**Appendix 1: Methods\***

\*From Hakim, Cummings & Young (2024) *Digital Intimacies: Queer Men and Smartphones in times of crisis*, Bloomsbury: London.

Our Digital Intimacies research took an interdisciplinary approach to understanding how queer men in the UK use smartphones to mediate intimacy. Interdisciplinarity, in this context, meant a coming together of media and cultural studies, sociology and, to an extent, public health. Where the introduction of this book outlines why and how we took a conjunctural analysis to answer our research aims, this appendix specifically describes our qualitative design and methods for the data presented throughout the book, and how it was shaped by our interdisciplinary approaches and the wider political conjuncture.

Firstly, as three cis, white, queer identified researchers, we brought some shared experiences of queerness and/or queer perspectives with participants. However, and importantly, we sought out - and our participants also brought - significant divergence in experiences and perspectives in relation to race, mobility, sexual and gender identities, health status, disability, class, age, migration experience and politics. Much has been written on the role of shared or overlapping (queer) identities in qualitative research (Nash and Browne, 2016) and the access and insight this can afford. However, it is important to pay attention to where and how the differences between interviewee and interviewer - as well as across our broad range of diverse participants – demand that we listen carefully to participant stories and to see how socio-cultural, political and material differences cut across these experiences (Plummer 1994). This is something we sought to do throughout the research process, and we hope we have done this adequately for our participants.

We also made the decision to work with community partners (often referred to as third sector partners in the UK), not simply to help with recruitment but to seek insight into key issues affecting queer men in the UK that these organizations were concerned with. We spent some time at the start of the project speaking with London-based London Friend, Scotland-based Waverley Care, and UK-based Terrence Higgins Trust, to get a handle on these issues, to get a sense of what they were concerned with and to consider how these immediate health and wellbeing issues might shape our research approach, questions and outcomes. These initial and ongoing discussions and support throughout the project proved invaluable. Indeed, we ran workshops and seminars about our findings in conversation with our community partners; these discussions contributed directly to our ongoing analysis of the qualitative data.

We set out at the start of this research to undertake qualitative research with a diversity of queer men in the UK. We secured research ethics approval from the University of East Anglia and the University of Edinburgh where we were based at the time of data collection, and to cover research across both London and Edinburgh. The main qualitative component of this research comprised of interviews with forty-three queer men (or non-binary masc people) across London and Edinburgh and its broad surroundings. This dual approach was an attempt to capture locally specific differences in smartphone use amongst queer men. Although, this turned out to be a less significant dimension of our findings (with the exception of issues of the gentrification of queer spaces, discussed in chapter five, which have been most intense in London).

From July 2020 – January 2021 we recruited research participants via social media, through community partners and through word of mouth. We explicitly sought to recruit people who identified as gay, bisexual and/or queer men who were aged eighteen or older, who lived in either London or Edinburgh (and surrounding areas) and who regularly used smartphones. As outlined above, we sought to include a diversity of queer participants along the lines of race, gender identity and class and used paid advertising on hook-up app Scruff to specifically recruit for trans and non-binary participants and for participants of colour to boost the number of participants. Our forty-three participants reflect a diversity of experience and social positions; these are detailed in Appendix 2. As COVID-19 disrupted our planned in-person interviews, we undertook all our interviews online. James and Ingrid undertook these interviews largely via Zoom. We audio recorded and transcribed the interviews which lasted one to two hours. Participants all received £25 voucher in thanks for their time. In these interviews, we asked participants to reflect on how smartphones are integrated into their everyday lives, how they foster or inhibit relationships and how they contribute to their sense of wellbeing. We explored experiences prior to and during COVID-19, and also explored participant views on and consumption of media representation of queer men.

At the same time as the interviews were taking place, Jamie led on mapping the cultural and material conditions that constituted the conjuncture in which the participants were navigating their intimate lives. Stuart Hall used Michel Foucault’s term ‘a history of the present’ to describe conjunctural analysis. What that meant in practice for us was continued vigilance to any historical changes that were happening that might have relevance to our research and archiving evidence of these changes as they were happening as best we could. This had two different strands. One strand was purely academic – reading literature that gave some insight into the organisation of the current conjuncture. The second strand used a very wide range of primary materials, from governmental reports to multiple forms of social and legacy media content to more informally ethnographic practices as evidence of historical change as it was happening.

Our process of analysing the interview data involved all three authors, plus Lewis Clarke, who worked with us for four months in 2021 to code the data using NVivo to assist with analysis. Ingrid, Jamie and James met regularly throughout the data collection period and beyond, regularly reading through transcripts and identifying key themes. These exchanges informed Jamie’s work on the cultural and material conditions of queer men’s experiences of intimacy in the UK, which in turn informed our own readings of the qualitative data. Through these exchanges, we identified both vulnerability and control as important themes, as well as other key themes around race and racism, trans lives and transphobia, the pandemic, temporality, and ‘safe’ space. Lewis systematically coded the qualitative data using NVivo for core themes we identified; we then discussed this coding and these themes collectively, making sense of what our participants had shared. Once the structure of the book was established, on the basis of these ongoing discussions, Jamie, James and Ingrid continued to work on the analysis and writing, sharing works in progress at various UK and international conferences, invited seminars and workshops. This iterative, collaborative and engaged process of analysis formed the shape of this book.

**References**

Nash, Catherine, and Kath Browne. 2016. *Queer Methods and Methodologies: Intersecting Queer Theories and Social Science Research*. London: Routledge.

Plummer, Kenneth. 1994. *Telling Sexual Stories: Power, Change and Social Worlds*. London: Routledge.