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From ‘homosexual offence’ to ‘LGBT community’:

A diachronic corpus-based critical discourse analysis of queer representation in *The Times* between 1957-2017

This thesis is submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Linguistics and English Language

Lancaster University

The Department of Linguistics and English Language

September 2023

There is nothing in me that is not in everybody else,

and nothing in everybody else that is not in me.

James Baldwin, 1984

What, then, is the need for a further debate about identity?

Who needs it?

Stuart Hall, 1996

Abstract

From 'homosexual offence' to 'LGBT community': A diachronic corpus-based critical discourse analysis of queer representation in *The Times* between 1957-2017

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This thesis presents a novel combination of diachronic corpus-based critical discourse analysis (CDA) with poststructuralist (post-Marxist) discourse theory (PDT) (Laclau and Mouffe 2014) in order to analyse how *The Times* has used language to discursively construct queer identities between 1957-2017. The data is comprised of three sub-corpora built from relevant search terms between 1957-1967, 1979-1990, and 2003-2017. The subsequent analysis reveals that representations of queer identities are consistently (re)produced in similar ways such that certain identifications become naturalised, thus obfuscating their historical conditions of emergence. The implication is that queer identities, like all identities, are never fixed and tend to change as different discursive formations become hegemonic.

Analysis began by thematically categorising the top 50 keywords and key terms from each of the three sub-corpora. This revealed that the most salient discourses were present across all three time periods, indicating that there were three discursive trajectories that shaped queer representation – *biopolitics, capitalism,* and *erasure.* Adapting the concept of the nodal point from PDT, one term was selected to represent each of the three discursive trajectories in each sub-corpus. These nine nodal points served as privileged signifiers, binding together a discursive formation. A combination of collocation and concordance analyses for each nodal point was then conducted. Results demonstrated that there was a dialectical relationship between the discursive construction of a queer Other and the hegemony of the British state during its various socioeconomic and political permutations.

This study makes an original contribution by integrating PDT with corpus-based CDA so as to enrich the interpretation of the corpus findings. In addition to PDT, theories such as *critical race theory* were also introduced where they would enhance the analysis. This thesis, therefore, highlights how a greater engagement with theory benefits corpus-based CDA by combining innovative corpus-linguistic methods with equally innovative critical theory from across the academy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of tables

List of figures

Acknowledgements

There's an irony to the fact that, after having written the longest single text of my life, I find myself at a loss for words — my gratitude being so great that it seems impossible to condense it into a page (or two).

To open though, I would be remiss if I didn't begin by expressing a tremendous amount of gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Paul Baker. When Paul agreed to take me on as a student in 2017, we had no idea that the next six years would bring about some of the biggest changes in our lives and, indeed, that of the entire world. But, through the darkest days of the Covid-19 pandemic, to the most exciting moments in both our journeys, Paul has been a remarkable support, intellectual mentor, and, indeed, a treasured and highly regarded friend. He not only allowed me to be intellectually adventurous, but he was also there to provide a steady hand when it seemed that I might have gone too far. When I thought I might give up, he contextualised the work — reminding me that, even when it seems impossible, these pages contain something of value and that it would be a shame if I didn't push through until the end. With this in mind, whatever pride or joy that that I have in submitting this thesis, it is entirely a result of the support and guidance provided by Paul and, for that, I will always be grateful.

It would also be impossible to write these acknowledgements without thanking my father, Professor Michael Wilkinson. Growing up with an intellectual force like my dad did not mean growing up in the shadow of his success. Rather, his accomplishments were like a beacon that showed the paths that could be taken and the rewards that could come from the pursuit of knowledge and the contributions that we all make as we begin to publish, present, and most importantly — teach. My father has not only been an inspiration since I decided to come back to academia in my 30s. He's also provided practical support without which I would never have made it through my MA or my PhD. As I sit here writing this, I can only hope that he knows that the struggles he went through, from his early life in Hunslet through to a Professorship at Dalhousie, have inspired countless students – both those in his lectures and his lab, but as well as at home and — still — as I sit here in London, writing these words.

I, of course, also need to thank my mother, Diane Wilkinson — not only for emotional support and an unwavering belief that everything I do is brilliant, but also for the crucial "behind-the-scenes" work that only her technical prowess could provide. I would never have been able to complete, let alone begin, this research without you. Merci maman!

I would also like to thank the Arts and Humanities Research Council Northwest Consortium Doctoral Training Partnership for awarding me the funding necessary to complete my PhD with Lancaster University. There are also many academics that have encouraged me while completing my thesis, but I would like to especially thank Tony McEnery, Luke Collins, Charlotte Taylor, Anna Marchi, Gavin Brookes, Jai MacKenzie and the LGS SIG committee, Andrew Lawson, and Laura Coffey-Glover. From advising me on panels to extending various invitations to contribute to our academic community, I am grateful to each of you for your interest in my research.

Finally, the person for whom no words of gratitude could ever suffice — *o meu porto de abrigo, João*. From celebrating with me when I won funding and student awards, to elevating my slides when they needed finesse; to being there with me when I thought I couldn't go on, to holding me when I just needed a good cry. You have been nothing short of the kind of partner everyone hopes for: supportive, patient, firm, but always compassionate. You've sacrificed so much so that I could complete this project and you have done so with grace, a sense of humour, and a faith in me that is unparalleled. *Amo-te para sempre*, and yes – it's finally done.

And, in conclusion, these acknowledgements would be rather incomplete if I did not properly thank Maria Miguel, without whose constant company, snoring, musical yawns, cuddle breaks, and demand for daily walks, I would never have been able to complete this project. *Obrigado à minha Maria linda xuxaxinhas!*

Declaration

This thesis has been submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Linguistics and English Language at Lancaster University. It has not been submitted in support of an application for another degree at this or any other university. The ideas and methods in this thesis were developed with my PhD supervisor, Professor Paul Baker. The political views expressed, however, are my own.

This thesis was funded in part by the Arts and Humanities Research Council North West Consortium Doctoral Training Partnership.

Chapter 1 — Introduction

1.1 — On the 'myth of the "eternal homosexual"'

The year 2017 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the *Sexual Offences Act 1967* (SOA) that decriminalised consensual sex in private between men over the age of 21. While arrests and raids actually *increased* in the subsequent decades (Weeks 2016), across much of the British media in 2017, the SOA was represented as a watershed that marked a decisive break from a repressive past. Such discourses of linear progress represent an abridged cultural memory that was exemplified in an editorial for *Pink News* written by former Prime Minister, Theresa May. While conceding that societal attitudes may not always have progressed in line with legislation, the Prime Minister maintained that 'the momentous changes to the law in 1967 started the journey towards equality' (May 2017). Embedded within dubious claims that such a 'journey' was representative of the notion that 'tolerance and openness are two of the most precious British values', May (2017) also seemed to imply that the benefits of the SOA somehow extended to those for whom such gains would have been inconsequential. Using the acronym 'LGBT+' as a signifier for inclusivity, May wrote that, 'today we remembered and celebrated those...who shifted public attitudes on LGBT+ equality' (May 2017). While a potential gesture towards diversity, the use of 'LGBT+' in this context is, in many ways, misleading. Firstly, the SOA was only concerned with sex between men. Secondly, fifty years ago, lesbian, gay, bi, and trans 'equality' would have been impossible because, aside from the term 'lesbian', none of these signifiers would have been used to represent transgressive sexual or gender identities. Rather, the language of sexual and gender identity was nascent and the association of an identity, let alone a community, constructed around one's desire or sexual activity was often limited to homosexual men living in large metropolitan areas (Jennings 2007).

Such illusory discourses of 'LGBT+ history' espoused in May's 2017 editorial are symptomatic of what D'Emilio (1983:101) has identified as 'the myth of the "eternal homosexual"' — a tendency to view contemporary queer[1] identities as reflecting an essential set of characteristics that have always

[1] Unless otherwise stated, this thesis will use both *queer* and *LGBTQI* as signifiers for transgressive sexual and/or gender identities. I am acutely aware, however, that their use poses both analytic and reflexive issues. First, the term *LGBTQI* is an acronym comprised of contemporary terms of identification that may or may not have existed within the timeframe of this study. It is also a controversial term in that it is often regarded as obfuscating a diverse group of identities through their conflation (see Chapter 7 for a further discussion of this issue). On the other hand, while *queer* is a historically contingent term that was used as a pejorative until being reclaimed by activists and academics in the 1980s and 1990s (De Lauretis 1990; Sedgwick 1990; Warner 1999), it is also not without contention. This is because, while there are those — like myself — who regard it as signifying liberation and a rejection of liberal identity politics, there are others who may still associate it with negative connotations. Their use in this thesis is, therefore, only intended as a shorthand to signify a series of

existed and can, therefore, be read backwards in time. What this 'myth' fails to consider is that lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) identities, like all identities, 'are a product of history, and have come into existence in a specific historical era' (D'Emilio 1983:101). This is not to deny that people who were identified as being of the same gender have always — across time and place — pursued sexual and romantic relationships with one another. Nor does it suggest that gender variance is a new phenomenon, as all historical and transcultural evidence suggests otherwise. Rather, the 'myth of the "eternal homosexual"' is a critique of the widely held belief that sexual and gender identities are universal categories — both stable and essentially the same across time and place. Building on D'Emilio's original contribution, this thesis will, therefore, explore how, when, why, and for whose benefit this 'myth' endures in the context of the UK.

In order to frame the following analysis, this introductory chapter will begin, in section 1.2, by explaining both my personal and political motivations for pursuing this research. Sections 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5 will then briefly outline some of the main concepts and approaches that will be employed — namely, an explanation of my use of the term, discourse; a brief overview of and explanation for why the methodology will be rooted in corpus-based Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA); as well as an explanation for why an analysis of news discourse is essential in revealing how identities are represented, (re)produced and then mediated. With this in mind, section 1.6 will then argue that, in addition to a corpus-based CDA of news discourse, the analysis of how identities are discursively constructed will be enhanced through an engagement with the theoretical affordances of Poststructuralist Discourse Theory (PDT). As the discussion of theory informs the type of questions that can be asked, section 1.7 will outline the main research questions before commenting on how this approach will make an original contribution to both corpus-based CDA and PDT in section 1.8. Finally, an outline of the thesis will be provided in section 1.9.

1.2 — On my motivation for writing this thesis

1.2.1 — Personal motivations

Before critiquing the 'myth' that transgressive sexual and gender identities are universal categories, it is important to note that, as a queer person coming of age in the 1990s, I myself, have benefitted from the notion that 'gay identity' is a universal and transhistorical category. In my isolation as a gay teenager in rural Canada, discourses surrounding 'gay culture' and the notion that there were people

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identities that were discursively constructed as being in contravention of compulsory heterosexuality and/or the gender binary.

who felt like me — not only around the world, but also reaching into the past — was crucial to my survival. It not only provided a language with which to identify and, potentially, with which to find solidarity in community, but it also provided me with the roots of a political consciousness in which I became acutely aware of the inequalities and violences — both physical and symbolic — that could be wrought even in an ostensibly 'liberal' nation like the one in which I was raised. Nevertheless, as a cisgender, white, middle-class, non-disabled gay teenager, I was also *un*aware of the fact that, for many queer people, their sexual or gender identity was not the primary vector of their oppression. This changed abruptly upon reading an interview from Richard Goldstein of *The Village Voice* published in 1984 wherein the author, essayist, and playwright, James Baldwin, argued that he had always felt 'remote from (gay life)' because for 'a black gay person…the sexual question comes after the question of color; it's simply one more aspect of the danger in which all black people live' (Goldstein 1984:60, 66-67). Reading this as a young white gay man, the comfort of a perceived universal gay identity fractured and, with it — as it so often does when reading Baldwin — emerged a newfound perspective and politics that began to lay the roots of what would eventually become this thesis.

In addition to the realisation that my own whiteness — in a world built on Racial Capitalism — had blinded me from the impossibility of a universal gay identity, Goldstein's interview with Baldwin also revealed that the very signifiers with which I had identified were not shared with a man whose identity I had for so long associated with my own. This is because, when Goldstein asked Baldwin if he ever thought of himself as 'being gay', he responded:

> No. I didn't have a word for it. The only one I had was "homosexual" and that didn't quite cover whatever it was I was beginning to feel (Goldstein 1984:59).

Like Goldstein, another white gay man, Baldwin's novels had also been, for me, 'an early vector of self-discovery' (Goldstein 1984:57). His claim, then, that he felt 'remote from (gay life)' and that it was a 'phenomenon that came along much after (he) was formed' profoundly changed how I understood sexual identities. If James Baldwin, one of the most critically acclaimed 'LGBTQ authors' of the 20th century (Pallardy and Lake 2014), had through historical, sociocultural and political circumstance, never actually identified as 'gay', then what was it in Baldwin's essays — in Baldwin's characters — with which I had been identifying all these years?

While the answer to this question is complex, it is also one that has been explored across the academy. In the introduction to *A Gay History of Britain* (Cook *et al.* 2007:xi), the historian, Matt Cook, clarifies for the reader that 'the "gay" in the title of this book can only really be said to apply to the last thirty years of the millennium under discussion, and looking for gay men in medieval monasteries

or the court of James I is a fruitless task'. Indeed, the main problem with trying to associate a sexual identity with figures such as Shakespeare or Richard I is to assume, through a contemporary lens, that such men understood their 'desire and identity; their loves and relationships, in the same ways; that — in modern parlance — they were all "gay"' (Cook *et al.* 2007:xi). This argument is echoed perhaps most famously in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* (Foucault 1979a:43) wherein Foucault argues that, until the 19th century in Europe, 'sodomy was a category of forbidden acts; their perpetrator was nothing more than the juridical subject of them'. It was not until the disciplines of Medicine, Psychiatry, and Sexology were developed that the signifier 'homosexual' became associated with an identity. Indeed, as Foucault (1979a:43) famously wrote, 'the sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species'. What is crucial here is that the sexual acts and desires had not changed. What *had* changed was the meaning ascribed to them and the discourses that had been developed during the 19th century that provided the discursive terrain upon which to render sexual identities possible. With this in mind, this thesis will proceed from the premise that an origin for the 'the myth of the "eternal homosexual"' (D'Emilio 1983:101) must be found in discourse.

1.2.2 — Political motivations

Before moving on to a discussion of discourse and the analytical approaches that will be applied in this thesis, it is important to note that the question of how identities are socially constructed is not limited to queer subject positions. Rather the same guiding questions that will be asked in this thesis could also be asked of any identity — namely, how is language used to discursively construct subjects and what are the histories that culminate in the appearance of a fixed and transhistorical identity? For example, in her seminal text, *The Invention of Women,* Oyèrónkẹ́ Oyěwùmí (1997) argues that a society structured around gender or sexual difference is a cultural construct that did not exist in precolonial Yorubaland (what is today parts of Nigeria, Togo and Benin). Rather, the gender binary and the subsequent division of labour arrived with European colonisation, thus suggesting that even the very *notion* of gender — a societal organising principle which has appeared universal — only emerges under specific historical conditions. Similarly, while phenotypical differences between populations are *today* interpreted as evidence of 'race'[2], this has not always been the case with many

[2] In the tradition of scholars such as Paul Gilroy (1987, 1993), the term 'race' has been placed in quotation marks in order to disrupt the idea that processes of *racialisation* have any basis in biology. Indeed, as argued by Gilroy (1987:38-39) in the introduction to *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack,* 'accepting that skin "colour", however meaningless we know it to be, has a strictly limited material basis in biology, opens up the possibility of engaging with theories of signification which can highlight the elasticity and the emptiness of "racial" signifiers as well as the ideological work which has to be done in order to turn them into signifiers in the first place'. Not only does this conception of 'race formation' (Gilroy 1987) complement Laclau and

'white' people having been racialised as Other in the recent past. While this point is discussed in more detail in section 3.3.3, it is crucial to note in the introduction to this thesis, that the discursive construction of sexual identities is not unlike the *racialisation* of certain populations in that group formation always serves a political purpose. For example, in the context of the UK, the notion of 'race' was, historically, used as a technology of governance against people from Ireland in order to justify colonisation, indentured labour, and displacement (Ignatiev 1995). Through a similar process — but with much more horrific consequences — Jewish people were also constructed as a 'race' throughout the 19th century (Goldstein 2020) — a process of racialisation that ultimately culminated in the *Shoah*, i.e. Holocaust, under the Third Reich. The preceding examples demonstrate two important points. *First*, identities are not universal or fixed categories. Rather, they emerge under particular circumstances and are, thus, always already in flux. *Secondly*, this lack of fixity means that the status of a particular identification or group is also always subject to change — a fact that has been a motivating factor in the following research.

There is no doubt that, during my lifetime, significant progress has been made regarding the status of homonormative relationships in nations as geographically and culturally diverse as the UK, Argentina and Taiwan. Similarly, legislative gains regarding gender recognition — especially self-identification — have been made in Portugal, Luxemburg, and Ireland. And while the legal status of same-sex marriage or the ability to legally 'change' one's legal gender are not, alone, evidence that there has been an equitable advance in the sociocultural, economic or political status among all LGBTQI people, the 'acceptance' of *certain* queer populations, i.e. largely white, cisgender, non-disabled, middle-class, gay men, *is* indicative of a rapid cultural change regarding the status of certain queer populations in some parts of the world. At the time of writing, however, there are indications that such progress may not be as permanent as it once appeared. As the rise of the far right continues to spread throughout Europe, the Americas, and even India, many of the legislative gains made over the last twenty years now appear fragile when faced with an emergent fascism. For example, the far-right cabinet of the Conservative Party in the UK have recently blocked Scotland from amending their *Gender Recognition Act* — a move which reflects an increasingly hostile environment for trans people across the country which is being fuelled by many within the British media. Such discourses do not solely impact the trans population's access to healthcare, but it has also resulted in a dramatic increase in violences — both material and symbolic — being perpetrated against trans people. Concurrently, in the US and Canada, demonstrations against 'Drag Story Time' are increasing as

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Mouffe's (2014) theory of discourse, but it also signals to the reader that, while the material consequences of *racism* have significant consequences, 'race' as a concept is best understood as a technology of governance rather than an identity.

reactionary views regarding paedophilia and so-called 'grooming' have ultimately resulted in Tennessee *banning* public Drag performances. These are but two examples of a chilling regression that appears to be accelerating and, thus, provides an added urgency to conducting research that seeks to trace how the social status of queer identities change according to the sociocultural, economic and political landscape in which they are positioned.

1.3 — On the use of the term *discourse*

In the discipline of linguistics, there are many definitions of discourse. At its most basic, discourse refers to 'language beyond the sentence' (Stubbs 1983:1) and the ways in which language use becomes coherent during a communicative event. Definitions of discourse can also take into account paralinguistic context from the social world, thereby referring to 'a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or 'social network'" (Gee, 1989, p. 21). Definitions of discourse, however, are not solely limited to linguistics with many other disciplines such as political science, sociology, and gender studies also investigating how discourses are developed, reproduced, and disseminated throughout the social world. In the interests of addressing the issue of sexual and gender identity, however, the current thesis will adopt the definition of discourse as presented by Foucault (1972:54) wherein he posits that 'discourses systematically form the objects of which they speak'. In the this oft quoted passage from *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, what Foucault (1972) appears to be arguing is that discourse is not simply about language or signifying practices passively representing the world around us in order to facilitate communication. Rather discourses serve an epistemological and ontological function in that they actively produce systems of knowledge, contest and maintain relations of power, and, ultimately, create the conditions of possibility for what can be known and what can be said. In other words, we are all products of discourse and are, therefore, unable to transcend it. This understanding of discourse has been partially adopted in certain fields of linguistics such as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and has proven fruitful in understanding how identities are formed, presented and understood. In the following sections of this Introduction I will, therefore, explain how a critical analysis of discourses surrounding sexual and gender identities will be undertaken through a combination of various approaches to discourse analysis.

