'QUEER(Y)ING LGBTQ+ ADVERTISEMENTS'

by

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the award of Doctor of Philosophy**

Oxford Brookes University

April 2021

Acknowledgements

I will purposely keep this short as there are genuinely too many people, past and present, who have been part of this journey. Thanks to you all (you know who you are!) for being supportive either of me getting to this point and/or of the topic itself.

That said, there are two people I would like to publicly acknowledge as without them I could not have reached this far: Professor Nick Rumens (my Director of Studies)….your faith in my ability to get here and your commitment to this thesis has been unfaltering. Thank you for continually supporting and intellectually challenging me! And Dr David Bowen (Head of Doctoral Programmes), I don't really have the words, other than to say it looks like my inner 'Wottle' finally found his way out….

Abstract

Extant studies on LGTBQ+ advertising are theoretically and empirically narrow, with much of the literature congregating around commercial risk associated with targeting an LGBTQ+ audience without alienating a heterosexual one. In response, this thesis critically examines LGBTQ+ targeted print advertisements and mobilises insights from queer theory to challenge both normative scholarly assertions within the literature and associated (advocated) advertising practice.

Adopting an interpretivist-queer position, this study identifies the types of LGBTQ+ advertising approaches discussed within the literature, consolidating these approaches as 'passive', 'conscious', 'tailored' and 'integrative'. This forms the conceptual framework for this study, illustrated in the model 'Targeted LGBTQ+ Advertising Approaches'. The prevalence of each approach in marketing practice and the constituent images used within each type of advertisement are then captured via a large-scale Interpretative Content Analysis (n=2,214) of advertisements placed in mainstream media (*GQ* and *Marie Claire* magazines) and LGBTQ+ media (*Gay Times* and *DIVA* magazines) over a 12-month circulation period. Concepts and analytical practices derived from queer theory are then deployed to deconstruct four 'Discursive Cases' generated from the sample, illustrative of each of advertising approach.

Through 'queering' each discursive case (and other illustrative advertising examples), this study exposes and problematises the hetero- and homonormativity (re)produced in LGBTQ+ advertising in both mainstream and LGBTQ+ media. The findings therefore contribute to the emergent literature on how LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders are discursively constructed and shaped by heteronormativity. Other scholarly contributions include the concept of 'straightening out', which is a reversed extension of Borgenson *et al.*'s (2010) 'straightening up'; and the development of 'gender anchors', which are normative gender signifiers that co-exist alongside non-normative gender images in passive advertisements, in order to create the ambiguity required. Theoretically, this study contributes to existing LGBTQ+ advertising literature via the conceptual framework developed for this thesis and adds to the work of Branchik (2007) through the creation of additional LGBTQ+ image denotations derived via the Interpretive Content Analysis. It also expands the hitherto limited number of critical studies within the field of LGBTQ+. Specifically, it builds on the seminal work of Kates (1999) to further scholarly understanding of LGBTQ+ advertising.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

This chapter outlines and contextualises the research aim and objectives that structure this thesis. As its title suggests, this study is concerned with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+[1]) advertising; specifically, the ways in which LGBTQ+ consumers are targeted within UK print media and the types of images and representations of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders featured within advertising practice. Its empirical context is UK print advertising in both mainstream and LGBTQ+ magazine publications. Theoretically, the scope of this thesis is much wider, not least because of the dearth of scholarly research on LGBTQ+ advertisements, but also because of the theoretical and empirical narrowness in extant studies on LGBTQ+ advertising, evidenced by their limited engagement with queer theory. Accordingly, this study brings queer theory into dialogue with the advertising field in general and LGBTQ+ advertising in particular. As I discuss throughout this thesis, its originality stems from this unison and its aim to expose and problematise how hetero- and homonormativity underpins, and is reproduced, in LGBTQ+ print media.

In terms of structure, this chapter begins by outlining my personal interest and concern with the research topic, before introducing the intellectual rationale driving this study and some of its key concepts and theoretical frameworks. In this discussion, areas of scholarly concern, or problems, are identified and justified as important and apposite. Before presenting the overall aim and research objectives of this thesis, I summarise the theoretical and empirical contributions this study makes. Finally, this chapter concludes with an outline of how this thesis is structured and provides a brief introduction to the first of two literature review chapters that follow.

1.1 My personal interest in LGBTQ+ advertising

My personal interest in this topic and the ultimate direction of this thesis stems in part from my own non-normative sexual and gender identity (which I will introduce shortly), but also my long-standing fascination with and visual appreciation of print advertisements. For me, print advertisements are forms of commercial art, subjective in their meaning and representative of their time. Every component part (the images used, colours, wording, setting etc.) is carefully planned, evoking multiple meanings that I find both cognitively and creatively stimulating when trying to decode and decipher them. Professionally, this is an area of marketing I am particularly drawn to and it also foreshadows my ontological and epistemological positions: for me, reality is (re)constructed, in a state of flux and

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[1] LGBTQ+ is used throughout this thesis as an inclusive term for those identifying as non-heterosexual and/or having a non-normative gender and/or sexual identity.

individually experienced and negotiated. Advertisements do not have one single point of 'truth'; rather the meanings we assign to them are contextually specific and subjectively interpreted.

With the above in mind, two key incidents led me to pursue this topic and specific line of inquiry. First, a chance encounter of a 'tailored'[2] advertisement on the back cover of *DIVA* magazine. The advertisement was for Gordon's Gin and appeared to contain a number of explicit gay male images[3]. This was during the late 2000s, when it was unusual to see such explicit LGBTQ+ imagery featured within advertisements for mainstream UK brands. Curious to know whether the same advertisement featured in any campaigns placed in mainstream media, I investigated, but found no such equivalent. Therefore, I understood the advertisement at the time to be an example of differentiated targeting based, presumably, on sexuality. This was interesting in itself, as the majority of advertisements placed in LGBTQ+ media at the time, from what I had seen, tended to be undifferentiated, unless the product being promoted was niche (for example gay cruises, LGBTQ+ film festivals and so on), in which case the wording or characters placed in an advertisement were explicitly LGBTQ+[4]. I began searching through the advertising literature to explore what had been written on the phenomenon. This is where the second key incident and motivator for this study occurred. Not only was there a dearth of academic research in the area of targeted LGBTQ+ advertising in general, but the most advocated approach was a polysemic one whereby subtle signs and symbols recognisable to an LGBTQ+ audience would be placed in a mainstream advertisement so that both LGBTQ+ and heterosexual consumers could read the advertisement as being aimed at them.

This, in itself, is not problematic: polysemic advertising in many ways can be seen as a smart and cost-effective form of undifferentiated marketing (Oakenfull, 2004). However, as I discuss in Chapter 2, the premise upon which this approach has been advocated within the literature (by, for example, Oakenfull and Greenlee, 2004; 2005; 2008; Um, 2010; 2014; Um *et al.*, 2015) is its ability to least offend or alienate the mainstream audience. While it is understandable that advertisers might wish to prioritise the interests of any dominant market, the main narrative within the body of work is, I suggest, a defensive one, designed to protect brands from the stigma of LGBTQ+ association and subsequent boycotts and/or a subsequent decline in brand image and revenue. Furthermore, studies have typically focused on the attitudes of heterosexual consumers towards explicit LGBTQ+ imagery in advertisements. The results of these studies elucidate this 'offence' and advance recommended

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[2] This is a category of targeted LGBTQ+ advertisements, borne out of the first phase of the research process (namely, an analysis of the LGBTQ+ literature, as I introduce shortly).
[3] For example, the lead (male) character was wearing gay-iconic black leather chaps and cap, and walking a number of Chihuahua dogs donned in pink and rainbow-coloured accessories.
[4] Such as couples holding hands or including the word 'lesbian or gay' as part of the text.

advertising strategies. Very few scholars have explored LGBTQ+ attitudes towards targeted advertisements, for example, contrary to what one might expect to see as part of good marketing (communications) research practice.

From an organisational perspective, the message and rationale within the advertising literature was relatively clear: protect your dominant market(s); and it is indeed understandable why this approach would be advocated. From a critical perspective, however, such as that fostered by queer theory, the discourse surrounding its advocacy is highly problematic. To summarise, it can be seen to defend and maintain the needs of heterosexual consumers over their homosexual counterparts, reproducing and entrenching heteronormativity. In doing so, it not only sustains the elevated and privileged status of heterosexuality (and reinforces the inferior status of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders), but also limits how audiences understand LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders, obscuring those that are queer(er). From a *human* perspective, a heteronormative narrative of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders is harmful. Returning briefly to my own non-normative sexual and gender identity, I do not identify as heterosexual or as female. As such, much of the advertising literature generated discomfort as I am one of those folks who are intentionally hidden from heterosexual audiences because I (may) cause offence.

My initial curiosity around the subject area therefore began to turn into 'academic frustration', not just because of the problematic narrative running through the majority of the works, but also their general narrowness and US-centricity. Indeed, as captured by Ginder and Byun (2015), LGBTQ+ advertising is significantly under-researched, with many gaps in theoretical and methodological approaches. Although lines of inquiry within the field have expanded to encompass, for example, the application of social identity theory (Angelini and Bradley, 2010; Gong, 2019), negotiated subcultural empowerment (Tsai, 2011; 2012), and social stigma/marginalisation theories (Hildebrand *et al.*, 2013), the majority of studies are largely positivist in design and situated within the areas of consumer response and advertisement-attitude. As such, the legacy of Oakenfull and Greenlee's (2005) work is still felt today, with Cheah *et al.* (2020), for example, retaining the same defensive organisational position, whereby the principal concern continues to be structured in terms of 'risk', 'negative reactions', 'opposing the homosexual lifestyle' and so on.

Eisend and Hermann (2019, p.398) shared the same concerns but ultimately advised advertisers to "better account" for homosexuals' increased societal prominence and move beyond the aforementioned polysemic approach. Similarly, more macromarketing-based studies have started to discuss the ethical obligation for a more stakeholder-focussed perspective in which advertisements are more representative of society, given their influence *on* society (McDonald, Laverie and Manis,

2020) but, overall, there remains a lack of critical analysis in the subject area. Indeed, with the exception of a handful of studies (e.g. Penaloza, 1996; Sender, 2004; Borgerson *et al.*, 2006; Gudelunas, 2011) there has been little critical theorising in relation to LGBTQ+ advertisements, and less still on mobilising concepts and theoretical insights derived from queer theory. As discussed in the literature review chapters that follow, the most notable and recognised queer advertising study is Kates (1999), in which the author posited some 20 years ago the need to challenge the advertising status quo; remarkably, this has not happened.

1.2 Thesis overview: concepts and areas of scholarly concern

These key incidents, and my subsequent motivation to embark on a study of this topic and nature, have led to a thesis which aims to critically examine LGBTQ+ targeted print advertisements placed in mainstream and LGBTQ+ media. More specifically, this study explores (or 'queer(y)s'), the targeted advertising *approaches* used by marketers to attract LGBTQ+ consumers and the *representations* constituted within advertisements placed in both mainstream and LGBTQ+ magazine publications. As introduced in Chapter 2, this study is set within the UK context of the 'pink pound' whereby businesses are increasingly interested in the commercial potential of the LGBTQ+ 'market', given its perceived wealth and propensity for high levels of consumption (Badgett, 2001; Cheah *et al.*, 2020). However, the aim of this study is not to provide 'top tips' for marketers to increase the success of their targeting. Instead, I seek to interrogate and problematise both the placement decisions of targeted advertisements and the images of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders constituted within them. In this regard, advertisements are conceptualised within this study not as a simple reflection of reality or only as a marketing tool designed to generate consumer spend, but as culturally constructed artefacts that can shape and influence society (Gauntlett, 2008; McDonald, Laverie and Kerry, 2020).

One starting point of this study is the identification of the types of advertising approaches used to target LGBTQ+ consumers, as documented in the advertising literature. As discussed in detail within Chapter 2, I have consolidated these approaches as 'passive', 'conscious', 'tailored' and 'integrative' based on the levels of LGBTQ+ representation used and the media placement decisions made. This consolidation forms the conceptual framework for this study, illustrated in the model 'Targeted LGBTQ+ Advertising Approaches' (Williams, 2015) in Figure 1:

Figure 1**: Conceptual framework: Targeted LGBTQ+ Advertising Approaches (Williams, 2015)**
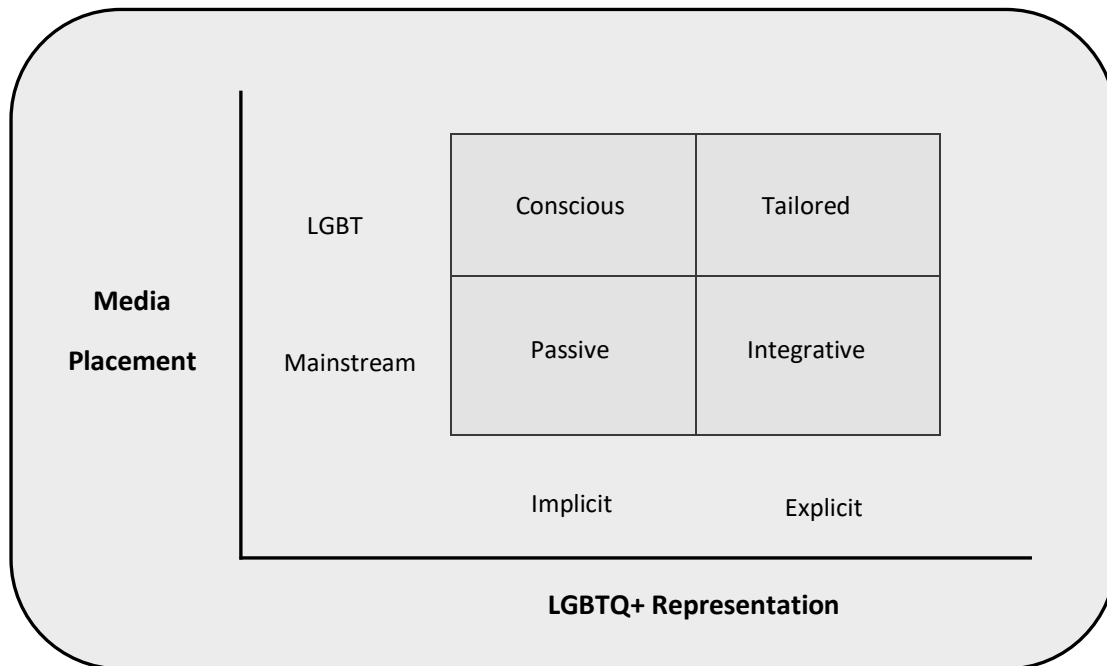
The prevalence of each approach in marketing practice and the constituent images used within each type of advertisement are then captured via a large-scale Interpretative Content Analysis (ICA) of 2,214 advertisements placed in mainstream media (*GQ* and *Marie Claire* magazines) and LGBTQ+ media (*Gay Times* and *DIVA* magazines) over a 12-month circulation period. Having established both a macro (scope and scale) and micro (detailed) picture of LGBTQ+ targeted advertisements, I then mobilise concepts and analytical practices associated with queer theory to expose and problematise the hetero- and homonormativity (re)produced in LGBTQ+ advertising. Specifically, I rely on 'queering' as an analytical concept and mode of analysis to not only expose hetero- and homonormativity, but also to search for representations of the non-normative in LGBTQ+ advertising. In so doing, I challenge taken-for-granted assumptions and generate alternative meanings concerning how LGBTQ+ advertisements can be read (Kates, 1999), thereby advancing scholarly knowledge about 'what is seen' (Rose, 2016) in LGBTQ+ advertisements in terms of particular signs of queerness.

Specifically, 'queering' is deployed in the thesis as it engages and utilises the disruptive and anti-normative qualities of queer theory (Warner, 1993; Halperin, 1995; Sullivan, 2002) to question normative advertising practice targeting LGBTQ+ consumers. As I discuss in Chapter 3, queer theory is not one theory designed to explore or explain what 'queer' *is*, or to decide categorically which advertisements are queer and which are not. Rather, I understand queer theory as a cluster of theories, ideas and concepts that can unsettle or rupture normative ways of thinking or being (Berlant

and Warner, 1995; Halperin, 1995). In this sense, 'queer' can be treated as a verb in terms of what it can *do* (Halley *et al.*, 2011; Giffney and O'Rourke, 2016) rather than what it is. Indeed, within this study, my 'queering' of LGBTQ+ advertisements shows how hetero- and homonormativity is at work in the media (re)construction of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders. Relatedly, the concept and analytical practice of queering is repeatedly linked to problematising heteronormativity (Sullivan, 2002). First coined by Warner (1993), 'heteronormativity' can be understood as:

> "the elemental form of human association, as the very model of inter-gender relations, as the indivisible basis of all community, and as the means of reproduction without which society wouldn't exist."

> (Warner, 1993, p.vii)

Warner's conceptualisation of heteronormativity is informed by theoretical insights from feminist theories that have variously conceptualised heterosexuality as natural, desirable or compulsory (Rich, 1980; Rubin, 1984). As such, heteronormativity was understood by Warner (1993) as a normative regime that privileges heterosexuality as 'natural', 'healthy' and 'normal', and this understanding of the term is adopted in this thesis. Heteronormativity sustains and is sustained by sexual (heterosexual/homosexual) and gender (masculine/feminine) binaries that are widely criticised by queer theorists for constraining how LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders are understood and experienced (Butler, 1990, 2004; Sedgwick, 1990; Warner, 1993). While this thesis frequently questions hetero- and homonormativity, it is important to acknowledge that hetero- and homonormativity can be viewed positively by LGBTQ+ people, not least because some LGBTQ+ folk want to fit into 'normal' heteronormative life (Drucker, 2015). This point foregrounds the importance of the concept of homonormativity, which Duggan (2002, p.179) described as:

> "a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions but upholds and sustains them while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption."

Homonormativity therefore embodies many of the features of heteronormativity, resulting in a distinct, homogenised group of largely gay and lesbian (much less so bisexual, transgender and queer+) citizen subjects who personify more closely heteronormative ideals of intimacy, family, conservative politics and professionalism (Rumens and Kerfoot, 2009; Drucker, 2015). For those LGBTQ+ subjects who are unable or unwilling to meet heteronormative ideals, whom Drucker (2015) largely identified as bisexual, transgender and queer individuals, homonormativity (re)produces sexual and gender hierarchies that structure which LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders are privileged, and which ones are marginalised and denigrated (Browne, 2006).

Herein exists an area of concern. While LGBTQ+ representations are increasingly more commonplace and visible than they were several decades ago (Eisend and Hermann, 2019), such that we can say that some progress has been made in terms of LGBTQ+ visibility in advertising, these representations, for the most part, construct narrowly homonormative representations of specific LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders. As I explore in the discussion chapters, LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders examined in printed media are often visually represented as white, middle class, healthy and wealthy. For gay and bisexual men, images extend to those of hypermasculinity and hypersexuality[5]. For lesbian and bisexual women, 'butch' and 'femme' (domestic) coupling is commonplace, whereby normative notions of heterosexuality and family are reproduced, albeit under a different (same sex) guise. These supplementary sets of images serve to reinforce the underlying presence of heteronormativity in LGBTQ+ advertising, most notably through the reproduction of gender binaries (male/female, masculine/feminine) and the reinforcement of what Judith Butler (1990) described as the heterosexual matrix, whereby gender is aligned with normative sexual practice (heterosexual/homosexual).

As I elaborate in Chapter 3, the heterosexual matrix has a regulatory function, excluding or alienating individuals who do not or cannot align with its heteronormative configuration of sex, gender and sexual desire (for example, those LGBTQ+ people who rupture the alignment between sex, gender and sexuality). The heterosexual/homosexual binary is maintained by the heterosexual matrix, and such is its pervasiveness and persistence that queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1990) referred to it as a master binary that structures contemporary culture. Collectively, the prominence of homonormativity at work in LGBTQ+ advertisements reveals the types of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders that are culturally (un)desirable in terms of human difference, including, but not limited to, class, ethnicity, age and ableness.

The harmful effects of hetero- and homonormativity for how LGBTQ+ people are (re)presented in cultural artefacts, such as advertisements, is one compelling reason why research on LGBTQ+ advertising is both important and apposite. As this study finds, overt LGBTQ+ representation in advertising is minimal, with only 2% of advertisements placed in mainstream publications containing explicit representations of non-heterosexuality[6]. Where explicit advertisements do exist (in mainstream *and* LGBTQ+ media), the majority of images are (re)shaped by heteronormativity; that is to say, they reinforce heterosexuality as the 'norm' in the ways briefly summarised above. These images, too, create 'new norms' via narrow (re)constructions of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders that

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[5] Whereby stereotypically male physiques and characteristics (such as strength) are exaggerated and references to sex (and images of semi-nudity) are common

[6] n= 31 out of all advertisements within the mainstream sample (1,696), including repeats

uphold heteronormative assumptions (Duggan, 2003) which, for some LGBTQ+ people, creates a welcome gateway to acceptance in everyday 'normal' life (Brown, 2012). For LGBTQ+ 'others' however, who cannot or choose not to live within heteronormative life, the risk of exclusion or marginalisation can be high.

Heteronormativity, however, is not confined only to advertising practice; it is apparent also in the field of advertising as an academic discipline, evidenced by the limited theoretical assumptions and heteronormative underpinnings within advertising *literature*, which are also problematic. As I discussed above, the relative absence of critical research in LGBTQ+ advertising that directly engages with the problem of hetero- and homonormativity has been a strong motivator to pursue this particular line of inquiry within this thesis. Much of the work in LGBTQ+ advertising is organisationally-oriented, exploring (mostly heterosexual) consumer responses to advertisement content in mainstream media featuring varying degrees and types of LGBTQ+ representation. Recommendations for practice are heavily risk-based (and averse), essentially advocating ways to protect the needs of the dominant heterosexual market. Oakenfull and Greenlee's (2005, p.432) work for example concluded that:

> *"*To reach gay and lesbian consumers, advertisers must provide advertising content with which they can identify (Jaffe, 1991). However, this study shows that although depictions of gay males and lesbians in advertising will effectively target gay and lesbian consumers, they will also result in an unfavorable response from mainstream consumers. Thus, marketers should avoid the temptation to simply rollover advertisements with explicit gay male or lesbian imagery customarily used in gay and lesbian media outlets into mainstream media outlets. Although a logical strategy given the attractiveness of the gay and lesbian market and the likelihood of developing strong brand loyalty among gay and lesbian consumers, rolling over such a strategy to mainstream media outlets would likely alienate many heterosexual consumers."

As I acknowledge in this and subsequent chapters, some markets may indeed be more valuable or complex than others, and so strategic decisions do need to be made. However, the perspectives within and influences on the majority of advertising research, in particular in the area of LGBTQ+ advertising, are very limited and limiting, resulting in a heavily blinkered view of LGBTQ+ advertising. Some of the theoretical foundations underpinning research questions in advertising research can be read as heteronormative (for example, "…this study addresses the question: How may marketers target gays and lesbians in mainstream media without alienating heterosexual consumers" (Oakenfull and Greenlee, 2005, p.421)). In sum, it is important to articulate from the outset that it is the issues with both advertising practice *and* theory that has driven a study of this nature and importance.

1.3 Theoretical and empirical contribution

As already alluded to above, the key area in which this study theoretically contributes is expanding the hitherto limited number of critical studies within the field of LGBTQ+ advertising research (Ginder and Byun, 2015). Queer theory has barely made an impression on the scholarly field of LGBTQ+ advertising, which represents a knowledge gap and a missed opportunity to expose and problematise the heteronormative assumptions and practices that underpin and are circulated within LGBTQ+ advertising research and practice. Specifically, it builds on the seminal work of Kates (1999), in that it uses queer theory, and the deconstructive impulse within the analytical practice of queering, to further scholarly understanding of LGBTQ+ advertising, highlighting how hetero- and homonormativity are at work and examining the implications of this for how LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders can be read and understood by consumers. Whilst the conceptual framework for this study ('Targeted LGBTQ+ Advertising Approaches') is a theoretical contribution in itself, it is the queering of advertising theory that informs this model, and the search for signs of non-normativity in LGBTQ+ advertisements that suggest queerer readings of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders.

This study also adds to the small number of UK-based empirical studies within the field of LGBTQ+ advertising. In Ginder and Byun's (2015) critical review of LGBTQ+ consumer research, no sample populations were from the UK, with almost 70% of studies (n=18/26) being based on data from the US. Within the last five years, this picture has barely changed. Some authors (for example Nölke, 2017) are affiliated to UK-based institutions but do not derive their empirical data from the UK. In contrast, this study not only uses UK print advertisements as units of analysis, it is large scale (n=2214) and analyses advertisements from both mainstream and LGBTQ+ media, all of which are sampling features that do not exist collectively in any other form of LGBTQ+ advertising research. The UK represents an important and relevant research context for several reasons, not the least of them being, as Jeffrey Weeks (2007) has pointed out, the ways in which LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders have become increasingly more visible and accepted in UK society. Indeed, Weeks (2007, p.111) commented that ideas of LGBTQ+ lifestyles have gained cultural prominence since the 1980s and are intertwined with 'marketing, advertising and consumerism'. His research recognised the new restrictions and norms that emerge alongside advancements in LGBTQ+ equalities and rights, such as those related to and reproduced by homonormativity. His argument is, however, nuanced, in that we should be attentive towards how available contemporary choices about how to live LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders relate to the new normative restrictions that manifest alongside them. In the case of LGBTQ+ advertising, the UK is a potentially exciting research context in that respect, and it is one in which LGBTQ+ advertising and the consumer behaviours it seeks to sustain are 'inextricably linked' to advancements in contemporary LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders (Mort, 1996, p.188).

In addition, the thesis contributes to scholarly knowledge on LGBTQ+ advertising by identifying and developing new LGBTQ+ implicit and explicit image signifiers as part of the ICA, which builds on the work of Branchik (2007) in particular, in which he identified ten (albeit limiting and outdated) dimensions of a gay male image. As part of the analysis of the ICA findings, I introduce the concept of 'straightening out', which is a reversed extension of Borgenson *et al.*'s (2010) 'straightening up', whereby LGBTQ+ audiences remove (take 'out') heterosexuality from ambiguous images and interpret the signifiers/cues as LGBTQ+. During the queering process of analysis, I present the notion of 'gender anchors', which are normative gender signifiers (for example long hair and make-up for women and a chiselled jaw-line for men) that co-exist alongside non-normative gender images in passive advertisements, in order to create the ambiguity required, thus exposing the gendered notion of sexuality and reinforcing Butler's (1990) concept of the heterosexual matrix. In the discussion chapters of this thesis, these principal contributions are explained more thoroughly, and summarised within the context of the overall research aims and objectives in the concluding chapter.

1.4 Research aim and objectives

Bringing together the discussion points above, the aim of this study is to critically examine the targeted advertising approaches used by marketers to attract LGBTQ+ consumers and the representations of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders (re)constructed within targeted advertisements placed in both mainstream and LGBTQ+ magazine publications in the UK. As shown in Figure 2 below, there are three research objectives (RO) and a series of research activities and data collection methods designed ensure that all ROs are met.

Figure 2: Research activity mapping against each Research Objective

Research Objective	Key research activity	Data collection method/analysis
RO1 Review the advertising literature and further develop the (author's) conceptual model 'Targeted LGBTQ+ Advertising Approaches' to present a consolidation of the advertising approaches used to attract LGBTQ+ consumers.	1.1 Conduct a thorough review of the LGBTQ+ advertising literature and continue to revisit works in the field and the dimensions of the conceptual model to ensure it remains robust and fit for purpose.	1.1 Secondary data analysis
RO2 Explore the representations of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders (re)constructed in targeted print advertisements.	2.1 As part of the literature review, identify what constitutes an LGBTQ+ image and how LGBTQ+ representation is defined and understood (e.g. implicit and explicit images).	2.1 Secondary data analysis
	2.2 Explore how LGBTQ+ representations (derived via 2.1 above) manifest within targeted print advertising practice in mainstream and LGBTQ+ media.	2.2 Primary data: large scale Interpretive Content Analysis (ICA)
RO3 Critically analyse LGBTQ+ targeted advertising approaches and constituent images, using queer theory as a framework for analysis.	3.1 As part of the literature review, begin to expose aspects of the advertising literature that are 'problematic' from a queer perspective.	3.1 Secondary data analysis
	3.2 Critically analyse the images used in LGBTQ+ targeted print advertisements by performing a queer deconstruction of four illustrative print advertisements (reflecting each of the advertising approaches captured within the conceptual model: 'passive', 'conscious', 'tailored' and 'integrative')	3.2 Queer deconstruction of four discursive cases

As briefly introduced at the beginning of this chapter, three distinct phases to the above research process are outlined, all linked but with differing methodological approaches. Phase One, as expected for any academic research project of this nature, involved conducting a comprehensive review of the relevant literature. In this case, an analysis of the advertising literature took place, focusing specifically on LGBTQ+ advertising[7], as per RO1 above. Its purpose was to obtain both a thorough theoretical understanding of the phenomena and to develop the conceptual framework for the study. Accordingly, I utilised an exploratory approach (Najmaei, 2016) initially, followed by an integrative method which allows findings to be critiqued and synthesised to generate new perspectives on a topic (Torraco, 2015). Indeed, out of this activity emerged the conceptual model 'Targeted LGBTQ+ Advertising Approaches', as shown in Figure 1 above, which consolidates the various print advertising approaches discussed within the advertising literature[8].

The literature review also enabled aspects of the remainder ROs to be met (see also 2.1 and 3.1 above) insomuch as it helped identify previous research in the field that had already begun to define what constitutes an LGBTQ+ image (e.g. Branchik, 2007; Um *et al.*, 2012) and how different levels of representations of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders are constituted and understood. As I discuss in Chapter 4, this information influenced many of the coding variables and values incorporated into the design of the ICA, and therefore directly contributed to enhancing its validity. The literature review, when considered in relation to knowledge drawn from the area of queer theory, also enabled the LGBTQ+ advertising body of work to be problematised during the critical analysis stages of this study, as captured within the discussion chapters that follow.

Having reviewed the literature, the aim of Phase Two was to explore which advertising approaches and types of LGBTQ+ representation discussed in the advertising literature manifest in advertising practice. In other words, its purpose was to populate the conceptual model. To do this, a large-scale ICA (Interpretive Content Analysis) was conducted on 2,214 advertisements placed in both mainstream (*GQ* and *Marie Claire)* and LGBTQ+ (*Gay Times* and *DIVA*) magazines, to establish both the scale (use) of the different advertising approaches in practice and the range/type of constituent images used within each type of advertisement.

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[7] As discussed towards the end of this chapter, a second literature review was also conducted (Chapter 3), which provides the reader with an overview of queer theory (what it is, its influences, core features and tenets etc.) and summaries its suitability and relevance for a study of this nature.

[8] Whilst the conceptual model was initially developed in 2015, the literature review (as captured in Chapter 2) has been updated multiple times, therefore both the content in that chapter and the model itself also reflect current research in the field.

The methodological design for this aspect of the study, considered in isolation, might appear to be at odds with the critical nature of this thesis and my overarching subjective ontological stance, since content analyses typically sit within the positivist research paradigm. Indeed, they are often understood as a large-scale quantitative methodology, enabling the researcher to objectively observe, or count, the phenomena under scrutiny (Rose, 2016). Referring to the overall research aim of this study, I do, however, need to be able to identify 'what' the targeted LGBTQ+ advertising approaches are in practice and the representations used before I can begin to 'critically examine' them. In this sense, I agree with Bell (2001, p.13) in that content analyses are "a necessary but not sufficient methodology for answering questions about what the media depicts or represents". For this reason, the ICA is only one part of the whole methodological design, with a deeper, critical analysis taking place via the queering of discursive advertising cases as per RO3.

That said, there are many different types of content analyses; and ICAs, in particular, recognise the importance of context and latent as well as manifest communications, hence its 'interpretative' prefix. It therefore aligns with a more interpretivist and constructivist epistemological position (Drisko and Maschi, 2015) and so whilst it provides the rigour required of a content analysis of this scale, it also enables me to interpret some of what is hidden and discover connotative or implied meaning (Kleinheksel *et al.*, 2020), which is especially important when categorising each advertisement overall as either passive, conscious, tailored or integrated. As I discuss in Chapter 4, this is where my positionality adds depth and richness to the analysis, since my LGBTQ+ 'insider' or 'in-group membership' provides a 'theoretical sensitivity' (Ahuvia, 2001) that enables me to explore meanings that may not otherwise be obvious or detectable. While it must be acknowledged that this approach is not without its challenges, it is particularly valuable given the advocacy of 'purposeful polysemy' (Puntoni, Schroeder, and Ritson, 2010) for LGBTQ+ targeted advertising and the interpretive role/process that is required when queering the discursive cases.

This leads on to the third and final research phase of this study, namely the queering of illustrative advertisements (as per RO3); in other words, the queer deconstruction of the 'discursive case' for each advertising approach. The purpose of this stage is to apply a critical lens to the findings of the ICA and explore in depth the types of LGBTQ+ images and levels of representation used in passive, conscious, tailored and integrative advertisements. As explained in Chapter 4, the selection of representative advertisements was determined by extracting examples from the ICA that contained the most frequently coded values for each key variable. The queering process itself mirrors much of Kates's (1999) approach, including the use of textual/image 'sex change operations' whereby the gender of a lone subject or one half of a (potential) same-sex couple is replaced with someone of the opposite

gender[9]. The discursive cases and findings from the analyses are discussed within Chapter 8 of this thesis and feature heavily in the overall conclusion.

1.5 Thesis structure

This thesis is organised in such a way that it enables its queer theoretical underpinning to be independently understood as well as elevating its central role in the analysis of the findings. Similarly, the conceptual roots of this study, borne out of the LGBTQ+ advertising literature, are initially discussed and then critically explored in relation to advertising practice. As shown in Figure 3 below, there are two literature reviews. Chapter 2 focuses on the LGBTQ+ advertising research landscape, culminating, as already mentioned, in the development of the conceptual framework for this study. It adopts mostly a chronological approach to capturing developments in the field and integrates illustrative advertising examples to tangibilise the conceptual approaches identified and discussed. The second literature review (Chapter 3) introduces queer theory and its value as a critical mode of analysis within an advertising context. It also outlines the concept of 'queering', thereby setting the scene for the analysis that focuses on selective advertisements drawn from the ICA. In sum, the aim of Chapter 3 is to provide a greater understanding of the theoretical framework of this thesis and how/why it later features as a core part of the overall analysis and discussion of the findings.

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[9] A binary conception of gender is intentionally used, since this process enables, when applicable, the exposure of heteronormative underpinnings whereby the new (changed) image is a convincingly heterosexual one.

Figure 3: Thesis structure and chapter organisation

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW I:
LGBTQ+ ADVERTISING

Chapter 3

LITERATURE REVIEW II:
QUEER THEORY

Chapter 4

METHODOLOGY

Chapter 5

FINDINGS (OF THE ICA)

Chapter 6

DISCUSSION I:
MAINSTREAM PLACEMENT

Chapter 7

DISCUSSION II:
LGBTQ+ PLACEMENT

Chapter 8

DISCUSSION III:
QUEERING

Chapter 9

CONCLUSION
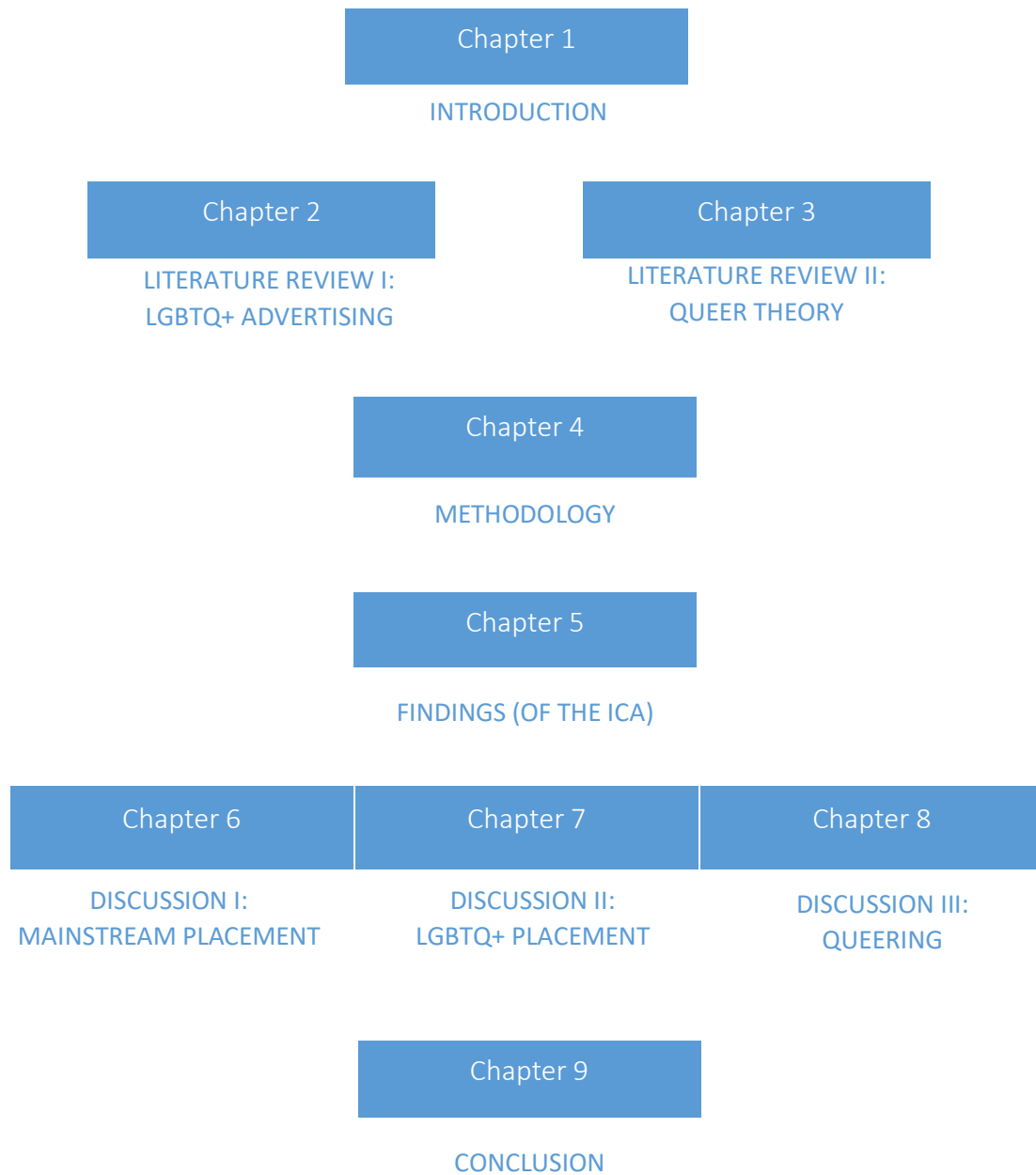
Chapter 4 then introduces the philosophical underpinnings and methodology behind this thesis, providing a rationale for each of the chosen methods for this study. Regarding the ICA, detailed design and procedural information is provided with the aim, in part, of addressing any validity and reliability concerns in line with its quantitative roots. Researcher reflexivity also forms an important part of this chapter, given my own non-normative gender and sexual identity. As already mentioned, this is not just related to how my positionality has influenced what I have chosen to investigate and the angle from which this is explored (Malterud, 2001), but also to how my 'in-group membership' influences my (de)coding of advertisements, for example, and the development of additional coding values as part of the ICA process.

The findings of the ICA are presented in Chapter 5. Given the size of the data set, macro-level data summaries have been provided to show, for example, the prevalence of each LGBTQ+ targeted advertising approach (passive, tailored, conscious and integrative) and the types of LGBTQ+ representation found within each publication and advertisement type. Only basic computations sit behind the data presented (for example frequency and percentages) since the aim of the ICA, as already mentioned, is to populate the conceptual model and capture the *extent* to which various advertising approaches and LGBTQ+ representations exist in practice. Summaries of the data (and more granular findings) are integrated within Chapters 5 and 6 so that an in-depth discussion takes place with the findings close at hand.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 are all dedicated to discussion of the findings. The first two focus on the results of the ICA and are contextualised by media type; in other words, they discuss passive and integrative advertisements placed in mainstream media (*Marie Claire* and *GQ*) and conscious and tailored advertisements placed in LGBTQ+ media (*Gay Times* and *DIVA*) respectively. Within these chapters, different types of LGBTQ+ representations (or no representation) are discussed and advertising examples from the sample are included to supplement the analysis. While these chapters begin to problematise some of the findings, it is the final discussion chapter (Chapter 8) that pulls together the results of the ICA and the context of the media placement from a queer theory perspective. Specifically, the ICA data for each advertising approach is used to generate four illustrative examples ('discursive cases') for each approach which are then queered (deconstructed) to deepen the analysis already undertaken. Other examples of advertising practice within the sample are also drawn into the analysis to show variations on particular key themes that emerge from the queering process, such as the use of gender non-conformity as signifier of homosexuality and other types of heteronormative underpinnings.

Chapter 9 concludes this study by reiterating its overall aim and how this thesis meets its research objectives as presented in Figure 2 above. It then outlines the key contributions to scholarly knowledge and theory, most notably in terms of critically adding to existing LGBTQ+ advertising literature in a way that is concerned with problematising hetero- and cisnormativity. Limitations of the study are then presented, as are avenues for future research.

The chapter that follows is the first of two literature reviews which, as already mentioned, focuses on LGBTQ+ advertising research. It consolidates the scholarly works in this area culminating in the development of the conceptual framework for this thesis, namely 'Targeted LGBTQ+ Advertising Approaches' (Williams, 2015). It discusses the shifts in advertising practice (and to a lesser extent advertising theory) aligned most notably with changes in the social/political/legal landscape in relation to LGBTQ+ equalities and provides advertising examples, where appropriate, to illustrate the conceptual approaches identified and discussed.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review: LGBTQ+ Advertising Approaches

2.1 Introduction

This, the first of two literature review chapters, reviews the marketing and advertising scholarship that underpins this thesis, paying close attention to critical engagement with the body of advertising research related to the targeting of LGBTQ+ consumers. As outlined in the introduction, this chapter most substantially addresses RO1 of this study, leading to the development of the conceptual framework of this thesis: 'Targeted LGBTQ+ Advertising Approaches' (Williams, 2015). It informs all other stages of the research process and the remaining ROs by, for example, helping to generate some of the variables and values used in the ICA. Given the critical context of this thesis, this chapter also seeks to expose aspects of existing LGBTQ+ advertising research that are problematic, thereby positioning this study within this scholarship and setting the scene for further critical analysis and discussion in later chapters.

In terms of structure, I begin by introducing the concept of the LGBTQ+ 'market' and some of the features and challenges associated with targeting and communicating with LGBTQ+ consumers. I then consolidate the various advertising approaches used to attract these consumers, as discussed within the literature, and provide an overview of each of the four subsequent advertising approaches as captured within the conceptual framework, namely: 'passive', 'conscious', 'tailored' and 'integrative'. After briefly reflecting on the managerial benefits of each approach, I then critically draw together some of the common themes and areas of concern that emerge from the literature, before identifying key conceptual and empirical deficiencies. Where possible, this chapter adopts a mainly chronological approach to capturing both practice and theoretical developments in the field, and it integrates real images/advertisements to bring life to some of the key concepts identified and discussed.

2.2 LGBTQ+ market background

LGBTQ+ consumption is not a new phenomenon, yet only in the last couple of decades has research emerged that examines how to reach the LGBTQ+ audience with any confidence (see for example Grier and Brumbaugh, 1999; Oakenfull and Greenlee, 2005; Branchik, 2007; Oakenfull, McCarthy and Greenlee, 2008; Angelini and Bradley, 2010; Puntoni, Vanhamme and Visscher, 2011; Um *et al.*, 2013; Wan-Hsiu, 2013; Ginder and Byun, 2015; Ivory, 2017; Coffin, Eichert and Nölke, 2019). The 1990s saw the emergence of the 'LGBTQ+ market' and much of the early research in this area tended to focus on the size and commercial potential of what became known as the 'pink pound' in the UK and the 'dream

market' in the US. With spending power established (although also contested: Hennessy, 1994; Gluckman and Reed, 1997; and more recently Chasin, 2000; Badgett, 2001, Albelda *et al.*, 2009; Gudelunas, 2011; Witeck, 2015), debates moved towards discussing whether the LGBTQ+ market was in fact a viable market segment in a wider, more practical sense. Early concerns presented by Fugate (1993), for example, raised the issue of whether the segment satisfied the criteria of being identifiable and accessible, given the socio-cultural context of the LGBTQ+ consumer. The potential 'invisibility' of homosexuality or absence of typification (Dyer,2003), as compared to race, for example, provides some LGBTQ+ people the opportunity to hide their sexual orientation (should they choose to, and be able to), which was felt to make actively identifying and accessing them comparatively more difficult.

In a contemporary marketing context, the increasing growth in LGBTQ+ media has made accessibility appear far less of a problem. LGBTQ+ magazines, radio stations, and social networking sites provide advertisers with direct access to members of the LGBTQ+ market, which in the UK alone is estimated to be worth £70-81 billion (Lane, 2014), representing an estimated purchasing power of £6 billion per year (Beveridge, 2018; Springfair, 2019). Media packs from Millivres Prowler Group (the largest LGBTQ+ media advertising and marketing publishers in the UK) break down readership levels, website statistics and income/spend levels of their consumer audiences to illustrate the potential opportunities associated with advertising or sponsorship. Indeed, companies such as Barclays, British Airways, Coach, Dior, Dockers, French Connection, Gucci, HMV, L'Oreal, Lacoste, the Royal Navy, JS Sainsbury, Samsonite and Selfridges have all recently bought advertising space within the Millivres Prowler Group's range of LGBTQ+ media operations (Millivres, 2016).

Whilst businesses may be investing money in advertising through various LGBTQ+ specific media channels, and therefore adopting a relatively well-targeted strategy, LGBTQ+ people are not just defined by their sexuality (Oakenfull, 2005; Visconti, 2008, Wan-Hsiu, 2013; Gopaldas and DeRoy, 2015; Coffin, Eichert and Nölke, 2019) and there is increasing acknowledgement that the heterogeneity of the LGBTQ+ market limits the impact of such advertising strategies (Oakenfull, 2007). Sub-segments have formed (Passport, 2011), and non-heterosexual cultures are becoming increasingly de-homogenised (Rinallo, 2007; Viscontini, 2008). Furthermore, the majority of LGBTQ+ consumers appear not to identify with LGBTQ+ mass media or read LGBTQ+ publications (Bashford, 2007; Cincotta, 2007). Oakenfull and Greenlee (2005) suggested that up to half of LGBTQ+ consumers in the US do not read LGBTQ+ media, and that only an estimated 3% will read an advertisement placed in two of the most widely circulated LGBTQ+ magazines.

Even though research exploring LGBTQ+ media readership levels and engagement is limited (especially in terms of currency), the observations above do introduce important issues relating to identity and

its complex relationship with multiple forms of human difference, which render a focus on sexuality as a 'segment characteristic' problematic. With its origins in black feminism, intersectionality is increasingly being recognised and applied within a sexualities context (Gamson and Moon, 2004; Shields, 2008; Rahman, 2010), but much less so in relation to LGBTQ+ advertising, with the notable exception of Nölke (2018). Calls are therefore being made for this concept to feature more centrally within advertising research:

> "Marketers today need to cater to a market of staggering diversity and scholars must re-evaluate the notion of the interpretative community for those who regard sexual identity as a less salient aspect of their self-concept and social identity."

> (Coffin, Eichert and Nölke, 2019, p.278)

In short, intersectionality posits that social positions overlap and there may be multiple features and memberships that help shape an individual's social identity. In this context, compare for example the black, lesbian female with the white, gay male. Intersect differences in social class, and you will have a multiplicity of complex social characteristics that make targeting an LGBTQ+ consumer through the prioritisation of sexuality problematic, and potentially ineffectual. Given this complexity, marketing and advertising organisations may benefit from using alternative or additional advertising methods to reach consumers who describe themselves as individuals 'who just happen to be LGBTQ+'; an assertion that de-emphasises sexuality and prioritises consumption. As discussed by Witeck and Combs (2006), these consumers may more easily be reached through the use of conventional marketing methods or channels. Sender (2017) went as far to say that the LGBTQ+ 'market' no longer exists in the digital advertising age, since big data is now such an effective predictor of consumption behaviour that it renders identity-based targeting almost obsolete.

The use of traditional and/or digital techniques, however, is not straightforward. While clearly not the only form of 'other', homosexuality has a particular socio-cultural context that influences both consumption and marketing practice. For example, during the early 1990s, homosexuality was viewed as one of the most stigmatised bases for identity (Costa, 1996), with bisexual men and women subject to the most severe negative stereotypes (Mize and Manago, 2018). As a result, LGBTQ+ people have different life experiences that impact on their consumption patterns and buyer behaviour. Rucker, Freitas and Huidor (1996) found that gift-giving among gay men was very different to heterosexual gift-giving patterns because of the strong relationships and attachments that gay men hold with close friends in light of the rejection they often experience from their family and peers. While attitudes towards homosexuality may have changed for the better in some ways, stemming from increased tolerance and acceptance (Weeks, 2007; People-Press, 2010, Passport, 2012; NatCen, 2020), this

legacy remains and continues to impact negatively on LGBTQ+ people within a market context (Wan-Hsiu, 2012).

The reality of not being heterosexual not only shapes the identity experiences and consumer behaviour of LGBTQ+ consumers themselves, but also makes actively targeting them commercially challenging. Referring to the work of Um *et al.* (2013, p.11), some (heterosexual) consumers "remain very uncomfortable with, or even loathe the gay community" and can view commercial associations with LGBTQ+ people negatively. Burnett (2000) and others (Sender, 2003; Oakenfull and Greenlee, 2005; and Oakenfull, McCarthy and Greenlee, 2008; Angelini and Bradley 2010; Wan-Hsiu, 2011; Um, 2012) all discuss the impact of alienating heterosexual consumers (who often have a dominant market influence) through actively targeting their LGBTQ+ counterparts. This, in turn, can put pressure on companies to re-think their advertising decisions. A high-profile UK example is that of Heinz who, in 2008, made the decision to pull their UK 'Deli-Mayo' mainstream television advertisement (which featured a brief kiss between two men) because of alleged public offence and subsequent pressure, even though the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) found that it did not constitute a breach of their advertising code (Sweney, 2008; ASA, 2009). Only 215 complaints were made and many of the objections came via the American Family Association, a non-profit Christian activist organisation based in the US who openly declare their opposition to any type of homosexual 'promotion'.

In the wider social and cultural context of how homosexuality is variously understood, both negatively and positively, the application of traditional marketing communication practices is complicated. Advertising research over the last 20 years has steadily tried to explore some of the key issues involved and provide solutions for the benefit of practitioners (as I discuss shortly). However, the principal focal points in this research can be criticised as repetitive and over-simplistic, in the sense that the extant literature tends to focus largely on measuring (quantitatively) heterosexual perceptions of and attitudes towards LGBTQ+ images in advertisements. There has, however, been a widening of scope within the domain (Visconti, 2008; Puntoni, Schroeder and Ritson, 2010; Oakenfull, 2012; 2013; Wan-Hsiu, 2012; 2013; Gong, 2019), which addresses some of the more complex identity and political issues that are relevant. Overall, in its current state, this research tends to be fragmented and the field is acknowledged as being under-developed theoretically and empirically (Ginder and Byun, 2015; Coffin, Eichert and Nölke, 2019).

2.3 Conceptual framework: targeted LGBTQ+ advertising approaches

What follows is a consolidation of the approaches used to attract LGBTQ+ consumers, drawn from current advertising literature, the findings of which have been captured in Figure 4: Targeted LGBTQ+

Advertising Approaches (Williams, 2015). As I discuss in more detail in Chapter 4, the approach and method used to conduct this review can be summarised as 'integrative' (Toracco, 2015, p.356) insomuch as it "reviews, critiques, and synthesizes representative literature on a topic in an integrated way such that new frameworks and perspectives on the topic are generated". Accordingly, the framework below uses the dimensions of media placement and LGBTQ+ representation in advertisements (which are the typical foci within LGBTQ+ advertising studies) and enables a more encompassing and comparable discussion of LGBTQ+ advertising approaches to subsequently take place. It also provides a conceptual framework for this study that can be interrogated and, from a queer theory perspective, deconstructed and problematised; the principles of these approaches are discussed in Chapter 3.

Figure 4**: Conceptual framework: Targeted LGBTQ+ Advertising Approaches (Williams, 2015)**
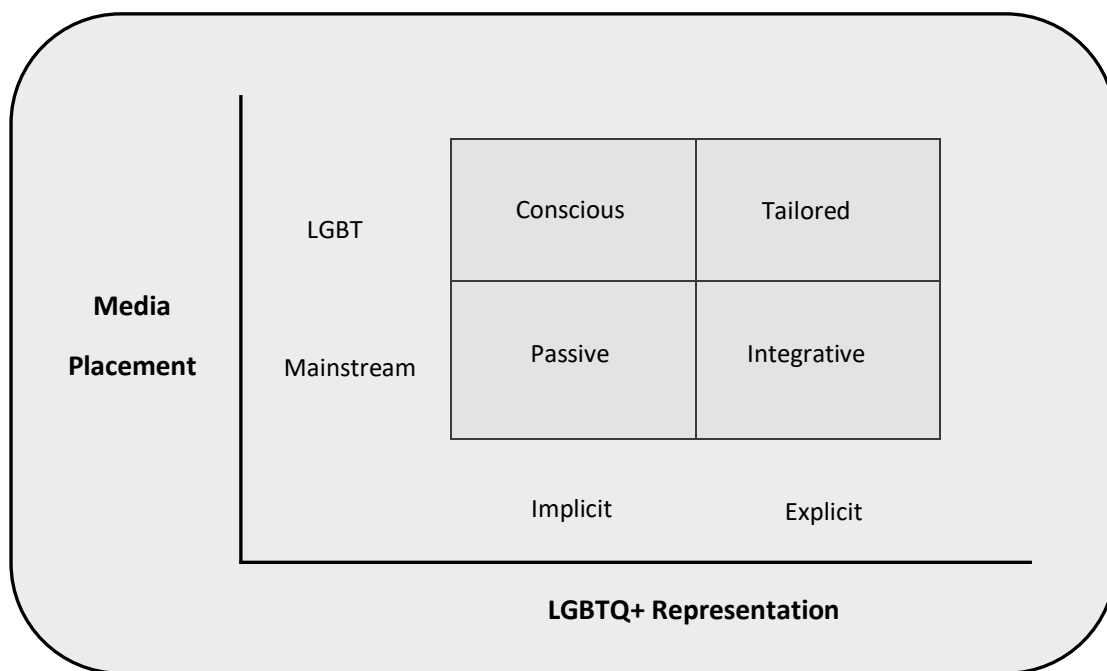
To introduce the dimensions used within the framework, 'media placement' refers to the managerial and practical placement choices open to advertisers in an attempt to reach the LGBTQ+ audience; for example, placing advertisements in LGBTQ+ and/or mainstream magazines. For information, the two leading LGBTQ+ magazines with the highest circulation in the UK (OutNow Consulting, 2011; BRAD, 2016) are *Gay Times* (90% gay male and 6% bisexual readership) and *DIVA* magazine (76% lesbian/gay

and 19% bisexual readership). Representation levels, expressed as 'implicit' or 'explicit', refer to the extent to which homosexuality is conveyed in the advertisements via the use of images, text and/or other subcultural reference points.

The use of the words 'implicit' and 'explicit' mirrors the language/narrative used within the existing literature. To help make the distinction between the two, Sender (2003) describes an LGBTQ+ couple *explicitly* represented in an advertisement (for example, two men on their own, interacting as a couple, perhaps browsing around a showroom); versus the *implicit* use of coded symbols or images which can be recognised via an LGBTQ+ reading because of their (iconic) subcultural significance. Examples include the pink triangle and/or rainbow that function as symbols of LGBTQ+ pride (Puntoni, Vanhamme and Visscher, 2011) and the use of the word 'pride' (Oakenfull, 2004). More subtle cues include various types of clothing, grooming and poses that the LGBTQ+ community would recognise as familiar within their subculture (Wan-Hsiu, 2012). Although one may expect to find images in LGBTQ+ media to be more explicit, and those in mainstream media to be less so, the approaches themselves demonstrate that this is not always the case. As discussed in more detail, explicit LGBTQ+ representation can be found in mainstream media, and implicit (or no) representation in LGBTQ+ media – the commercial justifications and implications of which form an important part of this study.

The exclusion of 'no representation' from the conceptual framework is intentional, for two key reasons. Firstly, the framework is designed to capture and consolidate current literature; studies do not tend to explore 'no LGBTQ+ images/representation' as part of their methodology. The reason for this relates to the second point, in that the framework has been designed to capture *targeted* approaches to attract LGBTQ+ consumers. 'No' LGBTQ+ representation in images placed in mainstream media would indicate that the advertisement is not targeted at the LGBTQ+ audience due to the absence of any signifiers or cues (implicit or explicit) [10]. As I discuss later, advertisements with no LGBTQ+ representation but placed in LGBTQ+ media would be picked up under the 'conscious' approach, since it is the placement decision (in *Gay Times* and/or *DIVA*) that categorises it as targeted.

Moving on to the chosen terminology for each of the four approaches ('passive', 'conscious', 'tailored' and 'integrative'): these words emerged from an on-going review of the literature and are designed to reflect the type and nature of each of the targeted advertising approaches identified. Brief descriptions have been provided to help explain the categorisation of each approach. The advertising examples selected to illustrate the approaches derive from either the literature itself or from

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[10] Please note that the number of 'not targeted' advertisements placed in mainstream media are still recorded as part of the ICA to help determine the relative prevalence of LGBTQ+ targeting advertisements across the whole sample.

advertisements placed in various print or television media[11]. These latter examples have been selected based on the guided explanations and examples provided in the LGBTQ+ advertising literature.

Referring to Sender's (2003) research, for example, a male on his own in a print advertisement can appeal to both hetero/bisexual women and homo/bisexual men, giving the advertisement more than one potential meaning and reading. If another man were to be inserted into the advertisement, it could be considered a clearer example of 'gay-vague' advertising (Joffe, 2007; Commercial Closet Association, 2008), also commonly referred to as 'gay window advertising' (see Clark, 1993; Kates, 1999; Sender, 2003; Schroeder and Zwick, 2004; Borgerson *et al.*, 2006; Puntoni *et al.,* 2011; Wan-Hsiu, 2011; 2012). This is when advertisers use implicit LGBTQ+ symbols or imagery to "attract gay and lesbian consumers without coding the advertisements in such a way as to exclude a heterosexual reading as well" (Freitas, Kaiser and Hammidi, 1996, p.89). If an image of a woman were instead inserted into the advertisement, it is likely to lose its ambiguity for the gay male audience and also its (gay window) reading.

Another point worth noting here (before discussing in detail within Chapter 4) is that defining and identifying LGBTQ+ images is a complex and subjective task, not least because the development of guided explanations to assist the process is a particularly neglected area within the LGBTQ+ advertising literature. 'Gay iconography' is often referred to (for example, the aforementioned pink triangle, rainbow, and use of the work 'pride') but this presents a relatively broad reference point and may not be recognisable to a younger LGBTQ+ market. Similarly, it does not take into account contemporary manifestations of 'LGBTQ+' sexualities and genders and may not be so prevalent across contemporary advertising examples. Most notably, Branchik's (2007) work produces a more detailed list of visual cues (see Table 1: Ten dimensions to denote a gay male image) and so has been deployed within the ICA as a basis for the coding structure for this study. The context is, however, narrow in the sense that it is applicable only to gay male images and its transferability/reversal to lesbian, bisexual and transgender-targeted advertisements, for example, may not be automatic.

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[11] All advertising examples are *pre*-ICA data collection, which means they are not retrospective examples of each category; rather, they are examples exemplifying each approach available at the time leading up to the ICA.

Table 1: Ten dimensions to denote a gay male image (Branchik, 2007)

1	Celebrities or other models known to be gay
2	Men depicted as being sexually aggressive toward other men
3	Men touching or embracing each other in an affectionate or eroticized way
4	Men undertaking an activity typically done by married couples (such as raising children, shopping or house-hunting)
5	Men in an effeminate pose
6	Men dressed as women (in "drag")
7	Men undertaking traditionally feminine activities like sewing or cooking
8	Men in traditionally "gay" occupations like hairdresser or decorator
9	Men depicted as rejecting women's advances
10	Men depicted as being rejected by a group of men

Um (2012) and Um *et al.* (2013; 2015) have similarly identified a list of symbols that they used to code advertisements with gay imagery (see Table 2). One might have hoped to have seen a less predictable set of criteria for such a relatively recent studies; they could instead have mobilised criteria that were less reliant on gay iconography from the 1970/80s. Nappier's (2013) classifications for coding gay-vague advertisements with lesbian imagery (see Table 3) goes some way in addressing this. Crucially, however, beyond these four pieces of work, very little else exists on LGBTQ+ image criteria within the advertising literature.

Table 2: Iconography or symbol of gay and lesbian (Um, 2012; Um et al., 2013)

1. Rainbow Flag	
2. Pink Triangle	
3. Male Symbol	
4. Female Symbol	
5. Red Ribbon	
6. Labrys	
7. Lambda Symbol	λ

Table 3: Criteria for evaluating gay-vague advertisements (Nappier, 2013)

1	Ads with androgynous female character
2	Ads with a single female who dons typical masculine attire and stance
3	Ads featuring same-sex female groupings
4	Ads with two women who appear to be twins
5	Ads featuring two women coded as a male/female pair
6	Ads featuring hypersexualised women in sexually suggestive situations

Figure 5, below, shows two examples of gay-vague advertisements as identified by Branchik (2007) and Nappier (2013) respectively. The first example (a) satisfies Branchik's criteria '3: Men touching or embracing each other in an affectionate or eroticised way'; and (b) captures (predominantly) Nappier's criteria '2: Ads with a single female who dons a typical masculine attire and stance'.

Figure 5: Examples of gay-vague advertisements

Example (a): Calvin Klein (1991)	Example (b): True Religion (2010)

2.4 An overview of each advertising approach

The following section describes each of the four advertising approaches as captured within Figure 4: Targeted LGBTQ+ Advertising Approaches.

i. The passive approach

As illustrated in Figure 4, the 'passive' approach refers to advertisements placed in mainstream media which seek to attract the LGBTQ+ consumer as well as the heterosexual consumer, without making an 'active' distinction between the two target groups. This is achieved by using implicit homosexual images, codes or symbols that can be picked up by an LGBTQ+ reading as well as content which appeals to the heterosexual audience (thereby using elements of the gay window advertising technique).

Figure 6 is an advertisement for Louis Vuitton placed in Esquire magazine (a UK mainstream men's lifestyle magazine). The visual shows two stylishly dressed men on a beach, one sitting on a sun-lounger with luggage, the other standing up. To the heterosexual audience, this advertisement does what is intended – communicates the stylish image of the brand. However, note the absence of a female in the advertisement, and the closeness of the hands on the luggage. The men could in fact be interpreted as lovers/partners by the gay/bisexual male audience (perhaps the luggage belongs to both of them?). Without a heterosexual cue in the advertisement, it can be considered ambiguous, and so appeal to the gay/bisexual male audience should they be reading the magazine.

Figure 6: A passive advertisement: Louis Vuitton advertisement placed in *Esquire* magazine

Compare this to another Louis Vuitton advertisement from the same campaign, shown in Figure 7. There is a woman's hand affectionately touching or at least holding the arm of another stylishly-dressed man. The ambiguity is subdued in this advertisement, reducing the chance of a gay male interpretation. Whilst the two characters may just be friends (regardless of sexuality), it is the mere presence of a female and what that might signify in this scenario that limits the potential of it being decoded by the gay male audience as being aimed at them.

Figure 7: A non-passive ('not targeted') advertisement: Louis Vuitton advertisement placed in
Esquire **magazine**

The passive approach in many ways demonstrates, or plays on, Scott's (1994) theory of reader-response, insomuch as there is no one correct way to interpret or read an advertisement. Wan-Hsiu's (2006; 2012) research explores the way in which LGBTQ+ consumers are able to interpret and subsequently articulate the references encoded within polysemic gay window advertising. Puntoni *et al*. (2011, p.25) similarly find that purposeful polysemy (that is, a more strategic advertising effort

concerned with attracting multiple interpretations) can achieve "significant positive target market effects of covert minority targeting". Furthermore, their research (in the context of gay men) found that gay window advertisements were evaluated more positively than their mainstream equivalents. This is in part due to the empowering normalising effect that market acknowledgement can have for some LGBTQ+ consumers (Wan-Hsiu, 2012) but, as I discuss later on in this chapter, the continued 'closeting' or invisibility of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders can also be a source of frustration for some LGBTQ+ consumers. Similarly, some studies suggest that LGBTQ+ people prefer explicit homosexual images aimed directly at them (Dotson, Hyatt and Thompson, 2009) and are more persuaded by such images due to improvements in their self-confidence as a result of increasing social tolerance and acceptance of LGBTQ+ people in *some* contexts (Eisend and Hermann, 2019).

Regardless of LGBTQ+ audience response levels, there is an obvious commercial benefit of the passive approach, derived from reaching both the hetero- and homosexual audience at the same time. An undifferentiated advertisement can be produced, creating cost-savings both during the production phase and as a result of placing the advertisement in fewer media publications. Perhaps more crucially, it can also be seen as a solution to what Oakenfull and Greenlee (2005, p.423) refer to as the 'paradox' of trying to penetrate the LGBTQ+ market without exposing mainstream audiences to explicit LGBTQ+ content. They argue that it can provide an advertising solution which allows marketers to "effectively target the gay and lesbian consumers who will recognise the symbolism in the advertisement, while posing far less risk of offending heterosexual consumers, who may be unaware of the meaning of the advertising content".

Many companies have purposely steered away from associations with homosexuality through fear of alienating heterosexual consumers. In the early 1990s, homophobia was cited as the main difficulty in selling advertising space in LGBTQ+ media in the US (Miller, 1990, cited in Penaloza, 1996). More recently, companies such as Philip Morris, Visa, Becks and the aforementioned Heinz have all pulled their advertisements or sponsorship because of negative reaction or pressure from some members of heterosexual society. As illustrated in Elliot and Elliot's (2005) research, advertisements containing images of men that were perceived as lacking masculinity and subsequently interpreted (negatively) as gay would prevent men from buying products from the advertising brand in the future. Similarly, Eisend and Hermann (2019) found that heterosexual men held more negative views about homosexuality and a less positive attitude to LGBTQ+ themed advertisements than women. Indeed, as I discuss in more detail later, studies exploring heterosexual perceptions of LGBTQ+ images in advertisements have repeatedly demonstrated negative interpretations and evaluations of these images, and therefore advocate the more passive approach (see for example Bhat, Leigh and

Wardlow, 1996; Grier and Brumbaugh, 1999; Oakenfull and Greenlee, 2005; Oakenfull, McCarthy and Greenlee, 2008; Angelini and Bradley, 2010; Um, 2010; Um *et al.*, 2013). As a strategy for trying to attract LGBTQ+ consumers, this approach can therefore be seen to minimise a perceived commercial risk associated with LGBTQ+ association and in that regard has been hailed as a 'successful' way to attract both sets of consumers simultaneously.

ii. The conscious approach

Not all companies have steered away from more open attempts to attract LGBTQ+ consumers. The 'conscious' approach reflects the intentional nature of placing advertisements in LGBTQ+ media, such as *Gay Times* and *DIVA* (in the UK) and *The Advocate* and *Out* magazines (in the US), to actively attract the LGBTQ+ market, and can be seen to have similarities with the initial 'mainstream' stage in Greenlee's (2004) five-stage hierarchical advertising strategy model. The advertisements remain undifferentiated and 'neutral': they do not feature explicit (or implicit) LGBTQ+ imagery/codes and instead tend to focus on visuals of the product itself. According to Ginder and Byun (2015), this is a popular strategy, with 42-46% of advertisements placed in LGBTQ+ magazines not containing gay/lesbian themed imagery or iconography. Conscious advertisements are typically standardised advertisements (Um *et al.*, 2013), which tend to also feature in mainstream media. Indeed, for similar reasons as the passive approach, conscious advertising is relatively cost-effective in terms of the savings associated with developing an undifferentiated advertisement that appears in both heterosexual and homosexual-targeted media.

