

ASPIRATIONAL IDENTITY IN BRITISH “GAY MASCULINITY” 1991-2011

by

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In memory of Susi, warm and caring, and Tony, who I hope will be able to provide
future analyses through his own experiences

*'No one takes pleasure from people making money out of the misery of others, but that
is a function of capitalist markets'*

George Osborne

*'If I had a world of my own, everything would be nonsense. Nothing
would be what it is because everything would be what it isn't. And contrary-wise;
what it is it wouldn't be, and what it wouldn't be, it would. You see?'*

Lewis Carroll, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

Abstract

Much of the mainstream literature surrounding “masculine” lifestyle(s) in post-Thatcherite British politics reflects an aspirational identity, increasingly basing itself round neo-liberal binaries of “success” and “failure”, similar to sexual dichotomies of “gay abject” and “straight subject”. While “straight masculinity” remains validated through the (re)production of a “gay abject”, however, a neo-liberal identity with binaries of “success” and “failure” has become intersected through the emphasis on homonormativity in “gay” lifestyle(s), as demonstrated by the aspiration for a “Pink Pound”.

To support the argument outlined, this thesis provides a new direction to studies of “gay masculinity”, examining the impact a consumerist approach has had on the two bestselling “gay” lifestyle(s) magazines between 1991 and 2011: *Attitude* and *GT* (previously known as *Gay Times*). In both magazines over the period covered, the desire for a “successful” identity as understood through neo-liberal discourse is demonstrated through textual analysis of the aspirational discourse and images (re)presented in both publications, specifically assessing the importance placed on signifiers of consumerism and celebrity role models. In selecting the most-read lifestyle(s) magazines in Britain over the period under study, I was able to understand how mainstream forms of “gay masculine” identity had increasingly been underpinned by discourse pertaining to consumerism as opposed to campaigns against perceived homophobia and inequality. In arguing that a neo-liberal binary of “success” and “failure” has become increasingly prevalent since 1991, with signifiers (re)constructing the former as

aspirational, this thesis also notes that *Attitude* and *Gay Times* have remained uniquely directed at an explicitly “gay” audience, with emphasis being placed on homonormative forms of “success” being an easily attainable norm.

The central argument of this thesis focuses on how “gay masculinity” in the British mainstream media has increasingly (re)presented neo-liberal conceptions of choice through varying lifestyle(s), nonetheless being based around homogenous forms of “success” and (re)producing heteronormative discourse similar to that of publications targeting “straight” men and women. The aspirational image of “success” is therefore identified as consistent across all genders and sexualities, in different forms according to its audience. Although a market-driven identity has become increasingly significant, however, the publications under study have nonetheless placed equal significance on existing sexual and gendered hierarchies. Through observing how both consumerist and heteronormative discourse have been assimilated across varying “gay” lifestyle(s) in Britain over a twenty year period by coding the key themes of aspiration and “success” in the bestselling magazines targeting this audience, I am able to provide a pertinent contribution to both media studies and masculinity studies, as well as drawing attention to how neo-liberal discourse has affected a marginalised sexuality over the post-Thatcher period.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Rationale

Despite extensive scholarship on neo-liberalism's intersection with sexual and gendered hierarchies in Britain (Edwards, 1997; McRobbie, 2009), academic literature concerning how "gay masculinity" has changed within a neo-liberal context remains insufficient. Frequently, academics have used mainstream lifestyle(s) magazine publications to assess similarities and changes in gender identities and gendered binaries over the past two decades, a process Bethan Benwell has praised for being 'one of the few arenas in which masculinity is regularly addressed, discussed and scrutinised' (2003b, p.156). In doing so, the 'growth market' of mainstream magazine publications reflected the broader promotion of varying product(s) and clothing brands (Edwards, 1997, p.72). In the case of women's magazines, "femininity" was defined through binaries of "can-do success" and "at-risk failure", with signifiers of "glossiness" similar to those (re)presented by figures including the Spice Girls and Britney Spears being considered as integral to "ordinar[y]" forms of womanhood (Harris, 2004a, p.127; see also McRobbie, 1997, p.198). Equally, "straight" men's magazines have been used to identify how ostensibly dichotomous lifestyle(s), for example those of *Sensitive New Man* and *New Lad*, were reliant on a sufficient disposable income (Benwell, 2003b, p.156). Despite the scholarship concerning how "gay masculinity" has undertaken a 'tacit but crucial privileging of heterosexuality' (Griffin, 2009, p.39), demonstrated in studies of a separate *Pink Pound* (Edwards, 1997, pp.113-5), there remains insufficient scrutiny placed on British "gay" men's publications since the early 1990s. As such, this thesis, in coding the two highest-

circulating “gay” lifestyle(s) magazines since 1991, was able to complement previous studies of similar texts targeted at women and “straight” men. To demonstrate how neo-liberalism has been assimilated into existing sexual hierarchies, it is firstly necessary to provide a wider context of how the hierarchy between the “straight subject” and its “gay abject” were maintained in Britain, additionally to discussing the significance of neo-liberalism more broadly.

To assess how heteronormative forms of “success” were prevalent within the broader literature on “gay masculinity”, it was important to discern how research on mainstream publications complemented the commercialisation prevalent in “gay” culture more broadly (Edwards, 1997, p.74). Although some research into British “gay” lifestyle(s) magazines has been undertaken, most notably Paul Baker’s case study of personal advertisements in *Gay Times* between 1973 and 2000 (2003), the current literature remains insufficient, a gap addressed by this thesis. Similar to Katherine Sender’s case study of the American “gay” and “lesbian” magazine *The Advocate*, in which the early 1990s were identified as a period targeting the ‘ideal gay consumer’, as opposed to earlier emphases on campaigning, my thesis undertakes a comparable British study. As such, the primary case study of this thesis complemented previous analyses of non-British “gay” lifestyle(s) publications. Further comparative research was provided through assessing how “straight” men’s magazines have been noted to (re)produce wider commercial changes in Britain since Thatcher’s resignation, demonstrated by Benwell’s outlining of seemingly dichotomous lifestyle(s) being equally dependent on purchasing specific product(s) (2003b, p.156). The identification of “can-do” and “at-risk” binaries as affecting “gay masculinity”

was accentuated through previous research into women's magazines, providing further comparative analysis of how 'commercial sites of intensified femininity' (McRobbie, 1999, p.46) were (re)constructed. Complementing Benwell's contention that analyses into "straight" men's magazines formed 'one of the few arenas in which masculinity is regularly addressed, discussed and scrutinised' (2003b, p.156), the case study underpinning this thesis provided me with a similar understanding of a marginalised sexuality, namely "gay masculinity".

Britain, Gender, Sexuality and Neo-Liberalism

Although the 1980s have statistically been identified as a prosperous decade for Britain (Fry et al., 2012 p.25), they remain one in which 'gay men were increasingly represented negatively' (Baker, 2003, p.256) through both legal reforms and mainstream discourse. Despite being frequently (re)presented as a "gay" icon (Flynn, 2006), the British Prime Minister of the time, Margaret Thatcher, has also been described as a 'staunch enemy of gay liberation' (Janes, 2012). The (re)construction of Thatcher's government(s) as 'enem[ies]' of "gay" men was demonstrated through Section 28, a clause in the 1988 Local Government Act placing a 'prohibition on promoting homosexuality by teaching or by publishing material' (1995, p.iii), the first actively anti-"gay" law passed since 'homosexual acts' were legalised two decades earlier (Sexual Offences Act, 1967, p.1)¹. Equally, a comment by Thatcher herself at

¹ Although the Nullity of Marriage Act can be argued to have limited "gay" rights through defining marriage as exclusively between "male" and "female" parties, its focus was primarily on trans relations (Cadwallar, 1972, pp.57-8). Section 28, by contrast, was directed *against* "gay" people rather forming a clarification of marriage in favour of the "straight subject".

the 1987 Tory Party Conference that ‘children who need to be taught to respect traditional moral values are being taught that they have an inalienable right to be gay’ (1987) formed a dichotomy between the ‘moral’ “subject” and its “gay abject”. The anti-“gay” sentiment in Britain during the 1980s was further reflected through derogatory signifiers including ‘poofs’ (Sanderson, 1995, pp.178-87) frequently being used in mainstream newspapers. Most notorious, however, was the media’s explicit equation of HIV/AIDS with “gay” men, making the latter appear disease-ridden in comparison to ‘good Christian people’ (Yorkshire Post, 1987), reflected by headlines including ‘straight sex cannot give you AIDS: official’ (The Sun, 1989, p.1) and one-way tickets out of Britain being offered to “gay” men (The Sun, 1987). Despite Thatcher frequently being credited as both ‘our 1st lady of girlpower’ (Fitzmaurice, 2013) and ending the rigidity of class distinction(s) (Willets, 1992), criticism remains regarding her position on “gay” rights.

Following the resignation of Thatcher and John Major’s accession as Prime Minister in 1990, a more moderate approach to “gay” relationships was identifiable, demonstrated by the lowering of consensual ‘homosexual acts’ from twenty one to eighteen (Criminal Justice and Public Order Act, 1994). Moreover, the subsequent New Labour government(s) (1997-2010) have been credited with making ‘dramatic advances in gay rights’ (Eaton, 2013), reducing the age of consent to sixteen (Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill, 2000); allowing “gay” couples to adopt (Adoption and Children Act, 2002); providing protection against homophobic discrimination (Equality Act, 2010, p.6); legalising “gay” civil partnerships (Civil Partnership Act, 2004); and, symbolically, repealing Section 28 (Local Government Act, 2003, p.80).

Following the election of a Conservative-led coalition in 2010, David Cameron articulated his desire to ‘export gay marriage around the world’ (Hope, 2013), fulfilled by its legalisation in England and Wales (Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act, 2013). Rather than a ‘never-ending effort to defame and dehumanise gay people’ (Sanderson, 1995, p.174) across the British media, perceived homophobia was instead condemned, recently demonstrated through a United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) councillor being derided for attributing widespread flooding to “gay” marriage (Wintour, 2014). As such, opponents of equal rights (re)constructed themselves as oppressed by a perceived pro-“gay” bigotry, using signifiers including ‘Stalinist’ (Hitchens, 2009) and ‘McCarthyites’ (Phillips, 2011) to criticise Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Queer, Intersexed, Asexual (LGBTQIA) lobbyists. Despite these changes since 1991, however, homophobia has remained a serious concern (Guasp, 2012, pp.15-6; Guasp et al., 2014 Mitchell, pp.48-50, pp.59-62).

Thatcherism has been widely credited with having ‘set in motion’ (McRobbie, 2000) neo-liberalism in Britain, a paradigm Peter Kerr and David Marsh have defined as (re)presenting ‘individualism rather than collectivism and...competition and market forces rather than state intervention’ (1999, p.169). Through discourse(s) including ‘we will back the workers, not the shirkers’ (O’Shaughnessy, 2014, p.23) and describing the unemployed as ‘moaning minnies’ in comparison to ‘the success stories in this region’ (Thatcher, 1985), a dichotomy was drawn between the hardworking and “successful self” and its feckless “other”. The perceived rewarding of individual effort is demonstrated by Karan Bilimora, the Indian-born CEO of Cobra Beer and current Chancellor at the University of Birmingham, perceiving Thatcherism as allowing

migrant workers the opportunity to ‘succeed, prosper and excel’ (2013). In being regarded as enabling citizens to (re)produce individual “success” (Thatcher, 1983), the illusion of choice was thus (re)constructed, a process further reflected through the ‘aspirational individualism and style conscious imitation’ made available to men across varying retailer(s) (Edwards, 2003, pp.69-70; see also Nixon, 1996, pp.26-7).

Given her dominant persona, it is inevitable that Thatcher has been framed within the mainstream media as having ‘overturn[ed] the ruling assumptions about the state and the market’ (Wolf, 2013) agentially. As such, scholars have identified the neo-liberal binary of “success” through individual effort and “failure” through welfare dependency as being upheld by her successors. For example, Kerr has contended that Majorism formed an extension of ‘late-Thatcherism’, observing that ‘under Major, the Thatcherite project reached a crescendo and gained a level of radical momentum which Mrs Thatcher had certainly started but had been unable to follow through’ (2001, p.180; see also McAnulla, 1999). Moreover, Angela McRobbie identifies New Labour as emphasising ‘aspirational’ signifiers across its perceived ‘meritocratic model of social mobility and consumerism’ (2009, p.130). Focusing on how women were (re)presented within this ‘meritocratic model’, McRobbie has argued that New Labour have (re)positioned ‘economic prosperity on the basis of [women’s]...enthusiasm for work and finding a career’ (2009, p.58). In doing so, ‘a scale running from welfare-dependent, single, with maternity marking failure to glamour marking success’ (McRobbie, 2009, p.134) is acknowledged as being integral to “feminine” lifestyle(s). Similar to McRobbie’s identification of aspiration as key to New Labour, individual achievement has been maintained under the present coalition,

evidenced in discourse surrounding an ‘aspiration nation’ (Cameron, 2013). As demonstrated by the cutting of welfare provision(s) being (re)constructed as ‘a journey from dependence to independence’ (Duncan Smith, 2014), Kerr et al.’s argument that Cameronism has acted as ‘a development in the unfolding of forms of neo-liberal governmentality’ (2011a) is supported through its promulgation of discourse supporting a dichotomy between the “successful self” and its “failed other”.

Given McRobbie’s identification of the ‘shrill championing of young women as a metaphor for social change’ (2009, p.15) under New Labour, it is important for this thesis to assess how aspirational opportunities were provided for a marginalised sexual identity through changes in both the law and social attitudes more broadly. As such, Bob Jessop has noted the existence of ‘a “Pink Pound” niche market reflecting changes in sexual identities and lifestyles’ (1997, p.565), providing “gay” men with a discrete space to buy product(s) framed as integral to their sexuality. As opposed to political campaigning, Ken Plummer has identified 1996’s Gay Pride as forming an ‘apolitical world of clubbing, Calvin Klein, Mr Gay Britain, designer beers, body piercing, kitchen styles, dream houses, gay holidays, gay marriages, theme parties, suntan products, gyms for the body beautiful, antiques, flash cars, Internet, financial services, dance, video and media of all forms’ (1999, p.149). Given arguments that ‘the politically active in the [gay] community have been marginalised in the interests of profit’ (Woods, 1995, p.45; see also Field, 1995), Tim Edwards has observed “gay” men as reinforcing sexual identity through ‘their consumption patterns’ (1997, p.74). Similar to how “femininity” was (re)constructed as emphasising the significance of being ‘flexible, individualised, resilient, self-driven and self-made’ (Harris, 2004a,

p.16), comparable signifiers have been placed on “gay” lifestyle(s).

Although Edwards has identified “gay” men as ‘maintaining a distinctive lifestyle or identity’ through a discrete Pink Pound (1997, p.74), Gert Hekma has countered that “gay” culture has suffered through its association with the “straight self” (2010, p.363). As such, a homonormative identity has emerged, defined by Lisa Duggan as forming ‘a privatised, depoliticised gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption’ (2003). In recognising this ‘domesticity’, Hekma notes that ‘many gays and lesbians are very happy with the security offered by the nuclear family...and enjoy the pleasures of monogamy’ (2010, p.363), rather than undertaking a disruptive, dynamic or fluid identity. Equally, Seymour Kleinberg has identified “gay masculinity” as being compromised through its perceived emphasis on muscular bodies (1995, pp.45-57), a physique validated through ‘the banishment of homosexuality’ (Simpson, 1994, p.29). As such, Kenneth MacKinnon’s argument that ‘publicly defining oneself as heterosexual seems to be a means to male legitimacy’ (2003, p.7) is demonstrable across mainstream “gay” identity, despite the latter remaining a ‘subordinated masculinit[y]’ (MacKinnon, 2003, p.7; see also Connell, 2011, p.40). Although “gay” men remain ‘subordinated’, therefore, a discrete Pink Pound has assimilated neo-liberal binaries of “success” and “failure” into their lifestyle(s), countering Edwards’ contention that a separate commercial identity has provided ‘added significance for the gay community as a visual and potentially political act, as well as a personal statement’ (2000, p.138). Given Edwards’ further point that “gay” men ‘tend to have fewer financial commitments and therefore often

higher disposable incomes' (1997, p.74), those unable to access a Pink Pound have been marginalised in both a sexual and neo-liberal capacity. Although it has been insufficiently addressed in much of the masculinity studies literature, therefore, the impact of neo-liberal dichotomies on poorer "gay" men remains a significant concern.

Research Overview and Contribution

Given the need for further literature concerning how a marginalised sexuality has been intersected with neo-liberal binaries of "success" and "failure", this thesis provides an explanation of the extent to which "gay" lifestyle(s) have aspired for values associated with both the "straight subject" and commercial forms of "success" whilst also appearing discrete. Given that Benwell has described "straight" men's magazines as 'one of the few arenas in which masculinity is regularly addressed, discussed and scrutinised' (2003b, p.156), it is arguable that this point is even more true of "gay" men's magazines. I therefore undertook a case study of *Gay Times* and *Attitude*, the two highest-circulating "gay" men's publications over the twenty years since Thatcher stepped down. Although *Gay Times* was initially campaign-oriented, *Attitude* was more focused on lifestyle(s) and culture, ensuring that a contrasting readership was provided for. As Edwards has contended 'gay sexuality remains a significant, if often unacknowledged, factor in the development of men's style magazines targeting men and masculinity' (1997, p.74), it was important to understand how this 'style' was marketed for an exclusively "gay" audience. Rather than selecting a larger range of minority publications, the high readership of *Attitude* and *Gay Times* (Baker, 2003, p.245; Stevenson et al., 2003, p.118) provided an understanding of how

varying audience(s) were both addressed and had their outlook ‘set’ by popular media outlets (McCombs and Shaw, 1972; see also Herman and Chomsky, 1988). In doing so, the expectations placed on “gay” men were therefore made apparent, allowing me to assess how signifiers of “success” functioned through a ‘regulative, normalising role’ (McRobbie, 1999, p.48) rather than being ‘defined by aspiration rather than full possession’ (Benwell, 2003b, p.161).

Similar to this thesis’ understanding of how neo-liberal binaries were assimilated into an “abject gay” identity, the study of lifestyle(s) magazines printed from 1991 allowed me to complement earlier scholarship on publications targeting a marginalised gender reliant on signifiers of ‘empowerment’ and ‘choice’ (McRobbie, 2009, p.1), contributing to research on how “straight” men’s publications have changed. In her analysis of the latter, Benwell has identified a shift from a ‘feminist friendly’ New Man to a New Lad that rejected “femininity” as an indicator of appearing ‘weakened’ (2003b, p.156). Despite acknowledging that “straight masculine” magazines have targeted discrete lifestyle(s), Benwell has maintained neo-liberal binaries of “success” and “failure” to have consistently been (re)produced, citing ‘the rapid rise of consumer markets anxious to capitalise on the male consumer in the mid-eighties’ (2003b, p.155). Equally, changes to “masculine” identity have been regarded as indicative of ‘the language of aspiration associated with consumer culture’ (Benwell, 2003b, p.156), supporting Mark Simpson’s dismissal of the perceived dichotomy between New Lad and New Man as ‘a “phony” marketing phenomenon’ (1996, p.249). Despite ‘a certain level of ambiguity’ (Benwell, 2003b, p.156) being observable across varying

publications, Edwards has acknowledged that ‘each of the titles concerned expresses a quite distinct set of characteristics and values which...centres on a particular construction of masculinity or personality’ (1997, p.80), upholding neo-liberal tropes of individual “success”. As Edwards has drawn attention to the need for comparative research in “gay” men’s magazines (1997, p.74), this thesis stressed how *Attitude* and *Gay Times* could maintain across varying discrete lifestyle(s) the aspiration for “can-do success”, validated through the marginalisation of an “at-risk other” (Harris, 2004a, p.32).

Through a focus on high-circulating “gay” men’s lifestyle(s) magazines published between 1991 and 2011 forming primary sources, this thesis contributes to the wider literature on sexuality and “masculinity”, demonstrating how ‘subordinated masculinities’ (MacKinnon, 2003, p.7) have intersected with neo-liberal binaries of “success” and “failure”. To support the coding of these texts, I conducted a selection of secondary interviews with “male” respondents not identifying as “straight” concerning their perceptions of the publications, alongside broader themes of “gay” lifestyle(s) and the aspiration to appear “successful”. Given Edwards’ warning that the analysis of magazines alone ‘runs the risk of missing their significance as a far wider cultural phenomenon’ (2003, p.135), it was necessary to assess how “gay” lifestyle(s) had changed on a ‘wider’ societal scale. As respondents were all over twenty-one, they were able to draw on how they regarded the publications when younger in comparison to how they considered them at present. Although sampling from a broad demography, interviews were conducted in Manchester, London and Brighton, areas with a notable

Pink Pound presence (BBC, 2005; Burston, 2006; Visit Manchester, 2014), enabling respondents to provide further evidence concerning how a “gay” sub-culture had changed in comparison to that (re)presented in *Attitude* and *Gay Times*. Equally to the publications more broadly, the lifestyle(s) and perceptions of the publications as outlined by varying respondents provided further comparison with the opinions of readers articulated in the letters pages of the magazines.

In order to assess how the magazines reflected neo-liberal binaries as having assimilated into a marginalised sexuality, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was used. A method praised for ‘highlight[ing] the substantively discursive nature of power relations in contemporary societies’ (Fairclough et al., 2009, p.369), CDA allowed me to understand the extent to which the discourse and images (re)presented in both publications have placed significance on homogenous aspirations for neo-liberal “success”. Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer have praised CDA for its ability to identify ‘the linguistic means used by the privileged to stabilise or even to intensify inequalities in society’ (2012, p.32), a process argued by Norman Fairclough et al. to have ‘explicitly position[ed] itself on the side of dominated and oppressed groups’ (2009, p.358). As such, CDA provided the thesis with an understanding of how sexual and neo-liberal ‘inequalities’ were prevalent within the discourse of *Attitude* and *Gay Times*. This thesis was therefore able to demonstrate that, despite David Cameron’s claim that Britain was ‘the best place to be lesbian, gay or transgender anywhere in Europe’ (Hope, 2013), a disposable income and homonormativity were both (re)constructed as integral to “gay masculinity”. Through the coding of mainstream

“gay” publications, I was able to complement and extend existing scholarship concerning the neo-liberal signifiers of “can-do” and “at-risk” identified in studies relating to “femininities” and social change (Harris, 2004a; McRobbie, 1999, 2009) by, to some extent, transposing this spectrum of “success” and “failure” into the study of “gay masculinities”.

1.2 Thesis Structure

In order to accurately determine how neo-liberal binaries of “success” and “failure” have been assimilated into a discrete “gay masculinity”, the first chapter of this thesis outlines how a commercial identity was observable in the academic literature on masculinity studies more broadly, assessing the contribution(s) of scholars including Edwards (1997), MacKinnon (2003) and Sean Nixon (1996). Although McRobbie has highlighted New Labour’s focus on an ‘individualistic’ image through women having ‘economic prosperity on the basis of [their]...enthusiasm for work and having a career’ (2009, p.58), it remained necessary to survey whether scholars acknowledged a similar approach in masculinity studies, in terms of product(s) purchased and men’s image more broadly. In understanding how masculinity studies have drawn attention to the neo-liberal emphasis on “success” as integral to gendered lifestyle(s), a wider context was thus provided for the case study contained in this thesis.

Having surveyed the existing literature on masculinity studies more widely, a second chapter outlining how “gay” lifestyle(s) have changed as a result of being intersected with neo-liberal binaries was necessary. As Edwards has provided a direct comparison

of “gay masculinity” within the context of the “straight self” (1997), it was necessary to examine his contribution(s). Equally, in order to glean a fuller understanding of how homonormativity has become integral to a separate “gay” identity, as identified by a Pink Pound, research by Lisa Duggan (2003) and Penny Griffin (2009) is also cited. Within the literature concerning “gay” lifestyle(s), it was therefore important to discern how far scholars had identified mainstream “gay masculinity” as being focused on aspiring toward the homonormative “self”, for example through drawing attention to emphasis on monogamy and parenthood rather than attempting to subvert dominant “straight” ideals. Equally, this chapter articulates the importance of expanding and complementing existing research from authors including Sender, who undertook a case study of the American “gay” publication *The Advocate* between 1967 and 1992 (2001) and analyses of “straight” men’s magazines by authors including Benwell (2003b) and Edwards (2003).

Having surveyed the existing literature’s identification of how gendered and sexual hierarchies were intersected with neo-liberal binaries of “success” and “failure” in the first two chapters of this thesis, the third chapter outlines the methods used when conducting the case study. Here, I assess the benefits of CDA for understanding the ‘ambivalent, shifting and contradictory’ discourse (Benwell, 2011) prevalent in both *Attitude* and *Gay Times*, the publications under review. As well as justifying the importance of selecting high-circulating magazines to be provided with a greater cultural currency of how “gay masculinity” has changed in Britain, I also discuss the benefits of selecting a finite number of editions published between 1991 and 2011. Although secondary to the coding of the publications, the methods chapter also

outlines the significance of interviews when examining the increased emphasis on neo-liberal “success” in LGBTQIA publications, assessing their benefit(s) on a one-to-one and semi-structured basis rather than as part of a wider focus group.

Having coded both *Attitude* and *Gay Times* alongside secondary interviews, in addition to reviewing the literature outlined in the first two chapters, two clear themes emerged: an emphasis on discrete “gay” lifestyle(s) as indicators of ‘glamorous individuality’ (McRobbie, 2009, p.125) and the (re)construction of homonormative forms of “success” as a norm, informing my analysis chapters. In my fourth chapter, I articulate how far the publications have targeted a younger and therefore more impressionable audience through promoting product(s) and lifestyle(s) as available to them through their having a disposable income. Given that Nick Stevenson et al. have drawn attention to a “heteroglossia of narratives” (2003, p.113), it was important to determine how far a broad demography was catered for, or whether a specific age range or ethnicity was targeted. Equally, this chapter draws attention to how far the prevalence of neo-liberal binaries across varying lifestyle(s), for example the emphasis placed on purchasing product(s) and promoting celebrities associated with different “gay” identities. As scholars examining changes to “femininity” have identified choice has become integral part of appearing “successful” (Harris, 2004a, pp.21-2; McRobbie, 2009, p.130). As such, the fourth chapter of this thesis notes the extent to which *Attitude* and *Gay Times* have regarded discrete lifestyle(s) as being indicative of existing sexual dichotomies intersecting with neo-liberal binaries.

Having assessed how far discrete lifestyle(s) have been accentuated within the magazines as integral to a ‘glamorous individuality’ (McRobbie, 2009, p.125), the fifth and final chapter of this thesis discusses the extent to which the neo-liberal emphasis on both a disposable income and homonormative forms of “success” (see Table 2, pp.125-7) has been (re)produced as a norm. As such, it was important for this chapter to acknowledge whether a binary “other” was (re)presented through those constructed as “failures” being marginalised against perceived norms of “success”, or not even being discussed at all (Taylor and Sutherland, 2003, p.172). This chapter discusses the significance of varying aspirational lifestyle(s) (re)presented in both publications through mainstream stars and political figures, assessing how far those considered as famous have been framed as role models. Equally, I place emphasis on the extent to which expensive product(s) and events have been promoted in *Attitude* and *Gay Times*, in addition to the maintaining of well-toned physique(s) through the commercial space of a gym (Edwards, 1997, p.130). Regarding how far a heteronormative identity has been (re)produced as a norm, I examine the extent to which the publications have placed significance on values of ‘domesticity’ (Duggan, 2003; see also Hekma, 2010, p.363) in terms of monogamous relationships, additionally to similar “straight” signifiers of marriage and parenthood.

Summary

In identifying how neo-liberal signifiers were assimilated into a sexuality marginalised in order to validate the “straight subject” (Connell, 2011, p.151), my case study forms a strong comparative analysis with research into marginalised groups

more broadly. Rather than the previously subversive discourse that questioned the necessity of gender binaries and dominance of the “straight self” (Lent, 2003), the coding of *Attitude* and *Gay Times* from 1991 to 2011 instead demonstrates how an assimilation of heteronormative values were prominent, with a discrete sexuality being maintained through neo-liberal signifiers rather than in spite of them. Given that binaries of “success” and “failure” were observable across “gay” lifestyle(s), I was thus able to note the development of a kyriarchy, a concept defined by Elizabeth Schlusser Fiorenza as ‘a complex pyramidal system of intersecting multiplicative social...structures of superordination and subordination’ (2009, p.112). Although those with both homonormative lifestyle(s) and a disposable income were (re)constructed as having varying choice(s), therefore, poorer “gay” men remained further marginalised.

2. Taking “Masculinity” Seriously

Academics in masculinity studies have observed that values associated with “straight” men in British culture have been (re)produced across “gay” male lifestyle(s) between 1991 and 2011. For example, “gay masculinity” is noted to mirror a “straight” identity through its emphasis on muscular bodies (Kleinberg, 1995, pp.45-57), additionally to long-term relationships and marriage (Hekma, 2010, p.363). Signifiers of “straight masculinity” are further reflected through the emphasis placed on consumerism, a process I define as the purchasing of expensive and branded product(s) that are perceived as projecting varying forms of “success”. Similarities between “gay” and “straight” men are also observable in the Pink Pound (Edwards, 1997, pp.113-5), a distinct form of “gay” consumerism that nonetheless reflects signifiers associated with “straight” lifestyle(s). Consequently, scholars have noted that to self-define as “gay” involves an assimilation into several perceived norms of “straight masculinity” (Hekma, 2010, p.363), forming what Kenneth MacKinnon has described as ‘a means to male legitimacy’ (2003, p.7). There therefore remains a need to address how “gay” men have emulated lifestyle(s) associated with “straight masculinity” in both their public and private lives, while also maintaining a separate Pink Pound.

In understanding how “straight masculinity” has (re)produced varying “gay” lifestyle(s) in the period my case study focuses on, this chapter evaluates how the discipline of masculinity studies has outlined changes to gendered identity. Academics

including Raewyn Connell (1987, 1995, 2011), Michael S. Kimmel (2000) and Alan Petersen (1998) have highlighted “masculine” forms of hegemony as having emerged through ‘a social ascendancy achieved in a play of social forces’ (Connell, 1987, p.184). These earlier studies are advanced by a second wave of sociologists, including Tim Edwards (1997; 2000; 2006) and Sean Nixon (1996; 1997), who note that both “gay” and “straight” men aspire for a form of ‘individual success’ (Nixon, 1996, p.160), as reflected in the use of ‘commodified solutions to [gendered anxiety], from multi-gyms to leather jackets’ (Edwards, 1997, p.129). ‘Different elements of hegemony’ relevant to discrete forms of “successful masculinity” (Ricciardelli et al., 2010, p.63), therefore, have been (re)constructed as identifiable through the specific product(s) purchased.

The hegemonic nature of “masculine success” identified in this chapter is complemented by a comparative analysis of the literature addressing “femininity”, a gender that McKinnon contends has validated the “masculine subject” through the ‘insisting of distance from the female subjects’ (2003, p.5). Specifically, the role of the “can-do” girl, a signifier used by Anita Harris to define those who appear ‘sexually attractive, smart and savvy; and declaring this through consumption and display’ (2004a, p.22) is assessed. The cultural theorist Angela McRobbie has applied Harris’ description of the “can-do” girl in a British context, linking the rise of New Labour to women’s aspirations for ideal forms of “success” through social mobility and consumerism (2009, p.130). Harris has argued that the “can-do” girl is validated by the stigmatising of an “at-risk other”, defining the “failure” associated with the latter as ‘a matter of personal choice, and at the same time the unintended consequence of an

unfortunate individual biography’ (2004a, p.35). An “at-risk” identity has thus been (re)constructed as avoidable through adhering to the perceived norms associated with “can-do success”. In applying the hierarchical “feminine” binaries used by Harris to understand “masculine” lifestyle(s), this chapter is able to demonstrate how the “successful masculine self” is validated by the subjugation of its “failed other”. In Table 1 below, therefore, the signifiers of “success” and “failure” are defined in the context of this thesis, expanding Nixon’s argument that “masculinity” has been ‘crucially determined by...the tensions and fractures between them’ (1996, p.13).

Table 1 – *How heteronormative neo-liberalism understands “success” and “failure”*

Definition of “Success”	Definition of “Failure”
A cis identity, a term defined by Kristen Schilt and Laurel Westbrook as being ‘individuals who have a match between the gender they were assigned at birth, their bodies, and their personal identities’ (2009). Additionally to a cisgender, “straight masculinity” is also regarded as integral to “success”.	Having an identity perceived as deviating from cis norms, additionally to not identifying as “straight”.
A disposable income that could be spent on accessing spaces and commodities including clothes, nightclubs and a gym.	Not earning enough money to take part in and attend exclusive commercial events.

A clearly visible fit and healthy body fashioned through training at a gym.	Having a body considered unattractive, most frequently through its being “othered” as fat.
Owning an array of fashion items exclusive to a specific identity and frequently purchasing select brands.	Being unable to buy a range of exclusive clothes.
A monogamous, long-term relationship, resulting in marriage and children as part of a nuclear family.	Being single for a long period of time, or unable to maintain a lasting relationship.
Having a professional career that is well-paid, respected and enjoyable, and aspiring to progress within it.	Being unemployed or demotivated through having a short-term job that does not pay well and is not regarded as being prestigious.
Living in an exclusive area in a vibrant location.	Living in a deprived area without any notable events taking place.
Having autonomy and choice over lifestyle(s) undertaken, defined by McRobbie as forming a glamorous individuality (2009, p.125).	Not having sufficient income to project difference and take part in discrete lifestyle(s).

The binaries of “success” and “failure” outlined in the table above are upheld through the discourse of neo-liberalism, a process understood in the context of this thesis as maintaining ‘heterosexuality as essential to appropriate and productive economic behaviour’ (Griffin, 2009, pp.46-7), reflected through individual financial growth.

Prior to conducting this analysis, however, it is important to emphasise that neo-liberalism is understood in the context of this thesis through its impact on “masculinity” in Britain, rather than on a broader scale. As with the binaries of “can-do” and “at-risk” outlined by Harris, the perceived norm of neo-liberal “success” can be rendered intelligible through the subjugation of “failure”. While the latter has been (re)constructed as atypical to “masculine” lifestyle(s), “success” is instead presupposed to be a norm. Although prominent in sexual and gendered identity, neo-liberal binaries are assimilated into, rather than remaining separate from, heteronormativity. The latter is best understood as a structure that upholds the ‘signifying practices’ maintaining “straight masculinity’s” position as a universal norm (Griffin, 2009, p.31). This thesis argues that, between 1991 and 2011, the concept of heteronormativity has been sustained through a pervasive neo-liberal identity. The link between heteronormativity and neo-liberalism in “gay” lifestyle(s) can thus be noted to maintain a ‘tacit but crucial privileging of heterosexuality’ (Griffin, 2009, p.39), reflected in the discourse surrounding a Pink Pound (Edwards, 1997, pp.113-5). By observing the (re)production of heteronormative norms, this thesis therefore contends that “gay” men aspire to replicate similar neo-liberal ideals of “success” to those undertaken by the “straight self”.

Through its impact on “femininity”, consumerist lifestyle(s) have been fundamental to cultural studies. For example, McRobbie has identified an emphasis on glamorous individuality (2009, p.125) in the UK in the period under review, noting that ‘fashion, beauty and lifestyle products’ (2009, p.126) have caused “femininity” to reflect what she regards as ‘a more competitive neo-liberal order’ (2009, p.125). The foundation to

understanding changes in “masculinity” is therefore advanced in this thesis through a comparative analysis of women’s studies, discussing how a neo-liberal identity is (re)presented across both “gay” and “straight masculine” lifestyle(s).

To understand how “gay masculinity” (re)produces characteristics associated with “straight” identity, this chapter provides an analysis of how the literature in masculinity studies evaluates neo-liberalism to have impacted on heteronormativity. Firstly, I outline scholars’ perceptions of what constitutes a “masculine” norm, taking into account the aspiration to have both a hegemonic identity involving heteronormative forms of “success” (see Table 1, pp.20-1) alongside individualised lifestyle(s). Secondly, I assess how academics draw attention to the neo-liberal drive for “success” through the consumerist desire for branded product(s). Having examined the impact of commercialism on men’s lifestyle(s), this chapter then discusses how scholars identify “masculinity” as being affected through a range of role models, notably through careers that have been (re)constructed as “successful”. Finally, to complement the research concerning neo-liberalism’s impact on “masculine” identity, I analyse how “can-do” and “at-risk” forms of “femininity” are (re)presented (Harris, 2004a), as outlined earlier in this chapter’s introduction. Across “masculine” lifestyle(s), therefore, I contend that hegemonic neo-liberal binaries have been assimilated into heteronormative power relations.

2.1 The (Re)Construction of a “Masculine” Norm

In the discipline of masculinity studies, there is insufficient discussion concerning how neo-liberal binaries of “success” and “failure” are assimilated into heteronormative discourse. This part of the chapter therefore examines how scholars have noted the forms of “success” outlined in Table 1 to be perceived across “masculine” lifestyle(s) as a norm. In doing so, it is firstly important to briefly assess how scholars have identified heteronormativity as upholding hierarchical gendered binaries. Secondly, I provide a more specific analysis of the hegemonic signifiers acknowledged in masculinity studies, despite its being regarded as a ‘multiple and even contradictory’ (MacKinnon, 2003, p.83) identity. Both the points made in this part of the chapter are consequently able to reflect a further understanding of neo-liberalism’s assimilation into “masculine” lifestyle(s) in the period under review, as discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

The Sustaining of a “Masculine” Norm through Heteronormativity

It is firstly important to acknowledge that “masculinity” is consistently (re)presented as a gendered norm, as demonstrated through what MacKinnon describes as an ‘insisting of distance’ against an “abject femininity” (2003, p.5). Candace West and Don Zimmerman have defined gendered binaries as being ‘embedded in everyday interaction’ (1987), a process that Francine M. Deutsch argues has created an ‘inevitability of inequality’ (2007). Further analysis is necessary, therefore, to understand how discrete binaries of “success” and “failure” have assimilated into

gendered hierarchies, while also sustaining the ‘inequality’ that Deutsch contends has been prevalent across a pervasive heteronormative identity.

To understand the similarities and differences in gendered identity between 1991 and 2011, it is firstly important to acknowledge the ‘prevailing social structures’ (Brickell, 2005) that are argued to affect gendered binaries. “Masculinity” is noted by Penny Griffin to function as a norm through its being (re)constructed as ‘natural and/or hegemonic, [but] only because [it has]...been successfully sedimented in and reproduced over time by society’ (2009, p.31). As mentioned, the dominance of “masculinity” in heteronormative discourse is (re)presented through ‘an acontextual, superordinate organising element’ (Smiler, 2004) sustained through subjugating “feminine” identity as an “abject other”.

Hegemonic “Masculinity”, Differing “Masculinities”

In order to understand how “masculinity” has been (re)constructed as a dominant norm, it is important to identify the extent to which academics consider gendered identity to be (re)presented through hegemonic attributes. For example, although Connell agrees that a dominant “masculine” hierarchy exists (2011, p.80-1), she also cautions against reducing gender relations to what she terms ‘fixed character type[s]’ (2011, p.76). The second wave of academics in masculinity studies, however, has contended that different lifestyle(s) are nonetheless based around similar ideals of “success”, as demonstrated through Edwards’ noting of a hegemonic ‘accessorising of

the same male form, and therefore...[acting as] two sides of the same coin' (1997, p.41). By applying Edwards' point that men considered "successful" across differing "masculine" lifestyle(s) were able to 'rule over the rest with a phallocentric intensity' (1997, p.130), I was therefore provided with a more comprehensive understanding of how concepts of "success" form a "self" reliant on "abject" identities in order to function.

Kimmel rejects the existence of an entirely hegemonic "masculinity", claiming that 'to speak of one male or one female sex role is to compress the enormous variety of our culture's ideals into one', contending that 'sex role theory' frequently disregards factors including race and sexuality (2000, p.89). Later scholars in masculinity studies, however, have countered that "masculine" norms remain dominant in varying ethnicities and sexualities. For example, although Nixon acknowledges that there is a 'plural nature [to] cultural identities' (1996, p.14), he counters Kimmel's argument that scholarly understandings of "masculinity" are frequently 'compress[ed]'. Instead, Nixon claims that perceived social hegemonies are 'sustained by dominance over other masculinities as much as by the exclusion and dominance over femininity' (1996, p.14). As such, this chapter expands the notion of 'dominance' Nixon puts forward, studying how consumerist discourse maintains a hegemonic form of "success" consistent with varying "masculine" lifestyle(s).

The extent to which differing "masculine" lifestyle(s) have been separate from one another is disputed by various academics. For example, although Edwards contrasts

the ‘caring’ identity of a Sensitive New Man (1997, p.39) with the ‘loud and sexist humour’ that he contends is inherent to a New Lad (2003, p.137), Bethan Benwell nonetheless counters that varying “masculine” lifestyle(s) can nonetheless ‘connect up and interact with one another’ (2003a, pp.22-3). In his journal article addressing distinct “masculinities”, Tony Coles agrees with Benwell that a range of ‘subfields’ are indicative of a ‘profound and pervasive’ gendered identity (2009). Despite acknowledging ‘a variety of dominant masculinities’, however, Coles has accepted that ‘pervasive’ lifestyle(s) are dependent on ‘hegemonic masculinity as [a]...culturally dominant ideal’ (2009). Although Coles contends that a range of ‘subfields’ give the impression of an individualised identity, therefore, the importance of hegemonic “masculine” ideals are nonetheless maintained; an issue that the following part of this chapter examines in greater depth.

2.2 The Neo-Liberal Drive for “Success” Through Consumption

Having examined how the “masculine” norm subjugates an “object femininity”, this part of the chapter focuses on the manner that academics noted consumerist forms of “success” to have been assimilated into heteronormative lifestyle(s). Scholars have disputed the accuracy of neo-liberalism’s self-defining as ‘officially “ungendered”’ (Griffin, 2009, p.30), and therefore claiming to have no impact on sexuality and gender. For example, Edwards contends that gendered identity is (re)produced through commercial discourse (1997, p.45), resulting in an increased acceptance of men ‘look[ing] into the mirror, purchas[ing] products for their skin or hair care, or wear[ing] a vast array of more fashion-conscious styles of clothes’ in order to appear

“masculine” (1997, p.84). Modern interpretations of “success”, Edwards argues, affect ‘how men *look* rather than what men *do*’ (2006, p.111). Consequently, varying “masculine” lifestyle(s) have been upheld through different product(s) being purchased.

In the first part of this chapter, I noted how the heteronormative emphasis on “masculinity” functioning as a gendered norm (MacKinnon, 2003, p.5) is reliant on the subjugation of “femininity”. This part of the chapter therefore examines the position of neo-liberal aspirations for “success” in the literature on masculinity studies, observing a gap concerning how signifiers of “failure” (see Table 1, pp.20-1) have formed a valedictory binary to “successful masculine” lifestyle(s). I begin this section by outlining how a range of commercial product(s) regarded by scholars as indicating “success” have functioned through perceptions of men unable to afford varying items being subjugated as having “failed”. In doing so, the disputes within masculinity scholarship concerning whether ‘affluent’ men alone are targeted by advertisers (Edwards, 1997, p.128) can be surveyed, understanding how far the ideal of consumerist discourse is pervasive across “masculine” lifestyle(s). Secondly, I assess how the significance of men’s fashion indicates a pervasive emphasis on “success” as a norm, before finally addressing how “masculine success” is associated with a muscular body sculpted through the use of a gym. The latter, I contend, has been (re)constructed as a commercial space accessed by those with sufficient disposable income. By addressing these three points, this part of the chapter therefore demonstrates how scholarship in masculinity studies allows neo-liberalism to maintain

‘dominant, hierarchical formations of gender’ (Griffin, 2009, p.208) through the purchasing of material commodities treated as integral to varying lifestyle(s).

(Re)Presenting Consumerist Discourse in “Masculine” Lifestyle(s)

This part of the chapter firstly assesses how authors consider consumerist discourse to have impacted on “masculinity”. In doing so, it is important to acknowledge that the rise of neo-liberalism has changed perceptions of “masculine” identity. Connell has gone further, contending that ‘advanced capitalism’ has enabled forms of “masculinity” to be (re)produced, signifying a ‘tamed’ part of the corporate economy (2011, p.165). Edwards maintains that “success” in the context of the ‘advanced capitalism’ noted by Connell is (re)shaped around conceptions of “masculinity”, observing that men have become ‘increasingly involved in all aspects of consumption’ (1997, p.96). For Edwards, therefore, conceptions of “success” have been based on the aspiration for consumerist ideals, furthering the literature concerning hegemonic “masculine” lifestyle(s) outlined in the previous part of this chapter.

The cultural theorist Mark Simpson has argued that the process of consumption (re)presents a shift from “straight masculinity” to “queer” lifestyle(s), defining the latter as being outside the ‘regulation’ of gendered and sexual identity (1994, p.99). Griffin has countered Simpson’s claim, however, contending that gendered binaries of “masculine” and “feminine” have allowed neo-liberal forms of “success” to have ‘a grid of intelligibility, delineating meaning, identity and behaviour’ (2009, p.30). Edwards has expanded on Griffin’s point concerning the gendered ‘grid of

intelligibility' through which varying forms of consumerism can function, noting a shift from "femininity" acting as 'the primary pawn in the game of consumption' (1997, p.128) to processes such as shopping being equally synonymous with a "masculine" identity (1997, p.96). This emphasis on commercial discourse across varying lifestyle(s), therefore, allows men to treat themselves and others 'as objects of desire to be bought and sold, or imitated and copied' (Edwards, 1997, p.73). Through the ability to buy and own varying product(s), an ideal of "masculine success" that men can aspire to (re)produce is consequently made apparent.

J. Dennis Lord has identified an aspiration to purchase a range of material items, observing how 'retail saturation' has impacted on 'the availability of capital, the competitiveness of key players, and the dynamic nature of the retailing and shopping centre development' (2000). Academics in masculinity studies have also noted these explicitly commercial signifiers as being highly prevalent. For example, Edwards has applied the emphasis that Lord places on 'retail saturation' to 'a subjective experience of image processing, association and value interpretation that is as individual and idiosyncratic as it is social and structured' (1997, p.91), arguing that consumerist discourse is prevalent in a range of "masculine" identities. Despite various lifestyle(s) considering themselves as 'individual and idiosyncratic', therefore, "masculinity" is noted as having continued to emphasise the buying of product(s) as an indicator of "success".

Lord's focus on the 'availability of capital' has been reflected in case studies concerning how "masculine" lifestyle(s) have (re)produced 'the dynamic nature of the retail and shopping centre development' (2000). Equally, Peter Anderson et al.'s examination of alcohol advertising has noted that different forms of "masculinity" can be identified across varying commercial product(s), for example citing how Smirnoff appears 'urbane' and 'charismatic'; forms of 'bravado' are associated with Sidekick and Carling equates "masculinity" with 'drinking too much' (2009, p.3). In a similar manner, Jackson Katz's case study of "masculine" violence in advertising has observed a 'James Bond-like camel provid[ing] female ratification of Joe [Camel]'s masculinity' (2003, p.355), explicitly linking consumerist product(s) to "masculine success" through sexual desirability. There is, therefore, a shift from alcohol and cigarettes being associated with a working-class identity (Green et al., 1991) to their (re)presenting varying forms of "masculinity" through neo-liberal ideals.

Edwards supports the points outlined by Anderson et al. (2009) that there is an 'individual and idiosyncratic' (1997, p.91) approach to selling discrete brands across a range of "masculine" lifestyle(s). Nonetheless, he contends that 'white, middle-class and young men, as the most affluent' (1997, p.128), are the primary targets of marketers and advertisers. Kristen Barber agrees with Edwards that commodities are specifically directed towards 'affluent' men, concluding from her case study of hair salons that middle-class men receive both a 'bodily pampering' and hairstyle that they 'conflate with white professional-class aesthetics' (2008, p.464). These indicators of "success", Barber contends, are not (re)produced in working-class barber shops, instead only being available for men with a high disposable income. Although

Edwards acknowledges that a ‘consumer society often offers the old, fat, ugly or “socially crippled” man little except increasing castigation’ (1997, p.130), there nonetheless remains insufficient scholarship in the mainstream academia on masculinity studies explicitly describing the manner that “failure” is valedictory for men regarded as having “successfully” conformed to neo-liberal ideals.

In his case study of middle-class young men purchasing what he describes as ‘vanity goods’, John Galilee (2002) counters the argument made by Edwards that the ideals of consumerism affect ‘affluent’ “masculine” identities alone (1997, p.128). Galilee is critical of how the second wave of masculinity studies (Edwards, 1997, 2000, 2006; Nixon, 1996, 1997) have focused on the ‘consumption habits of middle-class, young, urban men’ (2002, p.37), rather than studying the impact that consumerist discourse has had on “masculinity” as a whole. By assessing the sale of ‘imitated and mass-produced’ product(s) at cheaper prices, Galilee therefore identifies ideal forms of “success” that the ‘lower strata’ (2002, p.38) can realistically aspire for. Although Barber’s case study outlined earlier equates ‘white, professional-class aesthetics’ (2008, p.464) with consumerist lifestyle(s), Galilee has countered that commercial discourse is (re)produced beyond ‘middle-class, young, urban men’ to a ‘lower strata’. Despite the marketing of product(s) for explicitly separate “masculine” lifestyle(s) (Edwards, 1997, p.91), differences of opinion are demonstrated to exist in masculinity studies regarding whether an emphasis on commodities can be (re)presented at an equal level across varying social classes. Debate has also arisen concerning how a neo-liberal identity has reinforced the dominance of the “masculine self” (Edwards,

1997, p.96; Griffin, 2009, p.30), rather than explicitly detaching consumerist discourse from studies of gender and sexuality (Simpson, 1994, p.99).

