has become a normative practice when negotiating anticipations. As Charlie also says:

I have definitely pretended that I have been too drunk, like when I've got there and they're not want I was expecting, just like 'I'm too drunk, I've got to leave, I feel sick,' that sort of stuff, you know. (26, white British)

This has become a normalised and learnt practice among men who use Grindr to negotiate shifting anticipations. The anticipation of touch – or not wanting to be touched – is informing how users negotiate Grindr.

Not all unmet anticipations prompted users to end their encounters, and instead they continued to have sex. Tom, for example, started by describing that the Grindr user was much shorter, older, and moved and sounded more "feminine" than he presented on Grindr. He stated:

'You've mislead me, but I'm still gonna have my fun' … it's kind of that, 'you've spoke to me, we've chatted, got me horny, got me turned on, you're here now, okay I'll do it anyway' … we were talking in the afternoon, then he was going from shields to town,[1] came to the house, I just thought 'he wanted fucking.' I bent him over the sofa at home, fucked him, he came, I came, he left, I got the polish and the duster out and cleaned the sofa. And it was just literally, it was like making a cup of tea, it was an activity, it wasn't a connection, it wasn't anything else. (44, white British)

Tom highlights how sexual arousal and convenience is more important than shifting anticipations. As this user was travelling through the city, Tom did not have to wait or travel himself, making it convenient. Hooking up often becomes a practice that must be convenient that can "fill some time." Here, convenience and affective desire can momentarily transgress identity categories that may "other" some bodies (Brown, 2008; Caluya, 2008; Lim, 2007). However, we also see here that sex and touch are interlaced with power relations. Tom feels mislead but he still wants to enjoy himself, which becomes more important than a body that fails to meet his anticipations.

In this encounter, it is the release of semen that provides an indication that the hook-up has "ended." In other words, users have learnt that they often must leave one another's home when they climax sexually. Rupert further exemplifies this, saying:

Rupert: I'm quite happy for someone, this is going to make me sound awful, to meet up with someone, suck them off, then flip me over, fuck me, and as soon as they cum, just leave. That's basically what I'd be looking for in a hook-up I'm not really in to this post-coital pillow talk, I find it quite awkward especially when you're just hooking up with someone, 'you've cum, on you go, see you later mate.' So I do kind of almost make that explicit in my message to someone, but then maybe that's me being selfish because that's what I'm wanting … but I don't, I don't script it for them so to speak, so I don't sit there and tell them, 'oh when you come in you've got to do this, this, this and that,' there's got to be an element of spontaneity still. (37, white British)

Rupert uses the digital conversations to create offline scenarios – like many users he explains how he imagines their bodies to touch. He makes sure Grindr users know that once they orgasm – particularly releasing semen – they should leave his home. Bodily fluids can take on different meanings in different spaces at different times (Misgav & Johnston, 2014). Semen can be symbolic of play, eroticism, and satisfaction but also risk due to medical discourses around HIV and AIDS. In these assemblages, Grindr users have learnt that the release of semen means they must leave the homes of the host – with different levels of satisfaction.

Just because one person orgasms, it does not always mean that all users are sexually "satisfied" – embodied anticipations can also be let down during sex. As Charlie says:

I was chatting to a guy who lived in Cramlington and he was going on about how horny he was. And I drove there, and the drive there took longer than the sex did. So, I got there, and he'd obviously been far too excited and finished in about five minutes and I was like, wow, okay, this drive took 25 minutes to get here, 'I'll be going now, thanks.' I think you [need to] learn to manage your expectations. (33, white British)

As the sex was shorter than the journey, the encounter was not perceived to be worthwhile – or convenient. The geographies of these encounters matter, where travelling or hosting shaping the ways anticipations are met. Zack, who had only recently moved to Newcastle at the time of the interview, states:

Straight after that I thought, 'what the hell am I doing at two in the morning running around these places in Newcastle, no idea where I am?,' so I just, I'm better off going home, having a wank, going to sleep, it's a safer option all round. So, I wasn't online for about two weeks' cos of that. (32, British Pakistani)

In these Grindr encounters, bodies can become sites of eroticism, disappointment, frustration, but also convenience – they have the potential to facilitate an orgasm. When bodies are unable to fulfil this potential, they become inconvenient because of the "effort" involved in materialising the encounter. For Zack, the reconfiguring of anticipation leads him to reflect on his sexual practices, deleting the app temporarily.