1.4 — On Corpus-based Critical Discourse Analysis

One of the most useful methods to analyse how a particular identity or group has been represented is through the various analytic toolkits which have been developed in the field of CDA. Originally developed by scholars such as Ruth Wodak (1999; 2001), Norman Fairclough (1989;1995) and Teun van Dijk (1991; 1998), CDA seeks to ascertain — much like Foucault (1982) — how discourses are

used in order to (re)produce ideologies that justify inequality or other social phenomenon that contribute to unequal power relations. As will be discussed in Chapter 2, however, CDA has been accused of 'cherry-picking' examples of language that justify a predetermined conclusion of how language and power function in society (Baker and Levon 2015). In order to address accusations of 'bias', many scholars have taken an approach to analysis that combines CDA with Corpus Linguistics (CL). CL is a method of linguistic analysis that involves taking large bodies of naturally occurring language and then analysing them using software that allows for the identification of language patterns (McEnery and Hardie 2012). Not only can this reveal salient and frequent discourses in the data, as well as non-obvious patterns that would likely have remained hidden if reading a smaller sample, but CL can also provide quantitative evidence upon which a qualitative analysis is based. Corpus-based CDA or Corpus-assisted Discourse Studies (CADS) has been essential in analysing representations of marginalised groups, e.g. Muslims (Baker 2010; Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery 2013a; Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery 2013b), refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants and migrants (Baker, McEnery and Gabrielatos 2007; Gabrielatos and Baker 2008; KhosraviNik 2010), as well as the LGBTQI population (Baker 2005; Morrish and Sauntson 2011; Bachmann 2011; Zottola 2018; Wilkinson 2019), revealing the ways in which language is used to normalise inequalities and mediate certain discursive choices. Many of these studies will be discussed in the Literature Review (Chapter 2); however, it is important to note, at this point, that one of the main subjects in corpus-based CDA has been the analysis of language use by the media (Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery 2013a; Webster 2018; Clarke and Grieve 2019; Taylor 2020). This is primarily because, whether it be traditional forms such as newspapers or contemporary modalities such as Twitter, the media is one of the main methods through which knowledge and discourse is (re)produced, shared, and oftentimes, contested. If the goal of this thesis is to map how, when, why, and for whose benefit certain sexual and gender identities became hegemonic, then looking at how such discourses have been mediated is a crucial step in addressing these questions.

1.5 — On the power of the media and the need for a diachronic approach to corpus-based CDA

Like the interview in *The Village Voice* or Theresa May's editorial in *Pink News*, the media have been a consistent vehicle through which discourses and identities are represented, disseminated and (re)produced (Fairclough 1995). In order to begin exploring how sexual and gender identities came to appear fixed and, indeed, a fundamental social category in the organisation of society, I will argue that it is crucial to look at the language of the media and the discourses that have been *consistently* reproduced. In order to do so, I will be conducting a diachronic corpus-based CDA of newspaper discourse and how queer identities have been represented over time. The primary source of data will

be *The Times* (the rationale for which is discussed in Chapter 4). Beyond simply looking at the language that is mediated through *The Times* today, I will also argue that, in order to trace the roots of contemporary notions of sexual and gender identity, it is crucial that we observe the past. This is not only because historical discourses provide the foundations upon which contemporary discourses are developed. It is also because the affordances of temporal distance — in effect, 'no longer (being) native speakers of our texts' (Taylor 2022:4) — allows for the analyst to, perhaps, interpret language from a distance that allows for a greater insight into how identities are always historically contingent — informed by the discourses, politics, and sociocultural context in which they are formed and performed. In other words, a diachronic analysis of language data from *The Times* that focuses on the ways sexual and gender identity are always changing may provide additional evidence for the claims made in section 1.1 and 1.2, i.e. that there are no universal queer subjects. Rather, we are all products of history and place, represented through the language and discourse that is available at a particular historical conjuncture. While there has been important diachronic research on language and identity developed in corpus-based CDA as well as CADS, this thesis will propose that some of the underpinning theoretical assumptions intrinsic to this area of analysis may not be able to answer how LGBTQI identities have been discursively constructed. In order to address some of these theoretical gaps, I propose a novel approach wherein the strong methodological affordances of corpus-based CDA are used in conjunction with the theoretical framework of Poststructuralist Discourse Theory developed by Laclau and Mouffe (2014) in their seminal text, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics.*

1.6 — On the integration of corpus-based CDA with Laclau and Mouffe's Poststructuralist Discourse Theory

In sections 1.1 and 1.2, I argued that the primary motivation for this thesis is not to understand how LGBTQI people have been represented, but rather, to understand how the very notion of a queer identity has been discursively constructed across time. This is not only because, as a child, I had naïvely subsumed queerness within a universal perspective that places whiteness at its core, but also because the specificity of queernesses across time and place offers the potential for radical liberation. Approaching this thesis as a socialist and as someone who regards the current political and economic settlement as untenable for the majority of the world's population, I also believe that liberal identity politics are a potential hurdle in creating solidarity across, *inter alia*, 'race', class, gender, sexuality, region, and ability. Beginning from the premise that 'whatever is could always be otherwise' (Dahlberg and Phelan 2011; Graeber 2015) is, therefore, not only analytically necessary, but also politically liberating. With this in mind, the ontological framework provided by Laclau and Mouffe

(2014) resonates with these aspirations and observations, rendering their work essential in exploring how queer identities have been discursively constructed.

The theoretical framework developed by Laclau and Mouffe (2014) will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3; however, it is crucial at this point to highlight some of the reasons why their social ontology is relevant and useful to the current thesis. Referred to as post-Marxist or Poststructuralist Discourse Theory (PDT), Laclau and Mouffe's theoretical approach has been adopted primarily in the discipline of Political Science and, in particular, the study of Populism. This is because one of their main objectives has been to understand how identities are constructed, how politicised populations are formed, and how consent is manufactured for unequal political and economic settlements. In order to do so, there are two significant differences between corpus-based CDA and PDT that are essential to mention at this point. First, Laclau and Mouffe (2014) begin from the premise that there is no *pre*-discursive identity before a person or people are represented in discourse. In other words, this means that queer identities do not and *cannot* exist prior to being constructed through discourse. Secondly, Laclau and Mouffe (2014) make the controversial claim that there is nothing outside of discourse. This is not to say that there is no material reality outside of language. Rather, their argument is premised on the idea that nothing has meaning outside of discourse. These two points are crucial to uncovering the processes through which queer identities have been formed, changed and mediated over time. This is because, if there is no pre-discursive subject because identities are only constructed through discourse, then the primary research question is necessarily altered from 'how are queer identities represented in the language of the media?' to 'how is the language of the media used to discursively construct queer identities?'. With this in mind, PDT's ontological framework is well positioned to begin answering how, when, why, and for whose benefit the 'myth' of a universal and transhistorical queer identity is so salient in contemporary discourse.

It should be noted at this point, however, that the social ontology developed by Laclau and Mouffe (2014) resonates with many of the same theoretical insights developed in the area of Queer Theory (QT) (Sedgwick 1990; Butler 1990, 1993; Halperin 1995). Indeed, Ernesto Laclau and Judith Butler engaged deeply with each other's work such that they published a series of essays in dialogue with each other and co-author, Slavoj Žižek, in the monograph, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality* (Butler, Laclau and Žižek 2011). As such, it would seem likely that a thesis concerned with the discursive construction of queer identities would benefit from using QT as its primary theoretical frame. Nevertheless, there are three main reasons why I have chosen to root the proceeding analysis in PDT. First, while QT does engage with discourse, many of the arguments and analyses also deal with issues of materiality and embodiment which are, in many ways, beyond the purview of a study employing corpus-based CDA as its methodology. Secondly, the theoretical affordances of QT have

been adopted extensively in the field of Queer Linguistics (Hall, 2013; Milani 2013) and, more recently, with research in corpus-based CDA (see special issue of *Language and Sexuality* 2018). Conversely, when this project began in 2017, no such engagement between corpus-based CDA and PDT had yet begun in spite of the forthcoming argument that they are highly complementary approaches. Finally, while QT is primarily concerned with critiques of (hetero)normativity and issues of power in relation to sexuality and gender, PDT is more broadly concerned with group formation and hegemonic struggle. It is this final difference that provided my primary motivation for adopting PDT's social ontology. This is because, as noted in section 1.2, the same discursive processes that have resulted in the consistently changing status of the queer subject, are the same discursive processes that affect all subject positions and, indeed, identities. As such, the analysis of such processes could be extended to other identities and groups in order to both understand processes of identification and group formation as well as reconfiguring the social, political and economic landscape in order to achieve the liberation of all people.

1.7 — Research questions

The methodological affordances of diachronic corpus-based CDA when combined the theoretical framework of Laclau and Mouffe's PDT will provide the means through which to answer the following research questions.

Central research question:

1. How has *The Times* used language to discursively construct queer subject positions?

Supporting research questions:

2. In what ways have representations of queer identities in *The Times* changed or stayed the same over time?
3. To what extent are representations of LGBTQI people contingent on historical context, e.g. political, social and economic events?
4. In what ways can non-linguistic theoretical frameworks support the analysis of how queer subject positions were constructed in the language of *The Times*?
5. What are the strengths and weaknesses of a combined approach to the analysis of how queer subject positions were constructed in *The Times* that employs poststructuralist discourse theory and diachronic corpus-based critical discourse analysis?

1.8 — On this thesis' original contribution to the field

In the introduction to Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, he argues that:

> Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past (Marx 1885:iii).

Often misunderstood as deterministic, a reading of the context in which this quote appears reveals that what Marx actually appears to be arguing is that history is always already contingent upon its past. In other words, there are no essential identities that transcend time and place. Rather, we are only ever the result of choices that were made in the past and, while we can resist their outcomes, our histories cannot be transcended. In terms of the content of this thesis, it is my goal to elucidate the ways in which one of the most respected newspapers in the UK has, at times, represented transgressive sexual and gender identities as static and fixed categories. It is also my goal, however, to understand how such ahistorical representations of queer identities function within the broader sociocultural, political and economic context in which they are manifest. For instance, in the example of Theresa May's editorial in *Pink News*, she is committed to the language of inclusivity, using 'LGBT+' in contexts where it is historically inaccurate. Simultaneously, May is also committed to presenting the history of 'LGBT+ equality' as a linear march towards progress. In response, I would argue that the use of 'LGBT+' is, on the one hand, the outcome of Corporate Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training which does more to sanitise the image of the Conservative Party — or May herself — than it does recognise the particularities of lesbian, bi, trans, and queer people's oppression. On the other hand, by representing the 'journey' towards equality as steady and resulting in 'hard-won rights', May deflects from state oppressions in the past while simultaneously signalling to potential voters that, for everyone, tomorrow is always better than today. The original contribution that I aim to make in terms of content is, therefore, not only uncovering the salient discourses that have produced the perception of a fixed, universal, or transhistorical queer subject, but to also provide the historical context and potential reasons for *why* such discourses were mediated in the first place.

In terms of methodology, I would argue that the integration of corpus-based CDA with Laclau and Mouffe's PDT is an innovation that will allow for a better understanding of how identities are constructed. As will be discussed in Chapter 2, much CDA begins from the premise that there is a subject that is being represented. As this thesis begins from the premise that this is an impossibility, it is conceivable that the same methodological and theoretical amalgam could also be extended to understanding how all identities are constructed. While a novel approach, scholars such as Nikisianis *et al.* (2019), Brown (2020) as well as Brown and Mondon (2021) have also, since research for this

thesis began, been combining corpus-based CDA with PDT. This thesis will, therefore, not only be an innovation within the field of corpus-based CDA, but will also present the opportunity to work interdisciplinarily with scholars from other disciplines in order to refine this approach and its theoretical basis.

Finally, in each of the three analysis chapters, other social theories will be included in the analysis, e.g. *Biopolitics*, *Capitalism*, and *Erasure*. It is, therefore, also my contention that this thesis will make an original contribution by highlighting the ways in which corpus-based CDA has the opportunity to integrate social theories from across the Humanities and Social Sciences. It is my hope that, in doing so, corpus-based CDA or CADS will be able to tackle new topics and develop a theoretical toolkit that extends beyond much of what is currently employed. With these three contributions in mind, the next section will provide an outline for how the main arguments will be organised.

1.9 — Outline

The following thesis is comprised of eight chapters. Chapter 2 provides a critical Literature Review that highlights both the affordances of corpus-based CDA in analysing queer representation in news discourse while also suggesting that there are limitations that can be addressed by incorporating the social ontology developed by Laclau and Mouffe (2014). Chapter 3 outlines the key theories developed by Laclau and Mouffe (2014) in their seminal text, *Hegemony Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, before concluding with the argument that Laclau and Mouffe's theory of identity and group formation are complemented by the rigorous analytical methods developed in corpus-based CDA. Chapter 4 then provides an explanation for how the research questions presented in section 1.7, will be answered — describing the primary methodological approaches as well as the data that will be analysed. The following three analysis chapters will then answer the research questions by arguing that queer identities have been constructed through three discursive trajectories. Chapter 5 argues that LGBTQI populations have been both formed by state *biopower* while also providing a justification for the ongoing primacy of *biopolitics*. Chapter 6 then considers the ways in which *capitalism* and, specifically, *capitalist ideologies* have discursively constructed the queer subject while also providing new spaces in which certain members of the LGBTQI population have become emblematic of British capitalism. Finally, Chapter 7 will argue that the previous analyses are premised on the *erasure* of the inherent diversity within the LGBTQI population such that the history of queer representation is fundamentally the history of white, cisgender, middle-class, non-disabled, white gay men. In conclusion, Chapter 8 will highlight the ways in which corpus- assisted CDA along with PDT has provided the scope within which to answer the research questions in section 1.7. It will also reflect on the integration of more social theory into CADS and the extent to

which this approach has enhanced or, potentially, complicated the present study. Finally, a discussion of the impact and originality of the work will be presented along with suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2 — Literature review

2.1 — Introduction

This thesis emerges out of a tradition that analyses corpora, i.e. 'large…representative samples of a particular type of naturally occurring language' (Baker 2006:2), in order to support a critical study of discourse(s) with the aim of uncovering how language both shapes and is shaped by the social world (Fairclough 2015). In many ways, however, this is a curious amalgam of both method and theory — one which has resulted in a 'broad church' that continues to evolve, fracture, reconcile and, ultimately, produce more robust and innovative ways of analysing discourse. With this in mind, the following discussion will critically analyse literature that has informed my own approach while also providing a brief overview of key literature in the field more broadly. Specifically, section 2.2 will begin with an overview of the field, including a broad history of how corpus-based CDA was developed. This will be followed by a discussion in section 2.3 wherein some general types of corpora will be identified — a discussion that will lead into a critical evaluation of news discourse in section 2.4 and how my own research is situated within this tradition. In order to examine a method that I argue broaches some of these critiques, section 2.5 will discuss the role of diachronic corpora and how the current thesis is situated within this approach. Finally, section 2.6 will provide an overview and critique of how LGBTQI populations have been represented in the British Press.

2.2 — Corpus-based critical discourse analysis: Histories, rationale and politics

It has been posited that there are several schools that began combining corpus-linguistics with discourse analysis[3] (McEnery and Baker 2015). These include research conducted at the University of Birmingham, Lancaster University, and the University of Bologna. Beginning in earnest during the 1990s with authors such as Sinclair (1991), Hunston (1995) and Stubbs (1996), studies at the University of Birmingham were integral in developing many of the core principles which still drive research today. For instance, by using concordancing software to build on the idea that 'you shall

[3] While there are similar methods which have been developed in other languages, e.g. Mandarin (1996), Portuguese (Rocha and Santos 2001), and German (Kupietz *et al.* 2018), the current literature review will primarily focus on research conducted using English language sources. While this is primarily because the current thesis is concerned with media representation in the UK, it is also because the methodology in this thesis follows the approaches developed by scholars working mainly in English.

know a word by the company it keeps' (Firth, 1957:11), analyses of collocations and concordance lines revealed patterns in large corpora of naturally occurring language — an empirical approach that broke from much work in linguistics at the time, e.g. generative linguistics, that largely relied on intuitions about actual language use (McEnery and Hardie, 2012). Theories that emerged from this approach, specifically in relation to collocation, include semantic prosody (Louw 1993) and discourse prosody (Stubbs 2002) — both analytical tools which continue to have a significant impact on how analyses of discourse are conducted today. In my own research, this is especially true for the latter because, as noted by Stubbs (2002), an analysis of frequent collocations can reveal the encoded cultural concepts that are imbued within a word. The logic follows that, if 'words acquire meanings from the collocations in which they occur in individual texts, but also from the collocations in which they frequently occur in many kinds across the usage of a speech community' (Stubbs 2002:146), then it is plausible that signifiers representing a particular identity (or discourse) may eventually become suffused with meanings that trigger particular connotations and, therefore, attitudes. In spite of not explicitly using either of these terms, an essential study from this tradition is Krishnamurthy (1996) who effectively identified discourse prosodies through a corpus-based analysis of potentially innocuous terms such as *ethnic*, *racial*, and, *tribal*. Through an analysis of collocation and concordance lines, it became evident that *tribal* was most frequently imbued with pejorative connotations used in relation to foreign Others. In contrast, *tribal* was never used for British populations — *clan* being used instead — and, when it was, would only be used for humorous effect. One critique of the 'neo-Firthian' school, however, is that much of the research did not employ statistical significance testing (McEnery and Hardie 2012:125-126) — a critique that was addressed in research that was being conducted at Lancaster University.

Often referred to as corpus-*based* CDA, researchers such as Baker (2004; 2005; 2006), McEnery (2004) and Baker and McEnery (2005) developed an approach that sought to integrate corpus-linguistics with many of the theories and methods developed in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Influenced by scholars working in CDA such as Fairclough (1989;1995), van Dijk (1991; 1998), and in concert with Ruth Wodak (1999; 2001), corpus-based CDA represented a 'methodological synergy' (Baker *et al.* 2008) that addressed a frequent critique of CDA — namely, that it selects features of a text which support its preferred interpretation, rendering it a method of analysis which appears driven by a predetermined political position as opposed to rigorous linguistic analysis (Widdowson 1995, 1998, 2008). Originally piloted by Hardt-Mautner (1995), corpus-based CDA has since developed a broad methodological toolkit which, *inter alia*, has allowed researchers to critically address issues concerning the representation of refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants and migrants (Baker, McEnery and Gabrielatos 2007; Gabrielatos and Baker 2008; KhosraviNik 2010), Islam (Baker 2010; Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery 2013a; Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery 2013b), and

the LGBTQI population (Baker 2005; Morrish and Sauntson 2011; Bachmann 2011; Zottola 2018; Wilkinson 2019) while simultaneously developing rigorous statistical measurements that address criticisms of 'cherry-picking' evidence in order to support a predetermined conclusion (Baker and Levon 2015). In addition to the development of statistical methods that enhanced the use of analytical tools such as keyness and collocation — both statistical measures that will be explained in Chapter 4 — Lancaster also developed methods of tagging corpora, such that lexical and semantic features of a word were automatically ascribed to each token within a corpus (see Rayson 2008; 2009). Tagging a corpus with metadata, textual markup, and linguistic annotation was an innovative advancement in the field as it allowed for researchers to obtain an enriched sense of what kind of features were present in a corpus, i.e. a sort of linguistic analysis that McEnery and Hardie (2012:31) argue 'make(s) explicit information that is there implicitly in the data'. Thus, through statistical measurements and corpus annotation developed at Lancaster University, corpus-based CDA has been able to develop the type of research originally conducted by Krishnamurthy (1996). An essential example that has inspired my own research in corpus-based CDA is the seminal text by Baker, Gabrielatos, and McEnery (2013a) wherein the concept of discourse prosody was developed through the use of statistical significance testing in order to analyse representations of Islam in the British Press between 1998 and 2009. In a diachronic corpus of over 143 million words, it was demonstrated that, through collocates such as *behead*, *suspect*, *arrest*, *accuse* and *jail*, the word *Muslim* carried with it a negative discourse prosody for criminality (Baker, Gabrielatos, and McEnery 2013a:39). Similarly, the modifying collocates of *Islamic* such as *extremist*, *militant*, *fundamentalist*, *terrorist*, *extremism*, *radical*, *fanatic*, and *militancy*, give the word 'a negative discourse prosody of extremism, as well as a semantic preference for collectives, particularly involving political entities' (Baker, Gabrielatos, and McEnery, 2013a:45). Not only were these observations produced through the effective amalgam of quantitative corpus techniques and qualitative discourse analysis, but the findings were also the product of a holistic approach which followed one of the central tenets of CDA by taking into consideration the wider historical and political context in which such discourses were produced, processes of production and reception, as well as intertextuality, reflexivity and triangulation. Some examples of this include the consideration of readership demographics, the political and religious standpoints of newspapers, crime statistics relating to violence towards religious groups in the UK, as well as reflection from the authors on their own identities and how that may have impacted on the analysis (Baker, Gabrielatos, and McEnery 2013a). Based on this, it could, therefore, be convincingly argued that, through the 'incremental effect' (Baker 2006:13) of discourse, both Islam as a religion and Muslim people as a population would likely be perceived as dangerous as a result of media representation.