“Masculinity” and Fashion

Scholars have noted that consumerist forms of neo-liberalism are integrated into gendered identity, observing that there is an emphasis on fashion by varying “masculine” lifestyle(s). This emphasis on dress, Edwards argues, reflects the ‘rise of men’s designer fashion’ (2006, p.112), which he contends has resulted in an increased number of men ‘traipsing around supermarkets...[and] enjoying the raptures and passions of fashion’ (1997, p.96). Despite conceding that fashion has affected the working-class New Lad (2003, p.137), Edwards nonetheless observes that ideal forms of “masculine success” are (re)produced in the clothes made available for men to purchase. As with commercialism in general, he has claimed that marketers are ‘demographically specific and often focused strongly on younger men, more affluent men or, most importantly, those living and working in a metropolitan environment’ (2006, p.112). Although Edwards has acknowledged that ‘many poorer, older or inappropriately located men...[are] constrained or even excluded in relation to consumption’ (2000, p.137), there remains a gap in the literature on masculinity studies concerning how neo-liberal (re)constructions of “failure” have validated the perceived “success” associated with the purchasing of expensive and branded clothing.

Nixon contends that purchasing of clothes in order to demonstrate a “successful masculinity” has established ‘new groups of style-conscious men prepared to commit

time and money to clothing without the fear of being labelled outlandish, effeminate or gay' (1997, p.171). Rather than being explicitly affiliated with the latter, scholars in masculinity studies instead note that 'style-conscious' identities are associated by "straight" men with a sufficiently disposable income. The purchasing of various expensive and branded fashion items, therefore, are regarded as an indicator of "straight masculine success". Despite acknowledging that some product(s) are targeted at a 'lower strata', Galilee has nonetheless connected the ability to afford specific clothes with the existence of 'a structured hierarchy', which he contends to have maintained class distinctions (2002, p.38). An ideal form of "masculine success", therefore, is understood by scholars as involving overt displays of wealth, reflected in an emphasis on clothes being purchased because of the brands they are associated with (Galilee, 2002, p.50) rather than low prices. As opposed to saving money, Galilee instead argues that clothing product(s) are promoted in terms of allowing 'the individual to present his or her desired self-image to others' (2002, p.39). A sufficient disposable income to (re)produce distinctive "masculinities" that reflect a broader argument regarding 'individual and idiosyncratic' lifestyle(s) (Edwards, 1997, p.91) is therefore maintained through the process of shopping. For example, Nixon contends that choice and individualisation are reflected through "masculine" signifiers of exclusivity, conservatism and modernity (1997, p.184), meaning that differing lifestyle(s) are discernible in the clothes men choose to wear.

As well as focusing on individualised "masculine" identities, Edwards has outlined how discourse concerning fashion has (re)produced a 'heavy reliance on key factors of work-related aspirationalism and heterosexuality' (1997, p.67). Like Galilee (2002)

and Nixon (1996; 1997), Edwards notes that the purchasing of specific clothes has been used to reflect an aspiration towards ideal conceptions of work, linking the discourse of fashion with ‘a wider phenomenon of yuppiedom’ (1997, p.42). To be unable to dress in a way that can reflect the “success” of “yuppie” careers, therefore, is argued to give an impression of “failure” through the perceived lack of a disposable income. The earlier points made concerning how the purchasing of varying clothes (re)present notions of choice in separate “masculine” lifestyle(s), including identities considered alternative (Edwards, 1997; Galilee, 2002; Nixon, 1996, 1997), demonstrate fashion to provide a further understanding of how neo-liberalism has been assimilated into gendered identities. There is not, however, sufficient emphasis placed on how men perceived to have “failed” are subjugated by those whose fashion is (re)constructed as able to “successfully” reflect their separate identities, a gap in the literature that this thesis expands.

Perceptions of “Success” Through Toned Physique(s)

Following the emphasis on “success” through the purchasing of branded product(s), it is important to address how the literature in masculinity studies acknowledges consumption to have sexualised men’s bodies (Simpson, 1994, p.13). For example, Edwards cites the examples of ‘weight training among many young men [and] the rise of image consultancies for men’ as having reflected an ‘increased expenditure’ (1997, p.130) on a toned body, rather than an emphasis being placed on physical fitness. A sculpted muscular body at a gym, for example, has been treated as indicative of “masculine success” far more than a less overtly obvious one.

Scholars observe that a muscular body (re)produces “masculine success”, a process referred to by Susan Bordo as ‘bigorexia’ (1999, p.217), in the neo-liberal space of a gym (Edwards, 2006, pp.151-2; Simpson, 1994, pp.21-45). In his case study of bodybuilders, Simpson notes that gyms demonstrate an ideal form of “success” through the emphasis on sculpted physique(s), which he contends provide men with a ‘new-found respectability’ (1994, p.27). Consequently, Simpson cites the aspiration for physicality as leading to a shift in men’s interest from “proper” sports’ to being ‘focused unabashedly on the *corpus virile*’ (1994, p.23) through the placing of an ‘increased expenditure’ (Edwards, 1997, p.130) on men’s bodies. Edwards also argues that the emphasis on well-toned “masculine” physique(s) is indicative of a ‘concern with bodily surface rather than substance’ (2006, p.159), resulting in men’s build being (re)constructed as more important than their health. As with the purchasing of branded product(s) to indicate “masculine success”, academics in masculinity studies have observed that a gym culture also emphasises the ideal of a disposable income through the ability to “successfully” access a neo-liberal space.

Sarah Grogan and Helen Richards’ focus group based research on “masculine” bodies has concluded that well-toned physique(s) (re)produce ‘feelings of confidence and power’, whereas a fat build is associated with a ‘weakness of will’ (2002). Edwards agrees, noting that ‘processes of stigmatisation and valorisation’ (2006, p.154) are consistently emphasised when discussing “masculine” bodies. Expanding Grogan and Richards’ argument, I acknowledge that a toned physique is reliant on the

existence of a fat “other”, applying the neo-liberal emphasis on binaries of “success” and “failure” to men’s concern with their bodies. Those unable to be part of a gym culture, therefore, are regarded as “failures”, both for being lazy and for having insufficient disposable income to access it, validating a muscular frame as (re)presenting “success”.

In his case study of bodybuilding, Simpson has noted that forms of “masculine success” are understood through a ‘manly body [being] *against* homosexuality’ (1994, p.29; see also Benzie, 2000, pp.161-2). Conceptions of a “straight masculinity” in well-built men, Simpson argues, reflect a perceived ‘banishment’ of “gay” sexuality that he claims have reinforced concepts of muscularity being integral to an ‘impeccably heterosexual’ physique (1994, p.29). Despite Tim Benzie’s argument that ‘the notion of the muscle man as innately “not gay” is disappearing’ (2000, p.167), “gay” lifestyle(s) are nonetheless noted to have remained (re)constructed within heteronormative discourse as anathema to the “success” of well-toned bodies, thus (re)shaping the latter as norms within “straight masculinity”. To have an insufficiently ‘manly body’, by contrast, is therefore considered indicative of an “abject gay” identity, meaning men considered sufficiently muscular are (re)presented as “straight”, validated through the subjugation of a poorly-toned “other”. Given that scholars have noted gym culture to act as an exclusively consumerist space (Edwards, 2006, pp.151-2; Simpson, 1994, pp.21-45), forms of “success” and “failure” are therefore as relevant to commercialism as they are to the “masculine” values underpinning a muscular physique.

Simpson's argument that muscular bodies are (re)constructed to appear as 'the quintessence of virile heterosexuality' (1994, p.26) can be juxtaposed by Will H. Courtenay's observation that 'the social practices that undermine men's health are often signifiers of masculinity' (2000a). As discussed earlier in this chapter, different brands of alcohol (Anderson et al., 2009) and cigarettes (Katz, 2003) are (re)constructed by marketers to (re)produce separate "masculine" lifestyle(s). Courtenay expands the journal articles that have addressed this form of advertising, noting a link between fitness and unhealthy product(s) through citing tobacco's relation to 'virility and athletic performance', additionally to the 'unmistakeable link between alcohol and masculinity' (2000b, p.6). Simpson also observes that 'topless male models' (1994, p.23) are used to promote brands of cigarettes and alcohol, demonstrating contradictory ideals of "masculine success". In understanding how unhealthy product(s) are able to (re)present 'signifiers of masculinity' to a range of "masculine" identities, "success" is noted by scholars as being reflected across varying lifestyle(s) through commercialism. In addressing how there is a neo-liberal emphasis on "masculine role models", therefore, the following part of this chapter provides further clarification of how men with insufficient funds are "othered" as "failures", thus sustaining neo-liberal norms of "success".

2.3 The Neo-Liberal Drive for "Success" Through Role Models

Having demonstrated how hegemonic forms of consumerism have been integral to "masculine" lifestyle(s), this part of the chapter outlines how scholars identify

“success” as emerging through varying role models between 1991 and 2011. As a range of identities are regarded to have (re)produced “masculine success”, a ‘spectrum of gender patterns...in an increasingly complex business environment’ (Connell and Wood, 2005) is therefore made apparent. Academics have also noted that an emphasis on differing careers is used to project similar forms of “success” with discourse concerning celebrities, forming a sense of individualism across different lifestyle(s). Although this perceived individuality is reflected through the (re)construction of choice in role models, masculinity studies has nonetheless drawn attention to the perceived importance of emulating both the ideal of celebrity lifestyle(s) and the disposable income that is noted in the literature to accompany it.

To understand how scholars regard hierarchical neo-liberal binaries as being assimilated into differing “masculinities”, this part of the chapter begins by evaluating how varying profession(s) are able to (re)produce a notable ‘spectrum of gender patterns’ (Connell and Wood, 2005). Nonetheless, I am also careful to take into account the hegemonic importance placed on appearing “successful” that has been associated with “masculine” careers. Secondly, by outlining articles discussing the lifestyle(s) and careers of celebrities, I form a complementary understanding of “success” connected to “masculine” role models. By highlighting how the literature in masculinity studies emphasises “successful” occupations and the subsequent disposable income accompanying it as norms, this part of the chapter demonstrates that there is a neo-liberal drive for “success” in terms of careers, to the same extent as is observable in the purchasing of commercial product(s).

The Drive for “Success” Through a White-Collar Career

Several academics in masculinity studies have noted that varying careers in the period under study place an emphasis on neo-liberal ideals of “success” (see Table 1, pp.20-1). Similar to the arguments made concerning the purchasing of commodities analysed in the previous part of this chapter (Edwards, 2006, p.148), scholars have also observed that a well-paid profession is projected through neo-liberal discourse appearing as a norm across “masculine” identity. Employment considered “successful”, therefore, have been (re)constructed as available to anyone aspiring for the ideal of a well-paid, enjoyable and stable vocation, irrespective of their background or social class.

As with the discourse (re)presenting an insufficiently athletic body as indicative of a ‘weakness of will’ (Grogan and Richards, 2002), a career not considered “successful”, for example a low-paid and unstable one, is also regarded to signify emasculation. For example, Kevin D. Henson and Jackie Krasas Rogers’ case study of men in ‘temporary clerical employment’ has contended that the latter have been (re)constructed as subaltern, forming an “other” to the perceived norms of “masculine success”. In doing so, the former’s perceived “failure” has been equated with an “abject femininity” (2001). Henson and Rogers have therefore concluded that men not in permanent work are more likely to experience a ‘failure to live up to the ideals of hegemonic masculinity’ (2001), sustaining projections of “masculine success” as being projected through a perceived norm of high-paying and stable careers. As with Simpson’s contention that a poorly-toned physique indicates an “abject” sexuality (1994, p.29),

Griffin also notes that white-collar identity is (re)produced as being synonymous with signifiers of effeminacy (2009, p.34). In doing so, this thesis acknowledges neo-liberal binaries to have been assimilated into heteronormative discourse, treating career “success” as being indicative of “masculinity”. As such, employment perceived as subaltern is noted to have been equated with a “feminine” identity.

Scholars in masculinity studies have noted a rise in clerical occupations, a process Connell contends ‘almost certainly affects the construction of masculinity for the men employed there’ (2011, p.93). Consequently, Edwards observes that neo-liberal lifestyle(s) have (re)produced a ‘masculinity within white-collar and corporate and office cultures provid[ing] a more middle-class, yet similarly corporeal, assertion of masculinity’ (2006, p.157). Nixon expands this point, noting men to have increasingly placed an ‘emphasis on individual success, and a representation of themselves as enterprising’ (1996, p.160). As opposed to the more physical ‘assertion[s] of masculinity’ notable in a blue-collar workplace, therefore, Edwards instead claims that the ‘development of particular skills, from perfecting handshakes to playing golf’ (2006, p.145) have been used to reflect “masculine success”. Connell agrees, observing that an ‘arena of competition and power’ (2011, p.56) preoccupied with career-orientated “success” has been (re)presented through an office space, as opposed to traditionally working-class blue-collar environments associated with physical labour.

Although she identifies men as increasingly having white-collar careers, Connell nonetheless maintains that ‘hegemonic masculinity is not a fixed character type, always and everywhere the same’ (2011, p.76). The second wave of masculinity studies, however, has noted that similar neo-liberal conceptions of what constitutes “success” has been assimilated across the “masculine” workplace, despite the range of white-collar occupations being available. For example, Edwards has contended that, through the emphasis placed on ‘aspirationalism and corporate success’, a well-dressed appearance can project a ‘corporate power look’ (1997, p.41). Despite varying product(s) and fashion items being (re)constructed to reflect the ideal of “masculine” choice (Anderson et al., 2009, p.3), individualised vocations are nonetheless linked with an emphasis on neo-liberal binaries of “success” and “failure”. When discussing celebrity role models, therefore, it is important to provide further details of how signifiers of “success” are integrated across “masculinity” through the emphasis placed on the careers and lifestyle(s) of varying stars. In doing so, I am able to address the current gap in the literature concerning how neo-liberal forms of “failure” form a marginalised “abject”, therefore being able to validate the “successful subject”.

Using Celebrity Role Models To (Re)Produce Neo-Liberal Signifiers

Scholars in both masculinity studies and cultural studies have acknowledged a prevalence of celebrities whose perceived “success” is regarded as an ideal for men to (re)produce, putting forward ‘a series of visual images to the public in order to breed familiarity’ (Savigny, 2005, p.930). Authors observe that much of the everyday discourse in the period being studied has been centred round the “success” associated

with fame, citing how differing role models have what are considered as individualised identities (Connell, 2011, p.76; Kimmel, 2000, p.89). Nonetheless, mainstream discourse concerning celebrity lifestyle(s) maintains prominent hegemonic signifiers of neo-liberal “success”, including a disposable income (Edwards, 2006, p.148); the purchasing of expensive fashion items (Nixon, 1997, p.171) and stardom itself. Kim McNamara notes that prominent figures ‘regulate but also publicise their “front stage” public persona’ (2009), therefore enabling both routine and personal aspects of celebrity lifestyle(s) to be consistently discussed. Consequently, their influence as role models is upheld. P. David Marshall’s case study of social networking sites such as Facebook, myspace and Twitter has concurred with McNamara’s conclusions that the personal profiles of famous people has become more observable, a process Marshall notes has resulted in the ‘social network patterns of celebrities’ being (re)produced by ‘millions of users’ (2010). Through these ‘network patterns’, an aspirational identity is therefore attached to varying celebrity lifestyle(s), (re)constructing ideal forms of “success” that a range of “masculinities” are able to emulate.

Several of the ideals associated with celebrity lifestyle(s) emphasise the importance of aid work, treating the aspiration for ‘humane philanthrop[y]’ (Wheeler, 2013, p.161) as a form of “success”. Mark Wheeler notes that perceptions of ‘philanthrop[y]’ are (re)presented through a neo-liberal emphasis on ““compassionate consumption”” (2013, p.159) being able to ‘eas[e] consumer guilt’, for example through purchasing tickets for concerts by celebrity activists including U2 (2013, p.158-9; see also Street et al., 2008, p.282). Being unable to afford these tickets, therefore, is regarded as

uncaring and, by extension, a “failure”. By contrast, “success” is reflected through having sufficient disposable income to (re)produce forms of celebrity activism, for example through making regular donations to charities; buying clothes considered as ethical (Shaw and Tomolillo, 2004); and attending events and concerts hosted and organised by role models considered as ‘humane philanthropists’. In their case study of Live 8, John Street et al. have observed that the stars (re)presented have consistently overlooked the charitable connection, instead focusing on their role as celebrities (2008, p.275).

In terms of the impact of celebrity activism on “masculinity”, Joy V. Fuqua’s case study of Brad Pitt’s charity work during Hurricane Katrina observes that Pitt has been projected as an altruistic common man (2011), thus forming a “popular” legitimisation of the stars...as speaking for the people’ about issues of perceived social importance (Street et al., 2008, p.282). In contending that stars appear as “ordinary men”, Fuqua counters Wheeler’s portrayal of them attempting to act as ‘selfless Western crusaders, dedicated to alleviating the suffering of Africans’ (2013, p.162). For men aspiring to be both “successful” and benevolent, therefore, Fuqua notes that celebrities such as Pitt have been (re)constructed as appearing no differently to the common man, emphasising neo-liberal ideals of “success” to easily be (re)produced. When focusing on the desire for celebrity, Heather Nunn and Anita Biressi agree with Fuqua that there are ‘affective demands made upon the celebrity subject in contemporary media culture to be both intimate and “real”’ (2010). Through the (re)construction of varying public figures into more ‘intimate’ images, the aspiration to emulate their celebrity status has therefore been made more apparent. As highlighted by Marshall earlier in the chapter,

the use of ‘social network patterns’ (2010) when juxtaposed with perceptions of ‘authentic feeling’ (Nunn and Biressi, 2010) reinforces the image of stardom as a realistic ideal for those who nonetheless identify as a common man (Fuqua, 2011).

Through an analysis of how celebrity culture has been understood in masculinity studies more broadly, Connell has noted how the ‘corporate activity behind media celebrities’ is maintained through ‘hegemonic masculine politics [and] the management of patriarchal organisations’ (2011, p.215). Despite a range of careers and celebrities, a hegemonic ideal of neo-liberal “success” is consistently observed by scholars through the “masculine” (re)production of varying role models. There remains, however, a notable gap in the literature concerning how men appearing as “abject failures” in their careers have been used to validate the “successful” role model upheld by celebrities as a norm, a process addressed by the case study in this thesis.

2.4 The Assimilation of Neo-Liberal Binaries into a “Feminine” Identity

Research into the impact of neo-liberalism on “masculine” lifestyle(s) can be effectively complemented through the existing scholarship concerning “femininity”. This chapter therefore provides a comparative analysis of how binaries of “success” and “failure” have been (re)presented through women’s studies, demonstrating on a broader scale how neo-liberalism has assimilated into gendered binaries of “masculinity” and “femininity”. As outlined in this chapter’s introduction, the literature pertaining to women’s studies notes the existence of “can-do” and “at-risk” lifestyle(s) in “feminine” identity (Harris, 2004a), demonstrating how neo-liberal

ideals of “success” are dependent on validation through a “failed other”. For example, McRobbie identifies aspirational signifiers to have been ‘frequently used during the Blair years’ (2009, p.130), as demonstrated in discourse from Tony Blair himself concerning an ‘equality of opportunity’ (2000). The ‘aspirational individualism’ (Edwards, 2003, p.139) identified as prevalent in “masculine” identity has therefore been noted to be (re)produced across “feminine” lifestyle(s) through women ‘being increasingly individualised...[and] repeatedly called upon to shape themselves so as to be flexible’ (McRobbie, 2009, p.130). Despite the notion that neo-liberal lifestyle(s) provide ‘individualis[ation]’ and choice, McRobbie nonetheless notes that signifiers of “success” have been connected to hegemonic aspirations of appearing ‘flexible’ in areas including the workplace.

Additionally to the ability of undertaking a “successful” career, Harris has contended that ‘notions of choice, versatility, beauty and cleverness’ are also integral to the “can-do” identity (2004a, p.21-2). Similar to “masculine” identity (Edwards, 1997, p.41), the hegemonic drive for neo-liberal “success” is noted by scholars to exist across varying “feminine” lifestyle(s) in the period under study. As with scholars in masculinity studies (Edwards, 1997, p.91), Harris agrees with McRobbie (1994, p.139) that “feminine success” is (re)produced through perceptions of individualism, a process that she describes as being ‘achieved through the right personal choices and individual effort’ (2004, p.110). Similar to the manner that Henson and Rogers note subaltern men to be marginalised by perceptions of “masculine success” (2001), Harris identifies an “at-risk” girl as being associated with ‘juvenile delinquency, nihilism, and anti-social attitudes’, (re)presenting a binary “other” that validates the

perceived “feminine” norm of a “can-do” identity (2004a, p.25). As with masculinity studies (Edwards 2006, p.148), conceptions of a ‘meritocratic model of social mobility and consumerism’ (McRobbie, 2009, p.130) indicate “success” as being demonstrated through hard work, overlooking the impact of external issues including class, gender, sexuality and ethnicity. Concepts of a subaltern “masculinity”, therefore, have been complemented and expanded on through examining how women’s studies have documented “can-do femininity’s” validation through the “othering” of an “at-risk” girl.

To understand how the literature in women’s studies is able to complement neo-liberalism’s assimilation into “masculine” lifestyle(s), I begin this part of the chapter by outlining how scholars observe the validation of “can-do” girls through the existence of their “at-risk” counterpart (Harris, 2004a). Secondly, I examine how the emphasis on consumer product(s), especially fashion items, are integral to understanding a range of “feminine” lifestyle(s) through the association with the “can-do” identity, also complementing masculinity studies. Finally, I examine how “successful” careers have been (re)constructed as an ideal to aspire for, observing how “can-do” women are defined through their having “successful” professions. This part of the chapter therefore accentuates how a hegemonic form of neo-liberalism has impacted on “masculine” and “feminine” gendered identity, despite the latter remaining subjugated in order to validate the former. By examining the relevant literature concerning neo-liberalism’s integration into “feminine” lifestyle(s), the scholarship on “masculinity” can be complemented through an assessment of hierarchical binaries of “success” and “failure”. The intersection of neo-liberalism

with gendered identity, however, remains an issue insufficiently addressed in the present literature on masculinity studies.

“Can-Do” and “At-Risk” Forms of “Femininity”

Harris has firstly contended that the hegemonic nature of “feminine success” can reflect concepts of ‘strategic effort and good personal choices’, which she identifies as integral to ‘categorising young women as can-do or at-risk’ (2004a, p.32). McRobbie agrees, comparing the “A1” girl to her ‘pramface’ counterpart (2009, p.134). The observation of neo-liberal binaries in “feminine” lifestyle(s) is expanded by McRobbie, who identifies a false ideal of meritocracy (re)constructed as being attainable for any woman (2009, p.130). Nonetheless, Harris describes the “can-do” girl as being ‘much more readily taken up by white, middle-class young women’, contending that “acting white” is equated with “success” (2004a, p.107). As has also been noted in studies of neo-liberalism’s impact on the “successful masculine” identity (Edwards, 2006, p.148), the “can-do” ideal is treated as a universally attainable norm. Unlike masculinity studies, however, the projection of “at-risk” girls as ‘likely failures’ (Harris, 2004a, p.25) (re)produces a clear “abject other”, further validating perceptions of “can-do success”.

Harris has noted that appearing ‘optimistic, self-inventing and success-orientated’ (2004a, p.25) is integral to “can-do” lifestyle(s), contending ‘it is not that [“can-do” girls] are imagined as problem-free, but rather that their problems must be quickly dealt with to ensure their success’ (2004, p.32). By contrast, “at-risk” girls are (re)constructed as lacking ‘personal choice’ (Harris, 2004a, p.35) and are therefore

suffering from ‘personal incompetence’ (Harris, 2004a, p.26); therefore emphasising a need for “can-do” women to ‘ensure their success’ promptly. Despite acknowledging that neo-liberalism defines itself as providing women with more choices (2004a, pp.21-2), Harris counters that “can-do” girls are ‘perhaps more limited than ever’ (2004a, p.133). For example, signifiers of glamour, excellence and, most importantly, “success” are ‘simply taken for granted, and...produce thereby a normative femininity based on outstanding performance that is refigured as unremarkable’ (Harris, 2004a, p.106). As such, Harris has therefore contended that the “success” involved in “can-do” identity comes from ‘surviving in a risk society’ (2004a, p.35), as opposed to being a “failure” through the ‘aberrant and personal’ (2004a, p.118) circumstances that “at-risk” girls have suffered. McRobbie has also noted that the danger of moving from the “can-do subject” to an “at-risk abject” means that ‘the question of the self is never resolved and fixed, and it is therefore always open to change’ (1994, p.192). Through this constant fear of “failure”, emphasis is therefore placed on women having to work at maintaining their perceived excellence. Although “success” has been regarded as a norm, the risk of “failure” is (re)constructed as a real threat, leading to constant regulations being placed on women’s language and behaviour (Harris, 2004a, p.133). As such, the conceptions of choice and individualisation underpinning “can-do” lifestyle(s) are negated (Harris, 2004a, p.35).

The aspiration for “can-do success” in “femininity” can best be demonstrated through Harris’ point that girlpower, a signifier used since the 1990s to define ‘a sexy, brash and individualised expression of ambition’ (2004a, p.17), can ‘encapsulat[e] the narrative of the successful new young woman who is self-inventing, ambitious and

confident' (2004, p.17). Despite "can-do" girls being perceived as having 'the tools for mainstream success' (Harris, 2004a, p.29), those considered "at-risk" are instead regarded as being 'wilful risk takers who [would] use girlpower to their own (self-) destructive ends' (Harris, 2004a, p.26). An "at-risk" girl, therefore, is (re)constructed as a threat to "can-do feminine" lifestyle(s) through their having 'disordered patterns of consumption' (Harris, 2004a, p.90), whereas the "can-do" girl is regarded as dressing and shopping in a 'confident' manner. The argument made by Harris that those considered as "at-risk" are regarded as abusing "successful feminine" lifestyle(s) for 'their own (self-)destructive ends' further complements the case put forward earlier in this chapter that the neo-liberal drive for "success" (see Table 1, pp.20-1) forms a hegemonic link between separate "masculine" lifestyle(s) (Benwell, 2003a, p.23; Coles, 2009; Edwards, 1997, p.130).

For the "can-do" girl, Harris has contended that motherhood is (re)presented as equally integral to appearing 'sexy and glamorous' (2004a, p.24) as that of girlpower, validated by the "at-risk" mothers (re)constructed as indicative of an 'abject person with a "mismanaged life"' (McRobbie, 2009, p.133). As an example of appearing "mismanaged", Harris has noted that 'young motherhood' is frequently perceived as 'an unthinkable waste and tragedy' (2004a, p.23; see also McRobbie, 2009, p.134). Although planned parenthood is also treated as a form of "masculine success" when compared to younger fathers (Kerr et al., 2011b), Harris contends that greater significance is placed on motherhood, citing the "success" of the "can-do" girl as resulting from a 'reinscrib[ing of] the maternal' (2004a, p.23), complementing the

‘individualised expression of ambition’ (2004, p.17). Having children at an appropriate stage, therefore, has been associated with “can-do” concepts of girlpower.

How Consumerism is Indicative of “Feminine” Success

Harris has contended that signifiers associated with “can-do femininity” are reflected through the range of affordable material possessions. Women, she argues, are ‘lauded for their role as active consumers’ (2004a, p.28), a conception of “success” that is also acknowledged within analysis of “masculine” lifestyle(s) (Edwards, 1997, p.97). Additionally to scholars in masculinity studies claiming that neo-liberalism has changed understandings of a “successful” identity (Nixon, 1996; Edwards, 1997, p.96), academics studying “femininity” also maintain that the emphasis on consumerism between 1991 and 2011 has affected understandings of gender (Harris, 2004a, p.121; McRobbie, 2009, p.124). For example, the ideal of a disposable income remains an indicator of “success” (Harris, 2004a, p.7), nonetheless maintaining gendered hierarchies through the marketing of product(s) for a separate “feminine” audience (McRobbie, 1999, p.41).

Consumerism is argued by Harris to ‘stand in as a sign of both successfully secured social rights and civic power’ (2004b, p.163), enabling women’s purchasing of various product(s) to be (re)produced as a form of “female” empowerment. McRobbie’s contention that concepts of feminism in women’s lifestyle(s) are ‘summarily dismissed’ (2004, p.9) is supported by Harris’ observation that there instead exists ‘a problematic knitting together of feminist and neo-liberal ideology about power and opportunities’ (2004a, p.155). “Feminine” empowerment, therefore, is understood to

exist through women being ‘both sexually and economically free to do what they choose’, an identity (re)constructed as independent from ‘dominant forms of masculinity’ (Taylor and Sutherland, 2003, p.182). Cultural theorists have contended that women ‘successfully secur[ing] social rights’ are reflected through their having sufficient disposable income to purchase discrete branded product(s) (Harris, 2004a, p.28; McRobbie, 2009, p.124), an argument also been highlighted in masculinity studies (Edwards, 1997, p.96; Nixon, 1996, pp.33-47). As perceptions of equality are (re)produced through consumerism, McRobbie therefore notes that “femininity” has formed a glamorous individuality (2009, p.125) through promoting clothes worn and items owned. In understanding what scholars perceive as being the ideals central to “feminine” identity in the period under study, research on masculinity studies is provided with an important comparison in understanding how consumption has (re)constructed identity.

As with seemingly different “masculine” identities being noted to (re)present ‘two sides of the same coin’ (Edwards, 1997, p.41), varying “feminine” lifestyle(s) are also argued to maintain similar hegemonic values associated with “success”. For example, McRobbie claims that subcultures in “femininity” have found it ‘hard, if not impossible, to evade the surveillance of a seemingly friendly-capitalism’ (2009, p.121). When making the argument that ‘individualised styles of glamour requir[e] conspicuous consumption on the self’ (McRobbie, 2009, p.132), different material product(s) therefore target ‘individualised’ identities, including those regarded as alternative. Consequently, Harris argues that “can-do” girls are universally ‘imagined and produced as ideal consumers’ (2004a, p.121), a description that McRobbie agrees

with when describing fashion as ‘an almost wholly feminised industry’ (2009, p.41). Nonetheless, scholarship in masculinity studies identifies the purchasing of commodities as being integral to understanding “masculine success” (Edwards, 1997, p.96). Studies of consumerism undertaken in women’s studies, therefore, are able to complement the hierarchical neo-liberal binaries noted to have been assimilated into men’s lifestyle(s).

“Success” in Terms of Women’s Careers

Between 1991 and 2011, scholars have noted an ‘expansion of “women’s work”’ (Harris, 2004a, p.7) in Britain. Although Harris has defined ““women’s work”” as being undertaken by an ‘educated, young, professional career woman with glamorous consumer lifestyles’ (2004a, p.8), McRobbie has also observed that similar ideals of career-based “success” are (re)presented through a ‘preference for more self-expressive “artistic” choices’ (1994, p.139). Despite careers of an ““artistic”” nature not reflecting the commercial interpretation of glamorous individuality as obviously as discourse concerning ‘manicures, fashion, pampering and so on’ (McRobbie, 2009, p.132), the entrepreneurial need to ‘gain experience, get the edge on peers, develop skills and attain some independent income’ (Harris, 2004a, p.111) nonetheless remains prevalent. McRobbie’s contention that ““artistic”” careers aspire for similar neo-liberal ideals to white-collar professions therefore advances Edwards’ point that different fashions continue to (re)present ‘a return to traditional masculine values of money, work and success’ (1997, p.42). By applying McRobbie’s notes concerning “can-do” girls having careers perceived as alternative to masculinity studies, the research outlined earlier in this chapter can benefit accordingly.

As with the aspiration for celebrity lifestyle(s) (Nunn and Biressi, 2010) in masculinity studies noted previously, women are also noted to aspire for a similar ‘fantasy of achievement’ (Harris, 2004a, p.74). For example, Harris argues that career-based “success” is ‘dependent on personal effort’ (2004a, p.106), with “at-risk” identities being regarded as “failing” as a result of poor choices (2004a, p.30). Scholars have observed that “femininity’s” emphasis on self-determination is reflected in perceptions of young women being ‘the ideal subjects of the new socioeconomic order’ (Harris, 2004a, p.97). As is inherent to neo-liberal hierarchies (Griffin, 2009, p.31; Henson and Rogers, 2001), the ‘ideal subjects’ outlined are validated by the existence of women in subaltern careers, whom Harris contends form ‘a small minority who face particular personal problems preventing them from joining the mainstream’ (2004a, p.97). To understand how “can-do” careers have been (re)constructed as a norm, there is a need for further analysis concerning the assimilation of neo-liberalism into gendered lifestyle(s). The literature concerning “femininity” is therefore able to complement the existing debates in masculinity studies, outlining in further detail how neo-liberal binaries of “success” and “failure” have been assimilated into heteronormative discourse.

2.5 How the Literature Can Be Advanced

The literature evaluated in this chapter provides a key context for understanding how binaries of “success” and “failure” have been assimilated into British forms of “gay masculinity” in the period under review. This thesis therefore develops the points already outlined in masculinity studies in which the “self” has been projected through

how appearing overtly “masculine” (MacKinnon, 2003, p.5); healthiness (Grogan and Richards, 2002); profession (Henson and Rogers, 2001) and most notably the social hegemonies outlined by Nixon (1996, p.16) are validated through the subjugation of an “abject other”. Building on these binaries, this thesis is therefore able to extend the material evaluated by this chapter, acknowledging how neo-liberal hierarchies have integrated into British “gay” lifestyle(s) magazines, texts as yet unexamined.

Scholars in masculinity studies have noted that “success” is (re)presented by ‘affluent’ men purchasing a range of product(s) (re)constructed as integral to their varying lifestyle(s) (Edwards, 1997, p.128). Additionally, this emphasis on consumerism is highlighted in fashion items (Edwards, 1997, p.84), and the ideal careers of “masculine” role models (Henson and Rogers, 2001). The latter is also acknowledged in cultural studies more broadly, as evidenced through consumers being noted to emulate the ‘social network patterns’ (Marshall, 2010) undertaken by celebrities. Although consumerism is effectively identified as integral to gendered identity, there remains insufficient research concerning how “masculine success” is validated through “failure”, rendering the latter as a discrete neo-liberal “other”. To address this gap in masculinity studies, therefore, the case study conducted by this thesis is able to provide an original analysis regarding ideals of “success” in British “gay masculine” lifestyle(s) between 1991 and 2011 can reflect signifiers associated with the “straight self”.

The consumerist discourse noted by scholars as being prevalent in masculinity studies was able to complement research into “femininity”, providing a greater understanding of how neo-liberal values have assimilated into gendered identity, a point I expanded further through identifying similar binaries in “gay” lifestyle(s). By contending that an “A1” girl exists in ‘sharp contrast’ to ‘the pramface girl who is poor-looking and with a child in a buggy’ (McRobbie, 2009, p.134), neo-liberal (re)presentations of “success” are therefore validated through the existence of those perceived to have “failed”. McRobbie has also noted that glamorous individuality is significant to understanding the significance of the “can-do” girl across differing “feminine” lifestyle(s) (2009, p.130) and careers (2009, p.61). Despite having been discussed comprehensively in studies of “femininity”, neo-liberal perceptions of choice and individualism remain insufficiently addressed by the current scholarship in masculinity studies.

Despite the assimilation of neo-liberalism into gendered identities, it remains important to stress that existing hierarchies (MacKinnon, 2003, p.5) were undisturbed. Nonetheless, the validation of “can-do” girls through those (re)presented as “at-risk” (Harris, 2004a) is comparable to how heteronormativity requires a “feminine other” in order for “masculinity” to form the “subject” (Duggan, 2003, 2006; Griffin, 2006, 2009; Stryker, 2006, 2008). By applying McRobbie’s arguments concerning “can-do” identity’s prevalence across varying “feminine” lifestyle(s) (2009, p.130) to masculinity studies, including ‘self-expressive “artistic” choices’ (1994, p.139), the need for “gay” lifestyle(s) to (re)produce neo-liberal ideals to the same extent as “straight” men is therefore clearer.

Having assessed how the literature focusing on “can-do success” has been integrated into discrete lifestyle(s), the following chapter evaluates the existing research concerning neo-liberal binaries in “gay masculine” identity, allowing me to demonstrate how the shift from the disruption of heteronormative values to one (re)producing them had taken place. Like gendered hierarchies, the “straight self” is acknowledged to be maintained through the subjugation of a “gay other”. As with the differences between gendered lifestyle(s) discussed in this chapter (MacKinnon, 2003, p.5), I contend that the growth of a Pink Pound has (re)produced similar neo-liberal values of “success” to those in both “straight masculinity” and “femininity”, making an original contribution through the use of *Attitude* and *Gay Times* as primary sources. Having examined gendered identity, the following chapter is therefore able to comprehensively assess the scholarship concerning the intersection of neo-liberal discourse and sexuality.

3. Understanding “Gay” Identity

As the first chapter has illustrated, the literature concerning gendered identity places significance on how heteronormativity has (re)constructed “success” as a norm, contended by Griffin to (re)present a ‘tacit, but crucial, privileging of heterosexuality’ (2009, p.39). Similar “straight masculine” ideals of “success” (see Table 1, pp.20-1) are therefore replicated by homonormativity, a term defined by Lisa Duggan as indicating a ‘depoliticised gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption’ (2003). For example, Seymour Kleinberg cites the ‘glamorisation of physical strength’ (1995, p.47) as indicative of “successful gay masculinity”, (re)producing the physique(s) that Simpson contends ‘employs the desire for the manly body *against* homosexuality’ (1994, p.29). Scholars have also noted that further ideals of “success” considered integral to “straight masculinity” are reflected through a homonormative identity, reflected in an emphasis placed on both monogamy and ‘the security offered by a nuclear family’ (Hekma, 2010, p.363).

For an accurate understanding of how neo-liberal binaries have impacted on varying “gay” lifestyle(s) in Britain between 1991 and 2011, this chapter begins by examining how scholars note heteronormative forms of “success” to have formed aspirational ideals (see Table 1, pp.20-1). Despite similarities being observed in academic literature, I am careful to acknowledge that a separate “gay” identity remains marginalised in comparison to that of the “straight self”. Secondly, to fully understand how neo-liberal signifiers have been assimilated into a discrete “gay masculinity”, I

examine the importance that scholars place on a separate Pink Pound in upholding perceived norms of “success”. As with both “masculine” and “feminine” identity, therefore, “gay” lifestyle(s) function by “othering” as “abject failures” those unable to access commercial spaces including nightclubs and chain department stores. Equally, I assess how, similar to “straight masculinity” (Benwell, 2003a, pp.22-3), academics have noted how hegemonic forms of choice and individualism have been integral to varying “gay” lifestyle(s) in order to (re)produce “success”. Finally, accounting for my case study concerning the assimilation of neo-liberal hierarchies into an “abject gay” identity through mainstream “gay” publications, it is necessary to examine the existing research concerning how lifestyle(s) magazines as a whole have maintained discrete gendered and sexual binaries alongside commercial discourse. In examining how academics observe a commercial identity to have (re)constructed homonormative “success” as a norm in “gay masculinity”, this chapter therefore provides a context for understanding how neo-liberal hierarchies are upheld in the bestselling “gay” British publications analysed later in the thesis.

3.1 Maintaining a Homonormative Identity

Additionally to acknowledging how “femininity” forms an “abject other” that validates the “masculine self” (MacKinnon, 2003, p.5), scholars have also observed “gay” lifestyle(s) being (re)presented as an “abject” identity against the “straight subject” (Hekma, 2010, p.363; MacKinnon, 2003, p.7). Through “gay” identity being perceived as deviant, Connell argues, the negative signifiers associated with it therefore appear ‘so well formed and readily available that it can be imposed on

people whether they like it or not' (2011, p.151). Kimmel agrees, contending that "gay" men are (re)constructed as having 'sex role problems' perceived to 'differ from the normative' (2000, p.89). As mentioned in this chapter's introduction, the 'regulatory ideal[s]' of heteronormativity (Griffin, 2009, p.42) have been mimicked by homonormative signifiers. Rather than attempting to destabilise sexual hierarchies, Susan Stryker instead contends that Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Queer, Intersexed, Asexual (LGBTQIA) culture(s) have instead maintained 'an antipathy...toward other modes of queer difference' (2006, p.7). Through homonormativity, therefore, "gay" lifestyle(s) have emphasised a form of 'domesticity and consumption' (Duggan, 2003) commonly associated with heteronormativity as opposed to forms of subversion.

This part of the chapter acknowledges that homonormative forms of "masculinity" have maintained a distinction between the "straight" norm and its "gay abject", despite the latter (re)producing rather than disrupting heteronormative ideals of "success" (see Table 1, pp.20-1). I begin, therefore, with the recognition that homonormativity attempts to reflect the heteronormative "self", despite "gay masculinity" continuing to be "othered" by a "straight" identity. Secondly, I observe how a separate and subordinate "gay" identity is upheld, despite the introduction of heteronormative signifiers associated with "straight masculinity". As a result of homonormativity, "gay" men have attempted to imitate the "straight self" in a manner that perpetuates rather than contests sexual inequality. In doing so, Stryker's contention that heteronormative norms maintain the subjugation of "gay masculinity" as a "social monstrosity" (2006, p.13) is therefore validated.

How Homonormativity is “Othered” by the Heteronormative “Self”

To understand how homonormativity is different from the “straight self”, it is firstly important to draw a distinction between “gay masculinity” and a subversive identity discrete from gendered and sexual binaries self-identifying as “queer”. While the latter is defined through its attempts to disrupt fixed hierarchies (Duggan, 2006, p.193), the former instead upholds the concept of there being ‘two sexes; and that heterosexuality alone is “normal”’ (Griffin, 2009, p.33). Signifiers that have ‘regulated and reproduced’ (Griffin, 2009, p.31) “straight” sexuality therefore emphasise the need for “gay masculinity” to (re)produce homonormative ideals perceived as integral to “success”. Duggan has argued that homonormative discourse can validate “straight” lifestyle(s) by ‘not contest[ing] dominant heteronormative assumptions, but uphold[ing] and sustain[ing] them’ (2003) as ideals that “gay” men can aspire for. Despite attempts to (re)produce the heteronormative “self”, scholars have nonetheless contended that a homonormative identity maintains sexual hierarchies, supporting Duggan’s point that “gay” lifestyle(s) are ‘wedded to the natural and eternal nature of heterosexuality’ (2006, pp.194-5) rather than acting independently. Although neo-liberal ideals of “success” have been assimilated into “gay” identity, therefore, the latter continues to form an “abject” sexuality through its continued juxtaposition against the perceived “straight” norm.

Despite Duggan contending that homonormativity reinforces ‘the notion that heterosexuality alone is “normal”’ (2006, p.195), Connell has concluded that “gay” men (re)produce similar forms of “success” (see Table 1, pp.20-1) to those of the

“straight self”, for example in taking an ‘active and directing part’ in white-collar professions (2011, p.146). As Griffin notes, however, the ‘system of economic relations dependent on dominant hierarchical and heterosexual formations of gender’ (2009, p.169) has meant that heteronormativity undertakes ideals of “success” that “gay” men cannot (re)produce; for example discourse concerning procreation (Griffin, 2009, p.41). Despite homonormativity attempting to reflect heteronormative forms of “success”, therefore, scholars have nonetheless countered that a “gay masculinity” can, at best, only imitate the “straight self”.

Although the subjugation of a “gay” identity is regarded as key to validating “straight masculinity” (Duggan, 2006, p.195), the argument remains that a discrete Pink Pound enables neo-liberal forms of “success” to emulate a heteronormative identity (Edwards, 1997, pp.113-5). Emphasis, therefore, is placed on “gay” men aspiring to ‘redefin[e] their behaviour’ (Griffin, 2009, p.165) in order to attain the “successful” ideals associated with “straight masculinity”. Signifiers associated with “straight” identity, including monogamy and same-sex marriage, are thus (re)constructed as equally integral to “gay” lifestyle(s). Nonetheless, by (re)producing heteronormative ideals of “success”, the concept of a ‘rich gay culture’ (Hekma, 2010, p.363) is consequently undermined. Processes of homonormativity, therefore, have been noted to reduce the choices that “gay” men have over their lives. Rather than seeking to ‘destabilise the rigid notions of gender’ (Duggan, 2006, p.195) or disrupt the heteronormative norms upholding the “straight self”, scholars note that homonormativity instead (re)produces the ‘dominant hierarchical and heterosexual

forms of gender' (Griffin, 2009, p.38) fundamental to the subjugation of an "abject gay" identity. The perceived "self" of "straight" identity, therefore, is validated.

How "Gay" Lifestyle(s) Remain Separate to the "Straight Self", Despite (Re)Producing Homonormative Values

Despite acknowledging that "gay male" identity has functioned separately from "straight masculinity", Connell nonetheless identifies a blurring of sexual identities (1995, pp.164-5). Due to this perceived lack of clarity, therefore, Connell has argued that 'hegemonic heterosexuality cannot now monopolise the imagination in the way it once did', instead noting that a separate "gay" identity instead acts as 'a kind of permanent alternative' (2011, p.202). As such, a Pink Pound is (re)constructed as integral to 'forming, displaying and asserting an identity' (Edwards, 1997, p.113), (re)presenting a perceived norm of homonormativity within "gay" lifestyle(s). As with both "straight masculinity" (Coles, 2009; Edwards, 1997, 2000, 2006; Galilee, 2002; Nixon, 1996, 1997) and "femininity" (Harris, 2004a; McRobbie, 2009), the emphasis on having sufficient disposable income is regarded as central to varying "gay" lifestyle(s) providing access to 'alternative' commercial spaces such as nightclubs and department stores. By imitating heteronormative signifiers of "success" (see Table 1, pp.20-1) in this manner, however, "gay masculinity" continues to remain subordinate to the "straight subject", undermining Connell's point that a 'permanent alternative' exists.

As with “straight masculinity” (Edwards, 1997, p.31), “gay male” lifestyle(s) are perceived as having involved ‘tropes of partying and seduction’ (Gorman-Murray, 2011) to the same extent as signifiers concerning ‘the nuclear family’ (Hekma, 2010, p.363). Despite Connell’s claim that these separate lifestyle(s) form a ‘permanent alternative’ (2011, p.202) to “straight masculinity”, “gay” identity has nonetheless maintained a hegemonic aspiration of attaining heteronormative “success”. Edwards has contended that the neo-liberal ideal of “success” put forward is reflected in discrete LGBTQIA-orientated spaces, citing as an example the opening of a “gay”-oriented shopping mall in Manchester (1997, p.115). Although similar values have been (re)produced, homonormative forms of “success” are nonetheless regarded as functioning separately from a “straight masculinity”, for example reflected in Nixon’s argument that “gay” men’s fashion has been frequently regarded as ‘outlandish [and] effeminate’ (1997, p.171) within the “straight” mainstream. Despite the existence of a separate identity, Gert Hekma has nonetheless claimed that “gay” lifestyle(s) remain ‘widely seen as a vice’ (2010, p.347), reinforcing Nixon’s observation that there remains a ‘fear’ (1997, p.171) of the “gay other”, regardless of homonormativity’s impact. As Edwards has noted, however, the assimilation of consumerist discourse into “straight masculinity” has resulted in ‘the raptures and passions of fashion’ (1997, p.96) forming a hegemonic ideal aspired for across varying lifestyle(s). Despite the emphasis on a sufficient disposable income for (re)producing neo-liberal ideals of heteronormative success, therefore, fashion within “gay” identity nonetheless remains an “abject” identity in comparison to the style(s) advertised for the “straight self”.

Additionally to Connell's description of "gay masculinity" as a 'permanent alternative' (2011, p.202), Edwards has also maintained that affluent "gay" men were able to 'support [their] sexual orientation without fear of discrimination' (2000, p.139). Nonetheless, scholars have observed that the discourse of coming out as (re)positioning homonormativity as an "abject other", regardless of the financial "success" of "gay" individuals. Petersen defines the process of coming out as 'the relationship of homosexuality to the concepts of secrecy and disclosure' (1998, p.105), leading Connell to contend that heteronormativity is therefore defined 'in part by a vehement rejection of homosexuality' (1995, p.128). This 'vehement rejection' is reflected in Lina A. Ricciardelli et al.'s interviews with openly "gay" men, noting that respondents 'reported feeling like perpetual outsiders, regardless of the success of their performances' (2006). The discourse of coming out to form an "other" to the "straight self", therefore, is noted to have resulted in "gay masculinity" being unable to authentically (re)produce heteronormative forms of success". Consequently, "gay masculinity" has been subjugated by the "straight subject", therefore undermining the argument made by Steven Seidman et al. that coming out has gone "beyond the closet" (1999). Instead, the process of *having to* come out reinforces "gay masculinity's" subjugation as a sexual "other", through its perceived deviation from the "straight" norm.

Although academics have noted the existence of discrete "gay" lifestyle(s), MacKinnon observes that significance is consistently placed on 'publically defining oneself as heterosexual [as]...a means to male legitimacy' (2003, p.7). Consequently, a separate "gay other" is (re)constructed as being emasculated. Homonormativity,

therefore, attempts to appear 'legitima[te]' through (re)producing the forms of "success" described earlier in this thesis (see Table 1, pp.20-1). The tropes that Hekma argues are commonly associated with "straight masculinity", including 'the security offered by the nuclear family' (2010, p.363) and 'the pleasures of monogamy' (2010, p.363), are (re)presented as norms of "success" that "gay" men are expected to aspire for. Despite their upholding a separate sexual identity, therefore, ideals integral to heteronormative success" are nonetheless identifiable across a range of "gay masculine" lifestyle(s).

