INTRO:

Much of the mainstream commercial discourse surrounding masculine identity reflects an aspirational form of discourse, increasingly being based round neo-liberal binaries of “success” and “failure”, as opposed to sexual ones of “gay” and “straight”. Although academics have noted the existence of discrete “gay” lifestyle(s), MacKinnon observes that significance is consistently placed on ‘publicly defining oneself as heterosexual [as]…a means to male legitimacy’. 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).

To support this argument, this paper examines the impact a consumerist approach has had on bestselling British magazines aimed at gay men over the past twenty years. Here, the desire for a successful identity in the context of a corporate society is demonstrated through an analysis of aspirational, consumerist discourse and images prevalent across the magazines. While arguing binaries surrounding sexual and gendered identities have increasingly blurred, this paper also argues neo-liberal binaries are becoming increasingly prevalent. It demonstrates that, while the magazines remain directed at an explicitly gay audience, it bases itself on successful aspirations. Therefore, existing sexual binaries remain prevalent through signifiers of economic success to be aspired to.

This paper argues sexual identity is, like discourse surrounding gendered identity, adopting neo-liberal signifiers. It argues aspirational points in a successful identity remain consistent across all genders and sexualities, in different forms based on their audience. Therefore, gendered and sexual binaries are in turn eroded, with market-driven identities based round “success” and “failure” becoming increasingly significant. Through observing much of the neo-liberal and consumerist blending within the UK as a whole over the past twenty years or so through analysing the unique empirical framework in aspirational identity in gay lifestyle magazines, this provides a pertinent contribution to theories on homonormative identity.
When analysing how the content in the magazines speak to different types of gay men, however, a sentiment of difference is enacted on a broader scale, albeit orientated round neo-liberal forms of success. Within the empirical analysis, therefore, remains a sense of both explicit separation from straight identity and pride in this separation, tying into Connell’s point that explicitly gay identity forms a ‘permanent alternative’ (1995, *Masculinities*, p.202). This comes through in a variety of different ways, with earlier examples in magazines outlining this sense of separation through reviews of gay films, or films by gay directors, within the mainstream London Film Festival (November 1995, *Gay Times*, p.64), and comments on the killer of Gianni Versace as representative of the ‘polarised flip side of homosexuality’ being caricatured in a straight mainstream (November 1997, *Gay Times*, p.69). Reports like these reflect an explicitly separate gay identity, albeit discussing celebrities rather than issues affecting ordinary gay men.

By contrast, later magazines increasingly react to stereotypes against gay identity. This comes through with frustration gay men in the mainstream media are perceived as ‘unapologetically lunatic’, constructed as having crudely stereotyped identities instead of being afforded ‘the right to be mediocre’ (April 2011, *Attitude*, p.20). This message of resisting what are perceived as crude stereotypes comes through in an article from GT’s May 2009 edition, advising young gay men not to ‘mindlessly copy others or feel obliged to conform to gay stereotypes. There are many ways to be gay’ (May 2009, *GT*, p.43). Therefore, while a separate gay identity remains in the magazines based round tropes of aspiring towards success, it is focused round communicating with as diverse a group of “successful” identities as possible. Instead of encouraging or endorsing explicit stereotypes, emphasis is instead placed on maintaining a success in a gay identity. This contrasting emphasis, therefore, makes clear that gay men do not have to form specific identities explicitly associated with sexual binaries, instead emphasising the need to aspire to a successful neo-liberal identity. Therefore, there remains a wide range of differing, but explicitly gay, identities to be aspired to within the context of a “successful” identity.

However, discourse within magazine articles serving to maintain traditional gay stereotypes remains. This includes camp signifiers when discussing the Royal Wedding between Prince William and Kate Middleton. Examples like ‘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’ (April 2011, *Attitude*, p.79), and a need to ‘zazz up this Wills and Kate big day’ (April 2011, *Attitude*, p.79) demonstrate camp discourse interlaced with both the aspirational identities of the successful Royal Couple, and an emphasis on consumerism. Despite the different stances to an explicitly separate gay identity put forward, the articles, images and advertisements within the magazines are increasingly framed round the standpoint of a neo-liberal, corporate, lifestyle which readers are encouraged to aspire to emulate, primarily through having a larger disposable income to afford these consumerist items.