Alcohol, fragrances and jewellery continue to be common types of products advertised in this way, which may be attributable to the neutral nature (sexuality-wise) of the products themselves. However, there is an increasing range of products being advertised within LGBTQ+ media (Um, 2013), illustrating the growth of commercial acceptance by some companies of the opportunities potentially available through targeting LGBTQ+ consumers more directly in terms of their placement. Even though, as Oakenfull (2004) points out, negative publicity can still be an issue (through 'gay association'), in general terms this approach can be seen as a relatively cost-effective way to access LGBTQ+ consumers, with the choice of LGBTQ+ media making this approach particularly targeted.

iii. The tailored approach

The 'tailored' approach adopts a more differentiated strategy. Advertisements contain more explicit LGBTQ+ representation, in addition to being placed in LGBTQ+ media, and so have been adapted ('tailored') in some way to *also* reflect the readership of the publication. Not unsurprisingly, early examples related to LGBTQ+ specific products such as LGBTQ+ holidays, night clubs, and literature

outlets. By the mid-1990s, this had widened to include financial services, fashion and cars (Um *et al.*, 2013). More recently, an increasingly diverse range of mainstream organisations, including Virgin and the Spanish Tourist Office, have chosen to promote their products in this way (see Figures 8 and 9 below[12]).

Figure 8: Virgin Wines: an example of the tailored advertising approach, placed in *DIVA* (UK lesbian/bisexual magazine)

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[12] In Figure 8, note the word 'proud' and the rainbow – examples of gay iconography as mentioned earlier.

Figure 9: Spanish Tourist Authority: an example of the tailored advertising approach, placed in *DIVA* **(UK lesbian/bisexual magazine)**
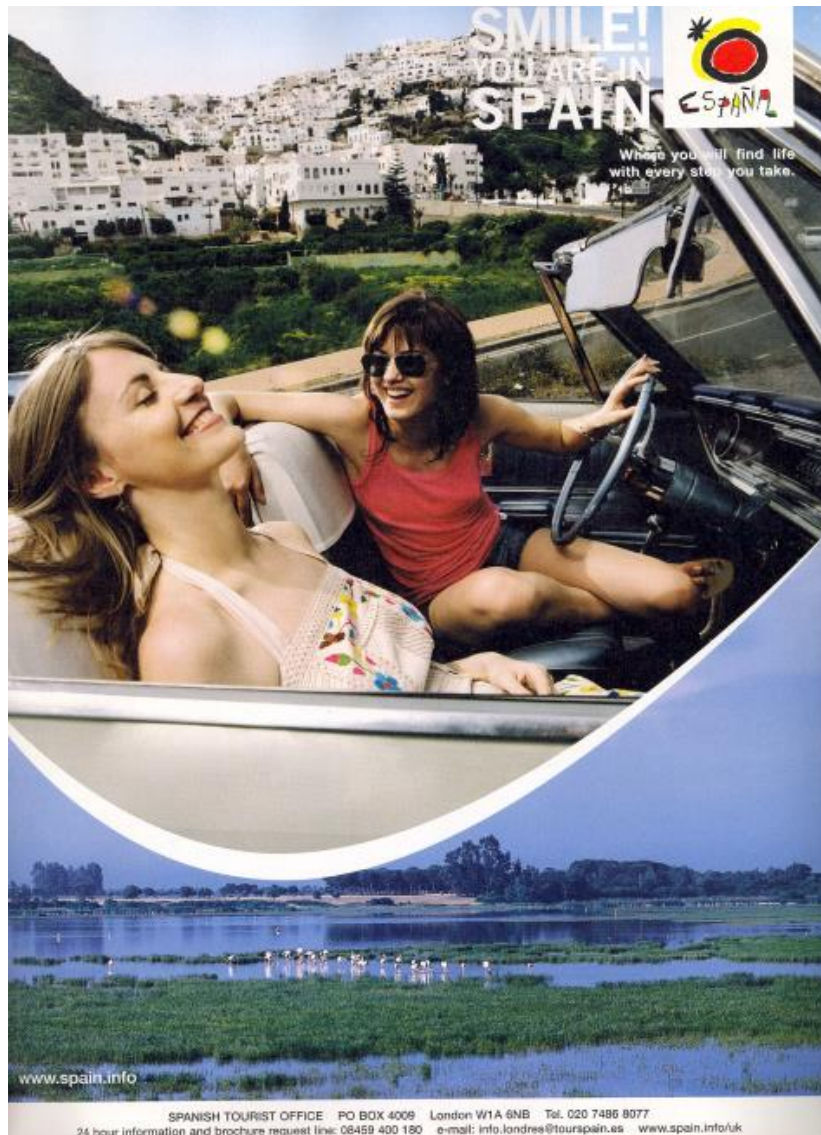
The tailored advertising approach could be considered the most targeted, in traditional marketing terms, since advertisements are placed in (LGBTQ+) segment-specific media and use more explicit images or representation that can be easily decoded by the target reader - allowing potential LGBTQ+ consumers to identify with the product being promoted (Angelini and Bradley, 2010). However, this may not be the most favoured approach for some companies, given once again the possibility of negative reaction from mainstream consumers through gay association. In addition, there can be an increase in advertising costs due to adapting advertisements for different markets and media publications.

iv. The integrative approach

The 'integrative' approach is similar to the tailored approach, in that LGBTQ+ images or people are explicitly represented, but the advertisement appears in mainstream media. Images of LGBTQ+ people are therefore *integrated* alongside their heterosexual counterparts within advertisements exposed to a wider (societal) audience. This was an approach considered 'adventurous' (Burnett, 2000) during the mid-1990s, given the potential repercussions of actively targeting the LGBTQ+ market. IKEA was one of the first companies to use this approach by featuring a gay male couple in both a print and a television advertising campaign. Societal response to the advertisement was mixed: at one extreme, the company received bomb threats as soon as the television advertisement was aired; yet, from a socio-political perspective, it also marked an advancement in terms of LGBTQ+ (market) visibility. It was the first mainstream advertisement which showed 'un-closeted' LGBTQ+ consumers (Branchik, 2007) in the sense that the sexuality of the characters was open, with no ambiguity or symbolic imagery for the LGBTQ+ consumer alone to decipher.

One of the first images of a gay male couple (albeit cartoon style) to feature in a mainstream advertising campaign in the UK was in 2010 for Lloyds TSB (see Figure 10). The advertisement, which ran in *The Independent* and *The Telegraph* newspapers, was originally intended to be a tailored advertisement for the LGBTQ+ press. However, Lloyds TSB wanted to "demonstrate its values to a mainstream audience" (Costa, 2010). They were one of a number of firms at the time (alongside ABSOLUT, Barclays, Ford, Pepsi, The Co-operative and Thomson) that openly communicated their commitment to the LGBTQ+ community via a range of means such as advertising practice, sponsorship alliances and human resources policies (Duckett, 2016).

Figure 10: Lloyds TSB: an example of the integrative advertising approach, placed in *The Independent* (UK mainstream newspaper)

Lloyds TSB have progressed their LGBTQ+ inclusivity to incorporate mainstream television advertising as well as print media. In 2016, they released a campaign that included an LGBTQ+ marriage proposal (see Figure 11 below), reflecting a progressive social, cultural, and legal UK context in which same-sex marriage had been legalised in 2014[13]. It also illustrated a turn, as noted in Nölke's (2018) study, toward 'human interest' LGBTQ+ advertisements whereby advertisers moved away from "hypersexualisation toward real individuals' stories of love and families" (p.224).

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[13] With the exception of Northern Ireland, which followed suit in 2020

Figure 11: Lloyds TSB: a print and television example of an integrative advertising approach (UK national campaign)

The advertisement above is an example that typifies the type of 'LGBTQ+ engagement' that some companies have started to adopt, a move that, according to Wheeler-Quinnell (2010) and Um *et al* (2013), would make the majority of LGBTQ+ consumers more likely to buy their products. Stonewall (the Equality and Justice Charity for LGBTQ+ people in the UK) make reference to a shift from boycott culture to a more 'nuanced ethical consumerism' (Summerskill, 2010), in which businesses aiming to be LGBTQ+ inclusive within their brand vision are likely to benefit from consumer loyalty, not only from LGBTQ+ consumers themselves but from their friends, families and allies.

Indeed, integrative advertisements that have emerged from this consumerist shift have also been recognised by academic literature as being 'desirable' (Mikkonen, 2010), but are still understood with caution (Eisend and Hermann, 2019; Gong, 2020). Either way, they can be understood to elicit greater loyalty from LGBTQ+ people since it allows them to be seen as - and therefore function as – 'typical' consumers (Burnett, 2000). LGBTQ+ consumers are likely to reward companies that view or treat them favourably (Rosenbaum, 2005; Witeck and Combs, 2006; Um, 2012), and, in turn, may see those companies using a more passive approach as having a lack of conviction (Oakenfull, 2004), sincerity and commitment (Gong, 2020). This is an important point. Passive and even conscious approaches can be viewed as relatively lazy or 'safe' strategies by the target audience; LGBTQ+ consumers are highly cognisant of purposeful polysemy (Wan-Hsiu, 2012) and can "detect if an advertisement

intended for a straight audience is being used to advertise to a gay market, which sends the message that a brand is not willing to pledge its full commitment to gay people" (Wheeler-Quinnell, 2010, p.14). From a commercial perspective then, the absence of explicit imagery in mainstream advertisements can be counter-productive, and the use of explicit images could be seen as an effective way to harness a LGBTQ+ consumer spend.

2.5 Effectiveness of advertising approaches targeting LGBTQ+ consumers

There are a range of advertising approaches used to target LGBTQ+ consumers that have been consolidated within the conceptual model of 'Targeted LGBTQ+ Advertising Approaches' (Figure 4). Four key approaches have been identified. The passive approach (i) relates to purposefully polysemic advertisements placed in mainstream media that contain implicit LGBTQ+ symbols and images, recognisable to LGBTQ+ consumers, to achieve an additional target group reading. The conscious approach (ii) involves advertisements placed in targeted LGBTQ+ media that do not contain explicit LGBTQ+ representations and/or images but reach the target audience through targeted media placement alone. The tailored approach (iii) covers advertisements that are placed in LGBTQ+ media but also contain explicit LGBTQ+ representation and/or images. Finally, the integrative approach (iv) describes a strategy in which explicit LGBTQ+ images and representations appear within advertisements placed in mainstream media.

From a managerial perspective, the passive and conscious approaches can be seen to benefit from cost savings achieved through the use of an undifferentiated advertisement; and they are relatively low risk in the sense that explicit LGBTQ+ representations are not present and therefore not exposed to a mainstream audience. Conscious advertisements, and indeed tailored, can also be seen as smart targeting in a traditional marketing sense, since placement is in LGBTQ+ specific media and therefore targeted specifically towards the readership demographic. That said, it is the tailored approach that may benefit from greater recognition among LGBTQ+ audiences as a result of the enhanced sense of in-group favouritism (Um *et al.*, 2013) achieved as a result of image differentiation. As already mentioned, however, since engagement levels with LGBTQ+ media may be an issue (Oakenfull and Greenlee, 2005; Bashford, 2007; Angelini and Bradley, 2010), both the conscious and tailored approaches may be vulnerable in terms of *actual* reach and impact, thereby strengthening the value of both the passive and integrative approaches.

Indeed, the commercial merits of the passive approach, in terms of communicating to both hetero- and homosexual consumers within one advertisement, is clearly an attractive 'win-win' proposition. Its actual effectiveness is, however, questionable. Wan-Hsiu (2006) commented that LGBTQ+

consumers like aspects of gay window advertising since they have an opportunity to exercise their sub-cultural capital and recognise insider clues which make them feel acknowledged, yet later (2012) equally emphasised that such an approach reinforces cultural exclusions, of which some LGBTQ+ consumers are acutely (and unfavourably) aware. Furthermore, "tokenistic imagery or visuals that ambiguously try to appeal to gay consumers rather than being explicit about including gay people ring hollow" (Wheeler-Quinnell, 2010, p.28). Linked to this, Dotson, Hyatt and Thompson (2009) found that LGBTQ+ people prefer explicit (rather than implicit) homosexual images aimed directly at them. Eisend and Hermann (2019) similarly concluded that LGBTQ+ consumers are more persuaded by explicit homosexual images.

In many respects then, the integrative approach has much potential. Indeed, to address some of the key concerns with this particular strategy, specifically the issue of dominant market (heterosexual) alienation, Borgerson *et al.'s* (2006) concept of 'straightening up' demonstrates how flexibly readers interpret advertisements, suggesting that even explicit LGBTQ+ imagery may not be read by heterosexual consumers as 'gay' and indeed that heterosexuals may normalise the image. However, this is veering more towards the premise of the passive approach insomuch as it is, in part, the *invisibility* of LGBTQ+ness to the mainstream audience that is considered the conduit for commercial success.

In short, there is no clear academic evidence to suggest that any one approach is preferred and/or more effective for *both* hetero- and homosexual markets. Recent (meta-analysis) research in the field conducted by Eisend and Hermann (2019, p.397) concluded that explicit LGBTQ+ portrayals "can be used for heterosexual consumers without jeopardizing the persuasive effects of advertising"; however, they also noted that this is culturally-specific, such that in 'highly masculine countries'[14] this type of integrative strategy is less likely to be effective (for the 'offensive' and 'alienating' reasons already discussed). Refreshingly, emerging research is seemingly beginning to acknowledge the influence of socio-cultural and political dimensions on the contexts in which investigations into LGBTQ+ representation in advertisements are undertaken. Wan-Hsiu's (2012) work, in particular, sets the scene for a more critical examination of the field, calling for the dominant 'risk' focus to be theoretically reviewed. In this vein, and in alignment with the aim of this study, the subsequent sections of this chapter begin to critique elements of both LGBTQ+ advertising theory and practice. Chapter 3 then develops this further by introducing queer theory, used as the core theoretical mode of analysis for this study.

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[14] Although it is not clear, in their study, how that is defined

2.6 Moving towards a more critical perspective

To restate, many companies clearly recognise the commercial potential of the LGBTQ+ market and are using a range of advertising approaches to target LGBTQ+ consumers. The approaches themselves vary in terms of the degree to which homosexuality is represented in the advertisements, and the choice of media placement. There is, however, a common theme running through much of the literature in terms of the perceived commercial risk of actively targeting LGBTQ+ consumers, whether it is through the use of advertisements placed in LGBTQ+ media and/or explicit LGBTQ+ representation in the advertisement itself. The risk is often expressed in terms of potential brand damage and revenue loss through alienating or 'offending' the heterosexual market. In support of this, much consumer-based research (mainly US-centric) has explored heterosexual responses to explicit LGBTQ+ content/imagery in advertisements and, in the main, advocates caution (Bhat, Leigh and Wardlow*.,* 1996; Grier and Brumbaugh, 1999; Oakenfull and Greenlee, 2005; Oakenfull, McCarthy and Greenlee, 2008; Dotson, Hyatt and Thompson, 2009; Tuten, Noeva and Hammonds, 2009; Angelini and Bradley, 2010; Um, 2010; Um *et al.*, 2013; Cheah *et al.*, 2020).

While this highlights the merits of the passive approach, choosing a strategy based on 'least offending' the wider heterosexual consumer base gives rise to a number of concerns. Firstly, it neglects the importance of understanding fully the targeted (in this case LGBTQ+) consumer, an approach which is largely considered to be one of the basic tenets of effective marketing. Although some studies have explored this line of enquiry more comprehensively (Dotson, Hyatt and Thompson, 2009; Eisend and Hermann, 2019), there is very little mention or evidence of any robust strategic or consumer-oriented thinking within the body of work in the interests of the LGBTQ+ market.

Secondly, it treats all *heterosexuals* as one homogeneous group. Presumably, advertising firms may only be concerned about those heterosexuals with anti-LGBTQ+ views, an observation largely unacknowledged in extant studies. Indeed, Ginder and Byun (2015) found issue with many of the (limited) sampling bases used within and across LGBTQ+ consumer based studies in their critical review of the field. This remains a problem. For example, Ivory's (2017) research, which acknowledged that different anti-homosexual attitudes influence responses to explicit LGBTQ+ images (responding to my aforementioned concern), is based on a sample of white, heterosexual and primarily (90%) 18-23 year-old college students, all of whom were given course credit for taking part in the research. In short, as the literature currently stands, the foundations upon which many of the conclusions and recommendations are made are, as Ginder and Byun (2015) held, methodologically questionable.

More pertinent to the critical focus of this thesis is that the advocated (passive) strategy can be seen to convey a very powerful message; one that reproduces a dominant heteronormative narrative running through the advertising literature (Ginder and Byun, 2015), and one which serves to perpetuate the marginalisation of LGBTQ+ people (Wan-Hsiu, 2012; Nölke, 2018). The premise of the advertising decision *to least offend* is negative and oppressive, so too is the terminology and tone used within the research itself – for example, that LGBTQ+ association can be 'offensive' to heterosexual consumers; and that there will be a 'backlash'. At a time and in a UK context where legislation recognises LGBTQ+ relationships (via civil partnerships and more recently same-sex marriage) and protects LGBTQ+ people against discrimination at work and in their consumption of services, this type of advertising strategy is, at the very least, dated and commercially defensive. It can also be read as being corporately socially irresponsible and homophobic in how it places emphasis on heterosexual offensiveness to LGBTQ+ imagery in advertisements.

Indeed, the Winter Olympics held in Sochi, Russia at the beginning of 2014 highlighted with gusto the responsible role business *can* and will play in contributing more positively to wider social and political issues. At the time, Russia's 'anti-LGBTQ+ propaganda' laws attracted global attention and related social media traffic during the games was immense, mirroring the calls from a range of human rights organisations and individual supporters from across the world for corporate sponsors to speak out. Although many sponsors refrained, other organisations showed their support in different ways. For example, Google's homepage doodle was rainbow-hued for the opening day; Chevrolet in the US premiered their advertisement featuring LGBTQ+ families during the Opening Ceremony; Channel 4 in the UK rebranded their logo (to rainbow-themed) and created a 90-second video in support of LGBTQ+ athletes; and the Canadian Institute of Diversity and Inclusion released a humorous and controversial public service video announcement[15] to show their direct support for LGBTQ+ human rights.

In sum, the academic advocacy of the 'passive' approach within so much of the LGBTQ+ advertising field research, and importantly its rationale, is largely incongruent with progressive public and business opinion. Additionally, Eisend and Hermann (2019, p.394) pointed out in their meta-analysis:

> "Considering the increasing support for homosexuality in society and homosexuals' growing self-confidence as individuals and consumers…the general advice is that advertisers should better account for homosexuals' increased prominence in society, media, and consumer markets, and clearly target and treat them as valuable consumer segments by incorporating corresponding advertising portrayals beyond heteronormative depictions that target mainstream heterosexual consumers."

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[15] Entitled 'The Games have always been a little gay' with the tagline: 'Let's fight to keep them that way'

As I already mention though, this recommendation is heavily cautioned in that success is dependent on geographically-specific levels of anti-LGBTQ+ attitudes. Therefore, whilst it does signal a different overall message within LGBTQ+ advertising research, it still adopts a relatively cautious, risk-based approach, whereby LGBTQ+ visibility is still (conditionally) determined on heterosexual terms.

That said, the challenges of using explicit LBGTQ+ images in mainstream advertising can be significant. In the US, Nabisco released an advertisement in 2014 featuring a pair of gay fathers with their children. They received damning complaints and boycott threats including one from 'One Million Mums' (a conservative group in the US made up of over 64,000 members), claiming they were highly offended by the company's "disrespect of millions of American families by supporting the homosexual agenda... Nabisco should be ashamed of themselves for their latest [advertisement] where they attempt to normalise sin... this commercial not only promotes homosexuality, but then calls the scene in the advertisement wholesome" (Morran, 2014). Rather than pull the advertisement however, the company produced a second online advertisement capturing all the disapproving and negative tweets/comments and turned them in to a positive art-project promoting 'love' that saw the firm subsequently turn around its social media presence and create an advertising campaign success (Ferraro, 2014).

It has taken some time for this type of strong commercial counter-response to occur. Until recently there were only a handful of examples where apparent changes in social attitude had managed to subsequently influence commercial behaviour. Ford, as an early example in 2005, having pulled their Jaguar advertisements placed in the LGBTQ+ press (following threats from anti-gay lobbying groups) reinstated them in response to pressure by LGBTQ+ rights organisations and their supporters to boycott the brand. Similarly, in 2007, Snickers pulled their Super Bowl advertisement following complaints that the commercial was homophobic. Some companies have begun to realise (albeit slowly) that they may actually have more to risk from alienating LGBTQ+ consumers (and supporters) than anti-LGBTQ+ ones. Indeed: "As more lesbian and gay people come out, and more people become supportive of gay and lesbian equality, the importance of those who support gay people is of far greater value than that of those who are rabidly homophobic" (Johnson, 2007, cited in Barker, 2007). Indeed, "Things have changed significantly in terms of risk and reward... businesses don't view this as a risk model any longer" (Witeck, 2003, cited in Italie, 2013).

At that time, however, many companies still faced considerable negative reaction to various campaigns. Coca-Cola's Super Bowl advertisement, entitled 'Beautiful', came up against especially tough criticism from the American Family Association, perhaps not unsurprisingly given the brand's association with traditional family values. However, the advertisement also received negative

reactions from some members of the LGBTQ+ community, frustrated by Coca-Cola's prior decision to remain major sponsors of the aforementioned Sochi Winter Olympics in Russia. The company also prevented the use of the word 'gay' on cans of coke as part of their customisation campaign, whilst permitting the use of the word 'straight'. Although there was still much support from LGBTQ+ people for Coca-Cola's LGBTQ+ inclusive advertisement, some have viewed it as an insincere after-thought, hypocritical and driven by commercialism. Indeed, Duckett (2015) stressed the need for brands to "ensure that their intentions are authentic, lest they are perceived as simply paying lip service".

Similar examples of mixed corporate messages include Ikea, perhaps surprisingly given that they were, as I have previously mentioned, the first company to use an openly gay couple in an advertisement in the 1990s. They came under criticism in December 2013 after they removed an article featuring a lesbian couple and their son from the Russian version of 'Ikea Family Live', which is distributed internationally. GLAAD (America's LGBTQ+ media advocacy organisation) started a global campaign urging Ikea not to 'erase' LGBTQ+ families in Russia, especially since the Russian Parliament at the time was trying to forcibly remove children from their LGBTQ+ parents. One sentiment summed up the desperation felt by some LGBTQ+ people: "If progressive and friendly Ikea erases us, who will stand up for us?" (RUSA LGBT, 2014).

Two key inter-related issues are particularly apparent here. The first is linked to authenticity and commercialisation; the second to identity and the political dimension of advertising. On the one hand, we find ourselves in a position whereby explicit LGBTQ+ visibility has substantially increased within mainstream advertising (Antoniou, 2017; Federici and Bernardelli, 2017; Nölke, 2018), and while there is backlash at times, this has been countered by LGBTQ+ groups and their supporters. Big brands, on the most part, are reinforcing that message by standing fast on their decision to engage with an openly LGBTQ+ inclusive advertising strategy. Given the significance of advertisements as cultural artefacts that play a substantial role in (re)shaping as well as reflecting society (Gauntlett, 2002; Bonsu, 2009; Wan-Hsiu, 2012), this sizable shift can therefore be seen as an important step in LGBTQ+ history and social advancement.

However, the more inconsistent sets of commercial decisions and behaviour (for example, Ikea and Coca-Cola cited above) call into question issues of authenticity and whether companies really are interested in or serious about LGBTQ+ inclusivity and equal rights, or merely their commercial interests. In a similar way that the term 'greenwashing' was established to describe a form of spin that gave the perception that a company was environmentally-friendly even though its practices may not reflect it, this type of corporate LGBTQ+ PR could be considered a form 'pinkwashing' (Puar, 2007; 2013; LeBlanc, 2014) or 'gay-washing', to use another term to describe this rhetoric-reality gap (Ginder

and Byun, 2015). Regardless of phraseology, the overarching concept exposes how discourse can circulate claims of LGBTQ+ tolerance and acceptance in specific cultural or organisational contexts to hide or gloss over LGBTQ+ realities of everyday life as heteronormative.

Indeed, there is a complex relationship between advances in LGBTQ+ rights and visibility and the advertising industry that operates on capitalistic principles. A link clearly exists between LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders and capitalism, but as Drucker (2015, p.27) commented, this relationship "remains for the most part unexplored". Yet the expansion of an LGBTQ+ market under capitalism has been significant in some cultural and business contexts, such as the UK and US, and can be traced to the rise of the aforementioned 'pink pound' concept in the 1990s as well as a 'dream market' narrative. A literature on LGBTQ+ identities and capitalism emerged during the 1990s (Clark, 1993; Peneloza, 1996; Gluckman and Reed, 1997) and has grown during the following decades (Chasin, 2000; Hennessy, 2000; Sender, 2004, 2017; Witeck and Combs, 2006; Alderson, 2016), as Drucker (2015) submits however, this scholarship is overshadowed by research on LGBTQ+ identities and sexualities that fails to link them to capitalism. Relevant here is one recurring theme in the literature; namely, that the heightened LGBTQ+ visibility in the market cannot be read to mean a parallel increase in LGBTQ+ rights and equalities.

As Bindel (2014) argues in response to relatively recent market LGBTQ+ visibility, "Some will hail this as a great stride forward… but this is about equity, not equality… Lesbian and gay men have accepted a fake, highly limited liberation which involves spending and sponsorship, and embraces the notion of inviting church and state back into our relationships". The latter part of Bindel's argument relates to the juxtaposed advancements I have already mentioned in terms of equal rights for LGBTQ+ people, most prominent, perhaps, in legalised same-sex marriage in the UK and, after numerous state and federal court rulings, in the US. Bindel's (2014) sense of frustration rests on the perceived decline of identity-based politics and the de-radicalisation of LGBTQ+ life, the result of which is viewed as producing aspirations of merely 'mainstream blending'. Her criticism of assimilationist politics, which involves accommodating LGBTQ+ people within a hetero- and cis-normative cultural context, and the hetero- and homonormative behaviours that stem from them, raises some very good points (discussed in more detail in the next chapter).

While notions of single identity politics have been challenged, particularly from queer theory perspectives, it is important to acknowledge the equality gains of the past. Crucially, though, LGBTQ+ identities have been understood since the 1990s in terms of difference, multiplicity and fragmentation. As noted by Chasin (2000, p.27):

> "gay identity politics, in collaboration with gay identity-based consumption, tends to underrepresent women, people of color, poor people, sick people and very young and very old people. The movement, as configured around gay and lesbian identity and single-issue politics, fails to serve all our interests."

Chasin draws attention to the importance of thinking about LGBTQ+ identities in terms of difference and how they intersect with other identities. Again, this is an area where advertising fails to catch up. LGBTQ+ inclusive advertisements depend on some level of typification in order to represent LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders so that the advertisement can be recognised and read accordingly by the intended audience. As many have written, this tends to manifest itself as a white, middle class male couple (Kates, 1999; Sender, 2004; Ginder and Byun, 2015; Nölke, 2018) in which "the gay consumer is not only gendered but class-coded" (Wan-Hsiu, 2012, p.51). This presents a narrow and distorted image of the LGBTQ+ community in which non-normative and queerer sexualities are squashed out or excluded. Similarly, as Schoeder *et al.* (2006) discuss, the advertising setting in which LGBTQ+ characters are framed is also a signifier. To indicate an LGBTQ+ family for example, there may be two people of the same sex and at least one child present, in close proximity to one another within a homely living-room or kitchen environment. Essentially, the scene may reproduce 'norms' of (heterosexual) family life to provide an additional cue for the LGBTQ+ (parental) audience to recognise and arguably subscribe/aspire to. As introduced in the previous chapter and extended in the next, these two sets of common images (of couples and families) assist in reinforcing the underlying presence of heteronormativity.

This 'one LGBTQ+ image/symbol fits all' approach is problematic. It is a form of homogenising (Nölke, 2018) that is largely inherent within all aspects of the market segmentation process. Indeed, advertising is often criticised for presenting idealised images, reflecting a socially-constructed, normative view of society. An issue for LGBTQ+ consumers, though, is whether normative constructions of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders, coded as white, middle-class, affluent and urban-dwelling, are relevant; *and* how they marginalise or exclude non-normative and queer sexualities and genders. Advertising research that explores this angle is scarce, but the seminal work of Kates (1999) found that gay men interpret such narrow representations critically, particularly in terms of the reproduction of heteronormativity. Conversely, Wan-Hsiu's (2011) study found almost the opposite, that lesbian and gay consumers criticised the use of LGBTQ+ distinctiveness on the basis that it may be perceived as a source of prejudice and discrimination. Instead, they preferred more normalised images (Wan-Hsiu, 2012), or at least those that allowed them to assimilate into the mainstream, as a way to help create a pathway to greater self-empowerment within an already difficult heteronormative world.

Although not directly referred to in Wan-Hsiu's (2012) study, the findings can be read as supporting a concept of 'identity ambivalence' – a concept originally developed by the sociologist Erving Goffman. As part of an 'in-group purification' process, it is possible that LGBTQ+ consumers may want less explicit or diverse representations of themselves to be found within LGBTQ+ inclusive advertisements in order to hide images that typify their difference (even though those images may be authentic), minimising the stigma they experience based on sexuality. In a similar way that radical or extremist actions can make group members feel that 'it gives the rest of us a bad name', the use of images with points of LGBTQ+ distinctiveness may be perceived only to make things worse.

As Richardson (2004, p.393) comments: "It is perhaps understandable that some lesbians and gay men come to disavow difference and desire normalcy, or at least desire to be understood as 'normal', in addition to wanting 'equality' with heterosexuals". The pursuit of this would, of course, have been reinforced by the assimilationist LGBTQ+ political agenda of the time (stemming from the early 1990s) and, as seen from the advertising examples used throughout this chapter, reproduced through the heteronormative images used in even the most progressive and integrative of advertisements. But, as I argue in this thesis, these images cannot go unchallenged. They are part of hetero- and homonormative regimes that maintain the *status quo* and prevent other non-normative LGBTQ+ and queer sexualities and genders from emerging (Sonnekus and van Eeden, 2009). Indeed, what is at stake here are as yet unimagined LGBTQ+ subjects whose conditions of existence are thwarted by normalised constructions of LBGTQ+ sexualities and genders in advertisements (Kates, 1999). Furthermore, and of equal importance, for those LGBTQ+ consumers who prefer to be represented as normalised, advertising can be seen to reproduce the terms and conditions of that very acceptance within hetero- and homonormative societies, where advertisements targeted at LGBTQ+ people are "constructed around the dominant heterosexist social order that reflects and shapes advertising conventions" (Wan-Hsiu, 2012, p.51).

2.7 Conclusion

As per RO1 of this study, the aim of this chapter was to review the LGBTQ+ advertising literature with a view to consolidating the different advertising approaches used to target LGBTQ+ consumers, as part of the ongoing development of the conceptual framework for this study. As shown in Figure 2: 'Research activity mapping against each Research Objective', this literature review was also designed to: (2.1) identify what constitutes an LGBTQ+ image and how LGBTQ+ representation is defined and understood (e.g. implicit and explicit images); and (3.1) begin to expose aspects of the advertising literature that are 'problematic' from a queer perspective.

Although LGBTQ+ advertising research is still in its infancy (Ginder and Byun, 2015) and lines of inquiry are limited (Coffin, Eichert and Nölke, 2019), there is sufficient work in the field to collate the types of advertising approaches discussed and consolidate them using key dimensions from within the literature, namely levels/types of representation (implicit and explicit) and media placement (LGBTQ+ and mainstream). The output of this activity is captured within the model 'Targeted LGBTQ+ Advertising Approaches' as shown in Figure 4, which forms the conceptual framework for this study. Four distinct categories of advertising approach have been identified: 'Passive', 'Conscious', Tailored' and 'Integrative'. Each has its own merits (and issues/drawbacks); however, 'passive' advertising is generally considered within the literature to be the most strategically effective given its ability to attract both homo- and heterosexual consumers via a purposefully polysemic approach, which mitigates the risks associated with publicly targeting LGBTQ+ consumers.

As I have asserted throughout much of this chapter, the premise upon which the passive approach is advocated (namely 'least offending' heterosexual consumers and so on) is highly problematic and reflects a general heteronormative and marginalising narrative running through the majority of this body of work. While advertising practice is moving towards the use of more 'integrative' advertisements, and indeed advertising research is beginning to acknowledge this as a potentially effective way forward, the types of LGBTQ+ representations that typically manifest and are discussed tend to be very narrow and heteronormative. In many ways, the integrative approach is a more progressive one, but it is still problematic, particularly from a queer theory perspective.

Part of this academic state of play is attributable to the mostly organisationally-focused research within the advertising field that tends to explore the phenomena in commercial terms, even in those studies that have branched out in to trying to better understand the LGBTQ+ consumer perspective. Attention remains strongly focused on audience preferences, image responses, purchase intentions and related aspects. As stated in the previous chapter, the position adopted for this thesis is that advertisements are not just persuasive marketing communications tools, they are artefacts that construct representations of people and behaviours and, as such, they have the capacity to influence how others (in this case LGBTQ+ folk) are seen, or not seen, and understood. Conversely, LGBTQ+ representations are also influential in terms of how LGBTQ+ people see, or do not see, and understand themselves. With the exception of the handful of studies already identified, this wider context does not feature within the body of LGBTQ+ advertising work, hence the very one-dimensional and problematic nature of much of what does exist.

Accordingly, the next chapter introduces ways in which these sorts of discussions (and challenges) can be brought to the research table and how some of the taken-for-granted assumptions and practices

within LGBTQ+ advertising can be called in to question. Specifically, I introduce queer theory as a set of conceptual resources and a critical mode of analysis, outlining the key tenets central to this study, most notably hetero- and homonormativity. I then present the concept of 'queering' and its ability in this context to examine LGBTQ+ targeted advertisements differently and expose the underpinning normative assumptions that have led to their construction. This chapter and the next, read in conjunction, pave the way for the methodological design of this thesis to be presented, in addition to contextualising the subsequent critical discussion in the remaining chapters.

Chapter 3 - Literature Review II: Queer Theory

3.1 Introduction

The first literature review, presented in the previous chapter, revealed a limited body of scholarly knowledge within the field of LGBTQ+ advertising research. This represents a missed opportunity for marketing and advertising scholars to explore fully how LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders are currently (re)constructed in advertisements, and the implications of these representations for challenging heteronormativity within the body of academic work and in everyday life. Queer theory has a long history in sexualities studies of exposing heteronormativity in the lives of LGBTQ+ people, in particular the sexual and gender binaries that sustain heteronormativity and constrain the ways in which LGBTQ+ sexualities are understood and experienced (Butler, 1990; 1993; Sedgwick, 1990; Warner, 1993; 1999; Edelman, 2004). However, as this chapters highlights, queer theory has rarely been adopted by advertising scholars to identify and problematise LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders in their normative forms. There are some exceptions (Kates, 1999; Schroeder *et al.*, 2006; Sonnekus and van Eeden, 2009), but given the rise of advertisements representing LGBTQ+ sexualities over the last few decades (Eisend and Hermann, 2019), the potential of queer theory for deconstructing these representations has yet to be realised.

With this in mind, I have chosen to mobilise theoretical insights from queer theory to deconstruct and analyse LGBTQ+ representations in a selection of mainstream and LGBTQ+ publications, namely *Marie Claire, GQ, DIVA* and *Gay Times*. As I explain in this chapter, one primary reason for choosing queer theory as a theoretical resource for this study is that, unlike other critical theories such as poststructuralism, postmodernism and feminism, queer theory has an established reputation for treating heteronormativity as an important category of analysis. Furthermore, queer theory has led the way in uncovering non-normative ways of understanding and living sexuality; in other words, how we might understand and experience sexuality in ways that rupture heteronormativity (Butler, 1990; 2004). In advertising, this could be reflected in non-normative representations of LGBTQ+ sexualities which problematise heteronormativity.

This chapter is structured as follows. First, I outline the term 'queer' and its origins, noting how it has been variously understood. Second, and most substantially, I discuss those key tenets of queer theorising that are central to the aim and objectives of this study. Third, I review the advertising literature that has adopted some of the key concepts associated with queer theory and, in doing so, I position this study within this segment of (albeit very limited) emergent literature.

3.2 Queer: the term, its origins and its meanings

William Sayers's (2005), writing on the etymology of 'queer' notes that one of its earliest uses (in the form 'queir') is in a Scottish poem dating from the early 1600s. Other references to 'queer' from around the same time appear to use the term to indicate something or someone perverse, but also obliquely and at a slant. Over the years, the term 'queer' has been used and understood in very different ways, whether as a noun, adjective or verb. Another example is the old English saying, 'There's nowt so queer as folk', still used in common phraseology as a rather endearing way of describing individuals who are slightly odd, strange or eccentric. In contrast, 'queer' has been used to refer to people (for example, he is a 'queer fellow') considered to be strange, suspicious or of questionable character (Sayers, 2005). The expression 'in Queer Street', is another instance of how 'queer' was used in a non-sexual way, in the early nineteenth century, to describe someone in financial trouble.

The etymology of 'queer' has also interested queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, who notes the following:

> "Queer is a continuing moment, movement, motive – recurrent, eddying, *troublant*. The word 'queer' itself means across – it comes from the Indo-European root – *twerkw*, which also yields the German *quer* (traverse), Latin t*orquere* (to twist), English *athwart*…"

> (1993, p.xii, emphasis in original)

In her reading of 'queer', Sedgwick placed emphasis on how the term refers to a sense of movement, as an adjective that can, as Sedgwick elaborated, traverse different disciplines and bodies of knowledge.

As a noun however, 'queer' has and can be used as an insult. Traditionally, to be called a 'queer' was (and still is for some people) a pejorative act of naming. Research in sexuality studies has shown that 'queer' became a vocalised form of abuse targeted at LGBTQ+ people, as its association with sexual deviance became more pronounced (Lewis, 2015). For example, the construction of homosexuality and the homosexual in the late nineteenth century (Foucault, 1979), a topic discussed later, linked the homosexual figure with sexual deviance, making the use of queer a 'fitting' insult (Sedgwick, 1993). Therefore, the use of 'queer' as a slur against LGBTQ+ people and as an expression of anti-LGBTQ+ prejudice became more common in the early to mid-twentieth century (Lewis, 2015).

However, 'queer' has also been used also as an insult by heterosexuals to affront each other. For example, Burn's (2000) study of 257 university students found that term 'queer' was regularly used,

especially between male students, to put each other down, as a masculinised form of anti-gay behaviour. Viewed this way, Burn argued that the pejorative use of 'queer' as a noun can contribute to the reproduction of heteronormativity, as it privileges heterosexuality as natural and normal through its positioning of queerness as (conversely) unnatural and abnormal. Additionally, the label of 'queer' can have a stigmatising effect, reinforcing the undesirability of being labelled as such. As Conley (2010) suggested, when deployed as an insult, 'queer' has both anti-social and organising effects, with the latter establishing social relations between people that are structured by notions of (ab)normality.

Crucially, the negativity associated with using 'queer' as an insult has been grasped by LGBTQ+ people in an effort to transform its potential uses and meanings. Jagose (1996, p.106) pointed out that the shame and stigma of being labelled 'queer' was exploited by LGBTQ+ people in order to turn it into a form of politics: "if queer is a politically potent term, which it is, that's because, far from being detached from the childhood source of shame, it cleaves to that scene as a near inexhaustible source of transformational energy". During the late 1980s, in the US and UK especially, queer movements such as Queer Nation took the term as a form of hate speech to oppress LGBTQ+ people and placed it at the centre of their political manifesto, a move that can be seen as politically transgressive:

> "Using "queer" is a way of reminding us how we are perceived by the rest of the world. It's a way of telling ourselves that we don't have to be witty and charming people who keep our lives discreet and marginalized in the straight world. We use queer as gay men loving lesbians and lesbians loving being queer. Queer, unlike gay, doesn't mean male. And when spoken to other gays and lesbians it's a way of suggesting we close ranks, and forget (temporarily) our individual differences because we face a more insidious common enemy. Yeah, queer can be a rough word but it is also a sly and ironic weapon we can steal from the homophobe's hands and use against him."

> (Stewart, 2014, p.587-88, quoted in Rumens, 2018a, p.12)

As the excerpt above shows, Queer Nation's use of 'queer' generated new meanings and associations, such as a noun to describe different non-heterosexual people. In doing so, political movements like Queer Nation re-claimed 'queer' and paved the way for it to function as an identity category around which all types of non-normative identifying individuals could collectively congregate.

Understood as an identity, 'queer' is seen by some to exhibit flexibility in describing variations in non-normative patterns of life and intimate relations. Mereish, Katz-Wise and Woulfe (2017), for example, examined the similarities and differences between adult women who identified as bisexually and those that identified as queer. They found that the latter were more likely than bisexual women to report variability in their sexual behaviours and attractions, revealing more fluidity in how they

identified sexually. The importance and ongoing relevance of 'queer' as a positive identity category can be evidenced in a variety of ways, from studies on 'queer youth' (Cover, 2016), representations of 'queer identity' in US television programmes such as *Glee* (Meyer and Wood, 2013) to the experience of 'queer Latinidad' identities (Rodríguez, 2003). That said, queer identities are not without their problems.

One facet of queer theory is that it has sought to challenge the stability of identity categories (Butler, 1990; Fuss, 1989; 1991), rendering them open to different meanings and connotations. Specifically, identity categories can be disciplinary devices in terms of the way they can steer or direct people into rigidly defined 'types' that do not match the complexities of how people wish to live their lives. Accordingly, such categories are objects of critical analysis for queer theorists (Butler, 1990; 2004). Indeed, queer identities have been subject to interrogation by queer theorists and others for their inadequacies. For example, lesbian feminist Sheila Jeffreys (2002) posited that 'queer', whether as an identity or as a mode of theorising, had come to stand for 'gay male', excluding the experiences of lesbian women. Similarly, serious reservations have been expressed by scholars of sexualities and queer theorists about the adequacy of 'queer' to account for and describe the experiences of people who identify as bisexual and transgender (Namaste, 2000; Erickson-Schroth and Mitchell, 2009). These debates continue, showing us that the meanings associated with 'queer' continue to contested and reinvented, particularly among queer theorists.

Within the context of this study, the use of 'queer' needs some clarification. Notwithstanding the complex multiplicity of its meanings and uses, I am interested in 'queer' as a theory or set of theories that problematise 'what is normal' and expose the gender and sexual binaries that sustain both heteronormativity and homonormativity (Warner, 1993; 1999; Halperin, 1995). Before outlining the most pertinent tenets of queer theory for my research in more detail, it is valuable to understand the origins of queer theory.

3.3 The origins of queer theory

The use of queer as a form of theorising dates from around the early 1990s. Understood as a theory or, as Hall (2003) posited, a cluster of theories, 'queer' is treated as a verb. Indeed, in this study, I am interested in queer, like Rumens (2018a), for what it can do, rather than what it might refer to. Queer theory emerged from scholarship in the US in the early 1990s, in particular in the writing of the feminist Teresa de Lauretis. In an article published in 1991 in the journal *differences*, de Lauretis (1991, p.iii) wanted to use the term 'queer theory' to re-"theorize lesbian and gay sexualities" so that new ways of thinking about sexuality could be nurtured. Specifically, de Lauretis was unhappy with some

of the ideas and theories that had become normative in how they were used to theorise gay and lesbian identities, lives, cultures and communities. One problem with gay and lesbian studies, as noted by Seidman (1997), was the notion of a common and shared homosexual identity. As such, it did not take into account important differences in how gay and lesbian identities are (re)constructed by, for example, those differentiated by gender.

According to Halperin (2003), de Lauretis coined the term 'queer theory' to call in to question or unsettle how gay and lesbian studies had become merged, based on an assumption that gay studies and lesbian studies could exist in a relationship of equivalence and therefore be aligned without any critical questioning. De Lauretis therefore wanted to challenge the *status quo* by using the term 'queer theory'. De Lauretis's intentions behind the origination of queer theory have two clear aspects. First, it was meant to make theory queer. As Halperin (2003) explains, de Lauretis had heard the term 'queer' being used in a self-affirming way by 'street kids', 'activists' and members of the art world in New York in the late 1980s. Borrowing the term and its usage in this way, de Lauretis sought to utilise it as a way of writing about sexuality and gender that did not use heterosexuality, or heteronormative sexual and gender binaries, as a reference. In this sense, queer theory was proposed by de Lauretis as a more fluid way of thinking about sexuality. Second, queer theory was designed to queer (unsettle, disrupt, rupture) theory, "to call attention to everything that is perverse about the project of theorizing sexual desire and sexual pleasure" (Halperin, 2003, p.340). In other words, part of queering existing theory is to conceptualise alternatives to how norms shape the ways in which sexuality and gender are theorised. Queer theorists are therefore interested in how we can think and live in non-normative ways, beyond the reach of heteronormativity (Butler, 1990; 2004; Warner, 1993; 1999).

It is important to acknowledge the wider political and cultural context in which queer theory emerged. De Lauretis's (1991) development of queer theory came at a time when LGBTQ+ people were experiencing harsh discrimination in all areas of their lives. Although the 1980s and 1990s were better decades for LGBTQ+ people to disclose their sexuality compared to previous decades (Weeks, 2007), in both the US and UK contexts LGBTQ+ people had little or no legal protection from discrimination in the workplace. They were also disadvantaged in other areas of life, such as not being able to serve in the military, get married or enjoy an equal age of consent (Walters, 2003; Weeks, 2007). Additionally, the HIV/AIDS crisis had reached a peak in the US and UK, with countless LGBTQ+ people's lives lost to the virus (Watney, 1994). For some opponents of LGBTQ+ people, the crisis was both just and deserved; a 'punishment' for being sexually promiscuous and deviant (Walters, 2003). Nonetheless, the HIV/AIDS environment stimulated political organising among LGBTQ+ people in a way that arguably has not been witnessed since. Forms of LGBTQ+ and queer activism helped to counter

unchecked and state-sanctioned prejudice and discrimination against LGBTQ+ people, confronting lawmakers and unfair legal systems (Barclay, Bernstein and Marshall, 2009). The impassioned and discriminatory nature of this context shaped the emergence of queer theory as politically-edged, and as a form of politics (Sullivan, 2003).

Understanding the relationship between queer theory and politics is important, not least because of queer theory's emphasis on transforming heteronormative society and culture, but also its ability to extend into practice. For example, the political goals of ACT UP in the UK (and Queer Nation in the US) were not about achieving equality based on strategies of accommodating or assimilating LGBTQ+ people in heteronormative societies, but instead sought to challenge and transform heteronormative societies to become more inclusive of different sexualities and genders (Tremblay and Paternotte, 2015). For this to happen, forms of queer political activism sought to undermine and destablise sexual and gender binaries which, as I discuss later in this chapter, play an important role in reproducing heteronormativity.

At this point, it is important to acknowledge that, whilst it is largely accepted that Terese de Lauretis was an important originator of queer theory, it has since been shaped by numerous academics including Judith Butler, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Michael Warner, Lauren Berlant, Jack Halberstam and Sara Ahmed. Additionally, the works of French philosophers Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida have been popular reference points for developing key concepts such as 'queering', even though neither engaged directly with queer theory itself.

Over time, queer theorising has developed in different strands, with varying focal points of analysis. Loutzenheiser (2007), for example, brought queer theory and critical race theory together to explore the contributions both can make to addressing issues of sexuality, race and ethnicity in education. Quinlivan *et al.* (2014, p.393) developed a similar strand of theorising to "critically queer how the Māori concept of *hauora*[16] is deployed in the intended and operational NZ [New Zealand] Health curriculum to shape the raced subject". Other scholars, such as Robert McRuer (2003, p.79), have linked queer theory to critical disability studies, to understand and interrogate "how able-bodiedness and heterosexuality are intertwined". A related theoretical off-shoot is the development of 'crip theory', which conjoins queer and critical disability studies (McRuer, 2006). Finally, another theoretical thread is anti-social queer theory. In this sub-field, queer theorists have turned to psychoanalysis to link sexuality not with positive ideas of reproduction and the future, but the 'death drive' and negativity, focusing on sex as both selfish and destructive (Edelman, 2004; Bersani, 2009).

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[16] Māori philosophy of health and well-being

The discussion above highlights that queer theory has been informed by a wide range of theoretical sources, from postmodernism, poststructuralism and psychoanalysis to gay and lesbian studies and strands of feminist thinking (Sullivan, 2003). As such, it is not appropriate to treat queer theory as a single, clearly defined theory (Berlant and Warner, 1995); or, as Jagose (1996, p.96) wrote: "Queer itself can have neither a fundamental logic, nor a consistent set of characteristics". While it is the case that over the years queer theory has developed a recognisable shape to its theoretical body (Sullivan, 2003), with some scholars claiming that queer theory has itself become normalised (Halperin, 2003), it remains a largely fluid set of ideas and conceptual resources that, as Hall (2003) put it, is a 'set of theories'. This approach is sensitive to the array of ideas and practices within the queer theory armoury, some of which are central to my research, while others are peripheral.

3.4 Key tenets of queer theory

In this section, I highlight some of the principal tenets of queer theory that underpin my research on targeted LGBTQ+ advertising. As I mention above, queer theory is a diverse theoretical field of ideas and practices, and therefore it is important to identify the concepts that I draw upon most substantially within this study, namely: anti-normativity; heteronormativity and homonormativity; queering; sexuality, gender and discourse.

3.4.1 Anti-normativity

As previously indicated, numerous queer theorists have written that queer theory is not easily defined and that it resists definition (Halperin, 1995; Sullivan, 2003; Browne, 2006; Rumens, 2018a). For example, Berlant and Warner (1995, p.344, *emphasis in the original*) argued that queer theory is "not the theory *of* anything in particular, and has no precise bibliographic shape". Similarly, Halperin (1995, p.18) suggested that queer theory "does not refer to anything in particular". Such statements can be confusing, since if it cannot be defined, or resists definition, how can it be of any use? One response is that because queer theory is a theory that is anti-normative, and exists in an challenging relationship with what is understood to be normal (Warner, 1993; Halperin, 1995; Browne, 2006), a commonly agreed definition of queer theory might work against it. In other words, a set definition of queer theory can become fixed and normative, susceptible to homogenisation in terms of how it is understood and applied. As Rumens (2018a, p.33) analogised, queer theory is similar to a "butterfly that always avoids the collector's net and, consequently, being pinned into a pre-existing classificatory system". In this sense, not being able to 'pin down' queer theory is one of its important qualities and not a deliberate act of theoretical attention-seeking designed to confuse and keep queer theory

inaccessible. Put differently, if queer theory becomes classifiable then its anti-normative impulse becomes ineffectual.

While it is useful to maintain a sense of fluidity in how queer theory is understood, many academics over the years have repeatedly defined queer theory as being anti-normative (Warner, 1993; Halperin, 1995; Edelman, 2004; Giffney and O'Rourke, 2016; Rumens, 2018a). As Michael Warner wrote, in a theoretical and political sense queer is "itself against the normal rather than the heterosexual" (1993, p.26). Likewise, Halperin asserted that queer is "whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant" (1995, p.62). In both cases, the positioning of queer theory as a critical theory of normative regimes tells us that it is not intended to be against heterosexuality. Nor is it a theory about and exclusively for LGBTQ+ people (Sullivan, 2003) or, as Warner put it, a "theory about queers" (1991, p.18).

That said, queer theorists have often utilised it to question and challenge the normative regimes that shape the lives of LGBTQ+ folk, one of the most influential being heteronormativity (Warner, 1993; 1999). Indeed, queer theory's anti-normative stance has been adopted by scholars interested in confronting heteronormativity in a variety of academic disciplines. For example, Zanghellini (2009, p1.), in the field of law, used queer theory's "distinctive and worthwhile contributions to make to both conceptual and normative inquiries in jurisprudence". Chevrette (2013, p.170) deployed queer theory to challenge the norms in communication studies that influence how "researchers have tended to construct and describe LGBTQ+ relationships in regard to a heterosexual norm". In organisation studies, Parker (2001; 2002) was one of the first to introduce queer theory as means to unsettle the ways in which management is normatively understood and experienced as a form of managerialism.

The examples above show the potential of queer theory to span different disciplines, a quality Sedgwick (1993) highlighted in her discussion of the origins of queer as something that is multifaceted and can cut across many things, including bodies of knowledge. This is relevant to my research, since queer theory can similarly infiltrate the advertising literature and be drawn upon from outside its home discipline of sexuality studies. Indeed, using queer theory within advertising studies feels emancipating because the discipline has been largely immune to its influence (Kates, 1999). It can bring new ideas and ways of thinking about LGBTQ+ advertisements that, for example, problematise the gender and sexual binaries generated in their production and expose how they embed forms of heteronormativity and homonormativity (concepts already introduced but discussed in more detail below). Additionally, as the empirical chapters show, the anti-normative impetus of queer theory is central to this study, acting as a key theoretical resource that enables me to expose and challenge how heteronormativity is at work in the (LGBTQ+ targeted) advertising industry.

3.4.2 Heteronormativity and homonormativity

As I have discussed previously, while queer theory has been understood and mobilised as a critique of what is normal, it has a long history of being used to problematise the norms that have privileged heterosexuality as natural, healthy and desirable. A central focal point of these critiques has been heteronormativity, the definition of which serves as a starting point for further discussion:

> "the elemental form of human association, as the very model of inter-gender relations, as the indivisible basis of all community, and as the means of reproduction without which society wouldn't exist."

> (Warner, 1993, p.vii)

Warner (1993) was the first to coin the term 'heteronormativity', but others have also drawn attention to the dominance of heterosexuality. Feminists such as Gayle Rubin and Adrienne Rich had already highlighted heterosexuality as a political institution that disempowered and was damaging to women. Rich (1980), for example, discussed heterosexuality as anything but natural; rather, it is conceptualised as being compulsory, always assumed to be a woman's natural sexuality, and as something that is imposed *onto* women, maintained by practices such as marriage that allow men to access women. By arguing from a lesbian feminist perspective, Rich (1980) argued that heterosexuality was not natural and not the only sexuality. Indeed, one of the claims she made was that women would benefit from relationships with other women, since these would unshackle women from compulsory heterosexuality. Important to Rich's (1980) argument, and especially relevant within the context of this thesis, is how compulsory heterosexuality is enforced in society and culture through (among other channels) the media and advertising, which serve to reproduce and validate norms of traditional femininity. In this way, traditional femininity, where women 'learn' to be subordinate to men and where heterosexuality is assumed to be the only natural and desirable sexuality, is constituted as the core of what it is to be a normal woman.

Over a decade later, Warner's (1993) definition of heteronormativity, whilst informed by the feminism of Rich (1980), concentrated much more on normative power relations and how these maintain what is understood to be normal. As Rumens *et al.* (2019) highlighted, this shift is largely informed by a Foucauldian conceptualisation of power relations as productive and disciplinary, whereby (as I discuss later) individuals are constituted as normal subjects. Understood in this way, heteronormativity is distinct from heterosexuality. Indeed, it is not the case that heteronormativity and heterosexuality are always aligned and coherent. Rumens *et al.* (2019) pointed out that some heterosexuals can be disadvantaged, such as those who cannot or refuse to meet its norms, for example those who choose not to or are unable to have children.

For the most part, analyses of heteronormativity have focused on its effects on LGBTQ+ people. Much research on this topic shows the harmful effects of heteronormativity, for example, how ideas of family have often privileged it as a heterosexual institution, excluding LGBTQ+ people. In the field of law, research has long shown how heteronormativity has been at work in denying LGBTQ+ people access to marriage, reproduction technologies, gender reassignment surgery, equal participation in the military and an equal age of consent[17]. Furthermore, there is well documented anti-LGBTQ+ prejudice and backlash in countries such as Russia and Hungary (Nuñez-Mietz, 2019), with lawmakers in the latter country voting in 2020 to terminate legal recognition for transgender people (Milton, 2020). In the workplace, Rumens and Colgan (2015) and others (Köllen, 2016; Ng and Rumens, 2017) examine how heteronormativity can operate and negatively impact on the work lives of LGBTQ+ and intersex employees, for example denying them promotion, putting them at risk of losing their jobs, hampering access to specific careers, making them vulnerable to bullying and harassment, and constraining opportunities for self-identifying (and being recognised by colleagues) as visible LGBTQ+ employees.

Considering this, the place and importance of heteronormativity in this study centres on how it reproduces the heterosexual/homosexual binary, one which Sedgwick (1990) argued is at the heart of Western culture. As the empirical discussion chapters within this thesis demonstrate, LGBTQ+ advertisements can play a role in reproducing this binary and others (for example, male/female and masculine/feminine), which in turn sustain heteronormativity. Crucially, and as I have discussed in previous chapters, this is not to say that heteronormativity is always harmful to LGBTQ+ people. Indeed, some LGBTQ+ people may seek to fit into heteronormative social institutions in order to live a 'normal' life and be recognised fully as a normal citizen in society (Drucker, 2015). Acknowledging this, it is important to discuss homonormativity, another concept that queer theorists are especially concerned with and which is also at the heart of this thesis.

The term homonormativity, as discussed in the introduction, was first coined by Lisa Duggan (2002, p.179) as:

> "a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions but upholds and sustains them while promising the possibility of a

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[17] While for some, changes in legislation over time have granted certain access to these heterosexual privileges, for others this is not the case. Furthermore, LGBTQ+ access to these institutions is fragile and politically-dependent, as evidenced by, for example, reversals in some US LGBTQ+ rights and protections under Trump's Republican administration (2017-2021). At its more extreme, there remain 72 jurisdictions globally where consenting, private, sexual activity between adults of the same sex is criminalised, and 11 where it is punishable by death (Human Dignity Trust, 2021).

demobilized gay constituency and a privatized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption."

According to Duggan, homonormativity functions without disrupting or challenging heteronormativity. Instead, it establishes the characteristics associated with heteronormativity (such as the privileging of heterosexuality) as natural and right. Notably, homonormativity opens up opportunities for LGBTQ+ people to become immersed or 'assimilated' into the heteronormative mainstream (Phelan, 1997; Ruiz, 2008; Drucker, 2015). In this respect, those LGBTQ+ people who come closest to meeting heteronormative values and standards of behaviour can benefit from access to similar privileges and rights, while those who are considered to be furthest away remain marginalised and excluded from the mainstream (Duggan, 2002; Drucker, 2015). Indeed, the latter may even be branded as being against heteronormativity and/or standing in the way of those LGBTQ+ people who are able to adopt heteronormative values and standards of behaviour, and therefore achieve greater access to, and acceptance within, wider society.

Homonormativity is closely linked to the normalisation of gay men and lesbians (in particular) and heteronormativity. Browne (2006, p.886) emphasises these linkages in her definition of homonormativity as "the normalisation and hierarchisation of particular forms of homosexuality within particular sexualised, classed, gendered and ethnic norms". In other words, the normalisation of LGBTQ+ people has been largely confined to white, middle-class, well-educated, affluent, urban-dwelling gay men and lesbians (Drucker, 2015). This has given critics of homonormativity much to be concerned about, as these groups of people have come to represent a 'new normal' in some cultural contexts, presenting ideal versions of gay men and lesbians that all 'others' should aspire to. Puar (2007, p.xxvi), for example, points out that homonormativity constructs the gay and lesbian subject as a "queer liberal one, invested in consumption, property ownership, and intimate, stable sexual relationships, relying on an archaic formulation of public/private divides". As the normalisation of gay men and lesbians extends and deepens (Drucker, 2015), it reinforces existing sexual hierarchies and creates new ones marked by ethnicity, race, class and age, between and among LGBTQ+ people; whereby those who do not or cannot meet these normative standards are marginalised and excluded. For example, Drucker (2015) cites transgendered people, many of whom are disproportionately employed in low-income jobs and are subject to disproportionately higher rates of discrimination, violence and persecution. Understood in this way, homonormativity is an organising process that can be seen to (re)produce sexual and gender hierarchies (amongst others), desired and found to be a positive experience by some, but experienced as exclusionary by many others.

Drucker (2015, p.220) points out that, although there has been a rise in homonormativity, mostly confined but not limited to Western societies, "it by no means implies that the larger societies are less heteronormative; on the contrary, homonormativity reflects and adapts to the heterosexual norm". This is one of the crucial links between homonormativity and heteronormativity, namely that the two work to mutually reinforce each other. Homonormative patterns of living, values and norms are rooted in heteronormativity, which is one reason why, for example, same-sex marriage has been so heavily sought after (even 'fought for'[18]) but on the other hand is criticised as merely replicating heteronormative patterns of intimate sexual life whereby an adapted version of marriage has been created (Yep, Lovaas and Ella, 2003).

The foregrounding of homonormativity (alongside heteronormativity) as a concept in this thesis is clearly important, not least given its circulation and reproduction in LGBTQ+ advertising practice as illustrated in the chapters that follow. Many portrayals of normal gay and lesbian life can indeed be seen to assume a white, middle-class experience as a norm (Drucker, 2015), which highlights how such sexualities are constituted as politically and economically viable within capitalist societies. Advertising can perform a key role in promoting such images of gay men and lesbians, yet as Drucker (2015, p.258) argues, the "prosperous couples focused on by glossy lesbian/gay magazines were never typical of most LGBTQ+ people". As such, it is important to acknowledge that the normalisation of LGBTQ+ folk does not always follow the same trajectory. The stark realities of LGBTQ+ representation (or non-representation) are still forming; and so the exploration of the complexities of LGBTQ+ normalisation and how it is (re)constructed in LGBTQ+ advertising is therefore of important interest and concern in this thesis.

3.4.3 Queering

As I briefly discussed in the introductory chapter of this thesis, the concept of queering underpins much queer theory research. While there are variations as to how it is defined, there is a general consensus that queering is about *doing* queer (Sullivan, 2003; Halley *et al.*, 2011; Giffney and O'Rourke, 2016). In other words, if treated as a verb (to 'queer' something) we can engage in a process of queering; and in doing so, explore what it can do for us and 'others' (Sullivan, 2003; Rumens, 2018a). Steven Seidman described queering as a mode of analysis which is deconstructive. That is, as:

> "a discursive strategy involving the displacement or placing into doubt of foundational
> assumptions (e.g., about the subject, knowledge, society, and history) for the purpose
> of opening up new possibilities for critical social analysis and political practice."

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[18] Stonewall (the UKs leading LGBTQ+ charity) was instrumental in lobbying for same sex marriage in the UK and continues to 'fight for marriage equality' (Macmillan, 2020).

Put differently, this mode of deconstructive analysis intends to challenge taken-for-granted concepts, practices and assumptions. This definition resonates, since queering in the context of this study allows me to 'displace' certain narratives surrounding advocated LGBTQ+ advertising practice and interrogate the 'foundational assumptions' behind the images used in targeted LGBTQ+ advertisements, thereby exposing the underlying normative assumptions upon which they are constructed. Crucially, Seidman (1997, p.xi) insisted that queering is not about "substituting one set of foundational assumptions and narratives for another". This would results in replacing one normative regime with another, a move that would go against the anti-normative character of queer theorising. Instead, norms and assumptions should be permanently available for analysis.

As the empirical chapters of this thesis (particularly the final discussion chapter) hope to demonstrate, the deployment of queering as a mode of analysis within this study involves the type of deconstruction that exposes and problematises the heterosexual/homosexual binary, considered by Sedgwick (1990) to be a widespread and highly influential binary in Western cultures. From a queer theory perspective, queering relies on Jacques Derrida's notion of deconstruction (Sullivan, 2003) to destabilise the supposed stability and rigidity of the heterosexual/homosexual binary (and others relevant to this research, such as male/female and masculine/feminine). For example, Diana Fuss (1991) highlighted how deconstruction can dispel the 'truth' about heterosexuality as natural, right and healthy, by demonstrating that it is an effect of discourse and power (to be discussed in more detail later). While Derrida's influence on queer theory has been marginal compared to Foucault's (Sullivan, 2003), it is important to acknowledge Derrida's contribution given that deconstruction is an analytical process that is commonly adopted by queer theorists, and as such features centrally within this thesis.

This leads on to the idea that queering is a situated, partial and subjective process (Sullivan, 2003). As I discuss in more detail within the next chapter, my investments in queering LGBTQ+ advertisements, as a white, non-binary, gay, middle-class, privileged academic, are likely to be very different to how other individuals situated within (and beyond) these identity categories might approach queering. As such, queering may be turned towards the academic doing it, in order to expose the types of investments they make in generating anti-normative knowledge (Seidman, 1997). With this in mind, queering is used in this thesis to unsettle, for instance, the sexual and gender binaries that LGBTQ+ advertisements (un)wittingly reproduce, which reflects *my* investment in queering, which may be different to others who engage in the same process.

Furthermore, queering is an important practice that is politically-edged because it enables the deconstruction of heteronormativity (by reading the advertisements as discursive texts) to expose the normative underpinnings that organise their production. As Rumens (2018a, p46) points out, queering poses a serious threat to "discourses that normalize, homogenize and categorize, in particular their effects that (re)produce hierarchical binaries such as male/female, masculine/feminine and heterosexual/homosexual". Indeed, there is a vast body of queer theory literature that has engaged with queering to expose and disrupt these binaries; for example, scholars have queered relationships (Rumens, 2012); notions of citizenship (Brandzel, 2005); ideals of beauty (Gurrieri and Cherrier, 2013); Bollywood (Gopinath, 2000); fertility clinics (Mamo, 2013); and the gendered dynamics of the bathroom (Cavanagh, 2010). This study therefore adds to this wider body of queer theory scholarship that seeks to deconstruct heteronormativity by, in part, unearthing and directly challenging the sexual and gender binaries reproduced in everyday life.

3.4.4 Sexuality, gender and discourse

In this section I discuss how sexuality and gender are conceptualised from a queer theory perspective. Before doing so, it is important to acknowledge that sexuality and gender have been defined differently by scholars over the decades (Weeks, 2011). There is not enough space here to provide a comprehensive overview of the multiple ways in how gender and sexuality have been defined; indeed, there are numerous books and other resources on this topic. Nonetheless, queer theorising aligns with social constructionism in its approach to viewing sexuality as a construct, not the biological essence of the individual. It is therefore important to acknowledge the influence of social constructionism in theorising gender and sexuality, before outlining why the approach of queer theory is different to many constructionist theories.

One highly influential approach to theorising gender and sexuality has been to treat it as a fixed property of the individual (Beasley, 2005; Jackson, Scott and Books, 2010). Considered this way, gender and sexuality can be understood as pre-determined are often described as internal essences. Such perspectives 'essentialise' gender and sexuality in the individual and assume not only that both are fixed but also adhere to the self and are universal (Fuss, 1989; 1991). Essentialist perspectives on gender and sexuality have, however, been criticised by scholars of sexuality and feminist theorists because they do not account for how the meanings attached to gender and sexuality have varied over the years and in different cultural contexts. Nor are essentialist perspectives adequate for accounting for how gender and sexuality are bound up with relations of power (Beasley, 2005). Indeed, both social constructionists of gender (Jackson and Scott, 1996) and sexuality (Weeks, 1985; Greenberg, 1988) have rejected essentialist theories by arguing that gender and sexuality are *created* by relations

of power. As Beasley (2005, p.23) points out, social constructionist theories focus on how gender and sexuality are "made different by the social structuring effects of power", providing socio-historical accounts of gender and sexuality which represent a radical departure from essentialist theories (Greenberg, 1988; Jackson and Scott, 2002). From a social constructionist perspective, gender or sexuality are far from natural, a very powerful and controversial counterpoint to the dominant discourse of sexual essentialism that claims the opposite (Beasley, 2005).