Grindr users build anticipations through their digital conversations on the app – sharing pictures and discussing what their offline erotic encounter might entail. When users meet in the flesh, these anticipations play a part in reconfiguring their desire to be touched. There are some embodied and sensory experiences that Grindr (and other technologies) does not account for – people are unable to hear, smell, and touch fleshy bodies through Grindr. This is one way that bodies and encounters become uncomfortable and why people often understand digital worlds as "separate" to offline ones. The ending of an encounter usually occurs when participants no longer want to be touched by the bodies of other users. There are particular strategies and practices being learnt by Grindr users as a way to negotiate these spaces, and this can involve creating excuses. These strategies are not only learnt in response to the reconfiguration of embodied anticipations, but also the materiality of the home too – it is these anticipations that I explore in the following section.

7 | MATERIAL ANTICIPATIONS

The embodied anticipations of users are also entangled in the materiality – the layout, objects, and things – of the home. Objects are not just things that simply exist, they have emotive potentialities and the capacity to affect and be affected (Ahmed, 2004). As a way of creating erotic atmospheres, there are material homemaking practices involved in preparing homes for Grindr encounters. At the same time, users have certain expectations of how homes should be. It is this materiality, and the ways it shapes touching in Grindr encounters, that I explore here.

In this interview, Tom highlights how he prepares the downstairs of his home:

Tom: If they're coming to me, you know, I'll do the whole porn on the TV, poppers[2] on the side, condoms, lube. It's either in the downstairs of the house, or if the weather's nice, I'm partial to take them into the back garden, which, it's not overlooked so it's quite private. And for me it's about getting everything prepared, everything ready, so they can be in and out. (44, White British)

For men who are hosting, there is an expectation that they provide the condoms and lubricant for sex. Tom uses the downstairs of the house for his hook-ups; therefore, he prepares this space for the encounter. Through their visibility and association with sex, the objects like condoms and lubricant intersect with non-heterosexual identities and are (re)produced as erotic. The visibility of condoms, poppers, lubricant, and the sight and sound of pornography all work to create an erotic atmosphere, facilitating touch. Living rooms are often not spaces where such erotic objects are displayed – they are usually reserved for more non-erotic ideas, memories, and emotions (Johnston & Valentine, 1995); however, the meanings and materialities of spaces are fluid and are constantly renegotiated (Bell & Valentine, 1995; Massey, 1994). In Grindr encounters, living spaces may momentarily become sites of eroticism that are prodcued, in part, by digital sexual practices.

When particular expectations that users have are not met, it can reshape desires and prevent users from wanting to be "touched," as Charlie explains:

Charlie: I was chatting to a guy at four in the morning and I decided to go and find his house and his photo wasn't that bad, and I got there and he was a five foot Scottish guy who lived in a flat that looked like something from 'hoarders buried alive,'[3] just had no carpets, had a sofa with two cushions, how do you lose a cushion from a sofa? And it turned into the, I just pretended to be a bit sick. (33, White British)

The homemaking practices did not meet the expectations that Charlie has of men. Objects in the home become important when hooking up. Brown (2008) argues that the non-human things that are involved in men's cruising – for example, urinals, sinks, tiles, and smells – are just as important as the bodies themselves. For Brown, the non-human things become erotic as they are symbolic of breaking moral codes and this has the capacity to confuse discursive identities (race, gender, class, age) and bring bodies together through sex. In contrast, Morrison's (2012) work around women's experiences of

heterosexual touch in the home highlights how the touch of household objects – such as the uncomfortable feeling of sofa fabric – on the skin does not bring sexualities into being in the same way, but reaffirms bodily boundaries. The idea of Charlie's skin touching cushions, sofas, and objects reshaped his experience of hooking up, desire, and touch. The multisensory experience of "too many" objects and missing objects has worked to stabilise bodily boundaries.