Concurrently, a similar approach was being developed by Partington (2004) at the University of Bologna which also addressed, *inter alia*, issues of representation, but diverged from corpus-based

CDA in two important ways. Dubbed Corpus-assisted Discourse Studies (CADS), Partington (2013:10) argued that CADS explicitly distanced itself from a particular approach to discourse analysis, i.e. 'certainly *not* critical discourse analysis' (emphasis in original), and that, as opposed to corpus-based CDA, CADS also has 'no overarching political agenda and has very different attitudes to and traditions of how language data should be managed'. Drawing more explicitly on the work of Stubbs (1996; 2002), the initial aim of CADS was to uncover and evaluate non-obvious meaning in large corpora. Later work in Modern-Diachronic CADS (MD-CADS) also aimed to uncover non-obvious meaning but did so through the analysis of comparable newspaper texts at different points in time (see Duguid 2010, Marchi 2010, and Taylor 2010).

It is important to mention at this point that, unlike Partington, the current study *does* take an explicit political position in relation to the subject and draws on political theories ranging from (post-)Marxist critique and critical theory (in the tradition of the Frankfurt School) through to poststructuralist discourse theory and CDA. Furthermore, I would also contend that any analysis of discourse is necessarily political. First, language use is political and always involves choices. As noted by Fowler (1991:4):

> There are always different ways of saying the same thing, and they are not accidental alternatives. Differences in expression carry ideological distinction (and thus differences in representation).

Secondly, research itself can never be 'objective' or free from bias. For example, in this particular field, the research questions asked, the decisions made when building and analysing corpora, as well as the answers that emerge are always informed and, indeed, structured by a particular perspective. In the tradition of Haraway (1988), I would argue that the discourse analyst can only ever provide 'situated knowledge', i.e. a necessarily partial perspective which is contingent upon, *inter alia*, gender, ethnicity, class, sexuality, age, nationality, personal history, employment status, region, linguistic background, etc. Finally, as argued by van Dijk (1993), the goal of linguistic analysis in the tradition of CDA should never be impartial but rather practised in solidarity with those affected by discursive practices.

At the same time, however, it is indeed the case that many publications which are positioned as 'CADS' and, especially, draw on diachronic methods of analysis, are crucial touchstones in my research (see Marchi and Taylor 2009b; Taylor 2020, 2021). For instance, analyses concerning the discursive construction of European identity by Marchi and Taylor (2009a) and Marchi (2012) have influenced the way my own research considers how corpora can assist in identifying the discursive construction of a diverse group of people. Similarly, research by Charlotte Taylor concerning the

subject of historical representations in the British Press (Taylor 2014; 2019; 2020) as well as the methodological task of identifying similarity (Taylor 2013) and absence (Schröter and Taylor 2018) are both foundational to the way I have formulated my research questions and approached my analysis. It is, therefore, likely the case that ten years after the publication of Partington *et al.* (2013), it is perhaps unhelpful to dwell on semantic taxonomies of what constitutes corpus-based CDA and what constitutes CADS. Indeed, as Taylor and Marchi (2018:5) suggest, it is time to transcend 'disciplinary barriers and avoid pigeon-holing or branding'. Based on this brief history of corpus-assisted approaches to (critical) discourse analysis, the overarching narrative is that, while corpus-linguistic techniques can provide quantifiable or statistical evidence to support an analysis of discourse, 'bias' is always present due to our 'situated perspective' and the nature of language (Haraway 1988; McEnery and Baker 2015). What corpus-linguistic tools offer to discourse analysis is, instead, 'a means of achieving greater precision, richness as well as awareness' (Taylor and Marchi 2018:6) of how analyses are conducted. The following section will provide a brief overview of some of the common topics and data sets which have been addressed using this method.

2.3 — Types of corpora

2.3.1 — General or balanced corpora

At the time of writing, the number of publicly available corpora has increased significantly since corpus-assisted discourse studies began to be developed in the late 1980s and early 1990s[4]. General or 'balanced' corpora such as the *British National Corpus* (BNC) provide the user with language data from different registers and genres (e.g. academic texts , fictional texts, periodicals) that are then tagged or coded according to grammatical information such as the part-of-speech for individual words as well as metadata regarding source or the encoding of individual texts (BNC 2001). While the majority of the 100-million-word BNC was compiled from written texts published between the late 1970s and early 1990s, the Spoken BNC was expanded in 2014 addressing the lack of widely available spoken corpora (Love *et al.* 2017). Similar corpora have been developed for American English such as the one-billion-word *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA) which is also compiled from academic texts, fiction, periodicals and spoken data. More recently, corpora such as the *TenTen* family have been built solely of language from the Internet. Due to the tremendous scope of language online, corpora such as *EnTenTen20* have now reached 36 billion words and are

[4] While there have been significant developments in corpora across a range of languages, the following discussion will focus on English as this directly relates to the scope of this thesis.

compiled from online English language data from around the world including texts types such as news discourse, gaming language, and blogs (Jakubíček *et al.* 2013). While synchronous corpora have been crucial in the development of the field, the current thesis draws more explicitly on a tradition of using diachronic corpora to track language change and similarity.

Diachronic and historical corpora have been developed to track linguistic variation across time, revealing both grammatical and semantic variation as well as social, cultural and political changes through the analysis of historical discourse. For the purposes of this review, I will draw a distinction between sampling methods, i.e. continuous language samples as opposed to parallel sampling methods. The former includes corpora such as the *Helsinki Corpus* which consists of texts ranging from 750 to 1700. While the corpus is divided into Old English, Middle English and Early Modern English, the corpus is constituted by contiguous time frames of 100 years each (Kytö 1996). Similarly, the *Corpus of Historical American English* (COHA) is a 475-million-word corpus which covers language ranging from the 1820s-2010s. Like COCA, the COHA corpus is constituted by a range of text types in order to allow for an analysis of variation. It is also divided according to decade, an approach similar to that of the *Helsinki Corpus*, in order to facilitate the analysis of diachronic variation. In terms of parallel sampling methods, the 'Brown Family' is perhaps the most well-known within the field and has provided the blueprint for many of the diachronic corpora that have been subsequently developed. Described by Baker (2010:59) as small but well balanced, the original *Brown Corpus* consisted of approximately 500 texts from 15 writing genres with a median year of 1961 that resulted in approximately 1 million words of text. Using the same sampling methods, the original *Brown Corpus* was soon followed by the *Lancaster/Oslo-Bergen* (LOB) corpus which was constituted by British English from the same time period. Since then, the Brown and LOB corpora have grown to include corpora compiled from the same sampling methods but for different points in time such as the *Freiburg-LOB* (FLOB) corpus representing British English around 1991, the *Freiburg-Brown* (FROWN) corpus representing American English around 1992, the *Before LOB* (BLOB) corpus representing British English from around 1931, as well as the *BE06* and *AE06* corpora developed by Baker (2009) which represent language from both the UK and the US with a median year of 2006. With their goal of achieving a balanced representation of text types and genres from each era, these corpora have provided insight into changes in the use of modal verbs (Leech 2002) as well as an indication of how gendered terms have been used over time (Baker 2010). In spite of the insights gained through the analyses of such synchronous and diachronic corpora, purpose-built corpora have also been essential in the development of the field. The following discussion will, therefore, address some of the common topics and text types that have been addressed by researchers in order to begin answering particular questions that may be beyond the purview of corpora such as the BNC or the Brown family.

2.3.2 — Purpose-built corpora

Purpose-built corpora are compiled from representative samples of language data that specifically address a particular research question. Such corpora and discourse studies have been particularly useful in addressing topics from health communication to political discourse and have influenced the design of the corpora built for the current thesis. Some notable recent examples concerning health communication include corpora compiled from patient feedback (Hunt, Koteyko and Gunter 2015; Baker, Brookes and Evans 2019; Baker and Brookes 2022; Brookes *et al.* 2022), online support groups (Hunt and Harvey 2015; Hunt and Brookes 2020; Kinloch and Jaworska 2021); as well as social media (Hunt, Koteyko and Gunter 2015; Koteyko and Atanasova 2018). Another area of research which has made extensive use of purpose-built corpora includes the analysis of metaphor. Again, healthcare communication has been analysed by looking at the use of metaphor in corpora compiled from conversations about cancer (Semino, Heywood, and Short 2004) as well as interviews and online forum posts which also address cancer and the end of life (Semino *et al.* 2017). Another area of metaphor analysis which has exploited the use of corpora is in regard to political discourses. Analyses by Charteris-Black (2004) used a corpus-based approach to the analysis of political speeches and manifestos which revealed, *inter alia*, cultural differences in political discourse and practice between the US and the UK. L'Hôte (2014) also used party political manifestos and speeches from New Labour which demonstrated how processes such as globalisation as well as 'third way politics' or 'politics without adversary' (Mouffe 1998) were presented as inevitable — not political choices but natural phenomena that could no longer be questioned or challenged. Finally, Partington (2003) as well as Partington and Taylor (2017) have published highly original work which considers the relationship between metaphor and pragmatics through the use of CADS. The variety of text types that can be explored through the development of purpose-built corpora is growing and include modalities such as Twitter (Clarke and Grieve 2019) and even multimodal corpora (Knight 2011). For the purposes of this thesis, however, an overview of corpora built from media discourses is essential as it not only positions the analysis within a broader research context but also because of the crucial role news plays in mediating hegemonic representations of sexual and gender identity.

2.4 — Corpus-based CDA and the significance of news discourse

One of the most common text-types to be analysed in corpus-based CDA is print media. This is primarily because news discourse functions to control the type of information that is made widely available to the public — interpreting, organising, and classifying information which influences the way people perceive the world and themselves in it (Conboy 2007). Indeed, as argued by van Dijk (2008:58),

> Probably no other discourse type is so pervasive and so shared and read by so many people at more or less the same time. Its power potential, therefore, is enormous and close scrutiny of the schemata, topics, and style of news reports is therefore crucial to our understanding of the exercise of political, economic, social and cultural power, and of the communication and acquisition of ideologies that support it.

Writing specifically about newspapers, Conboy (2007:5) points out that 'this control may not be overt but it is exercised nevertheless in patterns, habits and structures which have become so commonplace that they no longer are automatically seen as contributing to processes of control but are seen as merely "reflecting the world as it is"'. From a theoretical and political perspective, the media and specifically newspapers are, therefore, a crucial subject of analysis when considering questions concerning representation, politics, ideology and to what extent a topic may be considered 'newsworthy' (Bednarek and Caple 2017). In addition to these foundational questions about power and representation in the press, the use of newspaper data is also an 'ideal territory' for corpus-assisted CDA due to the abundance of data available (Marchi 2019:576). With online platforms such as *LexisNexis* and *Factiva*, analysts can build representative corpora from newspaper publications from around the world that address, *inter alia*, particular formats (e.g. tabloid versus broadsheet in the context of the UK), languages, regions, and time periods (Marchi 2019). With the relative ease with which newspaper corpora can be built, there are a plethora of topics that have been addressed using this particular type of discourse.

One important area of sociolinguistic analysis that has been addressed using newspaper discourse is concerned with language ideologies and how these are explicitly or implicitly manifest in the press. For instance, Wright and Brookes (2019) published a revealing analysis of how the (far) right-wing press represented the results of the 2011 census concerning English language proficiency. Over the subsequent five years of reporting, they identified a media narrative that invoked xenophobic and racist ideologies that were embedded within a discussion of English proficiency among immigrant populations. The discussion of language as opposed to 'race', religion or culture provided a topical vehicle with which to further marginalise immigrant populations in an already hostile environment, thus fuelling and proliferating a growing suspicion and fear of foreign Others. Similarly, the right-wing press' elision of austerity and the lack of access to language provision enabled the press to place the responsibility for language acquisition solely on the individual and their family. It was, therefore, demonstrated that the consistent use of such discourses over time served to 'legitimise the social exclusion and active discrimination of those who are perceived to be unable or unwilling to fit the linguistic "norm"' (Wright and Brookes 2019:79). While this thesis does not explicitly consider language ideology, the use of fear and suspicion aimed at a marginalised group in newspaper

discourse is a theme that will be salient in my own analysis. Before moving on to themes which are more closely related to the present thesis, it is important to note that another significant area using newspapers in order to explore language ideology is in relation to cross-linguistic studies (Freake 2012; Taylor 2014; Vessey 2013; Vessey 2014). For instance, Freake (2012) and Vessey (2013; 2014) looked at how language ideologies are manifest in the Canadian media. By comparing French and English language publications, one of the major themes that emerged was concerned with the salience of language in francophone publications versus an 'anglonormativity' which rendered language issues almost invisible in the anglophone press. This phenomenon in the francophone press, referred to as 'hyperlinguistic awareness', indexed a 'heightened and often marked awareness of linguistic issues' (Freake 2012:6). This markedness of French and the embedded normativity of English is not dissimilar to the ways in which transgressive sexual and gender identities are frequently marked in the news media. Where sexuality is not remarked upon, it is likely due to a heteronormativity which assumes heterosexuality to be a universal norm unless explicitly transgressed or crossed.

Issues surrounding the representation of gender have also been addressed through corpus-based studies of newspaper discourse. Similar to the research cited above, Krishnamurthy and Jaworska (2012) also conducted a cross-linguistic analysis, but in this case, looked at representations of feminism in both the English and German press (see also Taylor [2014] for a cross-linguistic study of representations of refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants and migrants (RASIM) in Italian and English newspaper discourse). Through an analysis of purpose-built corpora consisting of national newspapers from both the UK and Germany as well as an analysis of the reference corpora, it was revealed that the signifier *feminism/feminismus* was generally embedded within a negative discourse prosody. An analysis of collocates in both English and German newspapers revealed that, in both languages, feminism was discursively constructed as a movement from the past that had been unsuccessful in achieving its goals. It was also represented as being almost exclusively associated with western cultures. Feminism was not, however, represented uniformly between the German and British newspapers. For instance, in the English newspaper corpus, *feminism* was often also associated with the lesbian population whereas, in the German corpus, *feminism* was associated with academia — especially postmodernism — as well as being seen as an unattainable 'utopia' in the same way that the German press now represented the Communist *Deutsche Demokratische Republik* (DDR).

Where Krishnamurthy and Jaworska (2012) analysed feminism as an ideology, Baker and Levon (2015; 2016) analysed representations of masculinity in the British press and the hegemonic ideologies that structure hierarchies of masculinity. These seminal papers have informed my own analysis as the two publications focused on both methodological issues (Baker and Levon 2015) as well as the effects of media representation on the (re)production of hegemonic masculinity (Baker and

Levon 2016). In terms of methodology, Baker took a quantitative approach, analysing discourse patterns in a corpus of 44.1 million words while Levon adopted a strictly qualitative approach to a smaller sample of 51 articles (Baker and Levon 2015). The goal was to ascertain whether 'there were broad similarities or differences between the research findings and how this related to the different methodologies that were undertaken' (Baker 2015:222). In so doing, the results ultimately demonstrated that, like the 'methodological synergy' endorsed in Baker *et al.* (2008), a combination of corpus-based approaches to CDA was likely to produce similar findings to qualitative CDA, while also providing quantitative evidence that effectively strengthened the analytical argument. In addition, to informing my methodological approach, the subject of media representation in the (re)production of hegemonic masculinities also inspired my analysis of how the same discursive processes contribute to the mediation of hegemonic ideas surrounding sexual and gender diverse identities. This is because their analysis did not only focus on masculinity as a deracialised and classless subject position, but was rather enhanced through a specific focus on processes of intersectionality which took into consideration 'how different racialised and classed masculinities are positioned in relation to one another within a larger ideological field of masculinity in Britain' (Baker and Levon 2016:107).

What both studies found was that 'race', class and gender intersected along ideological axes primarily constituted by discourses concerning physicality and ambition (Baker and Levon 2016:131). These axes were arrived at through key findings concerning the intersectional processes constituted by 'race' and class. For instance, the racialisation of certain masculinities actually subsumed or elided class completely. Thus, Black and Asian men were represented as essentially classless, whereas working-class and middle-class masculinity was explicitly associated with whiteness. While untethered from a class position, Black men were discursively constructed as 'by definition, lacking in ambition and possessing an overabundance of physicality' (Baker and Levon 2016:120). They were, thus, associated with violence — both as perpetrators and as victims — while, at the same time, represented as prone to taking the 'easy option' or, when in positions of relative power, as 'anodyne'. Like Black masculinities, Asian men were also associated with violence, but in this case, a pernicious violence centred around gang culture and the grooming of white women (Baker and Levon 2016:121-122). Unlike Black men, however, Asian masculinities were frequently represented as 'ambitious' and 'entrepreneurial' (Baker and Levon 2016:122). Not unrelated from such discourses was the notion that, if Asian men could abandon their 'foreign' cultural values, they were capable of achieving a British gendered normativity (Baker and Levon 2016:123). In terms of class, both working-class and middle-class men were overwhelmingly represented as white (Baker and Levon 2015; 2016). What is most striking is that, in spite of their respective social, political and economic capital (Gilroy 1987; Akala 2018), both groups of men were represented as 'beleaguered' or as 'forgotten'. Interestingly, however, where both working-class and middle-class white men were represented as being 'banned',

'shunned', and 'excluded' unjustly (Baker and Levon 2016:126), only working-class men were positioned 'as (at least partially) responsible for their own failings' (Baker and Levon 2016: 128). The consequence of this was that working-class white men came to be seen as occupying 'a morally deviant space within the ideological landscape of masculinity' (Baker and Levon 2016:129). Through the findings discussed above, Baker and Levon (2015; 2016) have, therefore, provided a significant contribution to how gendered subject positions are constituted through intersectional processes that structure identities within a particular ideological conjuncture — a theoretical foundation that underpins much of the analysis in the present thesis.

The previous research discussed in this section has made significant contributions to the field and the studies chosen were included as exemplary due to the influence they have had on my own research. Furthermore, as a new era of corpus-based CDA begins to focus increasingly on digital media which have, without a doubt, transformed the discursive landscape and the ways in which ideologies and representations are mediated, I nevertheless strongly agree with Marchi (2019) who argues that traditional journalism is still alive and very relevant. Indeed, as van Dijk (2008) argues, there is perhaps no other discourse type which shapes the ideological terrain of a society as does the news media. With this in mind though, it is also important to reflect on areas of the analysis which have been underdeveloped — the 'dusty corners' to which Taylor and Marchi (2018) refer when taking stock of CADS current status as a discipline. While this is often likely due to space limitations in an academic journal article, I would argue that many of the conclusions reached in the previous studies stop short of explaining why certain representations become dominant and how the discursive (re)production of certain hegemonic discourses serve the interests of power. For instance, while Wright and Brookes (2019) acknowledge that there is a deficit in funding for ESOL programmes that would enable immigrants to develop their language skills, there is less attention paid to why these programmes have been cut in the first place and, indeed, what the ideological commitments of the current government are in relation to immigration and questions of citizenship more broadly (see Cooke 2015; Cooke and Peutrell 2019). Similarly, in a media ecology that primarily serves the interest of (far) right-wing actors, it would enhance the analysis to look at the relationship between representations of language ideology and how these act in concert with building electoral coalitions that fracture the working-classes, thus constructing antagonisms between groups of people who have been equally marginalised through the financialisation of the economy (Blakely 2019). The answer to the question of 'why' could, thus, be explored through post-Marxist and poststructuralist Discourse Theories (Hall 1987a, 2011; Laclau and Mouffe 2014; Mouffe 2018) that have focused on how contemporary political strategies have relied on marginalising sectors of the population (e.g. based on language proficiency) in order to build and maintain hegemony for a particular political and economic

settlement — in this case, neoliberalism. The inclusion of an explanatory critique would enhance the findings in Wright and Brookes (2019), bringing the 'critical' back into discourse analysis.