b- ATYPICAL IDENTITY
Throughout the magazines, a diverse range of identities are promoted, connected with the process of spending money in a consumerist manner. Therefore, gay men are presented within the magazines as being focused on a variety of careers, cultures and lifestyles. These differing identities come through across both magazines over the twenty year period studied, with an increased sense of commercialism. While a fundamentally consumerist message remains prevalent in earlier magazines, it is considerably less explicitly aspirational than examples in later editions. In 2010, an article is based around how ‘geeks have become sexy’ (February 2010, Attitude, pp.58-61). To demonstrate and validate this identity, celebrities such as Stephen Fry are frequently cited to qualify this identity, acting as a character readers should aspire to. This is epitomised through the comment ‘Sir Stephen Fry, King of gay geekage’ (February 2010, Attitude, p.61). ‘Gay geekage’, therefore, promotes a separate identity, using celebrity to emphasise this. Material commodities are also emphasised – as geek identities are treated ‘at the cutting edge of technology and art that would propel them into the heart of popular entertainment’. Geeky identities are also referred to as able to ‘work the latest apps for my iPhone’ (February 2010, Attitude, p.61) – implying readers can afford, or should aspire to afford, a range of “geeky” technological gadgets. Discourse regarding a separate “geeky” identity comes across in a more materialist style than earlier promotions, nonetheless emphasising commodities indicate specific identities.

The magazine constructs successful gay identity to their readership as an aspirational identity as an alternative to perceived gay male stereotypes. This comes through when interviewing the gay chef Yotam Ottolenghi. Although his cooking is promoted as ‘handy for the budget conscious’, Ottolenghi’s successful career is emphasised, as opposed to his cookery or sexuality (April 2011, Attitude, p.34).

With differing identities perceived as atypical, the role of celebrity comes through as much as consumerism. In later articles, the behaviour of celebrities such as Kerry Katona (August 2009, Attitude, p.146) are discussed as part of gay interest and identity. Therefore, the magazines increasingly encourage readers to be attuned to and have an understanding of celebrity culture, not necessarily linked to gay identity. This contrasts with earlier articles, which discuss figures far more explicitly connected with gay culture on an historical level. This comes through the openly gay singer Holly Johnson from Frankie Goes to Hollywood being praised for ‘(name-checking) all our favourite homos: “Andy Warhol, Johnnie Ray, William Burroughs (and) Jean Genet”’, while praising him for avoiding getting involved with mainstream record businesses (September 1994, Gay Times, p.4). In contrast to later features regarding established successful celebrities – such as ‘filthy, gorgeous Danny Dyer’ (February 2006, Attitude, p.1), and McFly, who are discussed because of their perceived ‘gay fan base’ (May 2011, GT, p.25), the earlier magazines emphasise a separate gay identity as opposed to a separate successful one through the not always aspirational lives of famous people. This earlier approach is clear in the 1999 edition of Gay Times, discussing Ronnie Kray, described him as ‘an extremely unbalanced, excessively violent and thoroughly unpleasant thug’ that was never challenged about his sexuality (June 1999, Gay Times, p.86), and the Marquis de Sade, about whom the magazine comments ‘few thinkers since antiquity…have more eloquently argued that heterosexual sex is no more “normal” than homosexual sex’ (June 1999, Gay Times, p.90). In discussing two contrasting historical figures in a gay – but not aspirational – context, the magazine indicates that not identifying as “straight” does not necessarily involve one totalising “gay” identity. This comes through differently in more recent magazines, as mainstream gay celebrities discuss a variety of lifestyles atypical of a mainstream gay culture, demonstrated earlier by promoting the openly gay chef Yotam Ottalenghi’s restaurant (April 2011, Attitude, p.34). Therefore, it is increasingly through successful mainstream celebrities regarded as ‘role models’ that readers can identify alternate methods of projecting a sexual identity.
However, this celebrity-based discourse indicates a desire to demonstrate a variety of gay identities. While promoting these, it is clear differing clothes – specific trainers for running, say (April 2011, Attitude, Attitude Active, p.7) – and consumable goods – for instance, pom poms and cosmetic kits connected with Glee (May 2011, GT, p.77) – increasingly treated as part of specific gay identities over time.