Further, Jackson and Scott (2010, p.1) provide an overview of the different ways sexuality has been theorised and, also rejecting essentialism, did not see sexuality "as in any way foundational to the human condition or social order". These authors challenged the idea (long held and still articulated in popular and some academic discourse) that sexuality is an inner truth or pre-determined entity. Rather, they viewed sexuality from a sociological perspective, as a "product of the social definition and ordering of erotic life" (2010, p.2). Similarly, Jeffrey Weeks (2011), a highly influential scholar of sexuality, in particular LGBTQ+ sexualities, adds that sexuality is notoriously difficult to define. Some of his most influential work developed the social construction of sexuality theory (Weeks, 1985); exploring, for example, how sexual identities are constructed in time and place by examining shifts in the social meanings attached to sexuality. While Weeks's (1985) work has been acknowledged as an important reference point from which queer theory has developed (McRuer, 2002), as have social constructionist approaches (Beasley, 2005), it is important to outline how and why the approach that queer theory takes towards gender and sexuality is particularly valuable for the analysis of LGBTQ+ advertisements in the following chapters.

Unlike social constructionist theories of sexuality and gender, queer theory interrogates sexuality and gender as *normative* forms. In other words, sexuality and gender are understood in terms of power relations that form part of normative regimes (Foucault, 1979; Butler, 1990; 1993). Moving away from even the more postmodern strands of social constructionism, queer theory treats sexuality and gender as discursive effects, which unsettles the notion of sexuality and gender having any fixed or universal basis (Sullivan, 2003). Indeed, the individual (or subject) is also understood as having no set basis, conceptualised as a discursive effect. In this way, the role of language is crucial since it has a constitutive role in how sexuality and gender are produced.

To help explain this further, the French philosopher Michel Foucault held a particularly radical approach to thinking about sexuality - again not as a stable essence but as an effect of discourse (Halperin, 1995; Spargo, 1999). For Foucault (1972a, p.80), discourses are the "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" as well as the unwritten rules that produce statements, which together generate bodies of knowledge. Language has a key role to play in

discourse since it organises and shapes how we think about and experience the world.   For queer theorists, discourse is particularly important because of its links to relations of power. Indeed, over three volumes of the *History of Sexuality* (1979; 1985; 1986), Foucault explored the shifting historical discourses on sexuality that have variously given meanings to how sexuality is understood and then experienced. One of the most important moments in the production of knowledge about sexuality was the creation of two categories of sexuality: heterosexuality and homosexuality. For Foucault, this occurred around the end of the nineteenth century when the terms homosexual, later followed by heterosexual, entered into language.

Significant here is that sexuality becomes understandable by specific *types*. Foucault (1979, p.43) wrote: "the sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species". The introduction of heterosexuality and homosexuality brought with them the figures of 'the heterosexual' and 'the homosexual', creating a master binary that has, as I have already mentioned, been influential in shaping how we understand our lives (Sedgwick, 1990; 1993). Foucault (1979) analysed how the discursively constituted figures of the heterosexual and the homosexual become attached to specific sexual behaviours, identities and patterns of life. Indeed, drawing from this aspect of Foucault's history of sexuality, queer theorists have argued with vigour that there is no intrinsic or natural link between specific sexual activities and sexual identities (Sullivan, 2003).

Notably, Foucault (1979) wrote about how sexuality is governed through discourse and knowledge, and therefore power. For example, the rise of the homosexual as a 'person' provided societies with a target that people could project their fears and anxieties onto, and ultimately regulate and control. Similarly, the power effects of discourses in the fields of medicine and psychiatry have in the past treated homosexuality as a perversion and state of arrested development (and continue to do so in some cultural contexts). Discursively constituted in this way, homosexuality was and is still seen as a threat to heterosexuality, as it fails to conduct sexual activity around the reproduction of the family. As mentioned, such discourses remain in place today. For example, in psychiatry there are still psychologists who offer reparative therapies in an attempt to 'cure' individuals who are homosexual, treating it as an abnormality (Van Zyl, Nel and Govender, 2017). While perhaps less obvious, the normalisation of LGBTQ+ sexualities itself is another example, insomuch as discourse has a role to play in the shaping of which LGBTQ+ sexualities come closest to meeting heteronormative values and standards of behaviour and which ones do not. As such, discourses of sexuality - in whatever form - can shape the material realities of LGBTQ+ people. In the case of images communicated via the media and advertising, what we are presented with and how we 'see' and understand images of LGBTQ+ people are influenced by concepts of desirability and commercial viability.

While discourse has immense power effects, Foucault (1979) argued that it is not wholly deterministic. Given that discourses are not completely coherent and there are always multiple discourses, opportunities are present for individuals to be positioned in other ways. For example, 'reverse discourses' develop, enabling these dominant narratives to be understood differently. As Foucault (1979, p.101) pointed out, such 'reverse' discourse enabled homosexuality "to speak in its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy or "naturality" be acknowledged, often in the same vocabulary, using the same categories by which it was medically disqualified". For instance, medical discourse on linking homosexuality to a genetic code or gene has been used by some LGBTQ+ people to claim they were 'born this way', enabling them to claim the naturalness of homosexuality in a biological sense (Bennett, 2014). In summary, Foucault's writing on the discourse and history of sexuality (and their relationship) is an important resource from which to gain theoretical insights into sexuality. In the context of this thesis, sexuality is understood to be an effect of discourse and it is acknowledged that discourses can organise knowledge on sexuality in specific ways. As such, sexuality is not an intrinsic property of the individual nor biologically determined.

Regarding discourse and *gender*, Foucault did not especially address the topic (Sawicki, 1991) however the works of Judith Butler (1990; 1993; 2004) conceptualise gender in a similar way and, importantly for the purpose of the thesis, problematise gender binaries. As one of the most distinguished figures associated with queer theory, Butler's writing on gender performativity developed a similar way of understanding gender and sexuality as a discursive effect and not as a fixed property of the individual. Working with ideas drawn from Foucault but also psychoanalysis, feminism and speech-act theory (for example, J.L. Austin), Butler primarily outlined her ideas on gender performativity in *Gender Trouble* (1990) and *Bodies that Matter* (1993). In keeping with a discursive perspective, Butler (1990; 1993) argued that gender is a 'corporeal style', an 'act' that "is both intentional and performative, where 'performative' suggests a dramatic and contingent construction of meaning" (Butler, 1990, p.177). The concept of performativity refers not to a one-off act, but a reiterative discursive constitution of the individual, or subject; one which requires the continual citation of gender norms to give the effect of being gendered.

In a similar way to Foucault, language for Butler (1990; 1993) is not a simple reflection of reality but has a constitutive effect in how, for example, it names the subject into being. Drawing from J.L. Austin, speech is seen to 'act upon us' as individuals, having a performative effect in how we live and understand the world. The example of a child being born and named a 'boy' or 'girl' is, for example, one of the most influential speech acts since the newly-born child cannot understand or know how they have been assigned a gender. As such, the child is vulnerable to a gender discourse they know

nothing about and is not of their choosing. This form of gender assignment is an example of how gender norms act upon us; in particular, how they *form* the subject as feminine or masculine. This does not mean to say that gender is merely something done to us, since the child, as it grows up, is arguably able to make choices about how to 'cite' gender norms. Indeed, while Butler (1990; 1993) examined gender norms and our ongoing obligation to reproduce them (thereby allowing ourselves to be understood as a gendered subject that can be recognised), there is scope for individuals to break from patterns of gender citation. For example, transgender people can deviate from established gender norms regarding what constitutes acceptable and recognisable forms of femininity and masculinity, in order to live (personally more) meaningful lives as non-normatively-gendered subjects. However, such deviations are not easy and can, of course, be penalised in any number of spheres of life, not least making individuals the target of violence and hate crimes for straying away from citing traditional gender norms (Butler, 2004).

It is important to stress at this point how performativity "cannot be understood outside of a process of iterability, a regularized and constrained repetition of norms. And this repetition is not performed *by* a subject; this repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject" (Butler, 1993, p.95, emphasis in original). In other words, it is not the individual who creates their own gender, but it is the repetition itself that enables the individual to be gendered, sometimes in ways of their choosing and sometimes not. The repetitive performances of gender over time can produce the effect of gender appearing 'natural', which in many ways can be seen to fuel the illusion, for some, of essentialism. However, being recognised as a gendered subject is a *process* that *forms* the subject – it is not as a result of, as Butler (1993) explains, 'free play' or 'theatrical self-presentation' where gender is a 'performance'.

Within the context of this thesis, one of the most valuable aspects of Butler's work is her argument that gender is organised into a binary form, and that the repetitive citation of gender norms are frequently organised within a male/female, masculine/feminine binary. In *Gender Trouble* (1990), the concept of the 'heterosexual matrix' is used to demonstrate how gender is aligned with sex in specific ways. She describes it as "a self-supporting signifying economy that wields power in marking off what can and cannot be thought within the terms of cultural intelligibility' (1999, pp.99-100). In other words, the heterosexual matrix has a shaping and constraining effect on how we can cite gender norms, telling us what gender norms are acceptable in order to be recognised and validated as a gendered subject, and which ones are not. The heterosexual matrix aligns (biological) sex, gender and sexuality in hierarchical binaries (male/female, masculine/feminine, heterosexual/homosexual) that sustain its existence and power. Through the matrix, individuals come to understand which genders

align with which sexual practices and identities, providing an important reference point for maintaining "relations of coherence and continuity among sex, gender, sexual practice, and desire" (Butler, 1999, p.23).

In summary, Butler's (1990; 1993; 2004) writing on the performativity of gender and the constitutive power of the heterosexual matrix enables the exposure and problematisation of the discursive (re)production of sexual and gender binaries. Additionally, the suggestion that individuals can break the repetition of gender norms offers a way of thinking about how sexual and gendered lives can be lived in non-normative ways. These are important theoretical insights (alongside, for example, Foucault's conception of sexuality as an effect of discourse) that inform the discussion chapters that follow later in the thesis. Furthermore, the attention Butler (1990) gives to how subjects are recognised as 'intelligible' gendered subjects is also important. Advertisements may be read discursively, since they can discursively construct 'intelligible' gendered and sexual subjects for viewers, such as the fashionable depictions of normalised gay men as prosperous, white, middle class and beautifully dressed (Drucker, 2015). In this way, advertisements are not merely windows into, or indeed reflections of, other realities; rather, they have a constitutive quality in how they discursively form the subjects they wish us to view. The reproduction or rupturing of sexual and gender binaries in advertisements is therefore of significant interest, as are the ways in which gender and sexuality and the different types of advertisement approaches discursively interact.

3.5 Queer theory and LGBTQ+ advertising studies

As discussed in the introductory chapter of this thesis, there has been a very limited mobilisation of queer theory within advertising scholarship (Ginder and Byun, 2015). The first and most notable example is Kates's (1999) study, in which he interpreted an Australian LGBTQ+ advertisement from both a traditional structuralist and a queer deconstruction approach. His overall advocacy of performing a queer critique rests in its ability to expose the manner in which heteronormative discourses influence representations of, in this case, gay men in advertising. As I outline shortly, this is the only study hitherto to have queered an LGBTQ+ advertisement. As such, I employ many of Kates's (1999) techniques during the final phase (Phase III) of this study, namely queering the 'Discursive Cases' and other advertisements of significance emerging from the ICA. The second study to incorporate queer theory is Schroeder *et al.*'s (2006) research, in which they explored consumer responses to representations of gay families in advertisements. Rather than use a queer deconstruction, though, they instead refer to Kates's (1999) work to illustrate how their stimuli-advertisements *could* be seen to contain heterosexual norms and "impose patterns of heterosexual gender roles" (p.67). Unfortunately, beyond these two pieces of work, very little else exists.

Some works on the (published) fringes includes Sonnekus and van Eeden's (2009) study, which engaged with queer theory insomuch as it *informed* their critique of levels of black representation in a South African gay male publication, but again they did not explicitly *queer* their selection of advertisements. There are a small number of other LGBTQ+ advertising studies that cite the works of Kates (1999) (for example, Lee, Willliams and LaFerle, 2004; Jones and LeBlanc, 2006; Hester and Gibson, 2007; Tsai, 2010; Oakenfull, 2013; Um *et al*.,) but overall adopt a different theoretical approach as the basis of their work.

Moving out of the 'advertising' subject field, but still of importance, are the works of DeLozier (2010), Bhat (2010), Nölke (2018) and Gong (2020), published in the *Journal of Homosexuality*. All refer to the LGBTQ+ 'market' and associated communications efforts, but again they do not explicitly use queer theory as an analytical framework. Two studies (one within *Sociological Perspectives* and one also within the *Journal of Homosexuality* respectively) that *do,* however, are: MacDonald (2002), in which the author queered whiteness (within the context of women's basketball marketing discourses); and Gurrieri and Cherrier (2013), in which they explored negotiations of beauty. Neither of these studies are within an LGBTQ+ context, but both are examples of queering in advertising and, as such, form an important part of understanding the queering process within research practice.

3.6 Conclusion

As outlined in Chapter 1 and supported by the findings of this chapter's literature review, there is a real need to mobilise insights from queer theory with LGBTQ+ advertising. Indeed, queering as a mode of analysis is powerful, especially given its ability to challenge certain narratives, interrogate and rupture foundational assumptions, and expose (hetero- and homo-) normative assumptions upon which LGBTQ+ images are discursively (re)constructed. What follows is an overview of how this occurs methodologically within this thesis. Influenced by much of what has been summarised in this chapter and shaped by my own lived experience, I start by introducing the interpretivist-queer positioning of this study. After re-introducing the research aims and objectives of this study, I then discuss each of the key research phases, most notably detailing the large scale ICA that explores the representation of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders (re)constructed in targeting print advertisements (RO2), and the queering of four 'Discursive (advertisement) Cases' in order to critically analyse LGBTQ+ targeted advertising approaches and the constituent images contained within them (RO3).

Chapter 4 – Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology that underpins this study. I start by introducing its ontological and epistemological roots and overall interpretivist-queer positioning, which has been shaped by my own lived experience and conceptual understanding of gender and sexuality. As discussed in the previous chapter, this study is informed by queer theory which, as a form of critical theory, extends beyond the traditional concerns of an interpretivist research philosophy. This is reflected in the methodological design and execution of the study, which fosters a critical line of inquiry that runs throughout the thesis. Next, I delineate the research aims and objectives of this study before discussing each key research phase in turn, namely i) the Literature Review ii) the ICA and iii) the Queering of Discursive Cases. Before this chapter concludes, I discuss my (researcher) ethics and reflexivity, particularly pertinent given my non-normative position within the LGBTQ+ context of this study.

4.2 Research philosophy

4.2.1 Ontological assumptions

As briefly summarised in the introductory chapter of this thesis, there were two key incidents that heavily influenced both the topic and content of this thesis and its subsequent line of inquiry. Firstly, my interest and curiosity was inspired after viewing a tailored advertisement on the back cover of *DIVA* magazine; and secondly, I experienced 'academic frustration' with the narrow, heteronormative (and harmful) narrative running through the LGBTQ+ advertising literature. The reason that these factors feature again here is that they both triggered a philosophical journey, not just an exploratory one. In short, I have since come to understand that my fascination with advertisements is a reflection of my subjective epistemological and ontological beliefs, and my academic frustration is a by-product of viewing advertisements as cultural artefacts and, therefore, as important sites of discursively constructed knowledge. Collectively, I find the exclusion or hiding of non-normative sexualities and genders via purposeful polysemy as reinforcing the role that heteronormative power relations play in the (re)construction and, in this case, *maintenance* of knowledge whereby heterosexuality is privileged and prioritised over other sexualities.

As I mentioned above, to get to this point of understanding has entailed a journey. I have always felt uncomfortable with the LGBTQ+ advertising literature and, at first, I thought it was because it was an emerging area of research (and practice), which exhibited underdeveloped ideas and perspectives. As I began to research the field in more depth and so better understand some of the central tenets of the literature, I had much less sympathy, as it felt that new research was following a 'bandwagon' of thought rather than forging new ways of understanding or critiquing works or theories that already existed. Again, trying to remain as objective as possible, I questioned the influence of my own positionality as a non-normative consumer and researcher (in terms of my sexuality and gender)[19], and the discomfort that arises from reading that I, and people like myself, are 'offensive' (Oakenfull and Greenlee, 2005).

Rather than trying to create a sense of *scientific* objectivity however, a concept traditionally linked to positivism wherein knowledge is understood to be value-free, I sought to embrace my instinct to challenge the heteronormative narrative within LGBTQ+ advertising literature. It was not, however, until I encountered Kates's use of queer theory in his (1999) work that I realised there was a way in which to do this theoretically, as discussed in the previous chapter. Kates (1999) introduced me to a concept of queer that aligned with my own anti-normative perspective on sexuality and gender. In short, my exploration of and resonance with queer theory provided an opportunity to put *myself* into my research (philosophically, and in terms of its design and methods and so on) - something which I had struggled to achieve during the very early stages of the study[20].

That is not to say that I had a pre-determined message I wanted to communicate regardless of my findings; rather that embedding queer theory within my study enabled me to problematise the operation of heteronormativity in the design and dissemination of LGBTQ+ targeted advertisements and in the discursive (re)construction of sexuality and gender within a wider social context. In so doing, I follow numerous scholars who have openly declared how their personal concerns have driven their research in the field of sexuality and gender (Wilton, 2004; Rumens, 2011; 2018b). In particular, I subscribe to Wilton's (2004) approach, questioning and at times rejecting methodological notions of scientific objectivity, in order to open up possibilities for empirically researching the epistemic assumptions that underpin LGBTQ+ advertisements. My personal interests and history have shaped

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[19] As discussed in the 'Ethics and Reflexivity' section towards the end of this chapter

[20] During the initial stages of this thesis, my intention was to conduct an LGBTQ+ audience-response component to the methodological design of this study by exploring LGBTQ+ attitudes towards each of the four targeted advertising approaches. In other words, a queer analysis did not feature at all. However, I always felt uncomfortable furthering the 'marketisation' dimension (theoretically and commercially) of LGBTQ+ advertising and my critique of the LGBTQ+ advertising literature, by itself, did not feel sufficiently challenging, especially given the premise upon which much of the work is based.

the way I have carried out this research, and it is important to acknowledge this. As I discuss next, this has shaped my ontological positioning.

Queer theory has *informed* my research philosophy insomuch as it has helped me to understand my beliefs about the derivation, nature and development of knowledge (Baipaj, 2011). Ontology refers to the study of reality. Or, as Glynos and Howarth (2007, p. 109) put it, "all theories and approaches in the social and political sciences, including positivist social science approaches, presuppose a distinctive ontology, which structures their more specific theories and explanations". Indeed, positivism assumes that reality is fixed and external to the researcher, which allows them to apply structured methodological procedures and methods that can discover 'truths' about reality. Positivism instructs the researcher to be objective and use scientific research methods that claim to keep the subjectivity, prejudices and biases of the researcher at bay.

The ontological assumptions underpinning positivism were rejected for this study, not least because the concept of scientific objectivity has often been "deployed in the natural sciences in order to conceal or deny what may, from another perspective, seem to be important personal concerns driving research in pre-determined directions" (Wilton, 2004, p.29). As lesbian feminist, Tamsin Wilton (2004) argued that the notion of scientific objectivity can obscure and discredit other perspectives, in particular those which derive from queer theory, on sexuality and gender. Positivistic research on sexuality and gender is not only underpinned by a rigid concept of scientific objectivity that assumes there can be objective distance between the researcher and the properties of a reality that is the object of research, but it reinforces a view of sexuality and gender as fixed and stable properties of the individual, which, as I have already mentioned, is not a view I subscribe to myself. As such, I believe that positivistic science can fail to account for or demonstrate sufficient sensitivity toward the provisional nature of sexuality and gender, in both cultural and historical terms. As discussed in the previous chapter, sexuality and gender are discursive constructs that can vary from one location to another and between specific moments in time. Additionally, positivistic social science has played a problematic role in researching 'homosexuality' in the social realm.

Criticising the impact of heteronormative bias on the field of psychology, Daniel Warner (2004) condemns psychology's historical role in identifying the figure of the 'homosexual' as deviant and pathologising homosexuality as a mental disorder through the deployment of research methods such as the laboratory experiment and the interview. Used in this way, research methods have categorised and curtailed the freedoms of LGBTQ+ people and silenced and discredited their voices, concerns, experiences and identities. At worst, they have been used to detect signs of homosexuality (e.g. in

the military) so that homosexuals may be identified and penalised (e.g. prosecuted, excluded) or subjected to nefarious remedies (e.g. reparative therapies, chemical castration).

Discarding a positivistic ontology, the ontological assumptions that underpin this study are informed by queer theory and its lineage in poststructuralism. As discussed in the previous chapter, queer theory is one example of a *critical theory* (others include feminism, Marxism, poststructuralism and postmodernism). Following Guba and Lincoln (1994), critical theories diverge from each other in their ideas and perspectives, but they share the view that the process of scientific inquiry is not value-free. Similarly, Kelemen and Rumens (2008) pointed out that critical theory maintains that the social world cannot be studied in the same way as the natural world. They characterise critical theory has having an emancipatory effect, whereby, for instance, dominant ways of knowing and authoritative discourses can be challenged and undermined. Furthermore, critical theories have sought to question the knowledge claims made by researchers premised on the notion of scientific objectivity and, thus, they have been concerned with the operation of power, both positive and negative, in the social world. With this in mind, the ontological assumptions that inform this study are as follows.

The poststructuralist nature of queer theory assumes that reality is constituted by language. In other words, language and reality co-exist and are mutually influencing. It is not that language simply reflects a pre-determined reality, but that language constitutes reality itself. Here, the concept of discourse is important. Referring to Foucault, whose writing on discourse and sexuality has been highly influential in queer theory (Halperin, 1995; Spargo, 1999), discourse refers to the "general domain of all statements, sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements" (Foucault, 1972b, p.80). In other words, Foucault appeared to suggest that discourse can be understood as utterances, language and texts that have meaning and have an effect. For example, Foucault's (1979) work highlighted the ways in which discourse has shaped how sexuality is understood, known and experienced. To briefly recap discussion in the previous chapter, Foucault (1979) argued that discourses around the late nineteenth century helped to construct and organise sexuality into distinct forms: homosexuality and heterosexuality. Categorising sexuality in this binary enabled each sexual category to be attached to specific meanings and ideas, which are historically patterned and susceptible to change over time and across contexts. Thus, ideas and meanings about heterosexuality have clarified since the late nineteenth century into a recognisable normative body of knowledge. Discourse, which includes but cannot be reduced to language, shapes the realities of what it is to live as sexual and gendered subjects. Indeed, in the context of this study, sexuality and gender are understood as being discursively (re)constructed and their meanings as context and historically specific.

Importantly, Foucault's notion of discourse is bound up with his ideas on power. As he wrote, "discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines it and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it" (1979, pp.100-101). Understood in this way, power is not something that an individual possesses, but that circulates through discourse, which has an effect on the individual. For example, discourse and power work together to regulate sexuality and its meanings. They do this by reproducing sexuality as a category of knowledge that shapes what we can say or not say about it, so that we have come to understand heterosexuality as 'natural', 'healthy' and 'normal', and LGBTQ+ sexualities as 'unnatural', 'unhealthy' and 'abnormal' (Warner, 1999). From this perspective, discourse can limit how we understand sexuality and how we perceive the reality of living as specific sexual subjects. At worst, the regulating power of discourse can aid those who seek to persecute and prosecute LGBTQ+ people under laws that criminalise same-sex relations, while in some cultural contexts same-sex relations are subject to the death penalty (ILGA, 2020). However, Foucault does not suggest discourse is deterministic, that there is no possibility of resisting its grip or being able to forge other discursive realities of sexuality and gender. Discourses can form to operate against discourses that are normative, such as discourses of queer theory that aim to challenge and dismantle the normative regime of heteronormativity (Warner, 1993). Thus, queer theory's preoccupation with encouraging us to pursue alternative, non-normative realities of sexuality and gender is an important ontological imperative.

A queer-poststructuralist ontology informs also how advertisements are conceptualised in the thesis as cultural artefacts that are discursively constructed, exhibiting the effects of heteronormative discourse. Additionally, it is useful to refer to Kant in order to understand the ontology of how objects relate to the representations of them. Kant (1781) posited in his *Critique of Pure Reason* that a fundamental change had occurred in how we might think about reality, and the relationship between objects and representations. Rather than representations (in other words, how an object is determined) conforming to the object itself, reality could be understood as objects conforming to our representations. Previously considered stable, an object could in fact be open to different representations, with its interpretation shaped by the *experience* of the object, which in itself is influenced by the condition (in its widest sense) of the individual. "Knowledge does not depend so much on the object of knowledge as on the capacity of the knower" (Chadwick and Cazeaux, 1992, p.43). Our capacity therefore shapes our experience of the object, resulting in the potential for multiple meaning-making across subjects. As such, reality can be understood to be subjectively constructed through the complexities of both perception and interaction (O'Gorman and MacIntosh, 2015).

Relating this to advertisements, there are multiple ways to read an advertisement ('object') and this is certainly a recognised stance/perspective within the LGBTQ+ advertising literature. The advocated passive approach, for example, *relies* on a polysemic reading so that both heterosexual and homosexual consumers can be reached. An interpretation, or reading, of the advertisement is shaped by our own (subjective) understanding of the world - which is precisely why certain images and references within advertisements can be recognised by some and not by others. The process of reading necessarily consists of the subject making sense of the visual (object) in front of them within the context of themselves (the position of the knower) and their understanding of what the images mean or represent within their own sphere of reality. In this sense, no two people will interpret or perceive the same visual in the same way. As objects, advertisements are therefore not fixed, isolated, separate or unchangeable. Rather, they are inseparable from the reader to achieve meaning; a meaning which is constructed, subjective, multiple and changeable.

Sturken and Cartwright's (2001) comprehensive text *Practices of Looking* captures much of this complexity, incorporating within the discussion the influential works of John Berger (1972), Judith Williamson (1978) and Stuart Hall (1997). In this text, the authors argued that images only produce meaning when they are consumed; and that *how* viewers (readers) identify with the images constructs their understanding of them. Much of the 'how' recognises that visuals do not operate in isolation; instead, they exist within a complex social and cultural dynamic, as evidenced by the success of purposely polysemic advertisements and the development of concepts such as Borgenson *et al.'s* (2006) 'straightening-up' (discussed in Chapter 2). Furthermore, the *created* component of the visual means that the 'object' itself, that is the advertisement, is not value-free. In other words, discourse and power operate within the production of advertisement images, whereby the producers of images can draw on different discourses to create what is intended to be seen or not seen. The advertisement may incorporate abstraction, whereby the consumer is beckoned to an imagined future, an inspirational and desirable state, should they purchase the product/service being advertised. Or, in the case of sexuality, creators can draw on discourses of heteronormativity to represent LGBTQ+ sexualities visually in ways that, for example, do not offend heterosexual viewers and consumers. The fact that this works for some people and not others illustrates again the subjectivity of meaning-making and the inseparability of the object from its representation.

Similarly, journalistic images can tell any story that the producer or photographer wants to tell. The photograph, which is considered to capture 'reality' (*'the camera never lies'*), can be understood to only ever subjectively represent it. While photographic images themselves may be seen to record the moment, the photographer has chosen that particular shot over another; that angle, that inclusion

(and therefore exclusion) and so on - based on any number of reasons from the intentional to the innate. An alternative photographer may have captured the same moment very differently. As such, in addition to a subjective *reading*, there is an element of inherent subjectivity in the production of the visual (Rose, 2016) in terms of how, when and what to capture in order to show or represent a moment, an 'object', a product, a story or an ideal. Similarly, advertisements, as part of our visual culture, are not objective artefacts in either their construction or consumption. Accordingly, they must be explored in a way that is commensurate with both their nature and overall existence.

4.2.2 Epistemological assumptions

The relationship between ontology and epistemology has been variously expressed using a range of metaphors that include a research onion, tree or iceberg (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019; Easterby-Smith *et al.,* 2018; and Farrow and Mathers*,* 2020, respectively). Understanding the relationship between ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods is important, since each stage of the research process is informed and influenced by our assumptions about reality and knowledge (Dudovskiy, 2018). As Eriksson and Kovalainen (2016) point out, ontological claims are closely related to epistemological ones, and in epistemology there also exists a subjectivist view (as opposed an objective one) in terms of understanding what knowledge is. Within this view, it is understood that "no access to the external world beyond our own observations and interpretations is possible" (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2016, p.15). While there is an acceptance that an external reality exists, a subjective epistemology also recognises that knowledge is influenced by the individual and that no two people, as already proposed, will observe, experience or interpret the same 'thing' in the same way (Levers, 2013). In other words, objects are *subject*(ive) to our own interpretation.

It is clear to see, then, how this epistemological view is associated with the paradigm of interpretivism, which, with its "focus on complexity, richness, multiple interpretations and meaning-making… is explicitly subjectivist" (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019, p.149). Interpretivism emerged to counter the normativity and hegemony of positivistic social science. While interpretivism has focused on the richness of meaning-making in the social sphere, it is a broad term that covers a diverse range of positions, theories and ideas. As a paradigm, understood here as a 'net' that collectively holds the ontological, epistemological, and methodological beliefs of the researcher (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005) interpretivism holds that knowledge is relative and influenced by "historical, temporal, cultural and subjective circumstances" (Benoliel, 1996, p.407). I share this view that knowledge is neither value-free nor scientifically objective. Furthermore, interpretivism has problematised the methodological assumptions that have often been used to privilege positivism as a superior type of social science, and

in so doing they have raised important questions about, for example, knowledge production and its validity.

While this study adopts an interpretivist approach to aspects of the data collection process, specifically the use of an ICA, discussed later, it is queer theory's epistemological concerns that are central to this thesis. To return to an earlier point, I posit that knowledge is constructed through discursive relations of power (Foucault, 1979; 1982), which produce bodies of knowledge on sexuality and gender. As noted, knowledge on homosexuality is neither neutral nor value-free, as it has been used (un)intentionally to harm LGBTQ+ people. Queer theory shatters the illusion of the researcher claiming to produce objective knowledge, not least because knowledge and relations of power are inextricably connected and operate together, such that knowledge claims are understood as partial, contingent and unstable (Wilton, 2004). To acknowledge this is to recognise the importance of developing queer epistemologies. As Rumens (2018b, p.113) asserted, "queer epistemology has been coined as a term to refer to ways of knowing and knowledge that problematize and extend beyond the reach of heteronormativity". Similarly, Eng, Halberstam and Muñoz (2005, p.3) define queer epistemology as a "continuous deconstruction of the tenets of positivism at the heart of identity politics". What I understand from both these quotes is a sense of how queer epistemologies can play a vital role in developing non-normative or queer knowledge on LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders. This may include, as Rumens (2018b) suggests, developing bodies of knowledge that show us how LGBTQ+ identities can be understood beyond the constraints of heteronormative discourse. For example, Kondakov (2020) outlined queer epistemologies that challenge and exceed the deeply heteronormative bodies of knowledge and ways of knowing about sexuality in Russia. As such, this study generates knowledge on how LGBTQ+ advertisements are the discursive effects of heteronormativity, and about how LGBTQ+ targeted advertisements can loosen their attachments to heteronormativity in order to represent LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders more queerly. In this way, the study critiques and challenges heteronormativity as an authoritative discourse. The focus is not so much on identifying specific types of discourses, but more on interrogating the operation of heteronormative discourses in LGBTQ+ targeted advertisements.

4.3 Research methodology

Bearing in mind the aforementioned discussion and the overall philosophical positioning of this thesis, this next section details the three research phases and methods used to collectively address the research aims and objectives of this study. As a reminder, these can be summarised as:

Figure 12: Research activity mapping against each Research Objective

Research Objective	Key research activity	Data collection method/analysis
RO1 Review the advertising literature and further develop the (author's) conceptual model 'Targeted LGBTQ+ Advertising Approaches' to present a consolidation of the advertising approaches used to attract LGBTQ+ consumers.	1.1 Conduct a thorough review of the LGBTQ+ advertising literature and continue to revisit works in the field and the dimensions of the conceptual model to ensure it remains robust and fit for purpose.	1.1 Secondary data analysis
RO2 Explore the representations of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders (re)constructed in targeted print advertisements.	2.1 As part of the literature review, identify what constitutes an LGBTQ+ image and how LGBTQ+ representation is defined and understood (e.g. implicit and explicit images).	2.1 Secondary data analysis
	2.2 Explore how LGBTQ+ representations (derived via 2.1 above) manifest within targeted print advertising practice in mainstream and LGBTQ+ media.	2.2 Primary data: large scale Interpretive Content Analysis (ICA)
RO3 Critically analyse LGBTQ+ targeted advertising approaches and constituent images, using queer theory as a framework for analysis.	3.1 As part of the literature review, begin to expose aspects of the advertising literature that are 'problematic' from a queer perspective.	3.1 Secondary data analysis
	3.2 Critically analyse the images used in LGBTQ+ targeted print advertisements by performing a queer deconstruction of four illustrative print advertisements (reflecting each of the advertising approaches captured within the conceptual model: 'passive', 'conscious', 'tailored' and 'integrative')	3.2 Queer deconstruction of four discursive cases

As outlined in the introductory chapter of this thesis, there are three research phases to this study: 1) a comprehensive review of the LGBTQ+ advertising literature; 2) a large-scale ICA of print advertisements placed in mainstream (*Marie Claire* and *GQ*) and LGBTQ+ (*DIVA* and *Gay Times*) media publications over a 12-month circulation period; and 3) the queering of four illustrative advertisements ('discursive cases') reflective of each LGBTQ+ targeted advertising approach. Each will be discussed in turn, detailing the techniques and methods used to both obtain and analyse the data collected.

4.4 Phase I: The LGBTQ+ advertising literature review

Critical to any thesis, regardless of level (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016), and a standalone method in itself (Torraco, 2015), the literature review enables the researcher to make an important assessment on the collective evidence existing within a particular area of study (Synder, 2019) and provides a strong foundation for advancing knowledge and furthering the development of theory (Webster and Watson, 2002). There are a number of different approaches to literature reviews depending on the purpose and context of the research, for example: evaluative, exploratory, instrumental and reflective (Najmaei, 2016). Given the ROs for this study, as shown above, it was necessary to employ aspects of an exploratory review since I was concerned with understanding the breadth of literature within the field to get a feel of what existed overall. However, the ultimate approach, as presented in Chapter 2, was an integrative one. As Torraco (2015, p.356) notes:

> "The integrative literature review is a form of research that reviews, critiques, and synthesizes representative literature on a topic in an integrated way such that new frameworks and perspectives on the topic are generated."

Specifically, having explored the literature regarding LGBTQ+ targeted advertising and recognising its general under-development and fragmented nature, I sought to provide a level of theoretical coherence by consolidating the body of work according to key dimensions that emerged. This resulted in the development of the conceptual model 'Targeted LGBTQ+ Advertising Approaches', which recognised the frequency with which studies discussed the importance of (and challenges faced in relation to) LGBTQ+ representation levels and associated placement decisions. As such, it also provides the conceptual framework for this thesis, and by doing so, as Synder (2019, p.357) observed, moves the review beyond simply providing a descriptive overview of the research area to addressing "new or emerging topics that would benefit from a holistic conceptualization and synthesis of the literature to date…[and]…lead to an initial or preliminary conceptualization of the topic (i.e., a new model or framework").

4.4.1 Conducting the literature review

The approach taken to conduct the literature review was initially organic. As relayed in Chapter 1, my first exploration of the literature was out of curiosity; I wanted to know whether 'tailored' advertising was a recognised or popular targeted approach, and to find out more about LGBTQ+ advertising generally. Without having a sense of who the key authors were or how the seminal works could be found, I jumped between different topics and authors until I came across Oakenfull and Greenlee's (2005) work which, as I have already mentioned, heavily influenced the ultimate direction of this thesis. Reading this paper gave me a starting point from which to begin structuring my literature search, motivated by wanting to know if/which other studies took the same theoretical stance and/or achieved similar results; and conversely which did not (and everything in between). Once I had been immersed in the literature for a while, I had a better understanding of which search terms to use, which databases to explore and how to find other useful sources of information. These three aspects have been summarised in Table 13 below along with notes on source selection:

Table 3: Parameters and processes for the integrative literature review

Literature Review consideration	Approach taken
Key search terms (combinations)	[LGBT, LGBTQ, LGBTQ+, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, homosexual, queer, queer theory] • + [advertising, adverts, ads, promotion] • + [marketing, economics, spending power, pink pound] • + [representation, images, visual]
Databases	• Oxford Brookes University's subscription business databases: Emerald, Business Source Complete, ProQuest, BRAD*, WARC* *Industry-based information (i.e. not academic)*
Other sources of information (same search terms where appropriate)	• Non-business journals: search via Oxford Brookes Library pages e.g. *Journal of Homosexuality* • Books: search via Oxford Brookes Library pages, Google Books, Amazon • GLAAD (Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) • Stonewall

	• OutNow Consulting
Currency	• Initially, no date limitations (to generally grasp topic, find seminal works etc.) • Each update: searching for new sources released within the elapsed time period • Google Scholar alert set (regular updates sent to email)
Methods of selection	• Initial reading of journal abstracts - to filter (Yes/No/Maybe) • Read all 'Yes' articles (and read 'Maybe' unless not relevant) • Assess credibility of source/author (especially if not via Library databases) • Scrutinise reference lists of those sources accepted

4.5 Phase II: The ICA

Having critically reviewed the LGBTQ+ advertising literature and consolidated the approaches used to attract LGBTQ+ consumers (as captured in the conceptual model 'Targeted LGBTQ+ Advertising Approaches'), the next phase of the research process was to explore the prevalence of each advertising approach and the types[21] of representations of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders (re)constructed within them (RO2). Content analyses have long been understood as an effective large-scale tool to analyse advertisements (Hall, 1997; Rose, 2007), enabling the researcher to objectively observe, or count, the phenomena under scrutiny. Accordingly, this approach enabled me to explore the extent to which each advertising approach is used in practice (by 'counting' the number of times each approach manifests). However, a content analysis has the ability to be far more versatile than that (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005; White and Marsh, 2006). Drisko and Maschi (2015), for example, discuss the variation within content analysis approaches (basic content analysis, interpretive content analysis, and qualitative content analysis), with differences relating to the degree to which meaning is taken into account within the interpretation (i.e. the way in which content is conceptualised, not just how it manifests), and the way in which the data itself is coded and analysed. Rose (2007; 2016) extends this and talks about the value of content analysis as part of a critical visual methodology, in which the cultural context

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[21] Levels (implicit/explicit) and constituent images etc.

of the visual is recognised, inseparable from the social practices and power relations in which it is embedded.

Incorporating 'meaning' within a content analysis recognises some of the temporal and subjective challenges associated with understanding 'what is seen', a key consideration that authors such as Stuart Hall have also long emphasised. In particular,

> "there is no single or 'correct' answer to the question, 'What does this image mean?' or 'What is this ad saying?'. Since there is no law which can guarantee that things will have 'one, true meaning', or that meanings won't change over time, work in this area is bound to be interpretative – a debate between, not who is 'right' and who is 'wrong', but between equally plausible, though sometimes competing and contesting, meanings and interpretations. The best way to 'settle' such contested readings is to look again at the concrete example and try to justify one's 'reading' in detail in relation to the actual practices and forms of signification used, and what meanings they seem to be producing."

(Hall, 1997, p.9)

'Justifying one's reading' and the process undertaken are therefore vital, and feature heavily in all forms of content analysis, whether it be via an emphasis on validity, reliability and objectivity for quantitatively-orientated studies (see for example Berger, 1991; Neuendorf, 2002), or validity, transparency and replicability for more qualitatively-orientated studies (see Altheide and Schneider, 2013; Mayring, 2000). Either way, and as Rose (2007) summarised (positively), the methodological explicitness of content analysis moves interpretation of the visual beyond having a 'good eye'.

That said, at the more interpretive end of the content analyses spectrum there still requires an element of seeing what is beyond manifest content, depending in some way on the 'expertise' of the researcher (Drisko and Machi, 2015). Linked closely to reflexivity (which I discuss later), interpretation in this sense requires a 'theoretical sensitivity' (Ahuvia, 2001) or as Strauss and Corbin (1990, p.41) put it, an "awareness of the subtleties of meaning of the data", which necessarily requires a contextual understanding of the content being analysed. For this study then, my positionality as a (gay, non-binary) member of the target audience of LGBTQ+ advertisements enables me to question, for example, whether two male characters featured in the same advertisement promoting Louis Vuitton luggage (see Figure 6 in Chapter 2) are indeed *just* friends. In short, it facilitates the recognition of 'gay vague' images and symbolism present within passive advertisements and, by doing so, enables me to effectively code (and then count) their presence and prevalence.

Linked to this, being able to see beyond manifest content helps improve the overall accuracy of the data analysis and advertisement categorisation. Consider, for example, a woman dressed in 'typical masculine attire' featured in an advertisement placed in a mainstream magazine. On the surface, the image would fulfil one of Nappier's (2013) criteria of a 'gay vague' advertisement, and so for the purposes of this study would be coded as a passive advertisement. If one were to consider the overall scene however, which depicts a middle-aged feminine woman, wearing a 'power suit', returning from work and walking over to her husband to give him a kiss as he cooks dinner for them both, the advertisement *in its entirety* tells a different story and would not be categorised as passive. Indeed, it is this type of 'meaning making' that is a central goal of interpretive techniques (Schwartz-Shea, 2006) and when embedded within traditional content analyses can help enhance the overall quality of the findings by moving beyond just identifying and counting isolated images.

This underscores the value of choosing an ICA for Phase II of the research process. As Ahuvia (2001, p.139) states, "interpretive content analysis is specially designed for latent content analysis, in which researchers go beyond quantifying the most straightforward denotative elements in a text". Making the useful distinction between denotive and connotative meaning, Ahuvia (2001) posits that it is the latter (which is derived from latent content) that helps to generate a greater understanding of the visual, having considered it in context. Returning to the example above, if the scene depicting the woman dressed in masculine attire was instead showing her walking into a bar full of rainbow flags and other women (only), the overall image would/could be interpreted very differently.

Relatedly, Krippendorff (2004) emphasises the concept of 'inference' whereby:

> "The researcher uses analytical constructs, or rules of inference, to move from the text to the answers to the research questions. The two domains, the texts and the context, are logically independent, and the researcher draws conclusions from one independent domain (the texts) to the other (the context)."
>
> White and Marsh (2006, p.27)

The concept of content analysis can be applied equally effectively to visual analysis as to text. One can *infer* different meanings from an independent image of a woman wearing masculine clothes when considered in the context of a kissing a male in a kitchen versus entering a woman-only bar. The process by which this 'conclusion drawing' occurs, though, is not straightforward (Ahuvia, 2001). As already mentioned, the practicalities of coding connotative meaning require expertise and theoretical sensitivity, and the coding itself cannot follow an explicit set of coding

'rules'. Indeed, the idea that rules of interpretation can even exist has been successfully contested (Garfinkel, 1967; Feldman, 1995) on the grounds that contexts are infinite and coding in this way would be both impractical and impossible. Thus, while one can code and count independent/isolated images within an advertisement, the overall categorisation of the advertisement *in its entirety* is based on its overall connotative meaning, which is inherently interpretive.

This emphasises one of the key differentiators of an ICA from a traditional content analysis and highlights its value and appropriateness for this study. While I want to be able to 'count' in order to establish the prevalence of constituent images within advertisements (for which a traditional content analysis might suffice), I also want to know the prevalence of the different types of advertising approach used to attract LGBTQ+ consumers, for which an analysis of the latent content and its connotative meaning is required. Linking back to my earlier discussion regarding the epistemological roots of this thesis, the interpretive nature of the ICA reflects its constructivist or interpretivist foundations (Krippendorff, 2013), whereby the constructs under investigation (in this case both individual/isolated images and overall advertisements) are seen not to *contain* meaning, rather they are "*rendered meaningful by the perspective and understanding of the reader* for specific purposes" (Drisko and Maschi, 2015, p.67). Thus, both manifest and latent content is interpreted within the contexts in which those constructs are consumed. For LGBTQ+ consumers browsing through magazines, this is why for example 'gay window' advertising is used and polysemic practices work. As a researcher, viewing independent constructs within their wider collective whole enables me to see beyond the visual(s) and 'make meaning' from an advertisement in its entirety, increasing understanding of the different ways in which advertisers attempt to attract LGBTQ+ consumers, and 'how' that is achieved.

Notwithstanding the challenges of how to code latent and connotative meaning, the following sections detail the ICA process undertaken for this study, beginning with the sampling methods used to select both the magazines and advertisements contained within them, before moving on to the coding process itself and how the values and variables used for ICA were constructed and applied within the data collection process.

4.5.1 The ICA process

As already mentioned, while ICAs are distinct from traditional content analyses, there is a general agreement among scholars (for example Ahuvia, 2001; Krippendorff, 2013; Drisko and Maschi, 2015) that the process involved in designing the ICA follows some of the same rules of engagement as traditional content analyses in terms of establishing coding protocols for the

analysis of manifest content. This is to ensure an element of rigour to the overall process, so that the study is conducted in a way that is coherent and internally consistent (Drisko, 2013) and procedurally transparent and therefore replicable (Bell, 2001). Connotative meanings however should "avoid coding rules" (Ahuvia, 2001, p.145) for the aforementioned reasons, and so while explicit procedures for interpretation are necessarily absent from this section, I do provide some guidance as to how advertisements have been categorised overall (as passive, tailored, conscious and integrative). More insight into my overall analysis and interpretation of advertisements can be found in the discussion chapters, where I deconstruct a number of illustrative advertisements and talk through how various isolated images (and wording, where necessary) combine with latent cues and the wider context of the media placement to arrive at an overall reading. This 'talking through' illustrates one of the key differences between traditional content analyses and ICAs, namely, as Ahuvia (2001) puts it, the shift in 'quality control' from maximising reliability for the coding of manifest content to *justifiability* when working with more complex connotative interpretations. This is where 'insightfulness' and the ability to convince the reader becomes more important, referring us once again to Stuart Hall's (1997) emphasis on the importance of 'justifying one's reading', in recognition that there is "no single or 'correct' answer to the question, 'What does this image mean?' or 'What is this ad saying?" (p.9).

With the above in mind, the following procedural approach and structural design of the ICA for this study is primarily based on the framework and guidance provided by Philip Bell (2001) in the *Handbook of Visual Analysis,* in which he outlines the various stages and steps involved in designing a content analysis of visual images. Given that this is an 'interpretive' content analysis, its design is also influenced by Aaron Ahuvia (2001), who was one of the pioneers of the ICA some twenty years ago and introduced it as one of two new methodologies[22] "to take the next step forward and move beyond a one-size-fits-all approach to content analysis" (p.140), especially given the complex nature of analysing latent content and connotative meaning. Finally, the perspectives of Gillian Rose (2007; 2016) have been weaved into the design of this study and therefore influence much of the latter stages of this chapter, given her authority as one of the UK's leading authors in the area of visual methodologies and the critical analysis of visual culture. Accordingly, the next four sections of this chapter outline the steps taken within the ICA process, namely: sampling; determining coding variables and values; the coding process; and data analysis.

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[22] The other being 'reception based' which is "a fusion of reception research and content analysis in which direct reader input is used to code texts into categories producing quantitative results" (Ahuvia, 2001, p.154).

4.5.2 Step 1: ICA sampling approach

For this study, there are two layers of sampling to discuss: the process by which the advertisements analysed within the ICA were selected, and the magazine publications in which they were located. Starting with the latter, the method used was *purposive* sampling, a non-probability approach that is the most common means of selecting content analysis cases (Riffe and Freitag, 1997) and uses the 'judgement' of the researcher to logically select representatives of the total population (Lavrakas, 2008). Regarding the advertisements themselves, *all* advertisements within the selected magazines were coded as part of the ICA. This was to ensure that any claims regarding *'prevalence'* (of different advertising approaches) were based on actual numbers of advertisements placed across the whole accessible population, and in this sense satisfies Drisko and Maschi's (2015) call to ensure that the sampling approach relates directly to the purpose and aims of the ICA. The large-scale data set provided by this design also helps ensure that the sample is representative of the variables and values specified for the study (Bell, 2001), which I will discuss in more detail shortly.

4.5.2.1 Magazine selection

As already introduced, the sampling approach used for the selection of magazines for this study was non-probability based. Specifically, the technique used was 'typical case purposive sampling', in that there was a clear rationale for selecting each of the magazines, with a view to illustrating what is 'normal' (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019), in other words *typical,* within the magazine industry. Four UK magazines were ultimately selected, and data was collected over a one-year period (from January to December, 2016)[23]. Two were mainstream publications (*Marie Claire* and *GQ*) and two LGBTQ+ (*DIVA* and *Gay Times).* The aim was to select comparative magazines in terms of reader demographic *and* publication type, in this case 'lifestyle'. These are the most popular ('typical') form of magazine and target the masses (Jones, 2019) and therefore have the broadest appeal within their respective hetero- and homosexual 'markets'. Table 4, below, summarises the key target audience demographics of the four magazines selected for this study, and their circulation levels*.*

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[23] The overall sample therefore consisted of 48 magazine editions i.e. consecutive publications over a period of 12 months for all four of the magazine titles.

Table 4: Target audiences and circulation levels for each of the four magazines purposively selected for the ICA

Magazine	Target Audience	Primary socio-economic group	Readership age range	Circulation
Marie Claire	Women	ABC1 (66%)	18-40	175, 302
GQ	Men	ABC1 (74%)	20-44	109, 536
DIVA	Lesbian and bisexual women	ABC1 (73%)	20-44	55,000
Gay Times	Gay and bisexual men	ABC1 (81%)	25-55	65,000

Source: BRAD (2016)

As Table 4 shows, much of the demographic data is relatively comparable in terms of the age range and socio-economic status of the target audiences, although in both instances there are higher levels of ABC1 readers for the LGBTQ+ publications[24]. Where there is a significant difference is the circulation levels, with mainstream publications gaining much higher readership levels. Both *DIVA* and *Gay Times,* however, had the highest circulation figures for UK LGBTQ+ lifestyle magazines (BRAD, 2016) and so a more comparable set of publications does not exist. It was therefore considered important to ensure that the mainstream equivalents were also highly popular (albeit within a much more competitive marketplace) and so *GQ* was selected over *Esquire,* for example, since it had a higher readership level *and* had similar target audience figures to the other three publications.

It is important to note the use of binary categorisations of both gender and sexuality to determine the sample for this study (for example, *GQ* and *Gay Times* are heterosexual and homosexual magazines aimed at 'men'). This is clearly at theoretical odds with the queer underpinning of this thesis. However, there are two key factors to keep in mind: firstly, that the ICA is designed to

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[24] This however was the closest 'match' possible between mainstream and LGBTQ+ magazines, limited by the low number of LGBTQ+ publications that exist and access to demographic and readership data.

'test' the conceptual model, the development of which is based on the LGBTQ+ advertising literature which, as discussed in Chapter 2, is highly heteronormative and uses such binary distinctions throughout. Secondly, and relatedly, this reflects the categorisation of magazines (or means of segmentation within the market) whereby, as shown in Figure 13 below, they are typically organised (or socially ordered) according to 'men' and 'women'; with a sub-category of 'LGBTQ+' sitting beneath. In sum, using these sampling fields was a necessary (unavoidable) methodological decision. It also, theoretically, validates Butler's (1990) heterosexual matrix and by doing so further reveals the heteronormative context within which this ICA sits and therefore the context within which LGBTQ+ advertising approaches are ultimately critically analysed (queered).

Figure 13: An example of magazine categorisations, illustrated via Zinio (a digital magazine platform)
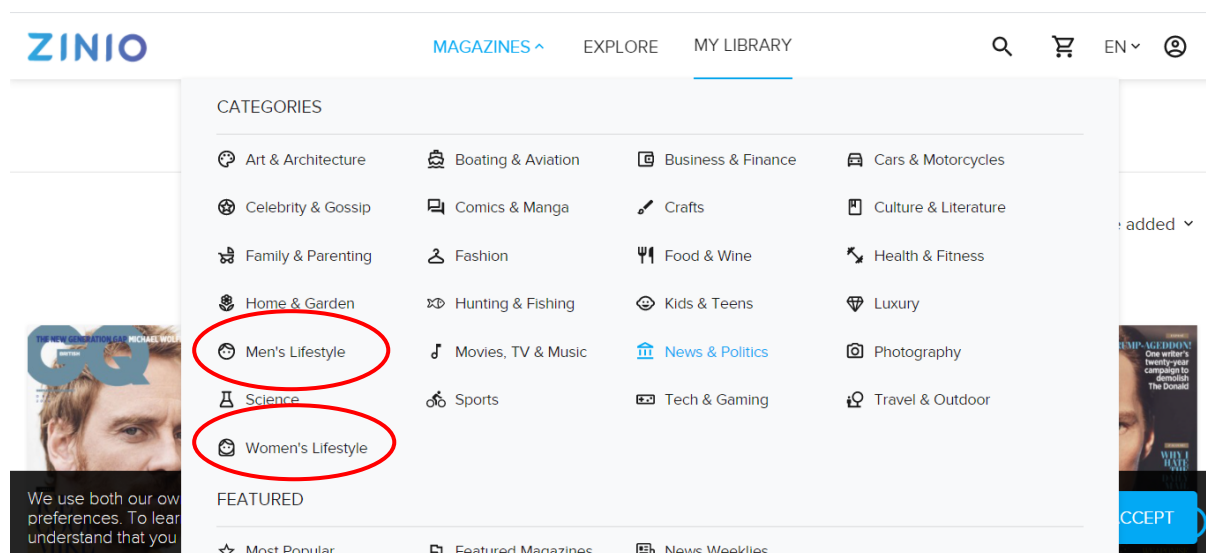
4.5.2.2 Advertisement selection

As already mentioned, all advertisements placed within all four magazines over a one-year (monthly) circulation period[25] were coded as part of the ICA, resulting in a total of 2,214 coded cases. Each case (an advertisement *in its entirety*) is considered a unit of analysis. As stressed by both Bell (2001) and Drisko and Maschi (2015), it is important to be explicit as to which units of

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[25] (n=48)

analysis have or have not been included within the sample. Therefore, it is also necessary to note the following are also points of clarification:

1) 'Classified advertisements' (that is, small personal or business advertisements relating to jobs, dating, accommodation etc) were not included within the study.

2) Advertisements promoting the magazine itself or its publishing company were also excluded.

3) Of the 2,214 units of analysis, discrete ('unique') advertisements account for 73% (n=1,626) of the total data set. The remainder (n=588) are repeat advertisements that have been placed in previous editions of the same publication and have been coded accordingly. *Both* sets of data feature within the findings and discussion chapters, where applicable[26], enabling a richer discussion of the ICA findings to take place that recognises the significance and implications of the publication variances as summarised in Table 5 below:

Table 5: Breakdown of units of analysis across publication type

Publication	Discrete units of analysis (unique advertisements)	Repeat units of analysis (repeat advertisements)	Total units of analysis (all advertisements)
Marie Claire	697 (76%)	221	918
GQ	635 (82%)	143	778
DIVA	119 (59%)	82	201
Gay Times	175 (55%)	142	317
	1,626 (73%)	**588**	**2,214**

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[26] As a general rule, the whole data set (that is, units of analysis including repeats) is used within the context of discussing 'prevalence', Repeat advertisements are typically removed when exploring image types and/or where discrete images are being discussed.

4.5.3 Step 2: Coding variables and values

Having established both the sampling approach of this study and what constitutes a unit of analysis, these next sections outline the process of *'what'* to analyse and *'how'*. As stressed previously, there are key differences between manifest and latent content and fundamental variations in how each can or 'should' be analysed or interpreted. Initially, I outline the process for identifying and coding manifest content (isolated images and wording within the advertisement, i.e. independent constructs) using the techniques advocated for a traditional content analysis (for example the creation of variables and values). This directly addresses RO2 of this thesis; specifically, '2.2 Explore how LGBTQ+ representations manifest within targeted print advertising practice in mainstream and LGBTQ+ media'. I then provide an overview of the approach taken to code each advertisement *in its entirety* (i.e. how I interpreted its overall connotative meaning) so as to ultimately categorise it as either passive, tailored, conscious or integrated. It is, however, via the deconstructions contained within the first two discussion chapters of this thesis that my reading is more fully explained and 'justified' (Hall, 1997).

4.5.3.1 Coding for manifest content

Commonly understood as a fundamental starting point in any content analysis is the construction of categories used to capture what can be seen (what 'manifests') within any unit of analysis:

> "Categories of (visual) content must be explicitly and unambiguously defined and employed consistently ('reliably') to yield meaningful evidence… To observe and quantify categories of content it is first necessary to define relevant '*variables*' of representation and/or salience. Then, on each variable, *values* can be distinguished to yield the categories of content which are to be observed and quantified."

(Bell, 2001, p.15)

Accordingly, an 'ICA Variables and Values Coding Sheet' was developed for this study (accessible here) which was adapted to provide space for tracking information, for example 'Advert ID'[27] so that advertisements, if necessary, could be easily recalled. Collectively, this formed the template within which all of the collected data was subsequently stored, a snap-shot of which can be found in the fourth tab on the same hyperlinked spreadsheet to illustrate how the data was entered and organised.

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[27] Every unit of analysis (advertisement) was given a unique code, as discussed later and illustrated in Table 16.

Alongside the creation of variables and values, content analysts must clearly define their coding systems (Drisko and Maschi, 2015) so that the analysis can be applied consistently across the dataset. This transparency also enhances the replicability of the study and its overall validity (Krippendorff, 1980). Thus, Table 6 below shows a sample of the same variables and values as above, together with a description of each categorisation to satisfy this very purpose. The full document is available via the second tab on the 'ICA Variables and Values Coding Sheet' above using the same hyperlink. Similarly, visual examples of the 'LGBTQ+ representation' values can be found on the third tab of the hyperlinked Coding Sheet.

Table 6: Sample ICA variable and values coding list with category descriptions

Tracking details or Coding theme	Variable Title	Description of Variable	Values (Abbreviated)	Description of Value (if not obvious)
Media details	**Media Placement**	The magazine in which the advertisement was **placed**	DIVA	*DIVA*
			GT	*Gay Times*
			GQ	*GQ*
			MC	*Marie Claire*
	Issue	The **month** in which the magazine was published	Jan	
			Feb	
			March	
			April	
			May	
			June	
			July	
			Aug	
			Sept	
			Oct	
			Nov	
			Dec	
	Advert size	The **size** of the advertisement placed in the magazine	Double page	
			Full page	
			Half page	
			1/4 page	
			Other	

LGBTQ+ representation	**Imp/Expl LGBTQ+ represent.**	The **majority 'level'** (implicit or explicit) of LGBTQ+ representation shown in the advertisement, if applicable	Explicit	**'No' ambiguity** regarding LGBTQ+ imagery (e.g. a same sex couple in a loving or sexual embrace)
			Implicit	**'Some' ambiguity** regarding LGBTQ+ imagery (e.g. an androgynous character or physical closeness between two same sex characters)
			None	**No LGBTQ+ images** at all (implicit or explicit)
	Main LGBTQ+ image denotation	The **main signifying** LGBTQ+ cue/image (implicit or explicit) contained within the advertisement *[The corresponding values were either deductively-generated using the works of Branchik (2007), Um (2012) and Nappier (2013) or emerged inductively via the ICA process]*	Abs of opp gend.	**'Absence of opposite gender'** (the absence of the opposite gender if more than one character is present in the advertisement)
			Sex gesture/pos/bravado	**'Sexual gesture, positioning or bravado'** (an image of a sexual nature e.g. sexual pose, gesture or confidence either alone or with somebody of the same sex)
			Sexually agg	**'Sexually aggressive behaviour'** (an image portraying overt sexual dominance or aggressive sexual behaviour between or towards same sex characters)
			Eff/butch pose	**'Effeminate (male) or butch (female) pose'** (an image where one or more character is positioned/poses in a non-normative gender manner, e.g. a male sitting with his legs crossed from the knee)
			Opp dressing	**'Characters engaged in opposite dressing'** (an image where a man is dressed as women (in 'drag') or a woman is dressed as a man)
			Eff/butch appear	**'Effeminate (male) or butch (female) appearance'** (an image where one or more character appropriates aspects of the appearance of the opposite gender e.g. a female wearing typically male attire or a male wearing make-up)
			Abs of other	**'Absence of other'**

				(where a character appears in an advertisement alone)
			LGBT occup.	**'LGBTQ+ occupation'** (an image which shows a character employed in a job typically associated with the opposite gender e.g. male as a hairdresser)
			Iconic symbol	**'LGBTQ+ iconic symbol or person'** (e.g. the rainbow flag or Judy Garland)
			LGBTQ+-rel word	**'LGBTQ+ -related word or phrase'** (e.g. 'Pride' or 'out')
			Phys closeness	**'Physical closeness'** (an image where two people of the same sex (or parts of their bodies) are positioned close together or touching)
			Androgynous char.	**'Androgynous character'** (an image of a character whose physical appearance is gender-ambiguous)
			Reject advances	**'Rejects advances'** (an image of a character(s) who rejects the sexual or romantic advances of the opposite sex)
			Masc/fem act'ies	**'Masculine or feminine activities'** (an image where the character is partaking in an activity typically associated with the opposite gender e.g. men sewing or women drinking beer)
			Group rejection	**'Group rejection'** (an image where a man or a woman is being rejected by a group of the same sex)
			Aff/sex touch	**'Affectionate or sexual touch'** (an image of men (or women) touching or embracing in an affectionate of eroticised way'
			LGBT celeb	**'LGBTQ+ Celebrity'** (the inclusion of an openly LGBTQ+ celebrity within the advertisement)
			Married activity	**'Married Activity'**

			(an image of two men (or two women) undertaking an activity typically carried out by married heterosexual couples, e.g. raising children, shopping or house-hunting)
		Advert design	**'Advert Design'** (where aspects of the design of the advertisement (e.g. colour, angles/shapes, props) are not congruent with the normative gender or sexuality of the main character(s) or media placement)
		N/A	**'N/A'** (no implicit or explicit LGBTQ+ images exist in the advertisement)
Wording influences	Whether **words** (as well as visuals) are contained within the advertisement and influence an LGBTQ+ reading	Yes	The advertisement **contains implicit or explicit LGBTQ+ wording** solely, or in addition to the visuals contained within the advertisement (e.g. gay, queer, DIVA)
		No	The advertisement **does not contain any LGBTQ+ wording**
		N/A	**'N/A'** (the advertisement is 'not targeted')
Overall categ'n	The overall advertising approach assigned to the advertisements	Passive	An advertisement containing implicit LGBTQ+ imagery placed within a mainstream magazine
		Tailored	An advertisement containing explicit LGBTQ+ imagery placed within an LGBTQ+ magazine
		Conscious	An advertisement placed within an LGBTQ+ magazine without containing explicit imagery
		Integrative	An advertisement containing explicit imagery placed in a mainstream magazine
		Not targeted	An advertisement placed in a mainstream magazine that does not have any implicit or explicit LGBTQ+ imagery

Some of the LGBTQ+ signifying values identified in Table 6 were developed *a priori* (deductively) using the works of Branchik (2007), Um (2012) and Nappier (2013) to denote LGBTQ+ images that may or may not manifest in the advertisements contained within the sample. Others evolved during the data collection process, when existing values were not present (i.e. 'codeable') within the advertisement but the *overall* impression left suggested that it was either passive, integrative, or tailored (i.e. it was felt to contain *some* level of LGBTQ+ signification or latent LGBTQ+ content). To use an already familiar example, in Chapter 2 I briefly deconstructed the Louis Vuitton advertisement featured in Figure 14 below, in which there was an element of ambiguity which would, according to Sender (2003), render the advertisement 'gay vague'. As part of that deconstruction, I referred to the physical closeness of the characters' hands around the luggage and the absence of the opposite gender:

Figure 14: A passive advertisement: Louis Vuitton advertisement placed in *Esquire* magazine

However, *neither* signifier has been identified previously as an LGBTQ+ image/denotation according to Branchik (2007), Um (2012) or Nappier (2013). Instead, my 'expert/in-group' positionality enabled me to recognise *other* manifestations or latent cues within the advertisement which contributed to an overall passive reading. Through applying this visual or interpretative 'diligence' throughout the ICA coding process, five additional values for the 'Main

LGBTQ+ image denotation' variable emerged out of the analysis, namely: physical closeness, absence of the opposite gender, absence of 'other', advert design and LGBTQ+ related word. Collectively then, the implicit and explicit signifiers donating an LGBTQ+ image, as utilised in this ICA, were derived in the following ways:

Table 7**: Derivation of implicit and explicit visuals (coded values) that denote an LGBTQ+ image used within the ICA**

(Values)	Deductively generated			Inductively generated
	Branchik (2007)	**Um (2012)**	**Nappier (2013)**	**Via the ICA**
Explicit	LGBT celeb			LGBTQ+ rel word
	Sexually agg			
	Aff/sex touch			
	Married activity		Sex gesture/ pos/bravado	
	Eff/butch pose		Eff/butch appear	
Implicit	Group rejection	Iconic symbol	Androgynous char.	Phys closeness
	LGBT occup.			Abs of opp gend.
	Masc/fem act'ies			Abs of other
	Opp dressing			
	Rejected by same sex			Advert Design

The position of each value on an 'explicit/implicit' continuum is based on Branchik's (2007, p.150) original dimensions to denote a gay male image, which he describes is "listed from the most overt to subtle". While not the same as 'explicit' and 'implicit' (the main terms of reference for representation found within the literature, hence, their inclusion within the conceptual model), this does give guidance as to where other denotations might sit. With the exception of Um (2012), who considers iconic symbolism to be both implicit and explicit (hence its midway position), the other denotations have been placed according to their *relative* explicitness. Again, this is based on my own assessment/expertise, common for more qualitatively-oriented content analyses whereby new codes can emerge from the data and more holistic interpretations can be made (Cavanagh, 1997; Alhuvia, 2002; Drisko and Maschi, 2015). Further, the position of each value on the continuum is less important than their categorisation as implicit or explicit, since the scale has not been applied in such a granular way, simply 'either/or' to replicate how representation 'type' is captured within the literature.

4.5.3.2 Coding overall units of analysis

The process of categorising targeted advertisements overall (as passive, conscious, tailored or integrative) used a combination of approaches that were iteratively employed. I either:

a) Examined each unit of analysis in turn to ascertain whether *any* of the eighteen values listed in Table 7 above were present in the advertisement. If so, the 'type' of image (i.e. implicit or explicit) combined with the mainstream or LGBTQ+ media placement decision would then determine whether the advertisement was passive, integrated, conscious or tailored (as per the conceptual model 'Targeted LGBTQ+ Advertising Approaches'). I would then 'sense-check' my categorisation by *stepping away* from the isolated images to look at the advertisement *as a whole* to consider whether my holistic reading aligned with the 'sum' of the manifest parts.

or alternatively:

b) I observed the unit of analysis *as a whole* and gained an overall first impression of the visual which, through my own reading, would enable me to determine whether the advertisement was ambiguous or if, indeed, I found it unambiguously targeted, or not targeted, towards an LGBTQ+ audience. I would then *look further* into the advertisement, in other words attempt to seek out any signs/cues (manifest or latent content) that would help explain/evidence/refute my overall initial interpretation.

In sum, I would oscillate between analysing the manifest images contained within an advertisement and reflecting on the impression left via its overall visual presence[28]. Helpful as a 'quality-control' measure for coding, this dual approach also reflects the different levels of interpretation available via an ICA whereby coding texts as well as interpreting data leads to a more contextualised analysis that goes beyond meaning which is "contained" (Krippendorff, 2013, p.25) within the visual. For some units of analysis, this process would be relatively straightforward. For others, it would take many iterations and be a time-consuming process. For these cases, I would briefly note as part of my ICA tracking system the reasons behind my ultimate categorisation, especially if it appeared to contradict the manifest images appearing within it. An example of the latter includes Figure 15 below, an advertisement for a book placed in both *DIVA* and *Gay Times* about a transgender adolescent trying to navigate around her family, school and friends*.*

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[28] The starting point (i.e. whether I used a) or b) first) depended on each advertisement. While my intention was to code for manifest content first and *then* derive an overall assessment of the advertisement approach, I often turned the page of the magazine to code the next advertisement and would have an instant (interpretive) response to the overall image in front of me *before* I had chance to consider the component parts.