Similarly, while the intersectional approach taken by Baker and Levon (2015; 2016) was highly original in the field and inspired in its analysis, this reader was left wondering why certain masculinities became hegemonized in the first instance. Again, perhaps due to space limitations as well as a research question that focused on how contemporary masculinities were represented in the British Press, it would not have been possible to also provide an explanatory critique. In other words, after the detailed linguistic analyses as well as the engagement with questions of methodology, there would not have been space within the format of a journal to explore these issues. Having said that, this does not mean that the opportunity to explore extra-linguistic theories is necessarily precluded. Rather, it will be argued in the subsequent analysis chapters that including political theories from across the social sciences and the humanities can enhance linguistic analyses. For instance, in order to explain why hegemonic masculinities in the UK are structured as they are by specific articulations of class and 'race', one could turn to Mouffe's (2013; 2018) theories of political antagonism and political agonism. According to their theory of antagonism and the discursive construction of political frontiers, i.e. us versus them, it could be argued that the deracialisation of class positions coupled with the classlessness of Black and Asian men serves to divide marginalised groups who, in reality, have similar economic and, thus, political interests. For example, the signifier of the 'white working class' serves to create racialised tensions between British people who identify as white and are living in deindustrialised areas of the country with diverse working-class communities in major urban centres who suffer from similar economic deprivations. The cumulative effect of such tensions results in a divisive politics that, ultimately, serves to keep increasingly right-wing governments in power (Mouffe 2018). Another area of explanation to pursue concerns the 'overabundance of physicality' (Baker and Levon 2016:228) in relation to Black men. Such representations have roots stretching back to the earliest days of European colonisation in Africa as well as to the Atlantic Slave Trade. An engagement with these histories and the historical trajectories of both Caribbean and African migration to the UK could perhaps provide an explanation for why, in the 21st century, the mainstream press is still preoccupied by the physicality of Black men's bodies. While these are only two possible lines of exploration among many, the point remains that the focus on corpus techniques may, at times, come at the expense of a deeper critical analysis of why certain discourses are more dominant than others. One possible strategy is to use more diachronic corpora that balance an analysis of historical contingency with the analysis of discourse (an excellent example of this being Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery 2013a). The next section will, therefore, provide a brief overview of some common approaches to diachronic corpus-based CDA and how these studies have informed the development of my own research questions and analysis.

2.5 — Diachronic approaches to corpus-based critical discourse analysis

Diachronic corpus-based critical discourse analyses can broadly be divided into 'long distance' studies which are constituted by corpora built from language data spanning over 50 years, and diachronic analyses which may deal with shorter but contiguous corpora or parallel corpora as discussed in section 2.3.1. The following overview will consider both types of diachronic corpora, but will be concerned with studies that address discursive representations of marginalised people primarily in the press.

2.5.1 — Diachronic studies of marginalised populations

A major contribution to the field of diachronic corpus-assisted discourse studies has been the development of the Siena—Bologna (Si-Bol) corpora and the subsequent studies that were conducted using this data set, broadly termed Modern Diachronic CADS (MD-CADS). The Si-Bol corpora consist of news discourse that was published in both 1993 as well as 2005 and were 'designed and compiled to be as similar as possible in order to eliminate any maverick variables' (Partington 2010:85). The result was two parallel corpora consisting of articles from *The Times, The Telegraph* and *The Guardian* as well as their Sunday editions. While the initial studies focused on changes surrounding salient discourses in the news such as morality (Marchi 2010), the rhetorical use of 'The Science' (Taylor 2010), and even the use of the prefix *anti-* (Duguid 2010), the most pertinent example of how marginalised populations are represented is discussed by Partington (2012) in his analysis of discourses surrounding antisemitism.

Prompted by a finding from Duguid (2010) in which it was revealed that the keywords *antisemitism* and *antisemitic* were salient in both the 1993 and 2005 corpora (albeit used in different contexts), Partington (2012:55) compiled a third corpus from 2009 in order to 'examine potential changes in the way antisemitism is discussed in the UK quality press'. Some of the major findings included a temporal and spatial shift concerning when and where antisemitism was reported to have occurred. For example, in the 1993 corpus, *antisemitism* was most often discussed as a historical phenomenon in Western Europe. Conversely, any discussion of contemporary antisemitism tended to refer, instead, to 'faraway places' such as the newly independent states of Eastern Europe including Poland and Latvia (Partington 2012:58). This changed significantly, however, in the 2005 and 2009 corpora as, disturbingly, a keyword analysis revealed a contemporary resurgence of reports concerning antisemitism both in the UK and throughout Western Europe. Couched within conspiracy theories regarding a global cabal of Jewish oligarchs as well as the conflation of Jewish people with the state of Israel and the politics of Zionism, the latter two corpora demonstrated how 'historical' prejudices can reassert themselves through new discursive formations. For instance, the conflation of Israel with

all Jewish people allows critiques of Zionism (which can be a legitimate political opinion based on the illegal occupation of Palestine) to act as a type of discursive veil for antisemitic violences — whether material or symbolic. Another salient change concerns the perpetrators of antisemitism. Where antisemitic racism was traditionally associated with the far right, the latter corpora increasingly focus on antisemitism that exists on the left as well as in Muslim populations. While the latter had often been represented as 'fellow victims of prejudice' (Partington 2012:63), there was a shift in discourse that increasingly associated so-called 'Islamists' with a global rise in antisemitism.

This example of MD-CADS is relevant to the present thesis as it is a telling demonstration of how representations of marginalised populations can be enhanced by taking a diachronic perspective. Having said that, Partington (2012) does not engage with why such changes have occurred, opting instead to simply *describe* the phenomenon. As this thesis and this section of the literature review is particularly interested in how marginalised populations are represented in the UK press, it strikes me as curious that there is no discussion of *why* Muslims, in particular, appear to have become increasingly conflated with antisemitism. For instance, Partington (2012:63) claims that the newspapers in question 'are very careful to make a distinction between *ordinary Muslims* and violent extremists' (emphasis added), but then gives two examples of antisemitism which, while clearly antisemitic and rooted in a deep hatred of the Jewish people, emerge from organisations which are ostensibly non-violent, i.e. Hizb ut-Tahrir[5] and a Jordanian television production organisation. The distinction between so-called 'ordinary Muslims'[6] and 'Islamic extremists' is, however, a discursive phenomenon critically evaluated by Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery (2013a) as well as Baker and McEnery (2019) — both of which enhance their analyses by taking a diachronic approach.

As discussed in section 2.2, the seminal study by Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery (2013a) analysed representations of Islam and Muslim people in the British Press between 1998-2009. While the initial results of the study were comprehensive and resulted in a series of articles (Baker 2010; Gabrielatos *et al.* 2012; Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery 2013b) as well as a book (Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery 2013a), I would like to focus on Chapter 4 of the monograph which explicitly addressed changes in how discourses varied and evolved over time. Taking each year of the corpus as a discrete data set,

[5] While Hizb-ut Tahrir is recognised as a radical Islamic organisation, they are explicitly non-violent in their pursuit of re-establishing a Caliphate (Orofino 2015).

[6] It is worth noting that the use of a phrase like '*ordinary* Muslims' to dissociate one segment of the population from the political or extremist interpretations of Islam is not dissimilar from purported 'anti-Zionists' qualifying 'good Jews' and 'bad Jews' according to their support for Israel. The cumulative effect is that the politics or ideologies of Muslim and Jewish people in the UK are policed in bad faith and that, to be 'ordinary' and spared discrimination, they must be depoliticised.

keywords from each year were then compared against those from the other eleven. It was found that the quantity of articles concerning Islam and Muslim people increased significantly in line with global events characterised specifically by conflict. These included, but were not limited to, 9/11, the illegal invasion of Iraq by the US and the UK, the train bombings in Madrid, the London Underground bombings, the so-called 'military intervention' in Somalia by the US, but also, conflicts surrounding the Jyllands-Posten cartoons depicting the prophet Mohammed as well as controversies surrounding hijab. What this demonstrated was that, over time, representations of Islam were invariably structured through discourses of conflict. There was, however, some significant diachronic variation in representation. In general, Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery (2013a) found that there was an increase in stories that centred Muslim people as opposed to the religion of Islam as well as an increase in references to 'British Muslims' as opposed to Muslim people in international contexts. Concurrently, discourses of extremism tended to be consistent across the twelve years in question — a finding that was likely not unrelated to the increased focus on Muslim people in the UK. One notable change that is significant in regard to the present thesis concerns the discursive relationship between transgressive sexual and gender identities and Islam. An analysis of salient keywords like *gay*, *homosexual* and *lesbian* between 1998 and 2000 suggested that Muslim people and queer people were often represented as 'shar(ing) common ground because they are oppressed groups' (Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery 2013a:122). When these signifiers for sexual identity re-emerged in the latter years of the corpus, however, there was an increased focus on the alleged homophobia that was represented as inherent within Muslim populations. The ways in which this alleged antagonism echoes the representation of Muslims as inherently antisemitic is suggestive of a broader move towards representing Muslim people and especially British Muslims, in particular, as intolerant and in contravention of alleged British values.

The diachronic variation exhibited in the 1998-2009 corpus was indicative of a broader theoretical phenomenon with significant methodological consequences — namely, that discourses are by their very nature 'Protean' and that any appearance of stability is often complex and historically contingent (Baker and McEnery 2019). In order to explore the extent to which salient discourses in the original studies had changed, Baker and McEnery (2019) extended the study by creating a new corpus compiled from articles ranging from 2010-2014. This mirrored the original composition as closely as possible in spite of the absence of certain publications which were no longer in circulation — a change that already affected the types of discourses under investigation. In spite of this first significant difference, there was a certain degree of discursive similarity. For instance, the signifier *Islamic* was still largely associated with discourses of extremism; discourses of conflict continued to structure and inform coverage of Muslims and Islam; controversies around hijab were sustained into the later corpus; and the phrase *devout Muslim* continued to carry a negative discourse prosody. In

spite of these similarities, stability was indeed the exception with diachronic variation between the two corpora revealing some significant changes. For instance, the notion of extremism, while still salient, was no longer explicitly associated with Muslim people or, indeed, even the modifier *Islamic*. Rather, the abstract concept of extremism had, in fact, increased and had become more closely aligned with the religion of Islam itself. This is significant for two reasons. First, as argued in the original study, the frequent association between two words, e.g. *Islamic extremism*, means that that the use of the term, *Islamic*, even if used in a different context, is still likely to prime an association with extremism. In this case then, the association between Islam and extremism is significant in that it more closely associates the religion itself with the concept of extremism. The second consequence of this which is discussed in Baker and McEnery (2019) is that there is an increased expectation that Muslim people explicitly condemn violence that is represented as somehow connected to Islam or Muslim people. No longer being provided with the discursive space to have a reaction or response, the press is now actively trying to shape what types of reactions Muslim people should have even if they have no other connection to the violence in question other than identifying as Muslim. The demand that Muslim people condemn violence and extremism is reminiscent of another change — namely, that coverage of Muslim people had shifted from Muslims abroad to those in the UK.

In the 2010-2014 corpus, there was actually a decrease in the number of references to British Muslims. There was, however, an increase in the use of *moderate* to describe Muslims. While Baker and McEnery (2019:240) commented that 'moderate Muslims are starting to get better representation proportionally', I would argue that the markedness of 'moderate Muslim', like 'ordinary Muslim' (Partington 2012:63), suggests that the press continue to represent unradicalised, or even non-political Muslims, as the exception. The consequence is that, as demonstrated by Baker and McEnery (2019), there is an increased anxiety (re)produced by the press that Muslims can always potentially be radicalised. This is evident through an analysis of the signifier, *young Muslims*, the collocates for which describe them as impressionable, disaffected, rootless, angry and susceptible. Unsurprisingly then, they are also represented as at risk of being lured, recruited, indoctrinated or brainwashed to commit crimes or engage in violent forms of Jihad. Baker and McEnery (2019) not only identified this discursive shift, but also exposed significant changes in how the press explained the causes of radicalisation. For instance, between 1998-2009, there appeared to be some kind of reckoning with the role that British foreign policy had played in the radicalisation of Muslim people. For example, 36% of articles which attempted to rationalise why someone might become radicalised took into account reasons such as the illegal invasion of Iraq, British participation in the war in Afghanistan and the so-called "War on Terror", as well as an infringement on civil liberties domestically. By contrast, in the latter corpus where references to radicalisation had actually doubled, the role of the British state had been discursively diminished with government interventions abroad being regarded 'as almost

historical factors attributable to the "Labour years", rather than relevant to the present situation' (Baker and McEnery 2019:243). Rather, radicalisation — especially regarding 'young Muslims' — was now primarily attributed to 'extremist Islam'. In fact, articles which explicitly attributed radicalisation to Islam, as opposed to other factors, had risen from 34% between 1998-2009 to 57% between 2010-2014, thus confirming the claims made above suggesting that Islam, as a religion, has become increasingly associated with extremism and violence. This is a significant finding in that it demonstrates the extent to which discourses mediated by the press can change quite swiftly and how 'each shift has the capacity to expose a driver in discourse in society — for example, how the causes of radicalization have been shifted in the UK press also has the effect of backgrounding blame for some and foregrounding blame for others' (Baker and McEnery 2019:246). This study, therefore, demonstrates why it is crucial to take a diachronic approach to the critical analysis of discourse, especially when engaging with the discursive construction of marginalised groups in a frequently shifting media landscape. In addition to isolated diachronic studies, Baker and McEnery (2019:246) also argue that 'studies should be restaged, and the findings of time bound analyses should not be assumed to be generalizable beyond the period studied unless there is clear evidence from a follow-on study that such a generalization is warranted'.

2.5.2 — 'Long distance' diachronic studies of marginalised populations

Where the previous studies took a diachronic view regarding how marginalised groups have been represented in the press, the following section will consider 'long distance' diachronic studies or those which span a time period which exceeds 50 years — an approach which is taken in the present thesis. Taylor (2022:4) argues that one of the affordances of this approach is that 'when we shift entirely to a historical period, we are no longer native speakers of our texts and this distance can bring insights (as well as challenges)'. As discourse analysts *and* as subjects that have been constituted by the social world which we inhabit, we are 'inevitably part of our own study' (Taylor 2022:4). This point has also been addressed by Fairclough (2015) as well as Foucault (1982) who have both argued that we cannot 'transcend discourse' or indeed dismiss the idea that we are effectively contributing to the reproduction of discourses, e.g. the discipline of linguistics, the continued primacy of the academy in knowledge production, or even as purveyors of resistance to existing discourses. Not only does this have implications for how we approach contemporary discourse analysis, but it also suggests that diachronic or historical approaches are a method that enable the analyst to, at least partially, step outside of the discursive terrain under investigation. Indeed, as argued by Taylor (2022:4), 'in effect, when we undertake historical discourse analysis, we are undertaking a cross-cultural study'. For example, in an analysis of signifiers concerning sexual identity, Wilkinson (2019) demonstrated how a long-distance discourse analysis of the term *bisexual* during the 20th century revealed semantic shifts

that both demonstrated how the words we use to identify ourselves have histories, as well as how words and discourses are, in many ways, living phenomena. It also added credence to the idea, made famous by Hall (1997a) that certain identifications, e.g. 'race', are floating signifiers that are historically contingent — evolving with and because of shifting discourses and material conditions. Baker, Gabrielatos, and McEnery (2013a) also took a long-distance view when considering representations of Islam. By comparing representations between 1475 to 1720 as well as the nineteenth century, they sought to establish whether a 'representation is new, or simply a modern version of a representation that has deep historical roots' (Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery 2013a:230). Their astute question of whether contemporary discourses 'rhyme' with the past is taken up in the following discussion of work conducted by Taylor (2018; 2020; 2022) which also seeks to understand if, by taking a long-distance view and thus 'denaturalising' the representations in question, it is possible to reveal the consistencies and dissonances in representations of marginalised groups.

Through an analysis of metaphors of migration between 1800-2018, Taylor (2021) demonstrated both consistency and change in the metaphorical framing of immigration and emigration. By using *The Times Online* corpus developed at Lancaster University and then supplementing this with more recent articles retrieved from *Nexis,* it appeared as though the metaphorical representation of migrants as 'liquid' or 'object' had been relatively consistent over the past 200 years. Dropping out of use were the metaphors of migrants as 'commodities' and as 'guests'. These were, in some ways replaced by more recent metaphors framing migrants as 'animals', 'invaders', or 'weight'. In the contemporary political environment of the UK, where immigrants and even asylum seekers are being represented as invaders, such historical perspectives are essential if we are to challenge the increasingly far-right political agenda of the Conservative Government over the past 13 years. Indeed, as argued by Fairclough (2015:42) in order to 'arrive at the necessary understanding of the present we need to include analysis of its relations to the past, and analysis of how the past and its relations to the present are represented by different social actors and agencies'. In the case of the British Press, this type of work is critical in order to resist narratives that cast the most marginalised and vulnerable as a threat, thus distracting the population from the failures of the Conservative Government. Another essential example of how 'long-distance' corpora can shed light on how marginalisation and discrimination is operationalised in the British press comes from Taylor (2018) and their analysis of how the Windrush Generation were represented in both the past and the present.

The 'Windrush Generation' is a metonymic term referring to a group of British citizens who primarily immigrated to the UK from former colonies in the Caribbean, e.g. Jamaica and Barbados (Taylor 2018). Named after the *Empire Windrush* which was one of the first boats to arrive from Jamaica in 1948, it is essential to acknowledge that, at the time of arrival, those who were moving to the UK

were *British Citizens* who had been invited to, *inter alia*, rebuild after WW2 and to work in the newly established National Health Service (NHS) (Goodfellow 2020). The contemporary use of the term 'Windrush Generation' does not, however, only refer to immigrants who arrived from the Caribbean, but indeed many people who arrived in the UK from British colonies between 1948-1973. However, due to the 'Hostile Environment' policy enacted by Theresa May in 2012, many Britons who had been living in the UK and had arrived before 1973 were suddenly required to 'prove' their right to remain in the UK. With many documents being impossible to locate and with others even having been destroyed by the Home Office (Goodfellow 2020), a still unknown number of British citizens of the 'Windrush Generation' were deported, made unemployed, denied healthcare, benefits and pensions (Taylor 2018; Goodfellow 2020). This did not, however, only affect the Windrush Generation but also rendered precarious the immigration status of their children and grandchildren. To date, British citizens have been deported to countries where they have never lived with some having died due to lack of access to the NHS. The callousness of the Hostile Environment policy was, however, met with resistance — not solely from the communities affected, their lawyers, activists, and political commentators who sought to rectify this injustice, but also from many branches of the mainstream media. What Taylor (2018) revealed through a diachronic discourse analysis of corpora compiled from parliamentary debates as well as from media sources, was that there was a stark divide between representations of The Windrush Generation in the 1940s and 1950s versus those that circulated during the 'Windrush scandal'. Specifically, representations of the Windrush Generation in the 1940s and 1950s were overwhelmingly hostile and were structured through water metaphors such as 'flooded', 'stream', and 'inundated' as well as through the use of explicitly racist metaphors such as the 'blackfly epidemic' (Taylor 2018:11). Contemporary metaphor analysis, however, revealed that the Windrush Generation were overwhelmingly represented as 'builders' of the nation and, ultimately, having been failed by the government. What the analysis also revealed, however, was a clear distinction between the ways in which the media represent the 'good immigrant' versus the 'bad immigrant'. For instance, the positioning of the Windrush Generation as the archetypal 'good immigrant' allows for the contemporary hostility to refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants and migrants to be justified. Taylor (2018) explains how this strategy functions in two ways. First, the 'favourable evaluations of the past are strategic in allowing present hostility to be attributed to the particularities of the current target' (2018:19). In other words, by representing past immigration as necessary and as a collective benefit for the UK, hostility toward contemporary migrants is rendered possible by portraying them as a strain on an already tenuous economy and political system (Goodfellow 2020). Similarly, 'favourably evaluating a (temporally) distant group of migrants may function as a strategy of avoiding accusations of xenophobia'. In other words, support for the Windrush Generation who are largely racialised as Black allows for opponents of contemporary migration to obfuscate their hostility towards racialised groups arriving in the UK now. For the

present thesis, Taylor (2018) is foundational in that it shows how contemporary representation often *does* 'rhyme' with the past — showing how representations and metaphors are 'more like a series of slots into which any group may be inserted' (Taylor 2018). This will be crucial when considering how representations of different queer subject positions are represented at different times in the past and into the present. Similarly, Taylor's 'long-distance' approach to representations of migration can arguably be applied to other marginalised groups in the sense that a diachronic analysis 'systematically brings out the contradictions of contemporary representations, the falsity of nostalgia and the ways in which the negative traits ascribed to 'them' in the present are likely to have been ascribed to 'us' in the past' (Taylor 2018:19). In the following, representations of sexual transgression and sexually diverse identities will also be analysed by looking at 'long distance' corpora.