Scholars have contended that "straight" identity (re)produces an ideal form of "masculinity" that "gay" men cannot emulate, as reflected in Kimmel's comment that 'since [gay men's] sex roles differed from the normative, it was they who had the problem' (2000, p.89). To be "gay", therefore, forms an identity that is subjugated as deviant in comparison to the perceived norms associated with a "straight" sexuality. Nonetheless, there remains a discrete consumerist discourse targeting separate "gay" lifestyle(s) (Edwards, 1997, pp.113-5) through an emphasis on homonormative signifiers, using separate product(s) to project neo-liberal ideals of "success". Like "can-do" girls (Harris, 2004a, pp.13-37), who remain part of a gendered "other" despite their perceived achievements, homonormativity is also marginalised as "abject" when compared to the "straight self". There is, however, insufficient scholarship acknowledging how the "successful gay" identity is reliant on (re)constructing "at-risk" "gay" men as "failures", an issue that shall be addressed by the empirical findings put forward in this thesis.

3.2 Consumerism in “Gay” Lifestyle(s)

Despite the impact of homonormativity, Stryker contends that “gay masculinity” remains a ‘putatively antiheteronormative’ (2006, p.7) identity. Like “straight masculinity”, however, scholars have observed that consumerism in “gay” lifestyle(s) has led to the (re)production of neo-liberal hierarchies. As binaries of “success” and “failure” are acknowledged to have been assimilated into a separate homonormative identity during the period under study (Griffin, 2007), Edwards has also noted that the commercial discourse associated with a discrete Pink Pound has created ‘an increasingly important market in itself and in competition with similar markets’ (1997, p.140). Nixon has therefore alluded to forms of “successful masculinity” functioning through a ‘dominance over other masculinities’ (1996, p.14), a point echoed in Hekma’s notes concerning how a disposable income has projected a separate “gay” identity that ‘excludes others who might wish to participate’ (2010, p.360) but, due to insufficient funds, cannot. This part of the chapter expands Hekma’s argument concerning hierarchies within “gay masculinity”, examining how perceptions of “failure” validate forms of “can-do success”, as demonstrated in the manner that a subjugated “gay” identity” has legitimised the “straight subject”.

For “gay” lifestyle(s) to consider themselves validated through ‘a moment of engagement with hegemonic masculinity’ (Connell, 2011, p.146), scholars have noted that a disposable income (re)produces an ideal form of “success” observable in both “femininity” (McRobbie, 2009, p.130) and “straight masculinity” (Edwards, 2006, p.148). To understand how forms of neo-liberal “success” are (re)constructed as norms through the Pink Pound’s emphasis on commercialism, I firstly evaluate how neo-

liberal values are maintained by a discrete “gay” identity, despite the latter being subjugated as a sexual “other”. Secondly, this part of the chapter clarifies how there are clear differences when comparing a Pink Pound with forms of consumerism regarded as integral to “straight masculinity”, despite both being underpinned by neo-liberal aspirations for “success”. In addition to addressing the differences between sexual binaries, this part of the chapter also observes how scholars have accounted for similarities between “gay” and “straight” identity, noting how stress has been placed on having a disposable income in order to appear “successful”. By analysing how consumerism has discretely impacted on “gay” identity, I am able to provide a fresh analysis of how neo-liberal binaries of “success” and “failure” have been assimilated into a separate sexuality that continues to be (re)presented as an “abject other” to the “straight self”. In doing so, my broader empirical study is therefore able to counter the arguments made that a Pink Pound effectively acts as a protest against “straight” ideals of “success” (Edwards, 2000, p.138; Hart, 2004). Instead, this part of the chapter emphasises how neo-liberalism has (re)produced similar consumerist tropes to those of the “straight self” within a separate Pink Pound, rather than destabilising sexual hierarchies.

Maintaining Sexual Hierarchies through Neo-Liberal Signifiers

Despite homonormativity’s impact on “gay” lifestyle(s), it remains important to emphasise that sexual hierarchies were undisturbed. “Gay” identity, therefore, is (re)presented as a binary “other”, a process leading Hekma to identify consumerism within the Pink Pound as being ‘widely seen as a vice’ (2010, p.347), rather than (re)producing the “success” commonly associated with the “straight self”. Although

Connell identifies an ‘undercurrent of threat’ in terms of “gay” men’s interaction with the “straight self” (2011, p.155), she has also contended that the Pink Pound has acted as part of an ‘engagement with hegemonic masculinity’ (2011, p.147), projecting a pervasive consumerist identity similar to that of its “straight” counterpart. Stryker contends that a distinct Pink Pound demonstrates that binaries of “success” and “failure” are assimilated into a “gay masculinity”, highlighting how binaries of ‘homo and hetero make sense only in relation to a gender they are the “same as” or “different from”’ (2008, p.16), rather than functioning separately. Despite identifying as “gay”, therefore, similar versions of “success” to those associated with the heteronormative “self” are projected through a separate Pink Pound.

Hekma’s argument that “gay masculinity” has been (re)constructed as a ‘vice’ (2010, p.347) through the Pink Pound provides a useful context to understanding how “straight” lifestyle(s) have subjugated a binary sexuality. For example, Mark Casey’s research of “gay” clubs in Newcastle notes that the presence of ‘a female heterosexual consumer’ has resulted in concerns regarding ‘safety, comfort and inclusion/exclusion for lesbians *and* some gay men’ (2004). The emphasis on consumerism in a separate “gay” identity, therefore, is (re)presented through the use of pervasive neo-liberal discourse allowing those identifying as “straight” to regard exclusively “gay” spaces as part of a temporary ‘pleasure of the strange’ (Mason and Lo, 2009). As such, Connell’s earlier point that a perceived “gay other” can only function through the ‘authorisation of the hegemonic masculinity of the dominant group’ (2011, p.81) is therefore supported. Despite much of the ‘pleasure’ being reflected in the “othering” of “gay masculinity” through the heteronormative “self”, it remains necessary to

clarify that neo-liberal binaries of “success” and “failure” have nonetheless underpinned “gay” consumerism in a similar manner to those observed across varying “straight” lifestyle(s) (Edwards, 1997; Galilee, 2002; Nixon, 1996, 1997).

To maintain the perceived norms associated with neo-liberal forms of “success”, academics have noted that “gay” men aspire to (re)produce ideals regarded as integral to “straight masculinity”. For example, Edwards has contended that homonormative forms of “success” have been (re)presented through stereotypes of affluent “gay” men able to ‘openly support [their] sexual orientation without fear of discrimination through consumption’ (2000, p.139). Further to this point, Connell has noted a ‘stabilisation of gay communities and gay social identity in metropolitan cities’ (2011, p.202) has also been undertaken separately from “straight masculinity”. Rather than authentically (re)creating a ‘permanent alternative’ (Connell, 2011, p.202) equal to the “straight self”, however, “gay” lifestyle(s) have instead aspired to the perceived norm of a disposable income, a process that forms the integral ideal of heteronormative “success”. As such, Connell’s argument that ‘hegemonic heterosexuality cannot now monopolise the imagination in the way it once did’ (2011, p.202) has therefore been undermined by the Pink Pound’s aspiration to (re)produce “straight” forms of “success”. To maintain this drive for “success” in “gay” identity, those with an insufficient disposable income have been (re)constructed as “failures”, thus underscoring how wealth is perceived as integral to perceptions of a “successful gay masculinity”.

How Neo-Liberalism has Functioned Discretely within “Gay” Identity

Although scholars contend that the Pink Pound provides different forms of consumerism for those with a “straight” identity, heteronormative and homonormative discourse nonetheless remain notably similar. As outlined in the previous part of this chapter, perceived ideals of commercial “success” have been (re)constructed as attainable to “gay” men to the same extent as they are to the “straight self”. By acknowledging that sexual binaries remain undisturbed, it is also important to take into account how a separate consumerist market has been made available to “gay” lifestyle(s). Despite being noted to cater for a ‘stigmatised identity, open to and often unprotected from discrimination’ (Edwards, 2000, p.138), a Pink Pound nonetheless ‘[upholds and sustains] dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions’ (Duggan, 2003), in turn (re)producing neo-liberal forms of “success”. It is important, therefore, to acknowledge that sexual identities are maintained through “gay masculinity” continuing to be subjugated rather than self-identifying as separate, as demonstrated by the latter’s discrete (re)production of consumerist habits integral to the heteronormative “self”.

Through (re)constructing the neo-liberal binaries of “success” and “failure” as indicative of a discrete Pink Pound, Griffin has observed that commercialised “gay” lifestyle(s) have been able to form a ‘powerful nexus that supports heterosexual privilege...as essential to appropriate and productive economic behaviour’ (2009, pp.46-7). Although the (re)production of ‘heterosexual privilege’ is regarded as ‘essential’ to homonormativity, consumerist forms of “success” exclusive to “gay”

identity have nonetheless formed an observable part of the discrete “straight subject”. Several academics have acknowledged this difference, contending that the Pink Pound uniquely provides “gay” consumers with commodified materials and spaces that are separate to “straight masculinity” (Edwards, 1997, pp.113-5, 2000, pp.138-41; Hughes, 1997). Despite these distinct sexual identities, however, ideals of “success” that are associated with the latter remain available for a “gay” audience.

Further to his point that “straight” forms of consumerism have targeted an ‘affluent’ audience (1997, p.128), Edwards has also addressed preconceptions of “gay” men having ‘fewer financial commitments and therefore often higher disposable incomes...to reinforce their sexual orientation’ (1997, p.74). Stereotypes within a Pink Pound, he contends, have (re)produced images of a ‘professionally employed gay male couple’ earning a higher wage than their “straight” counterparts, with generalisations made that both are employed and without dependents (Edwards, 2000, p.138). Despite concluding that the Pink Pound exclusively targets a ‘professionally employed’ audience with ‘higher disposable incomes’ rather than poorer “gay” men, Edwards has noted that ‘patterns of conspicuous consumption [gain] added significance for the gay community as a visual and potentially political act, as well as a personal statement’ (2000, p.138). By describing ‘conspicuous consumption’ as a ‘statement’, however, Edwards has overlooked how heteronormative signifiers such as marriage are frequently used in homonormative discourse in order to (re)produce forms of “success” associated with the “straight subject”. Rather than attempting to appear subversive, consumerist forms of “gay” identity have instead attempted to emulate the “success” associated with “straight masculinity” through purchasing commercial

product(s). As with masculinity studies more broadly, however, Edwards' analysis does not account for how "gay" men with insufficient disposable income have been (re)presented as a "failed other" to validate the homonormative "self" that are able to access a discrete Pink Pound.

The contention that a discrete Pink Pound acts as a 'visual and potentially political act' (Edwards, 2000, p.138) is further supported by Kylo-Patrick R. Hart's (2004) research. In his case study of *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, a 'makeover reality series that features five gay men improving the lives of "schlubby" straight men', Hart outlines what he regards as the validation of "gay" identity through the perceived 'inverting [of] the power dynamic between gay men and straights...encoding its experts as a band of (gay) superheroes' (2004). Jay Clarkson, however, counters that shows such as *Queer Eye* serve to normalise 'consumer masculinity, which rejects aspects of traditional masculinity and depends on vanity consumption' (2005), reiterating Nixon's assessment that fashion previously labelled as 'outlandish, effeminate or gay' (1997, p.171) has instead been (re)constructed as indicative of "success". "Gay" men unable to afford consumer products, therefore, are treated as "failures" when compared to the perceived norm of '(gay) superheroes' (re)presented in shows like *Queer Eye*; an inequality required for neo-liberalism to function. Although discrete, the connection between 'vanity consumption' and a separate "gay" identity means that the Pink Pound is (re)constructed as similar to commercialism in "straight" lifestyle(s) over the period of study (Connell, 2011, p.103; Edwards, 1997, p.130). Despite academics acknowledging consumerism's assimilation into sexuality, there remains insufficient emphasis on how the "othering" of poorer "gay" men as

“failures” has maintained the notion of a large disposable income being indicative of homonormative “success”.

Neo-liberal binaries within a discrete Pink Pound are clearly identifiable in the context of exclusive “gay” holidays. Despite their being promoted as separate to “straight” tourism, David A. B. Murray maintains that “gay” travel nonetheless ‘sustains social, political and economic inequalities with very deep roots in the socio-historical firmament’, a hierarchy he acknowledges has also been integral to ‘its mainstream counterpart’ (2007). Howard L. Hughes’ case study focusing on “gay” holidays, however, counters that a perceived ‘social censure of homosexuality’ has resulted in ‘a particularly necessary and significant agent for identity construction’ (1997), as expressed by separate forms of tourism. Despite the emergence of a separate ‘identity construction’, therefore, the avoidance of ‘social censure’ is nonetheless dependent on having a sufficient disposable income in order to form individualised “gay” lifestyle(s). The “success” associated with “gay” men able to afford holidays uniquely tailored for their sexuality, when directly contrasted with the “failure” of those unable to, further upholds Murray’s point that neo-liberal ‘inequalities’ in disposable income are as integral to “gay” tourism as they are to tourism as a whole. Those who cannot afford exclusive holidays, therefore, are (re)constructed as incapable of avoiding the ‘censure’ that Hughes outlines, remaining “abject failures” within both neo-liberal and sexual hierarchies.

Beyond “gay” tourism, Hekma has noted that ‘a lively gay scene has developed in many cities around the world’ (2010, p.363). Inevitably, however, a sufficient disposable income has been required in order to access ‘a distinctive lifestyle or identity’ (Edwards, 1997, p.74). The need for high earnings and a stable career in order to (re)present an ideal form of “success” in varying “gay” lifestyle(s), therefore, is reflected in the costs associated with product(s) purchased and spaces accessed, as demonstrated by the literature focusing on holiday resorts (Hughes, 1997), nightclubs (Casey, 2004) and Pride events (Mason and Lo, 2009). Although academics have acknowledged how neo-liberalism is assimilated into “gay” identity through a separate Pink Pound, I contend that it is also important to emphasise how those without access to sufficient funds have been subjugated as “failures”, further validating “successful” forms of “gay masculinity”. In doing so, the manner that “gay” men with an insufficient disposable income are “othered” is comparable to how scholars have contended that “gay” identity is regarded in sexual hierarchies as being ‘physically and psychologically degenerate’ (Stryker, 2008, p.37). As such, neo-liberal forms of “success” in “gay masculinity” can be validated in the same way that “straight” lifestyle(s) have been (re)constructed as norms.

3.3 Individualism and Choice

Hekma maintains that, although “gay” culture is ‘more homogenised as a result of globalisation...it has also become more fragmented’ (2010, p.360). Consequently, varying lifestyle(s) are noted as having been (re)constructed as part of a hegemonic “gay” identity. For example, in acknowledging the ‘growth of gay capitalism’, Jane

Ward's case study of a Gay Pride celebration also observes the 'disappearance of a broad-based LGBT movement ideology' at the expense of a 'class-based means of competition and ownership' (2003) within different communities. Through placing an emphasis on 'competition and ownership', I contend that neo-liberal hierarchies are assimilated into the varying "gay" identities which Hekma claims are 'fragmented' similar to how scholars in studies of social change have noted "can-do" and "at-risk" binaries to have impacted on "femininity" (Harris, 2004a, p.35; McRobbie, 2009, p.130). As explained earlier in the thesis (see Table 1, pp.20-1), the ability to make individual choices is regarded as integral to "success", a perception that Connell notes has formed 'the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations' (2011, p.76). Despite the conception of difference across "gay" lifestyle(s), therefore, the neo-liberal emphasis of choice and individualism acting as a form of "success" takes into account the diversity that Hekma has argued is integral to varying sub-cultures.

This part of the chapter begins by outlining how "straight-acting", a process that Wayne Martino contends has 'displac[ed] an already internalised sense of inferiority' (2012, p.43), is upheld through rejecting lifestyle(s) that 'often [impute] effeminacy' (MacKinnon, 2003, p.7). Despite the discourse of individuality (re)constructed in "gay masculinity" between 1991 and 2011, I note that significance is simultaneously attached to upholding forms of "straight-acting" and hypermasculinity (Benzie 2000, p.166) as homonormative norms, rather than the forms of camping up emphasised by earlier generations (Kleinberg, 1995, p.45). Secondly, I draw attention to how similar neo-liberal conceptions of choice that have been noted as ubiquitous in "gay" and "straight" sexuality have also been (re)produced in "queer" identity, despite the latter

self-identifying as ‘fluid and ambiguous’ (Hennessey, 1994, p.34). As opposed to destabilising sexual binaries, therefore, “queer” space has shifted from forming ‘a site of collective contestation’ (Butler, 1993, p.228) to placing emphasis on a separate ‘queer market’ (Oswin, 2005). Although neo-liberal discourse has placed strong emphasis on choice as a key indicator of “success”, Duggan nonetheless contends that seemingly individualised “gay” lifestyle(s) nonetheless remain ‘anchored in domesticity and consumption’ (2003). Rather than self-identifying through a ‘contestation’ of heteronormative ideals, therefore, scholars have instead noted that separate “gay” and “queer” identities have used commercial discourse in order to appear individualised.

“Straight-Acting” Forms of “Success” In “Gay Masculinity”

The conception of individual identities forming an ideal that “gay” men can aspire to emulate is reflected in Victoria Clarke and Kevin Turner’s argument that there is an unavoidable ‘hierarchy of styles organised around class, credit and consumption’ (2007, p.9) across neo-liberal discourse. Edwards agrees, contending that, as with “straight masculinity” (2000, p.137), “gay” men who are ‘older, poorer, live outside of major cities, or do not run their lives around their sexual orientation’ (1998, p.481) have inadequate control over their identity. In applying Harris’ argument that “can-do” girls are ‘perhaps more limited than ever’ (2004a, p.133) to “gay” men identifying as homonormative, however, I am therefore able to advance the research concerning how the discourse of neo-liberal “success” has impacted on perceptions of individualised lifestyle(s).

Scholars have noted that the perceived “success” of displaying an individual identity is dependent on the (re)production of homonormative discourse. As opposed to “gay” men finding a ‘relief in effeminate camping’ (Kleinberg, 1995, p.47) alone, therefore, there is a desire to emulate the muscular physique(s) that “straight masculinity” has associated with “success” (Edwards, 1997, p.130; Grogan and Richards, 2002; Simpson, 1994, p.29). Through undertaking “straight”-oriented lifestyle(s), Kleinberg argues that concepts of choice and individuality are undermined by a “gay masculinity” that ‘eroticis[es] the very values of straight society that have tyrannised their own lives’ (1995, p.47) rather than forming a separate identity rejecting heteronormative conceptions of “success”. In addition to homonormative forms of “success” having been associated with “straight masculinity”, the ‘glamorisation of physical strength’ (Kleinberg, 1995, p.47) has been fetishized as an ideal for “gay” men to (re)produce (Benzie, 2000, p.165; Clarke and Turner, 2007, p.9; McBride, 2007, pp.96-7). As a result of this ‘glamorisation’, Kleinberg claims that the previous ‘rage and oppression’ (1995, p.52) that camping reacted against has instead been replaced with a perception of “gay” men being ‘in love with masculinity’ (1995, p.53). The neo-liberal sense of individuality which the “successful” homonormative identity purports to offer, therefore, is noted to be undermined.

As “gay” culture is noted to have frequently replaced a camp identity with “straight-acting” during the period of study, scholars have contended that discrete lifestyle(s) have been alienated as a result of heteronormative characteristics being maintained in

the aspiration for an ideal “masculinity”. As opposed to individual choices being integral to neo-liberalism, Martino instead argues that “straight-acting” is ‘built on reinforcing rather than subverting gender hierarchies’ (2012, p.36). As such, hegemonic norms of “success” have therefore been associated with “straight-acting”, meaning that to appear camp in spaces such as a white-collar workplace is regarded as unacceptable. By contrast, homonormative forms of “success” are (re)constructed as being ‘thoroughly normalised’ (Griffin, 2009, p.157), undermining arguments that neo-liberalism is unable to provide “gay” men with choice over their identity.

Clarkson’s case study of the website Straight-Acting.com highlights a ‘sissyphobic’ attitude regarding the ‘condemn[ing of] any gender performances [members of this community]...label “in your face” gayness’, as well as ‘a high level of antifemininity and homophobia’ (2006). Despite this perceived ‘antifemininity’, Clarkson’s evaluation of *Queer Eye* discussed earlier in the chapter nonetheless acknowledges that men perceived as being camp were able to uphold a ‘consumer masculinity, which rejects aspects of traditional masculinity and depends on vanity consumption’ (2005) in order to indicate their having choice. As opposed to an identity that wishes to destabilise the “straight self”, therefore, effeminacy has instead been framed through the context of a disposable income, therefore being associated with consumerist “success” rather than acting as a protest. Although Clarkson has contended that ‘consumer masculinity is at odds with the masculinities that men on Straight-Acting.com are attempting to uphold’ (2005), both camp and “straight-acting” identities have remained able to (re)produce separate parts of a homonormative framework.

Kleinberg's argument that effeminate identities can act as 'a weapon as well as a comment' (1995, p.45) against the heteronormative "self" is countered by Gilad Pavda, who contends that a Pink Pound undermines camping's disruptive side by 'erasing its queerness and transforming it instead into a vulgar entertainment commodity' (2000). The initial role of camping as reflecting a sense of outrage against the "straight self", therefore, cannot be maintained by what Pavda argues is an identity homogenised through similar neo-liberal ideals of "success". As opposed to subverting perceptions of gender, the disruptive element of camping is rendered invisible through its being (re)presented as part of a 'commodified gay space' (Bell and Binnie, 2004). Camping in the period under study, therefore, is best understood through the context of a disposable income, resulting in the marginalisation of working-class "gay" men with effeminate lifestyle(s) unable to access 'commodified' spaces (Brewis and Jack, 2010). As such, Joanna Brewis and Gavin Jack have noted that "gay masculinity" in poorer men has been (re)defined as rough trade, as demonstrated through their case study of "gay" chav fetishism (2010, p.261), used by "successful gay masculinity" to subjugate men from a 'lower strata' (Galilee, 2002, p.38). The perceived choice involved in having a camp identity, therefore, relies on having sufficient income to appear "successful". Consequently, specific neo-liberal spaces in which "gay" men could act in an effeminate manner were only accessible for those earning sufficient income.

Additionally to camp identity being (re)presented as an 'alternative aesthetic' (Pavda, 2000), further "gay" lifestyle(s) differing from the mainstream scene have also been

noted to (re)construct the hegemonic signifiers of “success” and “failure” (see Table 1, pp.20-1). For example, Peter Hennen’s journal article concerning bears, a sub-culture of ‘gay men who valorise the larger, hirsute body’ (2005), acknowledges that lifestyle(s) perceived as ‘alternative’ nonetheless reinforce neo-liberal interpretations of “success” as a norm. Like Kleinberg’s contention that the process of hypermasculinity has ‘eroticis[ed] the very values of straight society’ (1995, p.47), Hennen has also noted that bear culture maintains a continued ‘repudiating [of] effeminacy that simultaneously challenges and reproduces norms’ (2005). In bear lifestyle(s), therefore, Hennen claims that ‘heteronormative and hegemonically masculine interpretations of sex’ (2005) are (re)produced, a process further marginalising camping and other subversive forms of “gay” identity. Hennen and Kleinberg’s findings are complemented by Chad M. Mosher et al.’s semi-structured interviews with leathermen, part of a “gay” identity that ‘eroticises leather dress and symbols’, while also emphasising ‘an aesthetic of heightened masculine appearance’ (2006). Similar to the two ‘alternative’ identities outlined here that have served to maintain rather than destabilise “masculine” norms, the perceived subversion underpinning camp identity has instead been rendered invisible as a result of its consumerist signifiers.

The Commercialism of “Queer” Identity

While there have been attempts to ‘undermine an overall discourse of sexual categorisation and, more particularly, the limitations of the heterosexual-homosexual divide’ (Edwards, 1998, p.472), “queer” identity is, like “gay” and “straight”

lifestyle(s), noted to also undertake levels of ‘normalisation and globalisation’ (Oswin, 2005). Hekma’s argument that a globalised identity underpins ‘fragmented’ “gay” lifestyle(s) (2010, p.360), demonstrating that a disposable income is (re)constructed as integral to individualism within a “queer” identity (Hennessey, 1994; Oswin, 2005). Neo-liberal binaries of “success” and “failure” are therefore also observable in lifestyle(s) that function to destabilise sexual inequalities.

Petersen has praised “queer” identity for having provided an opportunity to ‘rethink the question of sexual identity, particularly the idea that people have a “natural” “sexual orientation” which is “normally” heterosexual’ (1998, p.117). Kleinberg has countered, however, that ‘most homosexuals want to be conventional’ (1995, p.55), a point reinforced by the documented rise of a homonormative identity. This desire for ‘conventional[ity]’ is supported by the argument that, rather than forming a space for ‘collective contestation’ (Butler, 1993, p.228), attempts at “queer” subversion are also unable to ignore the market (Oswin, 2005). As such, it is clear that the commodification of “queerness” through neo-liberal forms of “can-do success” is, like the sexual and gendered binaries it attempts to disrupt, dependent on “at-risk failures” (see Table 1, pp.20-1). Similar to how Pavda has described camping as having become ‘a vulgar entertainment commodity’ (2000), neo-liberal discourse has also placed an emphasis on assimilation rather than destabilisation through “queer” identity more broadly.

Rosemary Hennessey has claimed that “queer” identity has the capacity to ‘disrupt normative conceptions of sexuality that infuse the circulation of commodities in consumer culture’ (1994, p.54). Nonetheless, attempts to destabilise sexual binaries, for example by selling product(s) perceived as subversive, only serve to continue the ‘circulation’ of ‘commodity fetishism’ (Hennessey, 1994, p.54). As with Edwards’ argument that the Pink Pound forms ‘a visual and potentially political act’ (2000, p.138), clothing and material items also function to (re)construct “queer” as a statement regarding a separation from sexual hierarchy. Neo-liberal binaries of “success” and “failure”, therefore, have been (re)presented in “queer” identity similar to “gay” lifestyle(s) more generally (Edwards, 1997, pp.113-5). Subsequently, Hennessey has noted that signifiers of “queer” and “gay” function interchangeably as an “other” validating the “straight self” (1994, p.34). A “queer” identity, therefore, appears more concerned with ‘commodity fetishism’ than disrupting hierarchical sexual binaries. As with homonormativity in “gay” lifestyle(s), however, Natalie Oswin’s case study observes that “queer” identity undermines a genuine sense of individualism, as opposed to the glamorous individuality (re)constructed by neo-liberal discourse (McRobbie, 2009, p.125). Consequently, those perceived as not being “successful” enough to afford the varying product(s) regarded as reinforcing “queer” forms of individuality are “othered” as a “failure” to the same extent that a camp “gay masculinity” has become inaccessible to those with insufficient disposable income.

“Queer” commercialism, like consumerism across varying heteronormative and homonormative lifestyle(s), are noted as being reliant on neo-liberal discourse ‘reveal[ing] to the consumer desires he/she didn’t know he/she had’ (Berlant and

Freeman, 1992, p.164). The choice of undertaking a “queer” identity in order to contest sexual and gendered hierarchies is therefore difficult to uphold, despite neo-liberal discourse’s emphasis on individuality indicating “success”. Rather than destabilising gendered binaries, Hennessey notes that “queer” lifestyle(s) can reflect ‘the requirements of commodity exchange’ (1994, p.57) as opposed to processes of subversion. Through undertaking forms of ‘commodity exchange’, Toby Miller describes “queer” identity as (re)producing ‘a new commodity of pleasure that is safely distant from, but compatible with, heteronormativity’ (2005). Despite self-identifying as independent from sexual and gendered hierarchies, “queer” culture has nonetheless been observed by scholars to have assimilated neo-liberal values into their identity. Ideals of choice in “queer” identity, therefore, are emphasised through the purchasing of specific commodities. Despite “queer” and camp lifestyle(s) having been argued to destabilise sexual hierarchies, both have nonetheless projected individualism through neo-liberal forms of “success” in the period under study. In doing so, the perceived “failure” of those unable to afford product(s) perceived as integral to their lifestyle(s) remain used to validate perceived “successful” norms. Hierarchical neo-liberal binaries within a Pink Pound, therefore, are maintained through commercialised forms of “queer” identity being similar to more mainstream “gay” lifestyle(s).

3.4 Discrete Lifestyle(s) Publications

Prior to undertaking the empirical review, it was important to provide an understanding of the current literature available concerning lifestyle(s) magazines, together with the gaps within it. In studies of “straight masculinity”, for example,

Benwell describes men's magazines as forming clear aspirational models of "success", acting as 'one of the few arenas in which masculinity is regularly addressed, discussed and scrutinised' (2003b, p.156). Although Anna Rogers has claimed that "straight" men's magazines raise 'entirely separate issues' (2005, p.176) to those (re)presented in "gay" lifestyle(s) publications, similarities can nonetheless be noted through both sexual identities having formed 'a commodified response to men's current gender anxieties' (Jackson et al., 1999). As discrete values and lifestyle(s) have been targeted across different men's magazines (Nixon, 1996, p.143), a comparison with the scholarship concerning how publications have upheld gendered, sexual and commercial hierarchies more broadly was necessary for a fuller understanding of how "gay" identity had been intersected with neo-liberal binaries of "success" and "failure" through mainstream magazines.

Prior to coding the publications, it was necessary to emphasise how scholars have placed importance on 'how texts are interpreted and received and what social effects they have' (Fairclough et al., 2009, p.371). For example, although Nick Stevenson et al. have identified mainstream men's publications as 'attempt[ing] to present themselves and their readers as engaged in a form of "harmless fun"', coding can nonetheless be undertaken for 'more subtle understandings of modern masculinities' (2003, p.129). Additionally to noting how the reader is addressed, "straight" men's publications are regarded as reflecting a 'reactionary drift' (Edwards, 1997, p.81), which Nixon has also viewed as indicative of a "modern conservative metropolitanism" (1996, p.163). The identification by Stevenson et al. of 'subtle[r] understandings' of "masculinity" when coding the publications has been argued by

Yolande Taylor and Jane Sutherland to be indicative of broader ‘cultural values and norms in society’ (2003, p.169). Through the coding of lifestyle(s) magazines, scholars have therefore identified the opportunity to discover ‘new avenues of research in the hitherto relatively unexplored domain of masculinity’ (Taylor and Sutherland, 2003, p.169). Nonetheless, there remains a comparative lack of information concerning “gay” British men’s magazines, demonstrating the gap that this thesis fills concerning how the cultural values (re)presented through mainstream men’s publications have been (re)constructed for a different audience.

Through the inclusion of existing research concerning both “straight” men’s and women’s magazines, I began this part of the chapter by providing examples of how mainstream publications have been noted to highlight heteronormative ideals of “success” as norms through the (re)construction of an “at-risk failure” (see Table 1, pp.20-1). Having gained this understanding, I examine how varying lifestyle(s) were observed to have been upheld across discrete magazines, including those of marginalised genders and sexualities. In doing so, I was able to apply the significance of glamorous individuality (McRobbie, 2009, p.125), acknowledged by varying scholars to be prevalent within best-selling British “gay” men’s lifestyle(s) magazines (Edwards, 1997, p.80). Equally, I assessed how similar neo-liberal binaries were applied to signifiers concerning fashion and a well-toned body, resulting in both being projected as aspirational norms. Although the points raised by scholars in this part of the chapter have gone beyond those affecting a marginalised “gay” identity, reflecting previous points concerning the “straight masculine subject”, it nonetheless remained important to examine them alongside the scholarship on “gay” lifestyle(s)

publications. In doing so, a more comprehensive analysis of the existing literature concerning how magazines have (re)presented different gendered and sexual hierarchies, and changes to these through neo-liberalism, were therefore provided.

(Re)Constructing Heteronormative “Success” as a Norm

Scholars have highlighted the emphasis on economic “success” as being integral to mainstream publications. As such, earning a sufficient disposable income to purchase varying commercial product(s) has been (re)constructed as a norm. Despite neo-liberal perceptions of individuality being central to the ‘whole new genre of lifestyle titles in the 1980s’ (Edwards, 2003, p.133), Paul Baker observes the hegemonic aspiration for ‘a successful career or material possessions’ (2003, p.254) as being equally prominent in the personal advertisements and letters contributed by readers in his case study of *Gay News*². Through undertaking a more comprehensive textual analysis to that undertaken by Baker, taking into account material from both readers and columnists, I could survey how neo-liberal signifiers had been assimilated across different gendered and sexual identities more broadly.

Scholars have identified some publications as perpetuating the emphasis placed on neo-liberal “success” through the ways in which they refer to their readership. For example, men’s lifestyle(s) magazines have ‘address[ed] the reader as a “mate”, offering to become the “reader’s friend” by providing handy hints, pointing out

²One of the two publications under study in this thesis, changing its name to *Gay Times* in 1985.

obvious pitfalls and providing useful advice' (Stevenson et al., 2003, p.120). As such, Stevenson et al. have also noted that the publications combine both sarcastic humour and "common sense", forming 'a warning against taking anything that is said too seriously' (2003, p.120). Through a "light-hearted" and "matey" rather than instructive tone, the magazines self-identify as providing 'guidance' (Edwards, 1997, p.83) for the "masculine" consumer. In being 'address[ed]...as a "mate" ', therefore, the reader has been provided with the impression that the commercial lifestyle(s) (re)presented by the magazines form attainable indicators of "success" that they can aspire to. Equally, despite their being marginalised as having an "abject" sexual identity (Connell, 2011, p.151; Hekma, 2010, p.363; Kimmel, 2000, p.89; MacKinnon, 2003, p.7; Simpson, 1994, p.29), Baker notes that the same tone is used in "gay" lifestyle(s) magazines when 'present[ing] aspirational ideals of consumption, grooming, fitness and masculinity' (2003, p.243).

As Nixon has argued that men's lifestyle(s) publications have regarded readers as being 'difficult and elusive' (1996, p.129) consumers, a discrete range of role models were made prominent across varying editions. Edwards agrees, identifying men's magazines as being 'for men but rarely about men, other than male celebrities' (2003, p.133). Equally, Nixon has noted the rise of a "new glitterati" that 'took for granted the importance of entrepreneurialism: the ethos, that is, of going it alone, of vigour, boldness and the ability to take risks' (1996, p.149). Through emphasising this "new glitterati", the publications have thus (re)presented neo-liberal signifiers of 'entrepreneurialism' as norms. In women's publications, Harris notes how the use of girlpower depicted celebrities such as the Spice Girls and Britney Spears as ' "just like

other girls”, except for their extraordinary determination to succeed’ (2004a, p.127). Taking this ‘extraordinary determination’ into account, the emphasis on ‘mak[ing] public the processes of transformation from ordinary to superstar’ (Harris, 2004a, pp.127-8) has (re)constructed the latter as attainable, thus serving to project celebrities into being role models.

Scholars of men’s lifestyle(s) publications have argued that readers are knowingly aspiring to ideals rather than norms. Despite Taylor and Sutherland concluding from their research that men’s lifestyle(s) magazines such as *Maxim* were ‘targeted at young men with a high disposable income’ (2003, p.171), Benwell has countered that the lifestyle(s) (re)presented in the publications are frequently ‘characterised by aspiration rather than full possession’ (2003b, p.161), emphasising how readers *should* act as opposed to the way they *do*. Equally, although her case study of the women’s publication *More!* concluded that readers were (re)constructed as ‘active consumers’ (1999, p.60), McRobbie nonetheless notes the projection of a sense of “failure”, contending that the advertisements available did ‘nothing but convince readers of their own inadequacies while drawing them into the consumer culture’ (1999, p.46). Equally, in men’s magazines, the interviews with prominent stars are observed by Benwell to have (re)produced an aspiration of “success”, forming a ‘representation of culturally dominant or idealised versions of masculinity’ (2003b, p.153) associated with varying celebrities whose lifestyle(s) remain unattainable to readers.

Through being validated by an “abject failure”, neo-liberal perceptions of “success”

have acted as ‘powerful discourses that seek to code “how men really are”’ (Stevenson et al., 2003, p.129). Regardless of discrete lifestyle(s) being (re)constructed as integral to glamorous individuality (McRobbie, 2009, p.125), Edwards has noted a ‘reactionary drift’ as being prevalent across men’s magazines (1997, p.81). Nixon has agreed, identifying articles in publications as ‘taking pleasure in a more traditional masculinity’ (1996, p.156). In terms of LGBTQIA politics, campaigns for equal rights are argued to have been undermined through an emphasis on consumerism, as Katherine Sender acknowledges in her argument that the ‘ideal gay consumer has costs for a diverse gay citizenship and for a lively, heterogeneous, sex-positive gay politics’ (2001, p.96). As such, discourse concerning a ‘diverse’ identity has been subverted through the ‘reactionary’ focus on heteronormative ideals of “success”, despite the neo-liberal emphasis on choice being perceived as integral to “gay” lifestyle(s). A significant point of interest over the twenty year timeframe of my case study, therefore, concerned how far both “gay” activists and “straight” celebrities were regarded by both columnists and letter-writers in the publications as role models, complementing Sender’s observation that *The Advocate* no longer reflected ‘divers[ity]’ and political issues between 1990-2.

Despite readers being unable to attain many of the perceived norms that have been associated with “can-do success”, an emphasis on “failure” forming an “at-risk” identity remains prevalent. Through the existence of the latter, readers have attempted to ‘avoid being categorised into this low status subgroup of men’ (Ricciardelli et al., 2010, p.74). As such, the literature concerning lifestyle(s) publications has identified this neo-liberal dichotomy as being assimilated through aspirations based around

idealised gendered binaries. For example, Amy R. Malkin et al. have noted that women's lifestyle(s) magazines tended to prioritise 'weight loss and dietary habits' (1999), whereas men's publications are regarded as placing importance on 'changes in body shape' (1999, p.648), similar to the sculpted physique(s) outlined by Simpson (1994, p.23) in the previous chapter.

Heteronormativity and neo-liberal tropes of "success" have been intersected across varying publications, as reflected in Stevi Jackson's observation of teenage girl's magazines having stigmatised lesbians as being "at-risk" while noting that the 'advice in the problem pages given on heterosexual sex is often sensible' (1996, p.58). As such, women's magazines are demonstrated to have established "straight" relationships as being integral to the "successful" norm. Furthering this point, McRobbie notes that teenage girls' magazines have, at best, approached same-sex relations as being 'a social issue rather than a sexual desire', whereas "straight" romances were (re)constructed to be within the 'framework of normality' (1999, p.57). Similar "at-risk" identities have been portrayed in men's lifestyle(s) magazines through the (re)production of 'homophobic and racist tendencies' (Wheaton, 2003, p.195); sexism (Whelehan, 2000, p.64) and an 'aggressive macho xenophobic form of English nationalism' (Carrington, 1999, p.83); all of which have served to marginalise the "abject other" in contrast to the "successful subject". In coding publications targeted at a marginalised sexual identity, therefore, this thesis provides further information about how "at-risk" identities have validated readers considered to have "successful" lifestyle(s) (see Table 1, pp.20-1).

When assessing how the magazines have (re)presented “success” as a norm through the use of neo-liberal signifiers, scholars have been careful to account for the period in which the texts were published. For example, Edwards has noted the emergence of a high proportion of ‘young single men with high personal incomes’ (1997, p.84) being targeted by the publications at the time of a broader “yuppie” subculture, a demographic that Belinda Wheaton has attributed to Thatcherism (2003, p.194). “Success” through a disposable income is therefore argued by scholars to function in the publications as a norm that readers could aspire for, for fear of appearing a “failure”. Beyond the aspiration for heteronormative “success” alone, however, the period directly following Margaret Thatcher’s government, described by David Harvey as promoting ““freedom of enterprise”” over individual freedoms (2005, p.80), resulted in readers instead being provided with lifestyle(s) publications to identify with. Although signifiers of “success” and “failure” have been (re)produced, scholars have noted that these neo-liberal binaries have retained the context of differing identities of which readers could apply to themselves.

Similarities and Differences between Discrete Lifestyle(s)

Further to observing how heteronormative ideals have been (re)constructed across varying magazines as norms, scholars have emphasised more broadly how engaging in lifestyle(s) distinct from one another has been regarded as integral for readers aspiring to appear “successful”. Most notably, Edwards has acknowledged different men’s magazines have ‘dip[ped] their toes into issues of men’s style’ (1997, p.72) in a more

observable manner than previous magazines published in the 1980s. Rather than one specific lifestyle(s), therefore, publications have been targeted at a range of identities, reflecting the perception of choice as being a norm associated with “success” (see Table 1, pp.20-1). In doing so, Benwell has contended that magazines can best be analysed through taking into account ‘how written texts of mass consumption operate’, placing emphasis on ‘the contexts within which they are likely to circulate’ and the different readerships targeted (2003b, p.153). Equally, David Abrahamson has not only praised research on magazines for providing an understanding of how neo-liberal binaries of “success” and “failure” are assimilated into discrete gendered and sexual hierarchies, but also for ‘reflect[ing]...the social reality of the times’ (2007). For example, Edwards has noted how the rise of publications such as *FHM* and *Loaded* targeted a New Lad in the 1990s through ‘loud and sexist humour often tied up with sexist and bad behaviour’, an attitude he acknowledges to have been demonstrated more broadly through popular shows such as *Men Behaving Badly* during the timeframe of his study (2003, p.137; see also Whelehan, 2000).

The publications have been identified by Benwell as endorsing varying lifestyle(s), thus accounting for the separate audiences reading them (2003b, pp.153-4). Although both are targeted at “straight” men, for example, the discourse of *Loaded* is noted to have been different to that of the more refined *GQ*. Nixon agrees, identifying signifiers associated with separate lifestyle(s) as significant for having ‘guided the way each of [the publications]...framed and presented the objects of consumption and leisure around which they were focused’ (1996, p.164). Although discrete gendered and sexual identities are prominent across the publications, scholars have identified a link

through the emphasis on ‘consumption and leisure’ (Nixon, 1996, p.164), (re)constructing heteronormativity as integral to a broader ‘framework of normality’ (McRobbie, 1999, p.57). As such, women’s publications have defined ‘normality’ through the discourse of ‘maternal and professional’ (McRobbie, 1999, p.60) “success” alongside that of girlpower (Harris, 2004a, pp.16-7). As such, significance has been placed on the neo-liberal signifier of choice (see Table 1, pp.20-1). By contrast, lesbianism has been marginalised as a “failure” (Jackson, 1996, p.58) similar to the rejection of a “feminist” outlook being perceived as overtly ‘moralistic’ (McRobbie, 1999, p.59), a process further validating the “straight can-do” girl (see Table 1, pp.20-1).

In projecting discrete forms of glamorous individuality, noted by McRobbie as integral to neo-liberal ideals of “success” (2009, p.125), magazines have (re)presented varying lifestyle(s) through ‘different discourses, which may represent the same area of the world from different perspectives or positions’ (Fairclough, 2003, p.26). Although ‘different discourses’ are (re)produced, similar aspirations for “success” (see Table 1, pp.20-1) are nonetheless noted to have remained prominent. Despite Rosalind Gill contending that readers could ‘construct their own identities contrastingly in terms of the intrinsic value of their own choices’ (2003, p.40), Harris has countered that self-determination is a pervasive part of neo-liberal discourse (2004a, p.97). As such, forms of choice are regarded as being reflected in how publications have provided a range of role models, whose “success” has formed an ideal that readers could aspire to. Stevenson et al. agree, opining that the ‘variety of subject positions...[mainstream publications] make available with respect to modern masculinities’ (2003, p.127) have

resulted in discrete lifestyle(s) being linked through the aspiration for “success”.

Taylor and Sutherland have credited the study of magazines with ‘affect[ing] cultural values and norms in society’ (2003, p.169), most notably in how perceived ideals of “success” have been (re)constructed as norms, as discussed in the previous part of the chapter. Despite the varying lifestyle(s) (re)produced across men’s magazines, scholars have argued that there remains a ‘shared sense of direction’ (Rogers, 2005) towards (re)producing the “successful subject” at the expense of an “abject other”. As regards “gay” lifestyle(s) publications, Sender has acknowledged that homonormative forms of “success” have been (re)presented, providing ‘credibility and acceptance’ for ‘a respectable, consuming, homosexual public’ (2001, p.93). Although points of “success” have acted as norms across differing identities, however, Benwell contends that the very nature of modern “masculinity” has involved it being ‘characterised by aspiration rather than full possession’ (2003b, p.161). Through examining how the magazines have promoted varying product(s), holidays and nightclubs noted by scholars as being unaffordable to the majority of readers, I was therefore able to discern how far readers considered the varying promotions across “gay” lifestyle(s) magazines to be an unrealistic desire.

Through the use of signifiers including ironic discourse, Benwell has argued that the publications ‘continually destabilise the notion of a coherent and visible masculinity’ (2004), while nonetheless giving the impression that diffuse gendered and sexual identities remain prevalent. This ‘destabilis[ation]’ is noted by Stevenson et al. to

(re)present men's lifestyle(s) magazines as 'a form of "harmless fun" ', preventing the reader from 'seeking to unravel more subtle understandings of modern masculinities' (2003, p.129). As such, the "successful subject" can be observed to have been (re)produced at the expense of a "failed abject" across varying publications, a process that Rogers notes 'offer[s] shared meanings to alienated readers' (2005, p.179). Despite these 'shared meanings', however, Benwell argues that the magazines are characterised through 'remain[ing] ambiguous, and consequently elusive or inscrutable' (2002) when addressing their audience(s). Although gendered and sexual binaries have been rigidly upheld, fluidity is instead evident through how different lifestyle(s) have been (re)presented across varying magazines, making it clear that readers should be "successful" enough to be able to choose their identity.

Although the magazines are noted to have outlined a tension between 'first, a traditional masculinity within which attributes such as physicality, violence, autonomy and silence are celebrated; and second, a more ironic, humorous, anti-heroic and self-deprecating masculinity' (Benwell, 2003b, p.151), a heteronormative identity nonetheless remains prevalent across varying lifestyle(s). Similar to "straight" men's magazines, Sender has noted the existence of a pervasive commercial discourse in *The Advocate*, contending that 'the glossy gay magazines may cultivate particular aspects of queer sensibility' provided that they remain part of a broader mainstream gentrification (2001, p.95; see also Oswin, 2005). Despite the 'elusive or inscrutable' (2002) forms of "masculinity" outlined by Benwell, therefore, the assimilation of neo-liberal binaries into existing hierarchies has ensured that discrete sexual and gendered identities are upheld, with differences in "success" and "failure" being applied to each

one in order for their individuality to be upheld.

Different lifestyle(s) are acknowledged to be integral for the formation of the “masculine self”, as reflected in the publications discretely targeting a New Lad and New Man. Stevenson et al. contend that the latter has been dismissed as a ‘media fiction’, in comparison to the (re)construction of the former as a ‘more natural form of masculinity’ (2003, p.124). Ben Crewe has agreed that the discourse of “sophistication” associated with a New Man was more likely to be ‘mock[ed] than admire[d]’ (2003, pp.93-4) by a New Lad, in contrast to the ‘middle-class notions of individual accomplishment, success and competence’ (2003, p.104) projected in publications including *GQ* and *Arena*. Despite her observations of ‘shifting versions of masculinity...within and between men’s magazines’, Wheaton acknowledges a hegemonic focus on ‘male consumption’ (2003, p.217) as having become commonplace across mainstream publications, a perspective also taken into account in my empirical study.

Varying lifestyle(s) magazines have been connected through the emphasis on a glossy appearance, leading to Stevenson et al. arguing that ‘the general distinction between “upmarket” magazines aimed at slightly older men...and “downmarket” magazines...has become increasingly blurred’ (2003, p.121). This ‘blurr[ing]’ of identity is therefore argued to have resulted in ‘aspects of masculine behaviour such as drinking to excess, adopting a predatory attitude towards women and obsessive forms of independence (read: fear of commitment)’ as being integral to men’s publications as

a whole rather than those previously considered “downmarket” (Stevenson et al., 2003, p.121). Despite Stevenson et al.’s observation that a “harder” image’ of masculinity was prevalent across the publications through this ‘blurr[ing]’ (2003, p.121), it nonetheless remains important to account for how glamorous individualism more broadly (McRobbie, 2009, p.125), allowing readers choice over their identity, formed an indicator of “success”. As Edwards has argued (1997, p.72), a range of lifestyle(s) were thus available through the accessing of varying publications.

Despite arguing that there has been a rise in periodicals targeting a “harder masculinity” (2003, p.121), Stevenson et al. concede that the ‘less laddish’ *Attitude*, a publication targeting a discretely “gay” male audience used in the empirical study of this thesis, has ‘expanded at a rapid rate’ (2003, p.120). As part of the ‘expan[sion]’ of “gay” publications, Sender notes the use of ‘corporate advertising in order [for the magazines] to flourish’ (2001, p.92), a point that this thesis is able to complement through examining “gay” British publications. Across men’s magazines more broadly, therefore, change can also be identified through the ‘packing and visual presentation’ (Nixon, 1996, p.146), (re)constructing the ‘subtly updated version of de luxe masculine consumption’ (Nixon, 1996, p.164) as a norm. Complementing Stevenson et al.’s analysis of the perceived ‘blurr[ing]’ (2003, p.121) of downmarket and upmarket publications, the emphasis on ‘de luxe masculine consumption’ is (re)constructed as integral to varying lifestyle(s); described by Sender as having become ‘the most acceptable version of gayness’ (2001, p.92) available. Benwell’s point that “masculinity” remains ‘elusive and inscrutable’ (2002) across men’s magazines, however, can be reflected in the individualised lifestyle(s) put forward.