Figure 15: A conscious advertisement featuring in LGBTQ+ media with an LGBTQ+ explicit denotation (01/DIVA/12/C)
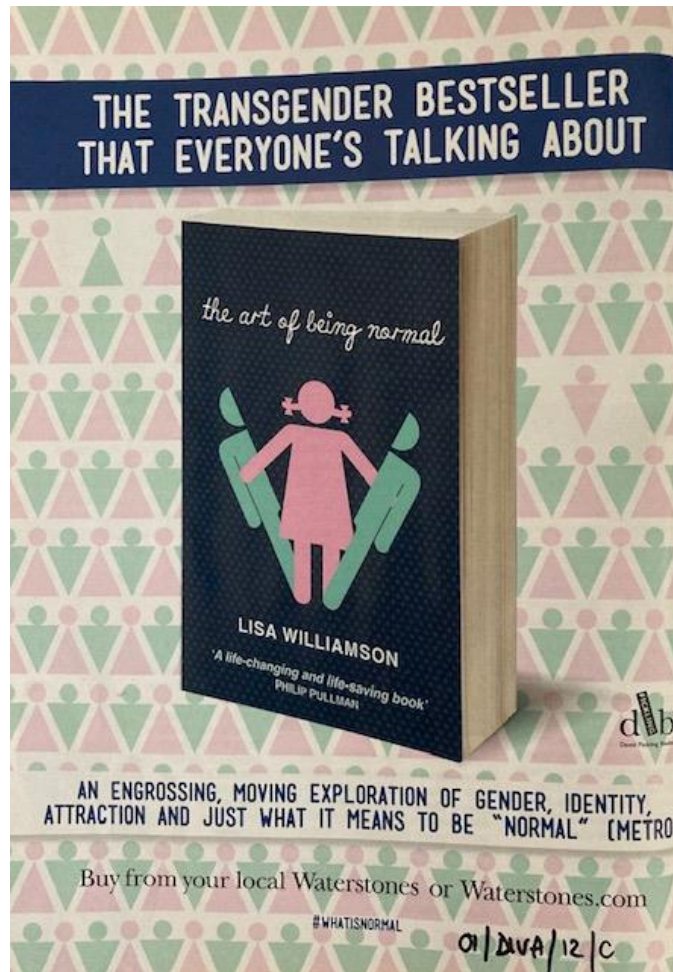
While there is an explicit LGBTQ+ reference in the visual (the word 'transgender') and so the advertisement would be categorised as 'tailored' given its placement in LGBTQ+ media, the explicit wording relates to the product itself and has not been purposely included within advertisement to 'tailor' it to an LGBTQ+ target audience. The advertisement (unchanged) could equally feature in a mainstream magazine and would not be categorised as integrative, since again there are no cues or signifiers aimed specifically at an LGBTQ+ audience, with the product remaining non-LGBTQ+ specific. In other words, it can be consumed by heterosexual/cis-gendered consumers (for example parents of transgender children) as well as those who are LGBTQ+. In these instances, it was necessary to 'over-ride' the manifest content when making decisions about overall advertisement categorisation, illustrating again the value of an ICA whereby context remains both central and important to the analysis.

4.5.4 Step 3: The coding process

The description above of my approach to coding both manifest and latent content relates to the end of the ICA coding process. There were a number of stages which needed to occur beforehand:

1) Ensuring reliability

Once coding variables and values for a content analysis have been developed, it is necessary to establish the level of consistency between different coders (inter-coder reliability) or, in this case, the internal consistency of *one* coder (intra-coder reliability) so that the analysis is objective and its results considered to be of value (Bell, 2001). While defining clear variables and values is critical to this process and improves the validity of the study, it is the consistent application of the descriptions that determines its overall reliability. To ensure consistency, pilot studies are often completed prior to the full content analysis to measure intra-coder reliability, where the coder would typically classify 50-100 cases (Bell, 2001).

For this study, the pilot consisted of coding all advertisements placed in one previous editions[29] of *DIVA* and *GQ* magazines (n=82). The reason for choosing these publications was to ensure I gained experience of coding advertisements in both a mainstream and LGBTQ+ publication (one of which is aimed at men and one at women) so that I also gained an understanding of how the different values might manifest and therefore apply within different contexts. Once coded, typical practice is to return to the pilot sample a week later and repeat the analysis, at which point the level of reliability is recommended to be 90% (Bell, 2011). While my overall percentage reliability score was 94%, the pilot did identify gaps in the values I had pre-created for variables related to 'Advertisement context/scene' and so more were added[30] ahead of the full data collection.

2) Record keeping

As mentioned above, the coding detail and overall categorisation for each advertisement within the data set (i.e. the coding result) was entered into the ICA Variables and Values Coding Sheet. Before starting the full data collection process, I developed a system to ensure that each advertisement could be tracked and therefore easily identified and retrieved if necessary. Instances included locating advertisements for inclusion in the discussion chapters as illustrative examples of various features (for example, gender non-conformity) or themes (for example,

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[29] November 2015 (the data set for the full ICA started January 2016)
[30] For example 'Extravagance' was added to the 'mood' value and 'Charity' added to 'product type'

heteronormativity) of interest or noteworthiness. This process also provides an audit trail of the ICA and enhances the replicability of the data collection stage. Accordingly, as shown in Figure 16 below, each advertisement was assigned a unique ID coding label.

Figure 16: Examples of coding labels and ID construction for each unit of analysis

ID content	Publication			
	Diva	*Gay Times*	*Marie Claire*	*GQ*
Publication and edition (month/publication)	**01/Diva** January edition of *DIVA*	**02/GT** February edition of *Gay Times*	**03/MC** March edition of *Marie Claire*	**04/GQ** April edition of *GQ*
Advertisement position (month/publication/advertisement position in the magazine as it occurs within edition)	**01/Diva/27** The 27th advertisement in the January edition of *DIVA*	**02/GT/12** The 12th advertisement the February edition of *Gay Times*	**03/MC/38** The 38th advertisement in the March edition of *Marie Claire*	**04/GQ/01** The first advertisement in the April edition of *GQ*
Overall categorisation status: (month/publication/advertisement number within edition/overall categorisation of advertisement) C= Conscious T=Tailored I=Integrative P= Passive NT= Not targeted	**01/Diva/27/C** The advertisement has been coded overall as a conscious advertisement	**02/GT/12/T** The advertisement has been coded overall as a tailored advertisement	**03/MC/38/I** The advertisement has been coded overall as an integrative advertisement	**04/GQ/01/NT** The advertisement has been coded overall as a passive advertisement

In short, each magazine was labelled at publication level according to its title and month of issue. Then, starting with the inside front cover, each advertisement placed within the publication was labelled chronologically and assigned an overall categorisation status (either passive, conscious, tailored, integrative or not targeted) once the coding process was complete. Collectively, an ID number was generated for all advertisements within the data set, for example 01/DIVA/12/C (as shown for the conscious advertisement for the transgender book example in Figure 15 above).

3) Coding order

Advertisements were coded each month for every publication rather than *within* publication over a twelve-month period. In other words, all the advertisements placed in the January editions of *DIVA, Gay Times, Marie Claire* and *GQ* were coded at the same time; and then February, March as so on. While both approaches have strengths, this was chosen for two main reasons: firstly, it was intended to enable the wider context of what might be happening at any given time (the Orlando bombing, Brexit, summer Pride events etc.) to be evenly in mind when coding the data to help explain if/why there were any significant changes in advertising style or content in response. Secondly, it was to more easily recognise/recall if an advertisement in one publication also featured in another and therefore whether any advertisements had been differentiated based on gender and/or sexuality.

The analysis of the advertisements took place in regular 'batches' to maintain coding momentum and familiarity with the value descriptions and how they were being applied within the study. Each 'batch' consisted of one month's worth of publications i.e. four magazines. As each advertisement was being analysed, coding decisions were entered directly in to the Variables and Values Coding Sheet (as shown/shared previously).

4.5.5 Step 4: ICA data analysis

While the analysis of each advertisement occurred as part of the coding process as detailed above, the analysis of the ICA data overall relates the coding results of the whole sample (n= 2,214) across all valuables and variables. To make this large and complex data set more accessible, various sets of numerical results (Bell, 2001) were created (see next Chapter) aligned to the aim and ROs of this study, specifically RO2.

RO2 Explore the representations of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders (re)constructed in targeted print advertisements	2.1 As part of the literature review, identify what constitutes an LGBTQ+ image and how LGBTQ+ representation is defined and understood (e.g. implicit and explicit images).	2.1 Secondary data analysis
	2.2 Explore how LGBTQ+ representations (derived via 2.1 above) manifest within targeted print advertising practice in mainstream and LGBTQ+ media.	2.2 Primary data: large scale Interpretive Content Analysis (ICA)

Aside from presenting macro-level results relating to the prevalence of the different advertising approaches, the main data table in Chapter 5 (Table 11: Classification of LGBTQ+ representation in *DIVA, Gay Times, Marie Claire* and *GQ*) shows the micro-level findings of the following variable frequencies: representation 'type' (implicit/explicit); main LGBTQ+ image denotations; and wording influence. Other summaries of results relate to the 'advertisement context scene' and 'demographic' variables, and present findings in relation to the setting of the advertisement scene (e.g. in a public or private space) and the age ranges of the characters featured within each advertisement.

Given the purpose of the ICA to 'count' the prevalence of the different advertising approaches used to target LGBTQ+ consumers and the (re)constructed images of non-normative genders and sexuality contained within them, all of the results are descriptive (i.e. no statistical analyses have taken place). Accordingly, basic computations on Excel were used to obtain frequency and percentage levels for all sets of coding. In isolation, these results are rather limited in terms of what they can 'say' about LGBTQ+ advertising. Indeed, interconnections cannot be made (Rose, 2016), for example; nor can the significance of the types of images found be explained. Therefore, ideally, "research adopting this methodology should supplement and extend its findings by means of detailed analysis of typical examples" (Bell, 2001, p.34). Consequently, the final phase of the research process entailed queer analysis of examples from the dataset that typified each advertising approach, mobilising insights from queer theory as the primary mode of critical analysis.

4.6 Phase III: Queering the Discursive Cases

4.6.1 What to queer?

This last phase of the research process involved the queering of 'typical examples' coming out of the ICA, having formed 'Discursive Cases'. Content analysis research and the mobilisation of queer theory represents a novel but seldom-used approach to the analysis of visual material (Meyerson *et al.*, 2007). Yet the deployment of queer theory as a mode of critical analysis to supplement content analysis data, referred to here as queering, enables critical exploration of normative constructions of sexuality and gender, such as those embedded in LGBTQ+ advertisements. The value of queering aspects of the ICA data is precisely that it goes beyond an analysis that illustrates *what is* normative practice. Rather, queering is concerned also with unsettling sexual and gender binaries and destabilising normative regimes such as heteronormativity that sustain those binaries.

The first step in queering the discursive cases was selecting them, which was numerically-driven and based on the most frequently occurring key values related to 'Advertisement context scene' and 'Demographic' variables'[31] in recognition of the *wider* context of the advertisement i.e. not just the manner in which LGBTQ+ representations manifest[32]. These frequencies are summarised in Table 8 below:

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[31] For non-repeat advertisements, in other words unique/discrete units of analysis only
[32] These (LGBTQ+ representation) manifestations already form the basis of the first two Discussion Chapters. The third 'Queering' chapter brings the analysis already undertaken together with the wider aspects of the ICA findings in order to more *comprehensively* queer the 'discursive cases'.

Table 8: Most frequently coded values per advertising approach (excluding repeat advertisements)

	No. ads.	Page size	Product type	Activity	Interaction	Setting	Mood	Gender	Ethnicity	Age	Wealth
CONSCIOUS											
DIVA	42	Full (74%)	Charity (21%)	No activity (50%)	N/A (60%)	N/A (60%)	Serious (43%)	N/A (52%)	N/A (57%)	N/A (60%)	Medium (38%)
GT	87	Full (68%)	Music/Film/TV (29%)	Posing (32%)	Alone (41%)	Staged (36%)	Serious (51%)	Male (51%)	White (45%)	N/A (34%)	Medium (36%)
Sub total	129	Full (70%)	Music/Film/TV (23%)	No activity (35%)	N/A (43%)	N/A (41%)	Serious (48%)	N/A (40%)	N/A (42%)	N/A (43%)	Meduim (36%)
TAILORED											
DIVA	77	Full (60%)	LGBT Festivals (23%)	Posing (23%)	Couples (27%)	Public (48%)	Happiness* (18%)	Female (78%)	White (52%)	19-29 (36%)	Low-med (45%)
GT	88	Full (84%)	Travel/Hol. ** (15%)	Posing (49%)	Alone (34%)	Staged (52%)	Serious (26%)	Male (81%)	White (65%)	19-29 (56%)	Medium (49%)
Sub total	165	Full (73%)	Travel/Hol (16%)	Posing (36%)	Alone (24%)	Staged (38%)	Serious (21%)	Male (43%)	White (59%)	19-29 (47%)	Medium (42%)
Total (LGBT)	294	** equal with 'Fashion High End'					* equal with 'Playful/fun'				
PASSIVE											
MC	29	Full (59%)	Fashion High End (55%)	Posing (69%)	Individual (52%)	Staged (48%)	Serious (45%)	Female (100%)	White (62%)	19-29 (97%)	Medium (52%)
GQ	62	Full (48%)	Fashion High End (87%)	Posing (76%)	Alone (56%)	Staged (42%)	Serious (58%)	Male (82%)	White (79%)	19-29 (92%)	Med-High (54%)
Sub total	91	Full (51%)	Fashion High End (78%)	Posing (74%)	Alone (48%)	Staged (44%)	Serious (54%)	Male (56%)	White (74%)	19-29 (92%)	Med-High (46%)
INTEGRATIVE											
MC	12	Full (95%)	Health/Beauty (42%)	Posing (92%)	Individual (50%)	Staged (83%)	Serious (42%)	Female (100%)	White (67%)	19-29 (100%)	Medium (75%)
GQ	12	Double (58%)	Fashion High End (75%)	Posing (58%)	Individual (42%)	Staged (50%)	Serious (58%)	Male (83%)	White (42%)	19-29 (92%)	Med-High (50%)
Sub total	24	Full (54%)	Fashion High End (42%)	Posing (75%)	Individual (46%)	Staged (67%)	Serious (42%)	Female (58%)	White (50%)	19-29 (96%)	Medium (50%)
Total (mainstream)	115										
OVERALL	409										

As noted in Chapter 8, while this approach continues the methodological rigour required for an ICA, the selected advertisements do not necessarily reflect the majority of advertisements placed in practice. Rather, this process is a one-size-fits-all 'reduction', attempting to locate in one exemplar advertisement all that epitomises the key features typically found in each type of advertising approach. Its value, then, is in holding *all* the key analytical forms in one summary artefact, enabling a comprehensive and contextualised analysis to take place. To supplement this approach, additional advertising examples from the dataset have been brought into the analyses to stimulate further discussion on variances on a theme. Collectively, the advertising examples selected for queering (as performed in Chapter 8) generate a sufficiently broad yet apposite basis from which to address the third RO of this thesis, namely:

RO3 Critically analyse LGBTQ+ targeted advertising approaches and constituent images, using queer theory as a frame for analysis	3.1 As part of the literature review, begin to expose aspects of the advertising literature that are 'problematic' from a queer perspective.	3.1 Secondary data analysis
	3.2 Critically analyse the images used in LGBTQ+ targeted print advertisements by performing a queer deconstruction of four illustrative print advertisements (reflecting each of the advertising approaches captured within the conceptual model: 'passive', 'conscious', 'tailored' and 'integrative')	3.2 Queer deconstruction of four discursive cases

4.6.2 How to queer

As discussed in Chapter 3, there is variation in how queering can be understood and mobilised. One instance of queering that is relevant to the process of data analysis is as a discursive strategy that, as Seidman (1997, p.7) puts it, involves the "displacement or placing into doubt of foundational assumptions (e.g., about the subject, knowledge, society, and history) for the purpose of opening up new possibilities for critical social analysis and political practice". In other words, queering is a mode of analysis that enabled me to interrogate LGBTQ+ advertisements in order to expose the underlying normative assumptions upon which they are constructed. As discussed in the introductory chapter of this thesis, the galvanisation of queer theory as an analytical practice of queering advertisements has yet to take hold, and is confined to a few studies (Kates, 1999). As such, I adopted Kates's approach to queering advertisements as a model for queering the LGBTQ+ advertisements in this thesis.

In practice, this involved applying a mixture of Derridean deconstruction - that is, 'privileging the absences' (1979) - with feminist (Stern, 1993) and queer thought, most notably resulting in the performance of a "textual sex change operation" (Kates, 1999, p.31). Designed to destabilise the preferred meaning (arguably its denotative meaning) by bringing in other[ed] knowledges about sexuality, it involves having "deconstructive fun" by playing with the cues/signifiers in the advertisement to "spin the chain of associations into strange and perverse possibilities" (Kates, 1999, p.33). So, if there were a male and female couple in an advertisement for example, the reader would change either of the characters to the opposite sex, resulting in two men (a gay couple) or two women (a lesbian couple) becoming the lead characters. If the couple are already same-sex, then reverse one to the opposite.

Procedurally, before beginning the process of queering, Kates (1999) suggests performing a more traditional analysis of the advertisement in an attempt to decipher its originally intended meaning (notwithstanding the absence of any 'one' reading for any advertisement); taking note in particular of any text that might constrain meaning-making (for example the wording 'the family car') which could potentially restrict the polysemy of the advertisement or at least reduce the flexibility of interpretation for some of its manifest content. He stresses the importance, too, of incorporating the media placement of the advertisement as part of the overall analysis. For example, by using the words 'the family car' alongside an image of two men and their dogs in an advertisement placed in an LGBTQ+ publication, "The family binary foregrounds the political imperative of legitimizing gay relationships" (Kates, 1999, p.30), thereby exposing the heteronormative underpinning of the discursively constructed advertisement.

As mentioned previously, the analysis itself takes place within the final 'queering' discussion chapter (Chapter 8) and so a full understanding of the way in which queering occurs within this thesis and the *chain of associations* featured and explored can be found later.

4.7 Reflexivity and Ethics

Having talked through each of the three phases of the research process, the final points I want to make before bringing this chapter to a close are in relation to reflexivity and, through that discussion, researcher ethics. This study did not include any collection of data from human participants and as such the *usual* ethical concerns surrounding 'do no harm' and confidentiality etc. do not apply in the same way[33]. That said, and as I mention again shortly, reflexivity is in part

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[33] Furthermore, the advertisements exist in the public domain and none have fallen foul of the Advertising Standards Authority's (ASA) code of conduct

about opening ourselves up to scrutiny (Cunliffe, 2003), and with that, a certain level of honesty is required. This is not just honesty in terms of reporting to the reader how various processes and procedures were conducted and presenting the findings truthfully (i.e. issues relating to accuracy and transparency), but also how our relationship with the context impacts all aspects of the research process. This brings in to play the importance of understanding my researcher positionality and its influence on "what kind of knowledge is possible" (Corlett and Mavin, 2018, p.6), as well as how it has influenced the design of the study, from its methods to its analysis.

Herein lies an ethical point of consideration; one which is not problematic but does need acknowledging nonetheless. For me to state my positionality requires disclosure of various parts of my identity that I may not wish to share. Personally, I am comfortable discussing how being gay and non-binary has shaped my understanding of sexuality and gender and thus the epistemological roots of this thesis. Less comfortable, however, but of equal importance is my 'socio-historical positioning' (Srivastava, 2006) whereby certain attitudes and behaviours I encountered 'growing up' in the 1980s/1990s influenced my response to hearing, for example, that images of people like myself may cause offence and create "a notable backlash" from heterosexuals (Oakenfull and Greenlee, 2015, p.247). This discomfort comes not only from the stark reminder of the *lived realities* of the hierarchical nature of the sexual binary, but also from the idea that the *source* of that marginalisation is not from a peer group, my teachers, or various encounters on the street; it arises via the discursive power present within "the realm of meaning and production of knowledge" (Day, 2012, p.67). In this sense, my positionality has strongly influenced the outcomes of my research (Whitaker and Atkinson, 2008) via my relationship with the *context of* the research (Corlett and Mavin, 2018). As I have said previously, that is not to say I have a pre-determined 'answer' I am seeking to achieve, rather that I have sought to put myself within the design of this study to intentionally destabilise/problematise some of the foundations upon which this knowledge is created and subsequently perpetuated and practised.

Linked to this, Gabriel (2015) stated that the reflexive researcher cannot separate themselves from the empirical data and, as previously mentioned, my non-normative gender and sexuality has influenced how I coded the ICA data and queered the discursive cases. This in many ways relates to 'interpretation of interpretation', as discussed by Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009), whereby no analysis of the data is completely 'interpretation-free'. However, my positionality does enable me to wear a "special pair of glasses" (Cousin, 2010, p.11) that aids my analysis of a topic of this nature. Disclosing this bias is important, since the reader is able to take my 'insider' position into account (Hardy, Phillips and Clegg, 2001). In the context of this research, though, I

posit that this enhanced understanding places me, as Ahuvia (2001) put it, in the position of 'expert'; this is necessary within the context of an ICA whereby, for example, being able to recognise and encode polysemic (passive) advertisements is crucial. Furthermore, given my epistemological and ontological stance, my interpretation of the data is only ever going to be *partial*. My analysis is not designed to be exhaustive or definitive; indeed, while the methodological processes and procedures for this study are transparent in part for the sake of replicability, this transparency also ensures that I am being as open and clear as possible about my own ways of seeing (Rose, 2007) and how these shape both the direction and outcomes of this study.

4.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined and justified the methodological underpinning and research methods deployed in this study. With the aim of producing knowledge about the discursive constructions of sexuality and gender in LGBTQ+ advertising, I have used an interpretive version of a traditional research method (content analysis) alongside a mode of analysis steeped in queer theory. As the following chapters demonstrate, this approach enables me to challenge normative assumptions about sexuality and gender when they are organised around the heterosexual/homosexual binary. In other words, in the remaining chapters I am able to discuss the various representations of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders in the advertising media selected. Building on this, queering serves to open up spaces for an analysis that exposes, but also encourages us to move beyond, limited and restrictively 'normal' sexual and gender binaries.

Chapter 5 – Results

5. 1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the ICA and, as such, provides the data to support RO2: 'Explore the representations of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders (re)constructed in targeted print advertisements'[34]. Specifically, this chapter displays different sets of top-level ICA data to show, for example, the prevalence of each advertising approach (passive, conscious, tailored and integrative) across the sample, and the LGBTQ+ denotations/images typically featured within each categorisation. Differences between magazines within and across media type (e.g. *DIVA* versus *Gay Times,* or *Gay Times* versus *GQ)* are shown where appropriate. Much of the way in which the findings have been presented is based on the guidance of Bell (2001), who recommended that data is organised according to variable classifications and ranked in relation to value frequencies.

Please note that the data is only *presented* in the sections that follow. The analysis takes place within the subsequent two discussion chapters, organised according to advertisements placed in mainstream media (Chapter 6) and LGBTQ+ media (Chapter 7). Other sets of more granular data are included within these discussions, extracted from the overall data set.

5.2 Prevalence of advertising approaches

The following two tables show the prevalence of each LGBTQ+ targeted advertising approach (passive, conscious, tailored and integrative) across the sample. The first includes *all* advertisements/units of analysis (n=2,214), the second removes any repeated advertisements *within* a publication (n=1,626).

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[34] Research activity 2.2: 'Explore how LGBTQ+ representations (derived via the LGBTQ+ Advertising Literature Review) manifest within targeted print advertising practice in mainstream and LGBTQ+ media'

Table 9: Prevalence of each advertising approach across all media publication/types (includes repeat advertisements)

Media	Publ.	Total ads	Passive		Conscious		Tailored		Integrative		Not targ.	
			n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%
LGBTQ+	DIVA	201			80	40%	121	60%				
	GT	317			160	50%	157	50%				
TOTAL		518			240	46%	278	54%				
M'stream	MC	918	36	4%					13	1%	869	95%
	GQ	778	70	9%					18	2%	690	89%
Total		1696	106	6%					31	2%	1559	92%
TOTAL		2214	106	5%	240	11%	278	13%	31	1%	1559	70%

Table 10: Prevalence of each advertising approach across all media publication/types (excluding repeat advertisements *within* publication)

Media	Publ.	Total ads	Passive		Conscious		Tailored		Integrated		Not targ.	
			n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%
LGBTQ+	DIVA	119			42	35%	77	65%				
	GT	175			87	50%	88	50%				
TOTAL		294			129	44%	165	56%				
M'stream	MC	697	29	4%					12	2%	656	94%
	GQ	635	62	10%					12	2%	561	88%
Total		1332	91	7%					24	2%	1217	91%
TOTAL		1626	91	6%	129	8%	165	10%	24	1%	1217	75%

5.3 Overall coding results

The following three tables show the coding decisions (frequencies) for all values constructed as part of the ICA. For ease of readership, these have been broken down into the three 'coding themes' designed for the Variables and Values Coding List, namely 'LGBTQ+ representation', 'Advertising Context/Scene' and 'Demographic-related' data. The values relating to each variable have been ranked (by total number across the sample) in addition to showing how they relate to each of the four publications selected for this study, namely *Marie Claire*, *GQ*, *DIVA* and *Gay Times.*

Table 11: Ranked classification of LGBTQ+ representation in *DIVA*, *Gay Times*, *Marie Claire* and *GQ* (excluding repeats, n=1626)

Variable	Value		DIVA (n=119)	Gay Times (n=175)	Marie Claire (n=697)	GQ (n=635)	Total (rank order)
1. Implicit/Explicit LGBTQ+ representation	1.1	None	27	57	656	561	1301
	1.2	Explicit	80	81	12	12	185
	1.3	Implicit	12	37	29	62	140
2. Main LGBTQ+ image denotation	2.1	N/A	27	58	642	559	1286
	2.2	LGBT-rel word	32	31	0	0	63
	2.3	Eff/butch appear	10	6	11	24	51
	2.4	Aff/sex touch	21	17	6	6	50
	2.5	Phys closeness	4	3	17	3	27
	2.6	Iconic symbol/word	12	14	1	0	27
	2.7	Androgynous char.	0	0	6	14	20
	2.8	Eff/butch pose	0	3	6	11	20
	2.9	LGBT celeb	3	4	6	5	18
	2.10	Abs of other	1	13	0	1	15
	2.11	Married activity	8	7	0	0	15
	2.12	Sex gesture/pos/bravado	0	11	0	4	15
	2.13	Abs of opp gend.	0	5	1	3	9
	2.14	Opp dressing	1	3	1	4	9
	2.15	Advert Design	0	0	0	1	1
	2.16	Masc/fem act'ies	0	0	0	0	0
	2.17	Group rejection	0	0	0	0	0
	2.18	LGBT occup.	0	0	0	0	0
	2.19	Reject advances	0	0	0	0	0

	2.20	Sexually agg	0	0	0	0	0
3. Wording influence	3.1	N/A	27	57	648	564	1296
	3.2	Yes	83	91	8	4	186
	3.3	No	9	27	41	67	144
4. Overall categorisation	4.1	Passive	0	0	29	62	91
	4.2	Tailored	77	88	0	0	165
	4.3	Conscious	42	77	0	0	119
	4.4	Integrative	0	0	12	12	24
	4.5	Not Targeted	0	0	656	561	1217

Highest ranking within publication

Table 12**: Ranked classification of advertisement context/scene data in** *DIVA, Gay Times, Marie Claire* **and** *GQ* **(excluding repeats, n=1626)**

Variable	Value		DIVA (n=119)	Gay Times (n=175)	Marie Claire (n=697)	GQ (n=635)	Total (rank order)
1. Product type	1.1	Fash High end	0	19	132	261	412
	1.2	Health/Beau.	1	24	239	26	290
	1.3	Jewellery/watch	4	8	76	128	216
	1.4	Fash High St	3	8	74	42	127
	1.5	Fragrance	0	0	68	38	106
	1.6	Car	2	2	14	38	56
	1.7	Travel/Hol.	16	15	10	13	54
	1.8	Music/film/tv	9	32	2	5	48
	1.9	Home-based	0	3	22	15	40
	1.10	Food	0	4	26	6	36
	1.11	Technology	1	2	5	24	32
	1.12	Charity	11	9	4	6	30
	1.13	Festival	18	1	0	2	21
	1.14	Wedding-related	8	9	1	0	18
	1.15	Leisure	3	10	2	3	18
	1.16	Drink - alcohol	0	1	1	14	16
	1.17	Fertility	15	0	0	0	15
	1.18	Financial	4	7	1	1	13
	1.19	LGBT event/supp.	5	2	0	0	7
	1.20	Book	4	2	1	1	8
	1.21	Employment	6	1	0	0	7
	1.22	Dating	3	3	0	0	6

	1.23	Drink - soft	0	0	5	1	6
	1.24	Legal	3	3	0	0	6
	1.25	Mixed retail	0	0	3	3	6
	1.26	Education	0	0	2	3	5
	1.27	FMCG	0	0	4	0	4
	1.28	Sex	0	5	0	0	5
	1.29	Family-related	1	1	2	0	4
	1.30	Art/photography	0	2	0	1	3
	1.31	Political/action	1	1	0	1	3
	1.32	Motorbike	0	0	0	1	1
	1.33	Pet	1	1	0	0	2
	1.34	Property-related	0	0	1	1	2
	1.35	Medical	0	0	1	0	1
	1.36	Flowers	0	0	1	0	1
	1.37	Stationery	0	0	0	1	1
2. LGBTQ+ related product	2.1	No	61	121	697	635	1514
	2.2	Yes	58	54	0	0	112
3. Activity	3.1	Posing	25	71	437	303	836
	3.2	No activity	30	31	109	129	299
	3.3	N/A	10	11	47	72	140
	3.4	Leisure	9	7	54	58	128
	3.5	Travel/Holiday	10	7	6	15	38
	3.6	Performing	4	17	1	8	30
	3.7	Socialising	5	3	10	10	28
	3.8	Romantic	12	9	3	4	28
	3.9	Sport	0	2	4	18	24

	3.10	Domestic	5	4	9	4	22
	3.11	Health	4	7	3	3	17
	3.12	Sexual	1	2	4	3	10
	3.13	Work	1	1	3	5	10
	3.14	Cosmetic/self care	0	1	4	0	5
	3.15	Shopping	0	1	3	1	5
	3.16	Family	2	0	0	1	3
	3.17	Relaxing	1	0	0	1	2
	3.18	Mixed	0	1	0	0	1
4. Interaction	4.1	Alone	17	66	404	291	778
	4.2	N/A	37	42	152	205	436
	4.2	Individuals	20	26	93	77	216
	4.2	Couple	19	21	27	35	102
	4.2	Mixed	11	9	3	5	28
	4.2	Group	3	7	7	7	24
	4.2	Family	7	3	6	6	22
	4.2	With animals	0	0	4	7	11
	4.2	Just animals	2	1	1	1	5
	4.2	Couples	3	0	0	1	4
5. Setting	5.1	Staged	24	76	350	190	640
	5.2	Public	46	49	160	191	446
	5.3	N/A	38	39	146	192	415
	5.4	Private	5	5	38	58	106
	5.5	Domestic	3	3	2	2	10
	5.6	Mixed	3	3	1	2	9
	5.7	Work	0	0	0	0	0

6. Nucleus	6.1	Product	16	35	288	330	669
	6.2	Characters	36	61	180	141	418
	6.3	Wording	57	72	133	64	326
	6.4	Brand	1	1	76	88	166
	6.5	Facial	4	6	20	11	41
	6.6	Activity	5	0	0	1	6
7. Mood	7.1	Serious	30	66	219	389	704
	7.2	Exciting	11	20	94	83	208
	7.3	Happiness	18	10	61	19	108
	7.4	Playful/fun	16	14	58	19	107
	7.5	Relaxing	4	6	33	31	74
	7.6	Indulgence	2	6	46	17	71
	7.7	Sexual	2	17	27	0	46
	7.8	Intense	1	7	17	30	55
	7.9	Independence	0	1	39	5	45
	7.10	Peaceful/calm	3	2	26	6	37
	7.11	Extravagance	1	0	16	16	33
	7.12	Humorous	4	3	16	8	31
	7.13	Celebratory	11	8	7	3	29
	7.14	Romantic	10	4	8	3	25
	7.15	Energetic	3	3	14	3	23
	7.16	Alluring	0	0	15		15
	7.17	Entertaining	3	8	0	1	12
	7.18	Futuristic	0	0	1	2	3

Highest ranking within publication

Table 13: Ranked classification of demographic-related data in *DIVA*, *Gay Times*, *Marie Claire* and *GQ* (excluding repeats, n=1626)

Variable	Value	DIVA (n=119)	Gay Times (n=175)	Marie Claire (n=697)	GQ (n=635)	Total (rank order)
1. (Majority) Gender	1.1 Female	73	11	498	27	610
	1.2 N/A	35	39	151	211	436
	1.3 Male	2	115	17	351	386
	1.5 Equal	0	1	29	37	68
	1.6 Not sure	7	3	2	8	23
	1.7 Transgend.	2	4	0	1	7
	1.8 Mixed	0	2	0	0	2
2. (Majority) Ethnicity	2.1 White	55	96	413	286	795
	2.2 N/A	36	40	151	207	398
	2.3 Unsure	9	20	73	83	176
	2.4 Mixed/Multi	17	14	39	27	80
	2.5 Black	2	5	9	19	33
	2.6 European	0	0	8	8	16
	2.7 Asian	0	0	4	4	8
	2.8 Other	0	0	0	1	1
3. (Majority) Adult Age	3.1 19-29	37	73	418	294	822
	3.2 N/A	36	40	151	208	435
	3.3 30-39	24	35	63	71	193
	3.4 40-49	14	14	28	27	83
	3.5 Not sure	1	7	6	23	37
	3.6 Baby/child	5	1	17	0	23
	3.7 50-59	2	3	6	8	19

	3.8	60-69	0	0	5	1	6
	3.9	Teens	0	1	2	2	5
	3.10	70+	0	1	1	1	3
4. (Majority) Disability	4.1	No	81	135	544	423	1183
	4.2	N/A	38	37	151	210	436
	4.3	Not sure	0	3	2	2	7
	4.4	Yes	0	0	0	0	0
5. Wealth indicator	5.1	Medium	41	74	368	251	734
	5.2	Med-High	16	32	139	288	475
	5.3	Low-medium	46	55	181	51	333
	5.4	High	2	1	1	41	45
	5.5	Unsure	13	12	0	4	29
	5.6	Low	1	1	8	0	10

Highest ranking within publication

5.4 Representations of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders

The final four tables extend the results shown in Table 13: Ranked classification of LGBTQ+ representation in *DIVA, Gay Times, Marie Claire and GQ,* above, by presenting the data according to each of the four advertising approaches. This provides a more comprehensive response to RO2: 'Explore the representations of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders (re)constructed in targeted print advertisements' for which the ICA has been designed to address.

Table 14**: Ranked LGBTQ+ image denotation for passive advertisements (excluding repeats)**

Coded image	Marie Claire	GQ	Total (rank order)
Eff/butch appear	7 (24%)	24 (39%)	31 (34%)
Androgynous char.	5 (17%)	14 (23%)	19 (21%)
Eff/butch pose	5 (17%)	10 (16%)	15 (17%)
Phys closeness	9 (30%)	1 (2%)	10 (11%)
Opp dressing	1 (4%)	4 (6%)	5 (5%)
Abs of opp gend.	1 (4%)	2(3%)	3 (3%)
Sex gesture/pos/bravado		4 (6%)	4 (4%)
Abs of other		2 (3%)	2 (2%)
Iconic symbol/word	1 (4%)		1 (1%)
Other: Advert design		1 (2%)	1 (1%)
LGBT occup.			
LGBT-rel word			
Sexually agg			
Reject advances			
Masc/fem act'ies			
Group rejection			
Aff/sex touch			
LGBT celeb			
Married activity			

Highest ranking within publication

Table 15**: Ranked LGBTQ+ image denotation for conscious advertisements (excluding repeats)**

Coded image	DIVA	Gay Times	Total (rank order)
N/A	26 (62%)	57 (66%)	83 (64%)
LGBT-rel word	7 (17%)	5 (6%)	12 (9%)
Iconic symbol/word	5 (12%)	5 (6%)	10 (8%)
Abs of other	1 (2%)	7 (8%)	8 (6%)
Aff/sex touch	1 (2%)	4 (5%)	5 (4%)
Abs of opp gend.	1 (2%)	2 (2%)	3 (2%)
LGBT celeb		3 (3%)	3 (2%)
Opp dressing		2 (2%)	2 (2%)
Eff/butch appear		2 (2%)	2 (2%)
Phys closeness	1 (2%)		1 (1%)
Sex gesture/pos/bravado			
Sexually agg			
Eff/butch pose			
LGBT occup.			
Androgynous char.			
Reject advances			
Masc/fem act'ies			
Group rejection			
Married activity			

Highest ranking within publication

Table 16: Ranked LGBTQ+ image denotation for tailored advertisements (excluding repeats)

Coded image	DIVA	Gay Times	Total (rank order)
LGBT-rel word	25 (32%)	26 (30%)	51 (31%)
Aff/sex touch	20 (26%)	13 (15%)	33 (20%)
Iconic symbol/word	7 (9%)	9 (10%)	16 (10%)
Married activity	8 (10%)	7 (8%)	15 (9%)
Eff/butch appear	10 (13%)	4 (5%)	14 (8%)
Sex gesture/pos/bravado		11 (13%)	11 (7%)
Phys closeness	3 (4%)	3 (3%)	6 (4%)
Abs of other		5 (6%)	5 (3%)
LGBT celeb	3 (4%)	2 (2%)	5 (3%)
Abs of opp gend.		4 (5%)	4 (2%)
Eff/butch pose		3 (3%)	3 (2%)
Opp dressing	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	2 (1%)
Sexually agg			
LGBT occup.			
Androgynous char.			
Reject advances			
Masc/fem act'ies			
Group rejection			

Highest ranking within publication

Table 17**: Ranked LGBTQ+ image denotation for integrative advertisements (excluding repeats)**

Coded image	Marie Claire	GQ	Total (rank order)
Aff/sex touch	6 (50%)	6 (50%)	12 (50%)
LGBT celeb	5 (42%)	5 (42%)	10 (42%)
Eff/butch appear	1 (8%)		1 (4%)
Eff/butch pose		1 (8%)	1 (4%)
Abs of opp gend.			
Sex gesture/pos/bravado			
Sexually agg			
Eff/butch pose			
Opp dressing			
Eff/butch appear			
Abs of other			
LGBT occup.			
Iconic symbol/word			
LGBT-rel word			
Phys closeness			
Androgynous char.			
Reject advances			
Masc/fem act'ies			
Group rejection			
Aff/sex touch			
LGBT celeb			
Married activity			

5.5 Conclusion

The top-level sets of data above are designed to give the reader a sense of the overall findings of the ICA. The following two chapters discuss these results (and other more granular combinations of the ICA findings) using various examples from the ICA data set to illustrate the points being made. While the ICA collected a large *range* of data (to help contextualise some of the manifest meaning and therefore deepen the overall analysis of some of the advertisements), not *all* sets of data have been drawn upon within the following discussion chapters. In other words, some results are discussed in more detail than others, while ensuring that the overall purpose of the ICA has been met and the RO achieved.

Chapter 6 - Discussion I: Mainstream Placement

6. 1 Introduction

This is the first of three discussion chapters addressing RO2 of this thesis, namely to 'critically analyse LGBTQ+ targeted advertising approaches and constituent images, using queer theory as a frame for analysis'. The first two discussion chapters position the findings of the ICA back within the LGBTQ+ advertising literature and are contextualised by media type; in other words, they discuss passive and integrative advertisements placed in mainstream media (this chapter) and conscious and tailored advertisement place in LGBTQ+ media (in the chapter that follows). While both integrate aspects of queer theory into the analyses, it is the final discussion chapter, in which four 'Discursive Cases' (advertisements) are deconstructed, that truly mobilises insights from queer theory to problematise hetero- and cisnormative representations of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders, and challenges other ways in which both are discursively re(constructed) within targeted LGBTQ+ advertisements.

In terms of structure, this chapter starts with a presentation the ICA findings for advertisements placed within *Marie Claire* and *GQ* magazine over a 12-month circulation period (n=1,696[35]). The frequency (actual and relative prevalence) of passive, integrative and not targeted advertisements is then discussed, including an analysis of the types of visuals used to denote an LGBTQ+ image (main and multiple combinations) and other coded variables such as categorical data/demographic points of distinction, type of product, character interaction and advertisement setting. Differences in findings between *Marie Claire* and *GQ* will be highlighted throughout. Interspersed within this analysis are pockets of queerer interpretations (for example how some of the images are highly heteronormative); however, the actual queering of a passive and integrative advertisement takes place in the final discussion chapter (Chapter 8).

6.2 Type and frequency of LGBTQ+ targeted advertisements placed in mainstream media

As shown in Table 18 below, a total of 1,696 advertisements placed in *Marie Claire* and *GQ* were coded as part of this study, split relatively evenly across each publication (54% and 46% respectively). Within

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[35] Including repeat advertisements

this group of advertisements, 2% were classified as integrative, 6% passive and 92% were not targeted towards LGBTQ+ consumers at all[36].

Table 18: Type and frequency of targeted LGBTQ+ advertisements in mainstream media (including repeat advertisements)

Media	Publication	Total ads	Passive		Conscious		Tailored		Integrative		Not targeted	
			n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%
LGBTQ+	DIVA	201 (39%)			80	40%	121	60%				
	GT	317 (61%)			160	50%	157	50%				
Total		518			240	46%	278	54%				
Mainstream	MC	918 (54%)	36	4%					13	1%	869	95%
	GQ	778 (46%)	70	9%					18	2%	690	89%
Total		1696	106	6%					31	2%	1559	92%
TOTAL		2214	106	5%	240	11%	278	13%	31	1%	1559	70%

Within the wider dataset, these figures reduce to 1% integrative, 5% passive and 70% not targeted, alongside 11% conscious and 13% tailored. In terms of headline findings for the ICA, this could be considered relatively positive in terms of LGBTQ+ inclusion, insomuch as almost a third of advertisements (30%) *across* publications were targeted towards LGBTQ+ consumers, either via the images used and/or the choice of magazine placement. However, this only stands true *within the sample* whereby mainstream and LGBTQ+ media have been equally represented (two magazines of each 'type'). There are, however, significantly more UK mainstream lifestyle publications in circulation than LGBTQ+ publications[37] (BRAD, 2020) and so the *exposure* of LGBTQ+ advertising/representations becomes diluted within the wider pool of magazine consumption; even more so given that the cross-

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[36] In other words, they did not contain any or sufficient levels of LGBTQ+ imagery or wording to lead to an LGBTQ+ reading.
[37] There are 56 men and women's *mainstream* lifestyle magazines (print/digital) in publication, versus 5 *LGBTQ+*

over in readership is typically one way (LGBTQ+ folk read mainstream magazines (Oakenfull and Greenlee, 2005) but non-LGBTQ+ people do not necessarily read LGBTQ+ publications).

This highlights the importance of analysing the findings of the ICA, in this chapter, from two distinct but inter-related standpoints:

> 1) to what extent do LGBTQ+ advertisements feature *within* the context of mainstream magazines (for example, to what extent do LGBTQ+ targeted advertisements feature as part of the total advertising presence in mainstream publications? What is the proportion of passive versus integrative advertisements? Within the advertisements, what representations or images are used to target LGBTQ+ people?)

and

> 2) what do these types and levels of LGBTQ+ visibility (or non-visibility) *begin to tell us* about non-normative genders and sexualities (for example, 'who' or 'what' is more present?) What are the potential implications of this (in)visibility within a mainstream context?

With this in mind, arguably it makes sense that only 8% of the advertisements (passive and integrative combined) are targeted at LGBTQ+ consumers and 92% are not targeted at all. Similar percentages are reported to represent members of the UK LGBTQ+ and heterosexual population respectively (ONS, 2016). However, the composition of that 8% is important. If passive advertising does what it is intended to (i.e. not be recognisable to a heterosexual audience) then there is only a 2% LGBTQ+ visibility level[38] for the mainstream audience. This means that dominant advertising practice a) disproportionately shows explicit images and representations of heterosexuality, and b) *hides* or *disguises* any LGBTQ+ imagery when actively trying to attract LGBTQ+ consumers. This latter finding can be seen to concur with the dominant narrative within the advertising literature, whereby 'gay vague' advertising is advocated (see, for example, Oakenfull and Greenlee, 2005; Um, 2010). This practice is, however, problematic. For example, since explicit (i.e. widely recognisable) LGBTQ+ representations are either minimal (2%), non-existent, or camouflaged to *make* it non-existent, it can be seen to reinforce the hierarchical binary of heterosexuality/homosexuality which, as I discussed in Chapter 3, not only privileges heterosexuality but reinforces the 'abnormality' of homosexuality (Sedgwick, 1990; Seidman, 1997). Such representational imbalance and paucity of LGBTQ+ images in

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[38] Passive advertisements make up 6% of total LGBTQ+ targeted advertisements in mainstream publications, compared to 2% integrative (whereby representations are explicit)

the media generally can lead to negative self-perceptions and feelings of inadequacy for LGBTQ+ people (Fryberg and Townsend, 2008; Gomillion and Giuliano, 2011).

6.3 LGBTQ+ signifiers in women's magazines

Where explicit representations *do* exist, there are also concerns about the signifiers used. As I discuss in more detail in the following sub-section, there is a stark contrast between, for example, the types of explicit lesbian/bisexual images used in integrative advertisements within *Marie Claire* (mainstream) versus tailored advertisements in *DIVA* (LGBTQ+). In *DIVA,* for example, there are far more non-conforming gender representations and images of non-heterosexuality[39] (see, for example, Figure 17 below) compared to *Marie Claire,* where the main signifiers are either the inclusion of an LGBTQ+ celebrity (for example, Cara Delevingne) or some element of sexualisation or touching[40] between at least two feminine-looking women (see Figure 18).

Figure 17: An example of LGBTQ+ signifiers/images in *DIVA* **(07/DIVA/01/T)**

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[39] As evidenced by images of 'Butch appearance' and 'Affectionate or sexual touch' (as coded in the ICA via denotations derived from Branchik (2007) and Nappier (2013))

[40] As evidenced by images of 'Affectionate of sexual touch' and 'Sexual gesture, **positioning** or bravado' (coded in the ICA via denotations derived from Branchik (2007) and Nappier (2013))

Figure 18: An example of lesbian LGBTQ+ signifiers/images in *Marie Claire* **(03/MC/21/I)** [41]

As illustrated above, the images in *Marie Claire* tend to conform to heteronormative notions of femininity, for example long hair, fitted clothes, make-up (Nolke, 2018), in other words reinforcing cisgender norms. Conversely, *DIVA* images present a much wider sense or expression of gender, for example the wearing of more masculine attire and having short hair. While these latter images can be seen to reflect elements of different or new forms of sexual and gendered othering (Rumens, 2018), they only obtain exposure *within* LGBTQ+ media, thereby containing non-normative expressions of gender and sexual identity within its own set of mirrors. For the *DIVA* reader, this may feel reassuring (to see others like yourself) or indeed liberating (I do not need to conform); however, they can also be seen to convey that acceptance can only (or is at least more likely to) occur *within* this group, thereby influencing how an LGBTQ+ person may choose to express (or constrain) themselves publicly. Further, confining non-normative images (mostly[42]) within LGBTQ+ media skews the way in which heterosexual people can begin to understand non-heterosexuality, especially for those without (m)any personal connections with LGBTQ+ people. This lack of wide-reaching representation masks, or sanitises, LGBTQ+ identities, resulting in a 'monolithic' portrayal (Martinez and Sullivan, 1998)

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[41] This advertisement (03/MC/21/I) will be discussed in more detail later, particularly with reference to the *type* of lesbian it portrays (see Nolke, 2018).
[42] Gong (2019) and Nölke (2018) found that 'minority sexuogendered identities' are invisible in mainstream media. Within the ICA for this study, I find 'some' non-normative images, as discussed later.

whereby certain minorities have been 'symbolically annihilated' (Tuchman, 1979; Nolke, 2018). Again, for some this may not appear problematic, but it has been criticised by many (see for example Herz and Johansson, 2015). For example, it has the potential to perpetuate the causes behind some of the identity constraints that exist for LGBTQ+ people, given that it does not reflect the diversity of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders that are experienced. I discuss this in more detail later and within the final 'Queering' discussion chapter (Chapter 8).

6.4 Mainstream media: *Marie Claire* and *GQ* differences

The examples I have briefly discussed above relate to representations of women. Bringing men, and *GQ*, into the equation, there are some interesting findings and comparisons. Firstly, as shown in Figure 19 below, while advertisements in both publications clearly favour the passive approach, we can see that *GQ* has nearly twice as many LGBTQ+ targeted advertisements *in total* than *Marie Claire*. *GQ* also has more than double the proportion of LGBTQ+ targeted advertisements, relative to its overall number of advertisements, compared to *Marie Claire.*

Figure 19: Targeted LGBTQ+ advertisements in mainstream media: publication differences (including repeat advertisements)

Media	Publication	Total ads	Passive		Integrative		Not targeted	
			n=	%	n=	%	n=	%
Mainstream	MC	**918** (54%)	36	4%	13	1%	869	95%
	GQ	**778** (46%)	70	9%	18	2%	690	89%
Total		**1696**	106	6%	31	2%	1559	92%
TOTAL		**2214**	106	5%	31	1%	1559	70%

5% = targeted adverts (*MC*)   11% = targeted adverts (*GQ*)

Given that the sample sizes are relatively similar, this is a valuable comparative finding. The reasons behind this are not, however, easily explained. Male attitudes towards male homosexuality are certainly not more tolerant or liberal than female attitudes toward lesbians (in fact the opposite can be seen to be true – see for example Kite and Whitley, 1996; Herek, 2000; Struckman-Johnson,

Quevillon and Banka, 2008). Similarly, there is no indication (via publisher media packs, BRAD or statistics) that more LGBTQ+ people engage with *GQ* than *Marie Claire.* It may be due, in part, to the types of product that feature LGBTQ+ representation. As shown later in Figure 21, 87% of passive advertisements and 75% of integrative advertisements placed in *GQ* were for 'High-End Fashion' products. Gay men have been heavily associated with fashion (Drucker, 2015) to such an extent they have been stereotyped as 'natural' occupants of work roles within the fashion industry. Media portrayals of gay men in this regard are also prominent, exemplified by the 2017 reboot of the US TV series 'Queer Eye', in which gay men give advice on a range of lifestyle topics including fashion. Figure 20, below, shows an advertisement placed in *GQ* for Dolce and Gabbana, which reconstructs this association, noted in the sophisticated/slick dress (in particular) of the characters highlighted and the casting eye of the left-hand male towards the female standing on the table. Contrast that gaze and posture with the other two men directly behind them, who have a different intent or purpose to their look (towards the women) and their body language:

Figure 20: A Dolce and Gabbana advertisement, placed in *GQ* (02/GQ/03/I)

While the link between gay men and High-End Fashion products may be a plausible explanation, it is not conclusive. The greater presence of LGBTQ+ targeted advertisements in *GQ* than *Marie* Claire could be equally reflective of the supposed wealth/income variance between gay men and lesbians

(Badgett, 2009), resulting in fewer advertisements being placed in female publications because of lower potential spending power. However, as shown in Table 4 in the methodology chapter, the readership profile of both *Marie Claire* and *GQ* are relatively similar in terms of income/status (ABC1 = 66% and 74% respectively). While the reasons behind this finding remain unclear, nonetheless it provides a useful context from which to analyse the remainder of the data.

Figure 21**: Summary of majority product types for targeted LGBTQ+ advertisements (non-repeat) placed in mainstream magazines (*Marie Claire* and *GQ*)**

	No. ads.	Product Type
PASSIVE		
MC	29	Fashion High End (55%)
GQ	62	Fashion High End (87%)
Sub total	**91**	Fashion High End (78%)
INTEGRATIVE		
MC	12	Health/Beauty (42%)
GQ	12	Fashion High End (75%)
Sub total	**24**	Fashion High End (42%)
Total (mainstream)	**115**	

Continuing to make comparisons, while *GQ* has more explicit LGBTQ+ representations within the dataset as a whole (i.e. more integrative advertisements in total), the table above shows that once the repeat advertisements are removed, the two mainstream publications have the same discrete number. Even though both figures are disproportionately low (as already discussed), there are some particular observations worth mentioning. For example, both publications have a reliance on LGBTQ+ celebrity endorsement and showing characters that are touching each other affectionately/sexually to denote an LGBTQ+ image[43]. Both also use some level of wording to help readers to de-code the advertisement, for example 'I resist definition' (05/GQ/22/I), as shown in Figure 22 below, and '…challenges rules, defies conventions' (04/MC/08/I).

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[43] …using the coding values as presented in Table 6 within the methodology chapter, also accessible here

Figure 22: An example of an integrative advertisement that uses wording as well as an image signifier to create an LGBTQ+ reading, placed in *GQ* (05/GQ/22/I)
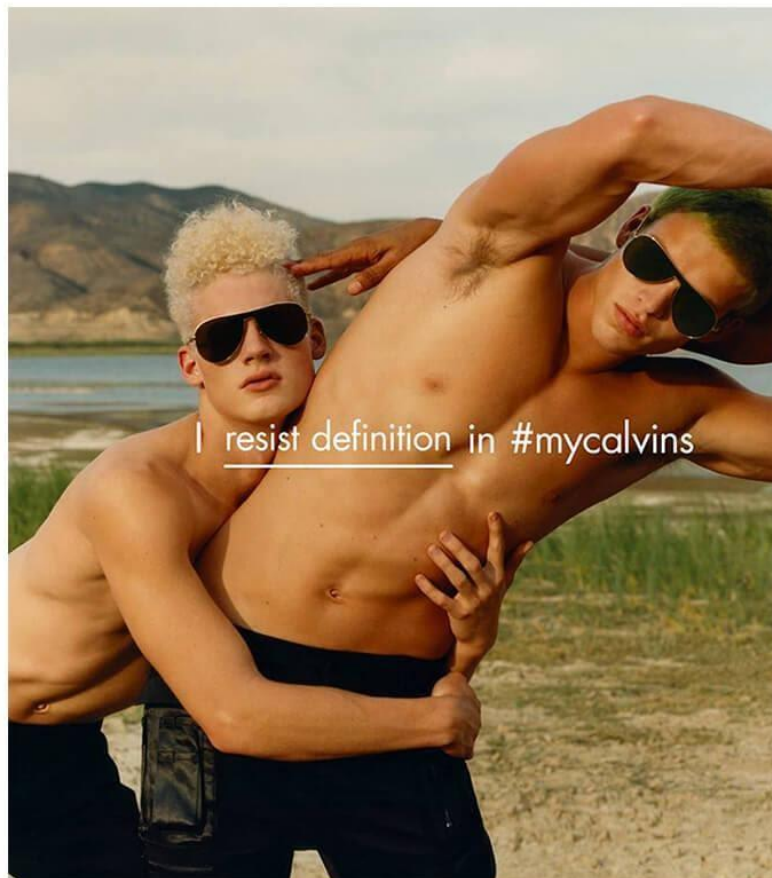
In terms of other image components, the majority of integrative advertisements use mostly young models/celebrities (coded as aged between '19-29' years old). However, *Marie Claire* advertisements contain far narrower, detached images of non-normative gender and sexualities. Using Figure 18 above again as an example, all three characters reproduce traditional notions of femininity and are 'posing' within a 'staged' (e.g. photoshoot) environment. Their direct gaze into the camera/audience (and not at each other) gives the impression that they are a collection of individuals which, as I discuss in the next chapter, is in contrast to the more typical representation of same sex coupledom or domesticity found in *DIVA* magazine. That said, the visual of three women and its potential representation of polyamory or a same-sex throuple is a departure from the highly normative images typically found in advertisements placed in *Marie Claire*, although the already mentioned heavily staged feel to the advertisement arguably removes the legitimacy of this type of reading; either that, or it represents such sexualities in a highly superficial and sexualised way.

In contrast, as shown in Table 19 below, integrative advertisements placed in *GQ* feature a wider range of interactions within a wider range of settings. Indeed, LGBTQ+ targeted advertisements placed in *GQ,* in general, feature less normative reconstructions of gender and sexuality. For example, Figure 23 below shows one of a very small number of explicit bisexual images[44] found within the total ICA sample:

Figure 23: An integrative advertisement for DSQUARED2, placed in *GQ* (04/GQ/16/I)

However, this advertisement can still be seen as problematic. For example, on the bottom left-hand side of the advertisement there are three males physically touching in a sexual manner, signified by skin-on-skin contact, slightly open mouths and closed eyes. This is juxtaposed (to the right) with an image of one of the same characters (at the back of the jeep) touching the waist of a woman from behind whilst gazing at the man in front of him, who is reciprocating the glance over his shoulder whilst leaning forward slightly (and possibly suggestively) on the bars of the vehicle. The same man (at the back of the jeep) features in the top left image, this time looking troubled/forlorn. Collectively, these images tell an interesting story[45], one which is sexualised and can be seen to reinforce the association of bisexuality with promiscuity and polygamy (Campbell, Hayfield and Reed, 2017). While in one sense it is encouraging to see portrayals of bi/pansexuality in mainstream media, these sorts of

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[44] n=6 (excluding repeats)

[45] Partly through some of the manifest content (as per the first image discussed) but also through some of the connotative meaning conveyed through the latent content via the other sets of images.

images feed into an aforementioned stereotype which can lead to self-stigmatisation and ultimately limit the personal trajectories of those it is intended to portray (McInroy and Craig, 2016).

In short then, not only do advertisements placed in *Marie Claire* contain fewer LGBTQ+ representations than *GQ*, but the types of explicit images are also narrower in range and the creative approaches are arguably less ambitions or progressive. These differences suggest that the normative state of play for lesbian and bisexual women is more pronounced and problematic than for their male counterparts. Very few will be able to see themselves in the limited images shown or imagine their potential selves, given the narrowness of the representations and lifestyles portrayed. Arguably, the same could be said for *all* targeted marketing, whereby communications (aimed at purposefully homogenised groups of people with similar needs or characteristics) are likely to evade *everyone's* reality. This position does not, however, make such practice satisfactory or acceptable. Indeed, advertising is being challenged generally for its lack of diversity and inclusion (see practitioner calls for change in, for example, *Adage*, 2017; *CampaignLive*, 2017; *The Drum*, 2017; *Adweek*, 2018; *Forbes*, 2020; *The Independent* (Oppenheim, 2020) and so on). Also, context and position is important. This ICA exposes multiple sets of already entrenched binary hierarchies: women/men, homosexual/heterosexual, lesbian/gay – whereby the homosexual woman bears the relational brunt of the privileges of others.

Interestingly, there is less disparity between *passive* advertisements placed in *Marie Claire* and *GQ*. Both publications tend to feature High-End Fashion products; wording is not typically used to help decode an image; posing is the most common advertisement activity; and a range of contexts and interactions feature[46]. The greatest difference between publications exists in the LGBTQ+ signifiers in the image. 'Effeminate/butch appearance' and 'Androgynous characters' are the main features used across the dataset to donate an LGBTQ+ image[47]; with *Marie Claire* relying more on images that show 'physically closeness' between two women (in order to provide the required advertisement ambiguity); and *GQ* relying much more on 'effeminate appearance'.

The dominant use of 'effeminate/butch appearance' and 'androgynous characters' in passive advertisements is worthy of specific mention, in that they both mobilise gender, not sexuality *per se,* as the dominant cue. In many ways, this is logical. If the intention is to try to not be *explicit*, it is understandable why there would be an absence of recognisable same-sex coupling for example. It is interesting, however, that it is non-traditional (i.e. non-conforming) representations of gender that

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[46] In comparison to integrative advertisements. Differences between integrative and passive advertisements will also be discussed later in this chapter.

[47] Together totalling 55% of the main images used in all passive advertisements (n=91, non-repeated units of analysis), as shown in Table 14 of the results chapter

are typically being used as signifiers of LGBTQ+ness, as opposed to other symbolic or suggestive cues such as those previously discussed in the illustrative Louis Vuitton passive advertisement (Figure 14). This tells us much about notions of gender and how its performativity influences perceptions of sexuality. Femininity/masculinity equals heterosexual, non-feminine/non-masculine equals non-heterosexual. Passive advertisements can therefore be seen to rely on this association; while, on the surface, these images begin to disrupt Butler's (1990) heterosexual matrix, they also show us the heteronormative foundation of its use. As I discuss in Chapter 3, through the heterosexual matrix individuals come to recognise how gender aligns with sexual practices and identities, which provides an important reference point for maintaining coherence surrounding gender, sex and desire. It is this 'reference point' that is being manipulated or played with in order for passive advertisements to work.

The use of ambiguous or non-conforming gender images in passive advertisements occurs more in *GQ* than *Marie Claire*. The approach more commonly used to attract a lesbian/bisexual reading is 'physical closeness' between two women, as illustrated in Figure 24 below[48]. The polysemy, or ambiguity, behind these types of images are that the women featured *could* be read as sisters, for example, or close friends.

Figure 24: A passive advertisement for Levi featuring the coded value 'Physical closeness', placed in *Marie Claire* (MC/12/26/P)

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[48] Particularly the lower left-hand image, where the physical closeness is the upper body (shoulders and chest/breast) area - a level of closeness that friends or sisters *might* not experience, hence its ambiguity

Relating this back to the LGBTQ+ advertising literature, the key benefit of passive advertising is that its polysemic approach has the potential to 'least offend' the heterosexual audience (Oakenfull and Greenlee, 2005). It is posited here that using physical closeness is less disruptive to the heterosexual matrix (indeed, both characters in the example above maintain some constructions of femininity, for example long hair) and can therefore be considered 'safer' than mobilising gender non-conforming images (for example a woman with a shaved head, dressed in masculine clothing) within passive advertisements, even if the latter is arguably a clearer (though still ambiguous) signifier. Put differently, normative female gender (re)constructions are so entrenched in mainstream advertising that to rupture them appears to be a step too far, as is also the case for *explicit* LGBTQ+ representation in integrative advertisements, illustrated in Figure 18 earlier.

6.5 LGBTQ+ images and representations within Integrative and Passive advertisements in mainstream publications

Having initially discussed some of the top-level findings from the ICA, the sections that follow discuss the types of images and representations used within both sets of advertising approaches (integrative and passive) in mainstream publications in more detail, again identifying any noticeable differences between publications. This moves the discussion of the ICA findings from the macro level to the (image) detail, addressing in particular RO2.2: 'Explore how LGBTQ+ images and representation levels currently manifest within print advertising practice in mainstream and LGBTQ+ media'.

6.5.1 Integrative advertisements: explicit images

As already mentioned above and shown in Figure 19, there are very few (2%) explicit LGBTQ+ images and representations used within LGBTQ+ targeted advertisements placed in mainstream media[49]. Furthermore, the range of LGBTQ+ representation within integrative advertisements is incredibly narrow – with only four different types of LGBTQ+ denotation occurring within the sample, two of which only appeared once each. The majority were either 'Affectionate/sexual touch' (50%) and 'LGBTQ+ celebrity' (42%), with both publications (*Marie Claire* and *GQ*) featuring each approach with identical frequency. Discussing these in turn then, Figure 25 below provides an example of the former, whereby the 'Affectionate/sexual touch' occurs between the two female characters on the right-hand side:

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[49] n=31 (or 24 discrete, i.e. non-repeat, advertisements)

Figure 25: An explicit LGBTQ+ image coded as 'Affectionate/sexual' touch, placed in *GQ* (O5/GQ/52/I).

The positioning of the touch (almost fully around the waist/stomach of another) discriminates it from 'Physical closeness' found in passive advertisements (such as the Levi advertisement above) in that there is less ambiguity surrounding its meaning. In this instance, the arched neck and facial reaction of the right-hand character communicates a sexual/affectionate undertone or intent to the touch. Also, as I refer back to later, the contrasting physical gender appearance of the pair ('femme' vs 'butch') provides an additional heteronormative cue. The other two characters aid the advertisement's overall categorisation as integrative. The male in the foreground, for example, exhibits elements of male gender non-conformity (or less traditional notions of masculinity) and the female to the left-hand side is portrayed almost as the rejected lover of the femme, having been replaced by the (other) 'butch'.

While some aspects of this advertisement do contain non-conforming gender (re)constructions, it is interesting to observe within the sample overall that explicit LGBTQ+ images typically rely much less

on gender as an LGBTQ+ signifier (in contrast to the recently discussed passive advertisements). Rather, one of the main/lead cues focuses on showing same sex people together in unambiguous ways. As I discuss later, and in the final discussion chapter, that explicitness tends to rely on sexualised interactions, as opposed to many of the explicit images in tailored advertisements (in *DIVA* in particular) showing same-sex couples in domesticised or family settings. Based on the integrative advertisements within this sample, then, it would appear that mainstream LGBTQ+ advertisements have not yet moved on from "hypersexualisation toward real individuals' stories of love and families" as found in Nolke's (2018, p.224) study[50], and instead use manifest content in which characters 'show' their non-normative sexuality via sexual interaction(s). This is further explored later and in the final queering discussion chapter to follow.

The second most frequent LGBTQ+ image denotation used in integrative advertisements, in both *Marie Claire* and *GQ*, is 'LGBTQ+ celebrity'; in other words, the inclusion a celebrity that already identifies publicly as LGBTQ+. In many ways, this makes sense in that the target audience might identify with the character that is presented before them. However, there are a number of potential problems with this. Firstly, it relies on the audience being aware that the celebrity identifies as LGBTQ+. Using the findings of the ICA as an example, one of the repeated advertisements placed in *GQ* magazine features Xavier Dolan, a gay Canadian actor/director. He is, however, not universally known, and for some people neither is his sexuality. Typically, there are no accompanying signifiers within these types of advertisements and so the targeted intention has the capacity to get lost, or is at least potentially vulnerable. Linked to this, and as I discuss shortly, the LGBTQ+ celebrity signifier is dependent on the reader feeling some affinity with the person being used. Whilst the same could be true for all celebrity endorsements, typically they appeal to their admirers because of their achievements/style/looks/values etc; and are successful within an advertising context because of the 'similarity fit' with the product being promoted and so on (Kamins, 1990; Choi, 2012).

Branchik's (2007) image denotation, and its value within an advertising context, assumes that LGBTQ+ people will positively respond to the celebrity's image because they too identify as LGBTQ+. This is a problematic assumption that has been criticised and debated in the media (see for example Ling's (2018) discussion surrounding *RuPaul's Drag Race* and cultural appropriation). In short, the foundation on which 'LGBTQ+ celebrity' images are being used can be seen as problematic, not just because of its homogenising premise, but also because people hold multiple identities within which their sexuality may or may not be ascribed much importance within a consumer context. Whilst more recent academic marketing research acknowledges the importance of 'self-referencing' within the

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[50] …which analysed explicit LGBTQ+ portrayals in mainstream advertising between 2009 and 2015

celebrity vs *consumer* relationship (e.g. Kim, 2014), the use of a shared sexuality (as that reference point) remains debateable.

Before moving on, an 'LGBTQ+ celebrity' example worth exploring briefly is shown in Figure 26 below, featuring Kristen Stewart. The reason for its inclusion here is because it (unusually) features additional LGBTQ+ cues. The top pair of images capture more a more masculine appearance/pose (to use implicit signifiers), and the advertisement suggestively includes the wording "Express yourself…" making use of the popular 'be who you are regardless of…' inference. Slightly more tenuous is the possibility that the "…in every dimension" makes reference to Stewart's bisexuality[51] (as well as, of course, the versatility of the product benefits).