McEnery and Baker (2017a; 2017b) and Baker and McEnery (2016) used the *Early English Books Online* (EEBO) corpus in order to analyse seventeenth-century representations of men who have sex with men (MSM), female sex workers, and male sex workers in England at the time. These three studies impacted both the design of my own methodology, particularly in terms of building the corpora, but also in terms of analysis. While the former is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, the latter is significant to the current discussion. In all three studies, there was a need to integrate the expertise of a discourse analyst using corpus-linguistic techniques with that of an historian. As argued by Baker and McEnery (2016:1), this is because 'the linguist brings expertise in the manipulation and understanding of large textual databases, with experience of the insights that can be brought about by the appropriate use of the tools of the corpus linguist' while 'the historian brings their knowledge of the period and topic in question, with a well-developed sense of the hypotheses of interest to that subject community and a body of work that can help to frame and explain what the corpus investigation finds'. In other words, this complementary interdisciplinary approach provides a more holistic account of the subject and provides insights that may otherwise be missed. While I am not trained as an historian or historiographer, such studies have inspired my own approach to this thesis in that there is a substantial emphasis placed on the historical contingency of discourse. Additionally, much like the present thesis, all three of these studies engage with populations whose marginalised position in society is constituted by sexual and gender transgression. As such, their discursive traces may 'have left nothing more than a shadowy impression upon the historical record' (McEnery and Baker 2017b:17) as in the case of male sex workers or, as in the case of men who had sex with men, any words used to describe them tend to be 'overwhelmingly laden with a negative meaning' (McEnery and Baker 2017a:214). While this is perhaps unsurprising, it raises an important theoretical point that will arise in my own analysis — namely, that representations of 'deviant' populations tend to tell us more about the society in which they lived than about the actual lives of the people who are

the subject of the study. As will be argued in the analysis chapters, this is true not solely when analysing texts from hundreds of years ago, but is equally true when considering contemporary data.

One of the main considerations in the work of McEnery and Baker (2017a, 2017b) was concerned with naming strategies. Several interesting results emerged from this discussion. For instance, in the study concerning female prostitution, the lexis used to describe women who engaged in sex work were varied and not always explicit in the way a term like sex worker or prostitute would be today in the early 21st century. Some of the most common terms included 'courtesan', 'harlot', 'jade', 'jilt', 'nightwalker', 'prostitute', 'punk', 'quean', 'strumpet', 'trull' and 'whore', but as the diachronic nature of the corpus covered the years from 1600 to 1700, these were subject to change. For instance, it is noted that the term 'whore' peaks in the 1640s and is then replaced by 'harlot' in the 1650s — a process of identification, and perhaps interpellation, that mirrors language change today and can thus inform my own analysis. Similarly, the term 'whore' undergoes a substantial semantic shift in the 1660s such that the semantic fields to which it is generally associated, e.g. 'insult' and 'disease' expand to include 'pity'. McEnery and Baker (2017a:186) note that 'this powerful extension of the meaning surrounding the word is very notable and certainly indicates that from the 1660s there is a real shift in how whores are written about in British society'. In order to account for this shift, it is crucial that the analysis include historiographical accounts of social and political developments that occurred around this time. These developments in both choice of lexis but also the semantic changes that are produced as a result of social and political changes are, again, indicative of similar processes occurring in the contemporary world that this thesis will try to answer. Before moving onto a more substantive discussion of theories such as the historical contingency of discourse, this chapter will conclude with an overview of corpus-based CDA that addresses representations of queer identities in the contemporary era.

2.6 — Corpus-based CDA and representations of LGBTQI populations in the press

There is a broad and growing field of corpus-based CDA which considers the interaction between language, gender and sexuality across multiple media. For example, Twitter discourse has provided the opportunity to study the self-sexualisation strategies of trans Twitter users (Webster 2018) as well as how antagonisms between trans and lesbian identities are both challenged and sustained (Webster 2022). Another medium that has been explored through corpus-assisted techniques concerns online spaces where queer people seek out sexual partners. For instance, Baker (2003), King (2011) and Milani (2013) all explored the ways in which economies of desire were structured through hegemonic masculinities as well as through historical conjuncture, culture, 'race', and class. There is also a growing body of work which considers queer representation beyond the Global North with studies from Nigeria (Onanuga 2021, 2022; Onanuga and Schmied 2022), Taiwan (Li and Lu 2021),

Singapore and Hong Kong (Lazar 2021) as well as Thailand (Kijratanakoson 2021) exploring how queer populations are representing themselves and being represented through online and print media. In order to situate the current study, however, the following literature review considers corpus-assisted studies that have looked at the discursive construction of LGBTQI people in British newspapers. First, I provide an overview of studies that ask how queer identities have been discursively constructed. Subsequently, there is a brief discussion of work done in diachronic corpus-based CDA which provides evidence for why queer linguistic approaches to the analysis of identity should necessarily couch their inquiries within a recognition of the radical historical contingency of all subject positions.

While some corpus-based studies such as Turner *et al.* (2017), Patterson and Coffey-Glover (2018), Jones and Collins (2020), as well as Heritage and Baker (2022) have looked at how a single issue, e.g. same-sex unions, PrEP, and 'Chemsex', have been represented in the British Press, Motschenbacher (2019) and Gupta (2019) both conducted corpus-based studies looking at the representation of a single event surrounding an individual. In each, the language used to represent these individuals revealed societal attitudes surrounding gender and sexuality. In an exploration of how the linguistic representation of a social actor changes after 'coming out', Motschenbacher (2019) built a corpus of British newspaper articles published before and after the pop singer Ricky Martin declared his identity as a gay man. Prior to Martin coming out, newspapers foregrounded his ethnicity and keywords examined during this period suggested that they were used to construct Martin in a 'sexually explicit, objectifying, and heteronormative way' (Motschenbacher 2019:295). Subsequent to his coming out, however, there was a marked omission of references to his ethnicity and the sexualisation of his persona. This suggests that there is a 'subtractive relationship' between ethnicity and sexuality — a pattern that contributes to the stereotype that gay men are white, middle-class, cisgender, and non-disabled (Motschenbacher 2019). Similar to Motschenbacher (2019), Gupta (2019) also analysed the press representation of a single individual by contrasting two time periods. In this case, Gupta (2019) addressed press representations surrounding the tragic death of Lucy Meadows, a trans teacher in the UK who ultimately committed suicide as a result of the media furore that resulted when it became national news that she had come out to her pupils and colleagues. Gupta's (2019:32) analysis focused on third person singular pronouns as 'socially significant lexical items' that shed light on 'issues of minority representation, press tactics of negative representation and the interactions between press, public, reporters and reported' (Gupta 2019:44). Specifically, the use of masculine or feminine pronouns in reference to Meadows indicated the ideological positions of various UK newspapers in relation to gender identity and trans people. A keyword analysis demonstrated that, before Meadows' death, she was more likely to be referred to using masculine pronouns. Subsequent to her death, however, there was a marked increase in the use of feminine pronouns. While this potentially

indicates respect for Meadows' gender identity, a closer look at quotations suggested only a partial amelioration. The repetition of certain transphobic quotations concerning Meadows continued to be circulated after her death, thus undermining her identity and contributing to the ongoing discrimination against trans people in the press. As a result of this evidence, Gupta (2019:44) was able to demonstrate that such a reporting strategy allows publications 'to evade direct responsibility for misgendering while continuing to produce the effect of undermining a trans person's gender identity' (Gupta 2019:44).

The preceding studies are significant in that they can be read as discursive 'snapshots' that indicate how LGBTQI people are being represented in the press as well as how such discourses ultimately contribute to the reproduction of hegemonic gender and sexuality norms. Such an approach, however, does not account for the discursive 'sedimentation' (Norval 2000) — i.e. the consistent use and accumulation of certain discourses over time — that has opened up the linguistic terrain in which to even discuss 'coming out' in the mainstream press. In other words, the press take as *a priori* the naming strategies and discursive frameworks necessary to represent LGBTQI people. In the following, therefore, I provide an overview of some of the studies that specifically consider *how* LGBTQI identities are discursively constructed in the press.

In Zottola (2018), the naming strategies used to represent trans people are explored by conducting a frequency analysis of which terms are preferred in the press, e.g. *transgender* or *transsexual*. The analysis also considers how these choices manifest themselves differently in tabloids versus broadsheets. The data demonstrated that, in broadsheets, *transgender* was used more frequently, whereas *transsexual* appeared to be the preferred term in tabloids. This is significant because organisations such as the Beaumont Society (2019) that are run for and by trans people, tend to use *transgender* as the preferred term for people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. It is also significant because, in an earlier collocation analysis of *transsexual*, Baker (2014b) revealed how *transsexual* was more often used as a noun, thus reducing human beings to one single aspect of themselves. This reductive nominalisation was exacerbated by discourses that fetishized trans bodies and tended to focus on their genitals (Baker 2014b). This does not, however, mean that discourses associated with the signifier, *transgender*, were entirely positive. In a collocation analysis, Zottola (2018) indicated how transgender people were represented as an easily offended *community* who received special attention and were able to exert undue political and social pressure on other groups — discourses that were also present several years earlier in Baker (2014b). While these two studies provided important data on how trans people are represented as well as how naming strategies may be imbued with negative discourse prosodies, the focus is on how discourses of trans identification are constructed in the *present* without considering how, over time, certain naming

strategies and discourses became conventionalised in the first place, i.e. at what point did the discursive terrain in which to discuss trans *identities* become a discourse that was salient within the British press. In addition to the theoretical implications of how subject positions are construed, it is also important to consider how such representations change or stay the same over time. Echoing the discussion of diachronic studies in section 2.5, I would argue that this approach is especially true when considering the significant shifts that have occurred recently in the socioeconomic and political position of LGBTQI people in the UK. The following studies therefore take a diachronic approach to the question of how subject positions are discursively constructed over time.

The first diachronic study in this discussion is Baker (2014a) in which the data from an earlier study is revisited (Baker 2005) in order extrapolate any diachronic variation in the discursive construction of gay identity. In Baker (2005), a collocation analysis of terms such as *gay(s), homosexual(s)* and *heterosexual(s)* was conducted in order to explore how gay men were represented in the tabloid press. Focusing on a corpus built from *The Mirror* and *The Daily Mail*, it was demonstrated how the language of these two publications tended to frame gay men within negative discourses including *crime and violence, shame and secrecy,* and *shamelessness*. As words carry with them the encoded cultural concepts that are acquired through their collocates (Stubbs 1996, 2002), it is therefore the case that, over time, such negative discourse prosodies would likely have contributed to the tabloids' readership having a negative perception of gay men. What is perhaps more significant in a discussion of *how* queer identities obtain an ontological status though is, in fact, the denial of a gay identity at all. In Baker (2005) one of the most significant findings was the fact that *homosexual* collocated with *practice*. The repetition of this collocation is significant because, as posited by Baker (2005:74), 'a practice is an extrinsic activity or behaviour, rather than an intrinsic identity trait'. By calling into question the status of gay identity, the language of *The Daily Mail* and *The Mirror* imply that, as a behaviour or proclivity, one need simply to stop 'practising' in order to assimilate into hegemonic expectations of normative sexuality in relation to one's gender identity.

In a different approach to Baker (2014a) in which two points in time were compared, Wilkinson (2019) built a corpus of language pertaining to the search term *bisexual** from *The Times* that spanned 60 years and tracked the discursive changes that occurred throughout. Similar to the studies above, a comparison was conducted between corpora, but in this case, the years between 1957-2017 had been divided into 5 periods that were marked by specific historical events that impacted on the lived experiences of bisexual people, e.g. The Thatcher Era (1979-1990). One of the most significant findings was that, in the language of *The Times,* bisexuality was *also* construed as practice. One could not 'be' bisexual unless actively pursuing sexual relationships in the present with individuals identifying as the same or different gender. The implication is that there are no bisexual *people* in the present — only bisexual *practices* in the past. In addition to this temporal displacement, collocation

analysis also demonstrated how bisexual people were frequently represented as being fictional characters. This fictional and temporal displacement of bisexual people contributed to the delegitimisation of bisexuality as a sexual identity (see Angelides 2001; MacDowall 2009). But while these findings indicate how bisexual *people* have been represented in *The Times*, it is important to note that between the late 1950s and the early 1980s, the signifier, *bisexual*, was not used to exclusively refer to an individual that was sexually or romantically attracted to individuals of the same or different gender (Wilkinson 2019). Rather, *bisexual* could refer to organisms that had both male and female reproductive organs and capabilities, situations that included both men and women, or items that would now likely be referred to as 'unisex' or 'androgynous'. It was not until the 1980s and the HIV/AIDS crisis that *bisexual* came to be used almost exclusively in reference to a sexual identity (Wilkinson 2019).

The fact that *bisexual* as a signifier for sexual identity became the most common usage has significant implications for how we understand the process through which discourses of sexual and gender identity are constructed and reproduced. First, it shows how the language used to index a sexual identity is historically contingent, and that certain terms can act as floating signifiers as they take on multiple meanings at different points in history. Secondly, these semantic shifts confirm the argument that the historically contingent nature of all sexual identity is crucial to a critique of queer representation in the press. This is because, if the language that we use to index queer identities is flexible and can change quickly depending on socioeconomic, cultural and political changes, then so too will the linguistic tools available to individuals to both identify themselves and others. In other words, as the language changes, so too does identity. Finally, while it is claimed that the combination of corpus linguistic methods and queer linguistics are 'ideal bedfellows…because *both approaches foreground the importance of capturing repeated patterns'* (Paterson and Coffey-Glover 2018:177) (emphasis added), I would argue that an analysis of the cumulative effects of discourse is rendered most salient when considering the sedimentation of such discursive formations over a sustained period of time. In other words, while synchronous studies or those addressing a single issue can reveal which representations are hegemonic at a particular historical conjuncture, the language used and the meanings that are ascribed to certain signifiers have always already become sedimented, thus 'forgetting' their original discursive constitution (Laclau and Mouffe 2014). As the current study is concerned with how language has been used to discursively construct a queer subject position, then — based on the discussion of diachronic corpora — the most logical approach would be to analyse a diachronic corpus that covers a representative sample of language over an extended period of time.

2.7 — Concluding remarks

The preceding discussion of corpus-based CDA not only provided a critical evaluation of relevant research that has informed the design of my own study, but it has also raised questions concerning the potential for 'blind spots' (Taylor and Marchi 2018) that this approach *alone* may not be able to reconcile. For instance, while corpus linguistics is indeed a 'powerful methodology' (McEnery and Baker 2015:1) that enables the analyst to rapidly identify language patterns across millions of words, corpus-based CDA has, at times, seen a paucity of critical analysis that seeks to explain *why* a certain discursive formation is deployed and in whose interest. This does not only apply to studies that claim to be apolitical, but is also a result of studies that have tended to foreground the results of corpus approaches — developing both innovative methodological approaches and a thick description of results, but which, nevertheless, come at the expense of engaging with broader questions concerning how discourses construct, maintain, and resist hegemonic settlements in the social world. When considering identity and, in particular, sexual and gender identities, I would also argue that there has been a lack of engagement with how subject positions are formed in the first instance. For example, the majority of the studies reviewed in section 2.7 assume that there is a *pre*-discursive subject that is being represented or, indeed, *mis*represented. And while this is useful when providing a critique of institutional discrimination that has an impact on people's lives, it also partially elides the historical contingency of all identities — obfuscating, albeit unintentionally, how identities are formed and are changed by particular historical conjunctures. This is not, however, solely a theoretical issue. Rather, an understanding of how the subject is constructed *through* discourse is necessary to effect radical social change. This is primarily because the historical contingency of identity means that there are always alternatives to what may seem fixed, opening up the possibility to resist discourses and hegemonic blocs that disenfranchise and marginalise certain populations based on their subject position. In other words, social movements that focus on civil rights and/or inclusion within existing social hierarchies for marginalised populations, e.g. trans people in Britain, inadvertently uphold these same institutions. Recognising that a society structured through gender is a contingent hegemonic formation opens up the possibility that society could be structured differently, thus rendering a truly liberationist transformation of society possible, albeit only likely in the long term.

The recognition that identities are not essential, but rather the product of historic factors is rendered most salient when analysing 'long-distance' corpora. As argued by Taylor (2021:464), this is because such an approach has the effect of denaturalising discourses such that the analyst may approach their subject as a construct. I would argue, however, that while the methodological affordances of diachronic corpus-based CDA are clear, the theoretical roots of CDA means that the conception of

the subject is always already rooted in a materialist understanding of identity which elides its discursive character. Indeed, as argued by Jörgensen and Philips (2002), one of the 'blind spots' of CDA is, indeed, how the subject is conceptualised. This is not, however, solely a critique. Rather, Chapter 3 will argue that this provides an opportunity for a novel interdisciplinary approach — one that combines the strong methodological affordances of corpus-based CDA with the theoretical foundations of Poststructuralist or post-Marxist discourse theory (PDT) as conceptualised by Laclau and Mouffe (2014). Indeed, as it will be demonstrated, where corpus-based CDA lacks the necessary theoretical framework, PDT is lacking in a clear methodological approach. Combining the two will, thus, provide the methodological and theoretical tools necessary to begin answering how queer subjectivities have been discursively constructed in the language of the British press.

Chapter 3 — Theoretical overview: Laclau and Mouffe's post-Marxist or Poststructuralist Discourse Theory

3.1 — Introduction

The following chapter introduces the theoretical framework developed by Laclau and Mouffe (2014) in their seminal text, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* referred to henceforth as *HSS*. Often referred to as Poststructuralist or post-Marxist Discourse Theory (PDT), their ontological framework has primarily been developed and applied in disciplines associated with Political Theory, most notably in the study of Populism (Howarth, Norval and Stavrakakis 2000; Howarth and Torfing 2004; Laclau 2005; Mouffe 2018; Glynos and Mondon 2019). This is, in part, because Laclau and Mouffe wrote *HSS* in response to political shifts that were occurring in the latter half of the 20th century[7] and partly because their theory of the subject has been foundational to an understanding of how Populist movements have been able to discursively construct political frontiers between 'the people' and an Other against whom they, i.e. 'the people', are organised. In the following discussion, I will outline how this primacy of the subject as an object of analysis does not, however, need to be limited to Populism Studies. Rather, it will be argued that the theoretical affordances of PDT do not solely explain how a population can become constituted as political subjects, but can also reveal how subject positions, in general, are discursively constructed, thus opening up or allowing for an inquiry into how sexual and gender variant identities have been discursively constructed. The following discussion will, therefore, begin with section 3.2 which explains the context in which *HSS* was written and the motivations for Laclau and Mouffe's break with Marxist thought at the time. This will be followed by section 3.3 wherein a discussion of some of the key theoretical concepts in PDT such as discourse, hegemony, radical contingency, floating signifiers, discursive sedimentation, nodal points, subject positions and, finally, group formation are explained. It will then be argued in, section 3.4, that this ontological framework originally developed by Laclau and Mouffe (2014) in *HSS* has the capacity to frame this study's analysis and reconcile the theoretical gap highlighted in the last chapter — namely, that corpus-based CDA does not provide a thorough account of how the subject is realised in and through representation and discourse. With this in mind, it will also be argued that while corpus-assisted CDA can, indeed, benefit from an engagement with PDT, so too can the methodological affordances of corpus-based CDA provide evidence for theoretical claims made using an approach

[7] The first edition of *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* was originally published in 1985.

based on PDT. The chapter will then conclude with a brief overview of literature currently using a similar approach.

3.2 — On the origins of Poststructuralist (post-Marxist) Discourse Theory

Laclau and Mouffe (2014) wrote *HSS* at a time of crisis — one that was borne out of political ruptures and new social movements that challenged the traditional political theories and strategies of the left. In terms of political economy, countries like the UK (where Laclau and Mouffe were writing) were undergoing a dramatic shift away from the Keynesian welfare state that had dominated most western democracies in the post-war era, toward a political and economic settlement that would come to be known as neoliberalism (Harvey 2007), i.e. a deregulated and financialised capitalism that privileged so-called 'economic liberty' and 'individual freedom' over and above the collective needs of society. At around the same time, there had also been a proliferation of social movements that were motivated by social identities that, while certainly intersecting with class positions, were not necessarily *determined* by them, e.g. feminist movements, anti-racist activism and the struggle for lesbian and gay rights. While many within 'the new social movements' maintained a commitment to socialism and the raising of class consciousness, they also posed a considerable challenge to traditional Marxist theory (Laclau and Mouffe 2014) — namely, that the centrality of *class* as both an organiser and driver of social change no longer appeared to be an inevitability. Rather, in Marxist terms, the division between the (economic) base and the (cultural, social, and political) superstructure whereby the base determined the superstructure and, thus, class consciousness was not borne out in contemporary events. For instance, in terms of the party-political sphere, politicians like Margaret Thatcher had been able to fracture the working class (see section 4.3.2 and 6.3.1 for more discussion on Thatcherism), effectively rendering the possibility for a Proletarian revolution impossible in any discernible future. At the same time, many of the movements that were resisting Thatcher were predicated on identities that were not only threatened by economic reforms, but also by a renewed moral conservatism which was ostensibly independent of economic forces (Laclau and Mouffe 2014). Reflecting on the particularities of this historical conjuncture, Laclau and Mouffe (2014), therefore, made the controversial argument that the economic determinism of traditional Marxist theory was no longer adequate as an explanation for this socio-political conjuncture or as an organising political strategy. While Marxist thinkers like Gramsci (1971) and Althusser (1971) had been articulating aspects of this argument throughout the 20th century, Laclau and Mouffe (2014) proposed an even more radical break with traditional Marxist thought, developing a social ontology that entirely rejected economic determinism and class essentialism in favour of one that considered *discourse* as the central organising principle upon which society and identity could be understood and, ultimately, changed.