Across discrete lifestyle(s), scholars have acknowledged consumerism as a key hegemonic ideal, a process leading to varying publications having ‘interact[ed] with consumer interests and consumer beliefs and desires’ (Wodak and Meyer, 2012, p.16) rather than forming an identity rejecting neo-liberal hierarchies. As magazines have been noted to (re)produce individual identity through ‘a quite distinct set of characteristics or values’ (Edwards, 1997, p.80), McRobbie has identified the coding of contemporary publications as being integral to establishing ‘tension[s]’ within different genders and sexualities (1999, p.59). Additionally to observing these ‘distinct[ions]’, Rosemary Ricciardelli et al. have praised the analyses of mainstream publications for their ability to reveal how ‘elements of hegemonic masculinity...are woven throughout’ magazines ostensibly targeting different audiences (2010). Although emphasis is placed on “can-do success”, scholars identify lifestyle(s) publications as providing ‘real resonance with lived cultures of masculinity’ (Crewe, 2003, p.91), for example through the New Lad regarding a working-class background as ‘something that should be coveted, but also transcended’ (Crewe, 2003, p.99). As such, niche product(s) for varying identities have been promoted as indicators of glamorous individuality (McRobbie, 2009, p.125), consistently presupposing that readers have sufficient disposable income to afford them.

Through the publications (re)producing ‘the language of enterprise and enterprise culture’ (1996, p.24), Nixon has highlighted that the separate ““values and lifestyles”” of readers (1996, p.130) have also been affected. As such, despite their (re)presenting

varying lifestyle(s), the discourse within the magazines have been noted to consistently focus on marketization rather than viable alternatives to neo-liberalism. Instead, scholars have observed publications to have targeted discrete forms of gendered and sexual identity through the pervasive 'enterprise culture', a shift McRobbie has attributed to a 'rapid and irreversible change in Britain over the last twenty-five years' (1999, p.37) regarding how a working-class identity views itself. While the New Lad continues to identify itself as working-class (Crewe, 2003, p.99), therefore, there remains a heteronormative imperative to avoid appearing "at-risk" through having insufficient income (Harris, 2004a, p.25). For a New Lad to be (re)constructed as discrete from a middle-class Sensitive New Man, however, is dependent on the discourse of the free market in order for it to appear as an 'emergent identit[y]' (McRobbie, 1994, p.51). Regarding a marginalised sexuality, Edwards has noted the 'lack of any overt recognition of a specifically gay consumer group' in the literature, instead contending that men's publications are concerned with 'defensively asserting the heterosexuality of their readers' (1997, p.47). A significant gap thus arises in masculinity studies concerning how "gay" publications in Britain have been affected by the broader rise in mainstream lifestyle(s) magazines since 1990 (Edwards, 1997, p.72), specifically concerning how 'enterprise culture' has been maintained while a separate sexual identity from the "straight subject" was upheld.

Commercialism through Fashion

Through the media "hype" (McRobbie, 1994, p.139) surrounding it, individual "success" has been (re)presented in the fashion industry as a norm. Magazines have

been integral to this publicity, promoting the notion that men have ‘a better chance of being successful in relation to other men by “dressing the part”’ (Ricciardelli et al., 2010, p.76). In doing so, the publications have (re)constructed themselves as helping men to have ‘the necessary knowledge to put together a “look” and carry it off with enviable ease’ (Nixon, 1996, p.164). “Dressing the part”, therefore, involves having sufficient income to (re)produce conceptions of “success” ‘in relation to other men’, rather than having a unique “look”. Ricciardelli et al. agree, attributing ‘the positive characteristics...being sold as achievable given the proper dress’ across the magazines to ‘consumer capitalism’ (2010, p.76), further regarding economic independence as integral to “success”.

Despite varying product(s) being targeted at discrete lifestyle(s), the magazines acknowledge fashion items as forming ‘the key to financial success’ (Ricciardelli et al., 2010, p.75). This aspiration to portray “success” through purchasing clothes is further reflected in McRobbie’s noting of ‘teams of stylists being sent out by the magazines each month to scour the market places...for commercial ideas’ (1989, p.39), indicating how neo-liberal perceptions of choice are reliant on disposable income. Although Ricciardelli et al. contend that ‘the fashion advertisements and articles depicted in the laddist magazines were considerably different from the other publications’ (2010, p.75), Edwards has countered that ostensibly diverse fashions nonetheless form ‘two sides of the same coin’ (1997, p.41), each emphasising the same neo-liberal signifiers of “success” (see Table 1, pp.20-1). Equally, Benzie has noted how Australian “gay” bodybuilding magazines have formed both ‘a shopping list and a guidebook to assist in the acquisition of cultural goods, goods that become part of the

cultural capital necessary in the formation of the “gay man” ’ (2000, p.159); a point I shall also demonstrate through more mainstream British publications over a wider timeframe. Despite the ‘shifting versions of masculinity’ (Wheaton, 2003, p.217) (re)presented across men’s magazines more broadly, however, identity is defined through a consistent ‘entrepreneurial infrastructure’ (McRobbie, 1994, p.135), indicating the necessity for disposable income across varying lifestyle(s).

The emphasis on commercialism is argued by McRobbie as having reduced readers to ‘concepts and strategies’ (1999, p.60) that fashion companies were able to attract, reinforcing the notion of individuality as being dependent on income. Despite the (re)production of varying lifestyle(s), Ricciardelli et al. note there to be a ‘centrality of fashion...promot[ing] image, style and appearance as being important for contemporary men’ (2010, p.76) across each publication. Nixon agrees, identifying the magazines as having treated the owning of product(s) as critical for the creation of ‘a distinct sense of masculine individuality through dress and appearance’ (1996, p.164). As such, McRobbie notes that fashion designers have been (re)constructed as role models for readers, receiving ‘gushy pages of praise’ (1999, p.43) across articles and advertisements throughout women’s magazines. Nonetheless, this ‘praise’ is noted to be concerned with the attributes that have allowed these stars to have become “successful”, rather than focusing on their actual achievements.

Despite the neo-liberal preoccupation with choice and individuality, Nixon has noted that men’s magazines have expressed ‘a concern with new menswear markets,

particularly designer menswear' (1996, p.34). For example, Nixon has identified brands such as Levi's as 'targeting new male consumers' through their being (re)constructed by the magazines as an indicator of "success" (1996, p.136), complementing the knowledge of style that the magazines have purported to provide. As also noted by Benzie, it is therefore assumed that the reader has sufficient disposable income to afford these branded products (2000, p.159). The 'repeated appearance of "label names"' (1996, p.153) is noted by Nixon to (re)produce 'an important determinant of the formation of men's magazines' (1996, p.136), thus drawing attention to how emphasis has been placed on different brands rather than the quality or style of fashion items. As a result, a correlation can be drawn with the 'entrepreneurial infrastructure' identified in women's publications (McRobbie, 1994, p.134). Through the ability to afford expensive clothing product(s) being (re)presented as a norm, it is therefore (re)constructed as being through hard work and individual talent that readers can have enough income to afford them.

The identification by scholars of commercial discourse targeting an audience that the magazines 'recurrently refe[r] to as style-conscious young men' (Nixon, 1996, p.128) has allowed them to highlight similarities across gendered and sexual identities. Within "masculine" identity, for example, the working-class nature of the New Lad (Crewe, 2003, p.98) can be reflected in Ricciardelli et al.'s acknowledgement of 'less expensive brands such as American Eagle, Abercrombie & Fitch and Unionbay' being advertised in publications including *FHM* and *Maxim* (2010, p.76). As such, Galilee's argument that cheaper product(s) have been targeted at a 'lower strata' (2002, p.38) has been supported through magazines regarded as being read by audiences with a

lower disposable income. In contrast to these ‘less expensive brands’, however, Ricciardelli et al. have noted the emergence of publications including *Men’s Health* as being ‘metrosexual publications [that] relied more on money and status as representations of power’ (2010, p.73). Nonetheless, Edwards has contended that men identifying with a ‘corporate power look’ can be juxtaposed with equally expensive ‘outdoor casuals’ within “masculine” identity, thus forming ‘two sides of the same coin’ (1997, p.41) rather than fashion product(s) being available for readers on a lower income. As such, an expectation remains of readers being able to afford a range of expensive clothing items, regardless of their self-identifying as part of a ‘lower strata’.

Regarding the manner that fashion is (re)presented across lifestyle(s) magazines, scholars observe the reader to have been treated as a consumer ‘in need of guidance’ (Edwards, 1997, p.83). Through this ‘guidance’, Edwards has described men’s publications as being ‘linked to the fostering of an aspirational and narcissistic masculinity that makes money for the fashion and media industries alike’ (1997, p.82). As such, readers are frequently assumed to have sufficient income to afford clothes reflecting their discrete lifestyle(s) (see Table 1, pp.20-1). Within a marginalised sexuality, for example, Benzie has noted that “gay” men’s magazines have formed a discrete space in which readers can understand ‘how to dress, act, eat, dance and buy “like a gay man”’ (2000, p.160). As with “straight” men’s publications, therefore, price and location are (re)constructed as irrelevant; a point I have expanded on through evaluating how the discourse surrounding fashion has changed in the magazines during a period in which the UK was acknowledged to be in an economic recession (BBC, 2009).

The Ideal Body

Wheaton has identified that aspirations of appearing sexually attractive are put forward in the publications through 'dominant representations of sporting masculinities, both in traditional sports magazines and men's lifestyle magazines such as *Men's Health*' (2003, p.208), a process stressing the perceived "success" of an ideal body. The emphasis placed on toned physique(s) in lifestyle(s) publications has therefore been (re)constructed as a norm, a process that has been intersected with discrete forms of neo-liberal "success" in both gendered and sexual hierarchies. For example, Harris has noted that emphasis is placed on "can-do" girls having a 'young female body that is toned and trim, with good, but not excessive, muscle definition and very little fat' (2004a, p.86); an ideal (re)produced in men's publications through a sculpted physique being regarded as indicative of "masculinity" (Benzie, 2000; Edwards, 2003; Hatoum and Belle, 2004). As such, the 'hyperculture of commercial sexuality' acknowledged by McRobbie as prevalent in women's magazines (2004, p.9) has been noted to have affected men in equal measure. Regardless of gender, sexuality or lifestyle(s), therefore, individual magazines have (re)presented the image of an ideal body as being integral to "success".

Through non-elite interviews, Ida Jodette Hatoum and Deborah Belle have concluded that readers of men's magazines 'took more dietary supplements to build muscle, spent more time exercising, were likely to hold a gym membership, more frequently endorsed the positive attributes of muscularity and endorsed other attitudes and behaviours related to muscularity and fitness' (2004, p.404). Marc E. Mishkind et al.

agree, noting that ‘men tend to see an overdeveloped muscular body as the most masculine physique’ (2001, p.111), superseding an emphasis on health. Supporting Benwell’s identification of “masculinity” as being ‘characterised by aspiration rather than full possession’ (2003b, p.161), Hatoum and Belle contend that “gay” men’s publications have (re)presented muscular bodies as ‘an ideal impossible for most men to achieve’ (2004; see also Ricciardelli et al., 2010, p.65). Nonetheless, varying ideal bodies have been (re)constructed through different magazines, as reflected in the distinction between the perceived authenticity of a New Lad’s physique (Gill, 2003, p.37) and the ‘middle-class aspirational discourse of body maintenance’ put forward in fitness publications such as *Men’s Health* (Whannel, 2008, p.193).

Alongside the aspiration for an ideal physique, scholars have acknowledged that “straight” men’s magazines frequently portray ‘sexy photographs of young women’ (Gill, 2003, p.37), furthering Heather Savigny and Lee Marsden’s argument that the ‘media [has] constructed the role of women to conform to the male gaze – that is, the ideal of what women should look like as defined by men, for men’ (2011, p.166). Similar to mainstream publications (re)presenting women ‘according to their appearance rather than their intellect or career’ (Taylor and Sutherland, 2003, p.180), Stevenson et al. have also observed ‘explicitly homoerotic images’ of ‘beautiful young men’ taking part in sports such as judo in order to confirm their manhood (2003, p.126). Through an ‘almost hysterical emphasis on women’s bodies and heterosexual sex juxtaposed alongside avowedly homoerotic photography’ (Gill, 2003, p.44), Taylor and Sutherland have identified this ‘soft-porn’ approach to sexuality as a norm in men’s lifestyle(s) magazines (2003, p.176). Ricciardelli et al. go further, contending

that “success” in publications targeting a New Lad has been understood through ‘sexual dominance over women’ (2010, p.73). Although neo-liberal binaries of “success” and “failure” are prominent in men’s lifestyle(s) magazines through this emphasis on ‘homoerotic images’, the commercial emphasis on ‘sexy photographs’ of women also maintains ‘dominance’ over a marginalised gender, as demonstrated by the inability to account for either their ‘intellect or career’.

As with the “undifferentiated male gaze” argued to have been emphasised in “straight” men’s publications (Benwell, 2003b, p.156; see also Simpson, 1994), scholars have identified a similar fetishisation of physical appearance in “gay” magazines. For example, despite the ‘exclusion of sexually explicit ads from the main pages of the magazine’, Sender acknowledges the marketization and mainstreaming of *The Advocate* to have resulted in ‘increasingly explicit pornographic advertisements for goods and services’ (2001, p.83). Although neo-liberalism does not have an obviously ‘pornographic’ tone, ‘explicit’ material nonetheless has been noted to remain available through the discourse concerning ‘goods and services’ in “gay masculinity”. Consequently, Ricciardelli et al. have found “gay” men’s magazines to contain more ‘explicitly homoerotic representations of male models’ (2010, p.73) than those of their “straight” counterparts. Although the latter contained ‘sexy photographs’ (Gill, 2003, p.37) of women, Jason A. Saucier and Sandra L. Caron nonetheless observed an ‘objectification of specific body parts...set by the images depicted’ (2008) through their case study of “gay” American lifestyle(s) magazines. Nonetheless, the ‘homoerotic images’ (Stevenson et al., 2003, p.126) (re)presented in “straight” men’s publications have also projected ideals of “success” concerning sculpted physique(s),

an aspiration (re)constructed as attainable through having a sufficient disposable income.

The publications are regarded by scholars as considering well-toned bodies to be indicative of “success”, as reflected in promotions for gym membership, work-out clothes and eating specific healthy food in order to form a sculpted body. This ‘external manifestation of the desired healthy state’ (Mishkind et al., 2001, p.113) is (re)presented through the “masculine” ‘emphasis on the six-pack’ (Wheaton, 2003, p.208) and the “feminine” ‘thin-ideal’ (Ricciardelli et al., 2010, p.65). The discourse concerning a perfect body (re)constructs “competitive individualism”, a process resulting in ‘looking fit, and working hard to do so, bec[oming] fashionable’ (Wheaton, 2003, p.194). ‘Looking fit’, however, is understood in the publications through applying sufficient ‘commitment and financial ability’ (Wheaton, 2003, p.215). Although a ‘defensively heterosexual and aggressively muscular hunk’ (Edwards, 1997, p.54) is perceived to be the norm, Ricciardelli et al. note that this body type is ‘not easily attainable for men’ (2010, p.65). Nonetheless, Wheaton has noted a ‘narcissistic’ emphasis on physicality to be apparent in magazines focused on men’s health, resulting in the ‘reinforc[ing of] bodily anxiety, particularly about ageing’ (2003, p.208). Equally, the ‘contrast between “ordinary women” and “celebrity beauties”’ is noted by Taylor and Sutherland to have been (re)produced in “straight” men’s magazines (2003, p.180). To appear “ordinary”, therefore, is anathema to the “can-do” beauty, an ideal” maintained through ‘looking fit’.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, defining “masculinity” through a well-toned body (Simpson, 1994, p.27) is intersected with a similar emphasis on drinking specific brands of alcohol (Anderson et al., 2009, p.3, see also Courtney, 2000b, p.6) and smoking discrete cigarettes (Katz, 2003, p.355) said to be specific of certain personality types. These broader contrasts to “masculine” signifiers (Courtney, 2000a) can be reflected in how the publications have been noted to encourage the purchasing of unhealthy commercial product(s) as demonstrating “masculine success”. For example, Arran Stibbe notes that *Men’s Health*, a magazine whose *raison d’etre* is primarily focused on sculpting an ideal physique, provides ‘abundant health advice...in a way that reproduces a type of hegemonic masculinity associated not with health, but with a variety of negative health behaviours’ (2004). As such, the publications (re)present a contradictory and confusing view of “masculinity”, with specific unhealthy brands including cigarettes and alcohol being promoted as indicating “success” in the publications alongside information concerning a sculpted figure.

Despite the publications promoting ‘negative health behaviours’ (Stibbe, 2004) as being indicative of “success”, fat physique(s) have remained consistent indicators of “failure”. Although Wheaton contends that sport has formed ‘a key element of men’s lifestyle magazines’ (2003, p.194), primary focus has been on sculpting the body (Benzie, 2000; Hatoum and Belle, 2004). Nonetheless, definitions of what constitutes a “successful” body tone have remained discrete to each publication. For example, in his case study of “gay” men’s magazines, Baker notes that slimness has been ‘associated with youth, a lack of body and facial hair and a softer, caring personality’

(2003, pp.252-3). These traits, he argues, are reversed when displaying a muscular build (2003, p.253), despite both functioning as physique(s) that readers can aspire to emulate. In contrast to these varying toned bodies indicating “success”, Ricciardelli et al. note that a fat body has consistently been ‘anathema to cultural ideals of masculinity, and that men need to work on and be responsible for their bodies’ (2010, p.73) for fear of appearing a “failure”. Given the rising levels of obesity across the UK (NHS Choices, 2013), the perceived “failure” of appearing fat, although increasingly acknowledged to have become a statistical norm (Triggle, 2014), remains ‘anathema’ to “can-do” lifestyle(s). Consequently, the perceived “success” of appearing healthy through a sculpted physique in publications targeted at “gay” men is validated through its “at-risk other” to the same extent as has been (re)presented in both “straight” men’s and women’s magazines (Duncan, 1994).

3.5 Bringing the Literature Together

Despite the assimilation of neo-liberal binaries across varying lifestyle(s), hierarchies in both gendered and sexual identities are upheld. As there is insufficient scholarship concerning neo-liberal conceptions of “failure” in “gay” magazines, additionally to “gay” lifestyle(s) more broadly, this thesis provides a new space in which texts can be ‘one of the few arenas in which masculinity is regularly addressed, discussed and *scrutinised*’ (Benwell, 2003b, p.156). As such, it was important to outline the neo-liberal binaries set out in this literature review (see Table 1, pp.20-1) across existing sexual hierarchies. In the latter’s case, Duggan has acknowledged that consumerism across varying lifestyle(s) ‘does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions

and institutions, but upholds and sustains them' (2003), countering Edwards' argument that a commercial identity can appear political (2000, p.138). By contrast, camping, an identity that Kleinberg identifies as having formed a subversive counter to the perceived "straight subject" (1995, p.49), has been marginalised as "deviant" across "gay" lifestyle(s), forming a 'vulgar entertainment commodity' (Pavda, 2000) through a Pink Pound. Additionally, the prominence of "straight-acting" (Martino, 2012) and hypermasculinity (Benzie, 2000, p.166; Kleinberg, 1995, p.47) has been 'built on reinforcing rather than subverting gender hierarchies' (Martino, 2012, p.36), a process serving to heighten "gay masculinity's" emulation of the "successful" norms considered to be indicative of "straight" identity.

Despite Hekma's claim that they 'deny a rich gay culture' (2010, p.363), tropes including marriage and monogamy have been regarded as synonymous with "success" in homonormative discourse. Although Seidman et al. have contended that "gay" identity has now moved "beyond the closet", therefore being 'normalised' (1999), Griffin has countered that professional, white-collar careers nonetheless (re)present 'development discourse by rationalising, privileging and normalising heterosexuality as universal' (2009, p.157). To ensure the ideal of "straight" identity was maintained as 'universal', scholars have noted that "feminine" and "gay" lifestyle(s) have (re)produced a consumerist culture in order emulating the "success" associated with the "straight masculine self", nonetheless maintaining their individual gendered and sexual identities. For example, McRobbie has outlined how 'traditional feminine practices of self-maintenance like manicures and pedicures are...reinstated as norms of feminine grooming' (2009, p.66) among "can-do" girls. With regards to a

“successful gay masculinity”, Edwards has noted that to be ‘young, often affluent and living in major cities where they adopt a gay (or queer) identity as a way of life’ (1998, pp.480-1) reflects the perceived norms commonly associated with homonormative “success”, an argument to which the coding of my primary research could uniquely expand.

Similar to his observations concerning “straight masculinity” (2000, p.137), Edwards has also noted that “gay” men who are ‘older, poorer, live outside of major cities, or do not run their lives around their sexual orientation’ (1998, p.481) are excluded from “gay” identity. Despite still remaining as an “abject” to the “straight self”, therefore, the Pink Pound demonstrates neo-liberal binaries of “success” and “failure” as being assimilated into a “gay other”. Nonetheless, as reflected in both the previous chapter and the analysis of lifestyle(s) publications, there is insufficient scholarly debate available concerning how perceived “masculine” norms of “success” are maintained through the subjugation of an “other” considered as a “failure” (see Table 1, pp.20-1). As demonstrated in this chapter, there remains a dearth of research concerning the assimilation of neo-liberal hierarchies into “gay masculinities” in Britain, despite the marginalisation of those unable to access commercial spaces provided by a Pink Pound. By providing a study of how mainstream texts (re)positioned understandings of distinct “gay” lifestyle(s) through undertaking a homonormative identity, the assimilation of neo-liberal values into “abject” lifestyle(s) was therefore observable.

This thesis contributes to the wider literature by demonstrating how “gay masculinity” has (re)produced neo-liberal binaries of “success” and “failure” within discrete mainstream media outlets, also functioning as a marginalised sexual identity valedictory to the “straight self”. Despite Nixon’s contention that ‘dominant versions of masculinity are sustained by dominance over other masculinities’ (1996, p.14), in addition to Hekma’s claim that a Pink Pound ‘excludes others who might wish to participate’ (2010, p.363), there remains a notable lack of emphasis in the scholarship on masculinity studies concerning how perceptions of “failure” validate the “successful self”. In examining how neo-liberal forms of “success” in a separate “gay” identity are also upheld through subjugating those regarded as “failures”, this thesis complements the scholarship undertaken in women’s studies concerning “can-do” and “at-risk” binaries (Harris, 2004a, pp.13-37).

The case study underpinning the thesis evaluates how “success” is reliant on “abject failure” in “gay masculinity”. In undertaking a critical discourse analysis of *Gay Times* and *Attitude*, the bestselling British “gay” lifestyle(s) magazines between 1991 and 2011, I examine how neo-liberal hierarchies are reflected across a “gay” sexuality (re)constructed as deviant when compared to the “straight self”. Taking into account the range of lifestyle(s) that a Pink Pound attempts to provide for (Clarkson, 2005), I acknowledge how different identities are offered varying role models and product(s) in the twenty year period under study. Applying the findings of the thesis to the wider arguments outlined in these first two chapters, as well as the broader analysis of lifestyle(s) magazines, provides both masculinity studies and queer theory with a further understanding of the binaries of “success” and “failure (see Table 1, pp.20-1).

It is firstly necessary, however, to provide a methodology that reiterates and justifies my contribution to the debate concerning neo-liberalism's assimilation into gendered and sexual identity.

4. Methods

Similar to the binaries of “can-do” and “at-risk” cited in studies of “femininity” and social change (Harris, 2004a; McRobbie, 2009), “successful” forms of marginalised “gay” identity have intersected with “straight” ideals of “success” (see Table 1, pp.20-1; see also Edwards, 1997, pp.113-5; Kleinberg, 1995; Martino, 2012; Sanchez and Vilain, 2012). Although Connell has attributed this (re)production of “straight” values to the blurring of sexual hierarchies (1995, pp.164-5; see also Stevenson et al., 2003, p.121), the discourse framing a Pink Pound has maintained a discrete “gay” emphasis on ‘conspicuous consumption’ (Edwards, 2000, p.138). To assess how the homonormative “subject” has been dependent on a “failed other” in order to promote the “successful self”, Sender observes that a Pink Pound has ‘cultivated particular tastes’ (2001, p.92) specific to varying lifestyle(s) rather than only targeting the ‘predominantly young, white and able-bodied’ (Browne, 2005, p.52; see also Bassi, 2002) identity. While maintaining a pervasive neo-liberal paradigm, the ideals of “success” outlined in this thesis (see Table 1, pp.20-1) were therefore (re)presented through separate “gay” lifestyle(s).

Through conducting a case study of mainstream “gay” men’s magazines in Britain, I was therefore able to glean an understanding of how consumerist discourse has affected gender and sexuality. As such, the empirical research in this thesis complemented Sender’s analysis that the American “gay” men’s magazine *The Advocate* had undergone a ‘shift in editorial focus toward celebrities and entertainment’, alongside a ‘greater interest from corporate sponsors, and competition

from new, glossy, gay and lesbian “lifestyle” magazines’ between 1990-2 (2001, p.79). Rather than coding select publications including *Bear Magazine* and *MUSED*, I selected two bestselling “gay” British magazines that targeted a broad range of readers: the lifestyle(s)-orientated *Attitude* and the initially campaign-based *Gay Times*³. In doing so, I was provided with a wider understanding of how neo-liberal “success” acted as an aspirational ideal for readers, (re)constructing disposable income as necessary for establishing an individual identity.

To assess how *Attitude* and *Gay Times* had promoted aspirational forms of “success”, I coded the publications between 1991 and 2011. As such, my research began around the period in which Sender has noted commercial lifestyle(s) to have become prominent (2001, p.79), a year after Margaret Thatcher, regarded as having ‘set in motion’ (McRobbie, 2000; see also Harvey, 2005, p.80) neo-liberalism in Britain, stood down as Prime Minister. By concluding at the start of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government, I was therefore able to encompass publications printed during both John Major’s Conservative government and New Labour, both identified by McRobbie as continuing Thatcher’s ‘transformations’ (2000; see also Kerr, 2001, p.180). For each year of the timeframe under study, I coded one publication of both *Attitude* and *Gay Times*, being careful to omit atypical editions such as Christmas Specials. Nonetheless, analysis was undertaken of *Attitude*’s 1994 inaugural edition in order to ascertain what form of “gay masculinity” was being put

³ Amidst some controversy (see 5.5), the magazine was renamed *GT* in March 2007, which I will refer to as such when necessary. When referring to the publication in general rather than specific editions, I shall use its original name of *Gay Times*.

forward to potential new readers. In coding from such a limited sample, Odis E. Bigus et al. have acknowledged that broader conclusions can be drawn (1994, p.54). Rather than analysing the samples discretely in terms of the different publication brands or between the separate years of release, however, I analysed the discourse across as broad a context as possible. In doing this over a fixed twenty year timeframe, I was therefore able to assess the disparities between the two publications, also being able to form an understanding of how neo-liberal binaries of “success” and “failure” (see Table 1, pp.20-1) had become prevalent across varying “gay” lifestyle(s) over the period of study.

Supplementary to the primary coding, a selection of non-elite interviews with a sample of men not identifying as “straight” were conducted. In previous case studies of lifestyle(s) publications, Edwards has contended that the coding of magazines alone ‘runs the risk of missing their significance as a far wider cultural phenomenon’ (2003, p.135). Subsequently, Uwe Flick has praised interviews as being ‘an elaborate method for working with people as cases from a comparative perspective’ (2007, p.84) to the texts under analysis. Providing recent editions of both *Attitude* and *Gay Times* as interview prompt(s), I recorded how respondents regarded the ideals of “success” portrayed in both publications. Through conducting interviews in cities with a notable “gay” sub-culture, namely Brighton, London and Manchester (BBC, 2005; Burston, 2006; Visit Manchester, 2014), respondents were therefore more likely to be forthcoming when compared to those living in parts of the UK where “gay” identity was less prevalent.

Due to the sensitivity of the topic, as Kath Browne has noted in her case study of women ‘who do not fit within the hegemonic heterosexual norm’ (2005), there were insufficient responses from both LGBTQIA University societies and potential elite respondents working for *Attitude* and *Gay Times*. To ensure participation, selections were made through the process of snowballing, a method defined in this thesis as sampling through mutual acquaintances and previous respondents that were able to vouch for my identity as a researcher. In order to broaden the demography, I asked those involved in the snowballing process to provide respondents of varying age, ethnicity and social class where possible. Through undertaking one-to-one interviews rather than focus groups with respondents, I was therefore able to (re)produce a relaxed atmosphere that allowed for candour (Bryman, 2001, p.350). Respondents were also provided with the opportunity to be forthcoming in interviews through the use of a semi-structured approach, defined by Alan Bryman as ‘a context in which the interviewer has a series of questions that are in the general form of an interview schedule, but is able to vary the sequence of questions’ (2001, p.110). Through providing recent editions of both magazines as prompts, respondents were able to articulate their experiences at length, being referred back to my primary research if their points were becoming tangential.

When coding the primary sources, Norman Fairclough has placed significance on the need for a form of textual analysis that ‘mediates the connection between language and social context’ (1995, p.189). Although the need to ‘discover and explore any inconsistencies’ (Hopkin, 2002, p.238) can be applied across separate publications, it remained important to discern how far ‘a relatively well defined repertoire of

discourses and genres' (Fairclough, 1995, p.212) had become pervasive across varying texts. This 'well defined repertoire' is also integral to Rogers' contention that men's lifestyle(s) magazines are integral to 'collectivising disorientated men within a virtual masculine community' (2005, p.176), a process consistently (re)constructing aspirational ideals as norms. In order to code the magazines accurately, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was used, a method of study defined as identifying power relations through language and texts while being careful to focus on 'actors, mode, time, tense, argumentation and so on' (Wodak and Meyer, 2012, p.28). As such, I was consistently conscious of *Attitude* (re)presenting the 'new, glossy, gay and lesbian "lifestyle" magazines' similar to those identified by Sender as emerging in the early 1990s (2001, p.79), alongside *Gay Times* being a publication initially focused on campaigning. Additionally to allowing me to assess how change had emerged over the period of study, therefore, CDA also provided a context for the material coded.

When undertaking the empirical analysis, a robust methodology was required to 'reduce the study to the essential issue...[of] answering the question' (Flick, 2007, p.50), rather than unnecessarily broadening the prior hypothesis. This chapter therefore begins by outlining how the use of CDA allowed for a textual analysis of hierarchical power relations, coding neo-liberal binaries of "success" and "failure" through the signifiers (re)presented in both publications. It was also necessary to explain in further detail how bestselling "gay" lifestyle(s) magazines formed the primary sources in this case study, providing an understanding of the intersection between neo-liberal and "gay masculine" values. Additionally, I note how the timeframe in which magazines were selected allowed me to complement Sender's

analysis of the bestselling American publication *The Advocate* over the previous twenty-five year period (2001). Regarding the secondary analysis, justification is given of how semi-structured, one-to-one interviews supplemented the hierarchies (re)produced from coding *Attitude* and *Gay Times*, further detailing the significance of snowball sampling. Despite the sources available being limited in their scope, it remained important to have ‘a plan for collecting and analysing evidence’ (Ragin, 1994, p.191) that (re)produced a focused, but nonetheless comprehensive, analysis.

4.1 Approaches to Data Collection

Through applying CDA’s ‘social theories of language’ (Fairclough et al., 2009, p.374) to my research, I was therefore able to advance understandings outlined in the literature review concerning how the “can-do subject” was validated by an “at-risk abject” (Harris, 2004a, p.35). As the subfield of gender studies is praised for having ‘identified normative assumptions of social science that falsely limited knowledge’ (Richardson, 2004, p.486), CDA was further beneficial for providing a textual analysis of how sexual and neo-liberal hierarchies were both maintained and intensified over the twenty year timeframe of research. In selecting *Attitude* and *Gay Times*, two bestselling “gay” British lifestyle(s) magazines with standpoints that were initially different from one another, I placed emphasis on the audience that each was targeting and how their varying aspirations were (re)produced. The research was also expanded through providing a comparison of how concepts of “success” and “failure” prevalent in both publications had shifted between 1991 and 2011, specifically concerning how the process of glamorous individuality (McRobbie, 2009, p.125) was (re)constructed as ‘unremarkable’ (Harris, 2004a, p.106).

In employing textual analysis through CDA, the existing literature concerning power relations in mainstream discourse was reinforced. Prior to undertaking coding that allowed for the ‘gathering [of] good information’ (Creswell, 1998, p.110), however, it remained important to (re)construct a strong framework, drawing attention to the benefits of CDA in terms of both textual analysis and the formation of broader conclusions from the sources under scrutiny. Having done so, I was able to place a focus more directly on signifiers that were indicative of hierarchical power relations over the twenty year timeframe, thus providing a further understanding of how binaries of “success” and “failure” were identifiable in “gay” lifestyle(s) publications. Through using CDA to identify binaries of “success” and “failure” in texts targeting a marginalised sexuality, my empirical research thus contributed a broader understanding of how power relations were (re)produced within an “abject” identity.

The Benefits of CDA for Studying Power Relations

In using CDA to undertake the textual analysis, different power relations could be reflected. Varying signifiers across the twenty year timeframe were therefore coded through a ‘cross-case analysis’ (Creswell, 1998, p.63), a process providing an understanding of how the discourse separate to different texts were able to ‘complement one another [and] compete with one another’ (Fairclough, 2003, p.124). In doing so, I was able to identify how neo-liberal perceptions of “success”, validated by an “abject failure”, were assimilated into discrete lifestyle(s). Teun A. van Dijk has noted that CDA allows for the analysis of ‘how dominated groups may resist such

abuse', forming their own discursive social hierarchies (2012, p.63) that allow 'the structures and strategies of dominant talk to focus on various forms of positive self-preservation' (1993, p.264). Notably, hierarchies discrete to separate identities have been (re)produced through the impact of market forces, furthering Lille Chouliaraki and Fairclough's praising of CDA's ability to code different power relations across varying discourses (1999, p.45; see also Thrift, 1996).

Through using CDA to code mainstream texts that were targeted for and read by a discrete audience, the smaller scale of analysis undertaken was able to accurately reflect 'how discourse cumulatively contributes to the reproduction of macro structures' (Fairclough, 1995, p.43). Despite being able to assess how neo-liberal values have become prominent in the UK on a micro scale through only coding over a twenty year timeframe, CDA nonetheless provided an understanding of how 'a broad range of factors exerting an influence on texts' (Wodak and Meyer, 2012, p.21) could be assessed more widely. As a researcher, it was therefore important for me to 'focus on the discursive strategies that legitimate control, or otherwise "naturalise" the social order, and especially relations of inequality' (van Dijk, 1993, p.254; see also Fairclough, 1985) in power relations on a micro scale, further reflecting how neo-liberal forms of "success" have been (re)constructed as norms.

Open and focused coding of the texts through CDA reflected how neo-liberal aspirations for "success" were notable across a broad range of identities, validated through binaries of "failure" (see Table 1, pp.20-1). Prior to coding, Creswell therefore

notes that it is important for researchers to acknowledge the ‘cultural themes’ (1998, p.59) central to separate texts. As such, analysis began with open coding, a process involving segmenting the data collected into distinct subjects, ensuring that ‘initial categories of information about the phenomenon being studied’ (Creswell, 1998, p.57) were identifiable. I followed this ‘initial’ research with the undertaking of focused coding, a process that allowed me to fragment the existing research further, also identifying how there had been changes to the discourse in *Attitude* and *Gay Times* over the twenty year timeframe. In doing so, I was able to discern how varying hierarchical power relations could exert ‘control over the minds of other people’ (van Dijk, 1993, p.257), providing me with an understanding of how the primary sources could reflect the power relations outlined in the literature review earlier in the thesis.

Using CDA when Surveying Men’s Lifestyle(s) Magazines

As noted in studies of gender (Deutsch, 2007; Griffin, 2009, p.208; MacKinnon, 2003, p.5; West and Zimmerman, 1987) and sexuality (Connell, 2011, p.151; Hekma, 2010, p.363; Kimmel, 2000, p.89; MacKinnon, 2003, p.7; Simpson, 1994, p.29), perceptions of “success” are validated through the marginalisation of an “abject other”. Prior to the analysis of *Attitude* and *Gay Times*, it was therefore important to outline how the signifiers provided by open coding have (re)presented neo-liberal forms of “success” in “gay masculinity” as ‘unremarkable’ (Harris, 2004a, p.106). Although Benwell has identified men’s lifestyle(s) magazines as being ‘ambiguous, and consequently elusive or inscrutable’ (2002), CDA is credited as being influential in demonstrating the ‘differences in power in hierarchical social structures’ (Wodak and

Meyer, 2012, p.10). Specifically to bestselling “gay” magazines, Taylor and Sutherland have praised CDA for ‘revealing a key discourse of masculinity...that has “intertextual” relationships with similar discourses in other texts’ (2003, p.182). In using this process to code varying publications, I was thus able to expand the existing research focusing on neo-liberal hierarchies in sexuality and gender. Accounting for previous studies of magazines outlined in the literature review, Table 2 below explains how the open coding allowed for a further identification of hierarchical relations within both *Attitude* and *Gay Times*.

Table 2 – *An open coding of homonormative binaries*

Themes	Forms of “Success”	Forms of “Failure”
Disposable Income	Earning sufficient income to facilitate independence and choice.	Being excluded from discrete “gay” culture through not having enough money.
Consumerism	Being able to afford product(s) tailored to discrete lifestyle(s).	Through insufficient disposable income, being unable to afford the goods argued to make up different identities.
Individualism	Forming an independent identity through glamorous individuality (McRobbie,	Not making sufficient choices in one’s lifestyle(s), in part

	2009, p.125).	through an inability to purchase accessories associated with different identities.
Neo-liberal Spaces	Healthiness and relationships being formed through accessing exclusive spaces including gyms and nightclubs.	Through being too poor to access the neo-liberal spaces stressed in later publications, readers are unable to achieve the “successes” (re)constructed as norms.
Role Models	Varying figures with ideal lifestyle(s) that readers could realistically attain.	Not having attained the lifestyle(s) (re)presented by role models at certain points.
Sculpted Physique(s)	Having a well-toned body as a result of accessing the neo-liberal space of a gym.	Being fat, and therefore stigmatised as both unhealthy and unattractive.
Fashion	Being able to afford varying clothing brands associated with different identities.	Having insufficient income to afford the different clothes promoted, thus being unable to project neo-

		liberal ideals of choice.
Relationships	The ability to have long-term monogamous relationships, with a view to parenthood.	Having anonymous sex without aspiring for long-terms relationships, or not being sexually active at all.
Age	Younger men are associated with being active, older men with being more nuanced and mature.	Older men being immature and not having realised homonormative forms of “success”.
Ethnicity	Being of a white majority complexion, and therefore being able to easily assimilate into the mainstream culture.	Being separate from the non-white “self” in terms of ethnicity and lifestyle(s).

Over the twenty year timeframe, it was necessary for focused coding to identify neo-liberal binaries across the publications. Despite CDA requiring ‘the suspension of belief in what one normally takes for granted’ (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, p.104), the need to provide a context for both the period in which the primary sources were written and their target audience remained significant; a point that was key to the analysis of magazines made in the previous chapter (Benwell, 2003b, p.153). When undertaking focused coding of the primary sources in order to identify the signifiers outlined in Table 2, I was therefore careful to account for how perceptions of “success” had changed over the twenty years of study. For example, through assessing

how far a perceived “heteroglossia of narratives” (Stevenson et al., 2003, p.113) had become prevalent in men’s lifestyle(s) publications, I was provided with an understanding of how the “success” of purchasing product(s) had been (re)constructed as reflecting glamorous individuality (McRobbie, 2009, p.125). Specifically to *Attitude* and *Gay Times*, commercialism targeted at a marginalised “gay” identity furthered Edwards’ argument that different fashions were able to act as ‘two sides of the same coin’ (1997, p.41). Additionally to assessing how discrete “gay” lifestyle(s) have been dependent on a Pink Pound since 1991, it was important to determine how “gay” identity nonetheless remained ‘widely seen as a vice’ (Hekma, 2010, p.347) in comparison to the “straight self”, despite having increasingly (re)produced signifiers associated with heteronormativity (Hekma, 2010, p.363).

Through acknowledging the wider timeframe of lifestyle(s) magazines, changes to ‘boundaries within and between “orders of discourse”’ (Fairclough et al., 2009, p.363) have become clearer, as demonstrated through the prevalence of a Pink Pound. Although Jonathan Potter and Margaret Wetherell have argued that ‘the success of a study is not in the least dependent on sample size’ (1987, p.161), a twenty year timeframe between 1991 and 2011 ensured ‘heterogeneity in the field...allowing as much comparison as possible’ (Flick, 2007, p.29). During the period of study, therefore, a “‘primacy of context”’ (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p.136) was maintained. For example, changes to LGBTQIA rights in Britain (Local Government Act, 2003, p.80; Civil Partnership Bill, 2004) were taken into account alongside the enhanced profile of “gay” celebrities through myspace, Twitter and Facebook (Marshall, 2010), resulting

in the latter being (re)constructed as role models for discrete audiences.

Further to the ‘analytic procedures’ used for coding, Juliet Corbin and Anselm L. Strauss have placed importance on the texts that researchers were intending to sample (1990, pp.251-2). In the case of studying discourse analysis through CDA, Bent Flyvbjerg has argued that ‘a representative case or a random sample may not be the most appropriate strategy’ (2001, pp.77-8). As such, I implemented a standardised textual analysis, coding one edition from each publication per year over the twenty year timeframe, thus providing me with ‘a large array of texts and approaches’ (Creswell, 1998, p.62) rather than limited and potentially atypical sources. Through using CDA to code power structures in “gay” lifestyle(s) magazines, I was thus able to (re)produce the ‘mental representations of experiences, events or situations, as well as the opinions we have about them’ (van Dijk, 1993, p.258) when analysing the neo-liberal binaries of “success” and “failure”. In doing so, I ascertained how varying lifestyle(s) (re)presented discrete consumerist identities across both magazines in the timeframe under study.

Choosing bestselling lifestyle(s) publications for a textual analysis of changes to “gay” lifestyle(s) provided a further understanding of how the ‘discursive (re)production of power results from social cognitions of the powerful’ (van Dijk, 1993, p.259), indicating how neo-liberal hierarchies of “success” and “failure” have functioned through a marginalised sexuality. Equally, Rogers’ similar case study of intimacy in “straight” men’s magazines examined ‘instances of each coding unit

grouped together so that categories of data emerged' (2005, p.181), a process observing the (re)production of an aspirational identity. In using CDA to undertake the focused coding in a manner similar to that outlined by Rogers, hierarchical binaries of "success" and "failure" within a sexuality regarded as deviant to the "straight self" were identifiable. As such, I was therefore able to complement McRobbie's examination of perceived 'freedoms' within a "feminine other", being able to acknowledge 'power and authority over those deemed socially subordinate' (1999, p.35) in terms of a "gay abject".

Alongside the signifiers of "success" (re)presented in "gay" lifestyle(s) publications, Taylor and Sutherland have noted that hierarchical binaries have been maintained 'not only through the choice of vocabulary and grammatical structures, but also, importantly, by *not* using other vocabulary or grammatical structures which logically could have been used' (2003, p.172). Through the use of CDA, I was therefore able to account for how specific signifiers and 'grammatical structures' were used in magazine articles, for example through lad's mags having 'address[ed] the reader as a "mate"' (Stevenson et al., 2003, p.120). Given the 'combination of discourses...associated with distinctive representations of social reality' (Fairclough et al., 2009, p.369), CDA has enabled researchers to observe the pervasive nature of hierarchical power relations across varying lifestyle(s), a process enabling me to identify neo-liberal binaries of "success" and "failure".

To ensure that coding was 'oriented to the contextual uniqueness and significance of

the aspect of the social world being studied' (Bryman, 2001, p.272), it was therefore important to determine how far the publications reflected the neo-liberal power relations that scholars have noted to have been pervasive in marginalised identities (Griffin, 2009, p.30; McRobbie, 2009, p.130). As such, Elinor Ochs has recognised the need to code older articles alongside more recent editions, a process she praises as having brought 'the past into the present time consciousness, providing a sense of continuity to the self and society' (2009, p.70). Through providing a comparative analysis, the focused coding undertaken in this thesis was able to identify the extent to which there had been a change from discourse concerning legal equality and subversion to an emphasis instead being placed on the commercial Pink Pound. As such, the coding of bestselling "gay" periodicals provided fuller perceptions of how "successful" ideals regarded as having underpinned consumerism were (re)constructed as norms. This thesis therefore takes into account Benwell's criticism that research of men's publications has resulted in a 'relative neglect of written and textual realisation[s] of gender' (2003b, p.152), instead using CDA to identify 'ambivalent, shifting and contradictory footings that could be thought to characterise "identification"' (Benwell, 2011) when applied to "gay" lifestyle(s) magazines.

4.2 The Significance of Lifestyle(s) Magazines

In order to determine how neo-liberalism has been assimilated into a discrete "gay masculinity", I coded from popular lifestyle(s) magazines printed between 1991 and 2011. Through undertaking a textual analysis of two high-circulating "gay" British publications, *Attitude* and *Gay Times*, I was able to identify how aspirations for "success" in the UK were validated through the marginalisation of a "failed other" (see

Table 2, pp.124-6). In doing so, I complemented Sender's point that the 'notions of desirable consumption' intrinsic to neo-liberal "success" were associated with "gay" lifestyle(s) from the early 1990s (2001, p.91). Although Bryman has contended that the analysis of texts such as magazines have frequently been secondary to the interview process (2001, p.266), Potter has instead placed significance on coding documents, describing them as being 'less affected by the formulations and assumptions of the researcher' (1997, p.150) than the contributions provided by non-elite respondents are likely to be.

For an accurate analysis, I coded how individual forms of "success" were projected by selecting publications that reflected a wide range of "gay" identities. Although Benwell has described lifestyle(s) magazines as 'one of the few arenas in which masculinity is regularly addressed, discussed and scrutinised' (2003b, p.156; see also Taylor and Sutherland, 2003, p.169), Sender has countered that "gay" publications have formed 'the most visible and, arguably, powerful version of "gayness" for both gay-identified people and the mainstream' (2001, p.75). Through their 'visib[ility]', best-selling publications such as *Attitude* and *Gay Times* were therefore able to (re)produce ideal forms of "gay masculinity" for their readers, reflecting 'how written texts for mass consumption operate within socio-cultural practice' (Benwell, 2003b, p.153). When analysing the intersection of British "gay masculinity" with a consumerist identity (Edwards, 2000; Griffin, 2007), I regarded discourse as 'a relatively unambiguous pathway to actions, beliefs and actual events' (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, p.34; see also Choularaki and Fairclough, 1999, p.38), projecting non-elite understandings of "success" and "failure".

To understand how neo-liberal binaries have affected the texts under analysis, it was also important to acknowledge the wider changes in “gay masculinity”. To justify my use of *Attitude* and *Gay Times*, this part of the chapter begins by providing an understanding of how sampling from different publications over a twenty year timeframe reflected differences across “gay” lifestyle(s). Following this point, it was important to explain in further detail how *Attitude* and *Gay Times* were the most reflective “gay” lifestyle(s) magazines for this thesis available in the UK. Finally, I explain the significance of the twenty year timeframe for outlining neo-liberalism’s assimilation into a marginalised sexual identity, accounting for trends and changes in a commercial identity between 1991 and 2011. Through coding these publications, I was therefore able to identify how heteronormative perceptions of “success” and “failure” (see Table 1, pp.20-1) were (re)produced across mainstream “gay” lifestyle(s).

How Distinct Samples (Re)Presented Differences

When surveying lifestyle(s) publications, Benwell acknowledges the significance of ‘a detailed and qualitative engagement with the patterns and choices of language which form cultural texts’, despite their having been ‘frequently...neglected in cultural studies’ (2003b, p.155). In coding social hierarchies through mainstream “gay” lifestyle(s) publications (see Table 2, pp.124-6), a context was thus provided of how neo-liberal binaries had assimilated into a marginalised sexuality. To gain an insight into how “gay” lifestyle(s) had changed over the twenty year period, I coded one edition of both *Attitude* and *Gay Times* over each year of study. As such, my primary

coding was able to further contribute to the literature concerning how a commercial identity within a marginalised sexuality had been accentuated over time. In coding through CDA, I was therefore able to account for how discourse had been ‘characterised and differentiated not only by features of vocabulary and semantic relations and assumptions, but also by grammatical features’ (Fairclough, 2003, p.133), as demonstrated in both the articles and general layout of the magazines.

While it remained important to code how the discourse (re)produced in men’s lifestyle(s) magazines reflected the underlying tropes of hegemonic “masculine” identity (Ricciardelli et al., 2010), Nixon has contended that these publications ‘not only establish continuities across different discursive representations, but also rank different masculinities in relation to one another’ (1996, p.14). As such, it was important to acknowledge the formation of collective ‘sites of struggle’ (Wodak and Meyer, 2012, p.10) prevalent across both publications. In each of the magazines over the twenty year timeframe, it was therefore important to note how the formation of a subaltern “other” (Henson and Rogers, 2001) has functioned to (re)construct homonormative forms of “success” (see Table 2, pp.124-6) as norms, regardless of the discrete lifestyle(s) put forward. When sampling, therefore, it was important to examine the extent to which ‘age and social class, as well as gender and ethnicity, mediate[d] the subcultural values expressed in the magazine’s content and particularly the coding of masculinity’ (Wheaton, 2003, p.217). By coding the ‘subcultural values’ associated with the “gay” lifestyle(s) sampled from both publications, an understanding was therefore gleaned concerning how binaries of “success” and “failure” were of primary importance to different identities.

By establishing an ‘explanation of the relationship between the discursive processes and social processes’ (Fairclough, 1995, p.97), the samples selected from each edition were able to reflect ‘the social reality of their sociocultural moment’ (Abrahamson, 2007), thus being able to portray an aspirational form of “gay” identity. In identifying how different publications (re)constructed “success” as both an aspiration and a norm validated through “failure”, I recognised the ‘social control and social domination’ identified by Fairclough as having been exercised across varying texts (1995, p.209). As Edwards has noted that men’s magazines have allowed readers to ‘affirm their masculinity without necessarily recognising or confronting it’ (2006, p.133), it was therefore important to understand how the texts sampled were able to (re)produce homonormative forms of “success” across varying lifestyle(s).