Figure 26: An LGBTQ+ celebrity image featuring other LGBTQ+ cues, placed in *Marie Claire* (05/MC/83/I)

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[51] As openly disclosed in various media interviews including Brooks (2017) in *The Guardian*

Given its multiple LGBTQ+ features (and therefore de-emphasis of LGBTQ+ status alone), this type of advertisement may be a more effective example of how to integrate LGBTQ+ celebrities within targeted advertising. Indeed, there are benefits to this approach in that high-profile LGBTQ+ visibility in the media can provide positive role models, for young people in particular (Gomillion, 2011). However, there remain issues with using LGBTQ+ celebrities *per se* for the reasons already discussed. Furthermore, the ICA findings themselves can be seen to give a false indication of the actual prevalence of 'LGBTQ+ celebrity' use. More than half of the advertisements coded with this value within the *GQ* sample used the same gay actor/director (Xavier Dolan), for the same brand. Advertisements placed in Marie Claire use two bisexual actresses/models (the other being Cara Delavigne) in three separate advertisements, reflecting half of the total number of integrative advertisements within the *Marie Claire* sample. In other words, the extent of this approach is distorted if we look at frequency alone. Further, all three celebrities enjoy a good similarity-fit with the brands/products they are modelling for, and so it is possible they were chosen for *that* purpose, not necessarily to attract LGBTQ+ consumers. While this finding may be unique to the sample within this study, it is suggested that this image denotation category (value) be understood with caution - particularly within the context of integrative advertisements in mainstream publications.

This brings the value of Branchik's (2007) ten dimensions to denote a gay male image into debate. Alongside questions over the legitimacy or value of the use of LGBTQ+ celebrities, two of Branchik's more overt denotations (namely 'sexually aggressive towards same sex' and 'a married act')[52] did not feature within the mainstream sample of the ICA. This could suggest a progressive move away from the use of *some* proxy behaviour to a more direct citing of same sex interactions or its own terms with little or no room for ambiguity. However, as evident in the 'label.m' advertisement (Figure 25 above) images *still* show elements of heteronormativity. As observed earlier, the 'femme/butch' lesbian (or bisexual) coupling, for example, replicates the female/male binary inherent within traditional notions of heterosexuality. As Nolke (2018) noted, the 'soft butch' (right-hand side image in Figure 25) if often teamed up with the 'femme' whose appearance adheres to heteronormative ideals of femininity, keeping the heterosexual matrix intact (Butler, 1990). The absence of 'married act', however, could instead be more of a risk-averse choice, exposing the reluctance of some companies to fully embrace the inclusion of explicit representations; and therefore, to a lesser extent, play to Oakenfull and Greenlee's (2004) caution towards overtly targeting LGBTQ+ consumers. However, the use of affection/sexual touch is arguably a bolder or more controversial way to denote non-heterosexuality, compared to say a same-sex couple shopping for a sofa in Ikea, which can be seen to have even

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[52] And, as I discuss, later four of his more implicit denotations similarly do not feature within the ICA, resulting in only 4 out of his 10 cues manifesting within this study

stronger heteronormative undertones and therefore more susceptible to straightening-up (Borgerson *et al.*, 2006).

Either way, this finding is relatively unexpected, especially in light of Nolke's (2018) work which found that advertisers (between 2009-2015) had moved away from hypersexualised LGBTQ+ representation towards a 'human interest' approach where more domesticised portrayals of homosexuality exist. The ICA findings here suggest otherwise. Firstly, the images remain heavily reliant on Affectionate/sexual touch (as already shown in Figures 22, 23 and 25), with no obvious signs of family interactions/relationships in either publication. Indeed, only one integrative advertisement featured a same sex couple within a private setting (as opposed to a staged photoshoot, for example). However, the advertisement in question (Figure 27 below) was part of a charity appeal for Elton John AIDS Foundation which does not constitute the type of domesticised portrayal Nolke (2018) was referring to.

Figure 27: Integrative advertisement featuring a couple in a domesticised setting (02/GQ/19/I**)**

The reason for this discrepancy could be the different foci of the two studies and subsequent sampling strategies. Nolke's (2018) research analysed advertisements submitted to AdRespect, which essentially is a crowd-sourced central repository for LGBTQ+ advertisements placed in mainstream media. While this allows for the exploration of already categorised integrative advertisements across a wide range of examples to take place (in this case n=171 over a six-year period), it does *not* reflect the actual frequency of publication. Put differently, the sample of advertisements placed in a twelve-month run of a mainstream publication is unlikely to capture all the permutations collected by AdRespect. As mentioned in Chapter 4, this study is concerned with the prevalence of different advertising approaches as well as how LGBTQ+ representations manifest in mainstream (and LGTBQ+) media, and so the different methodologies will have an impact on the types of results garnered. That said, it was surprising not to find *any* domesticised images, especially given the heteronormative nature of LGBTQ+ representations in mainstream media generally and, as I discuss in the next chapter, the extent to which these sorts of images exist within LGBTQ+ media.

To summarise at this point, integrative advertisements placed in mainstream publications rely on physical touch between same sex characters and the use of LGBTQ+ celebrities to attract an LBGTQ+ reading. The former category, whilst less reliant on non-conforming gender cues compared to passive advertisements with implicit images, still contains a narrow range of mostly heteronormative and sexualised images. This paints a reductionist picture and reinforces a particular (stereotyped) message about LGBTQ+ behaviour and lifestyle, one which mostly prioritises 'sex' over any other part of LGBTQ+ identity. The inclusion of LGBTQ+ celebrities within integrative advertisements has the potential to create positive role-models, but its use is based on a homogenising premise and is dependent on LGBTQ+ status audience recognition.

Having presented a mostly generic summary of explicit images used in integrative advertisements, there are a few more granular findings to comment on. Firstly, bisexuality was more present than originally anticipated[53], with female representations found in seven advertisements and male in two, equating to a third of all of integrative advertisements. However, bisexuality was mostly depicted by LGBTQ+ celebrity identification (n=6, including repeats) and for the reasons already mentioned this may be heavily skewing the data. One of the remaining two (for DQSUARED, see Figure 23) has already been discussed above, and the other advertisement features in the final queering discussion chapter, where I discuss its highly sexualised theme/nature in more detail. While difficult to 'show' or convey bisexuality in manifest content (given that a same sex couple is likely to be encoded as homosexual

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[53] In Nolke's (2018) sample, only 6 characters (out of 350) over a six-year period were identifiable as bisexual; whereas in this study, 8 bisexual characters/celebrities in 24 discrete advertisements during a 12-month period were found.

and an opposite sex couple as heterosexual) the reliance of sexual touch/activity as a signifier or, in the context of these two advertisements, hyper-sexualisation, is problematic, as I later discuss in Chapter 8.

Having already touched upon the subject, the second more granular finding I want to discuss is the types of lesbian representations found within the interpretive sample (albeit only eight characters featured within four advertisements). Using Nolke's (2018) four lesbian types[54], the 'soft butch' and 'femme' combination has already featured within this discussion (and does so again in the next two chapters). The absence of *any* domesticised LGBTQ+ representation in the sample perhaps explains why no 'domestic femmes' are found. This leaves the 'lipstick lesbians' who typically are "…long-haired, long-legged women, wearing tight, revealing clothes and bold makeup… they adhere to heteronormative ideals of beauty as part of storylines for the "straight male gaze"" (Nolke, 2018, p.239). Firstly, their presence in the ICA (to use Figure 18 once again) reinforces one of the reoccurring themes within this chapter that integrative advertisements are heavily normative (both heter- and cisgender). Secondly, the male gaze, in this context, might transfer to the 'lesbian gaze' insomuch as inclusions of these types of images might stimulate lesbian visual pleasure (Lewis, 1997). This is, however, unlikely if the low number of advertisements featuring lesbian/bisexual imagery is a proxy for lesbian interest or engagement in the publication. Indeed, *Marie Claire* is predominantly aimed at heterosexual women, reinforced by the 95% 'not targeted' advertisements coded as part of the ICA. Instead, the placement of advertisements featuring lipstick lesbians could be considered an out-dated approach based on getting attention through using 'stand-out' images (or shock-based tactics) rather than including imagery to attract a particular meaning or interpretation from a (lesbian) sub-segment of the female market.

Other findings worthy of comment relate to the demographic cues and advertisement context/scene determinants (in other words, the creative constructions) within each advertisement, as summarised in Table 19 below. Whilst here I talk about these multiple findings in relation to integrative advertisements, the following chapter will discuss how they compare with tailored advertisements: in other words, advertisements *also* containing explicit LGBTQ+ images but placed in LGBTQ+ publications (*DIVA* and *Gay Times*).

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[54] Namely 'Femme', 'Lipstick Lesbian', 'Domestic Femme' and 'Soft butch'.

Table 19: Demographic and contextual features within Integrative advertisements (excluding repeat advertisements: n=24)

Variable	Value[55]	Number (%) (*MC*)	Number (%) (*GQ*)	Total
Advertisement size	Full	9 (75%)	4 (33%)	13 (54%)
	Double	3 (25%)	7 (58%)	10 (42%)
	Feature		1 (8%)	1 (4%)
Product Type	Fashion High End	1 (8%)	9 (75%)	10 (42%)
	Charity		1 (8%)	1 (4%)
	Health and Beauty	5 (42%)	1 (10%)	6 (25%)
	Jewellery/Watch	4 (33%)		4 (17%)
	Fragrance	2 (17%)	1 (8%)	3 (12%)
Activity	Posing	11 (92%)	7 (58%)	18 (75%)
	Leisure		3 (25%)	3 (4%)
	Romantic		1 (8%)	1 (4%)
	Sexual	1 (8%)	1 (8%)	2 (8%)
Interaction	Alone	4 (33%)	4 (33%)	8 (33%)
	Couple	1 (8%)	1 (8%)	2 (8%)
	Group		1 (8%)	1 (4%)
	Individuals	6 (50%)	5 (42%)	11 (46%)
	Mixed	1 (8%)	1 (8%)	2 (8%)
Setting	Public		5 (42%)	5 (21%)
	Private	2 (17%)	2 (17%)	4 (17%)
	Staged	10 (83%)	5 (42%)	15 (63%)
Majority Age	19-29	12 (100%)	11 (92%)	23 (96%)
	30-39		1 (10%)	1 (4%)
Majority Ethnicity	White	8 (67%)	5 (42%)	12 (50%)
	European		1 (8%)	1 (4%)
	Mixed/Multi	4 (33%)	2 (17%)	6 (25%)
	Unsure		3 (25%)	4 (17%)
	Black		1 (8%)	1 (4%)
Majority Disability	No	12 (100%)	12 (100%)	24 (100%)
Majority Wealth indicator	Low-Medium	1 (8%)	2 (17%)	3 (12%)
	Medium	9 (75%)	3 (25%)	12 (50%)
	Medium-High	2 (17%)	6 (50%)	8 (33%)
	High		1 (8%)	1 (4%)

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[55] Other variables exist, please see Variables and Values List. This table only shows those that were coded within the sample of integrative advertisements (n=24)

Firstly, in terms of the design features/contexts of integrative advertisements, there are several key observations worth mentioning, some of which have been touched upon already. For example, the majority of products advertised are in the High-End Fashion sector (again for *GQ*) and health and beauty (for *Marie Claire*). 'Posing' is the main activity featured in both publications, but at the expense of nearly all others in *Marie Claire*. In terms of character interactions, advertisements in *GQ* have a wider scenario base, whereas in *Marie Claire* characters are either posing on their own or featured in a sexualised context. Similarly, *GQ* has a wider range of advertising 'settings' compared to *Marie Claire,* in which advertisements are mostly staged (for example, within a photoshoot).

Both latter points illustrate well the key difference between *Marie Claire* and *GQ* advertisements, namely that the former are much more manufactured/contrived and less likely to re-create or re-enact life interactions or situations. This contrasts with other advertisements for health and beauty products featured in *Marie Claire* that are *not* aimed at lesbian/bisexual women (see exemplar advertisement featured in Figure 28 below). That said, some advertisements in *GQ* are also unnaturally framed (take for example, the group celebratory occasion in Dolce and Gabbana's advertisement as shown in Figure 20) but they tend nonetheless to depict gay/bisexual men with other characters, even if that integration is still staged and ultimately heteronormative. In many ways, this reinforces that LGBTQ+ advertisements have not shifted towards 'human interest' themes and domesticised settings, as found by Nolke (2018). It does, however, indicate that advertisements aimed at gay/bisexual men are arguably closer to this progression, even if there is some way to go. However, and as I discuss in more detail in the final discussion chapter, this move toward the hetero- or homo-'norm' would further perpetuate the ideal of an assimilated, conforming life - advocating only a particular configuration of LGBTQ+ness that is acceptable (see Kates, 1999 and Warner, 2000).

Figure 28: A 'not targeted' advertisement for a Health and Beauty product featured in *Marie Claire* (02/MC/31/NT)

With regard to the *demographic representations* included within integrative advertisements, there are only minimal differences between *Marie Claire* and *GQ* – the main one being 'wealth indicators' – in which levels are higher for *GQ* than for Marie *Clair*e. This can be seen to mirror the readership profile for both publications (as shown in Table 4).

In terms of similarities between the publications, both primarily use models that represent younger consumers (19-29 years is by far the most common age range depicted, n=23 (96%)) and there are no representations of people with disabilities.   On the one hand, the minimal depictions of people over 30 is not necessarily worrying, given that the average ages of *Marie Claire* and *GQ* readers are 35 and 34 respectively. However, this average means there is a significant portion of the readership *over* 34/35 years, and therefore representations overall are disproportionately skewed towards younger people. Similarly, but significantly more problematic, are disability representations across and within both publications - in that there are no images depicting people with disabilities in any of the advertisements (n=1,696). These two findings are also true for 'not targeted' advertisements and so

cannot be concluded as purely associated with LGBTQ+ representations. To reiterate a point already made, LGBTQ+ identities are as diverse as their heterosexual counterparts in terms of their multiple identities, and there is an absence of disability (and dominance of youth) within mainstream advertising regardless of sexuality. Therefore, these findings are noted as problematic, but they extend beyond the LGBTQ+ focus of this study. Specific to sexuality though, and therefore relevant to *this* study, is the narrowness of explicit LGBTQ+ representations as part of the collective combination of other normative representations.

6.5.2 Passive advertisements: implicit images

Having discussed explicit images and representations in integrative advertisements, this section explores the same areas as above (where applicable) but within a *passive* advertising context: in other words, those advertisements featured in mainstream publications containing implicit images/symbols and levels of LGBTQ+ representation. As a reminder, passive advertisements constitute 6% of all advertisements placed in *Marie Claire* and *GQ* and feature implicit levels of LGBTQ+ representation, as captured in Table 14 in the previous results chapter. Some of the key findings have been mentioned here already, namely that the majority of signifiers for passive advertisements are based on gender, not sexuality cues ('androgynous characters' and 'effeminate/butch appearance'). Extending this theme, these first subsections explore both concepts together as well as discussing depictions of non-normative gender more generally.

While not commonplace, there are handful of passive advertisements that include a combination of non-normative gender and sexuality cues to render the overall reading as ambiguous[56]. Figure 29, below, is a case in point:

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[56] This is in contrast to the combination used in integrative advertisements (e.g. Figure 25 for Label.m in which the non-normative gender cues were more explicit (the 'soft' butch), as were signifiers of non-heterosexuality via 'Affectionate/sexual touch')

Figure 29: A passive advertisement featuring non-normative gender and sexuality cues, placed in *GQ* (06/GQ/30/P)

Focusing firstly on the central character, the audience is presented with a young, handsome, muscular sailor. Note that while his torso is traditionally masculine in appearance (strong, ribbed, flexed), his face has been softened. His lips are 'pinked' and his eyebrows shaped, reflecting a much more feminine tone. His tattoo, rather than being painfully inked, is being gently brushed onto his skin. Looking further into the background, there are hyper-females in pastel colours to the right of the image, mechanically/robotically walking on hard, spiked cogs of a wheel. Overall, there are a number of contrasting visual elements, 'symbolic binaries' that unsettle normative notions of gender, especially 'Le Male' (the name of the fragrance being advertised). Perhaps these visual binaries are to help decode the latent content within the advertisement: do they represent the dual aspects of bisexuality? Is he 'looking' at/for a male or female? Note the female on the left-hand side pulling a huge (phallic) lever, signalling her own sexual agency/independence. Even if the male character were attracted to the accompanying women, the advertisement leaves enough to the (gay and bisexual

male) imagination that it might *not* be at the expense of men. Certainly, the iconic gay symbolism of the sailor juxtaposed with corseted, beautiful women presents a different take on 'the man', especially when combined with the colours/tones and other subtle symbolism used within the advertisement.

Moving on to non-normative images of gender specifically, Figure 30 below shows an example that has been coded as containing the 'Opposite dress' code as per one of Branchick's (2007) denotations of a gay male image (and therefore used within the ICA):

Figure 30: A passive advertisement featuring non-normative gender imagery, placed in *GQ* (02/GQ/08/P)

The main decoded images in this advertisement relate to the appearance of the character, most notably the clothes worn from the waist up. The high buttoned, lace-trimmed blouse and crocheted beret are both non-traditional (non-normative) forms of male clothing and so *could* signify a transgender (or gender queer) identity. Other cues in the advertisement, such as the feminine-coloured flowers, the self-expression symbolism of the peacock, the contrasting part 'male' clothing from the waist down and 'masculine' skateboarding activity, all help contribute to an ambiguous reading. The word 'could' has been used here intentionally, partly since ambiguous images and symbols by nature are neither universally understood nor interpreted (Hall, 1997), but mostly because

the advertisement may simply be intending to communicate a quirky, edgy feel to reflect the Gucci brand. This is one of the challenges with decoding images in High-End Fashion advertisements in particular, because it can be difficult to know how companies use images to attract a target market reading based on self-referencing cues versus images to create or sustain a desired brand image. As mentioned, in this example, the advertisement has been coded as passive using Branchik's (2007) image denotations as an adjudicator. He cites 'drag' (to be extended in this study to 'wearing clothing typically associated with an alternative gender' – see Table 6) as an image that denotes a gay male. Whether this image should be categorised according to gender *or* sexuality is up for debate. When analysed in its entirety, it does display gender variance/fluidity (or at least ambiguity), and as such it has been sub-coded to this effect.

The advertisement is interesting in terms of what it tells the audience or communicates about transgender. In many ways, this is a positive representation, insomuch as the character in the advertisement is not replicating *either* binary cisgender norm. Instead, it introduces the notion of gender-queer appearance and/or identity and being confident with it. Furthermore, it is a far cry from past representations of transgender or drag in advertisements in which it was associated with (poor) humour and ridicule, for example in the Bounty advertisements during the 2000s (see Figure 31 below). However, the 'quirky/odd/eccentric' alternative reading to the advertisement, as mentioned previously, can also be seen to convey the message that transgender or being gender-queer is somehow quirky/odd/eccentric. The lone character adds to this solitary feel, especially since they are teamed up with a peacock and not another human.

Figure 31: An example of past (2000-2010) transgender representation within UK advertising

Figure 32: A (cropped) passive advertisement featuring an 'androgynous character', placed in *GQ* (03/GQ/23/P)
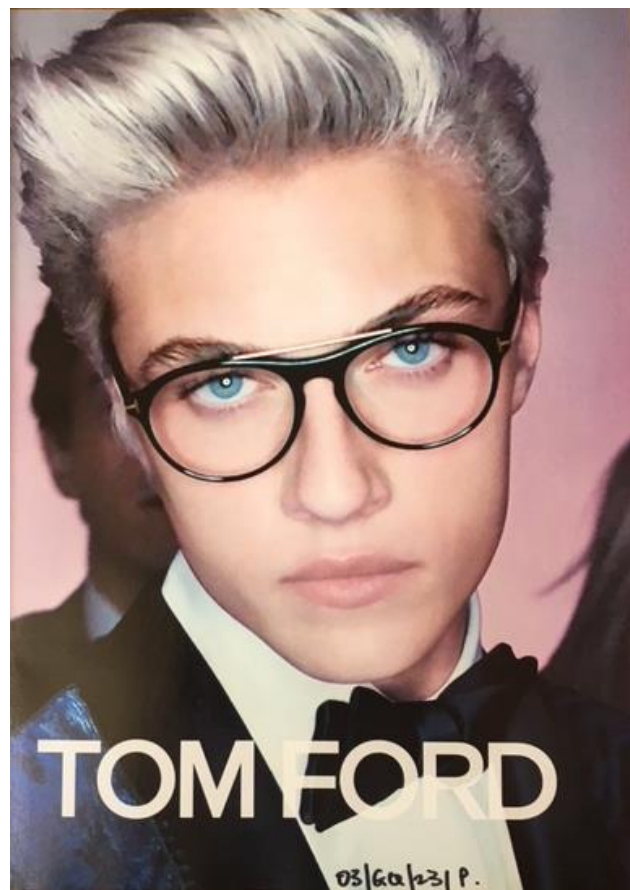
Moving on to another gender-related example, Figure 32 above shows an 'androgynous character', which was one of the most frequently coded LGBTQ+ values for passive advertisements within the ICA. This is the image featured on the right-hand page of a double page advertisement (which is where the eye is typically drawn) and shows an image of a character that could be decoded as male or female. The short hair and clothing could suggest male; the eyes/eyebrows, soft lips and jaw line, and pastel hue background could however suggest female. An alternative reading is that the character is transgender. Regardless, the image itself leaves some ambiguity over who the advertisement is trying to reference and be recognised by. When the advertisement is seen in full (Figure 33 below), there is a second image which presents a more 'masculine' character (sharper jaw line, pose for example), helping to decode the image as male, although there is still arguably some level of ambiguity within the overall visual.

Figure 33: A passive advertisement featuring an 'androgynous character' in full, placed in *GQ* (03/GQ/23/P)

The use of the two very different images side by side is noteworthy. It mirrors an observation made regarding a handful of other advertisements, namely the use of contrasting images (for example male characters) placed in the same advertisement to attract multiple markets. In the example above, the right-hand side image may draw in a non-heterosexual audience (given its androgyny and ambiguity) whilst the left-hand side attracts a heterosexual male equivalent (especially given the ultimate placement of the advertisement in *GQ*). Figure 34, below, shows a similar approach, with the

ambiguous image ('effeminate/butch pose') attached to the character placed second from the left in both advertisements:

Figure 34: Passive advertisements featuring multiple 'similar' characters with one ambiguous image, placed in *GQ* (04/GQ/29/P) and *Marie Claire* (09/MC/02/P)

The reason this is being highlighted is that, usually, when more than one person of the same gender is included within a passive advertisement, it is the close interaction or a shared glance, for example, that makes the image ambiguous. In these examples, and others, the characters are 'individuals' (rather than a *possible* couple), one of which potentially, or at least ambiguously, presents as non-heterosexual, and at least one as heterosexual. The subtle difference in approach is that in the above instances two or more micro-images are being used to attract multiple target markets within the same advertisement, rather than one image/advertisement being decoded (read) differently by people within different target markets. This perhaps also helps to explain the difference between manifest and latent content and the ways in which both feature within the analysis of the ICA and this study overall. In many ways, this can be considered to be an example of smart marketing (by avoiding additional advertising spend through the production of multiply differentiated advertisements); but this approach can also be seen as lazy and tokenistic, for the same reasons I attest in Chapter 2 regarding conscious advertisements – particularly examples similar to Figure 34 where images that reflect different types of (targeted) people are presented in a 'line up'.

Referring back briefly to the Tom Ford advertisement above (Figure 32), there is another feature of the advertisement worth commenting on: the colours and pastel-hazed shading used. This also featured in the Jean Paul Gaultier advertisement (Figure 29). These *help* to code the advertisement

as passive, playing on the binary opposites of pastel (gentle/soft) within a predominantly male context (*GQ*) and dark (bold/sharp) images within a predominantly female context (*Marie Claire*). This was an unexpected finding within this study, but one that occurred frequently enough to warrant specific attention. In all bar one instance however, it was used more as a secondary cue, insomuch as there were other, more obvious, 'lead' or main images that rendered the advertisement passive (or indeed 'tailored' – as captured in the next chapter). The exception can be found in Figure 35 below, whereby it was the advertisement design itself that led to it passive coding (with the product choice/style a secondary cue):

Figure 35: A passive advertisement in *GQ* coded via 'advert design' alone (05/GQ/23/P)

Because of the presence and frequency of this cue, it was (inductively) added to the LGBTQ+ image denotation list initially drawn up mostly using Branchik's (2007) research. As mentioned in the methodology (Chapter 4), this addition (and others, for example 'physical closeness') came out of the ICA process itself, suggesting that Branchik's list needs revisiting. This is partly based on the currency of the cues: 'opposite gender occupations' for example, is now actively encouraged in advertising to counteract gender stereo-typing (ASA, 2018) and is unlikely to be understood as denoting someone's sexuality; and partly as a result of this study adopting a more granular approach to decoding LGBTQ+ cues.

Linked to this (and as alluded to earlier), four of Branchik's (2007) more implicit signifiers were not present as lead signifiers within the study: rejecting advances from opposite gender; rejection by the same sex; LGBTQ+ occupation; and male or female activities of the opposite gender. The latter two, as already mentioned, would appear to indicate a more general shift in advertising towards attempting to break gender stereotyping, and it is not unexpected that these types of images did not manifest. The lack of the former two signifiers, however, is slightly more complex to understand. One possible explanation is that the 'rejection of…' construction can be seen to rely on a deficit model of (connotative) interpretation: because 'x' is not happening, 'y' must be the case. However, the sample (of integrative *and* passive advertisements), in general, shows a more affirming, *present* set of images whereby cues of LGBTQ+ness are more direct and show some element of non-normative gender and sexuality that is more clearly recognisable/obvious to the LGBT-target audience. Compare, for example, the 'Physical closeness' of two females, with a scene whereby a 'female rejects the advances of a man'. Whilst the overall encoding of the advertisement may depend on other cues (such as the physical appearance of the women, the accompanying wording and so on) the latter image on its own is likely to be a less obvious cue than the former. This change in approach could be in response to advertisers wanting to be more effective in grabbing the attention of the intended LGBTQ+ audience (while still maintaining some ambiguity), especially since mainstream magazines include high numbers of advertisements within each publication.

Alternatively, or indeed additionally, this shift in practice could align with changing attitudes towards LGBTQ+ folk generally (Passport, 2012; NatCen, 2020). Advertisers can afford to be slightly bolder or at least *less* ambiguous with their implicit signifiers to ensure that the advertisement can be read by LGBTQ+ consumers with more certainty. However, as discussed in Chapter Two, this could pose a commercial risk in that the new implicit image may become *too* explicit and therefore be perceived negatively by some heterosexual consumers. Yet this need not be a problem, if Borgerson *et al*.'s (2005; 2006) concept of 'straightening-up' by heterosexual consumers is valid. As a reminder, this is when an LGBTQ+ image (for example, two women (one of whom is androgynous) in close physical contact, with the accompanying text "love is forever") could still be decoded as non-LGBTQ+. Read in the context of their own heterosexual frame of reference, the characters could be mother and daughter/sisters/friends. Such is the strength of the heteronormative narrative running through advertisements placed in mainstream media and the publication itself that even explicit LGBTQ+ images can be 'misread'.

This is where media context becomes integral to the decoding/reading process, prompting an important finding within this study. Specifically, the interpretation of certain cues, and whether they

are implicit or explicit LGBTQ+ signifiers, is dependent upon where the advertisement is placed - either in a mainstream publication such as *Marie Claire* or *GQ*, or in an LGBTQ+ magazine such as *DIVA* or *Gay Times.* In this sense, images themselves become fluid and their meaning contextual. To use the above advertisement scenario once more, the combination of physical closeness, an androgynous character and the wording "love is forever" *in an advertisement placed in DIVA* is likely to be read by a lesbian or bisexual woman as containing *explicit* reference to them. There is little or no ambiguity present. *DIVA* is a space where explicit lesbian editorial content (and a *non*-heterosexual narrative) also exists, so the reader is unlikely to think that the characters in the advertisement are sisters or good friends. In summary, some of the signifiers that can be coded as implicit LGBTQ+ advertisement cues can also be read as explicit. It is suggested here that, similar to the way that explicit LGBTQ+ images can be 'straightened-up' by heterosexual people, implicit images have the potential to be 'straightened-out' by LGBTQ+ consumers, whereby heterosexuality within the advertisement is taken out/removed.

To illustrate, Figure 36, below, contains examples of advertisements placed in *GQ*. They have been categorised as either 'passive' or 'not targeted' because of their implicit (mostly ambiguous) images or non-LGBTQ+ coded images. If, however, the same advertisements were to be placed in *Gay Times*, they could be read in a more explicit, obvious way by the gay or bisexual male:

Figure 36: Examples of 'passive' and 'not targeted' advertisements (containing implicit or non-LGBTQ+ images) that could be 'straightened out' if placed in LGBTQ+ media (06/GQ/10/P), (06/GQ/40/NT), (03/GQ/07/P), (03/GQ/03/P), (03/GQ/33/P) and(03/GQ/09/P)

To be clear, it is not that the implicit image itself changes in to one of Branchik's (2007) more overt gay male images, for example, 'Physical closeness' becoming 'Sexual touch' – that would not be objectively coding what is being *seen*. Rather the reading of the same image is understood differently because of the context in which it is being consumed. The space (in this instance LGBTQ+ media instead of mainstream) takes some of the *heterosexual*-ambiguity or uncertainty away.

Linking this back to some of what has already been discussed, especially in relation to the queer elements of this analysis, an LGBTQ+ image is therefore not fixed. It is not part of (another) binary construct of implicit versus explicit, for either the heterosexual or homosexual. As a construct, an 'LGBTQ+ image' is as fluid as are the readings of the image itself by the audience. So, whilst advertising theory mostly advocates the separation of different image types, and authors such as Branchik (2007) understand images to feature on a scale of overtness, LGBTQ+ images themselves can be seen to defy this. The problem with separation is that, conceptually, it cannot work. No image can be guaranteed to be read in a particular way by a particular audience. The same is true for all images in advertising and so this imperfect approach cannot be seen as any more problematic within the context of LGBTQ+/heterosexual consumers than for any other consumer type or context.

What *is* problematic though, especially in relation to 'straightening-out', is that non-heterosexuals possess a high level of heterosexual-literacy but this does not necessarily apply in reverse. Applying the notion of 'subcultural competence' (Lewis, 1997), LGBTQ+ people are able to recognise implicit images placed in passive advertisements, or at least recognise the reference points trying to be portrayed, but equally have a sense that the advertisement is not necessarily aimed at them and/or there is another (heterosexual) market being targeted too (Tsai, 2008). They can therefore recognise heterosexual cues as well as their own and know when an advertisement does not 'speak' to them. The same is not true in reverse; indeed, passive advertising and 'straightening-up' *depends* on the opposite not being the case (Borgerson *et al.*, 2006). This is problematic in so much as it highlights

very starkly the 'other' positionality of non-heterosexuality, subordinate to the ubiquity of heterosexuality in advertising, which is reflective of its inferior (hierarchical) status more broadly (Butler, 1990; Sedgwick, 1990).

Before bringing this chapter to a close, there are a small number of values for discussion related to the *context/scene determinants* of passive advertisements. As a summary, most of the findings for passive advertisements (see Table 12) are similar to those for integrative advertisements. For example, the majority of the advertisements are for a similar range of products (most notably, again, High-End Fashion products) and they tend to include 'staged' settings as opposed to depicting LGBTQ+ people in public or private contexts.

Table 20: Demographic and contextual features within Passive advertisements (excluding repeat advertisements: n=91)

Variable	Value[57]	Number (%) (MC)	Number (%) (*GQ*)	Total
Advertisement size	Full	17 (59%)	30 (48%)	47 (51%)
	Double	11 (38%)	25 (40%)	36 (40%)
	Feature (2 or 4 pg)	1 (3%)	7 (11%)	8 (9%)
Product Type	Fashion High End	16 (55%)	54 (87%)	70 (78%)
	Fashion High Street	4 (14%)	1 (2%)	5 (5%)
	Food	1 (3%)	1 (2%)	2 (2%)
	Fragrance	2 (7%)	3 (5%)	5 (5%)
	Health and Beauty	4 (14%)	1 (2%)	5 (5%)
	Jewellery/Watch		2 (3%)	2 (2%)
	Education	1 (3%)		1 (1%)
	Car	1 (3%)		1 (1%)
Activity	Posing	20 (69%)	47 (76%)	67 (74%)
	Shopping		1 (2%)	1 (1%)
	Leisure	6 (21%)	10 (16%)	16 (18%)
	Performing		1 (2%)	1 (1%)
	Socialising	3 (10%)	2 (3%)	5 (5%)
	No activity		1 (2%)	1 (1%)
Interaction	Alone	9 (31%)	35 (56%)	44 (48%)
	Couple	2 (7%)	3 (5%)	5 (5%)
	Group	3 (10%)	3 (5%)	6 (7%)
	Individuals	15 (52%)	18 (29%)	33 (36%)

[57] Other variables exist, please see Variables and Values List. This table only shows those that were coded within the sample of passive advertisements (n=91)

	With Animals		2 (3%)	2 (2%)
	N/A		1 (2%)	1 (1%)
Setting	Public	13 (45%)	25 (40%)	38 (42%)
	Private	2 (7%)	10 (16%)	12 (13%)
	Staged	14 (48%)	26 (42%)	40 (44%)
	N/A		1 (2%)	1 (%)
Majority Age	19-29	28 (97%)	56 (92%)	84 (92%)
	30-39	1 (3%)	2 (3%)	3 (3%)
	40-49		2 (3%)	2 (2%)
	Unsure		1 (2%)	1 (1%)
	N/A		1 (2%)	1 (1%)
Majority Ethnicity	White	18 (62%)	49 (79%)	67 (74%)
	Asian		1 (2%)	1 (1%)
	Black		1 (2%)	1 (1%)
	Mixed/Multi	6 (21%)	6 (10%)	12 (13%)
	Unsure	5 (17%)	5 (8%)	10 (11%)
	N/A		1 (2%)	1 (1%)
Majority Disability	No	29 (100%)	61 (98%)	90 (99%)
	N/A		1 (3%)	1 (1%)
Majority Wealth indicator	Low-Medium	6 (20%)		6 (7%)
	Medium	15 (52%)	21 (34%)	36 (40%)
	Medium-High	8 (28%)	34 (54%)	42 (46%)
	High		7 (11%)	7 (8%)

Overall, the findings for passive advertisements presents a less sense of *detachment* to those found within integrative advertisements. The *demographic* representations included within passive advertisements are again narrow however. The majority age-range remains at 19-29 years for passive advertisements placed in *Marie Claire* (as per their integrative advertisements). All character images, again, are able-bodied, the majority are white, and they are depicted within a context of average or above average wealth.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to analyse 'passive' and 'integrative' advertisements placed in mainstream media (*Marie Claire* and *GQ*) in terms of their prevalence and the constituent images used within each advertising approach. In terms of macro-level findings, more LGBTQ+ targeting advertisements

feature in *GQ* than *Marie Claire* even though *Marie Claire* has the higher overall number of advertisements placed within it publication. This arguably reflects the perceived wealth/income difference and appetite for consumption between gay men and lesbians (Badgett, 2009) even though the income/status for lesbians (according to readership data for *DIVA*) is higher than heterosexual females (in *Marie Claire).*

In terms of integrative advertisements, both publications tend to feature young (19-29), white, healthy characters, though in *Marie Claire* representations overall are far narrower (in terms of character interactions, advertisement setting etc). For those advertisements *not* featuring an LGBTQ+ celebrity as the main signifier, images are mostly gender normative and sexualised whereby 'affectionate/sexual touch' features highly (e.g. Calvin Klein and Gucci advertisements). These findings are therefore at odds with Nolke's (2018) study whereby 'real' depictions of LGBTQ+ lifestyles are beginning to feature in mainstream advertising.

Passive advertisements, understandably given their purpose, do not use such direct signifiers and instead typically use gender ambiguity to denote an (implicit) LGBTQ+ image. This delivers a gendered notion of sexuality and reinforces the intertwined relationship between gender and sexuality as conceptualised in Butler's (1999) heterosexual matrix. However, *Marie Claire* has a slightly higher reliance on 'physical closeness' between two women, which it is suggested is because it is seen by advertisers as a safer (less disruptive) strategy than using non-normative gender images within a mainstream context. An important finding through analysing passive advertisements is the concept of 'straightening out' whereby LGBTQ+ people are able to remove the 'heterosexual ambiguity' from a passive advertisement to shift the meaning/interpretation towards their own sexuality. This again show the versatility or fluidity of images dependent on the context in which the visual is being consumed.

Using a similar approach, the following chapter explores targeted LGBTQ+ representation in advertisements placed in LGBTQ+ media, exploring the types of advertisements and the constituent images used within those placed in *DIVA* and *Gay Times.*

Chapter 7 - Discussion II: LGBTQ+ placement

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the remaining findings of the Interpretive Content Analysis (ICA) and foregrounds key aspects for further critical analysis in the final discussion chapter. Whereas the previous chapter focused on LGBTQ+-targeted advertisements placed in mainstream media (namely *Marie Claire* and *GQ*), this chapter analyses targeted advertisements placed in LGBTQ+ media. Accordingly, its analysis focuses on 518 advertisements placed in *DIVA* and *Gay Times*.

Within this chapter, the actual and relative prevalence of conscious and tailored advertisements will be discussed. Included are observations on the types of images used (main and multiple combinations) to donate an LGBTQ+ image and other coded variables of interest (such as advertisement context and demographic-related points of distinction). Differences in findings *between DIVA* and *Gay Times* will be highlighted throughout. Given the sequencing of these chapters, links/comparisons will also be made, where appropriate, between targeted advertisements placed in mainstream and LGBTQ+ media as discussed in the previous chapter.

This chapter concludes that LGBTQ+ visibility, even *within* LGBTQ+ media, is lacking. Whilst differences exist between publications, the majority of advertisements overall do not contain explicit visual images of non-heterosexuality, and when signifiers do exist (in tailored advertisements) those representations are heavily homo- and heteronormative, thereby creating a narrow and limiting reproduction of LGBTQ+ identities. These findings, and those discussed in the previous chapter (relating to LGBTQ+ targeted advertisements placed in *mainstream* press) are critically discussed in the final discussion chapter that follows, alongside the queering of discursive cases representative of all four advertising approaches: passive, tailored, conscious and integrative.

7.2 Type and frequency of LGBTQ+ targeted advertisements placed in LGBTQ+ media

A total of 518 advertisements placed in *DIVA* and *Gay Times* were coded as part of this study. As shown in Figure 37, 46% of all advertisements placed in LGBTQ+ media were conscious and 54% tailored.

Figure 37: Targeted LGBTQ+ advertisements placed in LGBTQ+ media (including repeats)

	Publication	Total ads	Conscious		Tailored	
			n= 240	%	n= 278	%
LGBTQ+ Media	DIVA	201 (39%)	80	40%	121	60%
	Gay Times	317 (61%)	160	50%	157	50%
Sub Total (% of sample)		518 (23%)	240	46%	278	54%
TOTAL sample		2214	240	11%	278	13%

Macro-level findings show that a) more advertisements are placed in *Gay Times* than *DIVA*, b) across all advertisements, slightly more are tailored (i.e. adapted in some way to make explicit reference to the non-heterosexuality of the target audience) and c) this 'tailoring' occurs more in *DIVA* than in *Gay Times*. Taking these one at a time as a starting point to this chapter, the higher advertisement frequency in *Gay Times* could, in part, be related to the length of the publication itself (approximately 165 pages versus 100 for *DIVA*). However, the percentage of advertisements per publication is proportionately higher for *Gay Times*, suggesting that this finding is less about size of publication and more about choice of media placement. On one level, this may be attributable to the commercial attractiveness of gay men over lesbians, linked to supposed differences in spending power and consumption habits (Badgett, 2009). Alternatively, it could relate to publication preference on the part of the brand. Either way, it does demonstrate that in general terms gay/bisexual men are being exposed to more advertisements than lesbian/bisexual women via these media.

Linked to this, and discussed in more depth later, the *types* of products advertised to gay men (in comparison to lesbians) indicate that gay men are perceived by business to be more commercially lucrative, or at least to have more money (or willingness) to buy expensive goods than their lesbian counterparts. *Gay Times* has, for example, a number of 'High-End Fashion' brands consistently placing advertisements within their publication (n=19/175 (11%), excluding repeats), compared to none (zero) in *DIVA*. This finding could also, as suggested in the previous chapter, relate to the association of gay

men with a love of fashion (Ducker, 2015) and by implication the lesbian's stereotypical lack of interest in this area, but equally the intended targeted male would need the means to be able to afford these types of products in the first instance.

Whilst the reason behind the higher frequency of advertisements placed in *Gay Times* is not clear (nor directly linked to the aim of this study) the *relative* difference compared to *DIVA* can be seen to both reflect and perpetuate the normative portrayal of the affluent gay male and his appetite for consumption (Bettinsoli, 2021). To introduce a recurring theme within this chapter, much of the advertising that occurs across LGBTQ+ media (within *Gay Times* in particular) serves to reinforce and prioritise a particular 'type' of LGBTQ+ person. At this macro level, the lesbian is present but can be seen as inferior, certainly in economic terms, to the gay male. As this analysis becomes more granular, other differences become apparent, such as the contrast in the types of products being advertised in *DIVA* and *Gay Times* and the way in which different sexualities are being portrayed. The result, for lesbians and bisexual women, tends to be the reinforcement of a certain gendered notion of what it is to be a 'good' lesbian (i.e. be in a monogamous relationship and have a family). For gay/bisexual males, representations typically communicate a lone (often hypersexualised) male who is white, wealthy and healthy. Although discussed in much greater detail later in this chapter, it is an important point to signpost upfront given its omnipresence throughout the findings and the basis it provides for understanding the heteronormative and homonormative themes that will be explored in more detail in the final discussion chapter to follow.

Moving on to the prevalence of advertising approaches found within the sample, there is relatively small difference in frequency in the use of conscious and tailored advertising techniques (46% versus 54% respectively). While, overall, slightly more advertisements contain explicit LGBTQ+ images (via tailored advertisements), clearly many, in the form of conscious advertisements, do not attempt to include LGBTQ+ signifiers at all. This was an unexpected finding insomuch as advertisements placed in targeted media (as LGBTQ+ print magazines would be classified, in relation to non-heterosexuality) tend to show at least some level of typification or self-referencing cues for the intended audience. Referring back to the last chapter, where advertisements placed in mainstream media were analysed, the majority of the 'not targeted' advertisements (in other words, those aimed at heterosexual consumers) contained clear target audience signifiers. Women in their 50s, for example, were depicted using anti-aging moisturiser on their faces for Olay in *Marie Claire*. Young, urban males featured in the new autumn clothing range for Top Man in *GQ*. In this sense, the targeting of the advertisement is not solely reliant on the media placement choice itself. There are clear signifiers within the advertisement which indicate to the reader that the advertisement (and product) is aimed

at them. However, common practice in advertisements placed in LGBTQ+ media (i.e. conscious advertisements) is *not* to include the equivalent signifiers. Examples of this approach can be seen in Figure 38 below:

Figure 38: A selection of conscious advertisements with no implicit or explicit LGBTQ+ representation (08/DIVA/06/C), (01/DIVA/07/C), and (01/GT/19/C)

All images are relatively neutral, in that there are no self-referencing cues in terms of (trans)gender or non-heterosexuality[58]. Other more contextual signifiers exist, for example 'Medium' wealth for the

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[58] Indeed, the opposite is true for the last advertisement shown, which was placed in *Gay Times*. The product being advertised is 'event organisation', yet a key visual used is for a female hen party, arguably one of the most recognisable visual representations of cis-female heterosexuality. Even if the hen party was for a lesbian/bisexual civil partnership/wedding, the target audience for the publication is gay men.

OWL advertisement, but no specific LGBTQ+ signifiers. The consequence of this, akin to the 92% of (non-targeted) advertisements placed in mainstream media, is that there is a significant absence of explicit LGBTQ+ visibility even *within* LGBTQ+ media. To reiterate, 46% of all advertisements placed in *DIVA* and *Gay Times* do not contain LGBTQ+ images/symbols. As discussed in the previous chapter, LGBTQ+ people once again have a limited mirror within which to see themselves or encounter visual representations of alternative ways of being. In a similar vein to passive advertisements placed in mainstream media, conscious advertisements, therefore, can be seen to be convey a 'tokenistic' message. On the one hand, the LGBTQ+ 'market' is attractive enough to warrant placing an advertisement in LGBTQ+ media, but not necessarily enough to invest time and money in creating a meaningful, engaging connection with the target audience. Compare this with, for example, Absolut Vodka, who are celebrating their 30-year commitment to their LGBTQ+ consumers with a $4 million advertising campaign (CBS, 2019) in mainstream press as well as LGBTQ+ media (see Figure 39 below).

Figure 39: Example print advertisement for Absolut Vodka commemorating 30 years of targeting LGBTQ+ consumers
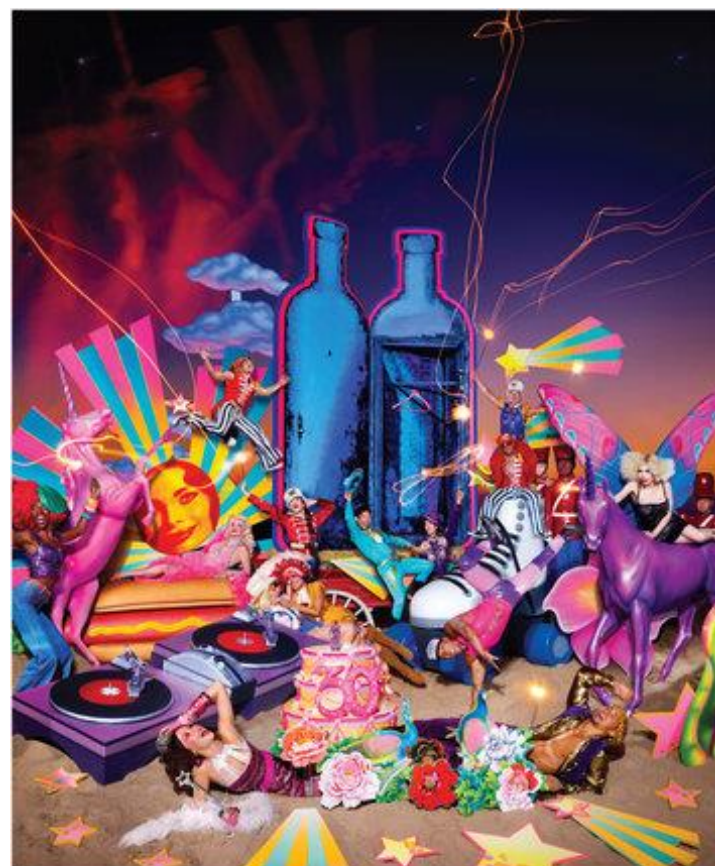
Linked to this[59], but arguably less problematic (since there is some level of explicit LGBTQ+ representation) is that a relatively large number of tailored advertisements (30%) rely on wording alone[60] as the main form of LGBTQ+ image/signifier. This is instead of *character* visual cues, for example, whereby there is some level of same-sex visibility and/or interaction. In terms of the ICA process, if an advertisement included the word 'gay' or 'lesbian' or 'pride' or similar, but had no other signifier, it would still be recognised (coded) as being tailored to the LGBTQ+ audience, since an explicit LGBT reference is being made[61]. Examples include those found in Figure 40 below:

Figure 40: Tailored advertisements coded using only 'LGBTQ+related word', placed in *Gay Times* (03/GT/14/T) and *DIVA* (06/DIVA/12/T)

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[59] …given the highlighted word 'out' (in pink) in 'outrageous'
[60] A new signifier ('LGBTQ+-related word') - inductively generated via the ICA, as listed and described in Table 6 in the methodology chapter (Chapter 4).
[61] As explained in the methodology chapter (Chapter 4), exceptions include those units of analysis whereby a decision was made 'over-ride' the manifest content (when coding the overall categorisation of the advertisement) based on whether the wording related to the product itself or whether the advertisement had been 'tailored' towards an LGBTQ+ audience.

The reason for including this here is that, whilst these types of advertisements have arguably been tailored to the LGBTQ+ audience, it is again relatively tokenistic, requiring minimal thought and effort on the part of the advertiser. Furthermore, gender and sexuality-based words as target audience indicators rarely occurs in advertisements placed in mainstream media aimed at heterosexual consumers. This difference exposes, once again, the heteronormative landscape of advertising, in that the 'norm' or default interpretation of an advertisement is that the characters are heterosexual and/or the advertisement is aimed at heterosexuals. Building on Kates (1999), rather than constraining meaning-making and minimise chances of a polysemic reading, LGBTQ+ words can be seen as 'deficit signifiers' to the audience in that the advertisement is '*not'* something (for example 'this is *not* aimed at heterosexuals') rather than it *being* something in its own right. Particularly worthy of mention is that this minimal wording technique is occurring in LGBTQ+ media where the readership is already (predominantly) LGBTQ+, where this type of signalling should arguably be superfluous. At best, this type of tailored practice can be seen as 'clunky' and a lack lustre progression from conscious advertising. It can also be seen to reinforce the position of non-heterosexuality as secondary or 'other', requiring an adaptation or a *fix*, thereby exposing its practice as heavily rooted in heteronormative advertising practice.

Similarly, companies have been including the wording '*DIVA*' or '*Gay Times*' as part of a 'call to action' promotional code (and to presumably track LGBTQ+ media placement effectiveness). Examples can be found below in Figure 41. These have also been classified as 'tailored' since the company has adapted their advertisement for the LGBTQ+ audience but arguably, again, not with full conviction; these advertisements can therefore be problematised in a similar way as discussed above.

Figure 41: Tailored advertisements using LGBTQ+ related wording as part of a 'call to action', placed in *Gay Times* (04/GT/06/T) and (08/GT/15/T)

Yet LGBTQ+ related wording has much potential in tailored advertisements if used in a more encompassing way. Figure 42 below shows two very similar products (in the 'fertility' category) placed in *DIVA* magazine. The top advertisement contains only the LGBTQ+ related word 'DIVA' (as in *DIVA* magazine), whereas the advertisement underneath incorporates a variety of LGBTQ+ related words to create more of an LGBTQ+ narrative[62]. Overall, the impression left for the aspiring LGBTQ+ parent by the second advertisement is that the clinic understands and knows how to cater for LGBTQ+ specific needs and demonstrates (as much as is possible within any advertisement) that they are an LGBTQ+ inclusive clinic[63].

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[62] For clarification, the Agora is not LGBTQ+-only.
[63] Whilst this is problematic in itself (and will be discussed later), the purpose of this deconstruction is to illustrate the level of audience connection and engagement that can be achieved in tailored advertisements beyond the use of minimal LGBT-related words.

Figure 42: Comparison of the use of wording in tailored advertisements placed in *DIVA* (02/DIVA/10/T) and (11/DIVA/08/T)

Whilst the Agora advertisement mainly uses words (as opposed to the inclusion of characters and depictions of family life etc.), its clever use of the 'Brighton Rocks' visual solidifies the inclusivity and credibility of the clinic in so much as Brighton is well known as being one of the most LGBTQ+ friendly cities in the UK where many alternative families choose to raise children (Rainbow Families, 2018). Indeed, the combined use of LGBTQ+ related words *and* visuals is a feature within the vast majority (89%) of tailored advertisements[64]. This has been used to good effect, for example in Figure 43 below. Here, words feature slightly less than in the Agora example above but the 'We understand family' narrative coupled with a visual of a lesbian family[65] (in other words, the final 'product') strengthens the overall encoded message.

Figure 43: A tailored advertisement placed in *DIVA* featuring both LGBTQ+ related words and explicit images (12/DIVA/27/T)

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[64] 94% in *DIVA* (72/77 tailored advertisements) and 85% (75/88) in *Gay Times* (excludes repeats)
[65] Again, the hetero- and homonormative elements within this advertisement are problematic and will be addressed later. The intention of its inclusion here, however, is to illustrate how the use of LGBT-related words and visuals are brought together to create a collective LGBT narrative within a tailored advertisement.

The heavy use of words incorporated within tailored advertising (in any shape or form) is an interesting finding, especially since this technique does not feature as highly within integrative advertisements, which also use explicit LGBTQ+ references/signifiers. The only difference between the two approaches is media placement, insomuch as the audience is wider (and majority heterosexual) for integrative advertisements, and conversely much narrower[66] for tailored equivalents. Again, not intended to be explored directly within this study, the difference may in part be due to organisations being able to have a more personalised conversation with LGBTQ+ consumers within LGBTQ+ media without the chatter of other audience communications. Or put slightly differently, organisations may be able to have a more intimate relationship with LGBTQ+ consumers behind the closed doors of LGBTQ+ media, a problematic confinement also discussed in the previous chapter whereby non-normative images (or in this case wording) are only viewed within their own set of mirrors.

An alternative (or secondary) explanation could be related to the types of products being advertised in tailored and integrative advertisements. 56% of tailored advertisements are 'LGBTQ+ related products' in that they are for the consumption of LGBTQ+ people specifically and/or exclusively. Examples include gay dating services, LGBTQ+ wedding services and lesbian festivals as show in Figure 44 below.

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[66] As mentioned in the previous chapter, LGBTQ+ people are more likely to read mainstream magazines than heterosexual people are to read LGBTQ+ equivalents (Oakenfull and Greenlee, 2005).

Figure 44: LGBTQ+ specific products promoted via tailored advertisements (11/GT/14/T), (01/GT/10/T) and (01/DIVA/08/T)
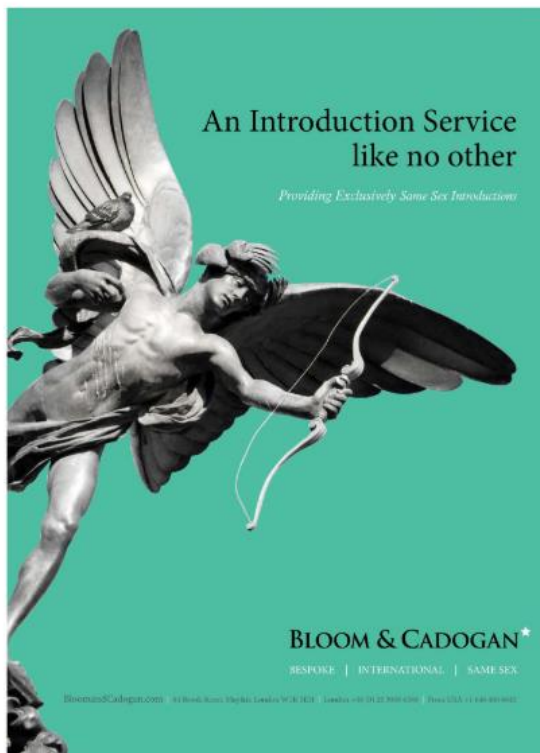
Typically, these products need to be communicated in a way that makes it clear the purpose and/or intended audience of the product, which cannot always be achieved using visuals alone. This makes sense, in that words can be used to avoid any ambiguity or, as Kates (1999) states, can at least constrain our meaning-making and restrict the polysemy of an advertisement. Perhaps the more interesting question to be asking, however, is why these types of products are only being promoted in LGBTQ+ media. No LGBTQ+ related products featured in any of the integrative advertisements placed in mainstream media. The marketing rationale could be simple: that this is smart differentiated targeting, allowing companies to allocate their resources in the most effective way to reach the intended audience. It is legitimate to question, however, why LGBTQ+ related products remain hidden behind those closed doors in the first place.

The third observation made at the beginning of this chapter (related to the macro-level data) was that *DIVA* has a higher rate of tailored (60%) versus conscious advertisements (40%) running through its publication. This is even more pronounced when repeated advertisements are removed from the findings to surface discrete advertisements only (65% versus 35%). *DIVA* readers can therefore be seen to be exposed to more explicit LGBTQ+ images and representations than gay/bisexual men in *Gay Times*. Furthermore, given that the vast majority (89%) of the advertisements feature a combination of LGBTQ+ related words and visuals (as discussed previously), they are arguably experiencing a more nuanced and individualised targeted approach than their gay/bisexual male counterparts. Leaving aside the *type*s of images and portrayals featured within the advertisements for a moment, at face value this is encouraging. Companies, targeting lesbian/bisexual women in particular, are taking the time to communicate with their audience directly and are adopting advertising practices (self-referential cues for example) similar to those used in mainstream publications aimed at attracting a heterosexual audience.

However, as *DIVA* has a relatively high number (49%[67]) of tailored advertisements featuring LGBTQ+ related products placed within its publication, this masks the extent to which lesbian/bisexual women feature on the radar of *mainstream* business and/or products. In comparison, just over two thirds of *Gay Times* advertisements are for non-LGBTQ+ related products, suggesting again that gay/bisexual men are perceived as the more commercially attractive consumer within a mainstream context. This can be seen to render lesbians as economically inferior, when in fact recent studies show that lesbians have the higher disposable income of the two sub-groups (Badgett, 2001). Whilst gay/bisexual men may be the more commercially attractive, the higher level of total conscious advertisements (50%

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[67] Compared to 31% in *Gay Times*

versus 40% in *DIVA*) returns the discussion once again to the tokenistic manner in which those commercial organisations choose to communicate with them.

However, conscious advertisements do have some benefits, for the organisation at least, if they are being used as part of an undifferentiated targeting strategy. The ability to attract multiple markets via one advertisement placed in more than one medium has the potential to generate a range of creative and production cost-savings. Because of this, it was anticipated that many (or at least some) of the conscious advertisements, such as those already featured, would also appear in mainstream advertising without adaptation. However, only one example within the sample (n=2214) met this expectation[68], as shown in Figure 45 below:

Figure 45: An undifferentiated advertisement for Movado watches placed in *GQ* (01/GQ/28/NT), *Gay Times* (03/GT/28/C) and *DIVA* (03/DIVA/04/C)

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[68] It is acknowledged that advertisements could have been placed in media other than *Marie Claire* and *GQ*. Within the sample, some undifferentiated advertisements did occur within LGBTQ+ media *or* within mainstream media (separately) and some *differentiated* examples across both, as discussed shortly. The data collection process was indeed designed to maximise the recording of multiple placements, if present, by analysing advertisements per month across all for publications (as detailed in the methodology chapter, Chapter 4).

This advertisement was placed in three out of the four publications featured within this study, with the exception of *Marie Claire*. One possible reason behind this decision could relate to the assumptions being made about the similarities between men (regardless of sexuality) and lesbian woman. To explain, a watch can be understood as gendered in different ways, compared to, for example, feminine hygiene products which are for female consumption. It has a potentially versatile audience, open therefore to the possibility of an undifferentiated targeting approach or adaptations between markets as required. With the product in question, the non-adaptation or non-placement of the advertisement in *Marie Claire* could be due to the *type* of watch featured in the advertisement. It is quite large and relatively 'masculine', reflected in the advertisement itself which has a monochromic, crisp, minimalistic feel to it. Essentially, not much of what is presented is likely to be appealing *in a normative* sense to a female market – which could be why it was not placed in *Marie Claire*.

If this were the reason, then the placement decisions for this advertisement relies on similarities being drawn between lesbians and men (hetero- *and* homosexual), insomuch as all three audiences might find the advertisement appealing, or at least not be put off by its (or the product's) masculinity. Such understanding can be seen to retrench the homogenising cultural construction of the 'butch lesbian', inflating its presence above all 'other' manifestations of non-heterosexual women. While this sub-categorisation *does* exist (Gill, 2009; Nolke, 2018) not all lesbians exude 'masculinity' or behave in a 'masculine' manner. Secondly, this association appears to be unhelpfully blurring the lines between gender and sexuality. The 'masculine' watch is advertised in both *Gay Times* and *GQ*, in other words the primary basis for its segmentation appears to be gender (*not* sexuality since its placement is in both mainstream and LGBTQ+ media). For the advertisement to then be placed in *DIVA without* being placed in *Marie Claire*, the segmentation-basis then shifts towards/to include sexuality. This links to the initial point being made, that lesbians appear to be perceived as having more commonalities with men than with heterosexual women, or at least men have more commonalities with lesbians than heterosexual women do. Either way, the homogenising assumptions informing this placement decision appear to be problematic.

To provide a similar example, Figure 46 below shows three versions of an advertisement for Infinity cars placed in *DIVA*, *Gay Times* and *GQ*. On this occasion, the advertisement is *differentiated*, in that it has been adapted (unlike Figure 45) for three distinct markets: 1) lesbian/bisexual women (by being placed in *DIVA* and including a woman in the top right corner of the visual); 2) gay/bisexual men (by being placed in *Gay Times* and removing the woman); and 3) heterosexual men (by being placed in *GQ* and including the woman again).

Figure 46: Differentiated advertisements for Infinity cars, featured in *DIVA* **(01/DIVA/02/C),** *Gay Times* **(01/GT/01/C) and** *GQ* **(01/GQ/58/NT)**

There is much to say about these advertisements. Firstly, to pick up on an earlier point related to tokenism, these advertisements feel creatively 'lazy'. The adaptations are minimal and centre on whether or not to include a (photo-stock) woman, seemingly as part of a lifestyle campaign that is intended to send the message: "if you buy this car you can have a successful, beautiful woman by your side"[69]. Or not, if you are a gay male. This laziness, as already discussed, contrasts greatly with the advertisements for The Agora Clinic or CAREFertility (Figures 42 and 43 above) in which the adaptations provide the opportunity for a meaningful connection with the target audience. Secondly, and similar to the Movado watch example, the absence of a differentiated advertisement featured in *Marie Claire* illustrates that the basis for segmentation is sexuality (or at least sexual attraction) which is, again, underpinned by the assumption that heterosexual men and lesbians have much (more) in common. Furthermore, by incorporating the advertisement text into the meaning-making process, its placement decisions also implies that heterosexual women are not 'born to challenge' (unlike men and lesbians) and communicates another stereotyped message related to the types of cars women do or do not like, or can and cannot drive[70].

Worth highlighting here too is the frequency of these types of advertisements. Only the Movado watch and a handful of differentiated advertisements (including the Infinity car above) cut across LGBTQ+ and mainstream media[71]. Again, whilst this is not, in itself, a problem and could simply be illustrative of effective targeting practice on the part of other marketers (or advertisements being placed in alternative publications to the ones selected for this study), it does at least *signal* a divide, especially given the size of this advertising sample (n=2,214) and the length of time (12 months) over which the data was collected. If normative LGBTQ+ targeted advertising practice is to promote products in *either* LGBTQ+ or mainstream media, then potential concerns over separation (rather than segmentation) begin to emerge. As I discuss in the previous chapter, few crossovers exist. Gucci, Pandora, Prada and Mont Blanc, for example, are simply not placing advertisements in LGBTQ+ media, even though some are targeting LGBTQ+ consumers via passive and integrative advertisements placed in mainstream magazines. Equally, brands that promote their products in *DIVA* and *Gay Times* are not

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[69] The first advertisement coded of this trio was the one placed in *DIVA*. Initially, it was thought that the featured woman was a signifier of the driver/owner. Once the identical advertisement was found in *GQ* (and the woman removed in *Gay Times*), it became clear that the woman is less about the driver and more about the (aspirational) passenger.

[70] This is reinforced by the low number and limited types of cars advertised in *Marie Claire* (n=14/918 (1.5% of all products advertised in *Marie Claire*)). Most are smaller versions such as the Mini and Fiat 500 and mainly communicated via playful/humorous/exciting messages.

[71] Many more differentiated and undifferentiated advertisements do exist but they occur *either* within LGBTQ+ *or* mainstream media. For example, a differentiated advertisement for Emerald Life Insurance appears in both *DIVA* and *Gay Times*, with the visuals changed to depict a lesbian couple in the former and gay male couple in the latter.

placing advertisements in *Marie Claire* and *GQ*. This latter finding may be easier to explain, in part, by the relatively large total amount of LGBTQ+ related products being advertised in LGBTQ+ media (56%). Target consumers for these more niche products are comparatively less likely to be found reading *Marie Claire* and *GQ*[72]. Also, cost could be a barrier, since advertising space is substantially more expensive in *Marie Claire* and *GQ* (BRAD, 2016), but again this does not explain why typically *only* smaller (or niche) brands are choosing to advertise in LGBTQ+ media.

If this 'mutually exclusive' placement *is* about corporate/strategic choice, then it is not being made on economic grounds. The socio-economic status of *DIVA* and *Gay Times* readers exceeds readers of *Marie Claire* and *GQ* respectively[73]. In other words, if high-end brands such as Gucci are placing advertisements in magazines such as *GQ* to reach ABC1 male consumers they will also, potentially, be able to reach them via *Gay Times*. It could be that the relatively small size of the gay/bisexual/transgender market does not warrant the additional advertising spend in *Gay Times*, especially if they can access them via passive and integrative advertisements in *GQ*; and/or it could be that they see heterosexual males (and females) as their primary markets and so strategically are prioritising them.

Regardless of the reason (which cannot be fully understood within the parameters of this study), it is clear that mainstream brands (typically larger, high-end brands) are choosing not to invest in either conscious or tailored advertisements placed in LGBTQ+ media to target LGBTQ+ consumers. Instead, a minority are using passive and/or integrative advertisements placed in mainstream publications, representing 8% (n=137/1696) of all mainstream advertisements featured. There are a number of problematic aspects to this. At face value, sexuality can be seen as a de-prioritised variable within the strategic decision-making process, which, given the individual economic potential of LGBTQ+ consumers (over their heterosexual equivalents), seems commercially short-sighted. Conscious or tailored advertisements have the potential for much exposure[74] to a captive audience and would appear to be the better placement choice in terms of return on investment (especially given the relatively lower placement costs). The potential argument that brands wish to instead show their LGBTQ+ support more publicly by advertising in mainstream media runs thin given that only 2% of advertisements are integrative and therefore potentially recognisable to the heterosexual public.

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[72] This does not negate the earlier challenge of this status-quo and the need to critique the reasons why LGBTQ+ products are not more widely advertised and available.

[73] See Table 4 in the methodology chapter (Chapter 4) which summarises the key target audience demographics of the four magazines selected for this study, and their circulation levels.

[74] Based on circulation levels for *DIVA* and *Gay Times*, also shown in Table 4

To conclude, a number of key findings have emerged so far. Gay/bisexual men are more exposed to LGBTQ+ targeted advertisements in LGBTQ+ media than lesbian/bisexual women, signalling a potentially higher commercial value to business than that of non-heterosexual females. However, gay/bisexual males are typically communicated to in a less meaningful and personalised way. This due to the higher number of conscious advertisements placed in *Gay Times* (compared to *DIVA*) and the lower number of tailored advertisements containing additional wording cues to connect more actively with the audience. Overall, explicit LGBTQ+ representation in LGBTQ+ media is limited, occurring in only 54% of total advertisements placed. This, coupled with the generally tokenistic nature of conscious advertisements, paints a relatively bleak or lacklustre picture of LGBTQ+ representation in LGBTQ+ media. Furthermore, 56% of advertisements placed in LGBTQ+ media are for LGBTQ+ related products, limiting the extent to which LGBTQ+ consumers (lesbian/bisexual women in particular) are being exposed to mainstream businesses or products. Linked to this, very few mainstream brands appear to be crossing over their advertising into LGBTQ+ media (and vice versa), despite the publications studied having similar readership characteristics for both hetero-and non-heterosexual consumers. This, therefore, begins to expose potential inequalities in terms of market status based on sexuality; a de-prioritisation that once again situates homosexuality as inferior to heterosexuality. Some of these issues, along with those that follow here, will be discussed in more detail in the final discussion and conclusion chapters.

7.3 LGBTQ+ images and representations within Conscious and Tailored advertisements in LGBTQ+ publications

Following a similar format to the previous chapter, the following sections discuss the types of images and representations used within both sets of advertising approaches (conscious and tailored) in more detail, again identifying any noticeable differences between publications (*DIVA* and *Gay Times*); thus addressing specifically RO2.2: 'Explore how LGBTQ+ images and representation levels currently manifest within print advertising practice in mainstream and LGBTQ+ media'.