The preceding history and the resulting rejection of an essential class position is not unrelated to the present study. This is, in part, because their theory of discourse provides a framework for understanding how the empirical changes in transgressive sexual and gender identities over time can be explained through processes of discursive construction. However, it is also because CDA, particularly in the tradition of Fairclough (1989; 1995), emerged out of a neo-Marxist or 'critical realist' (Fairclough, Jessop and Sayer 2004) critique of power and inequality which, like the economic determinism of traditional Marxism, has a 'theoretically weak understanding of processes of group formation, the subject and agency' (Jørgensen and Philips 2002:90). With this in mind, the following section will provide an overview of some of the key theoretical concepts within PDT that, I will argue, can more effectively frame an analysis of how the British Press have used language to contribute to the discursive construction of LGBTQI identities.

3.3 — Key theoretical concepts in poststructuralist discourse theory

PDT assumes that social phenomena are never fixed, and that identity and society are the result of hegemonic struggles that occurred in the past and have become 'sedimented', thus producing the illusion of stability (Laclau and Mouffe 2014; Laclau 1990, 2007; Smith 1998). The core of this argument is summarised by Jørgensen and Philips (2002:33) who argued:

> We act as if the 'reality' around us has a stable and unambiguous structure; as if society, the groups we belong to, and our identity, are objectively given facts. But just as the structure of language is never totally fixed, so are society and identity flexible and changeable entities that can never be completely fixed.

While this fundamental premise of PDT is largely a theoretical tool with which to analyse socio-political, cultural, and economic shifts, it is also borne out in historical observations of social and material change. For example, in the context of the present study, identities such as 'gay' or 'lesbian' are contemporary signifiers for identities that did not exist in the distant past — nor are the associated social practices, physical, or digital spaces that may be associated with these social groups, e.g. a 'bath house', a 'lesbian bar', or 'Grindr'. The proceeding discussion concerning the particularities of PDT will provide an explanation for why this might be the case, but it is important here to note that, unlike most CDA which makes a distinction between discursive practice and (non-discursive) social practice, Laclau and Mouffe (2014:93) — reflecting on the impermanent nature of both language and our social and material reality — developed a radical social ontology that 'rejects the distinction between discursive and non-discursive practices'. This does not mean, however, that everything is reduced to language. Rather, it means that, like the example of a lesbian bar, lesbian identities are *also* constituted in physical space and that this material reality forms a crucial aspect of how discourses of

lesbian identities are constructed and understood (Laclau and Mouffe 2014; Jørgensen and Philips 2002). With this in mind, the following section will describe the first key concept in Laclau and Mouffe (2014) social ontology — namely, PDT's theory of discourse and the associated concept of 'radical contingency'.

3.3.1 — Discourse and Radical Contingency

Laclau and Mouffe's theory of *discourse* (2014) both incorporates and critiques Saussure's *structuralism* (1983). Firstly, PDT appropriates aspects of Saussure's understanding of language wherein the meaning of a sign is constituted by its relationship to other signs. They expand this theory, however, to include all social phenomena and signifying practices — a totality which they identify as *Discourse* (Laclau and Mouffe 2014). In PDT, all discourse is thus relationally constituted, e.g. discourses of 'gender' are contemporarily constituted by their relationships to discourses of, *inter alia*, 'identity', 'sex', and 'culture'. However, unlike the structuralist position that posits such relationships constitute a *fixed* totality, Laclau and Mouffe (2014) take the *post*-structuralist position that, while meanings are indeed structured through their relations to one another, these relationships can only ever be temporary. In order to distinguish this difference, Laclau and Mouffe (2014) refer to the temporary fixation of discourses as a *discursive formation*, i.e. a relatively fixed structure of relationality between signifiers that appears stable and is relatively uncontested (Torfing 1999:300; Laclau and Mouffe 2014:91-93). In the context of the current study, a discursive formation that has structured sexual and gender identity throughout much of the modern era is constituted by a series of binaries such as male/female, masculine/feminine, gay/straight, etc. PDT, however, begins from the premise that these binaries are not essential categories and are, thus, ultimately unstable and contestable (Laclau and Mouffe 2014; Carpentier and De Cleen 2007). In other words, they emerged under certain conditions at a particular point in history and, as such, will *necessarily* change as culture, politics and the social *also* continue to develop and change. In keeping with the current example, this is seen already as subjects who identify as trans, non-binary, or even pansexual are disrupting the historical binary constitution of sexual and gender identity. The emerging result is, therefore, a new discursive formation that is contingent upon its relationships to other discourses — both past and present. Laclau and Mouffe (2014) explain this ongoing process of change and its effect on the constitution of identity through the theory of 'radical contingency'.

'Radical contingency' develops Saussure's concept of the signifier/signified and is foundational to PDT's ontological framework in that it posits any discursive formation or identity has no pre-discursive essence outside of its relationships to other discourses (Laclau 1990; Laclau and Mouffe 2014; Howarth 2018). The use of 'radical' as a modifier of 'contingency' is crucial here as Laclau and Mouffe (2014) were not simply arguing that discursive formations or identities emerge as a result of

circumstance or even chance. Rather, '*radical* contingency' means that 'contingency is not simply empirical but logically necessary' (Dahlberg and Phelan 2011:16) — an ontological claim which, ultimately, means that 'identities and their conditions of emergence form an inseparable whole' (Laclau 1990:21). As such, an analysis of sexual identity — an idea that emerges in Western Europe during the late 19th century (Foucault 1979a) — is inseparable from an analysis of its historical conditions of emergence, e.g. the development of disciplines such as Medicine and Psychiatry; taxonomies of 'race' and gender; the Industrial Revolution and capitalism; as well as the effects of Empire and Colonialism. This radical break with essentialism not only strengthens the theoretical position that 'there is no final, absolute ground, foundation or essence to identity, *except* for contingency itself' (Dahlberg and Phelan 2011:17), but it also provides a framework for understanding how and why an ahistorical and singular queer subject position is an impossibility and, thus, why sexual and gender identities have been consistently evolving as a result of their historical conditions of emergence. There are, however, several questions that emerge from the claim that nothing is fixed and everything is contingent — namely, if nothing has an essential character and all discursive formations are ultimately impermanent, how do we account for social change? What is exterior to the discursive formation that leads to its destabilisation? And finally, how is it that a particular discursive formation comes to appear as stable if it is always already in flux?

3.3.2 — Hegemony

In order to account for discursive and, therefore, socio-political, cultural and economic change, Laclau and Mouffe (2014:1) adapted and developed Gramsci's conception of *hegemony*, arguing that it is, in fact, 'the key concept in understanding the very unity existing in a social formation'. However, like other traditional Marxist theories, Laclau and Mouffe (2014:124) radically reorient Gramsci's original conception of hegemony in order to account for the contemporary social order as well as their fundamental critique of the premise that all subjects are necessarily constituted by class (Laclau and Mouffe 2014). A brief explanation of hegemony according to Gramsci (1971) is necessary in order to explain how and why Laclau and Mouffe (2014) both adapted and critiqued his theory.

Antonio Gramsci was an Italian Marxist, journalist, philosopher, and politician who was imprisoned by Benito Mussolini's *Partito Nazionale Fascista* (PNF) in 1926 (Hoare and Smith 1971). Between 1929 and 1935, Gramsci wrote what would come to be known as the *Quaderni del carcere* or *The Prison Notebooks* — a collection of over 3000 pages covering topics ranging from popular culture to the rise of Italian fascism. Like Laclau and Mouffe's *HSS*, one of Gramsci's primary questions was why the failures of capitalism had not resulted in a worker's revolution and, in the case of Italy in the 1920s, had instead resulted in broad consent for a fascist dictatorship. In order to reckon with this

apparent challenge to Marx's theory of history, Gramsci developed the concept of *cultural hegemony* in order to account for why the working classes of Northern Italy and the 'peasant masses' of Southern Italy had effectively consented to a political order that ultimately opposed their class interests, thus bringing them into political alliance with the middle classes and the bourgeoisie (Gramsci 1971). While the PNF certainly used violence and coercion to secure power, Gramsci (1971) argued that their success was ultimately due to the fashioning of an ensemble of values and ideas into a new 'collective will', such that a majority of the population became unified around a common project or 'historical bloc'. According to Gramsci (1971:244) hegemony is, thus, not simply an explanatory *principle* but is also a political *strategy* — i.e., 'the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules'. In other words, hegemony is achieved when different demands and interests are brought together and articulated in a way that creates a sense of shared identity and purpose. Over time, the result of this shared sense of values results in a new 'common sense' that ensures that the *status quo* appears not only inevitable, but natural.

Laclau and Mouffe (2014) maintain this fundamental understanding of hegemony but diverge from it in two fundamental ways. First, while the concept of 'historical bloc' coincides with the concept of 'discursive formation' (Laclau and Mouffe 2014:123), the former is primarily concerned with the relationship between a ruling class and its dominance over subordinated groups, i.e. class struggle. As opposed to an implicitly *singular* historical bloc, PDT assumes that there are *multiple* discursive formations at any given time in history and that hegemonic struggle is not only occurring between class positions, but also between any number of subject positions and contested sites of power, e.g. sexual norms, the gendered division of labour, and racial hierarchies. Secondly, while Gramsci did not discount the role of language in hegemonic struggle, Laclau and Mouffe's concept of hegemony is entirely predicated on their concept of discourse as defined in section 3.3.1. In other words, Laclau and Mouffe (2014) conceptualise hegemony as the constant struggle between competing discourses to fix meaning (Smith 1998; Howarth and Stavrakakis 2000; Laclau and Mouffe 2014). When one discursive formation becomes accepted as 'common sense', thus *temporarily* closing off the possibility of other meanings, this discursive formation has become hegemonic. In both cases, however, there is always an exterior that threatens the stability of a hegemonic bloc or discursive formation. In the case of Gramsci (1971), this would be another political party, economic settlement, or social group. As Laclau and Mouffe (2014) do not distinguish between the discursive and material, external threats are always discourses that threaten to undermine the partial fixation of meaning in a particular discursive formation (Smith 1998; Jørgensen and Philips 2002). For example, throughout the latter half of the 20th century, successive feminist movements in the west articulated an understanding of sex and gender whereby 'sex' was understood to be a materially constituted reality

predicated on individual physiognomy, whereas gender was understood to be a social construct predicated on, *inter alia*, the gendered division of labour, the devaluing of gendered occupations, the particular ways of dressing or performing one's gender identity, as well as gendered expectations pertaining to sexuality and coupling practices (Rubin 1984; de Beauvoir 1989). There was always, however, an exterior to this discursive formation, e.g. sex is an immutable characteristic that determines one's gender (Greer 1970; Raymond 1979; Jeffreys 2014) as well as the inverse which is that discourses of gender construct the ideology of sexual difference (Butler 1990: Kessler 1990; Fausto-Sterling 2000). In the context of the UK, recent years have witnessed a destabilisation of the hegemony of the sex/gender binary (Faye 2022). On the one hand, discourses concerned with trans liberation have argued that the signifier 'gender' is not solely an identity that is socially constructed and associated with gendered performance, but is rather an inherent identity (Serano 2007). On the other hand, reactionary discourses concerned with the spread of 'gender ideology' now argue that sex is an immutable characteristic based in 'the Science' (Stock 2021; Lawford-Smith 2022; see Taylor [2010] for a discussion of how 'the Science' has become a signifier for authority in contemporary news discourse). This example demonstrates a contemporary unfolding of how Laclau and Mouffe (2014) conceived of hegemonic struggle. In other words, as different discourses are vying to fix the meaning of a signifier, i.e. 'gender', a multiplicity of discursive formations are revealed, thus providing observable evidence for the theory that discourses are never static and always subject to relations of power in the attempt to fix meaning. In order to analyse how and when such hegemonic struggle occurs, Laclau and Mouffe (2014) expanded upon Gramsci's theory of hegemony by including Saussure's concept of the signifier. However, drawing on the *post*structuralist position that all signifiers and, thus, discursive formations are inherently unstable and only ever fixed temporarily, Laclau and Mouffe (2014) incorporated the concept of a 'floating signifier'.

3.3.3 — Floating signifiers

As discussed in section 3.3.1, the instability of a discursive formation does not, however, mean that there can never be partial fixations of meaning (Smith 1998). Rather, hegemony and the organisation of consent are only possible through systems of representation that stabilise a discursive formation such that it becomes dominant during a particular historical moment, thereby precluding other ways of understanding society or one's place in it (Torfing 1999). An analysis of this precarity of meaning is rendered possible through the argument that certain signifiers — whether these be words, symbols, ideas, identities, political demands, sounds, etc. — are perennial sites of contestation that reveal *both* how a particular discursive formation becomes hegemonic as well as why hegemonic struggle is never complete. Laclau and Mouffe (2014), along with other theorists such as Jacques Derrida (1967),

Stuart Hall (1997a), and Roland Barthes (1977) refer to such sites of contestation as 'floating signifiers'.

In PDT and much poststructuralist discourse, a 'floating signifier' essentially refers to a signifier that does not have a fixed referent or signified. In other words, 'floating signifiers…assume different meanings in different contexts (and) discourses' (Carpentier and De Cleen 2007:268). This is not, however, a benign process analogous to changes in fashion or even language change. Rather, according to Laclau and Mouffe (2014), hegemonic struggle is fundamentally about the battle to fix the meaning of a 'floating signifier' that is contemporaneously contested. According to Laclau (2007:545), this is because there is always 'a proliferation of "floating signifiers" in society, and political competition can be seen as attempts by rival political forces to partially fix those signifiers to particular signifying configurations'. An analysis of this political competition over a floating signifier is, thus, one of the primary goals of PDT as it facilitates locating centres of power and, thus, the origins of how society and identities are organised at a particular historical conjuncture and for whose benefit. An influential example of how the analysis of a 'floating signifier' is crucial to an understanding of power, politics, history, and culture is the seminal essay by Stuart Hall (1997a) — *Race, the floating signifier* — in which Hall (2021:362) begins from the premise that 'race works like a language'. This is to say — echoing the conceptual framework of PDT — that the signifier 'race' has no essential or 'biological' meaning, but in fact, obtains its meaning through relations of difference. In his description of how a 'floating signifier' functions, Hall (2021:362) argues that:

> Their meaning, because it is relational, and not essential, can never be finally fixed, but is subject to the constant process of redefinition and appropriation: to the losing of old meanings, and appropriation and collection and contracting of new ones, to the endless process of being constantly resignified, made to mean something different in different cultures, in different historical formations at different moments of time.

This claim that 'race' is a floating signifier is, in reality, not solely a theoretical position, but is borne out in both historical and cross-cultural observation. And, while the signifier, 'race', may not immediately appear relevant to this thesis, it is my contention that the floating signifier, 'race', is subject to the same discursive processes *and* has the capacity to structure identities in the same way as the floating signifiers, 'sexuality' and 'gender', which *are* central to this thesis. A brief description of Hall's argument will follow, thus, demonstrating the strength and relevance of this theory.

According to Hall (2021), while 'race' has played a central role in structuring, *inter alia,* national identity, the global economy, geopolitics, and colonisation, its meaning can 'can never be finally or transhistorically fixed'. This is because the definition of 'race' and, consequently, its significance, is

both historically contingent and, at this particular historical conjuncture, understood differently according to geography. This is evidenced in both the history of European Colonisation and the Transatlantic Slave Trade as well as in how 'race' is defined contemporarily. First, in the settler colonies of the Americas between the 16th and the late 19th century, the economy was reliant on the labour of enslaved Africans. This system, however, required political and legal frameworks that provided the basis for who could and could *not* be enslaved, i.e. taxonomies of 'race' that, crucially, had no essential character, but were instead, arbitrary and articulated differently in various regions and across cultures (DuBois 1935; Allen 1994; Gates 2014; Dabiri 2021). For example, in the centuries preceding European colonial expansion, 'the Irish' were referred to as a separate and subordinate 'race', thus allowing for technologies of governance that enabled England to colonise, subjugate, and exploit the people of Ireland and their land (Allen 1994; Ignatiev 1995). In this case, 'race' was not necessarily based on physical characteristics (although there is evidence that physical differences were erroneously taxonomised), but rather on what were perceived as 'primitive' cultural and moral differences (Igantiev 1995). The contemporary discursive formation wherein 'race' functions as a signifier referring to phenotypical traits such as skin colour and hair texture was not introduced and codified until 1661 when the British colony of Barbados passed 'An Act for the Better Ordering and Governing of Negroes' (Dabiri 2021). In addition to laying the legal groundwork upon which millions of African people would be enslaved in the British colonies (including what would become the US), the Act effectively created the categories of 'white' and 'Black', thus 'elevating' indentured Irish labourers above enslaved Africans in a hierarchy of racialisation that continues to structure social relations around the world to this day (Dabiri 2021). This discursive process, enacted through language, the controlled movement of people, and their labour, not only demonstrates how identities are formed and are contingent upon certain historical conditions of emergence, but it also reveals how the concept of the 'floating signifier' functions from a historical perspective. This 'sliding of meaning' associated with the signifier 'race' is also evidenced in contemporary discourse (Hall 2021:362).

The continued primacy of 'race' as a technology of governance continues to be salient in 'the western world' where it is necessary in order to ensure the maintenance of Racial Capitalism (Robinson 1983). Like the preceding example, however, 'race' is a discursive construct that, while having significant material consequences for racialised populations, has no essential meaning and is, therefore, conceptualised differently in different locations around the world. For example, in the US, the legacy of the so-called 'one drop rule' means that any person with African ancestry, i.e. one drop of African 'blood' (Sharfstein 2007:593), is racialised as 'Black', thus rendering them subject to the institutional racism that structures the political-economy and culture of the US (Dabiri 2019; Blay 2021). In Jamaica, however, if an individual has European ancestry, they are generally considered 'white' and,

thereby, beneficiaries of the affordances of whiteness in the post-colonial context of the Caribbean (Gilroy 1987; Hall 1997a; Akala 2016; Andrews 2021). In neither of these examples is 'race' determined by the colour of one's skin, but is, instead, tied to a biological conception of 'racial categories' that was developed during the Enlightenment by European scholars and then codified into law under systems of Racial Capitalism that emerged during European colonisation (Robinson 1983). The radical contingency of the floating signifier, 'race', is further evidenced when the preceding examples are compared against processes of racialisation in South Africa and the Dominican Republic. In both instances, 'race' is not solely determined by the colour of one's skin but rather, by the texture of one's hair. During the Apartheid regime in South Africa, communities were divided along 'racial' lines constituted by 'Black', 'White', 'Coloured' and 'Indian/Asian' (Mandela 1994; Magubane 1997; Du Preez Besdrob 2005). Where it was uncertain whether someone was 'Black' or 'Coloured', authorities from the Apartheid Regime would subject individuals to the so-called 'pencil test' wherein a pencil was inserted into a person's hair (Magubane 1997). If the pencil fell due to the texture of one's hair, they were racialised as 'Coloured'. If it did not fall, you were 'Black' and, as a consequence, entire communities and families were forcibly separated and displaced. The legacy of the 'pencil test' remains salient in discourses concerning 'race' in South Africa — the signifier of the pencil being reappropriated as a symbol of resistance to racial oppression and as a reminder of the injustices/cruelty of the Apartheid regime. Hair, as a signifier for 'race', is also salient in the Dominican Republic where one's status as 'Black', 'Indio', 'Moreno', 'Jabao' or 'White' is determined, not by the colour of one's skin, but by the extent to which someone has 'African hair' or 'European hair' (Dabiri 2019).