- A NEO-LIBERAL ANALYSIS OF THIS
  - ASPIRATIONAL IDENTITY

An aspirational identity in gay lifestyle is a pertinent issue in the magazines under analysis. However, there remains a notable shift from aspiring to have equal rights with straight men, for example in relation to mortgages, with a later emphasis on owning more material and commercial products, reflected in promotions for expensive clothes from Prowler (May 2011, GT, p.76). This supports Edwards’ argument that, through the impact of neo-liberalism, ‘the UK was already well-versed in aspirational individualism and style-conscious imitation’ (1997, pp.69-70), a point the magazines draw attention to in their increasingly commercial discourse. It is notable this more recent contrast to aspiring for more material products is nonetheless framed against the backdrop of gay identity, linked to commercial aspects of gay lifestyle. This is shown through the magazines promoting a range of differing brands targeting exclusively gay identities, demonstrated through some aftershave billed as ‘a personally engraved bottle of Mr Beckham’s scent’ (May 2009, GT, p.27), using both celebrity and commercial success as points readers can aspire to have.

In earlier magazines, however, “equality” is framed through discourse on finances and owning similar property to straight men. This comes through strongly in 1993 with a page set aside for advertisements emphasising financial advice, as well as joining trade unions, with headlines such as ‘gay money: straight advice’ and ‘UNISON cares about lesbian and gay workers’. This sense of equal rights to straight men is carried through to the September 2000 issue of Gay Times, advertising loans, home insurance, penthouses and mortgages explicitly targeted at gay men, framed in a neo-liberal discourse accordingly (September 2000, Gay Times, p.11; p.23; p.24; p.44; p.70). Therefore, there is an emphasis on sexual equality based on an assumed equal level of economic success, rather than acknowledging or drawing attention to economic inequalities among gay men. This is best indicated through the advertisement: ‘gay money: straight advice’, indicating a desire for the same rights as straight men, within the context of a neo-liberal background. Despite this emphasis on equal rights for gay men, however, articles and advertisements relating to mortgages and financial matters even in earlier magazines are rooted in a framework in which neo-liberal are increasingly prominent, albeit through established sexual binaries, promoting a successful identity accordingly.

Despite these points, discourse emphasising success is prominent in the magazines, drawing attention to gay men having equal rights in the context of a neo-liberal identity, shown through an emphasis on equality with straight men in terms of financial advice. This is demonstrated with the motif of a pink symbol – billing itself ‘the UK’s number 1 lender serving the gay community’ (September 2000, Gay Times, p.11). Therefore, the magazines promote companies set up serving to give gay men financial advice in the context of a neo-liberal economic environment.

The discourse on political equality is also linked to aspiring for a successful political identity, as shown with the September 1992 edition of Gay Times treating Chris Smith’s role as the first openly gay Shadow Cabinet MP as critically important (September 1992,
Gay Times, p.13). Therefore, these articles have an aspirational role for more politically-motivated readers, more likely to read Gay Times in 1992, inferring more gay men should aspire to a role model like Chris Smith. Therefore, while Edwards comments ‘the images and ideals (magazines) present remain focused on an often hard, muscular and certainly youthful sense of material aspiration’ (1997, p.137), this overlooks the equally aspirational role politicians play in the magazines. Despite fewer articles about British politics in later magazines, the role of politicians as a whole, as opposed to just those who are openly gay, function as role models to readers, contrasting from Edwards’ idea of what they represent. An interview with Nick Clegg prior to the 2010 General Election indicates this aspirational level of success reifies this, referring to him 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’ (February 2010, Attitude, p.62). As well as forming an aspirational role for readers interested in politics in the context of having a political figure to aspire to, therefore, the magazines are now able to make political figures come across as aspirational in terms of both their anti-homophobic stances and senior role in general.

As with politicians being treated as successful figures for readers to aspire to in the magazines, explicitly anti-homophobic discourse also is used by celebrities. This represents a notable shift in gay magazines discussing homophobia. So, instead of drawing attention to perceived homophobic attacks against the gay community, as shown with an article in the June 1999 edition of Gay Times concerning a gay teenager taking his school to court for homophobic bullying (June 1999, Gay Times, p.14), there is instead a focus on celebrity figures, regarded as successful and aspired to by many readers, such as Daniel Radcliffe making comments with pull quotes such as: ‘I loathe homophobia. It’s just disgusting and animal and stupid, and it’s just thick people who are scared’ (August 2009, Attitude, p.51). However, discourse combatting homophobia in the UK is increasingly less prominent in later magazines, instead using celebrities to clearly define homophobic behaviour as abhorrent as opposed to discussing the impact of homophobia as a whole.