As I have shown, the homes where Grindr encounters play out can be arousing, uncomfortable, and anxiety-provoking. What I want to highlight here are the ways that the materiality of the home, Grindr practices, and touch are co-constituted. When Grindr users hook-up in offline places, their unstable anticipations manifest through the homes that they meet in. Grindr practices have the ability to shape how homes are (re)made – erotic atmospheres can be created as a way of enabling touch between Grindr users. It is here that we see how digital spaces inform how homes can be remade. Some users have particular expectations of what a home should look like when they are hooking up through Grindr – these anticipations are produced by what a 'normative' home might look like. The ways homes are materially constructed and experienced, then, shape the ways digitally mediated hook ups play out, meaning that homes, touch and digital sexual practices are co-constituted. At the same time, the home is not only subject to the anticipations that are formed through Grindr – domestic spaces have their own – contested – meanings that shape the ways Grindr practices are experienced and negotiated. It is these meanings that I explore in the next section.

8 | PLACING TOUCH

Haptic geographies enable an understanding of the ways touch and place are co-constituted, exploring how places shape how touch can be enacted and how the touching of bodies and objects can (re)make places. In this section, I highlight how certain – often normative – understandings of domestic spaces shape how Grindr encounters are negotiated and how these understandings may be contested and reshaped. I draw attention to the ways different living arrangements – and the meanings these give the home – may be in conflict with what it means to be a man who uses Grindr.

Very few of the participants lived alone. Most of the participants lived with housemates, a few with parents, and one with a non-monogamous partner. Nathaniel, who had recently moved in with his parents from a rented flat to save money, explains how he has less "space" to hook up:

> Nathaniel: I have in the past, when I was at uni and I had my own place, it didn't matter, I wasn't full time and I could do whatever I wanted and stuff. (22, white British)

Josh talks about being "unable" to host when he lived with friends in rented accommodation, specifically mentioning concerns about being heard with another Grindr user:

> Josh: See my previous flat when I lived in Heaton, I would only ever do it at home when I knew that nobody was in the house, just because it was like two of my best friends living there and I just thought it would be like weird, like having someone round whilst they're in, and it was a much smaller flat as well so every room is right next to one another, so you can hear everything. But then like I had no problems going off somewhere, gallivanting around Heaton somewhere. (Josh, 32, white British)

For these men, they feel unable to hook up due to sharing homes. In her work with heterosexual couples, Morrison (2012) highlights how house-sharing can inhibit sexual touch as the sounds of sex and touch (for example, the hitting and pressing of bodies together and sounds of beds moving) are not confined to the private space of the bedroom. Sounds are not restricted in the same way sights are. Therefore, "privately situated acts of touch leak into the shared spaces of home and invade the sound space of others" (Morrison, 2012, p. 16). In the case of Josh, the fear of being heard having sex prevents him from hosting Grindr hook-ups. He points to a sense of shame in being "heard" having erotic encounters with men from Grindr. The particular spatial arrangement of house-sharing can make Grindr hook-ups feel shameful and can therefore regulate sexualities (Morrison, 2012; Probyn, 2005). Josh told me that his friends and housemates knew he used Grindr, and that he often posts about Grindr on his Facebook and Instagram accounts. However, being *heard* having sex with another user is key here. Sounds can affect bodies in very visceral ways – they can mobilise us into joy, pride, and excitement, while also forcing us to feel disgust, shame, and embarrassment (Gallagher, 2016; Waitt et al., 2014). Some participants did not want to be heard having sex with another Grindr user, as it may viscerally confirm, for their friends and housemates, that they do so.

James and Toby further highlight this, saying:

| James: | Occasionally, about a month ago, I slipped out about half 11, the guy was just around the corner, I went to his, sorted him out. |
| Toby: | I think it took like a few, not a few attempts, but like a few days before we actually met, so we talked, both knew we were interested in hooking up … a few days later, we were both free, I think he had a free house, and that was it. |

Both James and Toby shared a rented house with other gay men who used Grindr. They often spoke to one another about their Grindr encounters; however, they would not always feel comfortable sharing the exact moments they would be hooking up. Queer shame is powerful force in regulating our bodies and embodied practices (Ahmed, 2010), shaping how men who share accommodation enact their sexualities. Josh goes on to say:

Josh: I mean to be fair I've only got with like two people since I moved to Jesmond, to be fair. I was that drunk I probably didn't have that sense of shame or whatever, so I was 'yeah come round.'

The shame in being heard by his housemates is lessened because he has reduced inhibitions. In this situation, shame has less "power" to regulate embodied practices.