The preceding discussion of 'race' demonstrates how the concept of the floating signifier is not simply theoretical, but has an explanatory power when used as an analytical tool. The analysis of floating signifiers is also relevant to the present thesis in that racial identities — like transgressive sexual and gender identities — are radically and historically contingent. There is no pre-discursive essence or fixed referent for 'race' and, as will be demonstrated in the subsequent analysis, a signifier like 'gay' is equally 'empty' in that it has been imbued with different meanings at different points in history and in different locations. The floating signifier is, therefore, an explanatory and theoretical tool that assists in accounting for social change, but it does not — on its own — explain how a particular discursive formation becomes hegemonic. In order to explain how floating signifiers and discursive formations come to be seen as 'natural' or as 'common sense', Laclau and Mouffe (2014) introduced and adapted the concepts of the 'nodal point' and discursive 'sedimentation'.

3.3.4 — Nodal points

The concept of the 'nodal point', as theorised by Laclau and Mouffe (2014), brings together their theory of discursive formations, their analysis of hegemonic struggle, and the concept of the floating signifier. This is because, according to their theory of discourse, floating signifiers are generally understood to be the locus of hegemonic struggle wherein different forces compete to fix their meaning (Laclau 1990; Carpentier and De Cleen 2007; Laclau and Mouffe 2014). When the meaning of a particular floating signifier becomes partially or temporarily fixed, it obtains a privileged status and, thus, becomes a 'nodal point' that holds together a particular discursive formation. Howarth and Stavrakakis (2000:11) argue, therefore, that nodal points are effectively 'privileged signifiers or reference points…in a discourse that bind together a particular system of meaning or "chain of signification"'. In other words, while all signifiers and, indeed, identities, obtain their meaning through differential relations, the nodal point 'has the greatest effect in reshaping' and, thus, unifying a discursive formation (Smith 1998:89; Torfing 1999).

Following the example of the sex/gender distinction in section 3.3.2, I want to suggest that the signifier, 'sex', provides evidence for how a floating signifier, wherein the meaning is contested, can become a nodal point, wherein the meaning is partially fixed. Not only does 'sex' structure several discursive formations that are fundamental to the organisation of contemporary society, but it also shows how the origins of a particular discursive formation can become so normalised that it appears immutable or natural.

In contemporary discourses surrounding gender identity and the trans subject, 'sex' has re-entered the arena of hegemonic struggle as reactionary forces are engaged in trying to erase the notion of 'gender identity' and tether the meaning of 'man' and 'woman' to discourses of 'biological sex' (Faye 2021). And while the signifier 'sex' has generally been understood to be structured by the nodal point of 'biology', the science of sexual differentiation is historically contingent, therefore revealing how the floating signifier, 'sex', became a nodal point with a fixed meaning. This is evidenced by Laqueur (1990) who argues that, throughout Antiquity and up until the Enlightenment, our understanding of what would become known as 'human biology' and 'sex differentiation' was based on a 'one-sex model'. In other words, sexual organs were understood to be the same for those who were identified as men and women. Nevertheless, while male sexual organs were considered 'normal', female sexual organs were understood to be inverted. Ovaries were, thus, understood to be inverted testicles, the womb was understood to be an inverted scrotum, and the vagina as an interior penis (Dryander 1542 cited in Laqueur 1990). During the Enlightenment, however, this conception of 'sex' was disrupted by novel ideas such as Evolution and the development of disciplines such as Biology and Physiology (Laqueur 1990). At this point, the 'one-sex' model, having effectively acted as a nodal point which

structured and justified gendered relations, was destabilised thus reintroducing the signifier 'sex' as a floating signifier. For example, one model of sex maintained the theory that humans were only 'one-sex', but that, in terms of evolution, female sexual organs were 'less developed' than those of men — the difference between them being described as follows:

> It seems clear that in both sexes there exist the same fundamental faculties; that though in women they are somewhat less developed than in men, they are not qualitatively different (Spencer, 1864, p. 598)

This ostensibly 'evolutionary model' of sexual differentiation was analogous to what would become known as 'Social Darwinism' wherein the gendered and racialised divisions of labour and exploitation were justified through 'Science' and discourses that posited there was a 'natural order' or 'hierarchy' within the species (Balani 2023). Concurrently, the taxonomisation of plants according to Linnaeus in 18th century Sweden was also normalising the notion that 'sex' could be understood as a binary. Taken up by figures such as Charles Darwin and the eugenicist, Francis Galton, Linnaeus had argued that in some species of plants there were two sexes, i.e. male and female. According to Balani (2023), the taxonomies of Linnaeus were the impetus that led to our contemporary discourses of the sexual binary and, importantly, the subsequent discursive formations of sexual deviance and the racialisation of populations outside of Western Europe. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, the 'one-sex model' was eventually abandoned in favour of a 'sexual binary' which, like its antecedent, is predicated on the claim that, according to all scientific evidence, there are 'two distinct, immutable, and incommensurable sexes' (Laqueur 1990:21). Any exceptions to binary sex are represented as deviations that, while naturally occurring (as in the example of plants), are, nevertheless, exceptions.

The preceding discussion on the origins of the sexual binary provide further evidence for the argument that something which appears as 'common sense' is, according to historical evidence, radically and historically contingent. In other words, the material reality does not change, but the way in which — in this case — bodies are ascribed meaning, is reliant on how they are constructed through discourse. The question remains though as to *how* a particular nodal point and its contingent discursive formations come to be regarded as ahistorical, natural, or as 'all there is' (Norval 2000). According to Laclau and Mouffe (2014), nodal points reach this point of fixity through what they identify as processes of 'discursive sedimentation'.

3.3.5 — Discursive sedimentation

The theory of sedimentation is adapted from Husserl (1970) who described 'sedimentation' as the process whereby the origins of a phenomenon become routinised and forgotten. Laclau and Mouffe (2014) developed this theory to explain how, over time, a nodal point and its contingent discursive

formations become so normalised that the contingency of its origin becomes 'concealed' such that it becomes hegemonic and appears as an objective truth. Laclau (1990:34) described this 'moment of sedimentation' as follows:

> Insofar as a as an act of institution has been successful, a 'forgetting of the origins' tends to occur; the system of possible alternatives tends to vanish and the traces of the original contingency tend to fade…This is the moment of sedimentation.

The example of binary sex is a clear example of discursive sedimentation. First, the historical conditions of its emergence have been largely forgotten. And while authors like Laqueur (1990) and Balani (2023) *do* interrogate the discursive origins of the nodal point, 'sex', a mainstream response would likely be that the 'one-sex' model from Antiquity is no more relevant to contemporary discourses of 'Science' than is the idea of the Divine Right of Kings. Secondly, 'sex' has become 'sedimented' through the routinisation of discourses that support its continued hegemony. For example, modern medicine is largely based on discourses of a biologically determined sex binary (Foucault 1979a; 1979b). This is primarily evidenced in the institutionalisation of medical treatment and procedures which frequently take place in different spaces and by doctors who have trained in different specialisations. Nevertheless, it is also salient in the domain of sports where sexed bodies are deemed as inherently different and thus separated in order to maintain 'fairness' and 'safety'. The notion of binary sex has become so entrenched and institutionalised that, even intersex individuals who have lived their lives as women, are now categorised according to criteria such as chromosomes and hormonal differences. In all of these ways, discursive sedimentation is not only intrinsic to the fixation of a nodal point, but it is also crucial to the maintenance of hegemony — hegemonic forces providing the frameworks, institutions, and discourses that shape our lives as subjects in a series of discursive formations. In the following section, this overview of PDT will conclude by discussing how Laclau and Mouffe (2014) conceived of the subject and how discourse, discursive formations, radical contingency, hegemony, nodal points, and sedimentation all contribute to the discursive construction of subject positions. This discussion will also provide the theoretical underpinnings upon which this thesis will analyse how LGBTQI identities or queer subject positions were discursively constructed by the British Press.

3.3.6 — Subject positions

The previous chapter concluded with the critique that the materialist or neo-Marxist roots of CDA, wherein there is always a distinction between discursive and non-discursive social practice, elide the necessarily discursive character of the subject and its construction through processes of representation. Concluding the overview of PDT, this final section will expound upon the claim that

the discursive construction of the subject, according to Laclau and Mouffe (2014), provides an opportunity to combine the methodological affordances of diachronic corpus-based CDA with the theoretical framework developed in *HSS*. In addition to the construction of the subject, this section will also a include a discussion of how the same processes that constitute identities also structure group formation.

In *HSS*, Laclau and Mouffe (2014) introduce their discussion of the subject by claiming that 'whenever we use the category of "subject" in this text, we will do so in the sense of "subject positions" within a discursive structure' (Laclau and Mouffe 2014:101). While this terminology is a clear adaptation of the Foucauldian claim that discourses 'systematically form the objects of which they speak' (Foucault 1972:54), Laclau and Mouffe (2014:93) distance themselves from Foucault as they reject what they interpret as a 'distinction between…discursive and non-discursive practices'. Like the example of a lesbian bar in section 3.3, PDT is predicated on the idea that physical spaces and material practices are still discourse as they necessarily obtain their meaning through discursive formations. According to this logic, there is no meaning and, thus, *no subject,* outside of discourse. Consequently, it is also necessarily the case that subject positions are produced *through* discourse. In order to explain this process, Laclau and Mouffe (2014) adapted the theory of 'interpellation' introduced by Althusser (1971) in his seminal essay, *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses.*

Althusser (1971) sought to explain how individuals are socialised into their roles in society, thus ensuring the reproduction of capitalist modes of production, distribution (or the lack thereof), and relations of power. In an argument reminiscent of Gramsci's hegemony, Althusser (1971:109-113) argued that modern capitalist societies did not only maintain consent through 'Repressive State Apparatuses', e.g. the police, the courts, and the military, but that they also manufactured consent through a series of 'Ideological State Apparatuses' (ISAs), e.g. the media, education, and religion. But while ISAs are the *institutions* which serve to reproduce the ideology of the ruling class, 'interpellation' refers to the *mechanism* through which individuals concede to their subordinate role within the social relations of capitalism. This occurs when an individual is 'hailed', i.e. 'interpellated', by an ISA, e.g. deferring to your teacher and behaving as a student in a classroom or submitting to questioning or an arrest when stopped by a police officer. At the moment in which we begin to acknowledge our role in relation to those acting in concert with an ISA, we become subjects, thus supporting the argument that social reproduction is contingent upon an ideology that '"acts" or "functions" in such a way that it "recruits" or "transforms"… individuals into subjects' (Althusser 1971:130). While Laclau and Mouffe (2014) agree that 'interpellation' is the mechanism through which individuals are made subjects, they reject two of the fundamental premises of Althusser's argument. First, Althusser argues that ideology is a 'distortion' or 'representation of the world' that masks the 'real' relations between people which are necessarily determined by the economy. Having

rejected the economic determinism of traditional Marxist thought, Laclau and Mouffe (2014) argue that there are no 'real' relations that exist outside of ideology — only a heterogeneity of discourses that are in constant hegemonic struggle. Secondly, while Althusser (1971) seems to be suggesting that subjects are interpellated into a single unified ideology that supports the continued supremacy of Capital, Laclau and Mouffe (2014) argue that subjects are interpellated by multiple discourses at the same time. One's subject position within a discursive formation is, therefore, always fragmented and temporary — thus always already allowing for the possibility of social change. In this way, subject positions reflect and are constituted by the same discursive forces discussed in sections 3.3.1 through 3.3.5.

In particular, because all discourse is radically contingent and 'discourses always designate positions for people to occupy as subjects' (Jørgensen &Philips 2002:41), then it is logically necessary that any 'subject position is constructed through its differential relations with the other subject positions that are found in a particular discursive formation' (Smith 1998:87). For example, the subject position of 'homosexual' cannot exist without the subject position of 'heterosexual' and, indeed, without a gendered or sexual binary that necessarily interpellates individuals within a monosexual (as opposed to bi- or plurisexual) discursive formation. Nevertheless, while sexual identity may be a relevant identity in some discursive formations, it may be rendered irrelevant or, at least, peripheral when the same subject is simultaneously interpellated by a different discursive formation. For instance, the subject position of 'lesbian' may be peripheral when that same individual is interpellated as a 'consumer' when buying a coffee or purchasing groceries. The fact that subjects are always fractured between multiple discourses means that their lack of fixity is similar to that of a floating signifier and, therefore, subject to hegemonic struggle.

Smith (1998:89) reiterates this point by making the claim that all 'subject positions are like "floating signifiers": their meaning is never entirely fixed but always open to change'. The consequence of this is that a subject position like 'bisexual' is not permanent if discourses of sexual identity fracture and change. For instance, as described in section 2.7, Wilkinson (2019) demonstrated how the signifier 'bisexual' had several referents throughout the 20th century including organisms with no sexual differentiation, fragrances or clothing that could be worn by both male and female identified individuals, and finally in reference to an individual who is romantically and sexually attracted to people who identify as the same gender or as a different gender. In this example, it is not only the term that is behaving like a floating signifier, but also the identities of those who have been interpellated by this particular discourse. This is because, where the discursive formations of sex and gender are now open to hegemonic struggle, so too is the bisexual subject. In other words, in a discursive formation predicated on a sexual or gender binary, the 'bi' in *bi*sexuality could both structure and (re)produce the discourses of 'biological women/men'. In a discursive formation where

the binary has been disrupted, then the subject position, 'bisexual', could signify someone who is attracted to more than two genders or whose sexuality is not contingent upon gender identity at all. In other words, 'subject positions should be regarded as somewhat fluid processes' (Smith 1998:99), subject to interpellation by discourses that are only ever temporary and thus open to hegemonic struggle.

In section 3.3.2, the concept of hegemony was introduced as both an explanatory theory for social change, but also as a political strategy. It, therefore, logically follows that, if subjects are interpellated by a particular discursive formation, subject positions are necessarily constituted by the same hegemonic forces. Accordingly, Howarth (2018:384) posits that subject positions are 'best viewed as social constructions that are fabricated by complex political practices of inclusion and exclusion'. In other words, they are 'the result of contingent, discursive processes and, as such, are part of the discursive struggle' (Jørgensen and Philips 2002:41). In the same way that a discursive formation represents a reduction of possibilities (Jørgensen and Philips 2002:26-27), so too are subject positions fundamentally constituted by what or *who* they are not. In addition to being constituted by hegemonic struggle, certain subject positions necessarily become hegemonic themselves. Indeed, as argued by Jørgensen and Philips (2002:41), 'subject positions that are not in visible conflict with other positions are the outcome of hegemonic processes…whereby alternative possibilities have been excluded and a particular discourse has been naturalised'. This process of discursive sedimentation renders certain identities hegemonic, e.g. 'gay', 'lesbian', 'Black' or 'white'. Therefore, the same processes of discursive sedimentation outlined in section 3.3.5, means that certain subject positions will ultimately become hegemonic and, in some cases, will also become nodal points in a particular discursive formation.

When a subject position becomes a nodal point around which there is a partial fixation of discourse, it is often the centrifugal point around which group formation occurs. This is a crucial point for the present thesis as one of the research questions is concerned with how disparate groups come to be represented as a 'community', i.e. the 'LGBT community'. Laclau and Mouffe (2014) argue that like the discursive construction of a subject position, group formation is subject to the same processes of, *inter alia*, radical contingency, hegemonic struggle, floating signifiers, and discursive sedimentation. However, what is unique in the process of group formation is what Laclau and Mouffe (2014:182) have identified as 'chains of equivalence'. Like other discursive formations which are constituted through a reduction of possibilities, i.e. an exclusion of alternatives in a field of relationality, group formation is contingent upon 'antagonisms' wherein a group is fundamentally contingent upon the exclusion of an (or multiple) Other(s), i.e. an exclusionary relationship with other subject positions. This theory has already been explored in section 3.3.1 in relation to Saussure's structuralism such that one could make the simple claim that the nodal point of 'gay' is constituted by its negative

relationship to the signifier ‘straight’. ‘Chains of equivalence’, however, are not simply about what a subject position *is*, but are perhaps more crucially about what a subject *does* at a particular historical conjuncture. For instance, in the example discussed in section 2.6.1, Baker, Gabrielatos, and McEnery (2013:122) showed that, in the early years of their corpus, the subject position ‘Muslim’ and the subject positions, ‘lesbian’, ‘gay’, and ‘homosexual’ were often represented as ‘shar(ing) common ground because they are oppressed groups’ (Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery 2013a:122). In the latter years, however, Muslims were more often represented as homophobic, i.e. having an antagonistic relationship with queer people. In this case, the media had discursively constructed a chain of equivalence whereby the alleged acceptance of the LGBTQI population had been used to further marginalise British Muslims. In this example, ‘Muslim’ as well as ‘gay’ and ‘lesbian’ had acted as nodal points for broad populations that were at one time rendered equivalent and, at another, rendered in an antagonistic relationship. The result is that the hegemony of the British establishment is reproduced through the creation of chains of equivalence *and* difference that, not only divide the population in order to manufacture electoral coalitions, but are also unfixed and leave open the possibility of ongoing hegemonic struggle.

3.3.7 — Concluding remarks on the affordance of Poststructuralist Discourse Theory

I began this section by arguing that the neo-Marxist conception of the subject employed in much CDA and CADS cannot account for the manifold ways in which subject positions are constituted, rendered salient, and then fractured. Indeed, an historical overview of any subject position — especially one constituted by transgressive sexual desire or gendered variance (Smith 1998) — reveals a lack of essence or fixity that can better be analysed using the *post*-Marxist and poststructuralist ontological framework originally developed by Laclau and Mouffe (2014). The analysis chapters in this thesis will, therefore, be based on the idea that all social practice and identity is discursive and that there is no ‘real’ or objective reality that exists outside of discourse. Rather, the analysis will assume that all identities and discourses are subject to hegemonic struggle and that, any identity can, at some point, become a floating signifier. The discussion will proceed from the position that when certain floating signifiers become fixed, they may become a nodal point around which discursive formations are structured, thus presenting an opportunity to begin analysing the discursive construction of queer identities across time. Having identified the affordances of PDT, the following section will discuss the critique that PDT has no discernible methodology and that, as such, the integration of corpus-based CDA is an ideal method of reconciling this gap in the field.

3.4 — A justification for the integration of PDT with corpus-based CDA

Where Laclau and Mouffe (2014) were fastidious in developing a rich and hermetic theory, they were equally vague about providing any clarity regarding methodology and how PDT might be applied in research. Even scholars working within PDT argued that 'the lack of adequate responses to the epistemological and methodological questions poses significant problems for researchers working within discourse theory' (Howarth 1998:291). In order to address these methodological concerns, I propose the integration and, indeed, blending of diachronic corpus-based CDA with Laclau and Mouffe's PDT. There are several reasons for this. First, PDT takes as its starting point the historical contingency of all discursive formations whether they be subject positions, social practices, or political phenomena (Laclau and Mouffe 2014). Based on a large sample of representative data, a diachronic corpus-based approach should provide linguistic evidence for the historical conditions of emergence of a particular discursive formation that is currently lacking within PDT literature. Secondly, one of the key linguistic phenomena analysed within corpus-based CDA is that of *discourse prosody* which suggests that certain lexical items take on encoded cultural concepts when repeatedly used in conjunction with other words (Stubbs 1996, 2001). Like the example from section 2.2 in the Literature Review, 'Islamic' becomes associated with 'terrorist' when the two words collocate frequently over a significant amount of time (Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery, 2013a). The methodological insights provided by corpus evidence for discourse prosody and the assumption that discourses become normalised through the repetition of specific linguistic patterns, again, provides statistical evidence for the theory of discursive sedimentation in PDT. Additionally, I would argue that an analysis of repeated language patterns over an extended period of time could potentially indicate sites of hegemonic struggle over meaning, e.g. the changing meaning of *bisexual* over the course of 60 years (Wilkinson 2019). Finally, as Laclau (1990:27) has conceded that 'discourse theory can usefully gain from engagement with other theoretical approaches', I would argue that corpus-based CDA can equally benefit from an engagement with PDT. Where CDA has failed to effectively theorise the subject (Jørgensen and Philips 2002:146), PDT has, arguably, failed to effectively provide a method. A corpus-based approach to PDT can therefore rectify these shortcomings, providing the methodological and theoretical basis with which to effectively study how certain LGBTQI subject positions have become hegemonized.