Most notable in terms of a shift towards an aspirational identity, therefore, is the far higher number of celebrities, especially but not exclusively demonstrated through an increase in younger women, profiled or described as “gay icons” within later magazines. This increased use of younger celebrities is shown by a celebrity interviewee’s incredulity on Charlotte Church was a gay icon (November 2004, Gay Times, p.146). This proclivity for celebrities often plays on notions of gay men being interested in young female pop stars, promoting the likes of Cheryl Cole, Victoria Beckham, Duffy (August 2008, GT, p.19), Jessie J (April 2011, Attitude, p.19), Adele (April 2011, Attitude, p.20) and Katie Waissel (April 2011, Attitude, p.138) more frequently in later articles. In spite of more comprehensive coverage of younger, more mainstream and clearly successful female pop stars regarded as “gay icons” for readers to aspire to, the music reviews themselves are, despite referencing gay lifestyle, far broader (April 2011, Attitude, pp.38-9), accounting for a range of identities.

Therefore, by drawing attention to celebrities who have released CDs and promoting their upcoming tours, readers are also encouraged to purchase, or at least aspire to purchase, commercial products through these celebrities discussed, with a far wider range of what is considered “gay-friendly” material. This comes across clearly in terms of an article promoting the television show Glee, both through buying the DVD of its series and the live tour.
In terms of celebrities being focal across the magazine in total, earlier magazines principally discuss campaigning figures such as Peter Tatchell or historical gay figures such as Edward II, the Marquis de Sade and Caravaggio (June 1999, Gay Times, p.89), as opposed to more contemporary figures. Although the “gay icon” is prevalent in later magazines, and celebrities are often asked gay-related questions in later magazines (August 2008, Attitude, p.146; May 2001, GT, pp.32-41), maintaining gay identity is what Connell describes as a ‘permanent alternative’ to straight, the magazines increasingly orientate round the lifestyle and commercial successes specific celebrities have, rather than ordinary figures involved in campaigning, for example. This emphasis on celebrity’s lifestyle supports Benwell’s argument conceptions of traditional masculinity are increasingly ‘characterised by aspiration rather than full possession’ (2003, p.161). A notably neo-liberal framing to the magazines come about through forming an aspirational identity, partly through the magazine’s decision to use famous successful figures – both gay and straight, from a variety of different backgrounds as role models for gay men in terms of their contrasting successes and fame. This is further shown, as mentioned, through the broader range of different expensive material products and clothes advertised and promoted frequently in recent magazines (May 2009, GT, pp.76-85). Later magazines demonstrate the levels neo-liberal forms of success are important in gay identity through advertising and promoting expensive goods which a wider number of readers would aspire to own. The level of commercial material cited in the magazine, therefore, as well as the number of celebrities seen as important for readers to treat as role models, indicates a clear shift towards a more aspirational identity. This sense of a celebrity lifestyle to aspire to further comes through the broadcaster Paul Gambaccini, commenting to a future self: ‘you will fulfil all your ambitions before you turn 30. You will invent new ambitions and achieve them, too. This is where London will enter your life’ (May 2009, GT, p.49).