Selecting Magazines with a High Circulation

As opposed to selecting publications targeting a minority audience, such as *Bear Magazine* and *MUSED*, *Attitude* and *Gay Times* were sampled on account of their being bestselling magazines (Baker, 2003, p.245; Stevenson et al., 2003, p.118). Although Stevenson et al. note that specialist publications including *Men’s Health* have expanded whereas ‘longer-established titles’ including *Arena* and *Esquire* have undergone decline (2003, p.119), it remained important to sample publications that reflected varying “gay” lifestyle(s) rather than one discrete identity. By coding from magazines with a high readership over the timeframe of study, I was therefore able to encompass a broader audience. Through selecting publications with a wide readership,

I was therefore provided with an understanding of how neo-liberal forms of “success” were aspired for across varying lifestyle(s).

McRobbie has argued that high-circulating publications play a ‘regulative, normalising role’ in understanding conceptions of “success” (1999, p.48). Through both *Attitude* and *Gay Times* frequently upholding the ideal of a Pink Pound, I used CDA to effectively identify ‘the relationship between language, new media and social perceptions of value’ (Wodak and Meyer, 2012, p.13) when coding the magazines to identify varying power relations. Through focused coding, I was also able to evaluate how neo-liberal hierarchies (re)constructed disposable income as a norm across “gay” lifestyle(s). Sampling both *Attitude*, which was more focused on entertainment, and *Gay Times*, a publication that initially campaigned against homophobia and for “gay” rights, therefore provided me with an understanding of consumerism’s link to equality. As such, the coding of best-selling “gay” publications allowed me to complement Sender’s conclusions concerning the ‘opportunities offered by niche marketing strategies and through the tensions inherent in the post-Stonewall lesbian and gay civil rights movement’ (2001, p.78) from a British perspective.

In understanding how hierarchical relations were (re)constructed across varying lifestyle(s), high-circulating publications provided me with the opportunity to understand how changing trends were reflected across varying advertisements. For example, Benwell has noted that the sampling of promotions targeting varying audiences have provided ‘the contexts within which...[magazines] are likely to

circulate' (2003b, p.153), allowing an understanding of how advertisers were able to project "successful gay masculinity" as a norm similar to that of magazine publishers. Complementing the changes to *The Advocate* as observed by Sender from 1990-2 (2001, p.79), a comparative analysis concerning how mainstream British publications had shifted from a focus on anti-homophobia and equality to those promoting 'fitness and/or lifestyles' (Hatoum and Belle, 2004, p.400) was therefore necessary.

Despite emphasis being placed on a separate "gay" identity, the intersection between sexual and neo-liberal hierarchies has resulted in 'magazines aimed solely at either gay or heterosexual men...often shar[ing] more similarities than differences' (Baker, 2003, p.243). Through sampling publications targeting "gay" men, I complemented the existing research concerning both "straight" men's and women's magazines through coding neo-liberalism's assimilation into an "abject" sexuality. In sampling publications that targeted a wide demographic range, I was thus able to understand how variables of ethnicity, career and lifestyle(s) have also been regarded as significant to a discrete "gay" identity. Through the emphasis on a Pink Pound, however, neo-liberal concepts of "success" were (re)constructed as pervasive norms, demonstrated through the subjugation of "failure" as an "abject" deviancy across varying lifestyle(s).

Through the 'language variation' (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, p.33) observable in *Attitude* and *Gay Times*, different interpretations of fashion were regarded by varying lifestyle(s) as "successful". For example, McRobbie has referenced 'teams of stylists

being sent out by the magazines each month to scour the market places and end-of-term fashion shows for commercial ideas' (1989, p.39) that readers of women's magazines could aspire to (re)produce. Although Edwards has identified lads' mags as upholding similar 'commercial initiatives' (2003, p.145), neo-liberalism's individualistic nature has nonetheless been upheld. In their portrayal of fashion, the coding of publications thus provided an understanding of how 'different genres, discourses and styles may be "mixed", articulated and textured together in particular ways' (Fairclough, 2003, p.37) when addressing separate audiences, thus upholding the binary of "success" and "failure". In using CDA to code 'a broad range of macro and micro linguistic, pragmatic and argumentative features...in the analysis of specific texts' (Wodak and Meyer, 2012, p.21), I was able to identify how a discrete Pink Pound had facilitated changes to "gay" lifestyle(s) over an extensive period of time. It was thus important to sample publications that (re)produced mainstream consumerist lifestyle(s), allowing me to assess how neo-liberalism had assimilated into a "gay" identity discretely to that of both "straight masculine" and "feminine" identity.

Timeframe of Publications Coded

To understand how ideal forms of "gay masculinity" have been (re)constructed by the magazines, this thesis complemented Sender's case study of the high-circulating American "gay" magazine *The Advocate* between 1967 and 1992, observed to have shifted from 'a local activist newspaper to its incarnation as a gay and lesbian, glossy lifestyle magazine in the early 1990s' (2001). In understanding how the best-selling British publications *Attitude* and *Gay Times* had changed over the period following

Sender's studies, I began coding in 1991, a year after Margaret Thatcher's resignation. McRobbie credits Thatcherism as 'set[ting] in motion' (2000; see also Harvey, 2005, p.80) neo-liberalism in British culture. In choosing an appropriate point to conclude the case study, I selected 2011, both a year after the electoral defeat of New Labour⁴ and a significant length of time after the global recession of 2008. In the latter's case, however, the perceived green shoots of recovery were not yet apparent in the economy, reflected in reports concerning a 'double-dip recession' the following year (BBC, 2012). Two much-reported events in 2011 also reflected the disparity of opinion in the UK regarding whether neo-liberalism and a large disposable income formed an aspirational ideal: the Occupy movement purporting to (re)present a '99%' identifying as disenfranchised (Penny, 2012; see also Boffey and Townsend, 2011); and the celebration commemorating the Royal Wedding between Prince William and the 'commoner' Kate Middleton (Rayner, 2011; see also Milne, 2011).

To understand how neo-liberalism has intersected with "gay" identity, my empirical research outlines how it had changed from being 'putatively antiheteronormative' (Stryker, 2006, p.7) to consumerist over a twenty year timeframe. Through using CDA, I assessed how 'discourses are always connected to other discourses which were produced earlier, as well as those which are produced synchronically and subsequently'

⁴ Although there remains controversy concerning how far Gordon Brown's Premiership (re)presented a Keynesian 'paradigm shift' (Blair, 2011, p.679), Brown was nonetheless an influential figure in New Labour (BBC, 2002), carrying through its policies (BBC, 1997a; Brown, 1997) and discourse (BBC, 1997b; BBC, 1999; Boxell, 2009; Butler, 2007). As such, his term as Prime Minister between 2007 and 2010 is considered within the samples coded to be as indicative of New Labour as that of his predecessor.

(Fairclough et al., 2009, p.372). As such, CDA was effective in identifying how ‘discourses’ functioned hierarchically within existing social models, being able to outline the ‘interdiscursive hybridity in texts’ (Fairclough, 2003, p.35), a process undertaken through selecting two high-circulating publications with initially different audiences: the lifestyle(s)-based *Attitude* and campaigning *Gay Times*. Van Dijk praises CDA for assessing how ‘the media have their own rich repertoire of means to further enhance and “popularise”...sometimes abstract and technical language and opinions’ (1993, p.268). In doing so, I was able to assess the increasingly consumerist ‘language and opinions’ in both publications, despite the emphasis placed on ‘hybridity’.

This thesis acted as an extension of Sender’s paper concerning how emphasis had been placed on “gay” consumers in *The Advocate* appearing “respectable”, both ‘in class terms (as affluent, White, educated and male)’, and through the ‘sequestering, and then banishing altogether, [of] sex ads and content’ (2001, p.94). A notable change identified across *The Advocate*’s timeframe is the neo-liberal emphasis on ‘the individual as maker or breaker in his own happiness’, a process that ‘sacrificed a focus on the role of community in gay identity’ (Sender, 2001, p.92). My coding therefore prioritised how high-circulation British “gay” magazines placed similar emphasis on ‘individual[ity]’ when compared to ‘the role of community’ observed by Sender in the period prior to that of this thesis. *Attitude* and *Gay Times* thus formed a moot comparative analysis, (re)presenting the ‘peculiarly English phenomenon’ of men’s magazines that Edwards identifies as having grown since the 1980s (2003, p.133). Through (re)constructing a timeframe directly following Sender’s coding of *The*

Advocate, my analysis was therefore complementary. As such, both publications provided me with sufficient context when undertaking focused coding (see Table 2, pp.124-6).

Given that CDA has been credited with identifying ‘structures of oppression...in the worlds of lived experience’ (Denzin, 2004, p.461), a textual analysis of “gay” lifestyle(s) publications over the twenty year timeframe demonstrated a shift from self-defining as an oppressed minority to acting as a discrete part of the neo-liberal paradigm. Although there was a strong argument for coding high-circulating lesbian publications including *Diva* alongside *Attitude* and *Gay Times* in order to identify further ‘structures of oppression’ over the same timeframe, the gendered differences risked the empirical research being unnecessarily extensive. Instead, through the two best-selling British publications being used to complement Sender’s identification of the ‘increasingly marketable, and class-specific, notion[s] of gay lifestyle’ (2001, p.76) over the period following analysis of *The Advocate*, my coding of how sexual hierarchies were (re)constructed at the expense of ‘community’ (2001, p.92) was thus augmented.

Despite *Gay Times* being launched in 1984, I nonetheless coded from the period *after* Thatcher had left Downing Street. Through the focused coding of two bestselling magazines as opposed to a wider range of publications, I therefore avoided having to ‘study the detailed syntactic structures of a thousand news reports’ (van Dijk, 2009b, p.6), many of which were of questionable relevance. As Sender effectively examined

changing trends in *The Advocate* from an earlier period, I therefore coded how forms of “gay” identity incorporating a neo-liberal hierarchy were maintained through the 1990s. Within this period, McRobbie has noted that, through New Labour, the nominally left-wing Labour Party had coupled neo-liberal concepts of individualism (2009, pp.130-1) with ‘a rhetoric of confidence and capacity’ within “feminine” forms of “success” (2009, p.28), upheld through the existence of a “pramfaced failure” (McRobbie, 2009, p.134). Coding *Attitude* and *Gay Times* over a twenty year timeframe, encompassing the rise of New Labour thus demonstrated how a sexuality considered deviant has (re)constructed neo-liberal binaries of “success” and “failure”, a process equally reliant on the latter’s marginalisation in order for the former to be validated.

4.3 Undertaking Supplementary Interviews

Additionally to the primary research, it was necessary to conduct supplementary interviews, as coding *Attitude* and *Gay Times* alone risked undermining ‘their significance as a far wider cultural phenomenon’ (Edwards, 2003, p.135). In the context of the interview process, Fairclough has defined the respondent as being ‘an essential, integral “individual” who participates in various institutionally defined types of interaction without that individuality being in any way shaped or modified’ (1995, p.39). To ensure that the respondent was relaxed and their contributions reflected their own experiences rather than being ‘shaped or modified’, I began by addressing both ‘what will become of the interview’ (Miller and Glassner, 1997, p.104) and how it would assist the thesis as a whole. Respondents were provided with a consent form prior to the interview (see Appendix B), acting as an opportunity for them to address

any outstanding concerns they had with me.

Although supplementary interviews effectively complemented my coding of “gay” lifestyle(s) publications, I was aware that the process risked being needlessly time-consuming. To address this concern, Potter and Wetherell advocate ‘the use of open-ended interviews and procedures based on the interpretation of documents’ (1987, p.40), structuring interview questions around the material previously coded. In doing so, my primary research could thus be linked to a ‘far wider cultural phenomenon’ (Edwards, 2003, p.135). The publications were therefore complemented through the fixed number of ‘open-ended interviews’ undertaken in cities with a notable Pink Pound, namely Manchester, London and Brighton. Through selecting spaces in which respondents were likely to feel comfortable discussing their sexuality, I ‘obtain[ed] a rich, in-depth, experiential account’ (Fontana and Frey, 2003, p.63) of how the publications reflected their personal lifestyle(s).

In order to ensure that the ‘interactional contexts within which social worlds come to be better understood’ (Miller and Glassner, 1997, p.109), semi-structured one-to-one interviews were undertaken. Bryman has praised the semi-structured approach for allowing the interviewer ‘some latitude to ask further questions in response to what are seen as significant replies’, thus providing ‘more general’ questions to those asked as part of ‘a structured interview schedule’ (2001, p.110). In his advocacy of a relaxed environment in which the respondent was allowed to ramble candidly (2001, p.313), Bryman has noted that semi-structured interviews can glean ‘replies that the survey researcher may not have contemplated’ (2001, p.143). A loose interview structure

therefore allowed me ‘the opportunity of genuinely revealing the perspectives of the people...[I was] studying’ (Bryman, 2001, p.280), maintaining the topics identified as relevant alongside more open-ended discussion. Following the interview, I provided each respondent with a questionnaire, allowing me to gauge their ethnicity, career, age and social class, together with how they defined their sexuality.

My diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), a disability Damien E. M. Milton notes is commonly defined as ‘the inability to “read” the subtext of a social situation’ (2012, p.2), meant that I frequently needed to clarify points with respondents of a highly personal nature, risking inadvertently causing offence. Although ‘researchers develop a tendency to write themselves out of the research process’ (Brown and Boardman, 2011, p.24; see also Ryan-Flood and Gill (eds.), 2009), it was important to clarify that I was conducting sensitive interviews while having a disability making it difficult for me to “read” people’s motives. As such, a semi-structured one-to-one interview was preferable, being less rigorous than a structured interview in which I was expected to appear as an expert. Nonetheless, I was able to return to the key themes of the interview through the use of a pre-arranged set of questions. When undertaking one-to-one discussion, I ensured that I ‘play[ed] a significant role in setting the agenda’ (Savigny, 2007, p.127) of the interview procedure in a relaxed manner.

As qualitative data collection has allowed for the ‘gathering [of] good information to answer emerging research questions’ (Creswell, 1998, p.110), non-elite interviews

effectively complemented the data ‘gather[ed]’ from *Attitude* and *Gay Times*. As such, I begin this part of the chapter by outlining how semi-structured interviews provided the respondents with ample space to expand on how the magazines reflected choice in lifestyle(s), going on to discuss the benefits of providing sample publications for respondents to look through during the interviews. Following these points, I explain the necessity of the pilot interview prior to conducting the supplementary research. Fourthly, although garnering respondents from areas with a significant “gay” population, I discuss the need for samples to have a reflective demographic background. Following this point, I explain how the highly personal details concerning the sexual and financial lives of respondents meant that ‘a focus group would not be the most productive technique’ (Madriz, 2000, p.848) when compared with one-to-one interviews, despite their being favoured by several academics (Bryman, 1988, p.50; Madriz, 2000; Morgan, 2004). Finally, I outline how allowing the respondent flexibility to ramble as part of a one-to-one interview ensured that I maintained both a relaxed and professional approach, countering potential concerns with my disability. Despite its ability to effectively demonstrate how neo-liberal hierarchies were assimilated into a marginalised sexuality, it is nonetheless important to stress that the interview process was secondary to the coding of “gay” publications.

The Semi-Structured Interview

While the interviewer retained full control, semi-structured interviews nonetheless allowed respondents to fully express themselves, allowing them to ramble where necessary. Taking into account Savigny’s identification of focus groups having the

potential to be ‘a site where ideas and beliefs can be explored, with active encouragement by the moderator’ (2007, p.126), I applied a similar approach by drawing on contributions from previous respondents and signifiers within the publications themselves in order to ‘encourag[e]’ a reaction. Through asking ‘active and constructive and not passive and neutral’ (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, p.165) questions being asked of them, respondents were therefore able to expand on points relevant to the thesis rather than making more tangential contributions. William L. Miller and Benjamin F. Crabtree support this approach, regarding it as forming ‘an entranceway to narrative understanding’ (2004, p.200) that (re)produces detailed, intimate discussion. As part of this ‘narrative understanding’, it was thus important for respondents to reflect on how a market-driven identity had impacted on their lifestyle(s). As Bryman has highlighted the difficulty of open-ended questions being ‘sifted and coded in order for the data to be analysed quantitatively’ (2001, p.108), the primary research therefore acted as a template for the supplementary ‘data’ to be ‘sifted’ into.

Although the interviews were open-ended and relaxed, a hierarchical relationship between interviewer and respondent remained inevitable. As the interviewer controlled discussion (Miller and Crabtree, 2004, pp.187-8), it would be inaccurate to describe the research as being ‘inevitably focused on those elements contributed by the participant rather than those of the researcher’ (Potter, 1997, p.149). Instead, the semi-structured process allowed me to ‘formally develop a common set of questions, links or ratings’ (Miller and Crabtree, 2004, p.186) that returned the ‘elements contributed by the participant’ back to the magazine data. Rather than interrupting a respondent’s

flow on a subject that I considered irrelevant to my thesis, therefore, I gently directed the conversation towards commercial forms of “gay” identity. In doing so, I avoided the ‘lack of reciprocity and the taint of exploitation’ identified by Bryman as being symptomatic of structured interviews (2001, p.125).

Throughout the semi-structured approach, the interview process formed ‘a listening space where meaning is constructed through an interexchange/co-creation of verbal viewpoints’ (Miller and Crabtree, 2004, p.185), as opposed to my being an ‘expert researcher with the “best” questions’ (Creswell, 1998, p.19). Rather than (re)constructing an ‘impersonal’ approach through ‘a large number of closed questions’ (Bryman, 2001, p.146), the respondent was instead given space to ramble ‘in directions they regard as relevant’ (Savigny, 2007, p.127), thus providing them with the opportunity to (re)produce revealing ‘vignettes’ (Hopkin, 2002, p.239). Despite the interview acting as an ‘interexchange’ rather than having an ‘expert researcher’, Andrea Fontana and James H. Frey note that there remains a ‘hierarchical relation, with the respondent being in the subordinate position’ (2003, p.82). Through a ‘courteous, friendly and pleasant nature’ (Fontana and Frey, 2003, p.82), however, the sense of ‘subordinat[ion]’ was prevented, as demonstrated through my providing respondents the opportunity to speak at length. Through ‘impersonal’ interviews, therefore, a higher level of discussion was generated.

Interacting pragmatically with the respondent was integral to (re)constructing a relaxed and intimate interview process. Although it remained necessary to ask ‘crucial

questions' (Bryman, 2001, p.149) that were integral to the thesis as a whole, I nonetheless let respondents 'answer in their own terms' (Bryman, 2001, p.143) rather than 'taking a very directive and controlling posture, guiding discussion strictly and not permitting digression or variation from topic or agenda' (Fontana and Frey, 2003, p.72). As opposed to 'argu[ing] with and challeng[ing] participants' in a manner culminating in an 'inhibited' discussion (Savigny, 2007, p.130), I expanded points raised by respondents by behaving as an active listener, gleaning more detailed answers through a non-aggressive, if questioning, approach.

To elicit as comprehensive a level of information as possible, I asked supplementary questions based around issues raised by respondents (see Appendix A for a full list of primary and supplementary questions asked). Through having 'instructions about their progress through an interview schedule...in relation to filter questions' (Bryman, 2001, pp.115-6), my interview structure was therefore pragmatic, being based around the respondent. Bryman has praised this approach, noting that 'questions that are not included in the guide may be asked as the interviewer picks up on things being said by interviewees', additionally to an awareness of 'questions [that] may not follow on exactly in the way outlined on the schedule' (2001, p.314). In providing myself with a brief summation of the questions asked through a prompt sheet, I was thus able to draw on a range of issues. When there was a point raised I considered as being either irrelevant or likely to upset a respondent, it was not discussed or expanded on. Instead, I provided the respondents with space to freely express themselves, allowing them to emphasise the points more directly linked to their individual concerns.

Despite Bryman advocating ‘flexibility’ (2001, p.280) as integral to the interview process, a careful ordering was maintained when putting questions to respondents. Beginning with a broad enquiry regarding the type of man respondents found attractive, I proceeded by asking how far “gay masculine” lifestyle(s) put forward in the magazines (re)presented their own identities. Emphasising “gay” identity as a discrete, if marginalised, sexuality, I asked how “gay” lifestyle(s) differed from those identifying as “straight”, specifically concerning the impact of a Pink Pound. I also noted how neo-liberal binaries of “success” and “failure” were intersected with specific careers and celebrity role models, additionally to that of a disposable income. Concluding the interview with a broader question, the respondent was asked what changes, if any, they considered “gay” lifestyle(s) to have undergone and be likely to undergo. Despite the questions being carefully arranged, the interview was (re)constructed as ‘an informal conversation with the respondent’ (Fontana and Frey, 2003, p.86), in order to provide ‘more readily forthcoming’ (Thorne, 2004, p.167) data. An unstructured approach, by contrast, risked irrelevant material superseding that more relevant to my primary research of the publications.

It was important that respondents were provided with space to express their varying experiences, a process allowing me ‘insights into the narratives they use to describe the meanings of their social worlds and into their experience of the worlds of which they are a part’ (Miller and Glassner, 1997, p.106). Through firstly asking what type of man the respondent was attracted to, a broader point into which respondents integrated

specific aspirations including a disposable income and sculpted body, notions of “success” and “failure” within the publications themselves were then placed under scrutiny. Using a semi-structured approach thus allowed the respondents to (re)present their points expansively, ensuring that they remained focused on eliciting relevant information.

The Use of Sample Publications

In order to provoke discussion that linked back to the thesis, recent editions of both *Attitude* and *Gay Times* acted as prompts, a process that prevented ‘some of the answers to the questions [being]...remarkably brief’ (Galilee, 2002, p.43). Despite the significance of the publications, my first question accounted for how consumerism impacted on the type of man that respondents were attracted to. When contrasting the respondent’s personal experiences with the publications later in the interview process, I was able to draw on the opening part of the interview, for example enquiring which role models or sculpted physique(s) (re)presented in the magazines they were attracted to.

When undertaking fieldwork, the same editions of *Attitude* and *Gay Times* were used, acting alongside the questions to provide a ‘space for discovering what others think and feel about some aspect of the research topic’ (Miller and Crabtree, 2004, p.192). Both editions of the magazines selected for the interviews were published toward the end of the timeframe. As such, respondents were able to determine how similar their experiences of homonormativity were to those (re)presented by contemporary “gay” lifestyle(s) magazines. Through selecting respondents beyond the ‘young single men

with high personal incomes' which Edwards contends have been targeted by mainstream publications (1997, p.84), I gleaned an understanding of whether a 'high personal incom[e]' was considered as a "success" indicative of "gay masculine" identity more broadly. Through the magazines forming prompts for both the respondents and for myself as an interviewer, I was able to clarify the 'different understandings of the text[s]' (Chouliraki and Fairclough, 1999, p.67) that were (re)presented to varying lifestyle(s). Additionally, I drew comparisons with the impact that the publications had on respondents' lifestyle(s) when they were younger, less affluent and living in areas without a notable "gay" community.

One drawback of the semi-structured interview was the concern of the interviews 'branch[ing] out tangentially from a small selection of more open-ended questions' (Mann and Stewart, 2000, p.75) and consequently posing distractions. Articles and images in both publications therefore acted as the focal point of discussion, not only providing respondents with examples, but also by forming an understanding of how accurate the (re)presentation of varying "gay" lifestyle(s) in the magazines were. Nonetheless, I did not 'influence the respondent' (Bryman, 2001, p.118) through directing them to points in the publications that I considered as augmenting my central argument. Instead, articles and images in the magazines were shown that respondents could use as prompts when considering the questions asked over the course of the interview.

Although my primary research was concerned with coding the publications, respondents independently browsed through varying articles available across both

magazines in order to identify examples of consumerist lifestyle(s) that they considered to be relevant to them. Through demonstrating to respondents the product(s) available, for example, I was able to understand how far there has been an ‘emphasis upon a form of consumer culture that tended to target the young, white and affluent’ (Edwards, 2003, p.136). In addition to ‘young, white and affluent’ men, I was also careful to account for the ‘new markets for the constant reconstruction of masculinity through consumption’ (Edwards, 1997, p.82), indicating that “success” is targeted at a broader “gay” audience. Through a wide demographic of respondents, my research therefore ‘reflect[ed] a consistent reality’ (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, p.163), rather than the ‘subtly updated version of de luxe masculine consumption’ (1996, p.164) that Nixon notes to have been projected across men’s lifestyle(s) magazines as a norm. In the interview process, the publications formed prompts for respondents when articulating their personal experiences of homonormativity, supplementing the primary texts accordingly.

The respondents assisted in determining whether Benwell’s argument that “masculinity” was ‘marked and visible’ (2003b, p.162) in “straight” men’s lifestyle(s) magazines was equally true of publications targeting an “abject” sexuality. By allowing respondents the ability to browse the images and articles (re)presented by both publications and relate it back to their own lifestyle(s), the accuracy of the coding was thus reinforced. Despite some respondents self-identifying as “queer”, questions concerning both homonormativity and a Pink Pound allowed me to effectively gauge how far a discrete “gay” identity has undertaken a market-driven understanding of sexuality and gender similar to that of the “straight self”. The publications thus served

as a prompt to advance the interview, thus forming an opportunity for respondents to articulate how the sexual and consumerist norms put forward in the magazines (re)presented both discrete lifestyle(s) and broader ideals of “success”.

The Need for a Pilot Interview

To ensure that the supplementary interviews formed a ‘common set of questions’ (Miller and Crabtree, 2004, p.186) that could be expanded on where appropriate, a pilot interview was conducted with a family friend. In doing so, I was made familiar with what being an active listener involved, for example through allowing respondents to ramble or make tangential points (Bryman, 2001, p.313) provided that material relevant to the thesis remained under discussion. In case the tangents made by respondents were too obscure, I asked questions that returned the interview to the key points of study. Although Kathy Charmaz goes too far in claiming that ‘participants themselves cannot articulate the assumptions and meaning that they, in fact, hold and act upon’ (1994, p.99), it was nonetheless important for me to prompt respondents into ‘articulat[ing]’ themselves through preventing unnecessary rambling. Instead, I provided respondents with supplementary questions allowing them to articulate their arguments further.

Flick has emphasised the importance of interviews being held in an established setting, contending that this forms ‘a good starting point for developing an ethically sound relationship with the interviewees’ (2007, p.71). As well as a mutually agreed space allowing respondents the opportunity to feel relaxed, it was also important that I was comfortable during the interview process. Conducting the pilot interview in a

rather loud bar, for example, caused problems regarding my ability to record and focus my direction of discussion. As such, I suggested to respondents that interviews were conducted in a quiet coffee shop that they were familiar with. In selecting a relaxed atmosphere, conversation was therefore more forthcoming. Despite being in quiet surroundings, it was important ‘to have good recording equipment available’ (Flick, 2007, p.82) in order to hear precisely what the respondent was saying and prevent information being misheard or mis(re)presented, as opposed to the note-taking undertaken in the pilot interview that had disrupted the respondent’s flow. As I was anxious to avoid meeting the respondent in an artificial setting, the intimacy of a nearby coffee shop instead allowed for a more personal and relaxed conversation when compared to that of a University seminar room.

Following the pilot interview, I undertook a longer, more considered approach in order to prevent merely eliciting yes/no answers similar to those resulting from a questionnaire. As qualitative investigation is ‘rarely so unstructured that the researcher cannot at least specify a research focus’ (Bryman, 2001, p.317), it was important to emphasise how much of an impact marketization has had on “gay” identity, while also allowing respondents to ramble without interruption. To focus on discrete consumerist lifestyle(s), tangential questions raised in the pilot interview concerning HIV/AIDS and “gay” characters appearing on British television were dropped, as they led to longer discussion points less relevant to the key issues of the thesis. As such, the pilot respondent ‘provided [me] with a credible rationale for the research in which they are being asked to participate and for giving up their valuable time’ (Bryman, 2001, p.113), thus allowing for candid and focused responses in the interviews that followed

it.

Throughout the pilot interview, it was important to identify potential errors, thus preventing them from arising in future interviews. For example, Miller and Crabtree stress the significance of 'discuss[ing] note-taking, recording and the anticipated length of the interview' (2004, p.195) with respondents. Not only did addressing these points prior to the interview make the process more relaxed, but they also served to ensure that the respondent was aware precisely how their work was collated in the context of a broader thesis. Following a lack of clarity in the pilot interview, I instead provided a detailed consent form (see Appendix B) explaining that the interview would be recorded, as well as 'what the research is about in broad terms and why it is important' (Bryman, 2001, p.114), also answering any specific questions that the respondents had. Because rambling was integral to the semi-structured interview process, however, 'the anticipated length of the interview' became a less significant concern. In my pilot interview, the respondent tended to rush through questions with yes/no answers rather than providing a considered reply. As such, I was careful in future interviews to emphasise the discussion rather than fixing arbitrary times on the meeting, stressing that the respondent could have a break or terminate the interview whenever he chose.

John W. Creswell has argued that in a pilot interview, interviewers should firstly select 'a homogenous sample of individuals and then, after developing the theory, selecting and studying a heterogenous sample' (1998, p.118). Reflecting the 'homogenous sample', it was important that the pilot respondent maintained a

homonormative identity, considering how a disposable income with consumerist commodities including expensive fashion brands was (re)constructed as indicative of “success”. By conducting later interviews through taking the broad demographic of Manchester and London into account (Easton, 2013; Martikke, 2013), I came into contact with ‘a heterogenous sample’ (re)presenting a wider variety of “gay” lifestyle(s). It remained necessary, however, to begin the sample with a respondent that subscribed to both *Attitude* and *Gay Times* and was largely able to afford several of the product(s) promoted in these publications. Although Potter and Wetherell have argued that ‘consistency is valued so highly because it is taken as evidence of a corresponding set of actions or beliefs’ (1987, p.163), it was important to take into account the experiences of different respondents, returning to the central theme of how varying “gay” lifestyle(s) are reflected in the publications. To ramble from a central question through the semi-structured process therefore prevented ‘biased or distorted responses’ (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, p.163), instead providing an opportunity for respondents from varying background(s) to articulate their personal experiences of how neo-liberal hierarchies have assimilated into a marginalised sexual identity. Having undertaken the pilot interview with a respondent that regularly accessed a Pink Pound, it was therefore necessary to conduct the subsequent interviews with respondents from a range of backgrounds, determining how far the constructs of individuality and choice put forward in the magazines were notable across “gay” lifestyle(s) more broadly.

To gauge how the pilot respondent self-identified, I began the interview by providing him with a questionnaire. In order to prevent prejudicing the content of later interviews, however, questionnaires were made available after the interview was

conducted. By handing out a questionnaire alongside the consent form at the beginning of the pilot interview, however, the respondent presupposed that the points it raised were critical to the interview, affecting his answers accordingly. My broader first question, concerning the ‘type of man’ he was attracted to (see Appendix A), was therefore undermined through the questionnaire acting as a prompt. Although ultimately necessary for understanding how the discourse of neo-liberalism has intersected with an “abject” sexuality, the initial use of a questionnaire risked prejudicing the interview’s content through its emphasis on ethnicity, age and social class. Placing the questionnaire at the end of the interview instead gave the respondent sufficient time to consider his responses to the questions, also making further inquiries about the thesis itself or of me as a researcher.

Selecting Appropriate Respondents

To ensure that ‘a representative sample’ (Hopkin, 2002, p.239) of “gay” men were interviewed, I selected respondents of different age, ethnicity and social class, as well as identifying as “queer” rather than “gay”. The significance of demographic difference was underscored by the broad readership of both publications, as reflected in the varying (re)presentations of a Pink Pound. As such, the semi-structured interview was used to identify difference rather than ‘standardis[ing] the way in which each interviewee is dealt with’ (Bryman, 2001, p.313); a drawback to the structured process. Rather than regarding it as ‘background material’ (Corbin and Strauss, 1990, p.256), I related the separate experiences of respondents to the publications through supplementary questions. Although Potter is wary of overemphasising ‘external determinants’ (1997, p.158), he and Wetherell nonetheless acknowledge that the semi-

structured approach provides ‘not “one” self waiting to be discovered or uncovered, but a multitude’ (1987, p.102) being made identifiable. Although this ‘multitude’ of selves can be ‘uncovered’ through unstructured interviews, Bryman concedes that ‘the phrasing and sequencing of questions will vary’ (2001, p.110). In maintaining a ‘sequenc[e]’, however, the themes central to my research nonetheless remained significant.

Despite (re)presenting a wide demographic, I had difficulties interviewing respondents under twenty-one. Nonetheless, those interviewed frequently recalled having read one or both of the publications when they were younger, thus ‘cast[ing] their experiences in a comparative framework’ (Weston, 2004, p.180) alongside their present understandings of “gay masculinity”. Additionally, several respondents had moved to the area(s) where the interviews were conducted, meaning that they were able to compare their current lifestyle(s) with previous experiences when reading these magazines in parts of the country where it was harder to be openly “gay”. Although it is an overstatement to claim that ‘age begins to decrease in importance as a mean[s] of differentiating oneself’, Gary A. Fine and Kent L. Sandstrom are correct in pointing out that from adolescence ‘other dimensions of cultural differentiation, such as gender and class, become more crucial’ (1988, p.60). Additionally, Jody Miller and Barney Glassner have acknowledged the impact of ethnicity (1997, p.101) as a further ‘dimension’ of respondents ‘differentiating’ themselves from one another, a factor I was equally careful to account for when undertaking supplementary interviews.

Although I used a far-reaching approach when sampling the demographic

background(s) of respondents, interviews were nonetheless conducted in the three cities with a notable “gay” sub-culture. Concerns of ‘available resources, research goals, plus...time and energy’ (Corbin and Strauss, 1990, p.179) emphasised the need for focus over attempting to collate an extensive amount of material, especially considering the secondary nature of the interviews. In attempting to interview respondents from a wider range of geographical locations, for example, not only would there be less of an obvious Pink Pound to which respondents would be able to refer to, but the research process itself risked being too sprawling and therefore harder to draw conclusions from. Instead, I focused my ‘time and energy’ on conducting fieldwork in Manchester, London and Brighton, taking into account Eugene J. Webb et al.’s point that ‘population variation is a substantial issue in observation’ (1966, p.140). As demonstrated by the use of a Pink Pound in each of these areas, for example through the use of signifiers such as nightclubs, Gay Pride events and residencies, respondents would therefore be more likely to be as forthcoming in these areas.

As the interviews were supplementary to the central coding of the magazines, it was important for them to be time-efficient. By conducting a limited number of interviews, it was therefore critical that respondents were forthcoming. In areas without a notably “gay” subculture, however, responses risked being ‘muffled’ (Strauss, 1994, p.364). This lack of candour is acknowledged by Miller and Glassner as being part of a broader concern when ‘individuals are members of groups that have been stereotyped and devalued by the larger culture, and whose perspectives have been ignored’ (1997, pp.105-6). The use of a semi-structured approach was therefore effective in preventing

respondents from feeling ‘devalued’ based on their sexuality, thus allowing them to discuss their experiences at length.

Additionally to undertaking interviews in areas with a notable Pink Pound, the respondents sampled were exclusively non-elite. Nonetheless, James Halloran et al. have condoned elite interviews on account of their being ‘identifiable individuals with known views and, ideally, well-known public figures who occupy some “official” semi-official position’ (1970, p.137); in this case editors and reporters from *Attitude* and *Gay Times*. While it was useful to understand the motivations of “official” magazine authors, the difficulties of researchers ‘gaining access to the groups they want to study’ (Thorne, 2004, p.163) in elite interviewing remained unavoidable. When using CDA to code the interviews, however, Fairclough identifies the potential pitfall of ‘institutions hav[ing] a “public” to whom messages are addressed, [and] whose members are sometimes assumed to interpret these messages according to norms laid down by the[ir] institution’ (1995, p.39). Despite their elite position, those working with an ‘institution’ such as *Attitude* or *Gay Times* therefore were likely to have an “official” agenda put forward during the interview process. Although I was unable to discuss with elites how they perceived the magazines to (re)present “gay” identity across varying lifestyle(s), having a wide demographic of non-elite respondents was nonetheless able to reflect how power relations in both publications were reflected across a broader hegemonic identity.

Rejecting Focus Groups

Scholars have frequently cited focus groups as preferable to conducting interviews,

crediting them for providing the respondent with clearer control. However, this approach is counterproductive for more intimate and personal discussion, reflected in Bryman's concern that 'when such discomfort might arise, individual interviews are likely to be preferable' (2001, p.350; see also Fontana and Frey, 2003, p.74). As such, a relaxed semi-structured environment with a sympathetic interviewer ensured that respondents were forthcoming when personal themes including sexual preference(s) and disposable income were under discussion. Such issues were sensitive in the one-to-one interviews conducted, let alone a group environment. Nonetheless, Hannah Frith has maintained that focus groups are beneficial in terms of achieving intimacy and trust between interviewer and respondent, arguing that they 'provide conditions under which people feel comfortable discussing sexual experiences, and which encourage people to talk about sex' (2000, p.277). I was conscious, however, of respondents being embarrassed and uncomfortable with sharing this type of information as part of a wider group, leading to the risk of dishonesty from some respondents who may attempt to appear more "successful" than others, or fear of appearing a "failure". Despite her advocacy of focus groups, Esther Madriz shares this assessment, identifying situations in which this form of interview is inappropriate through its potential to cause respondents discomfort (2000, p.839).

Given the intimate topics that were placed under discussion, it was important for semi-structured interviews to form a space in which delicate and personal themes could easily be addressed. Full clarity was therefore important, meaning that 'the preinterview context...involves a negotiation type of discourse that is quite different from the interview discourse' (Miller and Crabtree, 2004, p.195). It would therefore be

more difficult in the context of a focus group to adequately explain the interview process, as I addressed for a range of questions that respondents were anxious to clarify. During the 'preinterview context' undertaken as part of the one-to-one interviews, some respondents expressed unease about certain themes being discussed, which were omitted from the interview accordingly. In a focus group, however, it would be harder for respondents to feel comfortable enquiring if specific areas of discussion could be overlooked, or the interview discontinued. By contrast, the one-to-one interview provided me with sufficient control to ensure that the respondent did not feel either embarrassed or judged, thus allowing for a stronger relationship between the respondent and myself.

Despite Frith's argument that focus groups allow respondents to 'feel comfortable discussing sexual experiences' (2000, p.277), she concedes that respondents risk 'reveal[ing] more information than they intended, and...say[ing] things they later regret' (2000, p.284). By contrast, semi-structured one-to-one interviews allow respondents the opportunity to ramble in a relaxed manner. For example, Elizabeth Bernstein conducted one-to-one interviews with sex workers during a 'conversation over tea' in their homes, a process in which respondents were at ease and therefore forthcoming (2007, p.476). Although the interviews for this thesis were undertaken in a coffee shop rather than the homes of respondents, the atmosphere nonetheless established a similar level of candour. By contrast, focus groups 'have the disadvantage of, sometimes, taking place outside of the settings where social interaction typically occurs' (Madriz, 2000, p.836), for example in University seminar rooms. As respondents lived in varying parts of each city, it was easier for them if I

conducted the interview in spaces convenient to them, rather than larger focus groups resulting in respondents having to travel across large cities such as London and Manchester to get to one specific point.

In addition to conducting interviews in spaces convenient for respondents, I (re)produced a relaxed atmosphere through ‘maintain[ing] a tone of “friendly” chat while trying to remain close to the guidelines of the topic of enquiry’ (Fontana and Frey, 2003, p.86). In doing so, I was able to elicit fuller details from respondents. While it was important that issues were discussed freely, the semi-structured nature of the interview allowed me to exert a “friendly” form of control. Although Madriz has praised focus groups for ‘minimis[ing] the control the researcher has during the data gathering process by decreasing the power of the researcher over research participants’ (2000, p.838), I was conscious of vociferous respondents moving the discussion’s direction toward irrelevant tangents. More significantly, quieter respondents risked having their ‘power’ minimised by more dominant members paying insufficient attention to their experiences, a process indicative of how focus groups have benefitted ‘the few, rather than the many’ (Savigny, 2007). By contrast, one-to-one interviews allowed me to appear both “friendly” and professional, ensuring that a sense of trust between interviewer and respondent was established. In doing so, the latter had sufficient ‘power’ to ramble freely, being returned to the core themes of the thesis once discussion became tangential.

The interviews functioned to ‘deliberately question an entire sample of people on the same issues’ (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, p.163), understanding how a pervasive

consumerist identity had been assimilated into different “gay” demographics including age, ethnicity and social class. By conducting one-to-one interviews with a broad range of respondents, I was therefore able to record the intersection of neo-liberal binaries of “success” and “failure” with varying “gay” lifestyle(s). I was aware, however, that it was harder to acknowledge differences between respondents in focus groups, as attempting to hold a wider discussion meant that individual respondents were unable to go into detail about the issues most pertinent to them. Additionally, I was concerned that respondents from an “abject” ethnicity or social class would be reluctant to share their experiences within a wider focus group, leading to problems regarding an accurate (re)presentation of opinion. Through undertaking one-to-one interviews rather than focus groups, I identified how respondents from different backgrounds maintained a hegemonic emphasis on heteronormative “success”, drawing a parallel with the coding undertaken in my primary research.

When conducting a focus group, I was aware that there would be differing opinions regarding the topics under discussion. As opposed to varying sentiments being (re)presented, van Dijk contends that many respondents ‘may conceal or only indirectly express one’s ideologies’ (2009a, p.392) within a larger group. Through the risk of respondents wishing to ‘conceal’ opinions that they considered were unpopular in the wider group, I was concerned that the focus groups would (re)produce unrepresentative conclusions. Within a focus group holding such a variety of opinions, therefore, I was concerned that both “groupthink” (Fontana and Frey, 2003, p.73) and argument were more likely than open-ended and candid dialogue.

Semi-Structured One-to-One Interviews and ASD

Although I began by conducting the pilot interview with a family friend rather than a respondent that I ‘may never meet again’ (Browne, 2005, p.54), I was nonetheless able ‘to adapt the research approach in order to accommodate potential difficulties’ (MacLeod et al., 2012, p.6) concerning its central structure. In doing so, I understood how best to form a professional relationship with the respondent. For respondents with ASD, Andrea G. MacLeod et al. have disputed how far ‘a flexible and individualised design would fit within a tightly prescribed and externally driven research agenda’ (2012, p.9), leading to concerns regarding how I as the researcher would manage the structured interview process. Rather than ‘tightly prescribed’ answers, the open-ended nature of semi-structured interviews ensured that responses were forthcoming. Unlike the unstructured interview process, however, the semi-structured interview prevented the risk of ‘digression or variation from topic or agenda’ (Fontana and Frey, 2003, p.72), a trait affecting people with ASD (Attwood, 2008, p.209). The principal and supplementary questions asked of respondents (see Appendix A) thus provided a focus, helping me to avoid being distracted by points raised that were irrelevant to the constraints of the thesis.

Through disclosing to the respondent what ASD entailed prior to undertaking the interview, I was able to reflect the candid nature of the semi-structured process. Additionally to a relaxed and open approach, my initial willingness to disclose a personal disability that affected my abilities as an interviewer emphasised the non-judgemental nature of the semi-structured interview process. Potter and Wetherell have praised this approach, arguing that it has frequently ‘result[ed] in more informal

conversational exchanges' (1987, p.165), a process in turn being easier for researchers with ASD.

As mentioned, focus groups were rejected as a method of conducting supplementary interviews in favour of one-to-one discussion. A further reason for this rejection was that, within focus groups, Ricciardelli et al. have noted the 'pervasive use of laddish humour, banter, ridicule and general macho joking around' (2010, p.72). Given the nature of my disability, therefore, it would be difficult for me to assume control and feel relaxed in such a situation. Through lacking the social skills of a neurotypical researcher, I had limited ability to 'cool down discussions' (Flick, 2007, p.87) between respondents, instead being more likely to exacerbate anxiety and distraction. I was also aware of my asking inappropriate questions and forgetting more relevant ones, given that 'under duress, standard interview procedures like filter questions can cause interviewers to get flustered' (Bryman, 2001, p.113). When conducting a focus group with a range of respondents holding different values, I was aware that this sense of 'duress' was likely to be accentuated. Through semi-structured one-to-one interviews, however, respondents were able to ramble without fear of being censured or having a third party take offence.

4.4 Snowballing

In order for the supplementary interviews to follow a reasonable timeframe, it was necessary to efficiently identify potential respondents. As such, selection was made through snowballing, a method of sampling Flick defines as 'going from one case to

the next, asking interviewees for other people who might be relevant to the study' (2007, p.28; see also Beardsworth and Keil, 1992, p.261). In attracting respondents to whom my abilities as a researcher were vouched for by third parties, discussion was therefore more focused and less stilted. From a logistical viewpoint, the correspondence sent to LGBTQIA societies at various Universities in the areas in which I conducted the interviews were rarely responded to, indicating the difficulty of securing respondents through this method. Additionally to snowballing respondents following each interview, I asked friends and colleagues living in Manchester, London and Brighton to provide details and help liaising with other viable contacts. Besides the pilot interview, however, I did not conduct interviews with people I knew, out of a concern that this familiarity would risk prejudicing the responses (Browne, 2005, p.54). By contrast, having a mutual acquaintance that could vouch for me enabled the data to be collated more easily.

Despite the use of snowball sampling, a broad demographic of respondents were interviewed in order to understand how the publications (re)produced discrete variables around a pervasive neo-liberal discourse. Firstly, therefore, it is important to explain how snowballing allowed me to select an opportunity sample reflecting a range of identities, providing an understanding of how heteronormative values were assimilated into varying lifestyle(s). Taking into account that 'where snowballs begin can be significant to the formation of the sample' (Browne, 2005, p.52), I asked friends and respondents to provide me with contacts from varying demographic backgrounds, ensuring that the interview process effectively (re)presented a broad range of viewpoints. In comparison to the poor responses from LGBTQIA

organisations and University societies, as well as elites working for *Attitude* and *Gay Times*, snowballing was by contrast deeply time-efficient. Secondly, this part of the chapter acknowledges how the snowballing process was complementary to the relaxed nature of semi-structured one-to-one interviews, eliciting a sense of trust. Finally, I outline how snowballing was extremely helpful considering my position as a researcher with ASD. Given that Lindsey Brown and Felicity K. Boardman have noted that ‘reflections on the mediating effects of impairments and disabilities should be incorporated into research’ (2011, p.24), the nature of ASD meant that it was important for respondent and interviewer alike to be relaxed. As such, semi-structured interviewing allowed me to complement the snowball sampling, thus allowing for open discussion between me and the respondent through a mutual acquaintance.

Ensuring a Reflective Opportunity Sample

Considering both the time constraints placed on conducting the supplementary interviews and my position as an outsider, interviewing a comprehensive range of respondents was problematic. Consequently, I was frequently forced to ‘sample on the basis of those that [I had]...access to or happen[ed] upon’ (Corbin and Strauss, 1990, p.186). As the research was ‘constrained by such structural conditions as who is available to be observed, talked with, overheard, interviewed or surveyed and at what times’ (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p.66-7), I placed emphasis on attaining a broad demography. Respondents varied their early twenties to sixties, allowing me to understand how different age groups experienced accessing the “gay” scene. Reflecting the demography of London and Manchester (Easton, 2013; Martikke,

2013), several respondents were non-white and non-British, providing a comparison with case studies of racism in “gay” culture (Loiacano, 1989). Equally, I encompassed a wide social class, for example through respondents being both a lawyer identifying as upper-middle class and a long-term unemployed man who mentioned his having no discernible saving(s) and only enough money to afford food. Despite there being general distain of the publications, I was careful to select a respondent that subscribed to both and was a regular reader. Although some respondents were not terribly familiar with *Attitude* and *Gay Times*, they nonetheless had heard of them and had at least some opinion. Political standpoints were also varied, with some respondents having a strong dislike of both commercial product(s) and not self-defining as “gay”, whereas others identified attraction in other men through their clothes. More specifically, different ideological affiliations were observable between respondents, as demonstrated by one respondent’s sympathies with the English Defence League (EDL). As such, a focus group would have been unable to allow respondents with potentially contentious opinions the ability to express themselves fully without offence being caused and the interview disrupted. The table below reflects these distinction(s), as drawn from the questionnaires provided following the interview.

Table 3 *Demographic Background of the Respondents*

Respondent	Age	Ethnicity	Social Class	Sexuality	Career
Respondent 1	27	White British	Upper Middle Class	Gay	Lawyer
Respondent 2	22	Latino	Middle Class	Gay	Student
Respondent 3	26	African	‘Origin wise, working class immigrant stock. But am now probably middle class though I’d never admit it!’	Gay	‘Researcher: I am working on a book about immigration, national identity and multiculturalism. I conduct research work into various areas e.g. history of multiculturalism, involves looking at academic journals, books, policy papers, interviews and film. Result would be five thousand word summary

					for the author of this book’.
Respondent 4	25	British	Working Class	Gay	‘I am at Middlesex Uni studying Film, Media and Cultural Studies. I work twelve hours a week in local Morrisons on the checkouts’.
Respondent 5	26	White	Middle Class	Gay	Art Director for Fashion Brands.
Respondent 6	27	White British	Middle Class	Gay	Student Life Advisor, University of Sussex. Student Welfare, emotional support and practical advice for students.
Respondent 7	53	White English	Working Class and Lower Middle Class	Gay	Social Worker (Management) Children and Families: Immigration.
Respondent 8	62	White	Middle	Gay	‘Counsellor/Therapist, Student just completing

		British	Class		a part-time degree (BA Fine Art). Minimalizing my therapist role currently'
Respondent 9	29	White British	Lower Middle Class	Gay	Unemployed since August 2010 ⁵
Respondent 10	27	White British	Middle Class	Gay	PhD Student, Nursing.
Respondent 11	31	Black American	Lower Middle Class	Queer	Catalogues/Conservation in a business archive; gig and multimedia events manager.
Respondent 12	30	White British	Lower Middle Class	Gay	Training Assistant: Manchester University. Event organisation, project management.