Tom also only engages in Grindr hook-ups when he is alone, but for different reasons. Tom is in a non-monogamous relationship. He says:

All the action has always stayed downstairs. I respect us enough not to take it upstairs into the bedroom area, even though he's probably like, and he [partner] knows that was happening … I have got a partner, I'm happy with that, I've got the emotional stuff that I need, I've got the relationship, for me it's just, we have the sex missing, so if I can find the sex somewhere else, then I will. And it is just sex, there's no emotional connection. (44, White British).

Tom, in comparison to participants like Josh, owns his home. Him and his partner are "professionals" and have a mortgage. Therefore, Tom's class and age positions enable his sexuality to be embodied and practised through the home differently from that of Josh. Tom has more physical space and fewer people to consider. At the same time, this does not mean Tom feels he can use all the spaces in the home to host encounters as their bedroom is understood as a space of emotional intimacy in their relationship. The ways Tom uses home spaces for hooking up may challenge the ways living spaces are used, but simultaneously keeps the spatial boundaries of the bedroom intact. As particular home spaces become synonymous with partnership, notions of respectability emerge. Reserving the bedroom enables Tom to stabilise gendered and sexualised subjectivities that may be rendered more unstable and fluid through his non-monogamous practices.

Feminist and queer geographers have long challenged fixed and stable understandings of home as private places (Andrucki & Kaplan, 2018; Gorman-Murray, 2008b; Johnston & Valentine, 1995; Oswin, 2010). The ways men do Grindr hook-ups are entangled in these spatial and sexual politics of the home. When it comes to erotic sexual practices, different parts of the home can be felt as more private than others. At times it may feel like the home has very little privacy at all. The sounds that are made through Grindr encounters may reveal such practices to other people in the home, which can materially confirm erotic practices – something many participants wanted to avoid due to a felt shame around being a Grindr user. Privacy is (re)made as certain domestic spaces are kept private from non-normative sexual practices. There are moments when these are disrupted – when alcohol is involved or at particular times of the day/night.

In these examples, the co-constitution of touch, sex, and place – and the meanings that are produced – require Grindr practices to be negotiated in very particular ways, with men who use Grindr learning what times, spaces, and places are comfortable and "appropriate" for hooking up. The ways Grindr practices are learnt, then, is an assemblage of domestic spaces and the embodied and material anticipations of the users. I highlight what this means for geographical scholarship on sexuality, embodiment, and the digital in the following section.

9 | SEX, SPACE, TOUCH

In this article, I have used a haptial geographical framework to explore the embodied and material anticipations that shape how erotic Grindr encounters play out, and I have argued that Grindr users are learning how to negotiate their hook-ups

through their reconfigured anticipations, domestic places and attachments to understandings of gender and sexuality. Doing so, I draw attention to the power relations that shape intimate touching and to the ways that touch, place and digital practices are co-constituted. By way of conclusion, I want to highlight three contributions.

First, I want to develop the work of Johnston (2012) and Morrison (2012), and argue for touch and haptic geographies to be further engaged with in geographies of sexualities. Sex is a series of touches that produce sounds, and can be smelt, tasted, and seen – and these shape how sexual encounters are felt, experienced, and negotiated. The ways Grindr practices are negotiated are rooted in the material arrangements and discurive meanings of domestic spaces and the multisensory experience of touch, shaping how, where and when touch happens. At the same time, digitally formed anticipations must be negotiated, through domestic spaces and fleshy bodies, meaning there are multiple spaces that inform how sex and sexuality are lived and experienced at the intimate scale of the body. Sexualities are not only construted, embodied and negotiated discursively, but through multisensory and emotional experiences - across mutlitple spaces - that matter to the ways that sexual practices come into being (as uncomfortable, shameful or pleasurable, for example). It is therefore important to pay attention to the intimate and sensory to understand the complex ways that sex and sexuality emerge, and the power relations that continually shape sexualities.