b- DISPOSABLE INCOME

The need for a disposable income comes through in the April 2011 edition of *Attitude*, in which examples of what Edwards describes as ‘the increasing significance of young, single men with high personal incomes’ (1997, p.84) becomes increasingly notable. This is demonstrated through promotions and advertisements for a variety of expensive products, including clothes (April 2011, Attitude, p.52); holidays (April 2011, Attitude, p.46); houses with leases exceeding one million pounds (April 2011, Attitude, p.117); and gym accessories such as trainers – with captions saying ‘exercise your wallet’ (April 2011, Attitude, Attitude Active, p.7). The aspiration to be able to spend a lot of money, and the conception readers feel good spending money comes through in an article on 2011’s Royal Wedding which comments: ‘the PR masterminds at the Palace apparently think the country, in the grip of recession, or post-recession, will baulk at a gaudy, gauzy spectacle of rich bitches in big hats. Numbskulls. If the country is depressed, what it needs is precisely a day featuring as many rich bitches in big hats as Westminster Abbey (at least they got that right and it’s not a registry office) can ram in’ (April 2011, Attitude, p.79), echoed in the comment made in 2009 that ‘visit just about any high street or department store on a Saturday and you’d be hard pushed to witness the throes of a recession’ (May 2009, GT, p.92). In a further example, the magazine cites homophobic abuse through the example of a couple with children, commenting ‘the couple’s stylishness was used against them, while that curiously straight tabloid obsession with gays having more money than straights was right at the forefront of the argument’ (April 2011, Attitude, p.75). This contrasts with earlier editions, demonstrated in the June 1999 edition of
Gay Times, concerned with nightclubs being ‘commercialised and corporate, leading to ‘not enough creativity’ (June 1999, Gay Times, p.111), not devoting any space to fashion or getting a well-toned body in the entire magazine. In terms of promoting holidays in earlier magazines, the emphasis is also on spaces where to be exclusively “gay” is acceptable, commenting of a gay guest house, ‘it’s good to be able to be able to stamp a camp sensibility on what once was regarded as a no-go area for gays’ (June 1999, Gay Times, p.121), putting gay identity ahead of identities based round success through not discussing prices attached to holidays, which differs from later articles. In later promotions, one area discussed is referred to as ‘a restaurant with rooms…in the most chocolatey of chocolate-box villages in the Range Rover obsessed Cotswolds. Think of those scenes in Bridget Jones…where Mrs Jones visits her folks in the honeycomb-tinted countryside and you’ll get the picture’ (August 2009, Attitude, p.102). By not referring to a “gay” identity, instead emphasising an economically successful one, the magazine’s discourse is increasingly framed through neo-liberal binaries of success and failure.

There is a range of differing methods readers can aspire to spend as well as make money throughout the magazines, as indicated through an interview with a DJ at gay weddings. The reader is informed that to hire a DJ at a wedding ‘(doesn’t) come cheap’ (April 2011, Attitude, p.28). This indicates a change in that gay men wanting to get married are implicitly reminded the price of a DJ at a wedding is expensive, being part of the neo-liberal emphasis on aspiring to have a lifestyle realising the perceived success of straight men, emphasising a disposable income’s importance. However, individuals wishing to get involved with this acknowledge it primarily as a successful method of making money. It also indicates the magazine attempts for its readers to aspire to do this through the economic recession, citing several differing methods. Despite later magazines citing few explicit methods readers can save money in a recession, there remains an emphasis on consumerism and spending a diverse number of material items throughout. Furthermore, despite the large amount of discourse within British society and media at large dedicated to the economic recession, the magazines analysed since 2008 demonstrate scant desire to address this. Instead, there remains an emphasis on explicitly expensive and consumable material items promoted by celebrities – as shown with the Rugby player Gareth Thomas wearing both a double-breasted suit (February 2010, Attitude, p.54) and sports clothes (February 2010, Attitude, p.48). These images and discourse, therefore, promote a lifestyle to aspire to for the level of economic success the magazines put forward.

Therefore, by wanting readers to have a well-paid successful, “professional” career in London – recognised as a successful place with a thriving gay culture – the magazine creates a form of gay identity built round disposable income and consumerism. This is clearer in the April 2011 edition of Attitude, in which images and discourse are placed on gay men with a disposable income with a career they are proud of (April 2011, Attitude, p.109; April 2011, Attitude, p.28), many of whom are also celebrities (April 2011, Attitude, p.34) and therefore treated as “successful”. The sense of a gay identity based around a mainstream, commercial context – if explicitly detached from straight identity – represents a paucity of explicitly non-mainstream gay identities in later articles. Diversity in gay identity is demonstrated, instead, through a commercial approach.