Through using snowball sampling to access a range of respondents, Creswell has advocated the use of a gatekeeper, whom he defines as 'an individual who is a member of or has insider status with a cultural group' (1998, p.117). Given the concern that a single gatekeeper would have limited contacts, however, I instead consulted multiple

5 Twenty one months at the time of the interview.

friends and colleagues with an ‘insider status’ based in the three areas of study. Taking into account the sensitive nature of the research, Browne has praised the ‘friendship networks’ set up through snowballing, describing them as being ‘especially important when participants are wary about revealing details of their (personal) lives to strangers’ (2005, p.50). As a white middle-class man in my twenties identifying as “straight”, a ‘war[iness]’ of differences between myself and many of the respondents, for example those in their sixties or identifying as African, was therefore of concern. Miller and Glassner have countered this point, contending that ‘the existence of social differences between the interviewer and interviewees does not mean that the interviews are devoid of information about social worlds’ (1997, p.105). Through the informality of the semi-structured interview, therefore, sufficient rapport was established to ensure that, as an interviewer, my background was irrelevant.

In spite of the relaxed atmosphere in which the interviews were conducted, Browne outlines a concern that snowball sampling remains somewhat imperfect for accumulating respondents (2005, pp.50-1). As mentioned, a range of respondents were in part selected through the use of multiple gatekeepers, as well as other respondents providing further contacts following the interview process. In doing so, I was careful to emphasise the need for a broad and contrasting demographic, countering the risk that ‘voices are often left unheard or invalidated’ (Browne, 2005, p.50). Nonetheless, it remains important to concede that much of the LGBTQIA community were inevitably ‘left unheard’, as I was anxious to prevent the supplementary interviews from sprawling. Although it was important for gatekeepers and respondents to provide samples (re)presenting difference in ethnicity, class and profession, in the latter’s case

also including unemployed respondents, I placed less emphasis on the minutia of individual “gay” lifestyle(s) and sub-cultures. For example, although anxious to interview those who rejected the signifier of “gay”, I did not specifically snowball to interview the respondents that self-identified as bears. Although aware that snowballing was not perfect for providing a cross-section of the “gay” population in each city, therefore, it remained sufficient for the supplementary interviews undertaken as part of the thesis.

Additionally to the range of ethnicities and ages selected, the snowballing process provided me with respondents earning varying disposable incomes. As such, snowballing was in part used to target ‘groups of people for whom there is no sampling frame’ (Bryman, 2001, p.324) as a result of their having both a lack of disposable income and a subaltern career (Henson and Rogers, 2001). In doing so, I was able to interview respondents that aspired for but were unable to afford the product(s) that were promoted in the publications. As such, a wider range of respondents were able to reflect how significance was placed on appearing “successful” across the magazines, subsequently (re)producing the fear of coming across as having “failed”. In enquiring about and conducting interviews with respondents that the publications (re)constructed as “failures” through their lack of disposable income, I was thus provided with a stronger understanding of the significance of earnings across varying “gay” lifestyle(s).

Despite the emphasis placed on attaining a representative proportion of LGBTQIA

readers, Browne has warned that ‘reinscribing particular categories of difference, and mak[ing] assumptions of homogeneity within predefined categories’ (2005, p.51) undermines the ‘difference[s]’ outlined. For example, it was inaccurate to presuppose the respondents that identified as “queer” or subversive were completely independent from the consumerist Pink Pound, as demonstrated through Oswin’s identification of a discrete ‘queer market’ (2005). By beginning with broad questions rather than those reflecting differences between respondents, I avoided ‘privileg[ing]’ one ‘social characteristic’ over another (Brown and Boardman, 2011, p.25). Instead, the respondents’ ‘social characteristic[s]’ were discussed once they had volunteered information concerning how their identity impacted on their sexuality, using a semi-structured approach to discuss issues pertaining to them. Although snowball sampling was used to interview a broad demographic, therefore, I was prepared for several respondents from differing backgrounds preferring *not* to discuss how homonormative values had impacted on their discrete identity.

Providing a Relaxed Atmosphere

Considering that ‘open situations and meeting strangers in order to have a conversation about sensitive topics with them can be a challenge for many researchers’ (Flick, 2007, p.70), snowball sampling through a mutual acquaintance was able to (re)produce a shared trust between myself as an interviewer and the respondent. Through sampling respondents in this manner, the semi-structured emphasis on a relaxed interview process was effectively complemented. To prevent ‘giving the interviewee the feeling of being “ripped off” or “abused”’ (Flick, 2007, p.83) following the interview process, I concluded by providing respondents with my email

address, also having an off-the-record conversation about my research over a coffee. As mentioned, this rapport allowed me to snowball the respondent for further samples, who in turn contacted me to express their interest in participating. Bryman has praised this form of 'respondent validation' for garnering trust, emphasising that 'a good correspondence between [the researcher's]...findings and the perspectives and experiences of their research participants' (2001, p.273) was necessary for forming accurate results.

When discussing highly sensitive topics including sexuality and disposable income, Browne has contended that 'people will be more open with those whom they may never meet again' (2005, p.54). As such, snowballing through gatekeepers enabled me to interview non-elite respondents that I did not know. There was therefore an emphasis on forming 'positive research experiences' (Browne, 2005, p.55), ensuring that respondents were willing to enquire on my behalf. I countered potential concerns that the interview would be either unprofessional or exploitative through providing a clear consent form, thus guaranteeing that information was 'more readily forthcoming' (Thorne, 2004, p.167). The consent form provided a rudimentary outline of the interview (see Appendix B), clarifying that it could be stopped or specific questions did not have to be answered should the respondent feel uncomfortable (Flick, 2007, p.69); a point that Barrie Thorne contends researchers have insufficiently accounted for (2004, p.166). Ensuring a respondent was interviewed with whom I 'may never meet again' thus served to (re)create a relaxed atmosphere of candour, maintaining trust between interviewer and respondent alike (Miller and Crabtree, 2004, p.196; Morgan, 2004, p.272).

The Impact of ASD on Research

As I have ASD, it was preferable to conduct supplementary interviews with respondents through snowball sampling. Frequently, I had problems clearly articulating a case, especially considering that the role of interviewer placed me under heightened pressure. In securing respondents through a mutual acquaintance, tension was thus alleviated. Prior to the interview, however, I referred to my ASD and the ramifications that this had on my abilities as a researcher. Given the sensitive material under discussion, an open-ended format was therefore necessary in order to prevent potential misunderstanding. Despite acknowledging it as a concern, I did not insinuate that my disability was either ‘a problem or a negative experience’ (Brown and Boardman, 2011, p.24), instead merely providing the respondent with full disclosure. Although Brown and Boardman recount an example of a researcher that ‘did not know if participants recruited through snowball sampling knew she was disabled’ (2011, p.27), non-disclosure of my disability risked making me appear unprofessional at points in the interview that I was likely to find difficult.

Snowballing sampling allowed me to be relaxed about disclosing my disability, forming ‘one practical way in which general assumptions of a binary disabled/non-disabled split may be challenged’ (Tregaskis and Goodley, 2005). As respondents were verified by a gatekeeper, a sense of trust was thus established before the interview had begun. In discussing my personal ‘binary disabled/non-disabled split’, respondents had the opportunity to reflect on further hierarchical relations affecting them, for example through sexuality and disposable income, as well as marginalisation on account of their demographic makeup. Criticism has been made of researchers for not providing

‘extensive information to each person they observe’ (Thorne, 2004, p.166), a concern I countered through explaining ‘extensive[ly]’ both what ASD was, and how it affected me. Claire Tregaskis and Dan Goodley have praised honesty from researchers regarding explaining their disabilities during the interview process, contending that ‘equitable working partnerships can only derive from the equal valuing of difference’ (2005). Through an acknowledgement of disability, therefore, a mutual acceptance of ‘difference[s]’ could be established.

Disclosing to respondents that I was diagnosed with ASD, additionally to explaining what this entailed, was important for reducing the stress that I frequently experienced when undertaking the interview process. In gleaning contacts from snowballing friends and previous respondents, therefore, I was more confident about pausing in the interview where necessary, for example to have a cigarette break. In doing so, I was able to both gather myself and establish further rapport with the respondent. To ensure that respondents felt equally at ease and would agree to get in touch with potential contacts on my behalf, it was important for me to be in a relaxed frame of mind, a situation that risked being undermined if the respondent selected was not themselves vouched for. Although selecting respondents from varying backgrounds to ensure an accurate sample, I was careful to emphasise to both previous respondents and gatekeepers the nature of my condition in order to prevent potentially confrontational or otherwise inappropriate respondents being selected.

The snowballing process resulted in rapport being easier than it would be through

either attempting to access LGBTQIA groups or elites working for the publications coded in the primary research. By contrast, respondents vouched for by either a gatekeeper or previous respondent ensured that the interviews progressed in a relaxed manner. By outlining my disability prior to the interview, Brown and Boardman's concerns that 'the researcher remains remote and unknown to the participant' through 'the imbalance of disclosure' (2011, p.28) was thus effectively countered. Bryman praises this candour, contending that 'unless an element of rapport can be established, some respondents may initially agree to be interviewed, but then decide to terminate their participation because of the length of time the interview is taking' (2001, p.114). Considering that 'time management and self-organisation can present problems for people on the autism spectrum' (MacLeod et al., 2012, p.5), it was therefore important for me to initially explain to respondents how my disability was likely to affect the interview process. As MacLeod et al. note that ASD 'profoundly affect[s the researcher's]...opportunities for inclusion' (2012, p.1), imparting information concerning its impact thus allowed for 'inclus[ive]' interviews. Considering that respondents were perceived as having an "abject" sexuality, a sense of trust regarding (re)constructed binaries of "self" and "other" was established through my disclosure, a situation mirrored when discussing marginalisation through demographic factors including ethnicity, social class and age.

4.5 Applying the Methods to Empirical Research

The methods for this case study complemented the broader literature concerning sexual and gendered hierarchies, providing further information concerning how emphasis within "gay" lifestyle(s) over the twenty year period following Thatcher's

resignation had shifted from campaigning against homophobic discrimination to focusing on a discrete Pink Pound. As my primary research involved a textual analysis of the two bestselling “gay” British publications as opposed to magazines with a more select readership, I gained an understanding of how requiring a sufficient disposable income to afford varying product(s) was (re)presented as a homonormative form of “can-do success”, being necessary for (re)producing glamorous individuality (McRobbie, 2009, p.125). Through pre-selecting a finite number of editions of *Attitude* and *Gay Times*, the empirical work was prevented from being too sprawling, being able to form wider conclusions about “gay” lifestyle(s) more generally through CDA (Fairclough, 1995, p.43). Although the “straight self” tends to be validated through (re)constructing “gay masculinity” as deviant (Connell, 2011, p.151), it was important for the empirical research to survey how *Attitude* and *Gay Times* have emphasised neo-liberal ideals of “can-do success” (see Table 2, pp.124-6) as norms, rendering those without this status as being “at-risk” (Harris, 2004a, p.16). In using CDA to code editions of both magazines, varying hierarchical relations in both publications were identified, despite both initially appearing to contrast with one another.

Further to coding the publications, it was important to understand how far respondents not identifying as “straight” considered *Attitude* and *Gay Times* to have (re)presented their lifestyle(s). The analysis was therefore complemented by conducting a selection of semi-structured one-to-one interviews, providing respondents with the opportunity to discuss their experiences at length, while also diverting tangential points back to the main themes under analysis. By providing

recent copies of both *Attitude* and *Gay Times* during the interview process, I was therefore able to focus discussion back to discrete examples of a Pink Pound, thus allowing me to reinforce the themes identified through primary coding. Having selected cities with a notable LGBTQIA sub-culture to ensure that respondents would feel comfortable discussing their sexuality in a public place, the methodological technique of snowball sampling allowed me to select respondents from a broader demography. As a researcher with ASD, snowballing was also beneficial in preventing me from being unduly stressed about unpredictable interactions, as those being interviewed were vouched for either by previous respondents or a range of gatekeepers.

The methods outlined in this chapter enabled me to identify the hierarchies prevalent in “gay” lifestyle(s) between 1991 and 2011, providing a structure for collating my empirical findings. Through coding the primary sources over a twenty year period, I was able to survey how the increase in legal rights for British “gay” men led to discrete advertising being (re)constructed as integral to a Pink Pound, a process complementing previous studies identifying how commercial product(s) were (re)presented in lifestyle(s) magazines (Cortese and Ling, 2011). In selecting “gay” publications that were read by a broad audience, I was able to demonstrate how hegemonic forms of homonormative “success” (see Table 2, pp.124-6) had been (re)produced across varying “gay” lifestyle(s) through glamorous individuality (McRobbie, 2009, p.125). Having identified the relevant themes coded during research (see Table 2, pp.124-6), the following empirical chapters demonstrate the intersection between discretely “gay” lifestyle(s) and wider neo-liberal forms of “success”. As

opposed to “gay” men undertaking a subversive identity, the empirical findings outline how discourse on mainstream “gay” magazines has increasingly placed significance on an assimilation, or aspiration for assimilation, into a perceived heteronormative norm.

5. Varying “Gay” Lifestyle(s)

Coding “gay” lifestyle(s) magazines between 1991 and 2011 provided an understanding of how binaries of “success” and “failure” (see Table 1, pp.20-1) were assimilated into a marginalised sexuality. Although the “straight self” ‘defines itself in part by a vehement rejection of homosexuality’ (Connell, 1995, p.128), the discrete Pink Pound is (re)produced through promotions (Edwards, 1997, pp.113-5) similar to those identified in “straight” men’s (Crewe, 2003, pp.96-7) and women’s (McRobbie, 1999, p.46) magazines. As such, heteronormative forms of “success” are notable in “gay” publications.

To gauge how “gay” lifestyle(s) had changed, I coded both *Gay Times* and *Attitude*, the two highest-circulating publications in the UK over the timeframe of study (Baker, 2003, p.245; Stevenson et al., 2003, p.118). In doing so, I observed how a perceived ‘radical shift from community based titles to more mainstream ventures’ (*Attitude*, May 1994, p.18) had taken place in British publications since 1991, complementing Sender’s identification of changes to *The Advocate* between 1967 and 1992 (2001). Nonetheless, I was careful to draw a distinction between the two magazines. While *Gay Times* initially focused on campaigning for equal rights, for example through the MediaWatch column drawing attention to perceived homophobia in the mainstream media, *Attitude* primarily concentrated on style, as reflected in its opening edition stating a desire to ‘bring a new slant to everything from football, fashion and beyond’ (May 1994, p.7).

Further to the articles and promotions within both *Attitude* and *Gay Times*, the coding of the letters pages allowed me to examine how representative the publications as a whole were to readers. Although one reader refers to ‘get[ting] bullied at school for being “out”’ (*Attitude*, April 1999, p.10), for example, the magazines have focused on how coming out is indicative of being ‘at the beginning of the road to happysville’, citing celebrities including Matt Lucas and Stephen Fry (*Attitude*, August 2009, pp.52-62) as indicators of “gay” lifestyle(s) being intersected with “success”. In also coding how readers’ letters responded to articles and promotions across *Attitude* and *Gay Times*, therefore, the analysis of how bestselling “gay” magazines (re)presented their audience was enhanced.

Secondary to coding the publications themselves, I interviewed men not identifying as “straight” living in Manchester, London and Brighton, cities with a notable Pink Pound, about their impressions of *Attitude* and *Gay Times*. When conducting the interviews, I was careful to avoid ‘the risk of missing [the publications]...significance as a far wider cultural phenomenon’ (Edwards, 2003, p.135). A semi-structured one-to-one approach was used, providing respondents with a relaxed environment to articulate ‘replies that the survey researcher may not have contemplated’ (Bryman, 2001, p.143). The respondents selected ranged from those taking out subscriptions for both publications (Respondent 1, 2012; for a complete transcript of these interviews see Appendix C) to those having bought them only occasionally and criticising them for being ‘essentially the same magazine’ as *GQ* (Respondent 11, 2012).

Although both publications (re)constructed heteronormative forms of “success”, the

emphasis on a separate sexuality remains, as demonstrated by varying “gay” lifestyle(s) being (re)presented through commercial discourse (see Table 2, pp.124-6). Respondents also noted heterogeneity in the “gay” scene, arguing that ‘the definitive gay identity is in its diversity’ (Respondent 5, 2012). Through this lack of a ‘definitive gay identity’, therefore, *Attitude* and *Gay Times* have appeared to uphold the varying discourses that Nixon acknowledges have existed across “masculinity” (1996, p.13). Additionally to discrete “gay” lifestyle(s), however, the magazines have emphasised the significance of neo-liberal “success”, a process leading to material product(s) being used to validate “gay” identity. Nonetheless, no attempt was made to subvert the dichotomy between the “straight subject” and its “gay abject” (Hekma, 2010, p.363; MacKinnon, 2003, p.7), with the latter instead adopting values held by the former (see Table 1, pp.20-1).

Although both publications promoted distinct “gay” lifestyle(s), younger readers were increasingly targeted during the twenty year timeframe under study. Although Benwell argues that lifestyle(s) magazines are ‘characterised by aspiration rather than full possession’ (2003b, p.161), a generally more impressionable readership is likely to be less able to draw that distinction. Secondly, through case studies of how both “gay” sports teams and nightclubs have been (re)presented as neo-liberal spaces (see Table 2, pp.124-6), I demonstrate how separate forms of entertainment are featured in both magazines. Following this analysis of leisure activities, I survey how lifestyle(s) of “gay” men regarded as atypical and even ‘putatively antiheteronormative’ (Stryker, 2006, p.7) were framed within a consumerist context, continuing to use aspirational (re)presentation(s) of “success”. Through coding mainstream “gay” publications, I was

able to compare varying commercial lifestyle(s) with Sender's analysis of *The Advocate* (2001) between 1967 and 1992; the period prior to my own timeframe.

5.1 A Younger "Gay" Audience

Through targeting a younger audience, both publications conflated homonormativity with "success". Although scholars have noted that "gay" identity is marginalised to validate the "straight self" (Hekma, 2010, p.363; MacKinnon, 2003, p.7), the publications acting as primary sources nonetheless (re)presented discrete forms of "success" through a Pink Pound. As I interviewed respondents over twenty-one, they were able to reflect on how the magazines had influenced them as teenagers in comparison with the present. For example, one respondent who described *Attitude* as 'a bit shit, really' recalled that 'when I was a chubby, gay fifteen-year-old kid who'd just come out, I used to get *Attitude*' (Respondent 11, 2012). Although there were letters in both publications concerning varying "gay" lifestyle(s), correspondence from younger readers frequently referred to issues concerning coming out and its repercussions.

Despite their appeal to varying lifestyle(s), this part of the chapter examines how both publications have increasingly targeted a younger audience through the frequent marginalisation of older "gay" men. As such, teenagers coming out are (re)constructed as 'normalised' through being "beyond the closet" (Seidman et al., 1999), and therefore being on 'the road to happysville' (*Attitude*, August 2009, p.52). Both publications, therefore, (re)produced homonormativity as being an indicator of

“success”, emphasising the significance of consumerism in terms of a distinct sexuality.

Emphasising a Younger Audience

Several respondents recalled purchasing both *Attitude* and *Gay Times* as teenagers, attributing their readership to the ‘level of isolation that you have [when younger]. Reading something that you can potentially identify with is good’ (Respondent 12, 2012; see also Respondent 6, 2012). Similar to a respondent recalling having enjoyed *FHM* as a teen despite considering it ‘disgusting’ (Respondent 9, 2012) in his twenties, respondents frequently considered the publications under review as ‘lowest common denominator stuff’ (Respondent 12, 2012), despite having read it when younger. Through being purchased by and targeted at an impressionable audience less able to access varying scene(s), the requirement of a disposable income for readers to access lifestyle(s) that they could ‘potentially identify with’ is reinforced.

The publications under analysis targeted younger readers through promoting teen television shows and films. Additionally to the romance *Dream Boy* advertised as being ‘like *Brokeback Mountain* set in high school’ (*Attitude*, August 2009, p.26), there was also an extensive review of the British coming-of-age drama *Submarine* (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.41). Despite the latter having no discernible “gay” theme, the trope of a teenager growing up was regarded as equally important to the broader aspects of “gay” lifestyle(s). Equally, the popular high school series *Glee* was praised for ‘deal[ing] sensitively with homophobic bullying and teen sexuality’ (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.41), demonstrating the assimilation of ‘teen sexuality’ into the “gay” identity

(re)presented by *Attitude* and *Gay Times*. While praising it for understanding issues including ‘homophobic bullying’, however, *Glee* is discussed in the context of purchasing a ‘live tour which may or may not require you to partially re-mortgage your house for a ticket’ (*GT*, May 2011 p.77). Although the publications have accepted that attendance is unlikely, the aspiration to earn sufficient income to do so is nonetheless (re)constructed as a homonormative form of “success” (see Table 2, pp.124-6).

When (re)presenting glamorous individuality (McRobbie, 2009, p.125) to younger readers, both publications were noted by one respondent to have framed “gay” lifestyle(s) as ‘the new black, almost’ (Respondent 2, 2012). For example, the ability for “gay” men to have “successful” careers similar to the “straight subject” has been demonstrated through references to ‘up-and-coming gay fashion stars of the future’ (*GT*, October 2010, pp.50-5), drawing distinction(s) through sexuality if not achievement. The emphasis on “success” as available for talented “gay” men is further observable through a letter-writer praising *Attitude* for having ‘helped me realise that being gay can be positive, even if you’re young and not sure where to start on the gay scene’ (March 1997, p.10). This sense of inclusivity is further (re)constructed through articles discussing the marginalisation of “gay” men in the 1980s through their being ‘distant fictions...or bad jokes’ (*Gay Times*, September 2003, pp.36-7), compared to considering it ‘great to be gay in 2004’ (*Gay Times*, July 2004, pp.112-3). The ‘great’ lifestyle(s) (re)presented in *Attitude* and *Gay Times* as discrete to “gay” men being an independent identity, however, are nonetheless apparent through (re)producing neo-liberal forms of “success” (see Table 1, pp.20-1) as being equally integral to both

“straight masculine” (Benwell, 2003a, p.7) and “feminine” (McRobbie, 2009, p.57) publications.

Despite earlier editions of *Attitude* and *Gay Times* highlighting the lower income of younger readers, later publications have used the Pink Pound as a separate indicator of homonormative “success”. For example, a shift can be observed from earlier promotions for a charity working with homeless young “gay” men (*Gay Times*, September 1994, p.129) to (re)constructing a norm of readers having sufficient disposable income to access the commercial product(s) promoted in the magazines. Most notably, when drawing a younger audience’s attention to material goods targeted at them, the publications have moved from placing a focus on concerns with acne and spots (*Attitude*, March 1996, p.81; *Attitude*, March 1997, pp.98-9) to promoting expensive branded clothes from ‘pioneering young creatives’ (*Attitude*, April 2011 p.48), (re)presenting fashion as an indicator of “success” to the same extent as disposable income (see Table 2, pp.124-6). Equally, articles in older publications have focused on British “gay” teenagers being the victims of homophobic bullying (*Gay Times*, June 1999, pp.14-5), rather than using examples of television shows such as *Glee* with a middle-class backdrop (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.41).

Although forms of “success” are made available to a younger audience, forms of “failure” were notable when the publications discussed older “gay” men. For example, the signifier ‘geriatric bigots’ was used in the context of homophobia, when contrasted with younger people ‘overwhelmingly support[ing] our call for equality’ (*Gay Times*, September 1998, p.64). This marginalisation of an older audience is also observable

through descriptions of ‘middle-aged tourism’ (*GT*, August 2008, p.112) being used in pull quotes praising ‘tanned boys in their shorts’ (*GT*, August 2008, p.114). Readers also acknowledged the dichotomy between an older “abject” and younger “subjects”, demonstrated through a letter-writer complaining of ‘horrendous looks and comments [in nightclubs] just because of my age’ (*GT*, August 2008, p.200). Equally, a respondent in his sixties recalled having how he ‘suddenly start[ed] to become invisible...and I think that’s incredibly true, you know, in the gay culture’ (Respondent 8, 2012). As such, older readers were further marginalised as ‘invisible’ through the publications discretely focusing on the opportunities for more impressionable younger audience with sufficient disposable income to access the “gay” scene.

The letters written in to both *Attitude* and *Gay Times* have reflected an older readership, demonstrated by one reader suggesting that *GT* should ‘write an article about the “older” guys’ (March 2007, p.13; see also *Gay Times*, November 1995, p.110; *Gay Times*, June 1999, p.130). These concerns regarding marginalisation are justified through readers being advised against having sex with older men, demonstrated by the use of signifiers including ‘100% sleaze’ (*Gay Times*, July 2004, p.112) to describe potential older partners. Additionally, a column mocking the ‘drug bores’ for whom ‘canonising the years 1988-9 does not protect...from signs of ageing’ (*Attitude*, July 2002, p.32) has served to reinforce a “failure” (see Table 2, pp.124-6) that younger audiences are compelled avoid emulating in later life.

Despite later editions of both *Attitude* and *Gay Times* being focused on younger readers, commercial product(s) were nonetheless made available to an older audience

at previous points over the twenty year timeframe. For example, branded leather jackets were promoted by older models, with the caption ‘leather doesn’t date...It just gets better with age’ (*Attitude*, April 1999, pp.58-67). Equally, earlier publications have promoted club nights for younger “gay” men (*Gay Times*, September 1994, pp.87-92) alongside separate events such as a Pink Picnic for older readers that was held in ‘a sleepy Yorkshire village’ (*Gay Times*, September 1994, p.94). Concerns about stigmatisation within the “gay” scene more broadly are articulated through a selection of interviews with older “gay” men concerning how they ‘feel marginalised by the gay marketplace and media’ (*Attitude*, June 2003, p.71). Although promotions across both publications for product(s) and events targeted at older readers provided a discrete way to prevent them from ‘feel[ing] marginalised’, the later focus on younger and more impressionable audience(s) allowed the ideal of ‘full possession’ (Benwell, 2003b, p.161) to appear more tangible.

Coming Out

Both publications have (re)constructed the process of coming out as being ‘normalised, even if incompletely, and thus...“beyond the closet”’ (Seidman et al., 1999). One respondent disputes how far this ‘normalis[ation]’ is accurate, arguing that ‘you don’t have to come out to be straight, you have to come out to be gay’ (Respondent 3, 2012). Despite *Attitude* and *Gay Times* having assimilated neo-liberal forms of “success” into a discrete “gay” identity, therefore, homonormativity is nonetheless marginalised in order to validate the “straight self” (Hekma, 2010, p.363). How the readers have experienced the process of coming out in comparison to how it was (re)presented in the publications is reflected in a letter from an eighteen-year-old

whose father rejected his sexuality. Although the magazine discusses how ‘many older people still haven’t moved with the times’, emphasis is primarily placed on how it is ‘great to be gay in 2004’ (*Gay Times*, July 2004, pp.112-3). Through the advice of role models including Stephen Fry and Matt Lucas, later publications have maintained these ‘great’ opportunities for openly “gay” readers in the commercial context of visiting cities including New York and London with a notable Pink Pound (*Attitude*, August 2009, pp.52-62). Comparatively, an earlier edition of *Gay Times* assured a reader uncertain about coming out that ‘at eighteen many guys are in the closet’ (September 1994, p.129), accounting for the hesitancy of a younger audience. Later publications, by contrast, focused on the neo-liberal opportunities for readers ““beyond the closet”” through sufficient disposable income.

Letters in earlier articles concerning coming out were focused on broader issues than those affecting younger readers, as demonstrated by a Bishop urging his fellow clergy to be openly “gay” (*Gay Times*, November 1997, p.42). As well as younger readers wanting to know how best to inform their parents about their sexuality, the questions put to the advice columns about coming out reflected a wider age range, as demonstrated by letters from closeted men in the workplace rather than at school (*Gay Times*, November 1997, p.122; *Gay Times*, September 1998, p.121). Rather than providing guidance for readers about issues associated with coming out, however, later publications contained parody advice columns regarding concerns affecting “gay” men (*Gay Times*, October 2010, p.134) similar to those identified by Benwell in magazines targeting a New Lad (2001, p.19). Despite the older audience (re)presented in earlier publications, therefore, later editions have framed the process of coming out as

principally affecting a younger readership, as well as being a positive experience.

To reinforce the benefits of coming out, both *Attitude* and *Gay Times* have used the experiences of celebrities to counter readers' potential concerns. For example, Brian May was interviewed recalling how Freddie Mercury found it 'difficult...to tell the world he was gay when, for many years, he wasn't sure himself' (*Gay Times*, September 2000, pp.17-8). This acknowledgement of the 'difficult[ies]' associated with coming out is further reflected through in a later edition of *GT* featuring celebrities writing to their younger selves, with the process of coming out and its ramifications being frequently referred to. Despite stars commenting about family being unsupportive, this is attributed to parents, and especially fathers, being: 'upset that he didn't do as much in his sixty years on this planet as you've done in a handful' (*GT*, May 2009, p.53). In focusing on the perceived "failure" of a homophobic parent, the ultimate "success" of the "subject" was thus accentuated, as opposed to advice columns providing readers advice and counselling for parents resistant of their son's coming out as "gay" (*Gay Times*, July 2004, pp.112-3). Equally, celebrities provided practical advice to their younger selves of 'snuggl[ing] up with mum' (*GT*, May 2009, p.61), and 'be[ing] nicer to your sister. She's on your side' (*GT*, May 2009, p.62), furthering the (re)construction of celebrities as role models able to assist younger readers insecure with their sexuality, rather than qualified counsellors in the ultimately phased out advice columns. Similar to Anita Brady's argument that mainstream "gay" celebrities have 'complicate[d] the discursive imperatives of what... "outness" means' (2011), the "success" (re)presented by the role models in both publications has formed an aspirational norm.

In comparison to the “success” that celebrities in later publications have associated with coming out, the letters from readers reflected concerns with how coming out was (re)presented, as demonstrated by a letter-writer’s concern about *Coronation Street*’s storyline about the subject resulting in ‘younger viewers...despis[ing] gay people’ (*Gay Times*, July 2004, p.9). One respondent agreed, disliking the high number of ‘coming out stories...which have horrendous results’ (Respondent 6, 2012). As such, readers’ concerns about hearing the ‘horrendous’ coming out dramas were alleviated through focusing on, despite initial hardship, the ultimate “success” of varying role models. For example, although the historian David Starkey was praised for having ‘dashes of fierceness and zinging wit’ alongside the ‘sheer unadulterated soppieness’ of a homonormative relationship, he nonetheless recalled his mother being ‘bitterly disappointed’ on his coming out as “gay” (*GT*, May 2009, p.73-4). A comparison is made, however, between coming out in the 1960s, as Starkey did, and the present day, in which discrete and diverse choice are (re)constructed as available for “gay” men. One respondent in his fifties has agreed, considering younger “gay” men as having the opportunity to ‘cross all divides’, in comparison to his father having ‘attacked me with a knife when I was sixteen and told him I was gay’ (Respondent 7, 2012). Nonetheless, a respondent in his twenties noted that on coming out ‘it took my dad a while to get used to the idea, um, and he’s still not entirely comfortable talking about it’ (Respondent 6, 2012), indicating the sense of family being ‘disappointed’ remains pertinent. It is through the experience(s) of celebrity role models, however, that the publications have framed the process of coming out as providing an opportunity to form a glamorous individuality (McRobbie, 2009, p.125), regardless of how initially

resentful families were.

One respondent who recalled experiencing ‘incredible hostility from my parents’ on coming out acknowledged the importance of having ‘good supports in place’ so young “gay” men could ‘form a good, positive identity’ (Respondent 8, 2012). Within both publications, letter-writers have interpreted ‘good supports’ as being provided through older role models. Additionally to praising celebrities like Stephen Gately for the ‘great job he has done in helping many young gay people to come to terms with their sexuality’ (*Attitude*, August 2001, p.12), however, letters have also acknowledged that ‘it isn’t just celebrities who can change the social landscape but ordinary people’, commending openly “gay” teachers (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.14). Although coming out was associated with varying opportunities to access the Pink Pound, readers have instead focused on the significance of openly “gay” stars forming role models assisting them to ‘come to terms with their sexuality’. It is through the aspiration to emulate established figures rather than by owning specific product(s), therefore, that a neo-liberal emphasis on “success” was identifiable regarding how both readers and respondents discussed coming out. On a broader scale, although recent editions of both publications have drawn attention to the range of “successful” identities available to younger “gay” men, providing them the opportunity to ‘pick and choose between role models from every industry and every colour’ (*Attitude*, August 2009, p.40), these remained principally targeted at a younger and therefore more impressionable audience.

5.2 Homonormativity in Diverse “Gay” Activities

Discrete “gay” lifestyle(s) have been (re)presented as having provided a range of separate activities. In doing so, both publications have (re)constructed the Pink Pound as exciting, reflected in a quote from Barbara Windsor complaining that ‘there aren’t any decent straight clubs’ (*Attitude*, April 1999, p.28). Despite readers accessing spaces separate from a ‘hetero hell’ (*Gay Times*, November 1995, pp.91-6) on account of having sufficient disposable income, homonormativity has been framed by both publications as a ‘powerful nexus that supports heterosexual privilege’ (Griffin, 2009, p.46), rather than attempting to subvert the “straight self” mocked across both publications. To identify how homonormativity is maintained through the lifestyle(s) (re)presented across both *Attitude* and *Gay Times*, this part of the chapter uses two “gay” leisure activities as case studies. As such, I begin by assessing the importance of sports clubs, also taking into account how the publications have emphasised the sex appeal and impact of figures such as David Beckham considered as “gay” icons. Equally, the use of a sufficient disposable income to indicate “success” can be demonstrated through focus on varying nightclubs forming an ‘underground party circuit’ (*Attitude*, August 2009, p.123) alongside the more mainstream G-A-Y (*Attitude*, August 2009, p.28). Despite “gay” lifestyle(s) being (re)constructed as more exciting than the “straight self”, therefore, homonormative forms of “success” (see Table 1, pp.20-1) have nonetheless remained ‘anchored in domesticity and consumption’ (Duggan, 2003). As such, both publications can be observed to have (re)produced a heteronormative identity.

Discrete “Gay” Sports

The magazines have frequently emphasised sports as part of a separate identity, making clear they and by extension their readers are ‘not these clichéd gays that dismiss all sport just because we got picked last every time’ (*Attitude*, August 2008, p.17). Instead, both publications refer to playing and taking an interest in varying sport(s), a point Connell attributes to the latter being (re)constructed as ‘the leading definer of masculinity in mass culture’ (2011, p.54). As such, a link with heteronormative perceptions of “success” can be made, despite *Attitude* and *Gay Times* using sports clubs to emphasise different lifestyle(s), for example through crediting a rugby team with ‘help[ing] to break down the barriers of prejudice which prevent many homosexuals from taking part in professional sport’ (*Gay Times*, July 2004, p.67). Despite acting as a ‘definer of masculinity’, it is through the “success” of taking part in these discrete sports clubs that the publications contend that “gay” men are able to prevent external ‘prejudice[s]’, thus forming a separate identity.

The “success” associated with joining distinct sports teams is reflected in articles concerning Stonewall FC (*GT*, August 2008, pp.54-6) and the World Out Games (*GT*, August 2008, pp.68-9), (re)presenting involvement as a political statement to the same extent as a personal one. For example, an earlier letter concerning Stonewall FC has focused on how taking part in a “gay” sports team demonstrates “success” through showing how ‘gay men can obviously be super-sexy and sporty even if you’re told at school that you can’t be into sports if you’re gay’ (*Attitude*, August 2001, p.12). A shift from younger “gay” men being ‘picked second-to-last, before the fat boy’ to eventually taking part through the perceived norm of a ‘trimmer’ body (*Attitude*,

March 1996, p.48) is therefore regarded as an aspiration that readers can (re)produce. Rather than sexuality forming a barrier to liking sports, therefore, *Attitude* and *Gay Times* have instead (re)constructed “success” through both separate “gay” teams and competitions, providing readers with opportunities to demonstrate their skills in a discrete context.

Perceived stereotypes of “gay” men enjoying and taking part in specific sports are dismissed through the comment that ‘obviously, as many of us wanted to be train drivers or rugby players (!) as those that wanted to be ballerinas or the sixth member of the Spice Girls. But what we all have in common is that we knew we were different to other little boys’ (*Attitude*, February 2010, p.25). The point that ‘rugby players’ are ‘no different’ to those enjoying ‘balle[t]’ is accentuated further by one “gay” man interviewed in the publications discussing his ‘guilty pleasure’ of snooker (*GT*, August 2008, p.67), indicating how distinct “gay” lifestyle(s) were accounted for across the publications more generally. The latter’s comment that ‘you can keep David Beckham. It’s all about Ronnie O’Sullivan for me’ (*GT*, August 2008, p.67), however, indicates an aspiration to emulate the “success” of celebrity role models when projecting both interest and talent in varying sports.

Across different sports, discrete participation is understood through varying celebrities coming out and being accepted within the heteronormative mainstream. For example, Gareth Thomas is referred to on one cover as a ‘rugby superstar. National hero. Gay man’ (*Attitude*, February 2010, p.1). As such, one of the key definers of homophobia is understood through the lack of openly “gay” footballers, as reflected in

the comment that ‘instead of a great footballer, we have a martyr’ (*Gay Times*, August 2004, p.50)⁶. Although columnists have berated the lack of aspirational stars available to readers, commenting ‘where in the wide world of sports are all the faggots?’ (*GT*, August 2008, p.39), David Beckham is referred to as both a “gay” icon and a role model for young “gay” men. Although not “gay”, Beckham is used to indicate that readers of *Attitude* and *Gay Times* can be accepted in football, demonstrated by one columnist praising him for having ‘spoke admiringly of the stand I’ve taken on homophobia’ (*GT*, August 2008, p.89). Rather than disrupting these sexual hierarchies, approval from heteronormative institutions has been (re)constructed as being of higher significance.

Later publications have emphasised fashion as being synonymous with specific sports, demonstrated through advertisements and promotions for varying equipment and clothing (*Attitude*, *Attitude Active*, April 2011, p.2). Edwards has referred to sport and health as ‘persistently dip[ping] their toes into issues of men’s style’ (1997, p.72), therefore suggesting that sports are further understood through the fashion ‘style[s]’ associated with “success”. Although affording these ‘style[s]’ can appear to older readers as ‘unreachable or at least a struggle to attain’ (Benwell, 2003b, p.161), informing a younger target audience that ‘sports bags and rucksacks can often damage the line of a good suit’ (*GT*, October 2010, p.89) (re)presents the affording of varying fashion items as a norm, regardless of expense to the reader.

The association of branded clothing with sporting “success” is further demonstrated

⁶ A reference to the suicide of the openly “gay” footballer Justin Fashanu (Watson-Smythe, 1998)

through (re)constructing sportsmen as sexually attractive, as demonstrated in the remark that ‘if you look at those Emporio Armani adverts with David Beckham, you’re not seeing him as an athlete. You’re seeing him as someone you’d give a blowjob to’ (*GT*, August 2008, p.54). This fetishisation of “straight” players is demonstrated more broadly through comments including ‘Vinnie Jones, grab our bollocks and you’ll get more than you bargained for’ (*Attitude*, April 1996, p.53), and ‘I have...found myself vividly imagining Joe Cole and Alan Smith involving me in one of their unsavoury roasting sessions’ (*Attitude*, June 2006, p.30). The latter signifiers thus support Baker’s argument that muscular forms of “masculinity” (re)presented in the context of sport form a ‘desirable trait’ (2003, p.245) in “gay” identity, forming an ideal that readers could aspire to. Nonetheless, the more recent reference to David Beckham appearing attractive through ‘Emporio Armani adverts’ has drawn a link between physical attraction and affording various expensive fashion brands, a process that has stressed to readers the importance of purchasing specific product(s) in order to appear attractive.

The Appeal of Nightclubs

Through the “success” of role models across varying sports, the publications have (re)constructed “gay” men as either assimilating into activities associated with the “straight self” (*Attitude*, February 2010, p.1) or forming separate “gay” teams (*Gay Times*, July 2004, p.67; *GT*, August 2008, pp.54-6). By contrast, nightclubs have consistently been (re)presented as distinct to “gay” lifestyle(s) across the twenty year timeframe under study. Although one respondent has agreed that the coverage of clubbing in *Attitude* and *Gay Times* is important for reflecting how ‘going out became

something that you just did every two or three months, just to keep a foot in' (Respondent 11, 2012), this approach was not wholly reflective of all "gay" men. For example, one letter recorded disdain with the 'lamentable apathy towards politics' in several of the nightclubs (*Attitude*, February 2000, p.12). Equally, one respondent noted how 'I've never met my boyfriends on the gay scene, so it's always been at straight clubs or parties' (Respondent 12, 2012). Despite stressing to readers the need to 'keep a foot in' "gay" clubbing, therefore, both disinterest and insufficient funds (Respondent 9, 2012) with demonstrating one's "gay" identity through attending discrete nightclubs is not sufficiently accounted for in later editions of *Attitude* and *Gay Times*.

The ideal of attending "gay" clubs has been positively compared by both of the publications to the perceived mediocrity of "straight" ones, demonstrated through Sarah Blackwood from the band Client commenting that 'being a woman in a gay club means you can relax and you can dress up without feeling that you're meant to be looked at' (*Attitude*, August 2009, p.122). Although "gay" nightclubs were (re)constructed as being more welcoming and exciting than those in the "straight" scene, sexual hierarchies were nonetheless upheld through "straight" female stars such as Blackwood having to validate a "gay" other. Additionally, the commercial emphasis on "gay" nightclubs (*Gay Times*, September 1992, p.23; *Gay Times*, March 1993, p.6; *GT*, August 2008, p.32; *Attitude*, April 2011, p.22) reflects the neo-liberal assimilation of heteronormative "success" (see Table 1, pp.20-1) into "gay" lifestyle(s). Equally, one respondent has noted similarities, citing how tickets on the door being sold by either 'a shirtless guy and the straight ones will have a girl with a hand in her hair and

a low-cut top on' (Respondent 6, 2012). Although a discrete target audience is retained in more recent publications, they have nonetheless been framed around similar commercial signifiers to those acknowledged within the "straight subject".

Rather than defining themselves through size or prestige, earlier publications understood a 'gay clubland' as being (re)presented through an ecstasy sub-culture (*Gay Times*, September 1994, p.1), as reflected in a contributor's comment that 'nightclubs, for me, mean drugs' (*Gay Times*, September 1998, p.19). In spite of drawing attention to 'the very real risks involved' with ecstasy (*Attitude*, May 1994, p.56; see also *Gay Times*, September 1994, p.23), clubbers are described as being 'ever eager for new drugs to use and abuse' (*Attitude*, April 1999, p.23). Increasingly, however, the link between drugs and clubbing has been played down, as shown by an attack on 'drug bores' (*Attitude*, July 2002, p.32). Instead, clubbing has been framed through readers being "successful" enough to access specific neo-liberal spaces, demonstrated by the London-based G-A-Y nightclub receiving praise for being 'so vast, it's probably the only man-made structure to be visible from outer space' (*Attitude*, August 2001, p.51). Equally, a 'legendary' club in Brussels has also been acclaimed for having 'gays flying in from all over the world' to attend (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.32). As opposed to an emphasis on ecstasy when (re)presenting the discrete nature of "gay" nightclubs, later editions of both publications have instead emphasised the commercial side of clubbing, further accentuating homonormative signifiers of "success".

The notion of varying "gay" lifestyle(s) can be identified through the diffuse

nightclubs (re)presented in both *Attitude* and *Gay Times*, for example through promotions for ‘attitude free’ venues (*Gay Times*, November 1995, p.97). Respondents support this range of identities, praising the nightclubs for putting forward ‘a wide cross-section of society’ (Respondent 7, 2012) that they contend “straight” spaces do not, for example noting ‘gay bars here [in Brighton] that more working-class people tend to go, older guys, hairy guys, and...clubs for younger guys’ (Respondent 6, 2012). Although later magazines acknowledge varying lifestyle(s) through separate promotions for club nights in Magaluf, a club in which Shirley Bassey is performing and a techno DJ referred to as ‘a regular on London’s underground party circuit’ in the same edition of *Attitude* (August 2009, pp.120-3), a commercial approach remains through the emphasis on high prices for entry and drinks. Through using homonormative signifiers of “success” (see Table 2, pp.124-6) when promoting different club nights, clubbing has remained (re)constructed as an activity that younger readers should aspire to. As the publications have reflected minority clubs undertaking homogenous values associated with more mainstream spaces, one respondent identifying as African has claimed how ‘I don’t find the black gay clubs any better than the majority of clubs, you know. I think they’re just the same’ (Respondent 3, 2012). Discrete lifestyle(s) are acknowledged, therefore, through varying parts of a Pink Pound being accessed through having a sufficient disposable income.

Over the timeframe of study, both publications have shifted from promoting nightclubs at varying ages across areas without an obvious Pink Pound (*Gay Times*, September 1994, pp.87-94) to providing excitement for a younger audience through larger nightclubs with signifiers such as ‘legendary’ (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.22). As a

reassurance to older readers, however, one contributor in an earlier edition of *Attitude* describes “gay” men as ‘still out bopping our tits off in the West End into and beyond middle-age’ (October 1998, p.73), also criticising ‘drunk teens with big elbows’ (*Attitude*, July 2001, p.15). In doing so, a more nuanced form of “success” associated with older men was therefore (re)produced. Further complaints of ‘drug bores’ the following year that ‘simply highlight the fact that age catches up with everyone’ (*Attitude*, July 2002, p.32) further reflect the importance placed on sophistication, marginalising both ‘drug bores’ and ‘drunk teens’ as childish, validating those perceived as mature enough to access the Pink Pound. In more recent editions, however, the younger target audience is (re)constructed as integral to nightclubs, one columnist acknowledging how the ‘fit lads [at a Manchester nightclub]...are all up for starting the weekend early, and are in a party mood. They’re the younger streetwise kids – I’m thirty-one’ (*GT*, March 2007, p.38). This focus on ‘younger streetwise kids’ is reflected in clubbing more broadly, resulting by one letter-writer commenting that he was made to feel like ‘a dirty old perv’ (*GT*, August 2008, p.200). As discussed in the previous part of the chapter, despite the publications drawing attention to the club nights available for varying lifestyle(s), focus has been placed on a ‘younger’ target audience, despite *Attitude* and *Gay Times* having taken an increasingly commercial rather than advisory position.

5.3 An Atypical Identity

Over the timeframe of study, I noted how *Attitude* and *Gay Times* have used the Pink Pound to form discrete lifestyle(s), accounted for by one respondent noting that it is important for the publishers ‘to appeal to everyone to some degree’ (Respondent 11,

2012; see also Respondent 3, 2012). This ‘appeal’ is reflected in an edition of *Gay Times* promoting “gay” saunas alongside an advertisement for an LGBTQIA Catholic helpline (June 1999, p.68), in addition to interviews with stars identifying as both camp and “straight-acting”. In the former’s case, Martine McCutcheon was praised for being ‘camp from the age of four!’ (*Attitude*, April 1999, p.40), whereas the comment regarding there being ‘something quite sexy about a gay man that is not feminine in any way’ when interviewing Danny Dyer (*Attitude*, June 2006, p.37) served to validate the latter. Through advertisements and interviews, therefore, varying forms of “gay” identity are (re)presented through both a disposable income and celebrity role models.

Reflecting the targeting of a younger and more impressionable audience, the notion of atypical “gay” figures has shifted from historical figures including Ronnie Kray (*Gay Times*, June 1999, p.86), Edward II (*Gay Times*, June 1999, p.18) and the Marquis de Sade (*Gay Times*, June 1999, p.90) to those more likely to appear as role models. Through noting the intersection of discrete “gay” lifestyle(s) with neo-liberal binaries of “success” and “failure” (see Table 2, pp.124-6), this part of the chapter begins by assessing how varying “gay” identities function through having sufficient disposable income to access the different product(s) associated with them, specifically through a case study of geek chic. I also survey how both publications have emphasised the “success” of varying celebrities across a range of careers atypical to “gay” identity, nonetheless involving homonormative forms of “success”. More specifically, I acknowledge how Pavda’s description of camping as a ‘vulgar entertainment commodity’ (2000) has been (re)produced in the publications rather than forming a challenge to heteronormative values (Kleinberg, 1995, p.52), a process

further resulting in letter-writers considering camp behaviour as problematic (*Attitude*, February 2000, p.10). I also allow for a consideration of how non-white ethnicities have been marginalised within “gay” identity more broadly (Loiacano, 1989), both in terms of fetishisation and “successful” alternatives (re)presented by both publications. Despite an emphasis on atypical identities, therefore, both *Attitude* and *Gay Times* have consistently stressed the importance of commercial “success”.

Projecting an Atypical Identity through a Disposable Income

Even when projecting atypical identities in earlier publications, consumerism has been (re)presented as integral to varying lifestyle(s), as demonstrated through promotions for sex shops (*Gay Times*, September 1992, p.34; *Gay Times*, September 2000, p.104) and a Bondage, Discipline, Submission, Masochism (BDSM) handbook (*Gay Times*, September 1994, p.5). Equally, homonormative understandings of “success” are observable through advice columns consciously attempting to prevent readers from undertaking uncommercial fetishes, for example directing a letter-writer with a fetish for small penises to a support group (*Gay Times*, October 1991, p.98) and advising another against sexual encounters with lorry drivers (*Gay Times*, September 1994, p.128). Significance is further placed on informing readers which materials they can legally own as part of BDSM culture (*Gay Times*, October 1991, p.98), reflecting an emphasis on upholding rather than contesting the law. In framing BDSM through commercial product(s), the need for sufficient disposable income in order to partake in discrete sub-cultures has therefore been emphasised.