Conscious advertisements: no images

Focusing first on conscious advertisements, there are a number of differences between advertisements placed in *DIVA* and *Gay Times*. As already discussed, more advertisements appear in *Gay Times* then *DIVA*, but new to the discussion is the type of products being advertised. For *DIVA*

the most frequent product is 'Charity' and for *Gay Times* 'Music/Film/TV'[75]. Table 21 below shows the
full range of products coded, alongside other key findings:

**Table 21: Table 22: Demographic and contextual features within conscious advertisements
(excluding repeat advertisements: n=129)**

Variable	Value[76]	Number (%) (DIVA n=42)	Number (%) (GT=87)	Total (n=129)
Advert size	Full	31 (74%)	59 (68%)	90 (70%)
	Half	3 (7%)	13 (15%)	16 (12%)
	Quarter page	7 (17%)	8 (9%)	15 (12%)
	Double	1 (2%)	7 (8%)	8 (6%)
Product Type	Book	4 (10%)	1 (1%)	5 (4%)
	Car	1 (2%)	2(2%)	3 (3%)
	Charity	9 (21%)	8 (9%)	17 (9%)
	Dating		1 (1%)	1 (1%)
	Employ/recruit.	4 (9%)	1(1%)	5 (4%)
	Fashion High End		6 (7%)	6 (5%)
	Fashion High St.	1 (2%)		1 (1%)
	Fertility	6 (14%)		6 (5%)
	Financial		2 (2%)	2 (2%)
	Food		2 (2%)	2(2%)
	Health and beauty		17 (20%)	17 (13%)
	Home-based		3 (34%)	3 (3%)
	Jewellery/Watch	4 (9%)	8 (9%)	12 (9%)
	Leisure	1 (2%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)
	Music/film/TV	5 (12%)	25 (29%)	30 (23%)
	Pet-related	1 (2%)	1 (1%)	2(2%)
	Political/action		1 (1%)	1 (1%)
	Technology		1 (1%)	1 (1%)
	Travel/Holiday	2 (5%)	2 (2%)	4 (3%)
	Wedding-related	4 (9%)	5 (6%)	9 (7%)
Activity	Cosmetic		1 (1%)	1 (1%)
	Domestic	1 (2%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)
	Health	2 (5%)	5 (6%)	7 (5%)
	Leisure	1 (2%)	3(3%)	4 (3%)
	Mixed		1 (1%)	1 (1%)
	N/A	6 (14%)	7(8%)	13 (10%)
	No activity	21 (50%)	24 (28%)	45 (35%)
	Performing		9 (10%)	9 (7%)
	Posing	7 (17%)	28 (32%)	35 (27%)
	Romantic	1 (2%)		1 (1%)
	Sexual	1 (2%)	2 (2%)	3 (2%)

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[75] Whilst this is a large product category, its intention is to also capture 'home entertainment-based' products.
For more information, please refer back to the coding Variables and Values List in the methodology chapter
(Chapter 4).
[76] Other variables exist, please see methodology chapter. This table only shows those that were coded within
the sample of conscious advertisements, excluding repeats (n=129).

	Sport		1 (1%)	1 (1%)
	Socialising		2 (2%)	2 (2%)
	Travel	1 (2%)	2 (2%)	3 (2%)
	Work	1 (2%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)
Interaction	Alone	6 (14%)	36 (41%)	42 (32%)
	Couple	2 (5%)	2 (2%)	4 (3%)
	Group		2 (2%)	2 (2%)
	Family	1 (2%)		1 (1%)
	Individuals	6 (14%)	10 (9%)	16 (12%)
	Just animals	2 (5%)	1 (1%)	3(2%)
	Mixed		5 (6%)	5 (4%)
	NA	25 (60%)	31 (36%)	56 (43%)
Setting	Private	1 (2%)	4 (5%)	5 (4%)
	Public	8 (19%)	23 (26%)	31 (24%)
	Staged	8 (19%)	31 (36%)	39 (30%)
	N/A	25 (60%)	28 (32%)	53 (41%)
Mood	Celebratory	1 (2%)	4 (5%)	5 (4%)
	Energetic	1 (2%)		1 (1%)
	Entertaining	1 (2%)	4 (5%)	5 (4%)
	Exciting	7 (17%)	11 (13%)	18 (14%)
	Extravagant	1 (2%)		1 (1%)
	Happiness	4 (10%)	2 (2%)	6 (5%)
	Humorous	3 (7%)	2 (2%)	5 (4%)
	Indulgence	1 (2%)	3 (3%)	4 (3%)
	Intense		5 (6%)	5 (4%)
	Playful/fun	2 (5%)	8 (9%)	10 (13%)
	Relaxing	1 (2%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)
	Romantic	1 (2%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)
	Serious	18 (43%)	44 (51%)	62 (48%)
	Sexual	1 (2%)		1 (1%)
Majority Gender	Female	14 (33%)	7 (8%)	21 (16%)
	Male	1 (2%)	44 (51%)	45 (35%)
	Mixed		2 (2%)	2 (2%)
	N/A	22 (52%)	29 (33%)	51 (40%)
	Not sure	4 (10%)	3 (3%)	7 (5%)
	Transsexual	1 (2%)	2 (2%)	3 (2%)
Majority Ethnicity	Black	1(2%)	4 (5%)	5 (4%)
	Mixed/Multi		4 (5%)	4 (3%)
	N/A	24 (57%)	30 (39%)	54 (42%)
	Unsure	3 (7%)	10 (9%)	13 (10%)
	White	14 (33%)	39 (45%)	53 (41%)
Majority Age	Baby/child	3 (7%)	1 (1%)	4 (3%)
	Teenage		1 (1%)	1 (1%)
	19-29	9 (21%)	24 (28%)	33 (26%)
	30-39	2 (5%)	19 (22%)	21 (16%)
	40-49	2 (5%)	4 (5%)	6 (5%)
	50-59	1 (2%)	2 (2%)	3 (2%)
	70-79		1 (1%)	1 (1%)
	N/A	25 (60%)	30 (34%)	55 (43%)

	Unsure		5 (9%)	5 (4%)
Majority Wealth indicator	Low	10 (24%)		10 (13%)
	Low-Medium		25 (29%)	25 (19%)
	Medium	16 (38%)	31 (36%)	47 (36%)
	Medium-High	7 (17%)	21 (24%)	28 (22%)
	High	1 (2%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)
	Unsure	8 (19%)	9 (10%)	17 (13%)

The relatively high number of Music/Film/TV advertisements placed in *Gay Times* skews the combined frequency levels in favour of this category, although it is also the third most frequent product type placed in *DIVA* so it is not without overall importance. Of particular interest related to this finding is the *type* of Music/Film/TV is being advertised. As shown in Figure 47 below, they are typically films/TV/artists that also feature in the mainstream arena but are considered popular amongst LGBTQ+ people. Examples include the film *Mamma Mia!* (with Abba soundtrack), musicians such as Marc Almond, Andy Bell (both gay males) and Alison Moyet, and UK TV shows such as *Bad Girls* or *Queer as Folk* which have LBGTQ+ storylines. Alternatively, some are LGBTQ+ themed films/TV shows that are more niche but not solely for LGBTQ+ consumption, for example Peccadillo Picture's LGBTQ+ world cinema collection.

Figure 47: Examples of LGBTQ+ themed film/DVD advertisements placed in LGBTQ+ media (12/GT/04/C) and (04/GT/05/C)

As discussed in the methodology, the classification of advertisements for these sorts of products[77] as either conscious or tailored was much deliberated. While they do often include explicit signifiers (for example two men embracing on the front cover of a DVD, or the LGBTQ+ related words 'transgender' or 'lesbian'), the distinction was ultimately made by asking the question 'have any inclusions/changes been made to the advertisement in an attempt to attract/be read specifically by an LGBTQ+ audience? In other words, could the same advertisement appear in mainstream media with the product appealing also to non-LGBTQ+ people? If the advertisement did not reflect any 'tailoring' to the LGBTQ+ audience then it would be classified as a 'conscious' placement.

Figure 48, below, shows how this distinction plays out within the context of Music/Film/TV advertisements. This version mentions the word 'gaytimes' as part of the website for the competition entry and therefore some adaptation has taken place for the LGBTQ+ context of its placement, in the same way as for the examples shown in Figure 40 earlier, and with the same problems.

Figure 48: A tailored advertisement for a Music/Film/TV product, placed in *Gay Times* (10/GT/03/T)

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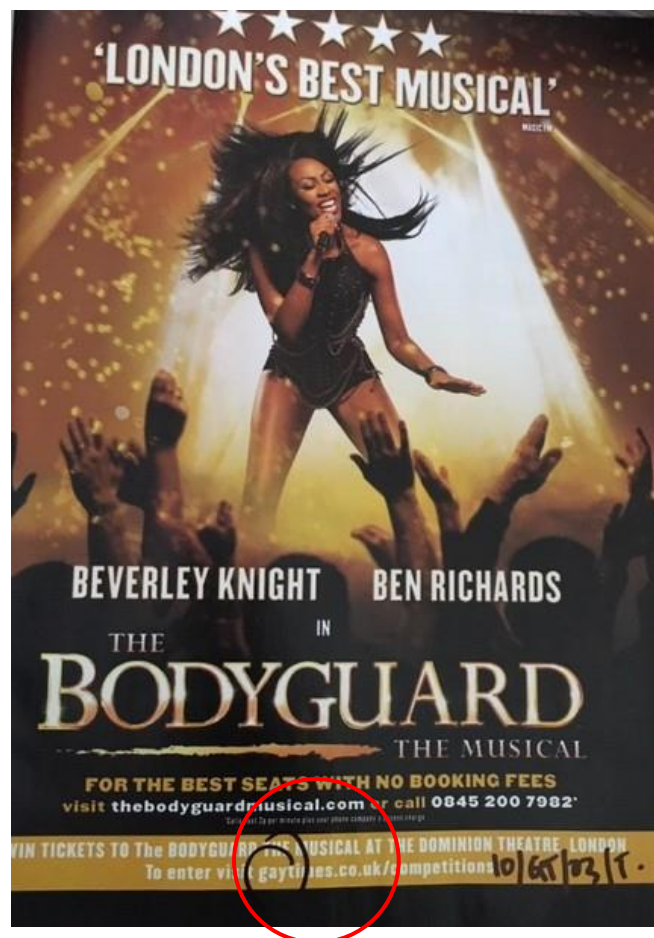
[77] LGBTQ+ themed products, for example the transgender novel 'The art of being normal' by Lisa Williamson.

The targeted placement of advertisements for music/films/TV with an LGBTQ+ theme in LGBTQ+ media is not an issue in itself; indeed, it makes good marketing sense for the same reasons raised previously. The problem occurs when the perspective shifts to what is 'absent'. Extending earlier discussions surrounding the lack of crossover between LGBTQ+ and mainstream advertising, the absence of other genres of film or more mainstream artists also implies an assumption that LGBTQ+ consumers have a less varied range of consumption preferences, predicated by their sexuality over other forms of their identity or indeed general tastes and preferences regardless of their derivation.

Moving on, charity advertising is an interesting product type to bring forward into this discussion, particularly since it features highly in conscious advertisements placed in *DIVA* (representing 21% of all products 'consciously' promoted) and much less so in *Gay Times*[78]. The possible reason behind this finding is not especially obvious. Whether lesbian/bisexual women are particularly altruistic/philanthropic, and this behaviour therefore informs advertising decisions, is not known. It is apparent, though, that there is a large imbalance in the number of charity advertisements placed in *DIVA* and *Gay Times* compared to those featured in *Marie Claire* and GQ. Indeed, only ten advertisements were placed in *GQ* and *Marie Claire*, representing 0.7% of discrete advertisements coded, compared with 7% in LGBTQ+ media.

The finding appears to indicate then that LGBTQ+ consumers, lesbian and bisexual women in particular, are perceived by charities as being more likely to donate than heterosexual consumers. Whilst possibly cause-dependent, this may again be linked to the homogenised association of LGBTQ+ people and the lucrative 'pink pound'. While the demographic readership figures for *DIVA* and *Gay Times* indicate this is true for some (in terms of socio-economic status as mentioned already) there is a contradictory message coming out of the ICA, particularly for *DIVA*, in terms of brand communication and positioning via the advertisements placed. Wealth indicators in advertisements place in *DIVA* (especially within tailored advertisements) are lower compared to *Gay Times*, and also to *Marie Claire* and *GQ*[79]. This highlights again the mainstream/LGBTQ+ publication advertising divide, with *DIVA* being almost the 'cinderella' of advertisement placement. It also begs the question as to whether *DIVA* is attracting the right advertisers, given their supposed readership (or more controversially, vice versa). There is certainly a misalignment between the two.

Before moving on to other features within conscious advertisements, there are a couple of product-related differences that are also worthy of mention. Firstly, compared to *no* such examples in *DIVA*,

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[78] 9% of conscious advertisements in *Gay Times* are charity-related.
[79] The most frequent wealth indicator for integrative advertisements is 'Medium' at 50% and the same for passive advertisements but at a slightly lower frequency (48%).

a noticeable number of advertisements in *Gay Times* are promoting a range of High-End Fashion and health/beauty products[80]. The implications of this are to be discussed in more detail later (and in the final discussion chapter). Suffice to say, it stimulates an interesting discussion around the dynamics of this finding. For example, are fashion, health and beauty companies choosing to advertise in *Gay Times* because of the gay male's (stereotyped) need/want/preoccupation to look good? And/or are gay males caught up in the (media-reinforced) homonormative pressure to conform to a particular way of looking? Certainly, visuals of young, handsome, muscular, well-dressed (if dressed at all) male images are ubiquitous within *Gay Times* (far outnumbering similar types of representations in *GQ*). Indeed, Figure 49 below shows the first three advertisements featured in the November edition of *Gay Times*. Whilst not all are conscious advertisements, it does provide a good overall impression of the types of images that gay/bisexual men are exposed to in *Gay Times*.

Figure 49: The first three advertisements placed in the November edition of GT (all double page) (11/GT/01/C), (11/GT/02/T) and (11/GT/03/T)

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[80] The actual number of advertisements for these types of products is much higher when combined with tailored advertisements, representing a third of all advertisement placed in *Gay Times*.

If you combine these types of images in *Gay Times* (including those that are tailored examples) with the other features of advertisements placed in the publication (as summarised in Figure 49 above, with some illustrations below in Figure 50), then an interesting picture emerges.

Figure 50: Exemplar tailored advertisements in *Gay Times* which feature the most frequently displayed values within the ICA
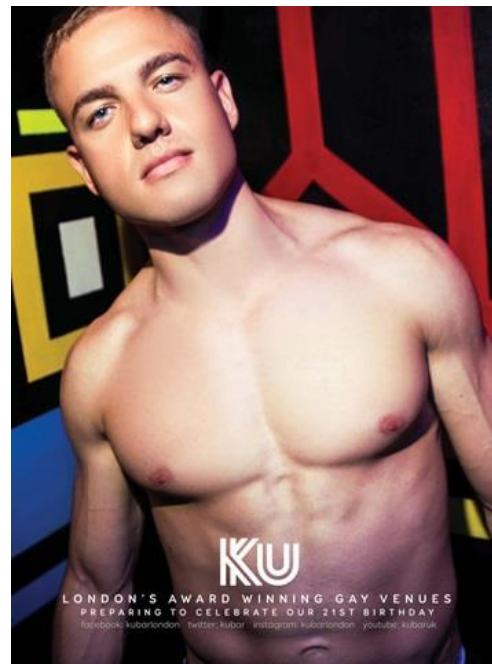
Not only is a certain type of physicality attached to the gay/bisexual male, they also tend to be featured: a) alone, in other words not as part of a couple, or group of friends or similar; b) posing, rather than participating in any (albeit re-created) activity with or without others; c) in a staged environment, for example a studio photoshoot, rather than in public/private space alone or with others; and d) with a serious undertone to the mood of the advertisement. In other words, a manufactured, detached version of any lived reality is visually consumed. Furthermore, the only

substantial difference between conscious and tailored advertisements placed in *Gay Times* is that for the latter (in other words where explicit LGBTQ+ images are used), the gay/bisexual male is even whiter and younger, and the advertisements themselves tend to have more of a sexual undertone (as evidenced by some of those featured above).

There is much to be discussed here (which extends in the next chapter) in terms of how the 'gay male' is portrayed in *Gay Times*. Firstly, the majority of images used can be seen to reinforce the notion that there *is* a clearly identifiable gay male, reproducing an essentialist view of gay male sexuality. In so doing, a 'person' is constructed, a fixed identity, of what a gay male is/looks like. As illustrated above, this 'look' is often sexual in nature or has a sexual undertone; and the typical absence of others in the visual infers that any intimate interaction is likely to be transient or at least that monogamy or family is of lesser importance or might feature less prominently in their lives. As discussed shortly, this is in stark contrast to the portrayal of lesbian/bisexual women, who are often depicted in social groups or as couples/families, for example in Figures 43 and 44 above. Gay men also tend to be shown as handsome, healthy, white (and often wealthy), thereby collectively reproducing a familiar (re)construction of gay male sexuality (Drucker, 2015). Even if these depictions are true for some gay/bisexual males, of key concern is the *scale* at which this particular representation is being portrayed in LGBTQ+ media and the narrowing homonormative ideal that is constructed, which marginalises alternative ways of being represented.

Other types of (non-normative) images do exist however they are also very narrow. Examples include advertisements for acts/performances which feature queer artists (see left-hand advertisement in Figure 51 below). These representations are not situating alternative identities as something to necessarily 'be' or aspire to, rather something to 'see' as a form of entertainment. The exception is the advertisement on the right-hand side of Figure 51, where the 'bear' subculture is being openly communicated in way which is, interestingly, more fun and social (albeit within an LGBTQ+ environment and therefore not seen by a mainstream audience). Whilst these inclusions can be understood as encouraging, the dominant representation of gay/bisexual males remains the white, youthful and body-beautiful.

Figure 51: Alternative representations of non-normative gender and sexualities in advertisements placed in *Gay Times*

A slightly different picture emerges for portrayals of lesbian/bisexual women in conscious advertisements placed in *DIVA*. They, too, are mostly depicted either in a detached way or not depicted at all; in other words, most of the images and/or wording used relate to the product, without the inclusion of people in various settings and interactions. However, in tailored advertisements, lesbian/bisexual women become much more visible and, to use the codes in this study, feature mostly as couples, in public spaces, and/or within happy or excited (although sometimes serious) scenarios. These representations are less about who the lesbian *is* (in an essentialist, identity-based way) and more about how they behave and interact with others.

That said, and as shown below in Figure 52, these behaviours and interactions are heavily heteronormative in how they construct acceptable behaviours that allow assimilation into mainstream life. These examples relate to marriage, having a family, and security, in an effort to show the parallels with heterosexual (acceptable) ways of being. These types of products, however, feature very rarely in advertisements placed in *Marie Claire,*[81] presumably because their heterosexual

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[81] Only two adverts (out of 697) placed in MC contained products relating to 'wedding', 'finance', 'legal' or 'fertility'. For DIVA, these product types equate to 25% of all products and for GT 11%.

audience is already accustomed to these types of products and this inherent privilege does not need to be 'sold' in the same way. They do, however, feature fairly heavily in *DIVA* magazine, reflecting one quarter of all advertisements placed in the publication.

Figure 52: Illustrative heteronormative tailored advertisements featured in DIVA (04/DIVA/06/T), (06/DIVA/16/T.) and (01/DIVA/09/T)

Referring to the coded terminology used throughout this study, it is clear to see that the settings for the advertisements include public spaces, with the mood tending to be happy, and interactions occurring within couples or families. To repeat an earlier point, this is in stark contrast to the majority of tailored advertisements placed in *Gay Times*.   That said, there are *some* similar types of advertisements to the three above, as shown in Figure 53 below.

Figure 53: Examples of advertisements featuring weddings, legal/financial services and alternative families placed in GT (05/GT/04/T) and (04/GT/08/T)

Interactions are also within couples or families and the mood is lightened. What is interesting, however, is that the models/characters are very different to the ones used in the majority of the other advertisements placed in *Gay Times*. Here, representations have more of a 'realness' to them, with less of a reliance on chiselled looks, physicality and youth. With gay/bisexual male representation in *Gay Times*, it appears that two fairly distinct portrayals exist: one which is lone, youthful, hypermasculine and often hypersexualised; the other which is older, emotionally committed and heavily heteronormative. As explored in the next discussion chapter, both representations are problematic for different reasons. For now, the key point is that, whilst alternative representations of gay/bisexual men exist in *Gay Times*, the majority of representations, as captured in Figures 49 and 50, reinforce a homonormative notion of what it is to be a gay male.

Linked to this, it also appears that heteronormativity is present in *what* is being promoted, not just how. Almost polarised product categories have already been identified as High-End Fashion and health/beauty in *Gay Times* and fertility in *DIVA*. Supported by examples already shown within this chapter, the placement of multiple discrete advertisements for fertility services can be seen as illustrative of the shift in more recent years of LGBTQ+ couples wanting to start families, and as such replicating normative heterosexual familial relationships. As already alluded to, of particular importance is that these types of advertisements only appear in *DIVA* and not *Gay Times*. Many more

male couples are choosing families via surrogacy[82] and, indeed, adoption, but advertisements for these services and related support are not being routinely placed in *Gay Times*. Arguably, this finding reinforces the heteronormative position of women being considered more child/family-driven than men, within a hierarchy that still favours biological ('natural') children born to heterosexual couples over any others. Gay fathers and their children do very occasionally[83] feature in tailored advertisements (as shown in the central example of Figure 53 above) but these relate to products linked to family security/stability/rights (for example life insurance) rather than the actual *creation* of families. As discussed in the next chapter, these advertisements can be seen to be both creating and reinforcing a homonormative ideal of what it is to be a 'good' gay male citizen within a heteronormative media discourse.

To summarise the key features of conscious advertisements, there are some similarities between *DIVA* and *Gay Times*. Both publications tend to contain advertisements that favour products of LGBTQ+ interest, most notably through the high number of iconic and niche Music/Film/TV advertisements placed and those for LGBTQ+ related charities. Regarding the latter, charities in general feature relatively highly across both publications (more so in *DIVA)*, indicating that LGBTQ+ consumers are considered generous/altruistic, arguably because of their perceived high disposable income. In terms of the design of the advertisements themselves, they tend to either contain visuals of the product itself and/or product-related wording (especially in *DIVA*) rather than feature any people/characters; or depict lone characters within a staged environment (more commonly found in *Gay Times*). Both are not unexpected given the nature of conscious advertisements. As illustrated here, differences between the way lesbians and gay men are being targeted in LGBTQ+ media are beginning to emerge, suggesting that the LGBTQ+ market is not being treated as a homogeneous group. This is to be explored in more detail in the sections that follow.

Tailored advertisements: explicit images

Moving the discussion towards the features of tailored advertisements, one of the key findings, again, is that there are differences in the most frequent types of products being advertised, not only between publications but also in contrast to conscious advertisements. As shown in Table 22 below, the most common tailored advertisements placed in *DIVA* are for LGBTQ+ Festivals (compared to Charity in conscious advertisements) and for *Gay Times* travel/holidays and High-End Fashion equally (compared to music/film/TV).

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[82] Although also being criticised for it. For example, Tom Daley (who had a son with his husband Dustin Lance Black) publicly stated "Lots of people say, 'why don't you adopt?' You wouldn't say that to a straight couple. You wouldn't say: 'why do you deserve to have a biological kid?'" (*The Telegraph*, 2018, p.18).
[83] In 3 out of 85 tailored advertisements (4%)

Table 23: Demographic and contextual features within tailored advertisements (excluding repeat advertisements: n=165)

Variable	Value[84]	Number (%) (DIVA n=77)	Number (%) (GT=88)	Total (n=165)
Advert size	Quarter page	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	2 (1%)
	Half	17 (22%)	6 (7%)	23 (14%)
	Full	46 (60%)	74 (84%)	120 (73%)
	Double	13 (17%)	7 (8%)	20 (12%)
Product Type	Book	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	2 (1%)
	Car	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
	Charity	2 (3%)	1 (1%)	3 (2%)
	Dating	3 (4%)	2 (2%)	5 (3%)
	Drink – alcoholic		1 (1%)	1 (1%)
	Employ/recruit.	2 (3%)		2 (1%)
	Family-related	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
	Fashion High End		13 (15%)	13 (8%)
	Fashion High St.	2 (3%)	8 (9%)	10 (6%)
	Fertility	8 (10%)		8 (5%)
	Festival	18 (23%)	1 (1%)	19 (11%)
	Financial	4 (5%)	7 (8%)	11 (7%)
	Food		2 (2%)	2 (1%)
	Health		2 (2%)	2 (1%)
	Health and Beauty	1 (1%)	6 (7%)	7 (4%)
	Legal	3 (4%)	3 (3%)	6 (4%)
	Leisure	2 (3%)	9 (10%)	11 (7%)
	LGBT event/sup.	5 (6%)	2 (2%)	7 (4%)
	Music/film/TV	5 (6%)	7 (8%)	12 (7%)
	Political/action	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
	Sex		5 (6%)	5 (3%)
	Technology	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	2 (1%)
	Travel/Holiday	13 (17%)	13 (15%)	26 (16%)
	Wedding-related	4 (5%)	4 (5%)	8 (5%)
Activity	Cosmetic			
	Domestic	4 (5%)	3 (3%)	7 (4%)
	Family	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
	Health	2 (3%)	2 (2%)	4 (2%)
	Holiday	8 (10%)	5 (6%)	13 (8%)
	Leisure	8 (10%)	4 (5%)	12 (7%)
	N/A	6 (8%)	4 (5%)	10 (6%)
	No activity	9 (12%)	7 (8%)	16 (10%)
	Performing	4 (5%)	8 (9%)	12 (7%)
	Posing	18 (23%)	43 (49%)	61 (36%)

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[84] Other variables exist, please see methodology chapter. This table only shows those that were coded within the sample of tailored advertisements (n=161)

	Relaxing	1 (1%)		1 (%)
	Romantic	11 (14%)	9 (10%)	20 (12%)
	Shopping		1 (1%)	1 (1%)
	Socialising	5 (6%)	1 (1%)	6 (4%)
	Sport		1 (1%)	1 (1%)
	Travel	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
Interaction	Alone	10 (13%)	30 (34%)	40 (24%)
	Couple	20 (27%)	19 (22%)	39 (24%)
	Family	5 (6%)	3 (3%)	8 (5%)
	Group	3 (4%)	5 (6%)	8 (5%)
	Individuals	14 (18%)	16 (2%)	30 (18%)
	Mixed	11 (14%)	4 (5%)	15 (9%)
	NA	14 (18%)	11 (13%)	25 (15%)
Setting	Mixed	3 (4%)	2 (2%)	5 (3%)
	Private	6 (8%)	4 (5%)	10 (6%)
	Public	37 (48%)	25 (28%)	62 (38%)
	Staged	16 (21%)	46 (52%)	62 (38%)
	N/A	15 (19%)	11 (13%)	26 (16%)
Mood	Celebratory	10 (13%)	4 (5%)	14 (8%)
	Energetic	2 (3%)	7 (8%)	9 (5%)
	Entertaining	2 (3%)	4 (5%)	6 (4%)
	Exciting	5 (6%)	9 (10%)	14 (8%)
	Happiness	14 (18%)	8 (9%)	22 (13%)
	Humorous	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	2 (1%)
	Independent		1 (1%)	1 (1%)
	Indulgence	1(1%)	3 (3%)	4 (2%)
	Intense	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	3 (2%)
	Peaceful/calm	2 (3%)		2 (1%)
	Playful/fun	14 (18%)	6 (7%)	20 (12%)
	Relaxing	3 (4%)	5 (6%)	8 (5%)
	Romantic	9 (12%)	3 (3%)	12 (7%)
	Serious	12 (16%)	23 (26%)	35 (21%)
	Sexual	1 (1%)	16 (18%)	17 (10%)
Majority Gender	Female	60 (78%)	4 (5%)	64 (39%)
	Male	1 (1%)	71 (81%)	72 (43%)
	Mixed		1 (1%)	1 (1%)
	N/A	12 (16%)	10 (11%)	22 (13%)
	Not sure	3 (4%)		3 (2%)
	Transsexual	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	3 (2%)
Majority Ethnicity	Black	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	2 (1%)
	Mixed/Multi	17 (22%)	10 (11%)	27 (16%)
	N/A	12 (16%)	10 (11%)	22 (13%)
	Unsure	7 (9%)	10 (11%)	17 (10%)
	White	40 (52%)	57 (65%)	97 (59%)
Majority Age	Baby/child	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
	19-29	28 (36%)	49 (56%)	77 (47%)
	30-39	22 (29%)	16 (18%)	38 (23%)
	40-49	12 (16%)	10 (11%)	22 (13%)
	50-59	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	2 (1%)

	N/A	12 (16%)	10 (11%)	22 (13%)
	Unsure	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	3 (2%)
Majority	Low	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	2 (1%)
Wealth	Low-Medium	35 (45%)	30 (34%)	65 (40%)
indicator	Medium	27 (35%)	43 (49%)	70 (42%)
	Medium-High	9 (12%)	11 (13%)	20 (12%)
	High	1 (1%)		1 (1%)
	Unsure	5 (%)6	3 (3%)	8 (5%)

Examples of the types of advertisements for LGBTQ+ festivals can be found in Figures 53 and 54. In Figure 53, four advertisements have been selected to show the range of events coded under this value. First there is an advertisement for 'LFest', one of the leading lesbian-only festivals in the UK. It is a child-friendly weekend event, with a mixture of live (and DJ) music, comedy, art, food, and so on, with options to camp and glamp on site. In this sense it is like many other festivals across the UK, apart from the fact that it is primarily attended by lesbians. The second and third half-page advertisements are two of many 'Pride' advertisements placed in *DIVA*. 'Pride' events have been classified as 'LGBTQ+ festivals' given their morphed[85] manifestations into all-encompassing entertainment-orientated celebrations. Many now promote themselves as festivals, as shown in the top example, and the size/scale of each event is dependent on the local resources available per region and amount of corporate sponsorship obtained. The final advertisement is for Ella festival, an annual international event for non-heterosexual women. Each festival contains an organised community/political element but is typically interwoven with aspects of relaxation and holidaying insomuch as there are beach events and culinary experiences also on offer.

Figure 54: Examples of tailored advertisements featuring LGBTQ+ festivals placed in *DIVA* (04/DIVA/19/T, 07/DIVA/14&15/T, and 03/DIVA/03/T)

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[85] The original 'Pride', that took place in 1970 to mark the first anniversary of the Stonewall riots, and those soon afterwards were politically-driven marches (now often termed 'parade' as illustrated in the bottom advertisement).

Whilst each have their differences, all of the events have a 'collective' nature to them by either being women-only or having a wider LGBTQ+ (and allies) attendance. This arguably communicates something important about the type of space some LGBTQ+ people want and enjoy. As quoted in relation to LFest: "It is a festival with a strong sense of community, respect, fun and friendship… somewhere I felt safe and comfortable to be myself at all times…" (LFest, 2012); "A friendly environment where I can be proud and open about my relationship with my girlfriend…" (LFest, 2018). This signals that everyday difference is not always experienced with ease and reflective of the point made earlier in relation to the limited mainstream advertising taking place in *DIVA* or *Gay Times*. Notably, some LGBTQ+ people are more welcomed into mainstream spaces than others (Drucker, 2015). These festivals appear to contribute positively to addressing some of the difficulties associated with being 'other'. Interestingly, LGBTQ+ festivals feature in only one of 88 tailored advertisements in GT (1%). On the surface, this implies that gay men either navigate their lived experiences with more comfort, have less of a need to congregate with men on a shared 'community' level, or dislike the concept of festivals in general. Whilst not the focus of this study, this stark difference is worthy of noting if only to add to the extent and nature of differences that seemingly exist between non-heterosexual sub-groups, illustrating once again that LGBTQ+ consumers are not one homogeneous group.

Figure 54, as well as showing the variety of festivals contained within this coding value, is also intended to illustrate the range of creative approaches used within the advertisements themselves. For example, the LFest advertisement features Heather Peace, a well-known lesbian singer-songwriter, actress and *DIVA* columnist. It is relatively basic and information-orientated in its approach, using the popularity of a lesbian celebrity to stimulate attention and engagement[86]. The advertisement for Stoke-on-Trent 'Pride' has adopted a similar informational technique, but with no visuals of people at all. Engagement is instead intended to be generated through the line-up and event details themselves. Both are in contrast to the advertisement for Reading 'Pride' where a (relative) range of LGBTQ+ people are featured, presumably past attendees. Whilst most are white and young, it does show a fairly eclectic mix of people, some of whom are in costume and drag. All are captured smiling, helping to convey the celebratory and happy atmosphere the event is designed to create. The advertisement for Ella festival adopts a similar style in terms of featuring (again presumably) real people and at least one couple (to the right), conveying a relaxed, fun feel to the event itself. Here the women are

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[86] Only 7 advertisements (2%) placed in LGBTQ+-media featured an 'LGBT-celebrity', compared to 42% in integrative advertisements placed in mainstream magazines

generally older and arguably wealthier given the more sophisticated appearance of the second and fourth women in particular (in comparison to 01/DIVA/08/T in Figure 44).

Interestingly, the only LGBTQ+ festival event featured in *Gay Times* is for Birmingham 'Pride', as shown in Figure 55 below. Whilst it similarly contains visuals of people, they are of the performing acts themselves and therefore not reflective of the event attendees.

Figure 55: Tailored advertisement for 'Birmingham Pride' placed in *Gay Times* (06/GT/07/T)

This links to the earlier point made about the images featured in *Gay Times* generally, with the majority being staged and manufactured (i.e. less 'real'). Even in tailored advertisements which necessarily contain some level of explicit LGBTQ+ representation, the gay/bisexual male (as coded in

Table 22) is most frequently portrayed alone, posing in a staged environment with a serious tone to the advertisement itself. Comparing this to the tailored advertisements in *DIVA*, lesbian/bisexual women, as already mentioned, are most frequently depicted as couples in public space with a happy or playful/fun mood to the communication. Perhaps this has something to (stereotypically) say about the nature of gay male and lesbian lifestyles and relationships with respect to 'coupledom', for example. Yet there are differences within *DIVA* between representations featured in conscious and tailored advertisements. Conscious advertisements have a relatively large number of 'N/As' relating to variables such as 'interaction'. This is because many of the advertisements do not feature characters (i.e. representations of people) and so no interaction levels exist. An example is shown in Figure 56 below.

Figure 56: Example conscious advertisements with the absence of people/characters placed in *DIVA* (04/DIVA/10/C)
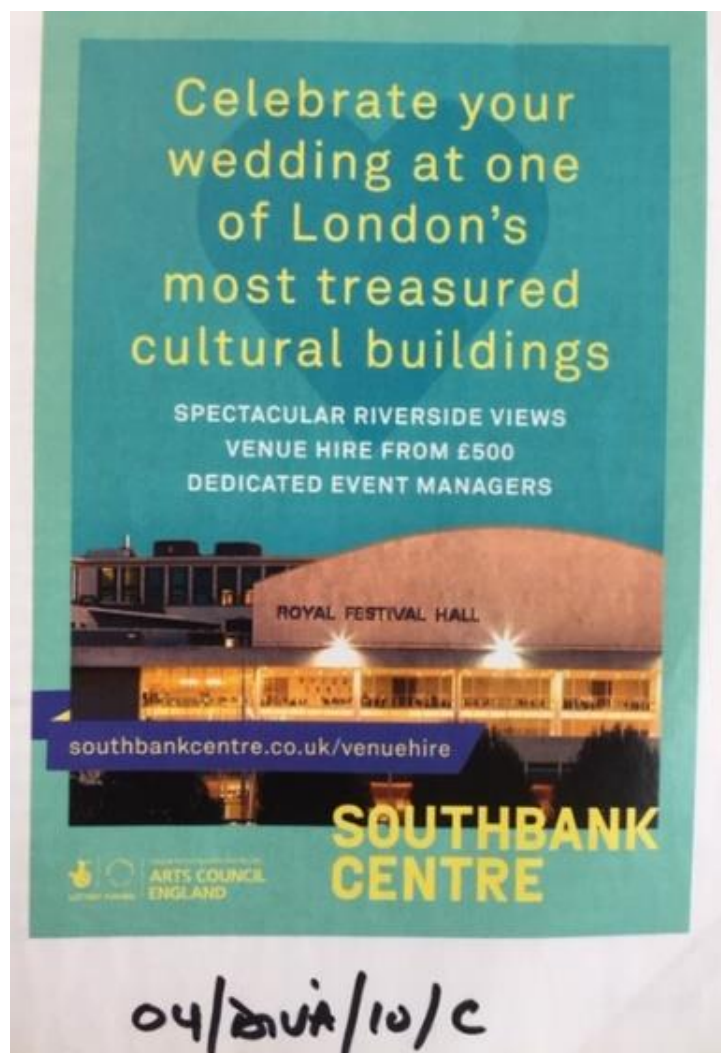
Similarly, the 'moods' of the different types of advertisements differ greatly, with the majority of conscious advertisements being 'serious' in nature. Indeed, they share a number of other similar characteristics to tailored advertisements placed in *Gay Times* such as no interaction with others. As already mentioned, these types of portrayals convey a more detached, faceless version of LGBTQ+ness. Yet this is not happening across the board; tailored advertisements in *DIVA* do show a more humanised version of non-heterosexuality. Is this because there are fundamental differences between gay/bisexual males and lesbian/bisexual woman that businesses have recognised and as such have chosen a tailored approach to connect with the audience on a more personal level? If this is the case, it would be moving closer to what Nolke (2018) described as the shift towards more domesticised portrayals,[87] however this does not explain why the shift has not extended itself to gay/bisexual males and could arguably be seen to reflect the earlier mentioned heteronormative assumption that women are more domesticated and that this crosses sexualities. Either way, the findings of the ICA show that gay/bisexual males are consistently being portrayed in a different way to lesbian/bisexual females, an important observation that will be discussed in more detail in the final discussion chapter.

Moving on to the 'Travel/Holidays' product category in particular, as one of the most frequently placed tailored advertisement in *Gay Times*, Figure 57 below shows two illustrative examples of the range of products promoted. In a similar vein to LGBTQ+ festivals above, they tend to be either gay-only (as per the first example) or gay-friendly in the case of Florida Keys[88], raising the same concerns over the promotion of LGBTQ+ orientated products as mentioned previously. Another feature they share with tailored advertisements placed in *DIVA* is the relatively large number of images containing the LGBTQ+ denotations of 'Physical closeness' and 'Affectionate/sexual touch'. This is disproportionately high[89] compared to other types of products advertised in *Gay Times*.

Looking at the full product range promoted in Table 22, this could be because many of the other products are for individual use/consumption only (for example health and beauty, and fashion), whereas travelling and holidays have the option to be consumed alongside others. Regardless of the reason, its presence is a minority (or anomaly) within a majority of images that typically convey gay/bisexual males as lone, self-orientated consumers. Furthermore, when portrayed as couples, the

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[87] Although Nolke's (2018) study was exploring explicit LGBTQ+ representations in mainstream advertising
[88] Again, the *types* and range of images used in these advertisements (and others) will be discussed later. For now the focus relates to the similarities and differences between DIVA and GT.
[89] 7 out of 13 (54%) tailored advertisements for travel/holiday products placed in GT use either 'Physical closeness' and 'Affectionate/sexual touch' as an LGBTQ+ denotation, compared to both only being used in 24% (39/165) of tailored advertisements in total.

images used still conform to a particular gay male 'norm' as already previously discussed and to be explored in more detail within the next chapter[90].

Figure 57: Examples of tailored advertisements featuring 'Travel/Holidays' placed in *Gay Times* (01/GT/04/T) and (03/GT/27/T)

As already commented above, and as highlighted in Table 23 below, there are slightly more examples of explicit LGBTQ+ representations being used in advertisements placed within LGBTQ+ media than those with no images. This difference is more pronounced when isolating *DIVA*'s advertisements from those in *Gay Times*, with explicit representations/images occurring in nearly two thirds of all advertisements placed in *DIVA* (77 out of 119).

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[90] Mostly 'handsome, healthy, white and wealthy', as mentioned previously

Table 24: Targeted LGBTQ+ advertisements in LGBTQ+ media (repeat advertisements excluded)

	Publ.	Total ads	Conscious		Tailored	
			n=	%	n=	%
LGBT Media	DIVA	119	42	35%	77	65%
	GT	175	87	50%	88	50%
Sub Total (% of sample)		**294**	**129**	**44%**	**165**	**56%**
TOTAL sample		1,626	240	15%	278	17%

No images   Explicit images

Exploring the *types* of explicit images, Table 16 in the previous results chapter lists these fully. One of the key observations is that there is a wider *range* of explicit images used in tailored advertisements placed within *Gay Times* than there are in *DIVA* (12 dimensions versus 8 respectively). The main area of difference is that some of the advertisements in *Gay Times* appear to use (not extensively but more heavily than in *DIVA*) images that within mainstream publications would be considered gay-vague and within this study, implicit. Specifically, these dimensions are 'absence of other' and 'absence of opposite gender', which represent 10% of all the main signifiers of tailored advertisements targeted towards gay/bisexual men. To explain their inclusion (and to briefly reiterate an earlier discussion in the previous chapter) it relates to the concept of 'straightening-out'. This is where the inherent fluidity of an image gives it the potential to be both implicit *and* explicit, dependent/influenced by the context of its media placement. For example, an LGBTQ+ audience can 'straighten-out' i.e. take out/remove the ambiguity of an implicit image placed in LGBTQ+ media and encode it more definitively as LGBTQ+ because of the very context in which it's being read. As a result of this, a total of five[91] implicit dimensions surfaced via the ICA.

Focusing back on the two dimensions mentioned above ('absence of other' and 'absence of opposite gender') this finding is not unsurprising given the aforementioned discussion surrounding the 'lone' construct of the gay/bisexual male. Conversely, it is not unexpected that these types of images failed to feature in the tailored advertisements placed in *DIVA* given the contrast in representations found within the sample (lesbian/female bisexual as couples, families and in groups). An implicit dimension where a stark difference exists that, on the surface, is *less* easily explained relates to 'Sexual

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[91] The others being 'Physical closeness', 'Sexual gesture/position/bravado' and 'LGBTQ+ icon/symbol' and 'Advert Design'

gesture/position/bravado'. A number of advertisements that have this image as its lead signifier have already been shown (see examples in Figures 49 and 50). For these, the coding relates to the position and body language of at least one of the characters. Another way in which these images manifest is to supplement the actual product being advertised where this relates to sex. Examples feature below in Figure 58:

Figure 58: Illustrative tailored advertisements placed in *GT* that have 'Sexual gesture/position/bravado' as the lead signifier for a sex-related product
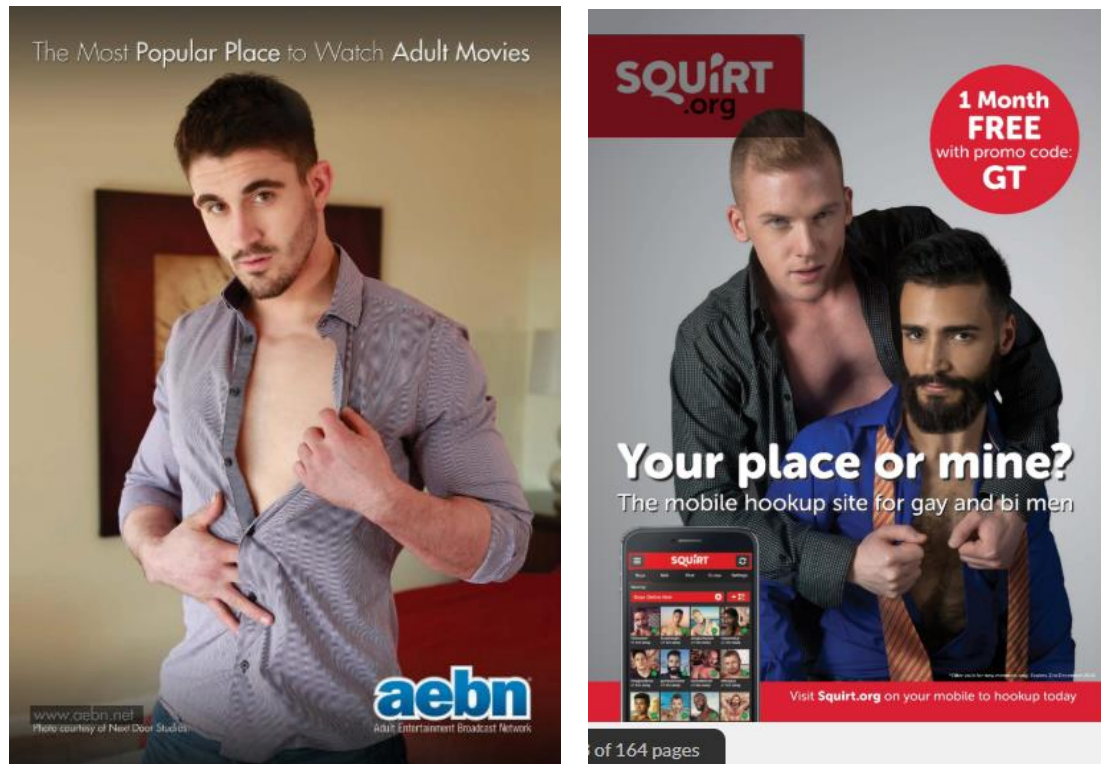
There are two observations worth mentioning here: namely that no such images exist in *DIVA* magazine and no sex-related products feature in any of the advertisements placed in the publication. This reinforces much of what has already been said in relation to the often hypersexualised portrayal of the gay/bisexual male. It does not, however, explain the absence of both in *DIVA*. Certainly, in the magazine's history the opposite has been true, and so it could be that the increasingly heteronormative flavour of the magazine (evidenced by the advertisements in particular) has diluted aspects of female non-conformity and associated behaviours in favour of creating an overall narrative that elevates marriage, families and stability. This would explain why there are currently a relatively large number of products related to weddings, fertility and financial/legal services as opposed to sex toys and erotic films that were previously well promoted. Furthermore, and to make a direct

comparison to *Gay Times*, the apps or websites advertised in *DIVA* where women can meet other women focus on the longevity of a relationship (see Figure 59 below), as opposed to an immediate "…hookup today" as promised by 'SQUIRT' in Figure 58 above.

Figure 59: A tailored advertisement in *DIVA* for a dating service (01/DIVA/18/T)

However, the hypermasculine and hypersexualised gay male stereotype (Sonnekus, 2007) is arguably harmful. In the same way that unrealistic representations of women in the media have be criticised for creating negative body images and poor self-esteem (McCall, 2012; Enson, 2017; Siddique, 2017) the same is beginning to be recognised for gay males (Mentalhealth.org, 2019), especially for those younger men who may feel pressurised in to conforming to a particular gay 'norm'. Figure 60 below is a potential illustrative example.

Figure 60: An example of an unrealistic and hypersexualised gay male image (11/GT/03/T)

This advertisement (for an underwear company) has already been referred to (in Figure 49 above) but the inclusion of this specific image here is to focus on the physicality of the model and the overall impression left for the reader. Firstly, and whilst not conclusive, the proportions of the model do not look realistic. His waist is very thin given the breadth of his shoulders/back and the size of his buttocks, perhaps digitally edited to exaggerate each attribute to be attractive to other gay/bisexual males. If real, then the casting of the model has been very specific, presumably for this purpose. The inclusion, and subsequent handling, of a hose pipe could be considered sexually-symbolic, and his positioning (with the back of his body accessible to the reader) is sexually suggestive/enticing. Overall, this image can be read as hypersexualised and presents an unrealistic body image that, as already mentioned, has the potential to do harm. Indeed, if the gender of the model was cis-female and presented in mainstream media, it is likely that it would have been banned by the ASA in a similar vein to those created for Missguided and Boohoo for being "…highly sexualised and socially irresponsible" (Hugh,

2019). So, not only are the majority of gay/bisexual male images narrow, manufactured and hypermasculine, there are elements to the construction that render them inappropriate and harmful, and to be avoided for that reason alone.

Another key finding is that 'Affectionate/sexual touch' is one of the most frequently used explicit LGBTQ+ symbols across *DIVA* and *Gay Times*, occurring in 20% of all tailored advertisements[92]. An even higher proportion can be found in advertisements that use the integrative approach in mainstream media, where explicit LGBTQ+ images are included[93]. Common across the whole study, then, is that when explicit images are used to attract an LGBTQ+ reading, regardless of media placement, one of the most popular techniques used is to include visuals of same sex people physically touching in an affectionate or sexual way. Examples of this within LGBTQ+ media can be seen in Figure 61 below:

Figure 61: Examples of tailored advertisements using 'affection/sexual touch' as the main explicit image in *DIVA* (12/DIVA/13/T), (11/DIVA/12/T) and *Gay Times* (12/GT/06/T) and (11/GT/28/T)

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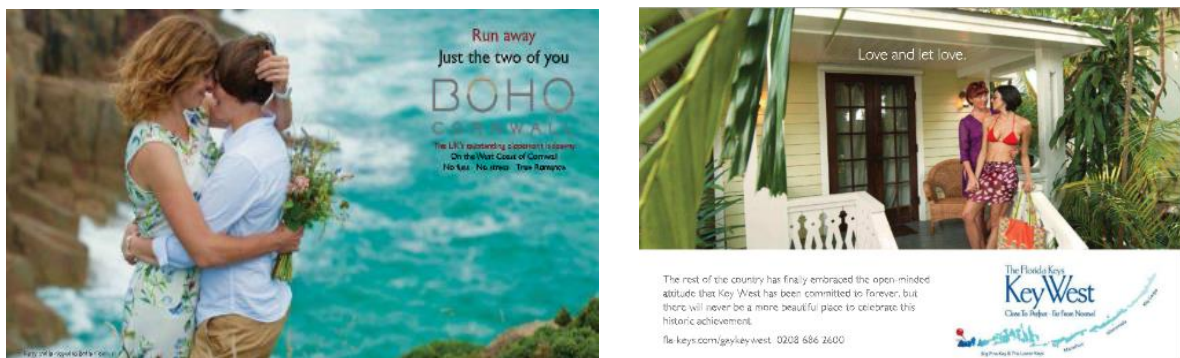
[92] Slightly more so in *DIVA* (26%)
[93] 50% of all integrative advertisements use this signifier as the main image (n=112/24) making it the most popular technique.

As I discuss in the previous chapter, this is perhaps unsurprising given that affectionate or sexual touch removes much/all ambiguity from an advertisement and therefore if the company is serious (and confident) about trying to attract an LGBTQ+ reading, the more obvious it can be in its signalling the better. What is relatively unexpected though, since not much else aligns across the two samples (of advertisements placed in LGBTQ+ and mainstream media), is that there is a universal approach in the use of explicit images regardless of media placement. Given the unambiguous nature of such same sex interactions, this finding does challenge the dominant advocated strategy: namely, to avoid overt images of non-heterosexuality. Admittedly, the low frequency at which this occurs in integrative advertisements (2% within the context of all mainstream publications) does not support its widespread use. It does nevertheless illustrate that those companies not afraid to actively target LGBTQ+ consumers in an explicit way act not in isolation. More importantly, from the perspective of this study, LGBTQ+ consumers are beginning to be exposed (albeit largely within LGBTQ+ media, and somewhat problematically) to representations of their own identities in a more open (overt) and de-humanised way.

To add to this point, out of all 33 tailored advertisements using 'Affectionate/sexual touch' as the main LGBTQ+ image/signifier, *all* use additional LGBTQ+ related wording bar one (12/DIVA/13/T). This is in contrast to 27% (3 out of 12) of integrative advertisements. As previously discussed, this technique appears to be a valuable way to communicate with potential customers since it helps make a meaningful connection with the target audience. The use of 'LGBTQ+ related wording' as the main signifier in itself is also very popular, representing 31% of all tailored advertisements place. However,

as already discussed, this technique includes 'call to actions' and overall can be lazy or tokenistic which does run thin with LGBTQ+ consumers (Wheeler-Quinnell, 2010). From the LGBTQ+ consumer perspective, seeing physical representations featured in advertisements (notwithstanding the issues with the *types* of portrayals presented) not only allows the target audience to better identify with the product being promoted (Angelini and Bradley, 2010) but can personally empower through sharing visible status with their heterosexual counterparts (Wan-Hsui, 2012), albeit in a commodified context within tailored advertisements that are hidden from mainstream exposure.

To summarise this section so far, there are a wider range of LGBTQ+ image-types being used in *Gay Times* than in *DIVA* magazine. Images overall tend to reinforce a (potentially harmful) stereotyped notion of the hypermasculine and/or hypersexualised lone gay male, and a heteronormative version of female same-sex relationships and binary representations (butch versus femme) of non-heterosexual female sexuality. Whilst alternative representations do exist, tailored advertisements by definition are housed within LGBTQ+ media and so such representations are not exposed to a mainstream audience. Universal to both mainstream and LGBTQ+ media, however, (in integrative and tailored advertisements respectively) is the high presence of 'Affectionate/sexual touch' to donate an overt LGBTQ+ image. Popular too, more so in LGBTQ+ media, is the combined use of LGBTQ+ related words and visuals to create a more meaningful connection with the target audience. LGBTQ+ visibility, and communication direct from brand to target consumer, is clearly occurring. But as already mentioned, and to be discussed in more detail within the next chapter, this can be problematised in terms of who exactly these images are visible to. What remains as a last point of exploration in *this* chapter is the constituent images in conscious advertisements (or inherent lack of) and how these have or have not influenced the overall advertising categorisation. The following section therefore briefly addresses this before an overall conclusion to this chapter is provided.

Conscious advertisements: images revisited?

As mentioned above, given that 'no' images exist in conscious advertisements, this section briefly explores if/how any types of signifiers (do or do not) manifest and how/why they are ultimately coded as conscious advertisements. Table 23 summarises the actual and relative number of conscious advertisements placed in LGBTQ+ media, namely 129 (44% of all advertisements placed in *DIVA* and *Gay Times*). Table 15 in the results chapter (Chapter 5) shows the images used in those advertisements, if any.

As expected, the majority of conscious advertisements do not contain any LGBTQ+ images (64%) since they are advertisements merely *placed* in LGBTQ+ media without any 'tailoring'. Perhaps surprising is that 36% of advertisements do contain some LGBTQ+ signifiers but remain coded overall as

'conscious'. Furthermore, some of the images used are explicit as well as implicit. Much of the explanation has already been discussed in that some advertisements contain images that fall under implicit or explicit ICA values (such as the inclusion of an 'LGBTQ+ related word') but the advertisement itself has not been tailored to the LGBTQ+ audience i.e. it could feature in mainstream press in exactly the same way. This is an example of a coding-intervention (as discussed in the methodology) to ensure that advertisements are not incorrectly categorised during the ICA process.

As shown below, this tends to occur in advertisements for products related to Music/TV/Film and Books[94], with Figure 62 below providing examples of each (others have already been featured in Figure 47). As evident, many of the products have an LGBTQ+ storyline/theme or, as in the case of the first example below, centre on an iconic actress (Judy Garland) well-loved by some LGBTQ+ people. This is why 'LGBTQ+ related words' (an explicit signifier), for example, may feature within the advertisement. As they stand, however, the advertisements do not show any evidence of being tailored for LGBTQ+ media. Furthermore, given that they are not LGBTQ+ orientated products in the same way as a gay-only cruise (i.e. they can also be purchased by heterosexual consumers) the same advertisements have the potential to also feature in mainstream media unchanged.

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[94] Explicit images featured in conscious advertisements (n=23) occur most frequently in advertisements for Music/TV/Film and Books, representing 83% (19 out of 23) of all advertisements of this type.

Figure 62: Examples of conscious advertisements containing explicit LGBTQ+ images

Those advertisements with *implicit* images, however, are often harder to categorise. For example, is the 'Physical closeness' of two women featured in an advertisement intended to be an explicit signifier on behalf of the brand, therefore making it a tailored advertisement? Or, as on the face of it, is it an ambiguous image that means it may/could also be placed unchanged in mainstream media (as a passive advertisement) and therefore categorised as a conscious within an LGBTQ+ magazine? Figure 63 below is a case in point. Are the females all friends/related, or are the two women on the right-hand side a couple?

Figure 63: A conscious advertisement coded using the implicit value of 'Physical closeness'

Creative *intention* is not however known and therefore one of the strengths of the ICA is to only code what you can see. On more complex examples such at the Malta advertisement above, it is useful to also explore what cannot be seen to help with the overall categorisation. For example, there are no additional images to the implicit signifier of 'Physical closeness' that would render the advertisement tailored. There is no additional 'LGBTQ+ wording' which often accompanies explicit images in tailored advertisements. Neither of the two women are 'butch' in appearance nor pose which tends to occur in tailored advertisements when one of characters is 'femme'.   So, in the absence of any *explicit* symbolism the advertisement can be coded as conscious.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to analyse 'conscious' and 'tailored' advertisements placed in LGBTQ+ media (*DIVA* and *Gay Times*) in terms of their prevalence and the constituent images used within each advertising approach. Firstly, more advertisements feature in *Gay Times* than *DIVA*, with an equal split of conscious and tailored advertisements found overall. Within both types of advertising approach, gay/bisexual males tend to be portrayed as lone, young and hypermasculine, reproducing an often sexualised gay male stereotype that reinforces a homonormative ideal which not only marginalises other representations of gay male sexuality but has the potential to do harm to its target audience. The majority of tailored advertisements convey heteronormative images, depicting couples consuming products related to weddings, family and security. Relatedly, very few advertisements present alternative ways of being, and when such images do occur, they more often than not feature as part of a collective mix of (drag/queer) performers or acts rather than as a self-referential cue that would better contribute to a less homogenised reproduction of gay/bisexual male sexuality.

Lesbian/bisexual females, on the other hand, are exposed to more tailored than conscious advertisements in *DIVA* and as such experience greater potential exposure to explicit non-heterosexual images and representations. However, images are also heavily heteronormative, and often feature the stereotyped image of the 'butch' and 'femme' lesbian. Furthermore, the relatively large number of LGBTQ+ related products being advertised in *DIVA* (56%) masks the extent to which lesbian/bisexual women are being exposed to mainstream brands and products, arguably rendering them economically inferior to their gay male counterparts. Linked to this, there are very few brands and products that span LGBTQ+ and mainstream media across the board, bringing in to question the extent to which sexuality features as a meaningful segmentation variable within the targeting process, even though the LGBTQ+ market itself is deemed lucrative.

In sum, there is generally a lack of LGBTQ+ visibility within advertisements placed in LGBTQ+ press. This is partly due to the high number (50%) of conscious advertisements placed within *DIVA* and *Gay Times* which, by definition, do not contain any explicit LGBTQ+ representations. Furthermore, many tailored advertisements choose to adapt their advertisements only with LGBTQ+ related words (as 'deficit signifiers') and so images of LGBTQ+ people are limited even within this more differentiated advertising approach. Those companies that attempt a more meaningful connection with the audience use a combination of both wording and explicit visuals, thereby moving away from a more faceless, tokenistic approach (synonymous with conscious advertisements in particular) that has previously been found to be unfavourable with the LGBTQ+ target audience. Explicit representations, however, tend to present both homo- and heteronormative reproductions of non-heterosexuality and

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as such construct a narrow and problematic set of gay/lesbian/bisexual representations. These findings, alongside those discussed in the previous chapter (relating to LGBTQ+ targeted advertisements placed in mainstream media) are critically explored in more detail in the final discussion to follow.

Chapter 8: Queering LGBTQ+ advertisements

8.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters have discussed the findings of the ICA (for advertisements placed within mainstream and LGBTQ+ media respectively) and situated the results within the context of existing LGBTQ+ advertising literature. Overall, the analysis finds that in mainstream publications, current advertising practice to attract an LGBTQ+ audience supports the most theoretically advocated approach (passive) over the use of integrative techniques where more explicit LGBTQ+ representations can be found. In LGBTQ+ media, the picture is more evenly split between the use of conscious and tailored advertising. Unsurprisingly perhaps, a greater number of explicit LGBTQ+ representations can be found in *DIVA* and *Gay Times* than in *Marie Claire* and *GQ.* Furthermore, the range and type of representations differ between and across publication types.

What has yet to be fully discussed is the nature of those LGBTQ+ representations. Emerging themes have already been touched upon, namely the heavy presence of hetero- and homonormativity as evidenced by, for example, the pervasive reproduction of gender and sexual binaries within explicitly targeted advertisements in particular. This final discussion chapter, therefore, sets out to explore in more detail these concepts and other key findings derived from the ICA. To do this, I derive theoretical insight from queer theory (Duggan, 2002; Warner, 1993; 1999) in order to read queerly four illustrative advertisements (one per advertising approach), before then exploring other forms of LGBT (non)representation using additional examples present within the overall sample. Alongside this critical analysis of four 'discursive cases', I discuss the significance of these findings and the implications from both theoretical and practical perspectives.

This final discussion chapter therefore addresses the last Research Objective for this study, namely:

- RO3: Critically analyse LGBT-targeted advertising approaches and constituent images, using queer theory as a frame for analysis

This chapter is structured as follows. First, I reiterate why I have chosen to mobilise insights from queer theory to analyse the illustrative examples ('discursive cases') of each advertising approach. Next, I deconstruct each discursive case (starting with those placed in LGBTQ+ media and then mainstream), incorporating other advertising examples within the analysis to deepen the discussion. An overall summary of the four sites of analyses will be presented in the conclusion chapter.

8.2 Why queer?

Before I begin deconstructing the discursive cases for each advertising approach, it is worth reiterating the relevance and importance of using queer theory as a method of analysis within the context of this study. As already mentioned, queering (as in 'doing') enables the exposure and questioning of what is normal or, as Seidman (1997) puts it, placing into doubt certain assumptions. Queer theory's merit then translates to questioning established/common advertising norms and practice (and the LGBT representations used within), with a view to challenging the normative regimes at work in these advertisements, most notably heteronormativity (Warner, 1999). As I discuss later, the findings of the ICA expose the prevalence of heteronormativity via the type and frequency of images that repeatedly reproduce gender and sexual binaries. Likewise, it exposes what those images do *not* show. As Kates's (1999, p.25) work argues, queer deconstruction has the power to progress our understanding of advertising through "exposing alternative meanings by "privileging the absences" and unearthing the dominance of heterosexuality inherent within advertising".

As I demonstrate within the first half of this chapter, queering also identifies and problematises 'new normals' that are (re)produced within heteronormative LGBTQ+ advertising. Such is the salience of heteronormative images of LGBTQ+ sexualites and genders, homonormative representations of non-heterosexuality manifest explicitly. Within this and other studies (Drucker, 2015), these most notably present as white, young, healthy and relatively wealthy depictions of LGBTQ+ people. Through queering these images, a homonormative hierarchisation is exposed that privileges those that meet normative standards and marginalises those that do not (Duggan, 2006; Drucker, 2015).

Queering, therefore, has the ability to problematise the familiar by destabilising the normative foundations upon which it is based. In this case, it enables the normativities (re)produced in 'what is seen and not seen' in LGBTQ+ targeted advertising to be confronted. As I have already discussed in the methodology chapter, one technique I use is to perform, as Kates (1999, p.31) does, a textual and visual "sex change operation" by replacing, for example, an LGBTQ+ character with a heterosexual one to see what is (re)formed. To begin this process of queer deconstruction, I turn now to the first case.

8.3 Discursive Case 1: The conscious approach

To contextualise the first discursive case (and those that follow) an overall summary of key ICA findings can be found in Table 24 below.

As (also) shown in Table 25 below that, for ease of reference, the most frequently coded values for conscious advertisements mostly relate to no-activity and non-representation. The latter is to be expected given that these advertisements contain no or implicit levels of LGBTQ+ representation (by definition), but the lack of images of people generally was not anticipated. This can be read as reinforcing the tokenistic/lazy nature of conscious advertisements I discussed in the previous chapter, whereby no creative effort is made to establish a connection with the individual being targeted. The LGBTQ+ consumer is literally and figuratively faceless. On the surface, this makes deconstructing images of LGBTQ+ representation in conscious advertisements challenging; yet, as I discuss shortly, there are a number of symbolic and metaphorical references used in these types of advertisements that enable a queer analysis to produce valuable insights.

Table 25: Summary of most frequently coded values (per key variable) for each of the four advertising approaches (conscious, tailored, passive and integrative)

	No. ads.	Page size	Product type	Activity	Interaction	Setting	Mood	Gender	Ethnicity	Age	Wealth
CONSCIOUS											
DIVA	42	Full (74%)	Charity (21%)	No activity (50%)	N/A (60%)	N/A (60%)	Serious (43%)	N/A (52%)	N/A (57%)	N/A (60%)	Medium (38%)
GT	87	Full (68%)	Music/Film/TV (29%)	Posing (32%)	Alone (41%)	Staged (36%)	Serious (51%)	Male (51%)	White (45%)	N/A (34%)	Medium (36%)
Sub total	129	Full (70%)	Music/Film/TV (23%)	No activity (35%)	N/A (43%)	N/A (41%)	Serious (48%)	N/A (40%)	N/A (42%)	N/A (43%)	Meduim (36%)
TAILORED											
DIVA	77	Full (60%)	LGBT Festivals (23%)	Posing (23%)	Couples (27%)	Public (48%)	Happiness* (18%)	Female (78%)	White (52%)	19-29 (36%)	Low-med (45%)
GT	88	Full (84%)	Travel/Hol. ** (15%)	Posing (49%)	Alone (34%)	Staged (52%)	Serious (26%)	Male (81%)	White (65%)	19-29 (56%)	Medium (49%)
Sub total	165	Full (73%)	Travel/Hol (16%)	Posing (36%)	Alone (24%)	Staged (38%)	Serious (21%)	Male (43%)	White (59%)	19-29 (47%)	Medium (42%)
Total (LGBT)	294	** equal with 'Fashion High End'					* equal with 'Playful/fun'				
PASSIVE											
MC	29	Full (59%)	Fashion High End (55%)	Posing (69%)	Individual (52%)	Staged (48%)	Serious (45%)	Female (100%)	White (62%)	19-29 (97%)	Medium (52%)
GQ	62	Full (48%)	Fashion High End (87%)	Posing (76%)	Alone (56%)	Staged (42%)	Serious (58%)	Male (82%)	White (79%)	19-29 (92%)	Med-High (54%)
Sub total	91	Full (51%)	Fashion High End (78%)	Posing (74%)	Alone (48%)	Staged (44%)	Serious (54%)	Male (56%)	White (74%)	19-29 (92%)	Med-High (46%)
INTEGRATIVE											
MC	12	Full (95%)	Health/Beauty (42%)	Posing (92%)	Individual (50%)	Staged (83%)	Serious (42%)	Female (100%)	White (67%)	19-29 (100%)	Medium (75%)
GQ	12	Double (58%)	Fashion High End (75%)	Posing (58%)	Individual (42%)	Staged (50%)	Serious (58%)	Male (83%)	White (42%)	19-29 (92%)	Med-High (50%)
Sub total	24	Full (54%)	Fashion High End (42%)	Posing (75%)	Individual (46%)	Staged (67%)	Serious (42%)	Female (58%)	White (50%)	19-29 (96%)	Medium (50%)
Total (mainstream)	115										
OVERALL	409										

Table 26: Summary of most frequently coded values (per key variable) for conscious advertisements

No. ads.	Page size	Product type	Activity	Interaction	Setting	Mood	Gender	Ethnicity	Age	Wealth
129	Full (70%)	Music/Film/TV (23%)	No activity (35%)	N/A (43%)	N/A (41%)	Serious (48%)	N/A (40%)	N/A (42%)	N/A (43%)	Medium (36%)

Figure 64, below, is the discursive case for conscious advertisements. As discussed in the methodology, its selection is based on matching the majority of the most frequently coded values (derived from the ICA), with the exception of 'Product type'.[95]

Figure 64: Discursive case for conscious advertisements – London Sperm Bank, placed in *DIVA* (11/DIVA/05/C)

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[95] No conscious advertisements exist in LGBTQ+ media that promote Music/Film/TV (n=30/129) without including images of people or conveying a 'serious' tone and 'medium' wealth. The chosen discursive case was one of only two advertisements that met all other coded criteria and was chosen for its greater potential for discussion within the context of this chapter.