One interviewee, a gay man, makes clear there are benefits to an identity allowing stability and a disposable income, as the magazine comments ‘having gained access to the “gang” that gays are so often excluded from birth, he’s gained the job status and salary that come with accepted entry’ (February 2000, Attitude, p.57). In indicating the benefits of an identity involving working in the city, this serves to demonstrate to younger readers why it is worth
aspiring to have a position like this, especially compared letters to the same magazine concerned with marginalisation in smaller areas through homophobic attitudes (February 2000, Attitude, p.18). In the same article, interviewing a black lesbian who has also had success as an entrepreneur, she concludes by commenting: ‘it’s the positive energy of individuals – gay or straight, male or female, white or black – coming together which, optimistically, could become the defining cultural moment of the next hundred years’ (February 2000, Attitude, p.58). It is interesting an optimistic comment such as this is included in a portion of the magazine focusing on the successful careers of young people with professional, entrepreneurial careers. Through positive statements like these in the context of interviews with young entrepreneurs, these careers are portrayed as a space LGBTQI people can thrive. Despite these points favouring a disposable income connected to gay identity, these interviews reveal a notable caveat. One interviewee deemed successful calls the gay scene ‘restrictive’ (February 2000, Attitude, p.56) through his job. Nonetheless, it comes across to these younger people who Attitude treat as “successful” as easier to be in a “gang” of individuals with the same level of economic success that Attitude promote as a point to aspire to than to be part of a scene identifying as gay. Through this, it is increasingly clear the neo-liberal binary of economic success is treated in this article as aspirational, despite not being part of a separate gay identity.

CONC:

In conclusion, editions of Attitude and Gay Times over a twenty year period provide a strong understanding of how sexual identity has increasingly eroded in importance, at the expense of increasingly prominent neo-liberal binaries. This frequently comes across in the promoting of a range of differing commercial products treated as being indicative of success in recent magazines, shown in promotions for ‘design classics’ towards keeping fit (April 2011, Attitude, Attitude Active, p.5), and advertisements promoting concerts for celebrities like Dolly Parton, Katy Perry and Rihanna (May 2011, GT, pp.2-3). However, the variety of gay identities is represented in the magazines through the promotion of a range of items explicitly aimed at a wide number of differing gay men reading the magazine. This range is demonstrated throughout the magazines, demonstrating with the adverts for dating, promoting couples being ‘very much in love’ and wanting ‘more phones, more guys, more fun’ on the same page (May 2011, GT, p.23). This range also comes through in relation to clothes promoted, shown in the August 2008 edition of Attitude, discussing differing ‘sexy and smart’ shorts (August 2008, Attitude, p.32), as well as models also promoting three piece suits (August 2008, Attitude, pp.73-83). Although earlier magazines explicitly focus on an exclusively gay audience, the discourse here differs greatly. This is demonstrated in later magazines focusing on an explicitly commercial identity compared to their predecessors, with an increasingly clear emphasis on mainstream celebrities, shown through the likes of Danny Dyer (June 2006, Attitude, p.1) and Daniel Radcliffe (August 2009, Attitude, p.1) appearing on the front cover.

Unlike more recent editions forming an aspirational identity around neo-liberal binaries of “success” and “failure”, earlier articles in Gay Times – a magazine traditionally treated as the more political of the two – covered more political events affecting British gay men, such as reactions to the 1999 nail bomb in Soho (June 1999, Gay Times, pp.55-60), and failure in the House of Lords to reduce the age of gay consent to sixteen (September 1998, Gay Times, pp.38-42), in contrast to Attitude’s emphasis on gay culture. In the March 2007 edition of GT, an emphasis on less anti-homophobic campaigning throughout the magazine as a whole
becomes clear, discussing more mainstream issues such as gay clubs in Manchester (March 2007, GT, p.38), and interviewing gay-friendly celebrities.

Reflecting binaries of success and failure, therefore, is a prevalent across neo-liberal society as a whole. This comes through increasingly in recent editions of both magazines, blurring the notion *Gay Times* is based round campaigning and *Attitude* lifestyle, instead consistently framing gay identity in a commercial and success-based discourse. In later editions, therefore, neo-liberal binaries based round success and failure become increasingly clear, *Gay Times* and *Attitude* increasingly basing themselves round equally key tropes of neo-liberalism. However, the magazines reflect a varied audience, many of whom aspire to undertake an explicitly materialist lifestyle, treating it as indicative of success. Both magazines, therefore, are increasingly framed within the neo-liberal discourse of “success” and “failure”, doing so through emphasising commercial products they feel readers should have, or aspire to have, and how much more successful this would make them appear accordingly.