This brings me to the second contribution on the ways non-heterosexual men feel about and experience their sexual identities and practices and the politics of domestic spaces. Most of the men I spoke with, especially the ones featured here, were "out" to their family, friends, colleagues, and housemates. Some of the men shared houses with other gay men and Grindr users, and others would recount stories about their Grindr encounters with friends. However, some of the users still felt a shame in being seen, heard, and/or recognised as a Grindr user. It is clear that some queer men feel uneasy about being materially confirmed as a Grindr user by their co-workers, housemates, and parents. Heteronormative discourses are still shaping how queer men feel about their embodied practices, despite legal and structural changes in LGBTQ+ rights Using a haptic geographical framework to pay attention to the touches, sounds and smells revealed the ways sexual identities and intimate practices can be experienced and understood as shameful or uncomfortable by queer men, even in their own homes. Research has questioned the subversive potential of apps like Grindr, as queer sex may be forced into private domestic spaces (Tziallas, 2015; Crooks, 2013; Tziallas 2015). At the same time, domestic spaces might not be places where queer digital sexual practices are easily and comfortably embodied either. Therefore, examining intimate bodily scales and sensory experiences may futher complicate understandings of LGBTQ+ equalities across public and private spaces.

The third contribution focuses on the importance of thinking corporeally about digital spaces, technologies, and practices. As Grindr is an app that facilitates offline encounters, exploring these practices provides a way to examine how corporeal bodies and digital technologies are co-constituted. Exploring the reconfigured anticipations reveals the moments when online/offline places feel separate and disconnected, therefore bodies come to matter in different ways across different online and offline places. The negotiation of digitally formed anticipations highlights how embodied touch, sex and sexualities are being shaped by digital practices, as well as the spaces that encounters can be located in. The focus on anticipations revealed how people are learning to negotiate the felt disconnect between the digital and corporeal, and the practices that may emerge through this negotiation. For geographers, thinking about how people anticipate spaces may help understand further how digital technologies reconfigure our relationships with places and bodies. Embodied anticipations by way of corporeal scholarship, then, can provide a useful tool in thinking through the ways people feel about and negotiate their everyday digital and corporeal lives.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available on reasonable request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

ORCID

Carl Bonner-Thompson 🔵 https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1589-6116

1 "Shields" is referring to South Shields. The journey to "town" (Newcastle city centre) from South Shields would involve by-passing Hebburn, where Tom lives.

2 A colloquial term used for a chemical that is used recreationally, often to facilitate anal sex.

3 Charlie is referring to TV shows that present homes of people who are "extreme" hoarders. The title he refers to is not the name of an actual TV show.

REFERENCES

Ahmed, S. (2004). *The cultural politics of emotion*. Taylor & Francis.

Ahmed, S. (2010). *The promise of happiness*. Duke University Press.

Andrucki, M. J., & Kaplan, D. J. (2018). Trans objects: Materializing queer time in US transmasculine homes. *Gender, Place & Culture*, *25*, 781–798. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2018.1457014

Ash J., Kitchin R., Leszczynski A. (2018). Digital turn, digital geographies?. *Progress in Human Geography*, *42*, (1), 25–43. https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132516664800

Bell, D. (1995). Pleasure and danger: The paradoxical spaces of sexual citizenship. *Political Geography*, *14*, 139–153. https://doi.org/10.1016/0962-6298(95)91661-M

Bell, D. (2006). Bodies, technologies, spaces: On 'dogging'. *Sexualities*, *9*, 387–407. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460706068040

Bell, D., & Valentine, G. (1995). Introduction: Orientations. In D. Bell & G. Valentine (Eds.), *Mapping desire: Geographies of sexualities* (pp. 1–27). Routledge.

Binnie, J. (2004). *The globalization of sexuality*. SAGE.

Blunt, A. (2005). Cultural geography: Cultural geographies of home. *Progress in Human Geography*, *29*, 505–515. https://doi.org/10.1191/0309132505ph564pr

Blunt, A., & Varley, A. (2004). Geographies of home. *Cultural Geographies*, *11*, 3–6. https://doi.org/10.1191/1474474004eu289xx

Bonner-Thompson C. (2017). 'The meat market': production and regulation of masculinities on the Grindr grid in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK. *Gender, Place & Culture*, *24*, (11), 1611–1625. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369x.2017.1356270

Brown, G. (2008). Ceramics, clothing and other bodies: Affective geographies of homoerotic cruising encounters. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *9*, 915–932. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649360802441457

Brown, M. (2000). *Closet space: Geographies of metaphor from the body to the globe*. Routledge.