Before a queering of this advertisement takes place, the difficulty in finding a discursive case derived from the ICA data deserves mention. Whilst content analyses are designed to capture objectively 'what is present', collective use of the component data does not produce a coherent whole. To illustrate, the ICA found that the majority 'mood' conveyed in a conscious advertisement is 'serious' and the majority of products advertised using the conscious approach are 'music/film/TV'. However, there are no 'music/film/TV' products being advertised in either *DIVA* or Gay Times using a 'serious' mood. In ICA terms, the variables can therefore be seen as mutually exclusive from one another with component values, having been discretely 'counted'. So, while the ICA is fit for purpose in terms of identifying and counting the frequency of micro elements within an advertisement, and helps with the overall categorisation of different types of targeted LGBTQ+ advertisements, its use has limitations. Within the context of this chapter, those limitations relate to the potential inability to critically analyse *all* of 'what is present' in any one advertisement; hence, why additional examples have been drawn upon to provide an in-depth and expansive discussion.

Referring back to Figure 64, and addressing one of the more obvious aspects of the advertisement, the product being promoted (sperm/fertility) and its media placement (in *DIVA*) extends a theme already introduced in the previous chapter. Lesbian/bisexual women remain entangled in gendered and heteronormative notions of what it is to *be* a woman (Butler, 1990; Rodríguez Rust, 2000). Reinforced by its wording ("start your *family* on the go"), the advertisement appears to construct 'acceptable' behaviours for non-heterosexual females to perform, namely to bear/raise children and have a family. The conscious nature of the advertisement (its non-adaptation for the LGBTQ+ audience) locates the roots of this messaging in heteronormative gender discourse, which in turn reinforces heterosexual ways of being for the lesbian/bisexual woman (Rust, 2000). Put differently, and from a queer theory perspective, the undifferentiated nature of the advertisement can be seen to homogenise women, regardless of sexuality, and entrench the heteronormative basis upon which segmentation and targeting decisions are made.

In case of any doubt as to whether the advertisement *has* been tailored for an LGBTQ+ audience, the only tangible area of ambiguity is the block/bold 'pink'[96] background colour. While this could be an intentional adaptation for the lesbian/bisexual market, the London Sperm Bank often uses pink as part

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[96] As Jensen (2015) notes, the colour pink has been routinely used and understood to represent 'gay' or LGBTQ+ness, for example the pink triangle (with a strong political heritage, now reclaimed as a symbol of LGBTQ+ rights/identity), and as Keating *et al*. (2015) discuss, the pink pound (a commercial term donating the perceived high economic value of the LGBTQ+ market).

of its branding[97], as illustrated below in a non-LGBTQ+ targeted advertisement for the company placed on the London Underground (see Figure 65 below).

Figure 65: Example of a non-targeted advertisement (placed on the London Tube) for the London Sperm Bank

Furthermore, the company placed the following advertisement[98], also in *DIVA* (see Figure 66 below), which includes the heavy use of the colour blue. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that pink has not been used by the brand as an intentional LGBTQ+ signifier (Jensen, 2015; Keating and McLoughlin, 2005) within LGBTQ+ media, and the discursive case has therefore been categorised as a conscious advertisement.

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[97] The colours used in the branding of the London Sperm Bank are predominately pink and/or blue with some white and black, mainly used for wording.

[98] This advertisement is another conscious example (given that it contains no explicit LGBTQ+ images) but differs from the discursive case because of its use of 'humour' (as opposed to a 'serious' coding). With that exception, it also satisfies the majority of the most frequently found values found within the ICA for conscious advertisements overall.

Figure 66: A conscious advertisement for the London Sperm Bank using blue branding (01/DIVA/07/C)
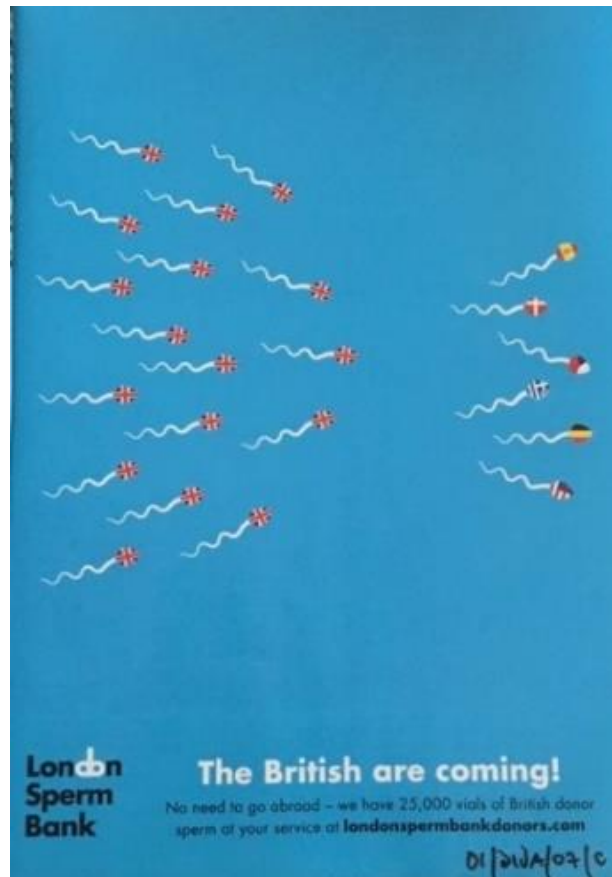
Focusing on the theme of colour, the heavy use of pink and blue within the two advertisements can itself be seen as problematic. Whilst increasingly contested, each colour remains deeply gendered and universally understood: pink serves as code for female and blue for male (Del Giudice, 2012). The conscious advertisements placed in DIVA use both (i.e. not just pink for a female audience), with the strong presence of blue having the potential to be encoded as 'male' by the audience. Using the advertisement above, blue contextualises and complements the cartoon sperm, reflecting the (male) source of the product being purchased. Blue could also, however, be understood as representing the sea, playing on the 'swimming' nature/requirement of sperm and reinforcing the overall message that women do not need to go overseas to have their eggs fertilised. Either way, the dominant use of blue and pink within the London Sperm Bank's advertising and branding overall can be seen to reflect a binary understanding of gender, manifest through the powerful and symbolic use of colour (Del Giudice, 2012).

This is perhaps not surprising given that the by-product for sale (a baby) requires a combination of 'male' and 'female' physiology. However, as Butler (1990) holds, binary gender constructs are sustained by the heterosexual matrix (where male and female are aligned with heterosexuality). These types of binary gendered constructions expose the heteronormative bias in the image. This is even more pronounced in tailored advertisements, whereby the core message attached to the consumption of fertility products is the creation of 'family' (as visually replicated in Figure 67 below) which, as a construct, is profoundly ingrained within heterosexual norms (Weston, 1990; Kitzinger, 2005). Yet, at the same time, the notion of the heteronormative family has been opened up and ruptured for and by LGBTQ+ people, as families have been queered in different ways (Park, 2006; Allen *et al*. 2018). For example, queered families may comprise friends and romantic partners as well as biological kin (Weston, 1990), and technologies of reproduction, such as sperm donations and surrogacy, are available to some LGBTQ+ people that have problematised heteronormative notions of 'motherhood' (Park, 2006).

Figure 67: An example of a 'family' message being communicated through a tailored advertisement placed in *DIVA* (12/DIVA/27/T)

Binary gender constructs are not reproduced only in LGBTQ+ media, but their prevalence is perhaps understandably high in non-LGBTQ+ targeted advertisements featured in mainstream publications. The two advertisements shown in Figure 68 below are explicit examples found in *Marie Claire* and *GQ* and illustrate how 'the man' and 'the woman' can (literally) be communicated to within mainstream advertisements. Not uncommon with fragrances, the product itself also reflects the 'either/or' constructed nature of gender within the heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1990), with a male and female version of the same scent available for consumption.

Figure 68: Examples of non-targeted advertisements placed in mainstream publications using explicit gender binary images to signify 'male' and 'female' (10/MC/11/NT) and (11/GQ/33/NT)
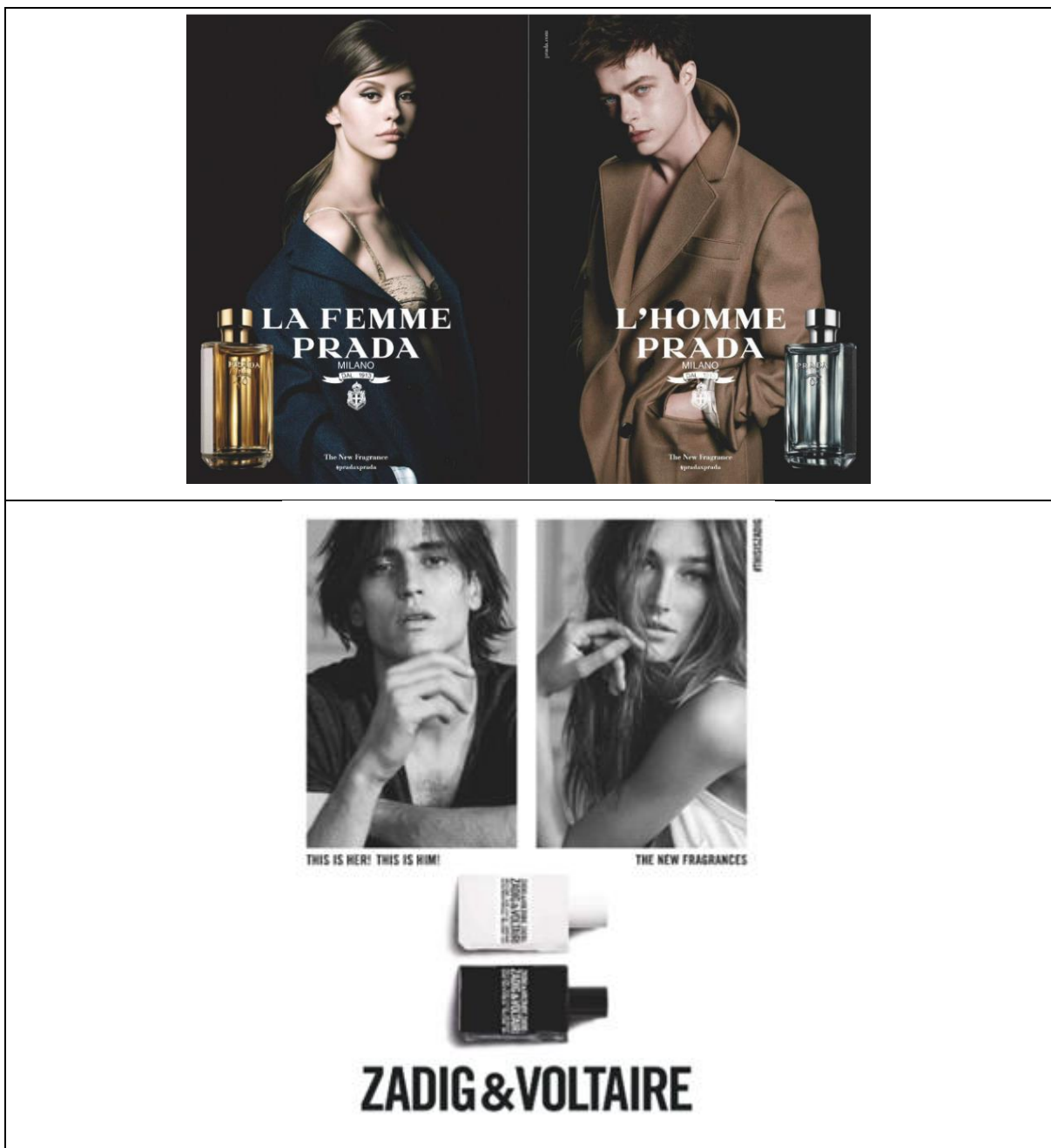
Reproductions of binary gender constructs can therefore be seen to exist within advertising regardless of media placement[99]. Problematic for those placed in LGBTQ+ publications, however, as I discuss in more detail later, is that those binaries remain intact and constrain more queer ways of thinking and representing LGBTQ+ people, thereby reinforcing heterosexuality as the dominant, taken-for-granted sexuality (Kates, 1999). In sum, the use of binary constructs such as male and female (encoded via colour in the two London Sperm Bank conscious advertisements above) replicated through 'butch' and 'femme' representations of non-heterosexual women to sell 'a family' is indicative of a dominant heteronormative approach within advertising (Kates, 1999).

One of the key features of conscious advertisements is the absence of LGBTQ+ people *at all,* which is in itself problematic, not just because of its aforementioned tokenism, but also its strong reinforcement of a heteronormative society that does not acknowledge their existence. Important to the queering process is an examination of what is 'absent' as well as present (Derrida, 1979; Kates, 1999) and so in the London Sperm Bank examples there is an absence of 'other'. Unlike Figure 67 where 'family' is emphasised[100], the advertisement does not infer or signal that having a child (and therefore conforming to 'acceptable heteronormative ways of behaving') need include a partner. Indeed, from a queer theory perspective, much of the London Sperm Bank's messaging could be understood as problematising traditional heteronormative ideas of the family based on heterosexual coupling (Park, 2006)[101]. In this sense, the advertisement does not *exclude* alternative ways of being a lesbian/bisexual parent; for example, raising a child alone. Still, there is still an underlying (heteronormative) message that lesbian/bisexual women will want to, or *should,* be parents[102]. More crucially, however, and as already identified in the previous chapter, the absence of *any* LGBTQ+ representation in conscious advertisements is problematic in terms of its exclusion of LGBTQ+ representation (or non-adaptation), which again prioritises heterosexuality as the dominant way of being.

Captured by Porfido (2009, p.162) as "visual deprivation"[103], this absence reinforces the 'othering' (Plummer, 2003) of the excluded group, whereby differences from the majority render them not

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[99] Notwithstanding *some* passive advertisements that unsettle this binary, for example the Jean Paul Gaultier advertisements for 'Le Male' (Figure 29) discussed in Chapter 6; yet these still feature highly masculine and feminine images (for example, the ribbed, naked male torso and the long-haired, high-heeled female).
[100] Captured as two stereotypical lesbian (butch and femme) mothers and a child, to be discussed in more detail later
[101] Two of the three 'Parent Stories' on their website include a single mother and a lesbian couple, with their home page stating that they "help people…whatever their circumstances" (London Sperm Bank, 2019)
[102] Especially given the prevalence of fertility/family-related organisations being promoted in *DIVA*, particularly when compared to *Gay Times*
[103] Within the context of queer televisual images (absence/presence), citizenship and heteronormativity

entitled to full membership. From a queer theory perspective, conscious advertisements perpetuate this cultural logic of exclusion and can be seen to be much more problematic than tailored or integrative advertisements, whereby explicit representation (therefore some level of presence) exists. This 'othering' is arguably more profound when extended to the wider context of LGBTQ+ representation in advertisements placed in mainstream media[104]. Referring to the discursive case (Figure 64) and fertility once again (i.e. sperm bank advertisement), these advertisements targeting lesbian/bisexual consumers are *only* found in LGBTQ+ media, and largely out of the view of a heterosexual audience, some of whom might take offense at advertisements concerning LGBTQ+ family reproduction. Images of lesbian/bisexual women interacting as a family, for example, are excluded from the majority group, sustaining a heteronormative ideal of the heterosexual family (Kitzinger, 2005). This 'othering' of LGBTQ+ lives in advertising has potentially damaging consequences (Taylor, 1992; De Drauw, 2017; McInroy and Craig, 2017), including negative self-perception and feelings of inadequacy (Fryberg and Townsend, 2008; Gomillion and Giuliano, 2011) and implications for queer self-formation (Porfido, 2009).

So, while invited to consume, lesbian/bisexual women do not have 'full membership' status. Indeed, economic value or marketplace visibility, when it *does* occur, does not constitute an equality of identity that recognises lesbian/bisexual women on their own. terms. Instead, it enables "assimilation into dominant norms, not resistance to them" (King, 2009, p.278) or transgression of them. As I have discussed previously, this is a pertinent issue within queer theory, which exposes and challenges normative regimes (Halperin, 1995), in particular heteronormativity (Warner, 1993). Within the context of visibility politics and a capitalist desire for the continuous creation of new markets (Phelan, 2001), most marketing strategies have, certainly in the past, been more about profit than liberation (Hennessy, 1995). Arguably then, it is not surprising that some companies are content in adopting this more cost-efficient, lazy tactic[105] to attract the LGBTQ+ market, as evidenced by its prevalence within this study.

Indeed, in the context of this study, the popularity of conscious advertisements is high, with 46% of all advertisements placed in LGBTQ+ media (n=240/518) adopting this method. From an audience perspective, its effectiveness can be seen to rely, in part, on the concept of cultural 'poaching' (de Certeau, 1984), whereby a minority group 'appropriates' images of the majority group used in a visual

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[104] Only 2% of advertisements placed in mainstream media (n=31/1696) contained explicit LGBTQ+ representation. 6% contained implicit images (in passive advertisements) but are intended to be unrecognisable to a mainstream audience anyway.

[105] As discussed in the previous chapter, and contrary to tailored advertisements which adapt the advertisement with the use of visual representations and/or wording to create a more meaningful communication with the target audience

as if intended for them. For example, Figure 69 below does not contain any identifiable LGBTQ+ cues/symbolism. Images are in fact of the majority group: the sporting celebrity James Anderson is heterosexual (married to ex-model Daniella Lloyd), and there is a strong gender binary presence through the use once again of the colour blue and the name of the product itself 'Well*man*'[106].

Figure 69: An example of a conscious advertisement featuring hetero- sexual/normative images

Rather than discount the advertisement altogether (as there are no self-referential cues), an LGBTQ+ audience has the capacity, or cultural competency (Lewis, 1997), to correctly encode it but, instead, resist its privileged message (Porfido, 2008). This is similar to the concept of 'straightening out'[107] originating from the ICA findings (and discussed in the previous chapter) whereby an LGBT audience can remove heterosexuality from an ambiguous image placed in passive advertisements and interpret them as LGBTQ+ signifiers/cues. Both concepts recognise the poylsemic nature of the advertisement

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[106] As '*opposed*' to Well*woman* which also exists for female consumption
[107] As a reversed extension of Borgerson *et al's* (2010) concept of 'straightening up' whereby explicit LGBT images are read as straight (heterosexual)

but that an overall reading is based on the insider position of the audience and their subjective acceptance and rejection of the images in front of them.

Conscious advertisements are reliant *in part* on cultural poaching because the wider placement context of the image can be seen as inseparable from the reading process and so therefore is also a contributing factor. In other words, an advertisement's placement in *DIVA* or *Gay Times* is a signifier in itself of who it is aimed at. Arguably less/no deciphering or resistance occurs; the audience is able to recognise that they are at least one of the intended audiences because they are already choosing to engage with the publication. Media placement can therefore be understood as helping to legitimise the translation of heterosexual images, assisted by the fluid, contextualised nature of the images themselves, as discussed in the previous chapter. The media context of conscious advertisements could therefore be seen to mitigate the *feeling* of exclusion insomuch as the LGBTQ+ audience is being recognised through the placement of the advertisement itself, albeit in a marketised way. The audience is also seeing tailored advertisements alongside conscious equivalents and so arguably the level of 'visual deprivation' within each publication is lessened overall.

8.5 Discursive case 2: The tailored approach

Moving on to tailored advertisements, as shown at the beginning of this chapter in Table 25 (and extracted below in Table 26 for ease of reference) the most frequently coded values for this targeted approach relate to visual representations of LGBTQ+ness (as opposed to the use of LGBTQ+ wording), with most characters posing alone within a staged setting. The majority of representations are of young, white males.

Table 27: Summary of most frequently coded value (per key variable) for tailored advertisements

No. ads.	Page size	Product type	Activity	Interaction	Setting	Mood	Gender	Ethnicity	Age	Wealth
165	Full (73%)	Travel/Hol (16%)	Posing (36%)	Alone (24%)	Staged (38%)	Serious (21%)	Male (43%)	White (59%)	19-29 (47%)	Medium (42%)
		** equal with 'Fashion High End'				* equal with 'Playful/fun'				

With this in mind, Figure 70 below is the 'discursive case' for this advertising approach since it matches the majority of the most frequently coded values (derived from the ICA), again with the exception of 'Product type'[108].

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[108] No tailored advertisements exist in LGBTQ+ media that promote Travel/Holiday products (n=26/165) using lone characters, posing within a staged setting with a serious tone. The discursive case was one of only two advertisements that met all other coded criteria and was chosen for its greater potential for discussion following my analysis in the previous chapter surrounding the prevalence of hyper-masculine, lone male images.

Figure 70: Discursive case for tailored advertisements – Garcon model, placed in *Gay Times* (07/GT/14/T)
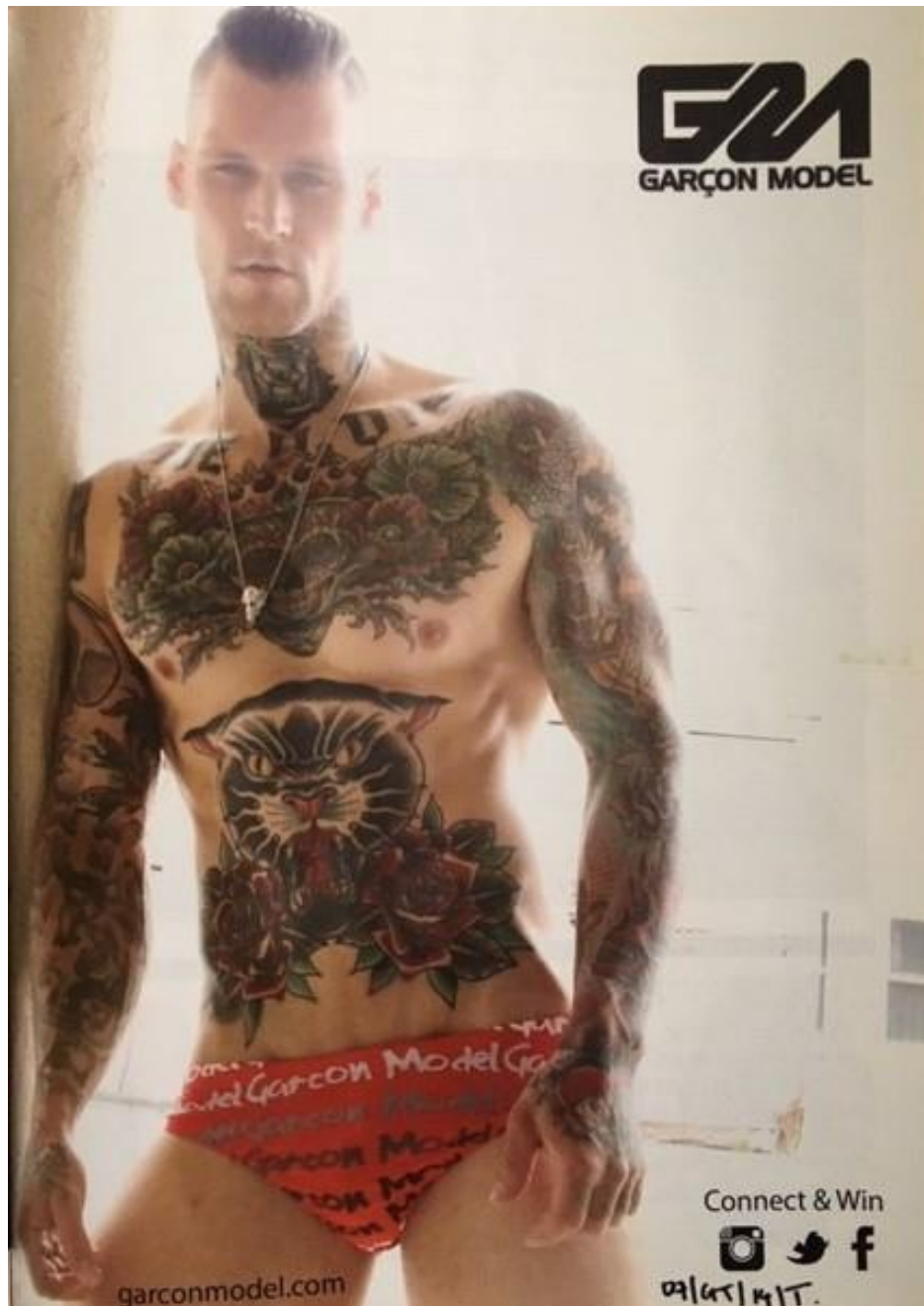
Before deconstructing the image itself, the finding that the majority of images in LGBTQ+ media are male is not surprising given the higher number of advertisements featured in *Gay Times* than *DIVA* overall (as I already observe in the previous chapter). Indeed, male LGBTQ+ depictions in the media generally outnumber female (McInroy and Craig, 2016) and their prominence within this advertising context too could be seen to reflect the broader "privileged masculine notion of homosexuality and

gay identity" (Kates, 1999, p.27), whereby market interest is skewed in favour of the governing male. A sexual hierarchy can therefore be seen to exist in LGBTQ+ advertising, one that reinforces a (heteronormative) male privilege.

Alongside the prioritisation of men is the prioritisation of masculinity as a particular *type* of male representation in tailored advertisements. Figure 71 below, and indeed the discursive case, are illustrative of the sorts of male visual featured within LGBTQ+ advertisements, in which it is the hyper-masculine image that dominates.

Figure 71: Examples of hyper-masculinity in tailored advertisements placed in *Gay Times* (08/GT/14/T) and 03/GT/12/T)

In such advertisements, male bodies are incredibly well-defined/muscular, shoulders are broad and upright, and jaw lines are chiselled. Stances are often confident and controlled, conveying strength and sangfroid. All can be understood as stereotypical heteronormative reproductions of ideal masculinity. Here the male is reproduced contrary to (other) stereotypical reproductions of gay male sexuality, such as effeminacy, campness and weakness, which have dominated other media representations in the past, particularly on screen (McInroy and Craig, 2017). These common portrayals together illustrate another gender binary: the hyper-masculine versus hyper-feminine gay male.

Whilst the hyper-masculine gay male figures prominently within tailored advertisements, it is interesting that images of the hyper-feminine gay male do not. Indeed, there is a stark absence of any other type of gay/bisexual male within targeted LGBTQ+ advertisements. In the previous chapter, I highlight two exceptions (in Figure 51) in which the advertisements are promoting a queer festival and a gay bear event, showing images that represent different the types of attendees expected. In this respect, it would appear that images of otherness are acceptable or relevant only when the product is niche, whereby 'others' are invited to consume. The advertisements for more general products (as per the three advertisements above) use more standardised, almost stock images of the hyper-masculine gay male as if representative of the majority. Thus, these images help to perpetuate the 'new norms' that have emerged in gay male culture in the fetishisation of gay male masculinity as heteronormative (Helperin, 2012). One consequence of this is that gay men who are represented as or presumed to be effeminate continue to be marginalised and even excluded within gay male culture.

An outlier advertising image that meets the same lone, staged, serious, male ICA majority values as the hyper-masculine male can be found below in Figure 72:

Figure 72: A variation of the majority gay/bisexual male image featured in *Gay Times*
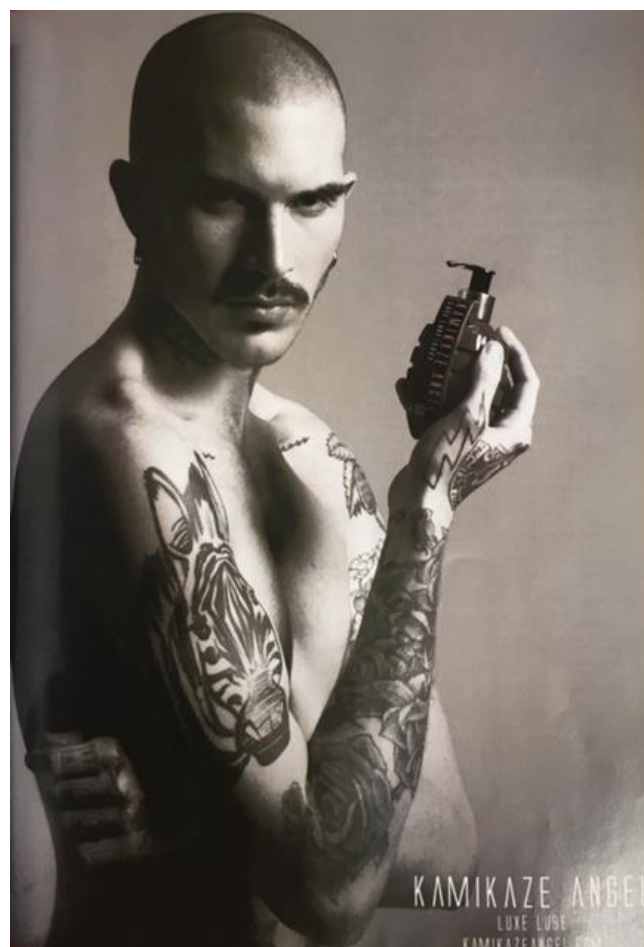
In this advertisement, signifiers of masculinity are present in the form of a shaved head and tattoos, similar to the discursive case. Yet there is a nuanced femininity exuding from the overall visual. The lips are fuller/softer, shoulders are more rolled (less upright and 'strong') and the crossed (almost vulnerable) positioning of the arms and tilted wrist are in contrast to the stances depicted in the hyper-masculine examples shown above. As such, this image can be seen to rupture some of the heteronormative constructs of 'the male'[109], presenting a slightly 'queerer' gendered representation. However, when deconstructing this image in terms of *sexuality,* the advertisement is less disruptive. The visual reproduces an almost archetypal gay image from the 1970/80s, that has visual references to the gay leather scene, the disco pop music group 'The Village People' and gay icon Freddie Mercury (as per Figure 73 below).

Figure 73: Examples of the types of 1970/80s gay male imagery reproduced in the Kamikaze Angel advertisement (Figure 72)

While the image deviates from the *hyper-masculine* lone male that features so heavily in advertisements placed in *Gay Times* press, it reproduces a gay male stereotype of its own. For example, with its 'rugged masculinity', "leather was everything that the self-consciously effeminate homosexuals weren't. They were some of the first gay men to reclaim masculinity" (Chaline, 2007, p.185). Clearly there are elements of femininity to some leather identities and similar representations as just described above; however, the roots of the leather scene stem back to a rejection of the effeminate gay male stereotype. Tom of Finland's iconic art captures the integration of leather and masculinity at its extreme, with a homoerotic body of work that depicts the hyper-muscular leather biker in a range of (often dominant[110]) sexualised encounters with cops, sailors and so on. Indeed,

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[109] As also depicted in mainstream publications, exemplified in Figure 68 featuring images of 'the man'.
[110] As opposed to 'subordinate', reflecting another set of binaries

much of the leather scene was/is organised around sexual activities (Siddons, 2018), a feature of which is also central to the Kamikaze Angel advertisement under discussion, in so much as the product being promoted is 'lube' (sexual lubricant). As such, there is a creative cohesion within the advertisement that can be seen to be influenced by and potentially read via an in-group understanding (a 'sub-cultural competence' (Lewis, 1997)) of a sub-set of LGBTQ+ cultural signifiers.

In one respect, this can be seen as sound marketing, in that self-referential clues are being incorporated within an advertisement placed in a targeted media publication. Furthermore, this type of image provides an alternative to the normative visual of the hyper-masculine gay/bisexual male as exemplified in this discursive case.   However, the advertisement can also be seen as exclusionary, even if the gay male reader may understand in a broad sense that it is aimed at them[111] (inasmuch as knowing it is not aimed at a heterosexual male). It contains signifiers that tap into another stereotyped association, this time of the gay/bisexual man and his prioritisation of and preoccupation with sex. Indeed, the association of gay men with sex remains a strong one (Halperin, 2012). As I discuss in the previous chapter, a number of advertisements in *Gay Times* contain sexualised messages by, for example, depicting gay/bisexual men in sexual positions/gestures or promoting sex-related products (see examples in Figure 74 below).

Figure 74: Tailored advertisements placed in *Gay Times* of a sexual nature or promoting a sex-related product

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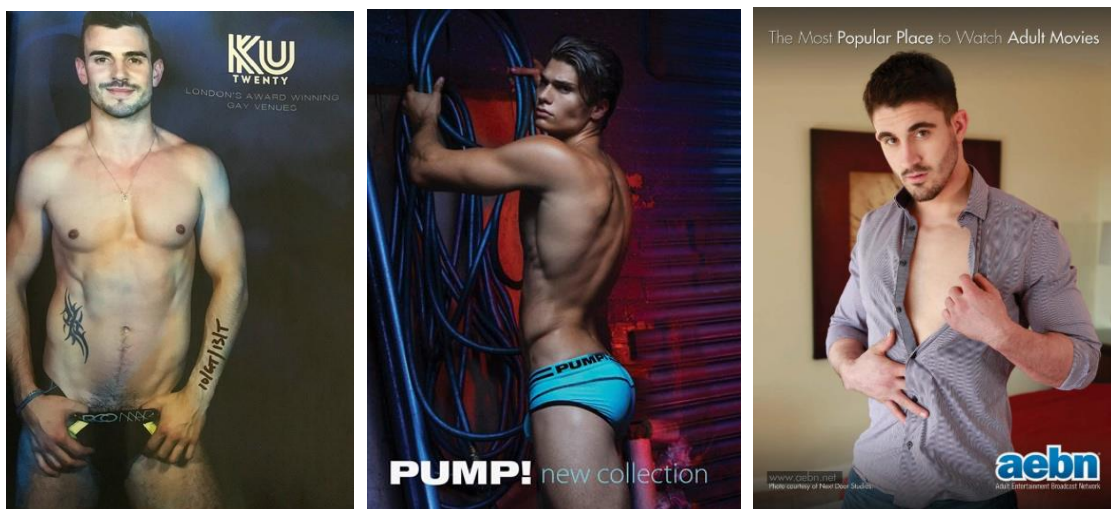
[111] This again is similar to the principle of 'straightening-out' in passive advertisements (a finding presented in the first discussion chapter of this thesis) whereby an LGBTQ+ audience is able to recognise various non-heterosexual cues in an advertisement and know that they are being targeted, even if those signifiers do not 'speak' to or reference their own LGBTQ+ identity directly.

To be discussed in more detail shortly, this is in stark contrast to LGBTQ+ targeted and non-targeted advertisements placed in *DIVA* and indeed mainstream publications. Furthermore, the high prevalence of lone males in *Gay Times* creates a faceless 'other' with whom this sexualised activity may take place, adding an element of promiscuity or at least non-commitment into the mix and thereby presenting an additional gay male stereotype that constrains alternative representations of gay male sexuality and gender (McInroy and Craig, 2017).

In summary then, the majority images of gay/bisexual men in tailored advertisements are lone, young, hyper-masculine (and often hypersexual) white, healthy males. This image creates its own normative constraints, whereby some LGBTQ+ identities are prioritised while others are not (Drucker, 2015). Referring back to Plummer's (2003) work, 'othering' therefore also occurs *within* the minority group where some members are not given the same status or rights as others. This can be seen in the reproduction of homonormativity (Duggan, 2002), which, as I have discussed in previous chapters, partly refers to the assimilation of heteronormative ideals into LGBTQ+ cultures and communities. Such homonormative advertisements can displace or marginalise non-normative LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders. In the context of the advertisements discussed here, homonormativity can put pressure on gay men to replicate a heteronormative ideal of what it is to be male and masculine that is ultimately "constructed according to hegemonic and heteronormative regulatory principles." (Porfido, 2009, p.166).

Recent promotions by Axel Hotels illustrate this interplay between homo- and heteronormativity, in their #beheterofriendly campaign aimed to support 'the normalization and rights of the LGBT community'. Using humour and parody, the LGBT chain of hotels (whose strapline is 'we are heterofriendly') created a series of print advertisements and video (see Figure x below) to:

> "…take the open mindedness of the brand to an extreme and turn around the situation: it doesn't matter that heterosexuals do not know how to dance, combine their socks, don't know the latest Madonna single, or simply don't have their abs defined; they are people too and have rights like everyone else…..we wanted to blink an eye at society when facing the struggle for true normalization of the LGBT community, we wanted them to step in our shoes for a moment".

> (Juan, 2016)

Figure 75: Axel Hotels "#beheterofriendly' campaign (print advertisement featured in *Gay Times* and YouTube/Facebook [online video](#))
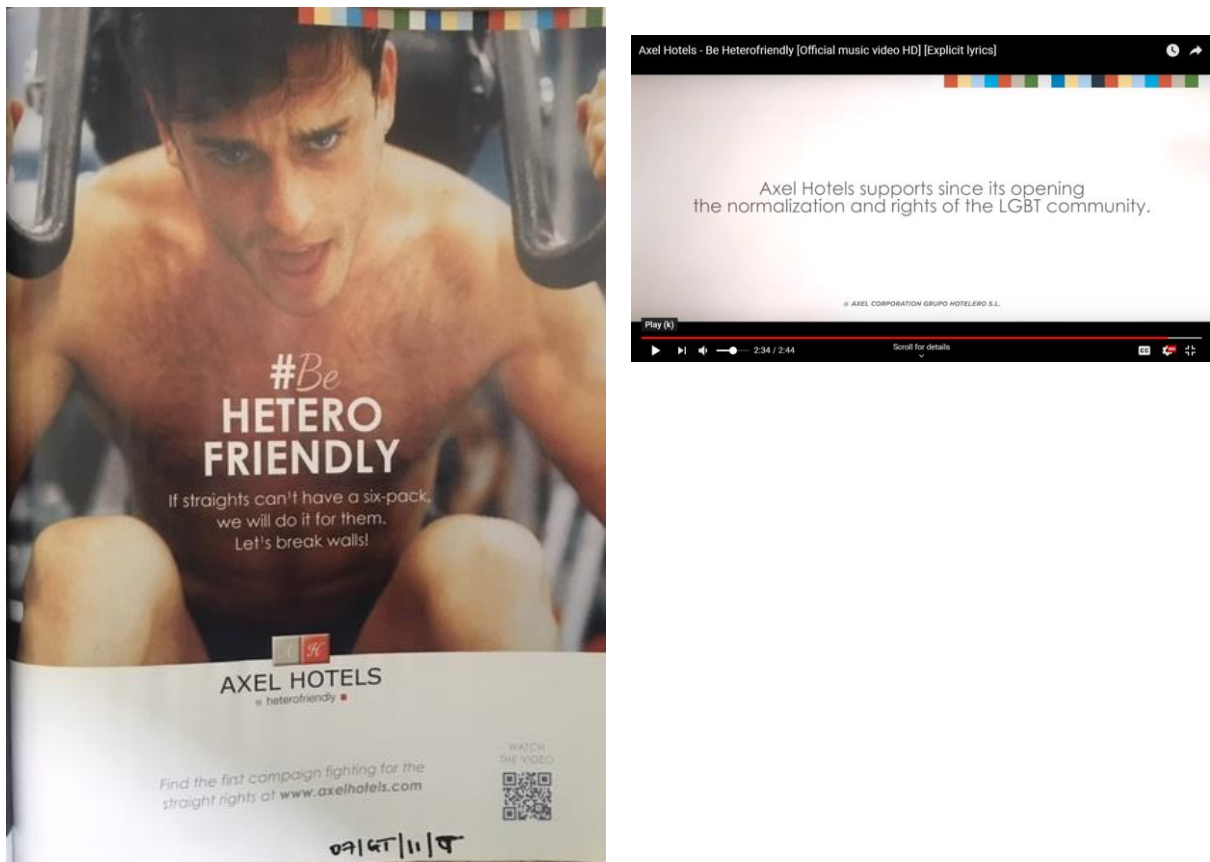
In short, whilst the campaign can be read as trying to 'queer' the heteronormative status quo, the result is, paradoxically, a strengthening of it, since it simply reverses the heterosexual/homosexual binary rather than undermining it altogether. Listed above and featured within the video clip and print advertisements (albeit humorously) are a set of gay male stereotypes. Visually, all the promotional materials feature young, white, hyper-masculine, healthy and in this case wealthy (given the cost of the product) males. One outcome of the intersect of homonormativity with heterosexual privilege is, as De Dauws (2009, p.87) writes, "a white middle-class community privileged and legitimised above other gay communities, which creates homonormativity". The Axel Hotels campaign reflects this well, as do their promotions in general (see examples in Figure 76 below), all of which can be seen to reproduce this aforementioned in-group dominance.

Figure 76: Examples of other (i.e. not the #beheterofriendly campaign) promotional materials for Axel Hotels
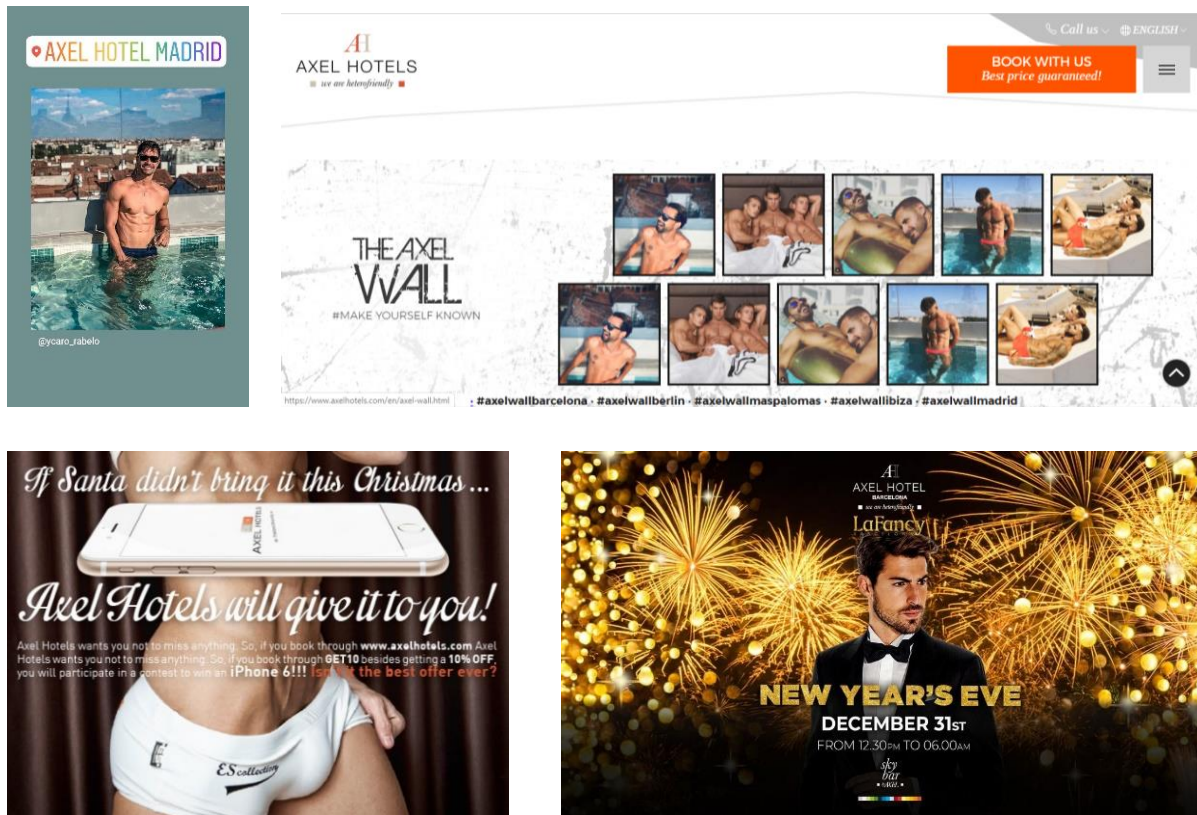
Collectively then, the audience is exposed to another set of norms, not as a challenge to existing (heterosexual) ones but as a means to being accepted within them. If other aspects of human difference, such as race and wealth, can be deployed as signifiers of privileged *heterosexuality,* then there is greater access to the majority group (as the privileged *homosexual*). Read queerly, hyper-masculinity feeds directly into this, insomuch as the normative heterosexual male is characterised by strength/masculinity as described earlier, and so if gay men can replicate or indeed 'do better' (with their six pack for example, as per Axel Hotel's campaign), their "struggle*"* for normalisation is made less difficult.

Comparing this type of homonormative reproduction with the Kamikaze Angel advertisement (as previously shown in Figure 72), heteronormative binaries are at play within both types of visual. However, it is the one that is less disruptive (in other words, most conforming to heterosexual norms) that features more prominently within tailored advertisements (namely the hyper-masculine male exemplified in the discursive case and the examples that followed). As I discuss later in this chapter, since these types of images are "more palatable to a mainstream audience" (De Dauw, 2017, p.93), it

is perhaps to be expected that they also feature in passive and integrative advertisements. Their prevalence within tailored advertisements reinforces the extent to which homonormativity exists in LGBTQ+ media and, arguably, helps perpetuate the desire to achieve homonormative constructions of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders. Problematic is not only the exclusion of LGBTQ+ 'others' but the quest for normalcy itself. Acceptance is not being sought through an acknowledgement or understanding of difference (Ahmed, 2012), but via assimilation into the majority-norm, which grants some, but by no means all, LGBTQ+ citizens access to the fabric of heteronormative everyday life (Richardson, 2005; Ahmed, 2012; Halperin, 2012). It can be seen as a desired, constructed privilege that potentially denies and/or invalidates the lives of others who cannot or choose not to conform (Butler, 2004).

This assimilation is no more evident than in tailored advertisements placed in *DIVA*. Figure 77 below shows three examples of homonormativity within a lesbian/bisexual female context. Here, rather than homonormativity manifesting as the ideal heterosexual female in terms of physicality/femininity (to reverse the male discussion above), the audience is exposed to reproductions of heteronormative *lifestyles and behaviour*. As per the findings of the ICA (Table 24 above), lesbian/bisexual woman are mostly depicted in couples, being happy, interacting in public, i.e. opposite to the serious, lone gay/bisexual male and his faceless (sexual) 'other'. Commitment, family and security are foregrounded. Interaction takes place in cafes, beaches and other forms of public space, inferring that this is normal and encouraging lesbian/bisexual females to behave in this way in reality.

Figure 77: Examples of homonormativity within a lesbian/bisexual female context, placed in *DIVA*

Applying the same process as Kates (1999) when queering his 'ad exemplar'[112], if one of the female characters is replaced with a male in each of the three advertisements above, the visuals all capture aspects of heterosexual 'everyday life', unquestioned and unequivocal. Heterosexuals (can) get married, have children, and financially/legally protect their families and themselves. They can interact with their children or embrace publicly without fear of verbal or physical abuse. The images therefore replicate heterosexual privileges, not all of which are yet accessible to all LGBTQ+ citizens, but which enable greater access to and membership of the majority group and aid assimilation into mainstream life.

As discussed by Puar (2007), this simulation of heteronormativity creates homonormativity within the minority group, whereby those with similar other hetero- privileges are in a position to replicate the *status quo*. Focussing on class/wealth for example: legal services, weddings and fertility are not cheap. Neither are the holidays or international festivals that are heavily promoted within *DIVA*. Collectively, then, the types of products advertised and the heteronormative depictions created to promote them help to shape and/or reinforce a particular lifestyle to emulate in order to achieve normalisation and therefore greater social acceptance. As already mentioned, however, membership conditions are not available to or sought by all (Ahmed, 2012; Drucker, 2015), and the omnipresence of homonormativity both dilutes difference that does exist (whether through choice or circumstance) and limits understanding of queer potentialities to live as sexual and gendered subjects in non-normative ways (Butler, 2004; Warner 1999).

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[112] The advertisement Kates (1999) selected for analysis would be categorised as 'tailored' as part of this research, in that it featured a same sex couple and was placed in LGBT media. Hence the same initial process of performing a "textual sex change operation" (p31) has been used here.

Indeed, in the top two *DIVA* advertisements (in Figure 77) we can see gender performed in a similar normative manner, with 'female' equalling mother, creating and nurturing the family. The characters are stereotypically feminine insomuch as they have long hair and are wearing clothes that align with traditional notions of being female and feminine. Contrast those images with the discursive case in Figure 70 and the dominant representations of men in *Gay Times* generally. There is a dearth of male portrayals interacting as part of a family, and, in reverse, an absence of women in *DIVA* exercising their sexual agency. Within these two advertisements (and acknowledging what is also absent from others), gender binaries and notions of what it means to be male and female remain intact, an important feature of homonormativity (De Dauws, 2009) that dominates tailored advertisements in LGBTQ+ media, as exposed via the results of the ICA.

The third advertisement featured in Figure 77 above features the familiar portrayal of two women, namely the 'femme' and 'butch' coupling. Another example, already discussed in this chapter and the previous one, can be found in Figure 67 above. With these sorts of depictions, we again see the replication of heteronormative gender binaries in practice, whereby one partner is/looks more traditionally 'feminine' and the other more 'masculine'. For example, one has long hair and is dressed in relatively feminine clothes whereas the other has short (or shaved) hair and is wearing more masculine clothing. In this example above, we also see both the 'male' and the 'female' aspects of heteronormative *parenting* ('father'/'mother') being performed by the butch and femme lesbian/bisexual woman respectively. So, in addition to gay/bisexual women being depicted as the mother/nurturer generally, we also see the reproduction of heteronormative gender binaries present and intact within the parenting roles represented. Again, this simulation of heterosexuality and the signifiers of other privileged strata (white, middle-class) expose the homonormativity embedded within the visual.

Within *DIVA*, the 'butch' lesbian construct also manifests in other ways. As I discuss in the previous chapter, it is in *DIVA* (*not Marie Claire*) that the 'masculine' Movado watch can be found and where the 'bigger' Infinity car is promoted, with the same or slighted adapted advertisements also featuring in *GQ* and *Gay Times* (in other words, publications aimed at men). Looking at these placement decisions, it would appear that binary assumptions about gender form part of strategic decisions regarding the targeting of markets based on sexuality. That is also perhaps why we tend to see lesbian/bisexual images of women featured in dichotomous ways: as butch lesbians or as femmes but in the company of other women to ensure that the image is not misread i.e. that it is LGBTQ+ explicit. Examples of the latter are shown below in Figure 78:

Figure 78: 'Femme' representations (featuring Affectionate/sexual touch with other women) in tailored advertisements placed in *DIVA*

These visuals reflect an important finding of the ICA, in that the main LGBTQ+ image-type featured within tailored advertisements placed in *DIVA* is either 'Butch appearance' or 'Affectionate/sexual touch'. The former is perhaps an obvious choice, as discussed above. With the latter, it would appear that in order to avoid reader-ambiguity, a femme must be touching either another femme (or a butch lesbian, as per the bottom advertisement in Figure 77 above) so that the image itself may be understood or interpreted correctly as lesbian/bisexual. In both advertisements, we can also see the inclusion of words to enable correct de-coding ('Men overboard' and 'Your wedding day'), although with the Key West advertisement the visual itself is arguably explicit enough.

This finding says much about the traditional notion of femininity and its association with heterosexuality and, perhaps more crucially, its *disassociation* with homosexuality. To repeat an already common finding, these types of images illustrate a heteronormative understanding of gender. They also perpetuate the 'butch' and 'femme' binary stereotype, reflective of the typically homonormative portrayal of lesbian/bisexual female relationships generally. However, in contrast to the Axel Hotels campaign cited earlier, the advertisement promoting Key West does not outwardly attempt to normalise homosexuality. The strap line of "Close to perfect, far from normal" boldly acknowledges and even celebrates that many of their visitors are not heterosexual. Yet the images used within their advertisements and the overall message communicated are highly normalised. Figure 79, below, shows two more advertisements promoting the same destination; the first also placed in *DIVA* and the second featured in *Gay Times*:

Figure 79: 'Key West' advertisements placed in *DIVA* and *Gay Times*

Focusing first on the top advertisement, it again contains two femme (or at least not butch) lesbian/bisexual women affectionately touching. The 'Love and let love' wording again helps remove any ambiguity as to the sexuality of or relationship between the two women. Both characters are white and seemingly middle class, given the nature of the product being promoted. Similarly, the males in the second advertisement convey many of the normative attributes discussed earlier, alongside the second discursive case (in Figure 70) and in the previous chapter, for example youth, good looks/health and wealth. The wording 'Where the bouys are' is a play on the (waterside) destination itself but also designed to convey an inclusive holiday environment where other gay/bisexual men will be found.

Where both sets of characters and messaging overlaps is their coupledom. Whilst this type of representation is prevalent in tailored advertisements placed in *DIVA*, it is a rare depiction as already noted for gay/bisexual men in *Gay Times*[113]. It rebuffs the typically lone, hypersexualised image in tailored advertisements as per the second discursive case featured in this chapter. Indeed, the overall positioning of Key West (from the three advertisements above) appears to be about relaxation and spending quality time with your significant other, in beautiful sun-filled surroundings, and so on. Again, adopting Kates' (1999) sex change operation, if each advertisement replaced one of the characters with someone from the opposite gender, we would seamlessly step into holiday advertisements aimed at heterosexual couples, such as those for Sandals as shown in Figure 80 below:

Figure 80: Various advertisements for Sandals aimed at heterosexual couples

Here, couples are also relaxing, physically affectionate and enjoying time in the sun(set) with one another. The images in the Key West advertisements can therefore be seen to replicate some of the same aspects of privileged heterosexual ways of being (relatively young, white, affluent, presumably

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[113] That said, couples featured more heavily in advertisements for travel/holiday products than any other type (as discussed in the previous chapter), assumed to be because of the shared nature of this consumption.

monoganmous) in a destination that seemingly welcomes LGBTQ+ visitors even if they are 'far from normal'. These homonormative visuals (Figure 79) can therefore be read and understood by the target audience as the criteria by which access is achieved; in other words, signifiers of the majority group criteria that enables membership and acceptance. To reverse the scenerio once more, would advertisements for Key West contain visuals of alternative or queerer ways of being? Would they be welcomed to the resort in the same way? Read queerly, it is reasonable to assert that 'Far from normal' may not be as far from the (hetero) norm as it would first seem.

These advertisements must, however, be recognised on some level for their progessive nature, whereby such explicit representation and messaging enables LGBTQ+ people to be folded in to mainstream life, whilst also being acknowledged as being different. Indeed, for many LGBTQ+ people achieving societal intergration and acceptance is a positive, especially for those who choose to live an 'ordinary' life and are able to do so (Brown, 2012). From a queer perspective, homonormativity (which is particularly present in tailored advertisements) retrenches heteronormativity and by doing so also elevates or strengthens the gender and sexual binaries that are sustained by it, and which constrains the possibilities for queerer representations of LGBTQ+ people to emerge.

8.6 Discursive case 3: The passive approach

As shown at the beginning of this chapter in Table 24 above, and extracted below in Table 27, the most frequently coded values for passive advertisements are very similar to those relating to tailored advertisements in that they also mostly portray young, white, males, posing alone with a serious tone within a staged environment. However in passive advertisements *more* characters are posing, *more* are alone, *more* environments are staged and the characters are *more* white, young and wealthy.

Table 28: Summary of most frequently coded value (per key variable) for passive advertisements

No. ads.	Page size	Product type	Activity	Interaction	Setting	Mood	Gender	Ethnicity	Age	Wealth
91	Full (51%)	Fashion High End (78%)	Posing (74%)	Alone (48%)	Staged (44%)	Serious (54%)	Male (56%)	White (74%)	19-29 (92%)	Med-High (46%)

In short, LGBTQ+ images and representations in passive advertisements can be seen to be much narrower. Indeed, this is reflected in the concentration of coded values for passive advertisements, whereby most advertisements (72%) feature one of three main signifiers, namely 'Eff/butch appearance', 'Androngynous character' and 'Eff/butch pose'.   This is perhaps unsurprising since passive advertisements mostly feature *implicit* images/cues), and so signifiers such as

'Affectionate/sexual touch' or 'Married activity' which appear in tailored advertisement are not going to be presents because of their explicitness[114].

Worthy of reiteration, however, given its significance within this study, is that the implicit signifiers within passive advertisements most frequently coded as part of the ICA pertain to gender non-conformity rather than (subtle or ambiguous) cues relating to sexuality[115] as listed above. This is exemplified in the discursive case for this advertising category as shown below in Figure 81 below[116].

Figure 81: Discursive case for passive advertisements – ETRO, placed in *GQ* (02/GQ/33/P)

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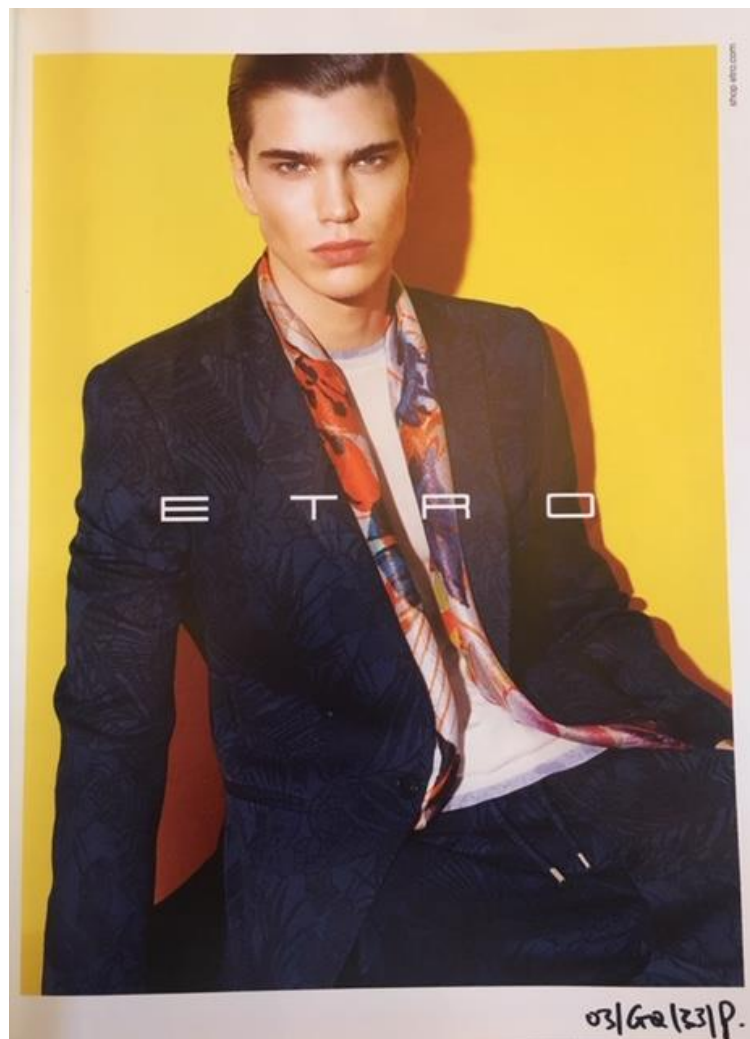
[114] In other words, tailored advertisements can include both implicit *and* explicit signifiers, as captured by Branchik (2007) and therefore it is likely that a greater number of signifiers exist.
[115] Such as 'physical closeness' between members of the same sex, which do also figure highly but not as much as the aforementioned gender-based signifiers.
[116] Unlike the other advertising approaches, there are a handful of examples that match all of the frequently coded values (derived from the ICA). This particular advertisement has been chosen since it exemplifies, more than the others, the values that have been most frequently coded whereby the typifications of each value are more pronounced.

Here there are a number of signifiers pertaining to non-normative gender appearance. In particular, the character is wearing a floral, colourful (and relatively feminine) scarf/neckerchief. Their lips are pink and plumped, with blusher possibly having been applied to the cheeks. There is an effeminate feel to the overall image that is subtly reinforced by the slightly reclined pose/stance of the character. Contrast this with the posture and physical appearance of the hyper-masculine male featured within the tailored discursive case (Figure 70) and images in Figure 71, which endorse normative constructions of ideal heteronormative masculinity. Figure 82 below shows two similar examples with the signifiers slightly less pronounced but leaving overall a similar impression. Again, elements of non-normative masculinity can be seen in the form of plump/pink/pouting lips and slightly effeminate dress (with the character of the left) and elements of a non-masculine pose (legs crossed and a relatively 'weak'[117] posture) with the character on the right. Equally, there are a number of masculine signifiers in the form once again of strong jaw lines, relatively short hair, and in the right-hand image a tailored suit (albeit oversized) and a hat that resembles part-bowler/part-trilby. I will discuss this again shortly.

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[117] As opposed to a (binary) strong, upright 'masculine' posture as per the hyper-masculine characters featured in tailored advertisements

Figure 82: Passive advertisements placed in *GQ* magazine, using non-normative gender signifiers
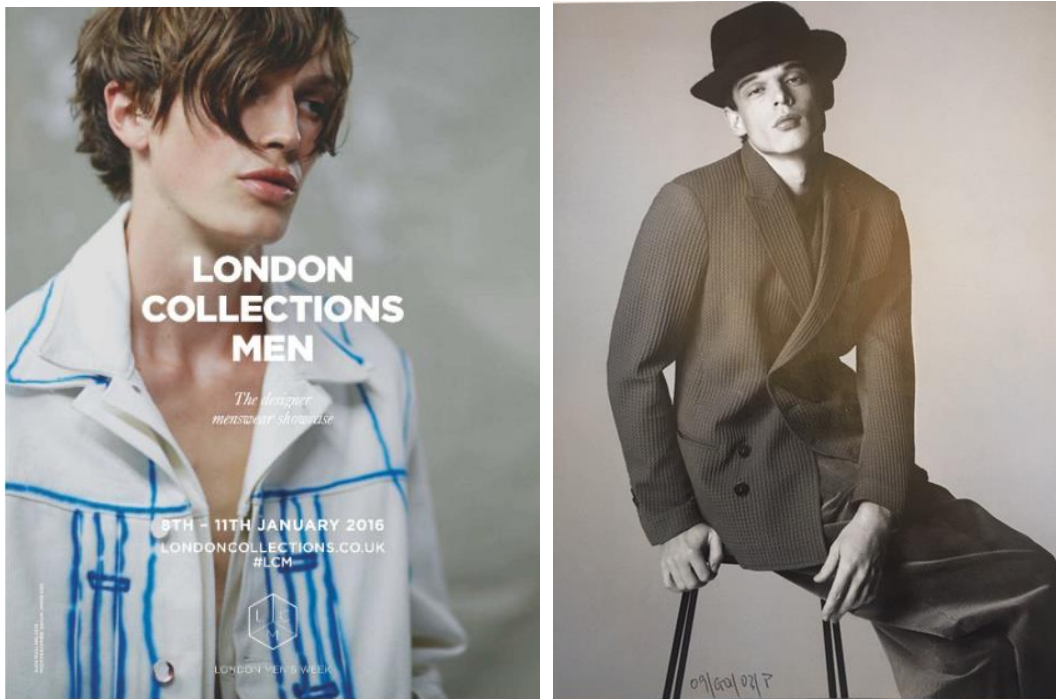
Within the context of passive advertisements, all three images do what they are intended to do, namely create some level of ambiguity for the intended audience(s). However, such is the inseparability of gender from hetero- homosexuality, i.e. the entrenchment of the heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1999), that it is enough to play with gender norms (as opposed to creating uncertainty through inserting a same-sex character) to create sufficient ambiguity. In other words, if you disrupt (or in this case, slightly distort or unsettle) the gender identity of the characters, questions over their (hetero) sexuality will also be raised. Seen here, therefore, is the gendering of sexuality, at least within a male/*GQ* placement context. Exploring this in relation to passive advertisements placed in *Marie Claire*, Figure 83 below is an advertisement coded with multiple implicit signifiers:

Figure 83: A multi-signifier passive advertisement for AG Jeans placed in *Marie Claire* (02/MC/11/P)

SPRING 2016
AGJEANS.COM

This advertisement in fact contains the highest number of LGBTQ+ signifiers within one case[118], the majority linked again to gender ambiguity and/or non-normative gender identity. Firstly, the clothing is relatively masculine, in that the character is wearing an un-buttoned shirt (not 'blouse') which arguably could not be possible[119] if the character had a more traditionally female (curvaceous) body. Similarly, the relatively strong neck/jaw reinforces elements of female masculinity (Halberstam, 1998) as does the fairly (confident) masculine pose with slightly opened legs, relaxed shoulders and hands resting around the crotch area. Linked to this is the final signifier[120], namely the background 'prop'

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[118] Five signifiers as coded via the ICA: eff/butch appearance, eff/butch pose, androgynous character, male activities (classic cars) and absence of other.
[119] Or ASA (Advertising Standards Authority) compliant, given current codes of practice.
[120] In relation to 'male/female activities', i.e. partaking in activities 'opposite' to traditional gender norms.

within the advertisement – the classic/sports car. The positioning of the character sitting comfortably on the convertible car door conveys a sense of ownership or at least familiarity with being around this type of vehicle, as opposed to historical images of hyperfeminine/sexualised women being draped over car bonnets in an effort to help sell cars (to men).

To use, once again, Kates's (1999) sex change operation, if the character in the above advertisement was a man, the visual would arguably 'pass' as relatively (male) gender normative. The only convincing female signifier is the character's long hair – a symbol[121] that appears to be regularly used as a 'gender-anchor' within a number of passive advertisements. This anchoring, in whatever form it takes, attaches or secures at least one part of the overall visual to a normative gender attribute traditionally aligned to the majority audience of the publication (in this study heterosexual men within *GQ* and heterosexual women within *Marie Claire*). It is this one, or more, gender normative attribute(s) that appears to enable a polysemic reading to take place, reinforced by the (mainstream) placement of the advertisement itself (as I already discuss within the context of *LGBTQ+* media). In other words, so long as there remains an obvious heteronormative anchor within an ambiguous visual placed within a mainstream publication, it will have the potential to be read as 'gay vague', rather than integrative where we would expect to see more explicit rather than implicit signifiers anyway.

Moving on, whilst there is a dominance of gender non-conformity being used to create the ambiguity necessary for passive advertisements to be successful, there are also a (smaller) number of advertisements that use 'Physical closeness', in other words ambiguous *sexuality-based* signifiers, to achieve the same effect. Figure 84, below, shows such an example. Here, heteronormative constructions of femininity are reproduced, exemplified by the presence of make-up, nail varnish, the wearing of dresses and the inclusion of the colour pink[122]. The characters are however 'physically close' in both images, thus the basis upon which any uncertainty regarding their sexuality is created.

Figure 84: A passive advertisement for Micheal Kors, using 'Physical closeness' as the main implicit LGBTQ+ signifier

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[121] Referring to 'hair length', which in reverse manifests as *short* hair in the discursive case placed in GQ

[122] Contrast this to the advertisement briefly deconstructed in Figure 83 for AG Jeans, to demonstrate even further the character's non-normative (female) gender appearance. Note the presence of 'long hair' in both examples to exemplify this symbol as a 'gender-anchor'. Also note the plump, pink lips that are similarly present (to a lesser extent, but a non-normative signifier nonetheless) in the ETRO discursive case and other *GQ* examples.

LAS VEGAS, 2016

MICHAEL
MICHAEL KORS

Ambiguity in this example relates to the potential relationship between the two characters. Working through the possibilities, the age similarity removes the reading of mother and daughter. Instead, they could be sisters or friends on a girls' night out. They could, however, be more than just friends. Reinforcing this through subtle symbolism, there is a certain confidence that exudes from the overall image. There is an almost 'girl on arm' pride or a protective 'looking after' feel to the visual, communicated via the foreground positioning and eye contact of the brunette (in both images) and the passivity/vulnerability of the blonde, the background 'other'. Similarly, the Las Vegas reference (and potential association with 'what happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas!') could suggest a spontaneous liaison of some kind that might need to be kept secret. The wearing of sunglasses (the actual product being promoted) aligns very nicely with this messaging and the overall hedonistic vibe that has been created within the advertisement.