Despite praising punk's ability to 'explore and embrace sexual deviation, experimentation and ambiguity' (*Gay Times*, October 1991, p.25) in an earlier article, later publications have placed emphasis on lifestyle(s) similar to characters in mainstream teen shows such as *Skins* (*Attitude*, August 2009, p.40). Rather than being concerned with deconstructing sexual binaries in favour of a fluid identity, more recent editions instead asked readers to 'decide which *Sex and the City* character you are' (*Attitude*, August 2009, p.55). Later attempts at forming atypical identities to that of the "gay" mainstream have therefore been (re)presented through different television figures whose personalities readers could relate to. For example, the teen show *Glee* is discussed in the context of going on a 'live tour which may or may not require you to partially re-mortgage your house for a ticket' (*GT*, May 2011, p.77). Through drawing attention to the merchandise accompanying television shows, therefore, discourse has shifted from 'experimentation' to the purchasing of overpriced product(s) in order to maintain a glamorous individuality (McRobbie, 2009, p.125). Rather than 'explor[ing] and embrac[ing] sexual deviation', therefore, differing identities have been acknowledged through mainstream commercial contexts including television shows.

Neo-liberal binaries have been maintained across alternative lifestyle(s), as demonstrated through a later emphasis on geek chic. As such, both publications have placed emphasis on how 'geeks have become sexy' (*Attitude*, February 2010, pp.58-61; see also *GT*, August 2008, p.21). In order to be regarded as 'at the cutting edge of technology and art' (*Attitude*, February 2010, p.61), therefore, the magazines have intersected this type of atypical identity with binaries of "success" and "failure" associated with more mainstream homonormative lifestyle(s) (see Table 2, pp.124-6).

In doing so, readers identifying in this manner are assumed to have sufficient disposable income to afford commodities associated with geek chic that have led to their being praised for ‘work[ing] out the latest apps for my iPhone’ (*Attitude*, February 2010, p.61). Equally, fashion designers interviewed have cited how a geeky identity has inspired specific clothes (*GT*, August 2008, p.21), further demonstrating the importance of purchasing specific product(s) to maintain a distinct identity within the mainstream “gay” scene. As McRobbie has noted in terms of “feminine” identity (2009, p.129), individuality has been understood through income earned rather than a questioning of hierarchies perceived as fixed, despite the latter being undertaken in earlier publications (*Gay Times*, October 1991, p.25; *Gay Times*, September 1994, p.63).

Atypical Role Models

Both publications have frequently focused on alternative identities in the context of celebrities and figures established as having unusual careers and lifestyle(s), thus emphasising the perceived norm of “gay” men being able to choose their identity. For example, when interviewing a clothes salesman critical of sexual binaries in an earlier edition of *Gay Times*, focus is placed on how ‘it’s reassuring to see someone with such radical opinions working in the fashion industry’ (September 1994, p.63). In acknowledging atypical and ostensibly subversive identities through the use of “successful” figures, the ability to challenge mainstream scenes was therefore equally (re)constructed as indicative of “success”, rather than being subversive to existing gendered, sexual and neo-liberal hierarchies more generally.

Although one respondent dismissed diversity within the publications, noting that ‘to me it just sort of says “clean gay men”’ (Respondent 11, 2012), *Attitude* and *Gay Times* have nonetheless accounted for readers not wishing to access a Pink Pound. For example, the prominent “gay” rights campaigner Peter Tatchell warns readers against being ‘seduced by materialism’ (*GT*, May 2009, p.43). While appearing to reject the purchase of separate product(s), the use of an influential figure such as Tatchell making these points rather than a lesser-known journalist or commentator demonstrates how the publications have been dependent on aspirational role models in order for commercialism to be rejected. Equally, Tatchell’s rejection of ‘materialism’ is inconsistent across the edition of *GT* in which it is cited, as demonstrated by later emphasis on various expensive clothing labels (May 2009, pp.76-85). In doing so, rejecting consumerist discourse is (re)constructed as a select component of the magazine’s readership, despite the aspiration to own varying commercial product(s) remaining of primary importance for the projection of a “successful” appearance.

Similar to discourse concerning careers and commercialism, the publications have also acknowledged the significance of singers and bands that were alternate to a mainstream “gay” scene. Although one respondent was annoyed that the publications did ‘not have a gay guy listening to Bob Dylan or whatever’ (Respondent 3, 2012), musicians not identifying with a “gay” mainstream were nonetheless frequently discussed. For example, one letter-writer praised *Attitude*’s ability to ‘acknowledg[e] that some gay men actually listen to female artists who have something genuinely interesting to say, rather than cheesy clichéd acts’ (February 2000, p.10). Through their perceived talents, however, the publications (re)constructed those with ‘something

genuinely interesting to say' as aspirational for readers, as demonstrated by Alicia Keyes being credited for having (re)presented the 'sudden surge of independent-minded young black women singer/songwriters' (*Attitude*, August 2001, pp.96-7). Similar to the use of signifiers such as 'independent-minded', "success" has been understood through singers being praised for taking an approach 'against other people's judgement' (*GT*, May 2009, p.106). Although the publications have focused less on artists such as 'Bob Dylan or whatever' than performers associated with mainstream "gay" audiences, an identity discrete from 'cheesy clichéd acts' has been reinforced. In varying role models being provided for different lifestyle(s), a neo-liberal emphasis on individuality through (re)producing atypical material has therefore accentuated the importance of neo-liberal "success".

Retaining a Camp Identity

For many readers and respondents, camping has acted as an opportunity to subvert "straight" norms, as shown by one respondent noting how 'this sort of campness is, like, celebrated' (Respondent 5, 2012) in mainstream "gay" culture. Nonetheless, one letter-writer notes that several "gay" men have 'this absolute terror of being seen as camp or not completely heterosexual' (*Attitude*, August 2001, p.12), indicating that "gay" identity has not been defined by camping alone. Despite the latter (re)presenting 'an exclusive form of behaviour that neither women nor straight men could adopt' (Kleinberg, 1995, p.48), Pavda counters that modern interpretations of its subversive element have been reduced to 'a vulgar entertainment commodity' (2000) through commercial product(s) and celebrity figures. The latter points are demonstrated in both publications through camp discourse when discussing "gay" men 'zazz[ing] up this

Wills and Kate big day' (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.79). This campness is best shown in the comment that 'we know, because honey WE KNOW TROLLEY DOLLIES, that you realise a desperate situation like this, a situation that could become seriously dull without some outrageous intervention, can only be saved by a handbag of those miniatures you scoop from the planes Bailey's, gin, whatever' (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.79). Additionally to discussing the Royal Family positively through camp signifiers rather than (re)producing the negative sentiments of previous publications (*Gay Times*, June 1999, p.82), therefore, assumptions are made of readers having sufficient income to both regularly travel by plane and the purchase the 'miniatures' (re)constructed to be associated with it.

Through generating excitement about mainstream events including the Royal Wedding, the publications have shifted from using camping in the context of those with a marginalised sexual identity to an equal focus on "straight" role models. For example, later publications have asked "straight" celebrities including Robert Webb questions determining how "gay" they are through the use of campy signifiers, as demonstrated through his being dressed as a sailor (*Attitude*, August 2008, p.116). As opposed to (re)presenting an identity exclusive from the "straight subject", therefore, the publications use camping to promote "successful" figures. Although one respondent has contended that 'campness is kind of part of the gay culture' (Respondent 10, 2012), the publications have instead used it to promote heteronormative forms of "success" (see Table 2, pp.124-6) within a discrete 'gay culture'. In doing so, a previously subversive part of "gay masculinity" (Kleinberg, 1995) can be (re)produced within a neo-liberal context.

Kleinberg's contention that camping has been eliminated from "gay" culture (1995, p.47) is questionable across much of the discourse in the twenty year timeframe. Nonetheless, the magazines have acknowledged that camp identity is not universal, for example recording an annoyance that 'unapologetically lunatic' figures on reality television shows have denied "gay" men 'the right to be mediocre' (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.20). Younger readers are also warned against 'conform[ing] to gay stereotypes' such as camping, instead drawing attention to the 'many ways to be gay' (*GT*, May 2009, p.43). Similar to camp discourse being used to promote both celebrities and varying product(s) across several of the publications, the "straight-acting" that Martino notes as being 'built on reinforcing rather than subverting gender hierarchies' (2012, p.36) has also been used in both magazines over the twenty year timeframe. For example, specific "masculine" stars were acclaimed through signifiers of both 'a monument of cool masculinity' (*Attitude*, April 1996, p.54) and 'a lump of pure, sizzling testosterone' (*Attitude*, June 2006, p.37). Rather than "straight-acting" or camping up being regarded as subverting either mainstream "gay" identity or sexual hierarchies more broadly, promoting both role models and product(s) through these separate identities (*Gay Times*, November 1997; p.33; *Attitude*, August 2009, p.102) nonetheless has served to maintain homonormative forms of "success" (see Table 2, pp.124-6).

Marginalised Ethnicities

Despite the focus on atypical "gay" lifestyle(s), several respondents highlighted how the publications (re)produced 'preened white affluence' (Respondent 11, 2012), with

non-white “gay” men ‘not represented...until you get to the sex ads at the back’ (Respondent 6, 2012). Additionally to the latter, images of black men being fondled by white hands (*Gay Times*, November 1995, p.10; *Attitude*, August 2008, p.70), licked (*Gay Times*, June 1999, p.111) and being made the focus of innuendo regarding large penises (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.29) have been used when promoting varying product(s) and events. As such, the non-white “abject” has been fetishized across seemingly innocuous articles and advertisements. More specifically to the ‘sex ads at the back’, black men have been fetishized to validate the white “subject”, as demonstrated through taglines including ‘Sink the Black’ when describing a pornographic film involving ‘eight black tops, one white bottom, one hundred minutes of non-stop action’ (*GT*, May 2009, p.171). Through this sexual marginalisation, both publications have upheld Olivier Roy’s observation that ‘various stereotypes of racialized sexuality seem to be prevalent among white gay men, effectively objectifying other men’ (2012). Through this ‘objectif[ication]’, the white “self” has been reinforced.

Especially but not exclusively in earlier editions of *Attitude* and *Gay Times*, non-white men being part of the “gay” scene has been (re)constructed as unusual, as demonstrated with an article on a “gay” Asian nightclub being referred to as ‘get[ting] down with the brown’ (*Gay Times*, September 1998, p.28). Equally, a health page concerning “gay” men’s perceived obsession with their penis size has focused on ‘the average length of erect penis for the Caucasian male’ (*Gay Times*, September 2000, p.108), indicating a presumption that readers are ‘Caucasian’. Given one black respondent discussed his having experienced ‘the threat of people coming up to me

and asking if I have a big black dick' (Respondent 11, 2012) in nightclubs, a stereotype further maintained in one of the more mainstream advertisements coded (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.29), the opportunity to correct commonplace racial prejudices was therefore not taken. As such, it is clear that the publications have primarily accounted for the white "subject's" experiences as opposed to those of a black or Asian minority.

Although the publications have validated "gay" white men through the marginalisation of a non-white "abject", discrete commercial spaces have been targeted at the latter. For example, a "gay" Asian club has been praised for having a 'queery Western injection' (*Gay Times*, September 1998, p.30), indicating that tropes associated with the white "self" are integral to non-white lifestyle(s) for fear of them appearing a "failure" (see Table 2, pp.124-6). Equally, an Asian man interviewed by *Attitude* noted that 'many black and Asian gay people would rather band together and go to places where you stand out from the crowd because you want to and not for being the colour you are' (January 1995, p.114), reflecting the importance of disposable income for attending spaces available to different ethnicities. Minorities requiring money to access a separate "gay" scene was reflected though one respondent commenting that an unemployed acquaintance 'comes to our choir, and I know that is the only thing he can afford to do each week. And he's black as well, so, you know, how many black men will he get to meet and see?' (Respondent 10, 2012). Despite publications promoting and interviewing support groups for ethnic minorities (*Attitude*, August 2008, p.142; see also *Attitude*, April 2011, p.101), importance is nonetheless placed on having sufficient disposable income to maintain these non-

white lifestyle(s) within “gay” identity.

Letter-writers have complained that *Gay Times* containing a ‘lack of ethnic gay males within your glossy pages’ (September 2003, p.12; see also October 2010, p.10), reflected in a concern from one respondent regarding minorities only appearing in ‘the sex ads at the back’ (Respondent 6, 2012). Nonetheless, both publications have frequently featured ethnic minorities within the context of homonormative “success” more broadly (see Table 2, pp.124-6), using them to promote branded product(s) (*Attitude*, March 1997, pp.72-9; *Attitude*, April 1999, p.6; *GT*, March 2007, pp.3-4), bars (*Gay Times*, June 1999, p.111), dating websites (*Gay Times*, September 2000, pp.14-5) and adoption services (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.87). More mainstream images of non-white “gay” men are therefore (re)presented as part of the “successful” homonormative “self”, rather than countering the ‘preened white affluence’ (Respondent 11, 2012) noted as being pervasive across *Attitude* and *Gay Times*. Instead, non-white “gay” men (re)constructed as equally ‘affluen[t]’ to the ‘preened white’ “subject” have been put forward across both publications.

While maintaining homonormative forms of “success”, non-white lifestyle(s) have been (re)constructed as different to the “gay” mainstream, as reflected in the careers of those interviewed in the publications. For example, the “gay” black musician David McAlmont has discussed how he released uncensored material reflecting his ‘creative talent’, despite being ‘cornered by my management’ to do otherwise (*GT*, May 2011, p.88). For non-white readers aspiring to have similar independence, figures like McAlmont have formed role models, with the ability to be ‘creative’ resulting from

marking themselves out as distinct. Affecting readers more directly, frequent profiles of non-white “gay” men with “successful” careers have been (re)presented, including Asian teachers (*Attitude*, November 2004, p.24) and stand-up comedians (*Gay Times*, March 2007, p.30). Emphasis is therefore placed on the latter’s resisting ‘the usual attempts to pigeonhole him’ (*Gay Times*, March 2007, p.30), echoing one respondent’s point that ‘yes I may be gay, but that’s not the main thing I am, and yes I have a Muslim background, but that’s not the main thing I am’ (Respondent 3, 2012). This reaction against the ‘pigeonhol[ing]’ of ethnic minorities based on their race or sexuality thus demonstrates to non-white readers, additionally to those aspiring for atypical lifestyle(s), that “success” is determined through individual effort. In doing so, the discourse in both publications concerning alternative identities remains similar to that across the homonormative mainstream.

5.4 “Success” Within a Marginalised Identity

Over the twenty year timeframe, both *Attitude* and *Gay Times* provided a unique demonstration of how neo-liberal forms of “success” have been assimilated into “gay” lifestyle(s), despite the latter’s “abjection” continuing to validate the “straight self” (MacKinnon, 2003, p.7). In doing so, a homonormative identity, described by Duggan as (re)producing a ‘depoliticised gay culture’ (2003), has become apparent. Similar to gendered and sexual hierarchical binaries, the perceived “success” of discrete lifestyle(s) through a consumerist identity functions through labelling those unable to access it as “at-risk failures” (Harris, 2004a, p.35). Rather than disrupting heteronormative forms of “success”, notions of glamorous individuality (McRobbie, 2009, p.125) were (re)presented effectively in both publications through the promotion

of a commercial Pink Pound.

Through both *Attitude* and *Gay Times* targeting commercial product(s) at varying audiences, separate “gay” lifestyle(s) have been (re)produced, as demonstrated through the promotion of saunas alongside advertisements for an LGBTQIA Catholic advice line (*Gay Times*, June 1999, p.68). Through the Pink Pound, choice has therefore been reinforced as a homonormative value to aspire for. Across individual identities, *Attitude* and *Gay Times* have demonstrated how “gay” men ‘are marginalised in one sense, [but] they wield incredible power and privilege in another’ (Respondent 3, 2012), reflected through the black “gay” songwriter David McAlmont’s perceived ‘creative talent’ (*GT*, May 2011, p.88). Across editions of both magazines, therefore, a clear kyriarchy, described by Elizabeth Schlusser Fiorenza as ‘a complex pyramidal system of intersecting multiplicative social...structures of superordination and subordination’ (2009, p.112), was notable. Rather than the “straight subject” being (re)produced, the ability of mainstream publications to (re)present varying lifestyle(s) have instead maintained forms of glamorous individuality (McRobbie, 2009, p.125), ‘intersecting’ hierarchies (re)constructed as indicative of “success” (see Table 2, pp.124-6).

Through *Attitude* and *Gay Times* targeting varying product(s) and lifestyle(s) at a younger and more impressionable readership, I was able to make both an original and comprehensive contribution regarding the (re)construction of ‘full possession’ rather than unattainable ideals (Benwell, 2003b, p.161). For example, one respondent described purchasing the product(s) available in both publications (re)constructed as

reflecting individuality as a process that ‘as I get older, I find I’ve mellowed out of’ (Respondent 3, 2012). The target audience of both publications, therefore, is regarded as not having yet ‘mellowed out of’ associating “success” with discretely spending a disposable income. Through (re)constructing varying homonormative lifestyle(s) as being easily available for a younger readership unfamiliar with the “gay” scene, the inability to achieve this perceived norm is therefore regarded as indicative of “failure”. Having discussed how the assimilation of neo-liberal binaries into a marginalised “gay” identity has established homogenous rather than subversive lifestyle(s), the following chapter examines how ideals of “success” have been (re)constructed as an aspirational norm.

6. The Ideal of Homonormative “Success” as a Norm

Despite (re)presenting varying “gay” lifestyle(s), both *Attitude* and *Gay Times* have consistently (re)produced homonormative ideals of “success” as norms. In attempting to form a ‘permanent alternative’ (Connell, 2011, p.202) to the “straight subject”, concerns specific to a “gay” identity were identified in earlier editions, reflected in articles on “gay” male anorexia (*Attitude*, January 1995, pp.67-70) and ‘the first current affairs programme for lesbians and gay men’ (*Attitude*, May 1994, p.14). This distinction from the “straight self” and, to some extent, rejection of heteronormativity was further reflected in one letter-writer commenting that “gay” men enlisting in the army ‘changes nothing. If it did, military homophobia would have ended years ago’ (*Attitude*, March 1996, p.8). By contrast, a discrete sexual identity was maintained in later publications through interviewing “straight” celebrities including Robert Webb (*Attitude*, August 2008, p.116) and Abi Titmuss (*Attitude*, August 2008, p.146) about how “gay” they are. As such, “gay” identity has been (re)constructed as more exciting than “straight” lifestyle(s) through upholding rather than subverting sexual hierarchies (Hekma, 2010, p.363).

Both publications have validated homonormative forms of “can-do success” (see Table 2, pp.124-6) through the binary of “at-risk failure”, as reflected in one respondent commenting how proud he was to attend University when compared to his school friends being ‘either young dads or working in dead-end jobs’ (Respondent 4, 2012). Nonetheless, Harris’ contention that neo-liberal ideals of “success” have been ‘refigured as unremarkable’ (2004a, p.106) in “femininity” could also be observed

when coding *Attitude* and *Gay Times*, in part through ‘a shift in editorial focus toward celebrities’ (Sender, 2001, p.79). As such, one respondent admitted ‘feel[ing] a massive sense of failure because I’m not as successful as I’d like to be’ (Respondent 11, 2012), suggesting that “success” has shifted from being an unattainable ideal to a norm that readers expect to attain, with them feeling as if they have “failed” if this “success” is not achieved. “Failure”, by contrast, has been (re)constructed in the publications as ‘an ever-lurking possibility that must be staved off through sustained application’, reinforcing the neo-liberal emphasis on ‘sufficient effort’ in order to uphold “successful” norms (Harris, 2004a, p.27).

Following the previous chapter’s analysis of how neo-liberal binaries have assimilated into discrete “gay” lifestyle(s), I assessed how the publications (re)constructed hegemonic forms of homonormative “success” (see Table 2, pp.124-6) as a norm. As such, this chapter begins by examining how *Attitude* and *Gay Times* have framed varying celebrities as role models, reflecting the broader conflation between ‘entertainment and “celebrity” news’ that Savigny has identified as being increasingly prominent (2004, p.226). Despite letters rhetorically asking if ‘your readers actually care about bumfluffy, Z-list, minor, minor hit, Take That-trailing nothings’ (*Attitude*, October 1998, p.16), respondents identified articles focusing on politicians that they perceived to have facilitated change (Respondent 3, 2012; Respondent 6, 2012; Respondent 9, 2012). Following this point, I examine how the publications have placed significance on disposable income within the context of a Pink Pound, using a case study of how holidays have incorporated homonormative tropes while continuing to emphasise the importance of choice. Equally, I survey how

both a toned physique and expensive fashion brands have been (re)constructed as indicative of homonormative “success”. Finally, I draw attention to how later publications have (re)presented a stable, monogamous relationship as a norm within “gay” lifestyle(s), whereas being single has been regarded as a “failure” for readers to avoid. Despite varying lifestyle(s) being made available to readers, homonormative tropes of “success” have been upheld as a norm, validated by an “at-risk failure” (Harris, 2004a, p.27).

6.1 Aspirational Role Models

An observable variance in role models was put forward across both publications. Despite the promotion of stars as diverse as Shane MacGowan (*Attitude*, October 1998, p.36), Rupert Everett (*Attitude*, April 1999, p.1) and the Sugababes (*Attitude*, June 2003, p.14), emphasis was placed on the “success” of celebrities rather than “gay” lifestyle(s) more generally. The function of these figures was identified by one respondent as ‘mak[ing] you feel bad enough about your own life to covet these, and work[ing] your ass off to try and get that lifestyle’ (Respondent 11, 2012). Similar to pop stars and actors, a ‘personalisation of politics’ (Savigny, 2008, p.104) was demonstrated through one respondent praising the publications for the inclusion of ‘somebody like Peter Tatchell, who’s actually done a huge amount of work for the LGBT community’ (Respondent 6, 2012). Although celebrities such as Abi Titmuss were dismissed as ‘ridiculous’ (Respondent 3, 2012), therefore, political campaigners remained ‘covet[ed]’, indicating the large number of varying role models (re)presented in both publications.

The (re)presentation in both publications of various stars (re)produced aspirational careers for a younger audience, also maintaining neo-liberal forms of “success” (see Table 1, pp.20-1) by emphasising product(s) owned by celebrities that appealed to discrete audiences. Equally, focus has been placed on role models through political campaigning (*Gay Times*, November 1994, p.28; *Gay Times*, November 1995, p.45), in addition to politicians more generally (*GT*, August 2008, p.87). In doing so, the publications have framed aspirations for political equality around aspiring to emulate political figures, similar to the aspirational discourse concerning mainstream celebrities.

Emphasis on Celebrity

Both *Attitude* and *Gay Times* have used ‘top celebrity interviews’ (*Attitude*, April 1999, p.8) to maintain “success” as a norm. The publications also (re)presented discrete sexual identity in the 1980s, a period in which “gay” identity is acknowledged to have been marginalised, through pop stars on mainstream shows forming ‘a big sick camp joke played to the nation’ (*Gay Times*, September 2003, p.37). Even subversive behaviour, therefore, has been framed through neo-liberal “success”. More recently, articles concerning “gay” stereotypes were intersected with the lifestyle(s) of “straight” celebrities, demonstrated by the ‘How Gay Are You’ questionnaire posed to Sue Johnston, who played the mother in *The Royle Family*, concluding that she ‘needs to brush up on Katona’ (*Attitude*, August 2009, p.146). Through signifiers associated with “gay” lifestyle(s) being referred to through broader interviews and promotions with “straight” celebrities (*Attitude*, March 1996, p.13; *Attitude*, August 2009, p.1), sexual hierarchies therefore remained unchallenged.

Although one respondent dismissed the celebrities interviewed as being ‘of no merit’, he conceded that the publications responded to ‘the culture, i.e. you know, maybe female pop stars, maybe well-known people’ (Respondent 3, 2012). This point was reflected in interviews with ‘female pop stars’ including Solange Knowles (*Attitude*, August 2008, p.18), additionally to *GT* being delighted about the release of the new Britney Spears album (*GT*, May 2011, p.85). Through consistently praising female pop stars, the publications have perpetuated neo-liberal understandings of “success” as resulting from one’s individual talent and effort rather than luck and privilege (see Table 2, pp.124-6), again being (re)produced through a younger audience. This emphasis on younger pop stars can be demonstrated further through the incredulity of Ricky Gervais that Charlotte Church was regarded as a gay icon in the context of *Attitude*’s ‘How Gay Are You’ interview (November 2004, p.146), highlighting how mainstream teen female pop stars have been (re)constructed as integral to varying “gay” lifestyle(s). Equally, letter-writers have criticised figures considered as ‘worn-out celebrities’ (*GT*, October 2010, p.10), attacking “gay” culture more broadly ‘for being so obsessed with celebrity and missing the bigger picture’ (*GT*, May 2009, p.12). By contrast, Stephen Gately was praised for ‘what a great job he has done in helping many young gay people to come to terms with their sexuality’ (*Attitude*, August 2001, p.12), demonstrating how stars focusing on the concerns of younger readers have been (re)constructed as role models, dismissing older and less helpful ones as ‘worn-out’.

Despite celebrities being praised by readers for discussing issues they could relate to, stars perceived by the publications as role models tended to focus on the varying

product(s) that they could afford. For example, one footballer interviewed commented 'I like to wear Gianfranco Ferre, Armani, Paul Smith and Dolce & Gabbana. Some months I might spend between £5,000 and £6,000 on clothes' (*Attitude*, March 1996, p.29). More significantly, "straight" figures including Vinnie Jones (*Attitude*, February 2000, p.38) and David Beckham (*GT*, May 2009, p.27) were provided with space to endorse their branded perfumes. One respondent interpreted this emphasis on celebrities promoting discrete merchandise to readers as a reassurance to the latter that, even though they did not have the same lifestyle(s) as these stars, buying goods associated with them maintained the aspiration of doing so (Respondent 11, 2012). As reflected in a discussion with Barbara Windsor about nightclubs (*Attitude*, April 1999, p.28) and Danni Minogue regarding expensive product(s) (*Attitude*, June 2003, p.29), the publications (re)constructed ideals of "success" as norms through the focus on what celebrities could afford to purchase.

In later publications, "straight" celebrities were interviewed to provide reassurance that homonormative "success" was an acceptable norm, for example placing emphasis on how Robbie Williams 'chose to do the first ever cover shoot of his solo career with us back in '96' (*Attitude*, November 2004, p.8). Being a "successful gay" man was therefore (re)constructed as coveted in "straight" identity, demonstrated by a pull quote from Janeane Garofolo claiming that 'I'm always flattered when people mistake me for gay. I take that as a high compliment' (*Attitude*, August 2009, p.20). Targeting a younger audience, the teen band Twenty Twenty noted how their being mistaken for "gay" was 'quite flattering really' (*GT*, May 2011, p.25). Through using "straight" celebrities to emphasise that "gay" identity could be exciting, both magazines have

played down a sense of marginalisation in comparison to the “straight subject” (Hekma, 2010, p.363; MacKinnon, 2003, p.7). Similar to *Attitude* and *Gay Times* using “straight” celebrities to validate “gay” identity, readers have been required to (re)produce heteronormative forms of “success” (see Table 1, pp.20-1) for their lifestyle(s) to appear exciting. To not do so, however, is to remain an “at-risk failure”.

A clear dichotomy was observable between how “straight” celebrities playing “gay” parts in films were perceived by *Attitude* and *Gay Times* and the opinions of their audiences. For example, articles in the publications described Heath Ledger’s “straight” marriage positively, claiming that ‘we like it when actors who take gay parts get married and prove it hasn’t turned them’ (*Attitude*, February 2007, p.12) and praising Colin Firth for his comments that the Christopher Isherwood adaptation *A Single Man* ‘doesn’t have a militant streak’ (*Attitude*, February 2010, p.72). By contrast, letter-writers have criticised the paucity of ‘gay actors rushing to the door marked OUT’ (*Gay Times*, May 2006, p.6), expressing further annoyance at ‘actors accepting gay parts in TV, plays, films and musicals...declar[ing] to the rest of the country that they are straight’ (*Gay Times*, July 2004, p.9). As such, letter-writers have discussed the need for ‘OUT’ role models, further demonstrating the desire of readers to be provided with “gay” figures they could relate to as opposed to mainstream “straight” celebrities promoted by the publications.

The publications regularly interviewed figures who had come through difficult periods to enjoy “successful” lifestyle(s), a process (re)constructed as a norm. Specifically, these role models discussed their problems with homophobic bullying,

targeting an audience more likely to be experiencing it at present. For example, when interviewing the writer and illustrator Philip Ridley, despite focusing on his fame and “success”, the point was stressed that ‘no one should have to go through all the bullying I did at school. It was devastating’ (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.44). In discussing Ridley’s later accomplishments at length, however, readers sending in letters concerned about people that ‘want to really hurt me’ (*Gay Times*, October 2006, p.125) were provided with celebrity role models who endured and overcame similar marginalisation through both talent and effort. Equally, an interview with an HIV-positive former crack addict performing at the London Olympics contained the pull quote ‘you have to aim high’, drawing attention to the importance of recovery through pursuing exciting and alternative careers different from ‘a nine-to-five life’ (*Attitude*, April 2011, pp.108-9). Through both examples, the publications have demonstrated that “success” was attainable at an older age through the ability of readers to develop individual lifestyle(s) independent from the mainstream when older. To continue being undermined or have an unexciting career, therefore, was (re)constructed as indicative of being “at-risk” (see Table 2, pp.124-6).

Using Role Models to (Re)Present Political and Legal Equality

Over the twenty year timeframe of study, both publications (re)presented celebrities as role models for countering homophobia. Despite acknowledging the impact of less high-profile figures challenging laws considered homophobic (*Gay Times*, June 1999, pp.14-5), earlier magazines primarily focused on change through stars influencing the government, for example through Ian McKellen’s meeting with John Major (*Gay Times*, September 1991, p.5). Maintaining an emphasis on celebrity could therefore be

noted in later editions of *Gay Times* and *Attitude* more broadly, however, as demonstrated through younger celebrities including Daniel Radcliffe commenting ‘I loathe homophobia. It’s just disgusting and animal and stupid, and it’s just thick people who are scared’ (*Attitude*, August 2009, p.51). Additionally to selecting celebrities similar to the target audience’s age, “straight” figures including Radcliffe were increasingly used to validate “gay” lifestyle(s) and (re)construct homophobia as abhorrent, rather than stars specifically involved with campaigning such as McKellen, indicating that “gay” identity has become dependent on the approval of “straight” role models.

Despite one respondent claiming that ‘politics doesn’t really make much money and isn’t very sexy’ (Respondent 12, 2012), the (re)construction of political figures as part of ‘popular culture’ (Savigny, 2005, p.929) suggests that the publications have accounted for an audience identifying itself as more interested in politics than celebrity gossip. For example, one respondent recalled aspiring to get involved with politics and having faith in politicians to facilitate change when he was younger (Respondent 3, 2012), a process the magazines projected through commending high-profile politicians such as Edwina Currie (*Attitude*, February 2000, p.16) and newly-elected Labour MPs (*Gay Times*, November 1997, p.67) for their LGBTQIA work. These interviews were praised by respondents for being more relevant to their lives than those of entertainment-based celebrities (Respondent 6, 2012), with criticism even being made of *Attitude* and *Gay Times* for not interviewing enough “gay” MPs or MEPs (Respondent 9, 2012). By contrast, later articles contained interviews with specific role models such as Tony Blair (*Attitude*, April 2005, pp.41-3) and Nick Clegg

(*Attitude*, February 2010, pp.62-6), emphasising the mainstream “success” of leadership. Earlier editions of *Gay Times*, however, were more concerned with parochial issues, such as a Councillor in Leeds resigning as a result of there being insufficient support from local government for people with HIV/AIDS (September 1994, p.29). Through this focus on more senior party leaders rather than “gay” politicians, therefore, “success” has been (re)constructed as equally significant to a discrete sexual identity.

Edwards’ argument that ‘the images and ideals [magazines] present remain focused on an often hard, muscular and certainly youthful sense of material aspiration’ (1997, p.137) overlooks how the publications have drawn attention to the “success” of “gay” politicians. For example, the Labour MP Chris Smith’s coming out as the first openly “gay” Shadow Cabinet Minister (*Gay Times*, September 1992, p.13) made it clear to readers that a career in Parliament was attainable, similar to how “gay” city professionals were praised for ‘gain[ing] access to the “gang” that gays are so often excluded from birth’ (*Attitude*, February 2000, p.57). Although acknowledging that both businesses and politics are associated with “straight” men, or at least heteronormativity, the publications made it clear that “gay” men aspiring for involvement could do so with sufficient motivation. For respondents and letter-writers interested in politics, therefore, the careers of figures including Smith and the MEP Michael Cashman (*Gay Times*, September 1998, p.46) were (re)constructed as feasible, regardless of sexual hierarchies.

In later editions, the ‘youthful sense of material aspiration’ (1997, p.137) referred to

by Edwards was linked to political role models, demonstrating the “‘celebrity politician” keen to engage in entertainment media’ (Savigny, 2008, pp.103-4). For example, Nick Clegg was referred to as ‘the only party leader calling for civil partnerships to be renamed as marriage, an end to the blood ban, and unequivocal rights for refugees who are fleeing homophobic persecution to be allowed to remain in Britain. Clegg is also, by consensus here in the *Attitude* office, the hottest of the party leaders’ (*Attitude*, February 2010, p.62). Alongside their career and politics, therefore, the need to ‘promote image rather than detailed information’ (Savigny, 2008, p.106) can be further shown as integral to the “success” of politicians, further demonstrated through earlier editions discussing Michael Portillo’s physical attractiveness (*Attitude*, May 1994, p.10), and a letter referring to a campaigner as ‘the cutest man alive’ (*Gay Times*, November 1997, p.119). Through intersecting good looks with politics, the publications have further maintained varying homonormative forms of “success” (see Table 2, pp.124-6), interlinking varying aspirations.

Both publications placed emphasis on the impact of mainstream political parties. For example, *Gay Times* published an advertisement from the Liberal Democrats, clarifying that they could ensure ‘a strong voice in the European Parliament for gays, lesbians and transgendered people’ (June 1999, p.69). The validation of parties providing a ‘strong voice’ to ‘gays, lesbians and transgendered people’ could give readers the aspiration of working for them, as referred to by respondents (Respondent 3, 2012; Respondent 9, 2012). Political parties and their leaders thus formed “successful” norms for readers to (re)produce, demonstrated by profiles of the three main party leaders through signifiers such as ‘passionate’ when describing Tony Blair

(*Attitude*, April 2005, p.41). The focus on homonormative politicians rather than activists was reflected in a letter arguing that ‘most average gay men are absolutely alienated by [OutRage’s] rantings and extremism’ (*Attitude*, February 2000, p.10), with preference instead being placed on LGBTQIA groups within major political parties. Although one respondent dismissed the publications as mainly being ‘superficial’, he admitted that ‘I bought one because it had, like, um, “which political party likes the gays?”’ (Respondent 4, 2012). For those more interested in politics, therefore, role models were provided through both openly “gay” MPs and party leaders promoting change.

When interviewing politicians, later publications moved away from “gay” identity to placing emphasis on the “success” of the figure under scrutiny, demonstrated for example through the then Conservative Shadow Home Secretary Dominic Grieve contributing a broader article about identity documents (*GT*, August 2008, p.87). Taking into account his opposition to both “gay” adoption and lowering the age of consent to sixteen (Ask Aristotle, 2011), however, it appeared that Grieve was only interviewed on account of his “success” as a senior Minister. Given letters critical of ‘an inclusive Tory Party?! Inclusive of what: bigotry, intolerance and lack of understanding?!’ (*Attitude*, February 2000, p.18) and the “gay” Tory parliamentary candidate and former *Coronation Street* star Adam Rickitt appearing at a Pride event being described as ‘the most backwards thing in the world’ (Respondent 12, 2012), both readers and respondents have therefore dismissed notions that Conservative politicians being role models. By contrast, political figures interviewed in older publications were focused on in the context of their campaigning for equal rights,

demonstrated through descriptions of newly-elected “gay” Labour MPs as being ‘remarkably non-judgemental’ (*Gay Times*, November 1997, p.64). Understandings of political “success” in the publications, therefore, were (re)presented through both MPs with a discrete “gay” identity, and, in later editions, more senior figures. Although reforms toward equality by party leaders were praised (*Attitude*, April 2005, p.18), it was through their “success” as politicians that later publications have (re)constructed figures such as Grieve and Tony Blair as role models.

The shift from publications encouraging involvement with political activism and perceived homophobia to careers in Westminster was observable through openly “gay” MPs forming a norm that readers aspired to (re)produce. Consequently, one respondent contended that ‘organisation around these issues have stopped’ (Respondent 6, 2012), demonstrated through the magazines interviewing party leaders about “gay” identity (*Attitude*, July 2005) rather than campaigners. Earlier editions, however, referred to political change as being (re)presented through “gay” celebrity activists negotiating with the Prime Minister for reform (*Gay Times*, October 1991, p.5), a process rejected by one letter-writer stating that ‘the threats to my life cannot be resolved over tea in Downing Street’ (*Gay Times*, September 1994, p.81). Despite the openly “gay” role models outlined in the context of both politics and entertainment, one respondent countered that ‘things haven’t moved on as much as these magazines would like to think’ (Respondent 11, 2012). Reflecting Savigny and Marsden’s point that the media is ‘in concert with the executive’ rather than ‘hold[ing] them to account’ (2011, p.162), those for whom ‘things haven’t moved on’ are (re)constructed as “failures”, with the perceived “successes” of famous role models forming a feasible

norm that readers could aspire to.

6.2 The Norm of a Disposable Income

Respondents criticised later magazines for (re)constructing ‘disposable income and a lifestyle that’s beyond the reach of most of us’ (Respondent 11, 2012) as integral to “gay” lifestyle(s). When demonstrating how access to the Pink Pound has acted across both publications as a norm, I survey how consumerism has been intersected with “success”, thus marginalising those with insufficient funds as “failures”. In order to understand further how *Attitude* and *Gay Times* have assimilated neo-liberal binaries into a separate sexuality, this part of the chapter also provides a case study of how articles and promotions concerning holidays have used commercial spaces as indicators of “success”. As one respondent conceded that ‘my idea of success partially is about money’ (Respondent 11, 2012), it is unsurprising that both magazines have (re)presented a disposable income as a norm. Through marginalising those unable to access a significant amount of money as “at-risk failures” (Harris, 2004a, p.27), previously coveted lifestyle(s) are ‘refigured as unremarkable’ (Harris, 2004a, p.106) rather than ideals of “success” defined by ‘aspiration rather than full possession’ (Benwell, 2003b, p.161).

Purchasing Discrete Product(s)

Earlier publications criticised an ‘over-inflated’ Pink Pound (*Gay Times*, September 1994, p.85), questioning whether “gay” men had sufficient disposable income to afford the product(s) associated with it (*Gay Times*, September 1994, pp.48-9). Nonetheless, later publications have promoted product(s) targeted at discrete

audiences, for example through advertisements for mortgages with “gay” estate agents (*Gay Times*, September 2000, p.11; *Gay Times*, July 2004, p.15). As such, the assumption that ‘gay men are quite middle-class’ (Respondent 3, 2012) was observable through the ways in which both *Attitude* and *Gay Times* have (re)constructed the ability to afford varying expensive items as a norm.

Across the timeframe under investigation, the aspiration of ‘buying things to probably make you feel better’ (Respondent 3, 2012) was (re)constructed by both publications as a norm for readers, using the Pink Pound to assimilate disposable income into discrete “gay” lifestyle(s). Through promotions featuring expensive product(s) including cars (*Gay Times*, November 1995, p.68; *Gay Times*, March 1996, p.15) and watches (*Attitude*, October 1998, p.31), a disparity between the goods available and their affordability to readers could be observed. For example, letter-writers have frequently made complaints such as ‘I don’t have the funds, so how about a little budget shopping’ (*Attitude*, April 1999, p.10). Rather than targeting a ‘lower strata’ referred to by Galilee (2002, p.38), the magazines have primarily advertised expensive items unaffordable to a majority of the readership, a process that one respondent noted ‘makes me feel even more marginalised’ (Respondent 11, 2012). For younger readers, therefore, the promotion of expensive product(s) has (re)presented affluence as a norm, resulting in those unable to access the Pink Pound being (re)constructed as being “at-risk”. Through praising the Royal Wedding for ‘featuring...rich bitches in big hats’ (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.79), for example, prosperity was portrayed as a component of “success” apparent through product(s) purchased. Although one respondent contended that ‘you very rarely hear of anything

good coming out of the show of wealth' (Respondent 4, 2012), signifiers such as 'rich bitches' as indicators of feel-good "success" have (re)constructed disposable income as the best way of accessing "successful" lifestyle(s).

Despite mainstream reports on the Great Recession's impact in terms of fashion (Arthurs, 2008) and wealth inequality (Williams, 2011), additionally to its impact on the young (Bell and Blanchflower, 2010), the publications countered that 'you'd be hard pushed to witness the throes of a recession' (*GT*, May 2009, p.92). As such, both magazines demonstrated how readers could replicate economic "success" through 'full possession' (Benwell, 2003b, p.161), promoting expensive fashion items (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.49; *GT*, May 2011, p.97), a process criticised by one respondent as 'something someone couldn't afford in the middle of a recession' (Respondent 10, 2012). Rather than drawing attention to how "gay" men were marginalised through the recession, as highlighted by respondents noting both rising homophobic attacks (Respondent 7, 2012) and heightening economic difficulties (Respondent 10, 2012), the publications instead addressed their audience as exclusively 'hyper-mobile, affluent and privileged' (Binnie and Skeggs, 2004, p.44; see also Edwards, 1997, p.147). Consequently, one respondent commented about one of the publications that 'I don't have any savings, so it's not really that representative to me' (Respondent 9, 2012), highlighting a disparity between the norms promoted in the magazines and the experiences of respondents. Irrespective of an economic downturn, *Attitude* and *Gay Times* have continued to (re)construct financial "success" as both aspirational and achievable, despite earlier articles addressing concerns including 'the lack of housing for older lesbians and gay men' (*Gay Times*, September 1994, p.127) alongside

promotions for expensive commodities.

Through the kyriarchies identifiable across “gay” lifestyle(s), the neo-liberal “success” of disposable income has been (re)constructed as a norm. As such, the working-class chav was stigmatised across both publications as being ‘not just a fetish, but...a crude stereotype’ (Respondent 3, 2012) when compared to images of ‘preened white affluence’ (Respondent 11, 2012), as also observed in British lifestyle(s) more broadly (Brewis and Jack, 2010). This assumption of ‘affluence’ was also notable in an article on the Royal Wedding, in which readers were urged to ‘get off your gay high horse and join the rest of the Broken Britain scum’ (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.82), implying that readers were distinct from those considered as working-class, ‘Broken Britain scum’. While the ability to afford expensive product(s) acted as a norm that readers should aspire to, sexualised stereotypes could be identified through signifiers including ‘scallies versus skins’ (*GT*, May 2009, p.175); ‘council estate ladz’ (*Attitude*, August 2009, p.133); ‘cheap scally filth’ (*Attitude*, February 2010, p.121) and ‘prison don’t scare me cos I’m a tough scally’ (*GT*, May 2011, p.139). Through this perceived “deviancy”, the publications have been able to sexualise and in turn stigmatise working-class “gay” men, further validating the perceived norm of middle-class lifestyle(s).

Significance of a Disposable Income in Regard to Holidays

By (re)constructing the ideal of disposable income as a norm, holidays were promoted in both *Attitude* and *Gay Times* through neo-liberal binaries of “success” and “failure” being assimilated into discrete “gay” lifestyle(s). Accounting for a wide

readership, the publications advertised different resorts, including a “gay” Bed and Breakfast (*Gay Times*, June 1999, pp.121-2); a ‘delightfully queer’ Vienna (*Gay Times*, September 2003, p.61) and travelling tours (re)presenting ‘a new horizon for gay and lesbian holidays’ (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.46). Emphasis was placed, therefore, on a range of spaces, emphasising the homonormative “success” of affording them as a norm. Having insufficient income to afford the varying resorts promoted, therefore, was (re)constructed by both magazines as indicative of “at-risk failure”.

Although earlier publications focused on discretely “gay” forms of travel (*Gay Times*, November 1995, pp.102-4; *Gay Times*, March 1996, p.97), later editions (re)presented holidays as indicators of affluent lifestyle(s). For example, a hotel promoted for providing ‘weekend celebrations of champagne on the veranda’ was described as being ‘in the most chocolatey of chocolate-box villages in the Range Rover obsessed Cotswolds’ (*Attitude*, August 2009, pp.102-3). Through signifiers including ‘champagne’, therefore, the “success” of a disposable income was demonstrated as necessary for accessing exclusive spaces. Nonetheless, the discourse of later articles remained within a fixed “gay” context, as demonstrated through advertisements for ‘Yellow Brick Road’ package tours (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.46). As such, earning sufficient income to afford an extravagant rather than modest holiday was (re)constructed as a norm by both publications, using the context of “gay masculinity” to do so. Nonetheless, there remained disparity between the prices of resorts promoted and their affordability for readers, as demonstrated by one letter-writer complaining of a travel guide to Liverpool that ‘in a city with literally hundreds of amazing restaurants, the two listed were the most expensive to eat at’ (*GT*, October 2010, p.8).

Equally, one respondent was indifferent to the expensive spaces promoted, commenting ‘I really don’t care about most of this shit. For example, I don’t really care about going to Capetown’s premier hotel’ (Respondent 11, 2012). In having targeted expensive product(s) and holidays at a younger and more impressionable audience as (re)presenting a separate “gay” identity, therefore, the publications have (re)constructed the ideal as being defined by ‘full possession’ rather than ‘aspiration’ alone (Benwell, 2003b, p.161).

6.3 An Affluent Appearance

As outlined earlier in the chapter, celebrities (re)constructed as role models used both fashion and physique as indicators of “success” (see Table 2, pp.124-6). Most notably, a well-toned body and branded clothes were intersected with signifiers of sexual attraction, demonstrated through Jonathan Rhys Meyers being described as ‘H-O-T’ when modelling for the Energie fashion label (*GT*, May 2009, p.89). As such, the publications have interpreted “success” as being (re)presented through commercial means, with both branded clothes (*Attitude*, May 1994, pp.2-3; *Gay Times*, September 1994, p.64; *Attitude*, October 1998, pp.4-5; *Attitude*, June 2003, pp.56-63) and the ‘overemphasis on a particular body type’ (Respondent 3, 2012) being (re)produced as norms enabling readers to appear both attractive and heteronormative.

One respondent noted that ‘a certain type of gay man who’s very focused on his looks, his muscles, his brand name underwear’ (Respondent 6, 2012) would consistently be (re)presented in both *Attitude* and *Gay Times*, for example reflected in images promoting James Tudor underwear (*Attitude*, February 2010, p.13). In

demonstrating how this ‘certain type of gay man’ has been (re)constructed as a norm across both publications, I begin by discussing the significance of a well-toned physique, in part through the neo-liberal space of a gym being used to demonstrate an ‘increased expenditure’ (Edwards, 1997, p.130). The magazines complemented sculpted bodies by focusing on established fashion items which indicated to readers that, through sufficient exercise, they would be able to have ‘designer jeans-worthy legs’ (*GT*, May 2009, p.95). As such, a link could be observed between how *Attitude* and *Gay Times* promoted both fashionable clothes and a healthy physique, (re)constructing affluence through the ability to both afford varying fashion product(s) and the neo-liberal spaces to form a sculpted body.

Sculpted Physique(s)

Baker has contended that *Attitude* and *Gay Times* ‘present aspirational ideals of consumption, grooming, fitness and masculinity’ to the reader (2003, p.243), reflected in one letter describing a previous cover shot as ‘a perfect mix of untouchable beauty and rugged masculinity’ (*Attitude*, June 2006, p.10). Both publications reinforced signifiers of ‘beauty’ through mesomorphic physique(s) by promoting varying role models with sculpted bodies, for example focusing on Jean-Claude van Damme’s weight training (*Attitude*, March 1996, p.32); Hugh Jackman being ‘super-buff’ (*GT*, May 2009, p.17); and Kelvin Fletcher having ‘the body of your average Greek god’ (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.56). Despite emphasis on ‘rugged masculinity’, however, well-built bodies were (re)presented through advertisements for gyms (*Attitude*, *Attitude Active*, April 2011, p.25), leading to one respondent dismissing the magazines as being ‘basically just a very small version of *Men’s Health*’ (Respondent 12, 2012).

Nonetheless, a correlation could be observed between the toned physique(s) promoted in both publications and respondents acknowledging that they were ‘body-conscious, definitely’ (Respondent 5, 2012), further demonstrated by one respondent praising models in *Attitude* and *Gay Times* as (re)presenting ‘a picture of health and success’ (Respondent 7, 2012). Although some respondents dismissed images across both magazines as unrepresentative of “gay” lifestyle(s) (Respondent 10, 2012), the ‘body-conscious’ aspirations held by most of the respondents interviewed demonstrates how toned physique(s) were more likely to be (re)constructed as attainable for a younger and more impressionable readership.