Caluya, G. (2008). 'The rice steamer': Race, desire and affect in Sydney's gay scene. *Australian Geographer*, *39*, 283–292. https://doi.org/10.1080/00049180802270481

Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies that matter: On the discursive limits of "sex"*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Coleman-Fountain, E. (2014). *Understanding narrative identity through lesbian and gay youth*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Colls, R. (2007). Materialising bodily matter: Intra-action and the embodiment of 'Fat'. *Geoforum*, *38*, 353–365. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2006.09.004

Crooks, R. N. (2013). The rainbow flag and the green carnation: Grindr in the gay village. *First Monday*, *18*. https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v18i11.4958

Cuomo, D., & Massaro, V. A. (2014). Boundary-making in feminist research: New methodologies for 'intimate insiders'. *Gender, Place & Culture*, *23*, 94–106. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2014.939157

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. l. (1987). *A Thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Dixon, D. P., & Straughan, E. R. (2010). Geographies of touch/touched by geography. *Geography Compass*, *4*, 449–459. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-8198.2009.00299.x

Domosh, M. (1998). Geography and gender: Home, again? *Progress in Human Geography*, *22*, 276–282. https://doi.org/10.1191/030913298676121192

Gallagher, M. (2016). Sound as affect: Difference, power and spatiality. *Emotion, Space and Society*, *20*, 42–48. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2016.02.004

Gibson, J. J. (1983). *The senses considered as perceptual systems*. Greenwood Press.

Gorman-Murray, A. (2006). Homeboys: Uses of home by gay Australian men. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *7*, 53–69. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649360500452988

Gorman-Murray, A. (2007). Contesting domestic ideals: Queering the Australian home. *Australian Geographer*, *38*, 195–213. https://doi.org/10.1080/00049180701392766

Gorman-Murray, A. (2008a). Masculinity and the home: A critical review and conceptual framework. *Australian Geographer*, *39*, 367–379. https://doi.org/10.1080/00049180802270556

Gorman-Murray, A. (2008b). Reconciling self: Gay men and lesbians using domestic materiality for identity management. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *9*, 283–301. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649360801990504

Grosz, E. A. (1994). *Volatile bodies: Toward a corporeal feminism*. Bloomington, IN: University Press.

Gudelunas, D. (2012). There's an app for that: The uses and gratifications of online social networks for gay men. *Sexuality & Culture*, *16*, 347–365. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-012-9127-4

Hubbard, P. (2012). *Cities and sexualities*. Routledge.

Hubbard, P. (2013). Kissing is not a universal right: Sexuality, law and the scales of citizenship. *Geoforum*, *49*, 224–232. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2012.08.002

Johnston, L. (2012). Sites of excess: The spatial politics of touch for drag queens in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Emotion, Space and Society*, *5*, 1–9. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2010.02.003

Johnston, L., & Valentine, G. (1995). Wherever I lay my girlfriend, that's my home: The performance and surveillance of lesbian identities in domestic environments. In D. Bell & G. Valentine (Eds.), *Mapping desire: Geographies of sexualities* (pp. 88–103). Routledge.

Koch R., Miles S. (2020). Inviting the stranger in: Intimacy, digital technology and new geographies of encounter. *Progress in Human Geography*, 030913252096188https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132520961881

Lim, J. (2007). Queer critique and the politics of affect. In G. Brown, K. Browne & J. Lim (Eds.), *Geographies of sexuality: Theory, practice and politics* (pp. 125–135). Ashgate.

Longhurst, R. (2017). *Skype: Bodies, screens, space*. Routledge.

Longhurst, R., Ho, E., & Johnston, L. (2008). Using 'the body' as an 'instrument of research': Kimch'i and pavlova. *Area*, *40*, 208–217. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4762.2008.00805.x

Longhurst, R. (1997). (Dis)embodied geographies. *Progress in Human Geography*, *21*(4), 486–501. https://doi.org/10.1191/030913297668704177

Longhurst, R. (2004). *Bodies: Exploring fluid boundaries* (1st ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Taylor and Francis.

Maalsen S. (2020). 'Generation Share': digitalized geographies of shared housing. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *21*, (1), 105–113. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2018.1466355

Madge, C., & O'Connor, H. (2005). Mothers in the making? Exploring liminality in cyber/space. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, *30*, 83–97. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2005.00153.x

Massey, D. B. (1994). *Space, place and gender*. Polity.