What happened or was about to happen between the two characters, or indeed their relationship to one another, is irrelevant. Of importance is that some level of ambiguity has been achieved in order for a polysemic reading to take place and thus its ultimate categorisation as a passive advertisement. As already mentioned, and in contrast to the AG Jeans advertisement in Figure 83 above, the context or source of that ambiguity appears to relate to *sexuality* rather than gender. However, there are aspects where binaries and heteronormativity are exposed within the visual. For example, note the 'blonde' versus 'brunette' and the 'pink' versus 'black' dichotomy. Furthermore, note that it is the

250

brunette wearing black (not the blonde wearing pink) that is adopting the 'male' protective role and is visually presented as more in control. One reading of this is that we might confer onto the brunette the role of the 'butch' and designate the blonde as the 'femme' because of *other* heteronormative binary signifiers attached to the images, such as the use of darker colours and images of control and protection, versus lighter colours and images of passivity and vulnerability.

Bringing this together then, within passive advertisements there is a presence of heteronormativity whereby gender binaries can either be relatively intact and or subtly obscured so that both masculine and feminine signifiers are at work. Figure 85 below is a further example of the latter.

Figure 85: A multi-signifier passive advertisement for Coach placed in *GQ* (09/GQ/34/P)

Examining the above image, normative 'masculine' signifiers include, once again, the strong jaw line, facial pose, open-legged sitting position and the inclusion of the car itself. Normative 'feminine' signifiers in this instance are limited in number but visually very dominant; namely the fur/shearling coat and the bag positioned under-arm (albeit with relaxed, open hold). Where this advertisement therefore differs from Figure 83 for AG Jeans and illustrates an important finding is that it is not the *quantity* of 'opposite' gender signifiers that makes the overall visual ambiguous (thereby classifying

the advertisement 'passive') rather the extent to which any (one) 'opposite' gender signifier prevails. Linking this to 'gender anchors', in the AG Jeans advertisement there was only one (namely the long hair), whereas in the Coach advertisement above there are at least four as listed above. Overall, then, the quantity and balance of normative *and* non-normative signifiers appears to be less relevant; more important is the presence of both.

In Figure 86 below, there is again the presence of binary gender signifiers. Unlike the previous examples (AJ Jeans and Coach) whereby both sets of signifiers are integrated within one character, the Gucci advertisement placed in *GQ* below separates out different signifiers, resulting in an either/or presentation of gender.

Figure 86: An example of dis-integrated gender binary signifiers within a passive advertisement placed in *GQ* (09/GQ/05/P)

Binary gender signifiers here are therefore 'dis-integrated', with each 'side' of the advertisement telling a different story. The left-hand image contains 'feminine' signifiers (e.g. the loose positioning of the arm/wrist/hand, the style and design of the clothing worn, and the highly pink backdrop to the visual in terms of the lanterns and blossom). The right-hand visual contains more normative masculine

signifiers (the 'gender anchors') with the inclusion of a vehicle/truck (albeit quite extravagant/theatrical in style) and the relatively open-legged seating position of the character. Presumably, the two images could be of the same person but the fact they are dis-integrated creates an interesting range of interpretations. Commercially, it could be seen to better focus on two different products with the Gucci range intended to be promoted (namely top/fitted jacket and shoes).

This separating out or disintegration of gender can also be found, to a greater extent, in the Gucci advertisement placed in *Marie Claire,* as shown in Figure 87 below.

Figure 87: An example of dis-integrated gender binary signifiers within a passive advertisement placed in *Marie Claire* (09/MC/84/P)

The similarity with the Gucci advertisement placed in *GQ* (as part of the same campaign) is that distinct binary gender signifiers are depicted in each of the double-page images. In this example, there are two hyperfeminine images on the left-hand side: the Barbie-doll and the Geisha-girl, both arguably reproductions of traditional feminine norms (Rich, 1980). The pose of the far-left character can be seen to replicate the rigidity of a doll (angled arms, awkward/twisted positioning of the right hand, and tilted head). The baby pink colouring of the coat, bag and scarf enable associations to be made

with Barbie, or at least reinforce high levels of normative femininity. The middle character is dressed similarly to a Geisha-girl with a traditional, controlled/compliant upright stance, polite expression and hands neatly folded over her clutch bag. Her demeanour is friendly and unassuming, conveying an almost passive nature to the character.

The visual on the right-hand page, in contrast, contains a number of masculine signifiers. These include masculine pose (left arm/wrist resting on separated leg), masculine appearance (typically male attire, strong jaw line) and the theme or context itself, namely bull-fighting which is typically a male-orientated activity. Gender anchors appear once again in the form of the character's long hair, slender left hand and the adornment of relatively delicate (albeit large) rings. Colour as a signifier is also important. Note the various hues of pink in the visual, which to the right of the scene appears to help create a heart-shape on the windowpane. Both features can be seen to reflect an element of femininity; however, the dominance of red, which is often associated with power, courage and strength,[123] helps once again to create a more masculine feel to the visual overall. In this context, red could also be a signifier of blood, linking back to the male-dominated matador/bull-fighting context created.

In sum, while there are similarities between this and the previous advertisements discussed, the example above has more non-conforming signifiers *and* more gender anchors. Overall, this reinforces a key finding that it is not just the gender image type (conforming and non-confirming) and the quantity of these that determines the categorisation of 'passive' advertisements; rather the presence of both. From a queer perspective, this interplay is important since it exposes a gendered notion of sexuality (thereby reinforcing Butler's (1990) heterosexual matrix) that helps to create the ambiguity of the overall image and ultimately its polysemic reading. While the presence of non-conformity itself begins to rupture normative constructs of gender and therefore represents some progress within mainstream advertising, passive advertisements can still be seen to hold their foundations within normative (gender) regimes whereby notions of masculinity and femininity largely remain intact.

On the surface, some images in disintegrated advertisements (as illustrated in the two Gucci examples above) are more destabilising since they are displayed in *opposition* to the normative image, enabling a more striking contrast to be made. In other passive advertisements where non-conforming images and gender anchors are blended in to one character/visual the potential distinctiveness can be seen to be more diluted. That said, the juxtaposition of more rupturing visuals with highly normative images to make that very distinction (e.g. the hyperfeminine Barbie construction versus the matador

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[123] The psychological meaning of red

masculine female) can be seen to infer that non-conforming versions, in this case of female existence, are *equally* unrealistic and unachievable. Similar to 'butch' and 'femme' categories, a binary distinction is potentially being created when instead the difference could simply be understood as an alternative, not something equally extreme.

Linked to this, and in a similar way to the construction of the lone, hyper-masculine gay male *in Gay Times*, dis-integrated advertisements do not represent LGBTQ+ ways of living or being. Characters are not interacting as couples or families, in a similar way to non-normative representations in *DIVA* for example. Instead, images are once again detached and staged. The lone feminine 'male' blows bubbles in a park and likewise the lone masculine 'female' plays at being a matador. In a wider sense then, these sorts of portrayals contribute to the 'visual deprivation' (Porfido, 2009) discussed earlier within the context of conscious and tailored approaches. Even though non-normative representations are present within mainstream media and therefore 'visible' to a heterosexual audience, they do not *make visible* the realities of non-normative life. Furthermore, these isolated and fragmented representations (in dis-integrated advertisements in particular) can be seen to exacerbate the 'othering' of LGBTQ+ people (Plummer, 2003).

8.7 Discursive case 4: The integrative approach

The final subsection of this chapter relates to advertisements placed in mainstream media that contain explicit representations of non-heterosexuality; namely, those falling under the 'integrative' category. These represent the fewest number of targeted LGBTQ+ advertisements across the total sample,[124] with only 24 discrete advertisements available as units of analysis, the range of illustrative examples to critically discuss is limited. That said, this finding is significant in itself since it evidences the lack of LGBTQ+ visibility within a mainstream context, the implications of which in general I have already discussed.

It is especially important to note here that invisibility within the other three approaches is intentional. In other words, a strategic decision has been made to target via LGBTQ+ media placement alone or through the creation of polysemic advertisements for mainstream placement where LGBTQ+ images cannot be 'seen' by the majority. The dearth of integrative advertisements instead illustrates just how few companies are strategically intending to make LGBTQ+ lives *visible* with their targeting. Whilst collectively all four strategies show a commitment to the LGBTQ+ market, given that only 2% of

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[124] (n=24/409 (6%) non-repeated advertisements, n=31/2214 (1%) of total advertisements)

advertisements placed in mainstream press feature explicit representations, it reinforces that LGBTQ+ people are still primarily considered in economic and commercial terms.

Consistent with this are the types of images used within integrative advertisements. As shown below in Table 28, the most frequently coded values for integrative advertisements align with the majority of the other categorisations of advertising approach in terms of activity, setting, and mood (namely 'posing', 'staged' and 'serious', respectively).

Table 29: Summary of most frequently coded value (per key variable) for integrative advertisements

No. ads.	Page size	Product type	Activity	Interaction	Setting	Mood	Gender	Ethnicity	Age	Wealth
24	Full (54%)	Fashion High End (42%)	Posing (75%)	Individual (46%)	Staged (67%)	Serious (42%)	Female (58%)	White (50%)	19-29 (96%)	Medium (50%)

The manner in which LGBTQ+ness is presented within integrative advertisements is therefore fairly similar to other types of advertising approaches. Representations are still relatively abstract and dehumanised/detached. A distinct difference, though, is that more advertisements than in any other targeted approach are set within a staged environment (63% overall, and 83% in *Marie Claire*) creating, as I already observe within passive advertisements (albeit to a lesser extent) a contrived life(style) that is 'unreal'. Whilst this can be seen to deviate from some of the heteronormative *lifestyle* reproductions that are ever-present in tailored advertisement (for example, the fertility advertisements placed in *DIVA*), it does instead hide or censor the depth of connectedness and richness of LGBTQ+ lived experiences.

Figure 88, below, is an already familiar example of a staged integrative advertisement. As I briefly discussed in Chapter 6, this advertisement is characterised as integrative because there is an 'affectionate/sexual touch' between two women (coded as an explicit signifier) which lacks the ambiguity found in passive advertisements. To understand this coding in full, observe the open mouth and overall expression of the woman at the back of the visual whose hand is touching the back/shoulder of the central character; and the relatively sexualised positioning[125] and body language of the two central characters.

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[125] Which is another coding value: 'Sexual gesture, **positioning** or bravado'

Figure 88: An example of a staged integrative advertisement placed in *Marie Claire* (03/MC/21/I)

Whilst there are explicit LGBTQ+ images apparent in the advertisement, the overall image lacks any realness/substance to it - hence its 'staged' coding. It is difficult to imagine that the main two or indeed all three characters (when not lying on the ground by a pool) are part of a couple/throuple or will be partaking in any affectionate/sexual activity together outside of this moment. This image can therefore be understood to have been constructed to sell the product and not a lifestyle (nor be reflective of one). Instead, it is an example of a sexualised advertisement in which the 'hot lesbian' (Gill, 2009, p.137) is used, and works, "within a visual economy that remains profoundly ageist and heteronormative". Indeed, this intersection of age and sexuality is one which exists throughout this study, whereby the majority of the characters in LGBTQ+ targeted advertisements are aged 19-29 years (94% across all integrative adverts, n=29/31). Heteronormativity can be seen here, most notably, and consistent with this discussion to date, through the reproduction of gender binaries, reinforced by images and text aligned to traditional ideals of femininity. Indeed, the strap line itself actively promotes and celebrates 'beauty' and asks its audience to 'fight' and 'defend' it.

Femininity (and hyperfemininity) is a common feature within lesbian/bisexual-targeted advertisements placed in mainstream media generally and, as I have already begun to unpick within the context of passive advertisements, its use reflects Butler's (1999) heterosexual matrix whereby masculine and feminine images convey (heteronormative) acceptable forms of gender that, if replicated, could enable LGBTQ+ people to meet normative feminine ideals. Focusing here on femininity within integrative advertisements, this finding is arguably intensified since, as I discuss in Chapter 6, 50% (n=6/12) of explicit signifiers in *Marie Claire* are coded as such because they include a celebrity who is known publicly to be lesbian or bisexual (as per Branchik's (2007) original categorisation). Not that all female celebrities are beautiful or feminine, but this does potentially skew the overall figure given the small sample of advertisements coded as integrative.

Keeping with the theme of femininity, Figure 89 below is the fourth and final 'discursive case' within this study. Whilst not the reason for the selection of this advertisement, one obvious and very relevant feature is the Marilyn Monroe figure - another archetypal female[126] whose popularity was very much based on her 'look'/beauty as well as her life story. Her femininity here is not only shown in her physical appearance (dress, make-up, hair, jewelry) but in her body language and interaction with the/'her' man. Her head is down, eyes are shut and there is an air of vulnerability as she stands with her arms around his waist and her head on his chest.

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[126] Alongside Barbie-doll and the Geisha-girl, as discussed within the context of passive advertisements earlier, both arguably reproductions of traditional feminine norms (Rich, 1980)

Figure 89: Discursive case for integrative advertisements – Calvin Klein

This is a familiar type of embrace (see Figure 90 below for examples), one where we would expect the male in return to be the consoler/protector and gently pull the/'his' woman in with his strong arms, and tilt his head down meet hers. Instead, what we see is a disinterested, almost angry male looking directly at the audience, with his arms down by his own side, overall conveying a strong sense of disconnect both physically and emotionally from the woman who is trying to hold on to him.

Figure 90: Examples of loving/consoling embraces between a man and woman, similar in style to Discursive Case 4 (for integrative advertisements)

Before deconstructing this advertisement further, its selection as the discursive case needs clarification since it provides an important context to the overall analysis. As per the previous three cases, the advertisement was selected because it matched the most frequently coded values[127] (derived via the ICA); however, its categorisation as an integrative advertisement is because of the sexuality of the male character and his celebrity status (Branchik, 2007). While it is unclear whether he is gay or bisexual, the American singer-songwriter 'Frank Ocean' spoke out in an open letter about his first love being with a man and in 2013 he was named "..the most powerful LGBT figure in America's music industry" (Pinknews, 2013).

Knowing this information enables a deeper analysis to take place. Rather than the advertisement being yet another heteronormative display of a feminine woman being held/looked after in the strong arms of her masculine other, the discursive case can be seen to reject this idealised notion of heterosexuality even though the physical appearances of both characters appear conforming[128].

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[127] With the exception of gender and ethnicity. As per the other discursive cases, its final selection was based on its ability to generate a critical discussion as part of the queering process.
[128] Ocean can be seen to exhibit aspects of masculinity, tall, strong-jawed, bearded, 'manly' etc.

Aspects of the heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1990) are therefore ruptured, given the known non-heterosexuality of Ocean and the disconnect created through his body language/positioning within the advertisement itself. In other words, the overall visual directly challenges the notion that masculinity and femininity equals heterosexuality.

This Calvin Klein campaign[129] is more than just the placement of various characters and celebrities within a series of print advertisements. Exploring extended features of this particular example, there is a one minute video that features this still-shot discursive case which enables a potentially wider interpretation to take place. As Ocean enters the scene with the Marilyn Monroe character, his narrative is:

> "You sort of, like, romanticize something that's in the past, which is fantasy because it's not exactly how it went down. Fantasy plays, like, the role of, uh, almost like a supplement. Draw on fantasy to make things hyperreal, I guess…saturate the colours."

(Calvin Klein, 2016)

Without knowing the intention behind the creative or Ocean's meaning behind these words, this additional narrative could be reflective of the way he remembers/'romanticises' his first male relationship/love, giving it equal status to the lofty (hierarchical) heights of 'real' (heterosexual) love. The symbolism of Marilyn Monroe certainly helps to convey this metaphor. Regardless, the wording on the print advertisement itself ('I…feel loved….') alongside the overall troubled impression created within the advertisement indicates that not all is in alignment. Ocean does not look like he feels loved. Perhaps it is because he cannot feel love in this (heterosexual) context, even with one of the most beautiful, iconic women in world; perhaps his unhappiness/anger is directed at 'us' (literally, given the eye-contact) for making real love synonymous with heterosexual love when his reality defies that.

Whatever the meaning, this discursive case can be read as calling into question heteronormative assumptions about gender and sexuality. It can be understood as anti-normative in how it conveys the message that heterosexuality does not equal happiness. Deconstructed, this image can therefore be seen to destabilise the supposed stability and rigidity of the heterosexual/homosexual binary and dispel some of the myths of heterosexuality. Indeed, discourses of heterosexual love and coupling are destabilised in this advertisement's visual display of unfelt or unrequited love within a seemingly normative male/female coupling.

To use a further example from the Calvin Klein campaign (one already referred to in Chapter 6) Figure 91, below, is another integrative advertisement placed in *GQ* magazine; one which arguably has

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[129] Indeed, another example from the campaign has been discussed in Chapter 6 and will feature again shortly

stronger signifiers at play, most notably in terms of the explicit 'affectionate/sexual touch'[130] between two characters of the same gender. Important too is the use of the word 'resist' and its association with the refusal/rejection of something expected or 'normal'.

Figure 91: A Calvin Klein integrative advertisement placed in *GQ*
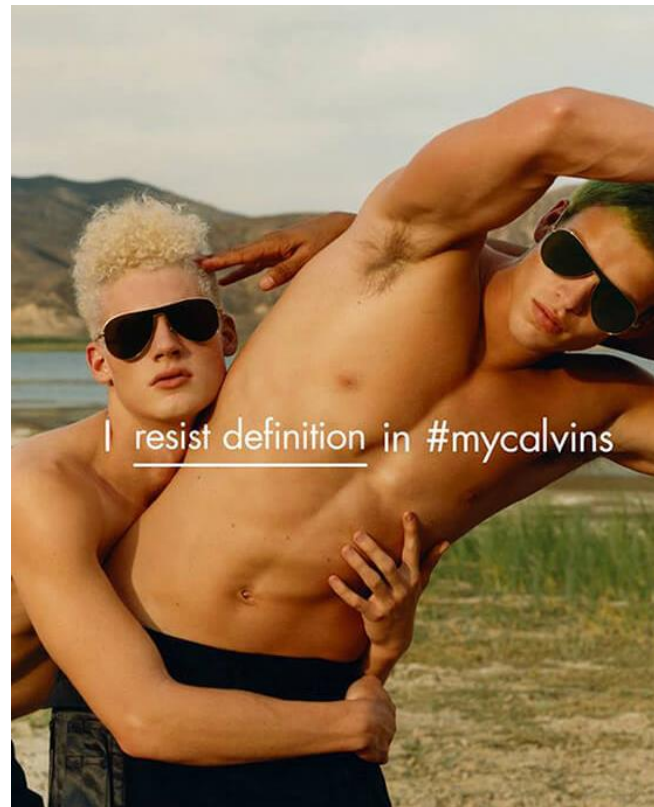
On the surface, this advertisement appears more anti-normative than the discursive case, given the combination of its mainstream media (audience) placement, wording and explicit images. There are, however, a number normative signifiers at work. Note the hyper-masculinity of the main character (right-hand side) in terms of his physique, chiselled jaw, short hair and so on. It is not dissimilar to the appearance of male characters in tailored advertisements placed within *Gay Times* (also white, young and healthy). Seen again, therefore, are heteronormative cues within a visual that overall attempts to convey non-heterosexuality[131], but in turn reproduces highly homonormative images. Linked to this, and as I have discussed already, many tailored advertisements in *Gay Times* featuring these types of images also portray men in hyper-sexualised ways. Whilst this advertisement may not be *as* sexualised, it deploys physical/sexual touch as a way to generate an unambiguous reading when any *other* context (for example in a domestic setting) could have been used. Once again, these types of

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[130] Coded ICA value, depicting an explicit image
[131] Most obviously via the use of physical/sexual contact between two characters of the same gender.

limited representations restrict the way in which male non-heterosexuality is understood and in turn perpetuate the stifling of gay/bisexual male possibilities.

There is more to the sexualised nature of the advertisement than the lead visual. Behind the neck and right shoulder of the main character, an arm can be seen with a hand touching the head of the left-hand character. The overall image now moves from being just about non-heterosexuality to also non-monogamy or polyamory, neither of which conforms to norms of heterosexuality. Read queerly, the advertisement could be seen to be even more challenging or anti-normative; yet, it also serves to preserve and indeed reinforce the association between gay/bisexual men and highly sexualised activity. There becomes a certain irony, then, to the wording that accompanies the visual. Rather than '...resist definition…' the characters in the advertisement can be seen to *embody* the normative definition/understanding of male non-heterosexuality.

Continuing on this theme, we see below in Figure 92 an advertisement for Gucci placed in *GQ* magazine that again features images of polyamory alongside relatively overt cues of bisexuality.

Figure 92: Bisexual and polyamorous representation in an integrative advertisement (10/GQ/16/I)

Here again we see non-conforming sexual behaviour (non-heterosexual, non-dyadic) but this time alongside the product name/wording of 'Guilty'. This pairing creates the impression that such conduct would or should leave the characters, and indeed anyone else who adopts similar practices, with something to feel guilty about. These types of behaviours are therefore positioned as 'wrong/bad' to the 'right/good' of monogamous heterosexuality. Present again, therefore, is another set of binaries privileging heteronormative standards whilst shaming the 'other'.

However, whilst not especially obvious (due to its position in the bottom right-hand corner of the advertisement), the campaign is accompanied by the hashtag #GuiltyNotGuilty. This shifts the message to create an unapologetic feel that is intended to rebuff the judgement (i.e. the source of the guilt) aimed at this type of sexual non-conformity. Indeed, Gucci wanted the advertisement to reflect the next generation of Gucci consumers who are 'celebrative anarchists' who:

> "don't believe in conformity, submitting to labels or to gender rules, breaking free from common social boundaries. They express themselves however they want, with whomever they want and passionately explore whatever they want. They are hedonistic without apology and indulge in life's pleasures without feeling guilty. They experiment and enjoy because they feel completely free. This modern declaration of self expression and sexuality ignites the new chapter of Gucci Guilty. It sparks the campaign's powerful statement: #GuiltyNotGuilty and its liberating concept, following three characters revealing in a new dawn of sexuality, emancipated from expectations and rules."

> (*The Sunday Guardian*, 2016)

I would argue, however, that this advertisement is not especially anarchic or non-conforming. Clearly there is some 'breaking free from common social boundaries' and 'emancipation from expectations and rules'. Bisexuality and polyamory are rarely 'seen' in mainstream media and so even the presence of this image can be understood to challenge the 'norm'. Nonetheless, the depiction here reduces both to pursuers of sexual indulgence, reinforcing, in a similar way to the Calvin Klein advertisement above, their assumed preoccupation of, and appetite for, sex.

Similarly, whilst there is a belief that the representation(s) here 'do not conform' or 'submit to labels or gender rules' there are heteronormative signifiers within the advertisement that would indicate otherwise. An obvious signifier is the appearance of both women: beautiful, long-haired, wearing make-up; in other words, conforming to traditional notions of femininity. Also, the dominant couple is the male/female pairing, with the same-sex configuration taking a back seat. Note the wanting/saddened look of the excluded 'other', uninvited in to the main (bath) arena, still dressed, unable to partake in the same level of intimacy. The main image therefore reflects many aspects of

Butler's (1990) heterosexual matrix where the male/female coupling is privileged, as is the 'heterosexual' union over the same-sex one.

That said, there are aspects to the advertisement that can be seen to disrupt normative representations of heterosexuality. Note that the woman to the right of the image is the central figure; she is the leading/dominant character in both pairings. Notice how the man is draping his arms over the woman's shoulders. Using Kates's (1999) sex change operation concept, this positioning of the arms is congruous with normative representations of how women embrace men. Other normative depictions occur within this reversal, in that it is the man's needs that are being prioritised. His interest/involvement is in both parties whereas the other two women are potentially interested only in him (i.e. not each other). This image, when restored back to its original form, begins to destabilise normative gender roles/power relations and overall presents an image to a mainstream audience that does challenge the 'norm'.

Overall, this advertisement, like many others[132] that fall under the integrative category (albeit very few in total), use sex/sexual interactions as an indicator of non-heterosexuality rather than any other depiction (cue) of their non-normative life. Whilst this can be seen to disrupt normative advertising practice, it does reduce LGBTQ+ folk to sexual subjects above all else and as such projects a limiting and potentially harmful image to the outside (mainstream) and inner (LGBTQ+) world that reinforces homogenising and damaging stereotypes. The integrative advertisements that use merely an LGBTQ+ celebrity as a readership cue are also unhelpful in this sense, although as I address in the conclusion chapter to follow, this arguably says more about the limitations of Branchik's (2007) signifiers than the use of celebrities *per se*. The integrative discursive case featuring Frank Ocean is indeed an exception in point, since knowing his sexuality is critical to the advertisement's overall reading and its resultant anti-normative impulses.

8.8 Conclusion

This chapter has mobilised insights from queer theory to analyse a selection of advertisements derived via the findings of the ICA. Through queering four 'discursive cases' reflective of each advertising approach, some of the common, more salient findings include the extensive presence of gender binaries within all LGBTQ+ targeted advertisements, whether in the shape of colour (the use of blue and pink), representations of the butch and femme and/or the hypermasculine and hyper feminine individual. Linked to gender, the higher presence of advertisements placed in *Gay Times* over *DIVA* (and their higher wealth indicators) can be seen to reflect the privileged position of the gay male

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[132] 50% of integrative advertisements in total (n=12/24)

(Kates, 1999) therefore reflective of a sexual hierarchy in favour of gay men. Relatedly, the relatively high number of advertisements placed in *DIVA* for fertility treatments, continues a theme from the previous chapter related to the entanglement of gendered and heteronormative notions of being an 'acceptable woman', namely to raise children and have a family. Further, for those advertisements that are conscious (i.e with no adaption for the LGBTQ+ audience[133]) this reflects the homogenisation of women regardless of sexuality and exposes the heteronormative basis from which segmentation and targeting decisions are made.

Summarising the findings for each advertising approach, conscious advertisements, by definition (given the absence of any LGBTQ+ visibility), reinforce a heteronormative society that does not acknowledge the existence of LGBTQ+ people. Such visual deprivation (Porfido, 2009) reinforces the othering (Plummer, 2003) of the excluded group whereby full membership in to the majority is not enjoyed. The implications of this can be damaging, including negative self-perception and feelings of inadequacy (Fryberg and Townsend, 2008; Gomillion and Giuliano, 2011).   For tailored advertisements, in addition to the prioritisation of men, there is a prioritisation of masculinity in which the (white, young, healthy) hyper-masculine 'gay male' can be seen to reproduce many of the (heteronormative) ideals of masculinity. Images are also frequently hypersexualised, reflected too in the sexual nature of some of the products advertised. Overall, (re)constructions of gay men in tailored advertisement can be understood as promoting a more palatable (De Dauw, 2017) homonormative ideal of the gay male alongside the product actually being advertised. Lesbian homonormativity however, manifests in (re)constructions of certain lifestyles and behaviours (such as marriage and families) rather than physical appearance although the butch/femme coupling is a frequent portrayal, in itself a heteronormative depiction where gender binaries remain intact,

Passive advertisements are different yet again. While there are many similarities with tailored advertisements in relation to the most frequently coded values per variable, the extent to which they feature varies quite considerably. For example, characters in passive advertisements are younger, whiter and wealthier, with more featuring alone. In short, representations are much narrower. They also typically use non-conforming gender cues to create the ambiguity required, with the majority of characters either appearing or posing in an 'Effeminate or butch' way, or exhibiting androgyny. This can therefore be seen to evidence the entrenchment of Butler's (1999) heterosexual matrix, whereby it only takes a slight disruption or unsettling of gender norms to bring in to question the sexuality of the character. This only works however if there remains a normative 'gender anchor' within the overall visual, again contributing to the necessary ambiguity required.

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[133] Representing 40% of all fertility advertisements placed in DIVA (n=6/15)

Finally, integrative advertisements were the least coded type of advertising approach within the data set (n=31/2,216), which highlights in itself the stark lack of explicit LGBTQ+ visibility within mainstream media. When images do exist they tend to be gender normative and the nature of the advertisement highly staged (i.e. 'unreal') and/or sexualised, a far cry from Nolke's (2018) assertion that mainstream LGBTQ+ advertising had moved more toward depicting real life stories. Unlike passive advertisements, gender is not the focal point of LGBTQ+ typification rather affection/sexual attraction is used to explicitly demonstrate non-heterosexuality. Yet as exemplified in the final Gucci advertisement featured in this chapter, this type of portrayal is not without its own problems even if it does disrupt normative advertising practice.

In the conclusion chapter that follows, these themes and others will be summarised within the context of the overall research aim and objectives. Theoretical and scholarly contributions will then be consolidated and summarised, before outlining the main limitations of the study and directions for future research.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I mobilised queering as a mode of analysis to deconstruct LGBTQ+ advertisements. The salience of queer theorising in this study relates to the overall aim, to critically examine the targeted advertising approaches used by marketers to attract LGBTQ+ consumers and the representations of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders (re)constructed within targeted advertisements placed in both mainstream and LGBTQ+ magazine publications in the UK. Bringing this thesis to a close, this chapter begins by revisiting the three principal research objectives (ROs) and research activities, discussing how they have been met and the conclusions that can subsequently be drawn. Following this, I outline the main contributions this thesis makes to scholarly knowledge and theory, before briefly commenting upon the implications for practice, but with a necessary queer flavour. Rounding off this chapter, I discuss the limitations to the study and propose avenues for future research.

9.2 Research objectives and related activities

RO1: Review the advertising literature and further develop the (author's) conceptual model 'Targeted LGBTQ+ Advertising Approaches' to present a consolidation of the advertising approaches used to attract LGBTQ+ consumers. *[Research activity: **1.1** Conduct a thorough review of the LGBTQ+ advertising literature and continue to revisit works in the field and the dimensions of the conceptual model to ensure it remains robust and fit for purpose]*

As described in Chapter 4, I initially undertook an exploratory review (Najmaei, 2016) of the advertising literature to gain a sense of what had been written on the subject of LGBTQ+ advertising and establish seminal works and emerging themes within the field and so forth. Having found the literature fragmented with seemingly narrow lines of inquiry, I adopted more of an 'integrative' approach, in which I critiqued and synthesised the body of work in such a way that generated a new framework (Torraco, 2015), which informed the conceptual model 'Targeted LGBTQ+ Advertising Approaches' (Williams, 2015). Reviewing the literature regularly (aided by regular Google Scholar alerts) enabled me to refine the content of the model which is conceptualised along two key dimensions consistently discussed within the literature: 'explicit/implicit' levels of representation and 'media placement'.

Useful sense-checks to ensure I was engaging with appropriate (emerging) literature were, in particular, Ginger and Byun's (2015) critical review of gay and lesbian consumer research and, more

recently, Eisend and Hermann's (2019) meta-analysis of consumer responses to homosexual imagery in advertising. The former coincided with the piloting of the ICA before formal data collection took place, the purpose of which, in part, was to populate the model. This gave reassurance that the dimensions of the model and my categorisations still held relevance and were fit for purpose. Similarly, Einsend and Hermann's (2019) study discussed the same sorts themes and points of foci. Their recognition of the influence of socio-cultural and political dimensions within the field was refreshing. However, alongside acknowledging that practice should move beyond using purposefully polysemic approaches to take "better account" of LGBTQ+ societal prominence (p.398), their research still towed the heteronormative line of proceeding with caution given the risk associated with using explicit LGBTQ+ imagery in advertisements.

Linked to this, and as an overall summary of the LGBTQ+ advertising literature, much of the relevant scholarship focuses on (mostly US) audience perceptions of and responses to LGBTQ+ imagery, which places heavy attention on how heterosexual audiences may be offended by representations of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders. In doing so, it has positioned LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders *in opposition* to a heterosexual majority, where it seems heterosexuals need to be protected. As such, the potential of queer theory as a conceptual resource for generating knowledge on LGBTQ+ advertising remains relevant. Regular reviews of the literature, which is still in its infancy (Coffin, Eichert and Nölke, 2019), has therefore ensured that the conceptual framework of this study has currency and remains of value whilst also affirming that my research is both necessary and important.

RO2 Explore the representations of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders (re)constructed in targeted print advertisements. *[Research activity: **2.1** As part of the literature review, identify what constitutes an LGBTQ+ image and how LGBTQ+ representation is defined and understood (e.g. implicit and explicit image]*

As noted previously, there is very little research in this area. Within the LGBTQ+ advertising literature, images tend to be expressed in terms of being 'implicit' and 'explicit', referring to the extent to which homosexuality is *visible* in an advertisement via the use of character appearances and interactions, wording, colours, symbols and so on. However, any definition of what implicit and explicit images *are* is substantially lacking. Sender (2003), for example, *describes* a scenario to help visualise what an explicit LGTBQ+ image might look like (two people of the same gender browsing around a showroom) but there are very few attempts to define/capture or explore them. Indeed, most studies tend to focus on implicit images, given the emphasis placed on purposeful polysemy (for example Clark, 1993; Oakenfull, 2004; Schroeder and Zwick, 2004; Borgerson *et al.*, 2006; Tsai, 2011, 2012; and Puntoni, Vanhamme and Visscher, 2011); and even then, the focus tends to be on identifying relatively obvious

manifest content (e.g. the rainbow symbol) rather than exploring more nuanced latent content and how it interplays with the meaning-making process, as I aim to do in this study and will return to shortly.

That aside, Branchik's (2007) study features the most comprehensive image list to date with his 'Ten dimensions to denote a gay male image'. Notwithstanding its questionable transferability across genders, this study finds concerns with the denotations, mostly in terms of their currency (for example, 'occupations of the opposite gender') and that many of the images can be considered 'proxy signifiers' whereby the image is the *absence* of something rather than a *presence of,* as a proxy for non-heterosexuality. Indeed, as I discuss again shortly, only four out of his ten signifiers were found within the ICA. Um's (2012) research represents a more recent attempt to address the issue of what constitutes a LGBTQ+ image, however it relies on very dated and (stereotypical) iconic-only symbols. Finally, Nappier's (2013) criteria for evaluating gay-vague advertisements brings the less familiar female/lesbian context to the discussion and, with it, a mixture or gender and sexually-based signifiers. Based on the findings of this study, these images appear to have more currency and face validity given their presence in the ICA. Indeed, the adaptation of Nappier's (2013) criteria 'Ads featuring a single female who dons typical masculine attire and stance' for this study (i.e. to 'eff/butch appearance') was the second most frequently coded LGBTQ+ signifier across the entire targeted advertisement data set (see Table 11 in Chapter 6).

The point remains, however, that LGBTQ+ images, whether explicit or implicit, are under-researched; and when they *are* discussed, they tend to be considered within another 'either/or' binary, using, as I summarise later, sets of heteronormative signifiers. In contrast, this study does not seek to find a set of definitive LGBTQ+ images that are universally understood as such, but examines how images that do manifest are constructed within a specific cultural context and moment in time. Using a queer theory perspective that focuses on how LGBTQ+ imagery has a constitutive value, in other words that LGBTQ+ images help to constitute discursively representations of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders, shifts the focus of analysis directly onto the production of LGBTQ+ images as a process of knowledge generation. Viewed in this way, LGBTQ+ advertising is not merely a reflection of reality but plays an important role in shaping the realities of and meanings attached to LGBTQ+ images generally in the contemporary era. As this study has demonstrated, the approaches adopted by advertisers in the construction of LGBTQ+ images in specific ways can be understood as providing empirical insights into how LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders are variously (re)constructed as 'normal', often in ways that do not heighten the risk of offending heterosexual audiences, including those that are intentionally designed to be more explicitly visible.

As already mentioned, this study found that out of the LGBTQ+ images and types of representations featured within the literature, Branchik's (2007) denotations presented in limited ways, not simply in terms of range but also in the nature of some of the denotations. The use of 'LGBTQ+ Celebrity' for example, is problematic given its (homogenising) dependency on the reader to feel some affinity with the celebrity because they share the same LGBTQ+ identity. Further, it requires the celebrity to be recognisable to an LGBTQ+ audience in the first instance, which is not always the case.   Encouraging, however, is the absence or low frequency of Branchik's (2007) 'proxy signifiers'. Within the dataset of integrative and passive advertisements, more affirming sets of images were found, in general, whereby cues that indicate LBGTQ+ sexualities, genders, lifestyles and identities were more direct. Some, for example, contained images that indicate non-normative gender and sexuality in ways that are more clearly recognisable to a LGBTQ+ target audience. This was apparent in advertisements used by Gucci, Calvin Klein and AJ Jeans, for example.

Before moving on to summarising how LGBTQ+ representations manifest in mainstream and LGBTQ+ specifically, there are a couple of more general but important findings that relate to how images and representations are (re)constructed within targeted print advertisements. Firstly, five new codes were generated via the ICA, namely: 'LGBTQ+ related word' (an explicit signifier), 'Physical closeness', 'Absence of opposite gender', 'Absence of other' and 'Advert design'. As I explained in Chapter 4, these codes were inductively developed, that is to say my 'theoretical sensitivity' (Ahuvia, 2001) or insider 'expertise' (Drisko and Machi, 2015), derived from my own non-normative gender and sexual identity, enabled me to recognise various images/cues that had not already been identified in the literature as LGBTQ+ signifiers. Linked to this, my positionality also enabled me to interpret more latent content present within a number of advertisements and thereby 'override' the overall categorisation of an advertisement based solely on its manifest content.

This latter point relates to a key conclusion of this study, namely the fluidity of an LGBTQ+ image. Through the process of coding, I suggest that the reading of an image in an advertisement is dependent on its media placement. In this sense, an LGBTQ+ image, as a discursive construct, is contextually specific and thus susceptible to change. Although advertising theory mostly advocates the separation of different image types (of which I have already problematised), and authors such as Branchik (2007) understand images to feature on a scale of overtness, LGBTQ+ images themselves can

be seen to defy this when they are understood as contextually contingent and historically patterned. Scales of overtness can be problematic as they rely on relatively stable ideas of overtness (or explicitness), when in fact no image can be guaranteed to be read in a particular way for a particular audience.

As discussed previously, but worth reiterating here, it is not that the implicit image itself in a mainstream publication changes into one of Branchik's (2007) more overt gay male images if placed in LGBTQ+ media (for example, 'physical closeness' becoming 'sexual touch') as that would not be objectively coding what has been observed. Rather, the reading of the same image is understood differently because of the context in which it is being consumed. The space (in this instance LGBTQ+ media instead of mainstream) is itself discursively constructed in ways that shape consumers' expectations about LGBTQ+ content and imagery. In some cases, there is no ambiguity in LGBTQ+ advertisements about their irrelevance to heterosexual audiences, but a recurring finding from the data analysis is how LGBTQ+ advertisements can exhibit traces of 'straightening-out'. It is suggested here, in a similar way that explicit LGBTQ+ images can be 'straightened-up' by heterosexual people (Borgerson *et al.*, 2005), implicit images have the potential to be 'straightened-out' by LGBTQ+ consumers, whereby heterosexuality within the advertisement is taken out/removed. For example, I discussed in Chapter 6 how a handful of 'passive' and 'not targeted' advertisements placed in *GQ* could be read by gay males more explicitly if placed in *Gay Times*.

Summarising key findings in how LGBTQ+ representations manifested in both mainstream and LGBTQ+ publications, I will start with the former and discuss advertisements placed in *Marie Claire* and *GQ* magazine. Firstly, LGBTQ+ targeted advertisements featured in 8% of all advertisements placed within mainstream media (n=1,696). Of that 8%, the majority (over three quarters) were passive advertisements, indicating that advertising practice is mirroring LGBTQ+ advertising theory and hiding or disguising LGBTQ+ imagery as part of a purposeful polysemic approach to reach both LGBTQ+ and heterosexual audiences. There were, however, a number of differences between publications. *GQ,* for example, had more than twice as many LGBTQ+ targeted advertisements in total than *Marie Claire* (11% vs 5%); however, both still heavily favoured the passive approach (80% *GQ* and 73% *Marie Claire* respectively). Within the passive approach, the main LGBTQ+ images used were 'androgynous characters' and 'effeminate/butch appearance' (in other words, mobilising gender as a cue, not sexuality *per se*) representing more than half of all cues within the targeted mainstream dataset.

Read in conjunction with Butler's (1990) notion of the heterosexual matrix, these high levels of passive practice using the mobilisation of gender signifiers can in some ways be seen to disrupt the

heteronormative alignments between gender, sex and sexual desire, although the overall effect is that heteronormativity is reproduced. This is because images of LGBTQ+ people are mapped onto stereotyped notions of gender (e.g., the 'butch' or 'femme' lesbian, the feminine or masculine gay man) that reinforce heteronormative ideas about how sexuality is gendered. However, in *Marie Claire* the highest implicit signifier is 'physical closeness' between two women rather than any disruption of gender norms. This can be understood as illustrative of entrenched female cis-normativity and its (re)construction within mainstream media. In other words, images of butch lesbians are rare and deemed unpalatable in mainstream media, supporting Halberstam's (1998) argument that female masculinity is culturally problematic for many women in general, and lesbians and transgender women in particular. Implicit LGBTQ+ representations are therefore constructed in such a way that hides a more diverse, anti-normative lived reality. Within a passive advertising context, not only are implicit images used to hide non-heterosexuality generally, but there is a double level of invisibility for the vast number of LGBTQ+ people who do not meet the 'norms' of the advertised LGBTQ+ consumer.

Within the integrative approach, advertisements appear to rely less on non-conforming images of LGBTQ+ sexuality and gender. As I noted in the empirical discussion chapters, there is, however, a very narrow range of explicit LGBTQ+ representations used in the media: only four different types, two of which only appeared once each. The majority were either a) 'affectionate/sexual touch' (50%) and b) 'LGBTQ+ celebrity' (42%), with both publications (*Marie Claire* and *GQ*) featuring each approach with identical frequency. The emphasis in images displaying 'affectionate/sexual touch', typically manifests as manufactured ('staged', 'posing' etc) and is intensely heteronormative and often sexualised. This stands in contrast to *DIVA*, where the same coded images convey themes of loving and romantic coupledom.   Notably, Nölke's (2018, p.224) observation of a shift from "hypersexualisation toward real individuals' stories of love and families" in advertising was largely absent in my study. The use of 'LGBTQ+ celebrity' has already been problematised; suffice to say that the deployment of a LGBTQ+ celebrity can be understood to be based on an assumption that a shared sexual identity provides the basis for a shared sense of affinity and belonging among LGBTQ+ people. As Ling (2018) comments, this strategy can homogenise LGBTQ+ consumers into recognisable categories when, in fact, LGBTQ+ individuals are positioned along multiple axes of race, ethnicity, age, religious belief, disability, and so on.

In terms of the key findings related to how LGBTQ+ representations manifested in LGBTQ+ media, the two advertising approaches were relatively even in terms of prevalence within the LGBTQ+ dataset (n=518). Conscious and tailored advertisements represented 46% and 54% of all advertisements placed in *DIVA* and *Gay Times* respectively. There was relatively little difference between publications,

with *Gay Times* featuring 50% of each advertising approach whereas *DIVA* contained more tailored advertisements (60%) than conscious (40%). One conclusion from these findings is that there were a surprising number of non-adapted advertisements (the conscious approach) given that points of self-reference are normally present in targeted advertising (for example, the 'not targeted' advertisements placed in *Marie Claire* and *GQ*). Linked to this, 1 in 5 tailored advertisements only used wording (e.g., 'gay, 'lesbian') as an explicit LGTBQ+ signifier, in other words they did not contain any visible representations of LGBTQ+ people or cues that indicate LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders. Building on Kates (1999), I suggest that rather than simply constraining meaning-making and therefore restricting a polysemic reading, LGBTQ+ words can be seen as 'deficit signifiers' to the audience (i.e., showing that the advertisement is 'not' something aimed at heterosexuals). This can be seen to reinforce the position of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders as 'other' since it requires a distinction from 'the norm'; and by requiring adaptation it exposes one of its aims, to reproduce heteronormativity.

A related finding is the high number of LGBTQ+ related products (68%) featured within tailored advertisements placed in *DIVA.* Examples includes lesbian festivals, holidays and so on. While on the surface it appears that the lesbian market is particularly attractive, and companies are communicating with them more directly (through explicit signifiers *and* media placement), this more granular finding masks the extent to which lesbian/bisexual women feature on the radar of *mainstream* business and/or products. In comparison, less than half of advertisements placed in *Gay Times* are for LGBTQ+ related products, suggesting overall that gay/bisexual men are perceived as the more commercially attractive consumer within a mainstream context. Relatedly, only two advertisements in the whole dataset (n=2,214) cut across both mainstream and LGBTQ+ media. Both examples (for a car and a watch) are placed in *DIVA*, *Gay Times* and *GQ* but do not extend to *Marie Claire.* As discussed in Chapter 7, advertising practice therefore appears to segment by sexuality rather than gender, however the main conclusion to note is that this very rarely happens. Similarly, given apparent lack of cross-over of mainstream brands advertising in LGBTQ+ media (*DIVA* especially), sexuality can be seen as a de-prioritised variable within the strategic decision-making process, which given the individual economic potential of LGBTQ+ consumers (over their heterosexual equivalents) seems potentially commercially short-sighted. Furthermore, in *DIVA,* which attracts relatively high ABC1 readership (73% vs 66% *Marie Claire*), advertisements showed the lowest wealth indicators ('low-medium') across all four publications.

Overall, one resounding conclusion to the question of how LGBTQ+ representations manifest within targeted print advertising practice in mainstream and LGBTQ+ media is that it varies. For example, the possibilities for different implicit and explicit representations are conditioned by contexts of

specific media as well as the wider social and cultural landscape of sexuality and gender. In mainstream media, LGBTQ+ representations are heavily cisgender- and heteronormative (e.g., the 'lipstick lesbian' as noted by Nölke (2018) and found in this study). In LGBTQ+ media, more non-normative representations exist (e.g., the 'soft butch') but, as the discussion chapters demonstrate, the discursive construction of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders largely reproduce and maintain hetero- and homonormativity. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the explicit representations of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders in mainstream media, often characterised by staged posing, detachment, whiteness, youth and able-bodiedness. This reinforces Drucker's (2015) argument that the normalisation of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders is associated with those who tend to be white, young and wealthy. Certainly, in the context of mainstream media examined in this study, there is no portrayal of domesticated or 'real' life situations in which LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders can be represented, and in that respect this study differs from Nölke (2018).

While the picture is slightly different in LGBTQ+ media (and different again *within* Gay Times and *DIVA*), one concern that arises from this conclusion is that LGBTQ+ explicit representations can play an influential role in reproducing hetero-, homo- and cisnormativity, all of which rely on restrictive, binary constructions of gender and sexuality. As discursive constructions of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders, LGBTQ+ explicit advertisements minimise possibilities for alternative, non-normative or queerer sexualities and genders to be represented. In this study, very few advertisements present alternative ways of being, although when such images do occur, they more often than not feature as part of a collective mix of (drag/queer) performers or acts. One outcome of this is that LGBTQ+ audiences may be left with the impression that non-normative sexualities and genders are culturally undesirable, potentially offensive to heterosexual and LGBTQ+ audiences and abnormal.

RO3: **Critically analyse LGBTQ+ targeted advertising approaches and constituent images, using queer theory as a frame for analysis.** *[3.1 As part of the literature review, expose aspects of the advertising literature that are 'problematic' from a queer theory perspective] and 3.2 Critically analyse the images used in LGBTQ+ targeted print advertisements by performing a queer deconstruction of four illustrative print advertisements (reflecting each of the advertising approaches captured within the conceptual model: 'passive', 'conscious', 'tailored' and 'integrative']*

With queer theory's accomplishments in problematising heteronormatvity, and more recently cisnormativity, the queer literature review featured in Chapter 3 exposed a number of problems with extant research on LGBTQ+ advertising. This scholarship was found to exhibit heteronormative bias in how studies often sought to protect the needs of heterosexual audiences from LGBTQ+ imagery

that could offend and upset (Oakenfull and Greenlee, 2005). As noted by some scholars, this bias has served to perpetuate the marginalisation of LGBTQ+ consumers and analyses of LGBTQ+ advertising (Tsai, 2012; Nölke, 2018).

While there are signs of welcomed change, not enough is known about LGBTQ+ advertising to ascertain if, for example, there is genuine commitment from advertisers to engage with LGBTQ+ imagery in ways that transcend the limitations of 'pinkwashing'. As Bindel (2014) points out, increased LGBTQ+ market visibility is about equity not equality, which is to say that we cannot assume growth in LGBTQ+ visibility is a reliable determinant of progressive equality gains. As I have argued above, and in line with Bindel (2014), LGBTQ+ advertising can help to accommodate LGBTQ+ people within a hetero- and cisnormative cultural context, rather than seeking to transform it. From a queer theory perspective, the role of advertising norms can be seen to reproduce the terms and conditions of that accommodation and, in some cases, normalisation of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders, which, as Tsai (2012, p.51) holds, reinforces a "dominant heterosexist social order that reflects and shapes advertising conventions".

Through a practice of queering, as detailed in the previous chapter, one conclusion is that the discursive construction of LGBTQ+ images reveals the dominance of heteronormativity in advertising (Kates, 1999). With regard to gay men, representations of members of this group are largely white, healthy and wealthy. Many of the images used are homonormative, as indicated by, for example, the presence of hypermasculinity. In the case of lesbians, a queer analysis shows that homonormativity is typically manifest in the replication of heterosexual lifestyles and behaviour in LGBTQ+ media. Here, it is not so much how a lesbian looks (although representations of 'butch' and 'femme' lesbians do exist in LGBTQ+ media), but more about how lesbians are represented in terms of commitment and creating families. These representations reproduce narrow heteronormative gender norms that only some but crucially not all lesbians can inhabit. Compared to mainstream media, where the common portrayal is of the femme or 'lipstick lesbian' (Nölke, 2018), some non-normative reconstructions do exist (albeit limited and still problematic). They are, however, hidden *within* LGBTQ+ media (e.g., lesbians interacting as a family (see my analysis of tailored advertisements in Chapter 8)) and excluded from the heterosexual majority, sustaining the heteronormative ideal of a hetero family (Kitzinger, 2005).

From a queer theory perspective, a complex picture emerges of LGBTQ+ advertising. It would be unfair to critique all LGBTQ+ advertising for reproducing hetero- and cisnormativity, whether this is through non/explicit references to LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders, since many LGBTQ+ people desire normalisation (Drucker, 2015). Here, the role of advertising norms in shaping how LGBTQ+ sexualities

and genders are culturally (un)desirable and (un)marketable can be read queerly, in different ways. From one perspective, in the context of LGBTQ+ visibility politics and a capitalist desire for the continuous creation of new markets (Phelan, 2001), most marketing strategies have, certainly in the historical past, been more about profit making than paving the way for LGBTQ+ liberation (Hennessy, 1995). The situation does not seem to have changed significantly (Drucker, 2015). Relatedly, in this study, more advertisements are placed in *Gay Times* than *DIVA*, via *more* mainstream brands for *more* mainstream products. This asymmetry can be read as reflecting a broader "privileged masculine notion of homosexuality and gay identity" (Kates, 1999, p.27), whereby market interest is skewed in favour of gay men. Put differently, a sexual hierarchy can be seen to exist in LGBTQ+ advertising, one that reinforces a (heteronormative) male privilege.

From another perspective, it is possible to posit that LGBTQ+ advertising can be acknowledged for its role in the normalisation of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders. Indeed, the presence of explicit representation and messaging enables some, but not all, LGBTQ+ consumers to recognise themselves in the pages of printed targeted media, where in the most progressive cases they are acknowledged positively as being diverse. Indeed, for many LGBTQ+ people, achieving societal integration and acceptance is a desirable goal since it affords them citizen-subject status, incredibly important to those LGBTQ+ people who choose to live an 'ordinary' life and are able to do so (Brown, 2012). A queer theory perspective, however, exposes the tension that arises from understanding LGBTQ+ advertising as a servant of a capitalistic form of heteronormativity that sustains restrictive constructions of sexuality and gender, which continue to be problematic for so many (Drucker, 2015), and its role in (re)shaping the normalisation of LGBTQ+ imagery in advertising that some LGBTQ+ consumers welcome.

Summarising briefly some of the more significant conclusions drawn from queering the four discursive cases and other examples of variances on emerging themes, conscious advertisements by their very nature do not exhibit any explicit LGBTQ+ representation. Linking to Porfido's (2009) 'visual deprivation', this non-adaption reinforces the 'othering' of the excluded (LGBTQ+) group and reinforces the prioritisation of heterosexuality as the dominant way of being. In tailored advertisements, there is a notable contrast in, for example, the core message of family, relationship and stability in *DIVA* versus the hypersexual, hypermasculine, lone male in *Gay Times,* with images often predicated around (faceless) sex. Aspects of both sets of (re)constructions can be seen to be engrained within heterosexual norms and exemplify homonormativity almost to an extreme. Explicit images in integrative advertisements are almost reversed in terms of gender, with the hyperfeminine, hypersexualised lipstick lesbian touching sexually at least one of person of the same gender. Male

images, too, involve some level of physical (sexual) contact and both sets of advertisements typically involve bisexuality, as evidenced for example in the Gucci 'guilty' campaign and DSQUARED and Label.M, advertisements, all deconstructed in the previous discussion chapters.

Finally, passive advertisements, in contrast to tailored or integrative approaches, rely heavily on gender cues to achieve a 'gay vague' reading, whereby gender norms are unsettled within the advertisement to produce some form ambiguity for the reader. This leads on to one of the major conclusions of this thesis, borne directly out of the queer deconstructions undertaken as the final part of this study, namely the concept of 'gender anchoring'. As I describe in relation to passive advertisements in the previous chapter, this anchoring attaches or secures at least one part of an overall visual to a normative gender attribute traditionally aligned to the majority audience of the publication (for example heterosexual men within *GQ* and heterosexual women within *Marie Claire*). I suggest that it is this one, or more, gender normative attribute(s) that enables a polysemic reading to take place, reinforced by the (mainstream) placement of the advertisement itself. In other words, so long as there remains an obvious heteronormative anchor within an ambiguous visual placed (i.e. contexualised) within a mainstream publication, it will have the potential to be read as 'gay vague' rather than integrative, where one would expect to see more explicit rather than implicit signifiers manifest. Not only does this illustrate the aforementioned fluidity of LGBTQ+ images and its relationship with meaning-making, but also from a queer perspective, this interplay is important. It exposes a gendered notion of sexuality (thereby reinforcing Butler's (1990) heterosexual matrix) which helps create the ambiguity of the overall image and ultimately its polysemic reading. While the presence of non-conformity itself begins to rupture normative constructs of gender and therefore represents some progress within mainstream advertising, passive advertisements can still be seen however to hold their foundations within normative (gender) regimes whereby notions of masculinity and femininity largely remain intact.

9.3 Contributions to scholarly knowledge and theory

This study makes several important contributions to scholarly knowledge in the advertising field. The first contribution to scholarly knowledge is located within the emergent literature on LGBTQ+ advertising in the marketing domain (Clark, 1993; Kates, 1999; Sender, 2003; Schroeder and Zwick, 2004; Borgerson *et al.*, 2006; Branchik, 2007; Puntoni, Vanhamme and Visscher, 2011; Tsai, 2011; 2012). As previously asserted, the dominant trend in this segment of advertising literature is audience perceptions and responses to LGBTQ+ advertising, where an emphasis has been placed on how such advertising can be offensive to heterosexual audiences. Additionally, this research is US- centric and while the US may share similarities with the UK in terms of LGBTQ+ visibility and equality gains, it is

not an exact parallel. Crucially, the empirical discussion chapters extend extant knowledge on how LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders are discursively constructed, not in terms of identifying images that are definitively indicative of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders, but in terms of how heteronormativity shape their construction. This represents a significant departure from existing studies, not least because this study focuses on heteronormativity as a normative regime (Warner, 1993) that operates through relations of power within the discourses drawn upon by advertisers to represent LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders.

By adopting this approach, this study provides empirical insights into how heteronormativity can variously shape the discursive construction of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders. For example, heteronormativity can place emphasis on the normalisation of heterosexuality by erasing LGBTQ+ imagery altogether, or creating LGBTQ+ imagery within the confines of the heterosexual/homosexual binary (Sedgwick, 1990), for example the CAREFertility tailored advertisement placed in DIVA (Figure 43). In these cases, it is possible to understand how heteronormativity operates in LGBTQ+ advertising through its heterosexist bias. Additionally, heteronormativity can place emphasis on gender norms to regulate the construction of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders, deploying images that reinforce the gendered nature of sexuality that sustain restrictive sexual and gender binaries. Representations of effeminate gay men (e.g., Gucci and ETRO campaigns), for instance, entrench heteronormative ideas about gay men as closer to femininity than masculinity. In this frame, the gendering of sexuality relies on a gender binary that assumes male and female bodies correspond to the 'proper' gender (Butler, 1990), where men possess a proper masculinity and women possess a 'proper' femininity. Gay men in the historical past and in the contemporary moment can be positioned as not 'real men' (Weeks, 2007), where they can become attached to femininity in ways that are often read pejoratively.

The second contribution to scholarly knowledge relates to the very limited research that mobilises queer theory concepts to examine LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders in advertising (Kates, 1999; Schroeder *et al.,* 2006; Sonnekus and van Eeden, 2009). It is not especially surprising that the advertising domain has overlooked queer theory as a conceptual resource, given queer theory's analytical focus. Rather than seek to improve the efficiency and productivity of advertising practice, which queer theory is not concerned with enhancing, it aims to critique what is normal and taken-for-granted. This represents a more radical turn of emphasis within a discipline that traditionally focuses on improving the efficiency of advertising strategies and practices, although critical perspectives on advertising are increasing.

In the context of this study, the mobilisation of queer theory has opened up a wider range of empirical insights into how heteronormativity operates within LGBTQ+ advertising. One significant contribution

to knowledge is that queering LGBTQ+ advertisements directs our attention to discourses of homonormativity. As such, while Kates's (1999) adoption of queer theory focused on the process and value of queering as a source of advertisement critique and to help generate more perceptive marketing practice (and warrants suitable recognition for being one of the first to mobilise queer theory in advertising) this study develops the first part of this trajectory by interrogating the reproduction of homonormativity. As stated earlier in this chapter, such discourses are drawn upon by advertisers to construct images of white, healthy and wealthy gay men, and lesbian imagery that reproduces themes of commitment and family. Homonormativity plays an important role in sustaining heteronormativity (Duggan, 2002), and can be problematic in how it creates sexual and gender hierarchies. Put differently, it is the case that representations of white, healthy and wealthy gay men serve as aspirational ideals, but also as signifiers of gay and lesbian normalisation (Drucker, 2015). A multitude of LGBTQ+ others are largely excluded, such as transgender persons, effeminate gay men, bisexuals, LGBTQ+ people of colour, to mention but a few (Drucker, 2015). Indeed, there is a notable shortage of non-normative representations of LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders in both mainstream and LGBTQ+ printed media. From a queer theory perspective, the problematic status of homonormativity ruptures the argument that manifestations of homonormativity can hold enormous appeal to those gay men and lesbians seeking cultural recognition and acceptance.

Theoretically, this study makes two important contributions. The first relates to how I have consolidated aspects of existing LGBTQ+ advertising theory that explore ways in which the LGBTQ+ market can be targeted, culminating in the conceptual model 'Targeted LGBTQ+ Advertising Approaches' (Williams, 2015). As shown in Figure 1, the model uses the dimensions of 'LGBTQ+ representation' and 'media placement' to frame various studies/approaches given their prominence as key targeting variables discussed within the LGBTQ+ advertising literature. Accordingly, four advertising approaches have been identified: passive, conscious, tailored and integrative, descriptions of which have been provided in Chapter 2. Linked to this, I have developed five new LGBTQ+ image denotations, which occurred inductively through the ICA coding process when populating the model, namely 'LGBTQ+ related word' (an explicit signifier), 'Physical closeness', 'Absence of opposite gender', 'Absence of other' and 'Advert design'. To reiterate an earlier point made above, the intention is not for these to be conceptualised as fixed implicit or explicit types of images (as important as these new codes are), rather as additional ways to help constitute discursively representation of LGBTQ+ sexualities.

The second theoretical contribution concerns the potential of queer theory to queer *advertising* theory, which is understood here as a concern to rupture the foundations of the discipline (Warner,

1993). Elaborating this, it is important to recap that queer theory is guided by an anti-normative impulse (Rumens, 2018; Warner, 1993; 1999), which structures its ability to problematise and rupture normative regimes (Halperin, 1995; Sullivan, 2002). One advantage of this is that queer theory can be deployed to queer the norms that constitute the body of scholarly knowledge and theory within the advertising field. This has been demonstrated in this study through the use of queering as an analytic tool for deconstructing what is normal and taken-for-granted in LGBTQ+ advertising. One outcome of this practice is that heteronormativity has been exposed and problematised, unsettling existing theoretical approaches used to study LGBTQ+ advertisements, often in terms of heterosexual audience responses and perceptions of them. As this study has shown, queer theorising has incredible utility as a conceptual resource for unsettling the foundations of extant advertising scholarship, challenging how scholars approach the study of LGBTQ+ advertising. While queer theory has yet to establish itself with any prominence in advertising, it is worth drawing a parallel with how queer theory has been deployed in organisation and management studies, not just to expose and dismantle hetero- and cisnormativity, but to challenge the norms that constitute the body of scholarly knowledge on organisation and management. As Parker's (2002) ideas on queering management and organisation show, queer theory can be used to interrogate prevailing concepts on management and organisation, helping scholars to research alternative, non-normative modes of doing management and organising. Parker (2002) draws on Butler's theory of performativity to this end, developing the idea of management as performative and, in so doing, destabilises the norms that shape dominant modes of management anchored in managerialism. I suggest that similar opportunities exist for advertising scholars to engage with queer theory in this way. For example, scholars may use queer theory to interrogate the norms that shape how advertising is approached and understood as a discipline and category of scholarly knowledge, which may lead to the development of ideas about advertising as performative, in Butler's (1990) terms.

In whatever way it might be deployed, queer theory has a wider reach than its traditional focus on sexuality, gender and heteronormativity. With this in mind, queering the discipline of advertising can channel scholarly attention toward normative modes of theorising advertising and marketing that reproduce harmful ways of representing subjects, not just in relation to sexuality and gender, but also race, ethnicity, age, disability, religious beliefs and class. Following this line of inquiry may involve using queer theory in conjunction with sociology, psychology, critical race studies and theories drawn from postcolonialism and disability studies. In so doing, queering advertising knowledge may be understood as queering theory (Warner, 1993), making scholars aware of the issues at stake for the individuals advertisers seek to represent in the media. To refer back to an observation made at the very beginning of this thesis, queering theory aims "to make theory queer, not just to have

a theory about queers" (Warner, 1993, p.xxvi). Indeed, as this study shows, dominant modes of LGBTQ+ representation in the advertising domain reproduce rigid LGBTQ+ identity categories, the sexual and gender binaries that sustain them, and hetero- and cisnormativity. Making advertising theory queer can invite scholars to challenge and blur the boundaries between academic disciplines, potentially disrupting what is currently taken for granted about and within marketing and advertising theory.

9.5 Practical implications (with an essence of queer)

Having stated that queer theory has no interest in improving the productivity of advertising, the issue of how LGBTQ+ advertisements are understood by LGBTQ+ audiences remains significant. Specifically, I am keen to emphasise and influence the importance of interrogating how LGBTQ+ advertising constructs sexuality and gender. The advertising industry is deeply implicated in how LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders are rendered (in)visible in the public domain. The various approaches adopted, as detailed in the 'Targeted LGBTQ+ Advertising Approaches (Williams, 2015) model, have implications for advertising practice. For example, the 'behind closed doors' nature of tailored advertisements and the 'othering' of LGBTQ+ lives in advertising have potentially damaging consequences for members of LGBTQ+ audiences (Taylor, 1992; McInroy and Craig, 2017; De Drauw, 2017), including negative self-perception, feelings of inadequacy (Fryberg and Townsend, 2008; Gomillion and Giuliano, 2011) and limiting opportunities for developing queerer senses of self (Porfido, 2009). From a LGBTQ+ consumer perspective, a more diverse array of LGBTQ+ representations in advertisements (notwithstanding the issues with the types of portrayals presented) may help target audiences to better identify with the product being promoted (Angelini and Bradley, 2010), but also contribute to human thriving through a shared sense of visibility (Tsai, 2012).

At the very least, responding to Eisend and Hermann's (2019) meta-analysis of the advertising literature, the findings of this study can help advertisers understand more fully the operation of heteronormativity in the advertising industry. That advertisers should better account for LGBTQ+ increased visibility in UK society through more diverse and inclusive LGBTQ+ advertising is a persuasive sentiment. However, queer theory forces us to think through such goals, not least because improvements in LGBTQ+ advertising practice are likely to be implicated in the ongoing reproduction of heteronormativity. Acknowledging this, the value of queer theory lies in its continual questioning (or 'queer(y)ing') of supposedly desirable goals and practices, which is why a queer perspective on advertising practice would help advertising scholars to sustain ongoing analyses of how practices reproduce a logic of cultural inclusion and exclusion. It would help also to stimulate ideas about what a queerer advertising industry might look like and what purpose it might serve.

9.6 Limitations and avenues for future research

The emphasis of this thesis has very much been on the mobilisation of insights from queer theory to expose and problematise the hetero- and homonormativity (re)produced in LGBTQ+ advertising, and in so doing contribute to the emergent literature on how LGBTQ+ sexualities and genders are discursively constructed and shaped by heteronormativity. In order to do this, it has been the discursive cases, the selection of which derived from the results of the ICA, that have provided key vehicles for analysis. One limitation of the study could therefore be seen as the currency of the advertisements featured within this analysis, since the data was collected between January and December 2016 However, the theoretical and scholarly contributions of this study rest on *theoretical and scholarly* currency, which can be assured.   As detailed in Chapter 4 and summarised here under RO1, the LGBTQ+ advertising literature has been regularly updated. Indeed, this thesis includes sources published as recently as 2021. In short, as each new theoretical avenue or finding emerged, it was considered within the context of the key contributions of this study, which include: the development of the conceptual model 'Targeted LGBTQ+ Advertising Approaches'; the concept of 'straightening out' and the use of gender anchors; and the general contribution this critical (queer) study makes to the field of LGBTQ+ advertising. All are still relevant and of value.

That said, an avenue for future research that is directly linked to this study is to repeat the ICA *in identical terms* between January and December 2021 (to account for a five-year cycle) or indeed between January and December 2026 (for ten) so that a comparative set of data could be analysed alongside the results of this ICA to provide a longitudinal picture. That such replicability is possible is one of the key benefits of having such a detailed and transparent set of procedures and processes. This could extend to conducting the same ICA on similarly leading lifestyle magazines in different countries to understand the impact of different geo-social/cultural environments. This would be particularly interesting given Eisend and Hermann's (2019) conclusion that explicit LGBTQ+ portrayals could be used successfully in mainstream advertising but that this is culturally-specific.

Linked to this, the focus of this study has been the analysis of LGBTQ+ representations within targeted advertisements. As shown in Chapter 6, some of which has been incorporated within the discussion chapters also, there is a multitude of *other* data that could be foregrounded and critically examined, exploring for example various sets of intersectional representations for example. Indeed, as Ginder and Byun, 2015, p.19) point out:

> "For this field of research to progress, it is essential for scholars to better address the needs of
> the entire LGBT community. There is undoubtedly a gap in research examining gay and
> lesbian consumers who are already marginalized (Penaloza, 1996) whether it is ethnic
> minorities, the elderly, the poor, females, or the transgendered. The nexus of the market and

the movement is just as significant today as it was back at the time of the Stonewall riots and the AIDS epidemic; there is a clear tension between the positive and negative sociocultural and sociopolitical implications of market incorporation that must continue to be negotiated. As the quest for the queer dollar marches on, scholarly research must seek to bring the light to both the bright side and the dark side of the rainbow."

As stated, the ICA already has coded data related to a number of the marginalised groups listed and so shifting critical emphasis to any of these specific groups would respond well to this call for future research and add greatly to the limited the body of (queer(y)ing) work that this study now joins.

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