Simpson’s argument that sculpted physique(s) have undergone a ‘new-found respectability’ (1994, p.27) was reinforced through both publications and respondents contending that ‘looking fit, and working hard to do so, became fashionable’ (Wheaton, 2003, p.194). Despite one columnist dismissing muscular bodies as being ‘too close to what the straight world have offered for thousands of years’ (*Attitude*, March 1996, p.12), the magazines’ broader (re)construction of well-toned bodies as a norm frequently resulted in readers experiencing a sense of “failure”. For example, one letter recorded how ‘sometimes I feel awkward out on the scene because I am surrounded by so many men striving for the perfect looks and figure’ (*Attitude*, October 1998, p.16). Equally, a respondent maintained how “gay” men were ‘really marginalised by the sense of the “gay beautiful”’ (Respondent 11, 2012), as projected across advertisements (*Gay Times*, November 1995, p.76; *GT*, May 2009, pp.2-5) and promotions (*Gay Times*, September 2000, p.33; *Gay Times*, September 2003, p.30). Although one article acknowledges the ‘social pressures’ as ‘the biggest cause of self-

dissatisfaction and the main instigator of eating disorders among young men' (*Attitude*, January 1995, p.67), the later emphasis on sculpted" physique(s) as both an unremarkable and attainable norm served to accentuate the sense of marginalisation affecting many readers.

Despite being associated with "straight" identity (Simpson, 1994, p.27), both publications projected sculpted physique(s) as part of "gay" lifestyle(s), reflected through discrete images of ballet troupes (*Gay Times*, November 1995, p.1; *Attitude*, February 2000, p.18) and holidays (*Gay Times*, March 1996, p.97, p.99). Although one publication described "gay" men having a muscular body as an indicator that they were no longer marginalised by the "straight subject" (*Attitude*, March 1996, p.48), one respondent was more cynical of the 'really hard gay demeanour and fascist body politic' (Respondent 11, 2012) projected in *Attitude* and *Gay Times*. Additionally to respondents describing the physique of models portrayed in the publications as both unrepresentative (Respondent 4, 2012; Respondent 5, 2012) and unattractive (Respondent 9, 2012), complaints were made concerning the paucity of focus on alternative body tones such as those of bears (Respondent 10, 2012). As such, the discourse in both magazines (re)constructed muscular bodies as being integral to homonormative "success", as demonstrated through articles focused on 'how to get a bigger, thicker, wider... back (what else?)' (*Attitude*, July 2002, p.90) and placing emphasis on 'those who like their men with muscle' (*Gay Times*, February 2002, p.14). Through these statements, possessing or fetishizing the 'hard gay demeanour' was (re)presented by *Attitude* and *Gay Times* as a norm, further reflected through articles adulating Guy Pearce for having 'the sort of body a certain strain of gay man

would kill for' (*Attitude*, August 2008, p.28).

As demonstrated by the “success” attached to having a personal trainer (*Gay Times*, July 2002, p.93), the need for a disposable income to access the neo-liberal environment of a gym was regarded by the publications as equally significant to the toned physique(s) promoted. Despite sections including *Attitude Active* promoting gym culture (April 2011, pp.1-24), the letters coded did not reflect a similar aspiration to (re)producing these bodies, instead being dismissive of working out (*Attitude*, March 1997, p.10). As such, some respondents observed a ‘backlash within the [gay] community’ (Respondent 3, 2012) toward gym culture, demonstrated by comments including ‘I couldn’t stand [the gym] after a while’ (Respondent 8, 2012), and ‘I’ve never really personally liked gym culture very much’ (Respondent 9, 2012). Although the publications provided information on how readers could sculpt their bodies, for example through colonics (*Attitude*, August 2009, pp.98-9), well-toned physique(s) were considered a lesser concern by both readers and respondents, forming a disparity between the “success” of toned figures (re)presented by *Attitude* and *Gay Times* and the intended readership. Moreover, later publications did not focus on issues of ‘bigorexia’ (Bordo, 1999, p.217) and anorexia (*Attitude*, January 1995, pp.67-70) noted to affect “gay” men, despite these being well-documented concerns (Duggan and McCreary, 2004). Instead, the publications were focused on projecting physique(s) considered as indicative of both the homonormative “self” and “gay” culture more generally, despite some readers being less attracted to these bodies.

Similar to sculpted physique(s) (re)presenting “success”, fat bodies were

marginalised by the magazines and respondents on account of their being an “abject failure”, demonstrated by one respondent being ‘not very proud of my body...I used to have a skinny face, I used to have a thirty inch waist. Now I’ve got a thirty-four’ (Respondent 7, 2012). Equally to “failure” being (re)produced when compared to the perceived norm of physically fit bodies, several respondents recorded feeling uncomfortable about the prospect of an overweight partner. For example, one respondent noted that ‘fat represents someone that’s unhealthy and doesn’t take care of themselves. If you see someone slim, muscular, a nice colour to their skin, you think healthy’ (Respondent 7, 2012). As such, the magazines have (re)constructed “fat” as indicative of ‘weakness of will and lack of control’ (Grogan and Richards, 2002), as reflected in an advice column telling a letter-writer bullied for his figure to ‘regard these taunts as a challenge’ (*Gay Times*, November 1995, p.136) and lose weight accordingly. A fat body, therefore, has been (re)constructed by the publications as anathema to the homonormative “subject” (see Table 2, pp.124-6), reflected through older “straight” men being mocked for having ‘Clarkson bell[ies]’ (*Attitude*, August 2008, p.44) and stigmatised as ‘fat balding businessmen’ (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.102). Although several respondents and letter-writers were unenthusiastic about using a gym, being fat was nonetheless understood to epitomise “failure”, as demonstrated by one respondent noting that ‘you will be ostracised on Canal Street if you are a “big lad”’ (Respondent 11, 2012). Sculpted physique(s) are therefore consistent with the homonormative “self”, being (re)constructed as both integral to “gay” lifestyle(s) and a realistic aspiration of “success” for readers. Although respondents were sceptical of gym culture, they nonetheless appreciated the importance of not appearing as, or dating, a fat “abject”.

Fashion

As with their emphasis on toned bodies, more recent publications (re)constructed the owning of fashion brands as a norm, described by one respondent as ‘up there to aspire to, definitely’ (Respondent 10, 2012). Although earlier magazines contained advertisements (*Gay Times*, November 1995, p.42) and articles (*Attitude*, October 1998, p.22) promoting clothing, the intersection of fashion into discrete “gay” lifestyle(s) was less explicit. For example, when interviewing a fashion designer, focus was placed on his views regarding sexual binaries rather than the promotion of varying product(s) (*Gay Times*, September 1994, p.63). Given one respondent’s criticism of the ‘blank colours’ (Respondent 3, 2012) worn by models in the magazines acting as prompts, emphasis in later editions was instead placed on readers purchasing expensive brands as part of their identity rather than the style(s) available. Through an editorial describing the fashion pages as allowing readers to feel ‘inspired’ (*GT*, October 2010, p.6) when clothes shopping, an assumption was made that affording varying expensive product(s) was (re)constructed as a norm. Despite respondents dismissing the fashion sections as both irrelevant (Respondent 9, 2012) and ‘like, really gratuitous’ (Respondent 2, 2012), letters praised the publications for providing ‘a killer month of fashion’ (*Attitude*, November 2004, p.10), indicating an appreciation on the part of a younger target audience not shared by older respondents.

As mentioned, the use of shopping in Oxford Street to justify the argument that ‘you’d be hard pushed to witness the throes of a recession’ (*GT*, May 2009, p.92) has overlooked settlements including Margate, whose town centres experienced the

withdrawal of major high-street businesses (Ruddick, 2010). As such, Edwards' point that spending on fashion items increases during economic recessions (1997, p.123) has been maintained through promoting expensive product(s) rather than those targeted at a 'lower strata' (Galilee, 2002, p.38). Despite respondents being unenthusiastic about the publications' emphasis on branded goods, one respondent noted how his friends 'have a sense to conform to what their industry expects of them' (Respondent 3, 2012). As demonstrated through items aimed at the metrosexual 'urban man' (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.53), respondents noted that 'gay and straight men are probably at the moment fairly equally fashion-conscious' (Respondent 6, 2012), indicating how neo-liberal forms of "success" have been assimilated into both "gay" and "straight" lifestyle(s). Nonetheless, the publications indicated a distinct targeting of "gay" men, for example through framing fashion as integral to homonormativity (*Attitude*, March 1996, p.22), a process that one respondent argued had led to "gay" men being (re)constructed as 'the Italians of Europe' (Respondent 10, 2012). Although respondents commented about the clothes available that 'if I don't have the money I just don't buy it' (Respondent 10, 2012), the younger audience being targeted have remained more likely to regard the brands as norms of "success" rather than unattainable ideals (Benwell, 2003b, p.161), given that this is how the clothes have been (re)constructed in the publications.

As demonstrated through the promotion of brands including Diesel, Dior, Hom and Dolce & Gabbana following *Attitude*'s tie-in with Selfridge's (August 2009, p.23), both publications assimilated branded clothes into discrete homonormative lifestyle(s). Despite the Great Recession and subsequent discourse of austerity discussed earlier in

this chapter, more recent magazines were more concerned with endorsing expensive branded clothes (*GT*, October 2010, p.22) than focusing on their affordability. By contrast, older articles have advertised product(s) through captions including ‘all this for just £30’ (*Attitude*, March 1997, p.100), with signifiers of ‘cheap’ brands (*Attitude*, March 1996, pp.34-5) being interspersed with stars discussing how ‘some months I might spend between £5,000 and £6,000 on clothes’ (*Attitude*, March 1996, p.29). A dichotomy was observable in earlier editions of both *Attitude* and *Gay Times*, therefore, between exclusive product(s) to aspire for and inexpensive material for a ‘lower strata’ (Galilee, 2002, p.38). In later publications, by contrast, emphasis was placed on affording and wearing expensive brands as an indicator of “gay” identity.

Through signifiers including ‘hyperactive’ (*Attitude*, March 1996, pp.62-9); ‘chic’ (*Gay Times*, June 1999, p.124) and ‘optimis[ing] your most important assets’ (*Attitude*, August 2009, p.7) being used to promote varying clothes, the publications drew sexual parallels between specific brands and the models who wore them. As such, the product(s) (re)presented in both magazines demonstrated ‘a new and highly sexualised image of masculinity into what was previously perceived as a dull area of men’s dress’ (Edwards, 1997, p.42), further reflected through one respondent mentioning his being attracted to a ‘Jack Wills, Abercrombie, kinda guy’ (Respondent 1, 2012). Similar to the perceived norm of sculpted bodies, the publications thus contented that through purchasing and wearing fashionable clothes, readers could appear more “successful”, and therefore more attractive. By contrast, having insufficient income to access the neo-liberal spaces of gyms and department stores was (re)constructed as being indicative of “failure” (see Table 2, pp.124-6).

6.4 Sexuality and Relationships

Despite the varying “gay” lifestyle(s) (re)presented across both publications, a universal homonormative identity was grounded in discourse concerning ‘domesticity and consumption’ (Duggan, 2003). For example, although one column criticised “gay” men for ‘sheepishly copying the “monogamy rule” from our heterosexual counterparts’ (*Attitude*, August 2001, p.34), promotions for civil partnerships (*GT*, May 2011, p.94; *Attitude*, February 2010, p.4) and adoption (*Attitude*, April 2011, pp.6-7, p.97, p.103) were commonplace in later publications. Through (re)presenting heteronormative forms of “success” (see Table 1, pp.20-1), both *Attitude* and *Gay Times* have assimilated neo-liberal binaries into varying “gay” lifestyle(s).

Despite one respondent questioning their necessity (Respondent 3, 2012), later editions of both publications have (re)constructed “straight” signifiers as integral to “gay” relationships, for example placing emphasis on planned parenthood (Kerr et al., 2011b). As such, this part of the chapter begins by surveying how a heteronormative relationship, or desire to (re)produce one, has been framed in both publications as a norm (see Table 1, pp.20-1). Additionally, I examine how single men were referred to in the magazines, emphasising how long-term relationships formed an attainable form of “success” rather than the perceived benefits of cruising (*Attitude*, April 1999, p.34) and cottaging (*Gay Times*, September 1998, p.121) put forward in previous publications. Similar to the norm of commercial discourse identified earlier in the chapter, therefore, an emphasis on relationships (re)presenting the heteronormative “subject” (see Table 1, pp.20-1) were also promoted across later publications.

The Homonormative “Self”

Although Edwards regards sexual politics as being distinct from ‘the constant reconstruction of masculinity through consumption’ (1997, p.82), even the earlier publications upheld sexual and gendered norms. Equally, advertisements not considered conventionally homonormative, for example those promoting BDSM equipment (*Gay Times*, September 1994, p.5), regarded the ability to have sufficient disposable income to access these commodities as a norm. Fetishes discussed by letter-writers without a clear Pink Pound, by contrast, were (re)constructed as deviant, as demonstrated through the responses from advice columnists to letters concerning attraction to small penises (*Gay Times*, October 1991, p.98), cruising lorry drivers (*Gay Times*, September 1994, p.128) and paying young Asian men to watch body-building videos (*Gay Times*, June 1999, p.130). Instead, more commercial forms of sexuality were (re)presented through consumerist promotions, thus eroding choice through the requirement of readers to have sufficient income to access them.

Additionally to associating sexuality with material product(s), the assumption of an active sex life was (re)constructed by both publications as a norm, notably through drawing distinctions between the ways in which sex is more enjoyable for “gay” men than their “straight” counterparts (*Attitude*, May 1994, p.36). For example, in a later publication Elton John was featured telling a younger audience to ‘have fun, have lots of safe sex and enjoy your sexuality’ (*GT*, May 2009, p.38), presupposing that readers could easily form “gay” relationships within their peer group. Similar to the discourse used when describing using a gym to form sculpted physique(s), the publications have

also provided the argument that readers could improve their sexual performance through accessing neo-liberal spaces, for example promoting sex courses (*Attitude*, August 2009, p.108). Through *Attitude* and *Gay Times* having (re)constructed an active sex life as a norm, readers not sexually active were marginalised by not having formed relationships in the manner framed by the magazines as commonplace among younger “gay” men (*Gay Times*, September 1998, p.19).

In the context of relationships, later publications have framed the homonormative self through forms of glamorous individuality (McRobbie, 2009, p.125) rather than a fluid sexual identity. Although earlier articles discussed the necessity of sexual hierarchies (*Attitude*, May 1994, pp.7-9; *Gay Times*, September 1994, p.63), one respondent drew attention to a perceived need to ‘choose your box’ (Respondent 11, 2012) within the “gay” scene, citing “queer” as being suited to him. Despite identifying itself as distinct from sexual binaries, therefore, “queer” identity was (re)produced within neo-liberal values of choice rather than those of subversion. Instead, ‘box[es]’ of identity were defined through both publications having shifted from focusing on discourse concerning activities involving casual sex such as cottaging to a later neo-liberal emphasis on disposable income. Whereas an earlier edition described anonymous sex as being integral to “gay” lifestyle(s) despite ‘the prejudice of the straight world’ (*Gay Times*, September 1998, p.121), later magazines have instead (re)constructed casual sex and long-term relationships around expensive bars and nightclubs, thus reinforcing the owning of sufficient income to access discrete neo-liberal spaces as a norm. Consequently, one unemployed respondent described forming relationships through the “gay” scene as a process that he had been

excluded from (Respondent 9, 2012).

Both *Attitude* and *Gay Times* have emphasised that stable relationships act as a norm, for example through referring to Boy George as having ‘contented domesticity...with long-term lover Michael’ (*Attitude*, May 1994, p.72). Despite using the lifestyle(s) of “gay” celebrities as examples of monogamous relationships, older publications used signifiers including ‘traditional families’ (*Gay Times*, November 1995, p.48) and ‘the family values brigade’ (*Gay Times*, November 1997, p.64) to stigmatise perceived homophobes. By contrast, promotions and general references to anonymous sex, saunas and cruising were used to denote spaces assumed to be frequented by readers (*Gay Times*, March 1993, pp.43-7; *Attitude*, April 1999, p.34). Unlike the earlier example of Boy George, however, later articles have resisted using celebrities alone to illustrate the significance of monogamy and long-term relationships within “gay” lifestyle(s). Instead, signifiers describing a ‘picture-perfect cohabiting couple’ (*Attitude*, February 2007, p.24) and ‘a magical feeling’ (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.104) were used through contexts that readers could relate to. Despite a letter sent in by a police officer warning of ‘zero tolerance’ towards cottaging (*Gay Times*, September 2003, p.12) reinforcing how anonymous sex outside of neo-liberal settings such as nightclubs was (re)constructed as unacceptable, one respondent noted how ‘the police won’t arrest you or condemn you’ for cruising in Brighton (Respondent 7, 2012). Nonetheless, monogamy was also identified by one respondent as integral to his sexuality, with the comment that ‘being gay, a gay man, is living with my partner, hanging out with my partner, doing dinner parties with my partner’ (Respondent 1, 2012), (re)producing the “gay domesticity” referred to by Andrew Gorman-Murray

(2006) as prevalent within long-term relationships. Although a heteronormative emphasis on monogamy was notable among respondents, the secondary interviews also reflected how a significant proportion of “gay” men still had anonymous sex outside of commercial spaces; a point not (re)presented in later publications.

The promotion of civil partnerships (*Attitude*, February 2010, p.4; *GT*, May 2011, p.94) was central in both publications to discourse concerning monogamy. As such, disposable income was (re)constructed as a norm in the context of (re)producing heteronormative forms of “success”. As reflected in the promotion for a Bed and Breakfast with ‘civil partnership and wedding parties book[ing] out the guesthouse for weekend celebrations of champagne on the veranda’ (*Attitude*, August 2009, p.103), civil partnerships and reports concerning “gay” marriage were intersected with financial “success” to the same extent as a discrete “gay” identity. As such, one respondent criticised the heteronormative nature of civil partnerships, describing them as ‘a carbon copy of your white wedding, as in white dress, but as well as culturally’ (Respondent 10, 2012). Rather than subverting the norms associated with the “straight self”, therefore, homonormativity can be argued to have instead imitated it.

In earlier magazines, “gay” marriage was (re)presented as indicative of imitating “straight” lifestyle(s) rather than indicating equality, with focus placed on lowering the LGBTQIA age of consent or repealing Section 28. As such, a disparity could be coded between later publications promoting civil partnerships in neo-liberal spaces, and earlier attacks in the magazines on the process of “gay” marriage for ‘sheepishly copying the “monogamy rule” from our heterosexual counterparts’ (*Attitude*, August

2001, p.34). For example, an earlier edition of *Attitude* criticised a “gay” ‘virtual wedding’ for having the potential to create ‘a ghetto, for want of a better word, like Soho or Canal Street’ (April 1999, p.22) between those who could and could not access it. In shifting from ‘cult stuff like drugs’ (Respondent 2, 2012; see also *Gay Times*, September 1994, pp.10-24) to discourse concerning civil partnerships over the twenty year timeframe, both publications have increasingly (re)produced heteronormative forms of “success” (see Table 1, pp.20-1). Through the publications interviewing “gay” men about the benefits they have experienced as a result of being in a civil partnership (*Attitude*, April 2005, p.14; *Attitude*, August 2008, p.22; *GT*, May 2009, p.35; *Attitude*, April 2011, p.104), the latter was thus (re)constructed as a norm within “gay” identity. Nonetheless, the description by one respondent of “gay” relationships being ‘colonised by this massive capitalist money-making machine based round heterosexual marriage’ (Respondent 10, 2012) was overlooked within later publications, which instead have focused on the venues and merchandise available for couples.

The heteronormative use of family to indicate “success” (see Table 1, pp.20-1) was accepted in the publications as being available through a disposable income. For example, a later article contained a report on a “gay” couple with children being stigmatised through ‘that curiously straight tabloid obsession with gays having more money than straights’, using the signifier ‘normal’ to describe the family (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.75-7). In doing so, a perceived norm of ‘gays having more money’ was established, implicitly (re)presenting those unable to afford dependents as “failures”; a point further demonstrated by another couple commenting that ‘soon we start the

process of adoption. Elliott would make an amazing dad' (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.104). It is through having sufficient disposable income, therefore, that the heteronormative aspiration to ensure parenthood (Kerr et al., 2011b) was achievable. Through similar promotions and advertisements (*Attitude*, February 2007, p.58; *Attitude*, April 2011, pp.6-7, p.97, p.103), the ideal of a stable, nuclear family is therefore able to be (re)constructed as a norm within "gay" relationships. Unlike the prospect of "gay" marriage, earlier letters also regarded parenthood as an indicator of equality (*Gay Times*, September 2000, p.110; *Attitude*, February 2000, p.12). This view was shared by respondents, one of whom questioned 'why should ["gay" men]...have any less of these [parenting] desires than a straight man' (Respondent 7, 2012; see also Respondent 3, 2012; Respondent 4, 2012). Rather than information concerning childcare and parenthood itself, however, the publications focused on the heteronormative "success" of readers being financially able to fulfil their paternal 'desires'.

Single Men

In recent publications, single men were implicitly (re)constructed as "failures" through their not being in a long-term monogamous relationship. For example, one article profiling a group of men who had never had a partner attempted to propose 'solutions' for them, rather than debating how beneficial monogamy could actually be (*Attitude*, April 2011, pp.64-9). Through using pull quotes including 'how do serial monogamists go from one relationship to another when I've had none' (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.67), it was implied that single men were aspiring for the perceived "success" of long-term relationships. Despite letter-writers commenting that 'if you haven't got a

boyfriend you're not a cripple' (*Attitude*, April 2005, p.12) and praising sex clubs (*Attitude*, June 2003, p.10), long-term relationships were (re)constructed by articles in both magazines as 'a part of life that [single men]...had always expected would have fallen into place by now' (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.66). More recent publications have therefore associated signifiers of monogamy with homonormative "success", despite their readership(s) being divided on the subject.

Reflecting how the discourse in the magazines (re)constructed monogamy as a "successful" norm, dating was also promoted through the discrete 'gay-PARSHIP' agency, using signifiers including 'another happy couple' alongside images of rings and weddings (*Attitude*, February 2010, p.4). Furthermore, articles have criticised casual sex for 'infantilising us' (*Attitude*, August 2008, p.42), also attacking the 'highly sexual gay scene' (*Attitude*, August 2009, p.72) for how it has impacted on "gay" men's wellbeing. Instead, heteronormative relationships were promoted, acting as a shift from the acknowledgement of cottaging forming a necessity for "gay" men put forward in earlier magazines (*Gay Times*, September 1998, p.121).

One respondent has praised the publications for including 'nice interviews with gay couples about their life, how they met and stuff' (Respondent 4, 2012), indicating how the heteronormative "success" of a long-term relationship was regarded as the ideal endpoint of dating. Nonetheless, an earlier pull quote describing how 'our own worthlessness is as much a part of our own heritage as Morris dancing' (*Gay Times*, March 1993, p.45) acknowledged that dating was not as straightforward as the "successes" recorded by columnists in later publications (*Attitude*, October 2010, p.28;

Attitude, April 2011, p.102) had (re)constructed it to be. As opposed to focusing on readers' perceived sense of 'worthlessness', later publications instead drew attention to contributors preferring not to have 'a boyfriend as a distraction from the miseries of my life' (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.26). Through (re)presenting single men as 'holding out for an ideal' (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.68) rather than those aspiring for, but "failing", to have a sex life, readers in the latter situation were further marginalised as having an "at-risk" 'worthlessness' when compared to the norm of being sexually active.

In terms of dating, regarding older men as being 'handsome' and 'suave' was (re)produced as a norm, as demonstrated by one columnist recalling a date being 'comfortable in his surroundings and his own skin, something boys my age rarely are' (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.102). Through describing "gay" men as 'age[ing] like gods [whereas] straight men age like shit' (*Attitude*, August 2008, p.44), readers were therefore provided with aspirational role models both through dating and their expected future achievements. Equally, the prospect of "gay" men being 'handsome' in later life was contrasted with the marginalisation of "straight" older men as 'fat, balding businessmen with hot young girls laughing at their every joke' (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.102). As such, the perceived "success" of being 'suave' when older was upheld as a norm that readers should be able to achieve, a process requiring sufficient disposable income. Despite the younger target audiences being concerned about not earning enough money (Respondent 2, 2012), therefore, an older man able to afford meals in plush restaurants acted as an example of aspirational "success", demonstrated by the journalist on the date with him commenting how 'my last date was in Nando's'

(*Attitude*, April 2011, p.102). Equally, one respondent defined attraction as being reflected through ‘the maturity of the person, really’ (Respondent 10, 2012), an attitude (re)constructed as a norm for older “gay” men in both publications. By contrast, older men regarded as ‘drug bores’ (*Attitude*, July 2002, p.32) were marginalised for their comparative immaturity, thus making them appear as “at-risk failures” who were less able to form meaningful relationships.

6.5 Broadening the Research

Despite accounting for discrete lifestyle(s), the publications have uniquely framed homonormativity as integral to “gay” identity. To reinforce the ‘unremarkable’ nature of “can-do success” (Harris, 2004a, p.106), signifiers of “at-risk failure” were also (re)presented as a threat. As such, one respondent noted ‘a massive sense of failure because I’m not as successful as I’d like to be’ (Respondent 11, 2012), indicating how focus was placed on achieving neo-liberal forms of “success” rather than their being (re)constructed as unattainable ideals (Benwell, 2003b, p.161). Although discrete from the “straight subject” through its emphasis on disposable income within a separate Pink Pound, the ideals associated with heteronormativity were (re)produced across the editions of *Attitude* and *Gay Times* under review.

An original contribution to the significance of gendered binaries was made through examining how both publications projected the perceived norm of neo-liberal “success” within the wider Pink Pound (*GT*, May 2009, p.95) alongside interviews with notable role models in entertainment (*Attitude*, August 2008, pp.36-9) and politics (*Attitude*, April 2005, pp.41-3). As mentioned in the previous chapter, the

emphasis on consumerist product(s) acted as an aspiration to varying “gay” lifestyle(s), including those atypical within the broader “gay” scene. By increasingly appealing to a teen audience, therefore, later publications primarily used younger celebrities that were less associated with “gay” identity to promote different commodities (*Attitude*, August 2008, p.18), reinforcing the perception that the “successful” norm could be realised through purchasing commercial items.

Not only was the timeframe of study a unique space to identify how changes to neo-liberalism were evident since Thatcherism and on account of New Labour (McRobbie, 2009, p.130), but an examination of how “gay” identity had changed over the same period. For example, *Gay Times* shifted from campaigning about events affecting British “gay” men, including homophobic attacks (June 1999, pp.55-60) and reducing the age of consent (September 1998, pp.38-42), to raising issues concerning equality within the context of homonormative “success”. Nonetheless, one letter-writer criticised the publication for shortening its name to *GT*, accusing it of ‘moving even further from its political roots’ (March 2007, p.14). Despite its having ‘mov[ed]’, therefore, the letters have demonstrated that audiences were still concerned with themes related to campaigning. The ‘political’ material in later editions of both *Attitude* and *Gay Times* was instead (re)presented through politicians including Nick Clegg (*Attitude*, February 2010, pp.62-6) and Dominic Grieve (*GT*, August 2008, p.87) functioning as role models, despite a letter attacking the latter’s party for ‘the damage [they]...caused in the past’ (*Gay Times*, May 2006, p.8). Equally, through using younger stars, including Daniel Radcliffe, to describe homophobia as indicative of ‘people who are scared’ (*Attitude*, August 2009, p.51), the publications tended to

select mainstream celebrities to articulate political opinions rather than activists such as a “gay” teenager suing his school for a homophobic attack (*Gay Times*, June 1999, p.14). In doing so, campaigns against what earlier publications regarded as the homophobic mainstream were instead (re)constructed as a ‘scared’ minority, interviewing role models more aspirational to the magazine’s target audience than figures more involved in demonstrating for equality. In doing so, the publications have become dependent on “successful straight” celebrities such as Radcliffe in order to reassure readers that they were not deviant, a process further marginalising them against the “straight self”.

Through using *Attitude* and *Gay Times* to demonstrate how an increasingly young and impressionable audience were provided with forms of glamorous individuality (McRobbie, 1999, p.125) through varying role models, “can-do success” was reinforced as a norm through a perceived “at-risk failure” (see Table 2, pp.124-6). Consequently, this case study is able to complement previous research concerning how neo-liberal hierarchies have affected women’s and “straight” men’s lifestyle(s) publications, in addition to Sender’s research into changes to *The Advocate* between 1967 and 1992 (2001). Although one respondent has noted that ‘even within mainstream gay culture, the idea of choice as to how you want to live your life is there a lot more’ (Respondent 11, 2012), the publications under study formed unique examples of how ‘choice’ was dependent on the perceived norm of disposable income. Through focusing on ideals of parenthood and civil union rather than those of cottaging and cruising, later articles (re)constructed glamorous individuality through heteronormative parameters. Although the Pink Pound was perceived as being distinct

from the “straight subject” (Edwards, 1997, pp.113-5), the publications have nonetheless (re)produced heteronormative forms of “success” rather than subverting them.

7. Conclusion

Between 1991 and 2011, the argument that ‘I don’t think there’s any form of institutionalised homophobia pretty much anywhere in this day and age, really’ (Respondent 10, 2012) could be reflected both legally and socially in Britain. Not only were “gay” men (re)constructed as being assimilated into the “straight” mainstream (*Attitude*, February 2010, p.1), but a separate sexuality remained prevalent. This distinction was reflected through an emphasis on the homonormative “self”, a form of ‘gay domesticity’ (Duggan, 2003) that attempted to (re)produce “straight” ideals of “success”. For example, emphasis was placed on parenthood (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.104) and civil partnerships (*Attitude*, August 2009, p.103). Through readers being (re)constructed as having sufficient disposable income to access a discrete Pink Pound (Edwards, 1997, p.113-5), an intersection between “gay” identity and a neo-liberal emphasis on “success” was established. In emphasising the ‘risk’ (Harris, 2004a, p.35) associated with appearing a “failure” (see Table 2, pp.124-6) when compared to the perceived norm of “success”, however, signifiers related to neo-liberalism were upheld. Despite “gay” men being recognised as having equal rights to those identifying as “straight” (Equality Act, 2010, p.6), the latter’s reliance on a “gay abject” was accentuated rather than disrupted.

Coding *Attitude* and *Gay Times*, the highest-circulating British magazines over the period of study (Baker, 2003, p.245; Stevenson et al., 2003, p.118) allowed me to survey how “gay” identity had shifted from activism to adopting heteronormative

values. In selecting publications read by a wide audience, I was provided with a broader understanding of how neo-liberal signifiers had become dominant across discrete lifestyle(s) since 1991. Additionally, a complementary selection of secondary interviews allowed me to assess how the publications reflected “gay” identity more broadly. By also reviewing how the previous scholarship on mainstream publications have targeted “straight” men (Benwell, 2003b; Edwards, 2003; Gill, 2003), women (Harris, 2004a; McRobbie, 1999) and American “gay” men (Sender, 2001), my research of how British “gay” men’s publications were affected by neo-liberal values was supported.

Given the paucity of literature regarding how “gay” British lifestyle(s) magazines have promoted the image of readers as ‘active consumers’ (McRobbie, 1999, p.60), my case study provided an original position for supporting both current and future research. Through CDA, I was able to identify how neo-liberal hierarchies were assimilated into “gay” lifestyle(s). Rather than later publications emphasising campaigning (*Gay Times*, June 1999, p.14), however, focus was placed on the lifestyle(s) of mainstream celebrities likely to appeal to a broader teen audience than a specifically “gay” one (*GT*, May 2011, p.25), with affluent lifestyle(s) (*Attitude*, June 2003, p.29) being (re)constructed as a norm. Despite the frequency of these tropes in later editions, forms of ‘glamorous individuality’ (McRobbie, 2009, p.125) were also notable through the promotion of identities distinct from the wider “gay” scene, demonstrated by the alternative geek chic promoted through product(s) and celebrities associated with it (*Attitude*, February 2010, pp.58-61; see also *GT*, August 2008, p.21).

7.1 Understanding Changes to Power Relations in “Gay” Lifestyle(s)

In coding publications from 1991, I was provided with an understanding of how changes since Thatcherism were accentuated across the timeframe. Despite earlier articles in the more campaign-oriented *Gay Times* (Edwards, 1997, p.77) (re)constructing celebrity activists including Peter Tatchell (November 1995, p.45) and Ian McKellen (September 1991, p.5) as role models, focus remained on attaining equal rights to “straight” men (*Gay Times*, September 1998, p.64) rather than aspiring for a separate Pink Pound. Whereas an earlier publication described Norman Tebbit, a former Conservative Minister who recommended barring “gay” men from the office of Home Secretary (1998), as ‘malevolent of countenance’ (September 1998, *Gay Times*, p.38), a lighter rebuke of ‘silly sod’ following Tebbit’s later use of the signifier ‘raving queer[s]’ (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.20) demonstrated that concerns regarding discrimination in Britain were increasingly considered less significant. Instead, both publications have framed institutional homophobia in a global context, with pull quotes drawing attention to ‘massive taboo[s]’ in India (*GT*, May 2011, p.64) and a ‘climate of fear and anger’ in Uganda (*GT*, August 2008, p.97). Through these international concerns, one respondent referred to his preference of marching in solidarity with “gay” men living in countries such as Lithuania, instead describing London as ‘the most tolerant city in the world’ (Respondent 5, 2012). Rather than asking further questions of the ‘tacit privileging of heterosexuality’ (Griffin, 2009, p.39), the publications have understood ‘toleran[ce]’ through the perceived norm of accessing discrete commercial spaces, reflecting broader changes to marginalised identity.

To attribute legal equality alone to the shift from a campaign-oriented approach to aspirations for similar forms of heteronormative “success” (see Table 1, pp.20-1) overlooks the broader discourse in both Majorism and New Labour. Peter Kerr has dismissed conceptions of the former being more conciliatory than Thatcherism, citing the rise of privatisation and decline in welfare as solidifying ‘efforts to see off any remaining effective opposition to the overall direction in which the Conservatives wanted to go’ (2001, p.185). This end to a coherent ‘opposition’ was further demonstrated through the landslide victory of New Labour, in which a rise in aspiration(s) for neo-liberal forms of “success” were also noted to have become prevalent in women’s lifestyle(s) (McRobbie, 2009, p.130), with signifiers of “at-risk” being necessary for validating the “can-do self” (Harris, 2004a, p.32). Edwards has also identified “gay” men to have undertaken a similar shift toward commercial forms of aspiration since the 1990s, citing ‘consumption *without* fear of discrimination’ as indicative of progress (1997, pp.113-5), despite the consequent marginalisation of poorer “gay” men (Respondent 10, 2012). As such, both publications have contributed to the exclusion of identities considered “at-risk” through the promotion of varying product(s) and events only a minority of readers could afford. Although earlier publications advertised expensive items including cars (*Gay Times*, November 1995, p.68) and watches (*Attitude*, October 1998, p.31), the subsequent commercial discourse concerning different types of “gay”-oriented clubs (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.22) and holidays (*Attitude*, August 2009, pp.102-3) reflected the discrete assimilation of neo-liberal values into a marginalised sexuality.

Although later editions were primarily targeted at a younger demographic, as

demonstrated by the article ‘100 Things to do When You Come Out’ (*Attitude*, August 2009, pp.52-61), both publications have (re)presented themselves as available to varying minorities and lifestyle(s). Consequently, both the discourse and images in the publications upheld the perceived dichotomy between “straight-acting” (*Attitude*, June 2006, p.37) and camping (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.78-82). Equally, support groups were advertised for non-white men considering themselves marginalised and discriminated within the “gay” scene (*Attitude*, August 2008, p.142; see also *Attitude*, April 2011, p.101). Complementing Edwards’ contention that “gay” men have ‘fewer financial commitments and therefore often higher disposable incomes’ (1997, p.74; see also Respondent 1), the publications neither discussed working-class lifestyle(s) nor promoted product(s) available to a ‘lower strata’ (Galilee, 2002, p.38), leading to a letter-writer demanding ‘a little budget shopping’ (*Attitude*, April 1999, p.10). Equally, one Brighton-based respondent complained of the magazines that ‘I don’t have any savings, so it’s not really that representative to me’ (Respondent 9, 2012), despite his living in a city with a notable Pink Pound (BBC, 2005). Instead, the publications tended to fetishize working-class men in a manner reflecting the discourse concerning “gay” chavs more broadly (Brewis and Jack, 2010, p.261), as demonstrated through signifiers including ‘tough scally’ (*GT*, May 2011, p.139) and ‘council estate ladz’ (*Attitude*, August 2009, p.133) in the sex advertisements. Instead of “gay” identity more broadly being (re)constructed as deviant, working-class men formed an “abject” to the affluent “subjects”, both in terms of long-term civil partnerships (*Attitude*, August 2009, p.103) and parenthood (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.104).

Previous studies have identified a working-class identity emphasised in magazines including *Loaded* aimed at a New Lad have formed an indicator of identity rather than broader class politics (Crewe, 2003, p.98). As such, both celebrities and product(s) specific to a separate working-class identity were (re)presented, albeit through the promotion of less expensive brands (Galilee, 2002, p.38; Ricciardelli, 2010, p.76). Despite its perceived difference from the Sensitive New Man, therefore, a neo-liberal emphasis remains on purchasing material items in order to reify separate lifestyle(s). McRobbie agrees, identifying a ‘glamorous individuality’ (1999, p.125) as (re)producing similar consumerist values to distinct “feminine” lifestyle(s). Complementing these earlier studies, my research on “gay” men’s magazines made an original contribution concerning how lifestyle(s) within a marginalised sexuality were separate from one another through similar neo-liberal signifiers. For example, different celebrities were framed as integral to discrete identities, demonstrated by Stephen Fry being (re)constructed as ‘King of Gay Geekage’ (*Attitude*, February 2010, p.61). Rather than being entirely distinct from one another, the lifestyle(s) (re)presented across the publications were centred round homonormative signifiers of “success” (see Table 2, pp.124-6), supporting Oswin’s earlier research concerning how a “queer” identity has integrated into a consumerist mainstream (2005).

Although Benwell has argued that the readers of men’s magazines understand “success” as an indicator of ‘aspiration rather than full possession’ (2003b, p.161), later editions of *Attitude* and *Gay Times* have increasingly targeted a younger audience. To reflect this more impressionable demographic, the language of the publications consequently (re)constructed “success” in older “gay” men as a norm,

describing them as ‘age[ing] like gods [whereas] straight men age like shit’ (*Attitude*, August 2008, p.44) and using signifiers of being ‘comfortable in his own surroundings and his own skin’ (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.102). Equally to the notion that younger readers insecure about their sexuality (*Gay Times*, October 2006, p.125) could eventually appear ‘suave’ when older (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.102), affluence was also (re)produced through promotions for using a gym to attain sculpted physique(s) (*Attitude*, *Attitude Active*, April 2011, pp.1-24) and purchasing varying expensive fashion brand(s) (*Attitude*, August 2009, p.23; *GT*, October 2010, p.22). Regarding the latter, product(s) targeting a ‘lower strata’ (Galilee, 2002, p.38) were overlooked, despite letter-writers criticising insufficient ‘budget’ goods (*Attitude*, April 1999, p.10). Although one respondent acknowledged that he would not choose to buy items he could not afford (Respondent 10, 2012), a teen audience were more likely to consider the purchasing of varying brands a way of reflecting their individuality, for example demonstrated in the promotions for discrete sports items (*Attitude*, *Attitude Active*, April 2011, p.2).

In order for “can-do success” to be (re)constructed as a norm, the publications also emphasised perceptions of “failure” as an “other” for readers to avoid. For example, discussion of ‘handsome, suave’ older men with sufficient disposable income to dine at exclusive restaurants and live in an expensive part of London (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.102) was contrasted with signifiers of ‘drug bores’ (*Attitude*, July 2002, p.32) and ‘100% sleaze’ (*Gay Times*, July 2004, p.112). In (re)producing this dichotomy, readers were provided with images of aspirational older men against an “at-risk failure”. Equally, the perceived norm of toned physique(s) reflected through discourse

including ‘hunks’ and photographs of topless men (*Attitude*, April 2011, pp.54-5; *GT*, May 2011, p.1) was further validated by a fat “other” being marginalised by one respondent as ‘someone that’s unhealthy and doesn’t take care of themselves’ (Respondent 7, 2012). Alongside newer supplements promoting muscular physique(s) including *Attitude Active* (April 2011, pp.1-24), signifiers of ‘fat balding businessmen’ (*Attitude*, April 2011, p.102) and ‘Clarkson bellies’ (*Attitude*, August 2008, p.44) were used when describing middle-aged “straight” men, questioning how far overweight readers could function in a “gay” scene. Nonetheless, as further reflected through comments regarding a ‘hetero hell’ (*Gay Times*, November 1995, pp.91-6), the “straight self” was considered unfashionable rather than “at-risk”. Instead, a respondent maintained that overweight men were frequently ‘ostracised on Canal Street’ (Respondent 11, 2012), demonstrating how the marginalisation of a “failed” fat body was reflected in “gay” lifestyle(s) more broadly.

Although several examples of “successful” identity were (re)presented in the publications over the twenty year timeframe, “failure”, or even readers’ insecurities concerning their need to (re)produce the homonormative “self”, were rendered invisible in later publications. As such, it was important to apply Taylor and Sutherland’s argument that power relations could be understood through identifying the ‘vocabulary or grammatical structures’ absent from the publications (2003, p.172). Although “gay” men considered overweight (*Gay Times*, November 1995, p.136) or immature (*Attitude*, July 2002, p.32) were stigmatised in a manner validating the “successful subject”, later publications’ reluctance to even discuss perceived “failure” intensified homonormative “success” as a norm. As mentioned, the MediaWatch

column, which frequently attacked establishment figures through signifiers including ‘bigots’ (*Gay Times*, September 1998, p.64), was discontinued in more recent editions of *Gay Times*, indicating an assimilation with the heteronormative mainstream, further demonstrated by more general articles written by senior Conservative MPs (*GT*, August 2008, p.87). Equally, the advice columns allowing readers space to address concerns including that of appearing ‘a dirty old perv’ on the “gay” scene (*GT*, August 2008, p.200) were withdrawn, with a parody version replacing them (*Gay Times*, October 2010, p.134). Given an older edition’s acknowledgement of the insecurities associated with younger men coming out (*Gay Times*, September 1994, p.129), the publications provided no space to reflect this, instead regarding it as a process ‘at the beginning of the road to happysville’ (*Attitude*, August 2009, pp.52-62). While it was perceived as permissible for “straight” men to appear unfashionable (*GT*, August 2008, p.112), attend dull nightclubs (*Attitude*, April 1999, p.28) and be overweight (*Attitude*, August 2008, p.44), a separate “gay” identity instead was noted to (re)construct itself around ‘the body beautiful’ (Respondent 11, 2012) alone.

7.2 Advancing the Research

Although it is inevitable that the coding of high-circulating “gay” men’s publications cannot provide a complete picture of how a neo-liberal shift has been accentuated within a marginalised sexuality, an original contribution has been made through a comparative analysis with research focusing on “straight” men’s magazines (Benwell, 2003b; Nixon, 1996, p.143) and women’s lifestyle(s) (Harris, 2004a; McRobbie, 1999). My analysis of *Attitude* and *Gay Times* therefore complemented Sender’s argument that *The Advocate* had encompassed ‘a respectable, consuming homosexual

public' between 1990-2 in America (2001, p.93), reflecting how the prominence of "gay" 'consum[erism]' as a norm was accentuated in Britain over the following two decades. Equally, an original perspective on British LGBTQIA lifestyle(s) was provided through what Benwell has described as 'one of the few arenas in which masculinity is regularly addressed, discussed and scrutinised' (2003b, p.156). In using CDA to identify a position 'against the power elites and in solidarity with dominated groups' (van Dijk, 1993, p.279), I coded the discourse of mainstream texts from a marginalised sexuality considering itself as able to project a separate identity, but instead (re)producing further heteronormative kyriarchies. Having complemented the existing research, this thesis can also be applied for understanding aspirational identity within marginalised minorities, for example through coding *The Voice* and *Disability Now* to determine how neo-liberal forms of "success" were (re)presented, rather than focusing on perceptions of discrimination and inequality. Equally, a comparative analysis with the high-circulating "lesbian" magazine *Diva*⁷ would be useful for future research; providing an opportunity to survey how far an identity marginalised through gender and sexuality (re)produced the homonormative binaries of "success" and "failure" that I have identified in *Gay Times* and *Attitude*.

As the engagement with lifestyle(s) publications has been 'severely curtailed' (Savigny, 2008, p.106) on account of their reduced circulation (Ponsford, 2014), it is difficult to imagine scholars studying future magazines sharing Benwell's view that these texts can allow "masculinity" to be 'regularly addressed, discussed and

⁷ Published by Milivres, the same company responsible for publishing *Gay Times* (Milivres Prowler Group, 2014).

scrutinised' (2003b, p.156). Nonetheless, opportunities for future research in LGBTQIA publications remain fertile, as demonstrated through the launch of *Winq*, a new 'luxury lifestyle [magazine] for gay men' (2014) and the recent appointment of a trans activist as *Attitude*'s editor-at-large (Lees, 2014). Equally, the rise of social networking to reflect "successful" lifestyle(s), celebrities and campaigning (Marshall, 2010) has superseded 'luxury' publications. Taking into account David Cameron's desire for Britain to become an 'aspiration nation' (2013), further case studies of how neo-liberal hierarchies have assimilated into "gay" identities was therefore necessary, either through coding larger publication houses or examining whether 'the internet has the potential to become as much a part of the commercial media system' (Savigny, 2004, p.235). At the very least, the coding of *Attitude* and *Gay Times* between Thatcher's resignation and the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition as presented here has provided a start.

8. Bibliography

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Appendix A

In this appendix, the questions asked of respondents during the secondary interviews, additionally to follow-up questions, are provided. Following the pilot interview, several of the points raised were dropped, allowing for a focus on questions I considered more specific to my work and less likely to result in rambling:

1. What type of man would you consider dating? Do you have a type?
2. Do any of you read gay magazines, such as *GT* or *Attitude*, which I've got on the table here? How representative do you think the images in here are of your lives? Why? Which images in particular reflect/do not reflect gay identity?
3. As well as this, there are also stereotypes of gay men having muscular bodies, as these images show. Is this, in your opinion, a fair reflection of gay identity? Is it a fairer reflection than the idea of a camp identity? What is a fair reflection of gay identity to you?
4. In several media portrayals, gay men have been given a camp identity, as shown through figures such as John Inman in *Are You Being Served* or *Sex and the City's*

Stanford. Do you think this is a stereotype of gay lifestyle rather than a fair reflection?

Why? Do you still think this is the case today?

5. Do you think now there *is* an alternative culture to straight culture, or do you think that there has been a gradual assimilation into this culture? If so, how do you think you have become similar, or remained different, to straight men? If not, do you think there has been a change to become less assimilated or do you think this has always been the case?
6. Do you find there are noticeable differences between, if you like, 'mainstream' and non-mainstream (which I guess you could argue could be working class gay culture and non-white gay culture when compared to more) gay culture? What, in particular, are these differences, or why do you think there are no differences?
7. Do you find events such as Gay Pride focus specifically on gay identity, or do you find it more commercialised and based round sales? Do you think Pride has changed from when you started attending? Could it be, for all intents and purposes, any other event? Do you think Gay Pride today is constructive to facilitating change to help gay men and draw attention to problems they face? Do you think Gay Pride is even necessary?
8. Do you think that you have a need to come across as successful? Do you feel you have to do this more than a straight man does? What constitutes 'success' and 'failure' to you?

9. There seems to be quite a lot of gay men on television now – I’m thinking Queer as Folk, or David in Six Feet Under, or Will in Will and Grace, and I’m sure you can name a number more on top of that. However, with mainstream films like Brokeback Mountain, it still seems gay men in a relationship remains some sort of ‘forbidden love’. Do you think there should be more frank and regular exposure to gay relationships as they are on television or in the cinema, or do you think there is already an adequate amount of exposure? It also seems that gay characters feature a lot on adult post-watershed television, but do you think there’s much chance of this appearing regularly pre-watershed, or even in children’s programmes?
10. Do you think HIV/AIDS has created a culture change regarding how gay men are perceived within the media? Is this for better or worse?
11. Do you see unemployment as a reflection on you as a person, especially regarding what job you have or don’t have? Does this reflect the way you dress? Or your relationships?
- 12- Do you think, compared to a generation ago, there was more of a definitive gay identity – how so? How is gay identity different now to how it was a generation ago? And, in a generation’s time, do you think there will be less of a separate gay identity than there is today?

Appendix B

The consent form provided to respondents prior to the interview being undertaken, and questionnaire undertaken following the interview. Signed copies available on request:

The questions I am asking are being used towards a thesis on how identity has moved from a perceived duality of male and female, or gay and straight, to one based around being career-based, either through being economically successful or undergoing failure. In order to get a fuller understanding of this, I am conducting interviews with gay men about their careers, sense of identity and love life. While being aware of the sensitivity of this, these interviews are necessary towards the writing of my PhD as a whole.

Taking its sensitivity into account, therefore, the interviews shall be totally confidential and if you want to leave at any point or do not want to answer a question, it is fine for you to do so. If there are any further points you would like to make, this is also fine.

If you would like to hear about how this thesis has progressed, please leave me your email address so I can get in touch with you at a later date to show you my thesis in its final version and draw your attention to where and how your contributions to this material has helped this thesis and this argument as a whole

I agree to this interview being undertaken

Signature:

Date:

This form is both entirely confidential and optional, being used to compare your responses demographically to other responses when drawing final conclusions in this thesis. If there is anything here you are unsure of, please ask, or – if you would like to provide further information, please e-mail me at searleken@hotmail.co.uk

AGE:

ETHNICITY:

WHICH SOCIAL CLASS WOULD YOU DEFINE YOURSELF AS BEING PART
OF:

Working Class

Lower Middle Class

Middle Class

Upper Middle Class

Not sure

Would not choose to define

HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE YOUR SEXUALITY:

Gay

Queer

Homosexual

Bisexual

Not sure

Would not choose to define

Other (please state)

PLEASE GIVE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF YOUR JOB AND WHAT IT ENTAILS
(IF UNEMPLOYED, PLEASE STATE)