Misgav, C., & Johnston, L. (2014). Dirty dancing: The (non)fluid embodied geographies of a queer nightclub in Tel Aviv. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *15*, 730–746. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2014.916744

Montagu, A. (1971). *Touching: The human significance of the skin*. Columbia University Press.

Morrison, C.-A. (2012). Heterosexuality and home: Intimacies of space and spaces of touch. *Emotion, Space and Society*, *5*, 10–18. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2010.09.001

Morrison, C.-A. (2013). Homemaking in New Zealand: Thinking through the mutually constitutive relationship between domestic material objects, heterosexuality and home. *Gender, Place & Culture*, *20*, 413–431. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2012.694358

Nash, C. J., & Gorman-Murray, A. (2017). Sexualities, subjectivities and urban spaces: A case for assemblage thinking. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 1521–1529. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2017.1372388

Nayak, A. (2003). Last of the 'Real Geordies'? White masculinities and the subcultural response to deindustrialisation. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, *21*, 7–25. https://doi.org/10.1068/d44j

ONS (2012). *Census result shows increase in population of the North East*.

Oswin, N. (2010). The modern model family at home in Singapore: A queer geography. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, *35*, 256–268. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2009.00379.x

Paterson, M. (2005). Affecting touch: Towards a felt phenomenology of therapeutic touch. In L. Bondi & J. Davidson (Eds.), *Emotional geographies* (pp. 161–176). Routledge.

Paterson, M. (2009). Haptic geographies: Ethnography, haptic knowledges and sensuous dispositions. *Progress in Human Geography*, *33*, 766–788. https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132509103155

Pink, S., Horst, H., Nettheim, J., & Bell, G. (2017). Digital work and play: Mobile technologies and new ways of feeling at home. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, *21*, 26–38. https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549417705602

Price, P. L. (2013). Race and ethnicity II: Skin and other intimacies. *Progress in Human Geography*, *37*, 578–586. https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132512465719

Prior, J., Crofts, P., & Hubbard, P. (2013). Planning, law, and sexuality: Hiding immorality in plain view. *Geographical Research*, *51*, 354–363. https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-5871.12033

Probyn, E. (2005). *Blush: Faces of shame*. University of New South Wales Press.

Puar, J.K. (2007). *Terrorist assemblages: Homonationalism in queer times*. Durham, UK: Duke University Press.

Raj, S. (2013, August 2). How Grindr has transformed users' experience of intimacy. *The Guardian*.

Rodaway, P. (1994). *Sensuous geographies: Body, sense, place*. Routledge.

Rose, G. (2003). Family photographs and domestic spacings: A case study. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, *28*, 5–18. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-5661.00074

Rose, G. (2010). *Doing family photography the domestic, the public and the politics of sentiment*. Ashgate Publishing Ltd.

Straughan, E. R. (2012). Touched by water: The body in scuba diving. *Emotion, Space and Society*, *5*, 19–26. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2010.10.003

Tan, Q. H. (2013). Flirtatious geographies: clubs as spaces for the performance of affective heterosexualities. *Gender, Place & Culture*, *20*(6), 718–736. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2012.716403

Tziallas, E. (2015). Gamified eroticism: Gay male "social networking" applications and self-pornography. *Sexuality & Culture*, *19*, 759–775. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-015-9288-z

Valentine, G. (1996). (Re)negotiating the street: Lesbian productions of space. In N. Duncan (Ed.), *BodySpace: Destabilizing geographies of gender and sexuality* (pp. 145–154). Routledge.

Valentine, G., Vanderbeck, R., Sadgrove, J., & Andersson, J. (2013). Producing moral geographies: The dynamics of homophobia within a transnational religious network. *The Geographical Journal*, *179*, 165–176. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4959.2012.00482.x

van Doorn, N. (2013). Architectures of 'the good life': Queer assemblages and the composition of intimate citizenship. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, *31*(1), 157–173.

Waitt, G. (2014). Bodies that sweat: The affective responses of young women in Wollongong, New South Wales, Australia. *Gender, Place & Culture*, *21*, 666–682. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2013.802668

Waitt, G., Ryan, E., & Farbotko, C. (2014). Visceral politics of sound. *Antipode*, *46*, 283–300. https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12032