One final point of convergence between the two disciplines is in relation to media analysis. Chapter 2 outlined the innovative research corpus-based CDA has undertaken in relation to the media and its power to influence how certain groups or phenomena are represented. While at times critical, PDT has taken inspiration from both CDA and corpus-based CDA both in terms of method and, at times, interpretation (Montesano Montessori 2011; Brown 2020; Brown and Mondon 2021). For instance,

Kellner (cited in Torfing 1999:210) claims that 'mass media produce, store and reinvoke the symbols, myths and values that constitute what we consider to be our "common culture"'. This is a claim not dissimilar to van Dijk (2008) who argues that the media has the power to reinforce existing power relations and dominant ideologies. Having said that, PDT takes a more radical view in regard to the power of the media and its capacity to shape discourse, identities and all social phenomena. For instance, Dahlberg and Phelan (2011:275) claim that 'from a discourse-theoretical viewpoint, media are seen not just as passively expressing or reflecting social phenomena, but as specific machineries that produce, reproduce and transform social phenomena'. Taken to its logical conclusion, Dahlberg and Phelan (2011) are here suggesting that representation is the discursive mechanism through which identities are constructed. Like Hall (2011:4) who argued that 'identities are…constituted within, not outside representation', so too does PDT see the emergence of subject positions as radically contingent upon — and thus *not separate from* — representation. Drawing on this ontological and epistemological tradition then, the following thesis will not — in the tradition of corpus-based CDA — differentiate between representation and discursive construction. Rather, any analysis of representation will implicitly index construction while any discussion of construction will effectively be referencing representation — the two processes being radically contingent upon one another. Indeed, in a discussion of how the mediatisation of group identity discursively constructs that which is being represented, Laclau (1993:289) (emphasis added) argues:

> There are no objective groups since groups are always created through contingent constructions of equivalence among different elements. So it is not the case that the group is formed first and later represented; *group and representative are constituted in one movement*. It is not until someone speaks of, or to, or on behalf of, a group that it is constituted as a group.

In sum, while the following thesis will conduct an analysis of queer representation in the British Press by integrating the methodological affordances of corpus-based CDA with the theoretical strengths of PDT, it is this final point — that there is no *pre*-discursive subject that is being represented and that all identities are discursively constructed through processes of representation — that will underpin the analysis. Before concluding this chapter, the following section will outline some of the recent work that has also been exploring the benefits of combining corpus-based CDA with PDT.

3.5 — Corpus-based approaches to poststructuralist discourse analysis

Much literature that addresses LGBTQI representation in the press using CADS or corpus-based CDA is premised on normative ideas about accurate and inaccurate representations — a position which necessarily assumes that there is a reality *outside* of or separate from discourse. While this can provide

the grounds for 'strategic essentialism' (Spivak 1996) and the ability to organise community and build resistance to oppression, analyses which begin from the point of view that identities exist outside of representation skip over or elide the ontological question of how these identities are established in the first instance. With this in mind, the following section will consider an emerging field of study which, not only considers the ontological dimensions of how discourse constructs identities and contributes to group formation, but which does so through studies combining corpus- assisted approaches to discourse analysis with PDT.

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, PDT has been applied primarily in fields associated with Political Theory, most notably in the study of Populism. In response to the current political climate in Europe, the Americas, but also, *inter alia*, in India, the Philippines, and Australia, much of the scholarship conducted under the umbrella of PDT has been concerned with the resurgence of the far right. This is because PDT offers a method for understanding how signifiers such as 'Populism' are used to euphemise and, ultimately, mainstream ideologies and political parties whose platforms are predicated on racism and, in many cases, a resurgent fascism (Mondon and Winter 2020). While PDT is not solely concerned with textual analysis, much contemporary research has been enhanced by a triangulation of methods which often includes critical discourse analysis (CDA) and, more recently, corpus linguistic approaches. Specifically, research emerging from the POPULISMUS project (Nikisianis *et al.* 2019) based at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki as well as from research funded by the ESRC at the University of Bath (e.g. Brown and Mondon 2021) has begun to explicitly combine corpus-based analyses of language data in order to enhance their research. While earlier work from Glasz (2007), Caiani and Della Porta (2011) as well as Rooduijn and Pawels (2011) used 'lexicometric procedures' to complement content analyses of political speeches, publications from political parties, and newspapers, their methods and tools are perhaps dissimilar from contemporary work in CADS to be relevant here. In keeping with these earlier studies, however, Nikisianis *et al.* (2019) continue to use the term 'lexicometric approach'. Nevertheless, their use of keywords, collocates and the concordancing software, AntConc (Anthony 2022), suggests that their methodology is a *corpus-based* approach in *practice* if not in *name*.

While still few in number, the emerging use of corpus-linguistic approaches to support discourse theoretical analyses of 'Populism' and/or 'populist hype' (Mondon and Glynos 2016) have emerged since work for this project began in 2017. A review of this growing area is essential as this thesis employs a similar research design even if it is applied to a very different subject matter. Nikisianis *et al.* (2019), Brown (2020), Brown and Mondon (2021), as well as Brown, Mondon and Winter (2021) are all examples of how corpus-based textual analysis has been used with PDT and, in some cases, CDA (referred to in Brown's work as Critical Discourse Studies [CDS]). In terms of subject, Nikisianis *et al.* (2019) addressed pro- and anti-populist discourse in Greek newspapers between 2014

and 2015. This coincided with 'decisive political events and upheavals in Greek politics' (Nikisianis *et al.* 2015:270) connected to the rise and electoral success of the left-wing party, SYRIZA, and culminating with the referendum on the EU's 'bailout' terms in July 2015. Brown and Mondon (2020) as well as Brown, Mondon and Winter (2021) also built corpora using data from print media, but in these cases, focused specifically on the UK broadsheet, *The Guardian.* Unlike the Greek context which primarily associated populist discourse with the far left, both studies addressing the *Guardian* argued that the use of the signifier 'Populism' contributes to the mainstreaming of far-right discourse. Finally, in Brown (2020), the corpora under consideration were built using articles from the official party websites of The UK Independence Party (UKIP) and the *Rassemblement National* (RN) in France in order to establish how the discursive construction of Turkey functioned as a privileged signifier in debates concerning EU/Turkey relations and a so-called 'European identity'. The differences in content between the current study and the preceding discussions may appear obvious, but there is, nevertheless, a common theoretical thread that ties them together — namely, the role of discourse in group formation or 'community'. Specifically, the scholarship discussed above analyses and critiques how discourses of 'Populism' are deployed to establish 'the people' by creating political antagonisms between different groups, e.g. the working class versus the liberal elite (Brown, Mondon and Winter 2021). Through a similar discursive process, it will be argued that representations of the LGBTQI population in *The Times* also function to create antagonisms between sexualised and gendered groups such that notions of, for example, the 'gay community' become naturalised and appear as 'common sense'. In addition to these theoretical echoes, there are also significant methodological similarities.

With the exception of Brown, Mondon and Winter (2021) who do not necessarily make explicit how corpus linguistic methods informed their analysis, the other studies follow a similar method to most work in corpus-based CDA or CADS. Specifically, after building corpora that were representative of a particular discursive phenomenon, both Nikisianis *et al.* (2019) and Brown (2020) used reference corpora to generate keywords and, in the case of Brown (2020), key *terms* (KTs) through the use of *Sketch Engine.* Nikisianis *et al.* (2019) used the keyness of certain signifiers as a guide to establish which terms acted as nodal points that structured much of the Greek media's preoccupation with Populism. While also using the concept of the nodal point to guide their analysis, Brown (2020) began from the premise that this was, in fact, *Turkey/Turquie,* and so used the keywords and KTs to establish thematic categories which, ultimately, indicated which arguments for exclusion were most salient in the data. Finally, Nikisianis *et al.* (2019), Brown (2020) as well as Brown and Mondon (2021) all used collocation and concordance analysis in order to ascertain how certain signifiers were articulated in context. The current study mirrors these studies in the following ways.

As will be discussed in the data and methodology chapter, my analysis also began by using *Sketch*

Engine to generate a list of keywords and KTs. Through a process of thematic categorisation, I also identified nodal points, but where Nikisianis *et al.* (2019:280) argued that 'a nodal point should (a) be among the most powerful keywords and at the same time, (b)…be strongly connected with the other keywords', my criteria were more contingent on other factors which will be outlined in Chapter 4.

Like Nikisianis *et al.* (2019), Brown (2020) as well as Brown and Mondon (2021), my analysis was also frequently driven by a collocation analysis and always involved concordance analysis and the close reading of texts. The *interpretation* of which discourses were most salient and the context in which these discourses were presented was also always informed by a combination of CDA and PDT. This is because, where PDT provides the scope for a macro-level ontological analysis of discursive structures, CDA provides a toolbox for a more micro-analysis of individual texts or language patterns which, cumulatively, account for how such discursive structures are deployed in specific contexts thus providing empirical evidence for the analysis. In this way, CDA 'extends and complements' the goals of PDT (Brown and Mondon 2021:4) while corpus-based approaches provide the ability to track usage and emerging patterns across large amounts of language data.

This study was developed at the same time that the preceding research was published and, therefore quite interestingly, shares many of the same methodological and theoretical approaches. Having said that, it has also developed independently and is, therefore, different in some crucial ways. First, the current study seeks to analyse how *The Times* has used language to discursively construct a queer subject position which, historically, has also been a marginalised position. In contrast, 'populist hype' in the early 21st century is necessarily about a phenomenon that has become mainstream. While there may be a historical moment when the LGBQTI population of Britain becomes mainstream, the use of corpus-based PDT to analyse marginality presents methodological and theoretical concerns which diverge from the aforementioned studies. But perhaps most importantly, the current study takes a diachronic approach to the analysis, bringing it more in line with the work of Baker and McEnery (2019) or Taylor (2020) discussed in section 2.6.2. In this way, the current study is filling a crucial gap. This is because one of the central tenets of PDT is concerned with how certain discourses or identities become hegemonic through processes of discursive sedimentation, i.e. the ways in which certain discourses become naturalised over time, thus obfuscating the other discursive choices that could have been made. As noted by Taylor (2020:464), 'a major affordance of a long-distance view for discourse analysis is the ability to denaturalise the discourse in question and to approach it as a construct'. Thus, while the contributions made by Nikisianis *et al.* (2019), Brown (2020), Brown and Mondon (2021), as well as Brown, Mondon and Winter (2021) have shown how corpus-assisted approaches to textual analysis can enhance PDT, the current study further complements PDT by addressing a foundational element of Laclau and Mouffe's theory — namely, that all identities and, indeed, all discourses are radically contingent on their historical conditions of emergence. The

following chapter will, therefore, provide an overview of the methodological approaches undertaken in order to explore and map this process.

Chapter 4 — Data and Methodology

4.1 — Identifying a relevant source for the corpus

Where the discussion in chapter 2 suggested that there was a gap in research concerning the ontological origins of LGBTQI subject positions, chapter 3 suggested that an analysis guided by Poststructuralist Discourse Theory (PDT) combined with corpus-based approaches to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) could help to answer the research questions identified in chapter 1:

1. How has *The Times* used language to discursively construct queer subject positions?
2. In what ways have representations of LGBTQI people in *The Times* changed or stayed the same over time?
3. To what extent are representations of LGBTQI people contingent on historical context, e.g. political, social and economic events?
4. In what ways can non-linguistic theoretical frameworks support the analysis of how queer subject positions were constructed in the language of *The Times*?
5. What are the strengths and weaknesses of a combined approach to the analysis of how queer subject positions were constructed in *The Times* that employs poststructuralist discourse theory and diachronic corpus-based critical discourse analysis?

While #5 is a reflective question best discussed in the conclusion, the following chapter will outline how questions #1 through #4 were answered through an analysis of language data.

In order to begin exploring the central question posed in question #1, i.e. ascertaining how language has been used to discursively construct LGBTQI identities in the British Press, it was decided to build a diachronic corpus from one publication. While an analysis that included a variety of broadsheet and tabloid newspapers would have provided insight into political, topical, and stylistic variation, I wanted the focus of the analysis to be primarily concerned with both diachronic variation as well as similarity — the ways in which the consistent use of certain representations over a sustained period of time resulted in discursive 'sedimentation' (Norval 2000; Laclau and Mouffe 2014). In other words, I wanted the focus of the analysis to be on how certain representations of a queer subject position came to be seen as 'fixed' or hegemonic while other possibilities for representation had not, thus guiding the analysis in a direction that would begin to answer questions #2 through #4. In addition to focusing on one publication, I also decided to focus on a broadsheet that was considered, if not 'centrist', then at least representative of the Establishment consensus. There are two main reasons for this. First, while a tabloid such as *The Daily Mail* would certainly have provided sensational coverage of scandals and particular individuals (see Baker 2005; Baker 2014a), I was more interested in the kind

of quotidian representation which, cumulatively, amounts to the appearance of a fixed or stable identity. It was my supposition that such representations could be indicative of 'common sense' opinions concerning what constituted transgressive sexual and gender identities at various points in recent history as opposed to what could be, in the tabloids, exceptional representations. It is, therefore, likely the case that negative constructions of the queer subject would be less obvious, thus, uncovering non-obvious patterns of representation. Secondly, I am particularly interested in so-called 'centrist' politics and, therefore, sought to identify a source that could be considered as aligned with the political centre. While the political centre is unstable and frequently shifts, it *does* — at certain points in history — indicate which ideological positions have achieved hegemony at a particular moment in time (Mouffe 2018). The challenge, however, is that the media ecology of the UK is overwhelmingly skewed to the right (Jones 2014; Dahlgreen 2016) leaving few options to choose from. For instance, in a *YouGov* poll taken the year this research began, Smith (2017) found that of the top 8 newspapers in circulation, only two were generally considered left-wing (i.e. *The Guardian* and *The Mirror*), 5 were considered right-wing (i.e., *The Times, The Telegraph, The Sun, The Daily Express* and *The Daily Mail*) while only one was considered 'centrist' (i.e. *The Independent*). While *The Independent* would have been a relevant publication, it has only been in publication since 1986, thus rendering it incapable of providing the diachronic scope identified in research questions #2 and #3 which were primarily concerned with diachronic variation. With this in mind, it was decided to collect articles from *The Times*[8]. Not only has this particular publication existed since 1785, but as shown in Figure 4.1, it appears to be perceived by many within the population as the most centrist of the right-wing press. Similarly, it has tended to reflect the views of the British Establishment which, to an extent, have changed as the interests of the state and, more importantly, the interests of Capital, have developed and diverged over time. In other words, the evolving allegiances to those at the centre of power reflect and (re)produce 'common sense' views that come to be held by many within the population. An example of this pivoting is evident in who *The Times* has supported during various general elections. While they have most often supported the Conservative and Unionist Party, they

[8] It should be noted at this point that, while CQPweb (Hardie 2012) has already made their *Times Online Corpus* available, there were several reasons why I decided that building my own corpus would be more effective in answering the research questions outlined in section 4.1. First, I anticipated that a corpus built from articles which only contained lexis referencing transgressive sexual and gender identities would be more effective in identifying relevant discourses. Related to this first point, I also wanted to build several corpora from different time periods in order to track diachronic variation or similarity (see section 4.2. and 4.3 for a discussion of the temporal criteria). As CQPweb has already divided the data according to decade, i.e. *Times Online: 1950s*, it would not have been possible to delineate time periods that traversed these dates. Finally, I had also anticipated that the best way to begin the corpus analysis would be to identify which lexical items were 'key'. As this would require comparing corpora (see section 4.5.1 for a discussion of reference corpora), it was also necessary that I build my own data sets in order to begin answering my research questions.

also endorsed New Labour during the 2001 and 2005 General Elections. And while New Labour certainly espoused the ideological commitments of neoliberalism and implemented free-market reforms that were more reminiscent of Thatcher's Tories than that of any previous Labour Party, *The Times'* endorsement does suggest a tendency of the paper to both reflect and (re)produce discourses which come to be perceived as ostensibly centrist when compared to the right-wing or left-wing press.

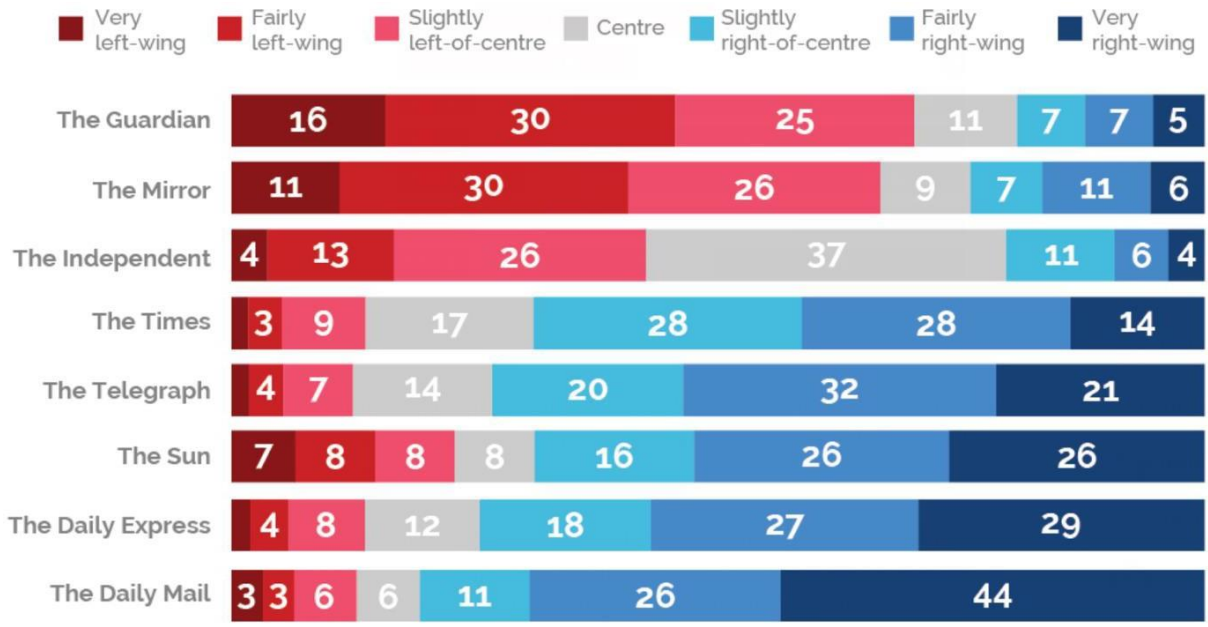

Figure 4.1 — *YouGov* poll results for the question: 'How Left or Right-Wing are the UK's newspapers?' (Smith 2017)

4.2 — Defining a temporal scope for the corpus

In order to build a corpus that was representative of the diachronic changes outlined in research questions #2 and #3, the next step was to identify a time period that would not only reflect the temporal scope within which the discursive construction of the queer subject could be analysed, but also to identify a time frame wherein a queer subject could actually be located. This is because the language of sexual *identity* is a modern phenomenon which emerged through the development of disciplines such as psychiatry, medicine and law (Foucault 1979a). Indeed, prior to the end of the 19th century, while sexual practice and desire between people identified as the same gender was considered a punishable *act*, it was not yet considered as constitutive of an identity in the sense that it is understood today (Foucault 1979a). The difficulty in locating marginal identities in a historical corpus is also discussed by McEnery and Baker (2017b:199), who remark that 'one of the challenges in exploring marginalized identities with corpus data is that the marginal nature of the identities brings with it the strong likelihood that the frequency of the lexis referring to such behaviours and

groups will be suppressed'. In other words, without the *language* of sexual identity, it would be beyond the scope of this thesis to map the development of LGBTQI identities in the language of *The Times.*

With this in mind, I decided to carry out a brief search of *The Times* to ascertain when lexis related to sexual identity began to occur at a frequency that might warrant a corpus linguistic approach. Using *The Times Digital Archive* (TDA), an online database that provides digital scans of every issue of *The Times* dating back to its Establishment in 1785, I decided to look for terms that were likely to have been used during the earlier decades of the 20th century. This resulted in the decision to use the terms *lesbian* and *homosexual*. While these two signifiers for sexual identity existed in the early half of the 20th century (Weeks 2016; Jennings 2007), terms like *transgender* had not yet emerged. This is not to say that individuals whose gender identity did not comport with the sex they were assigned at birth did not exist, but rather that one cannot read backwards in time identifications that are historically and culturally contingent. This argument is echoed by Burns (2018) who claims that there is a danger in labelling people from the past as *transgender* as such a term did not exist — rendering interpellation and identification impossible. They argue that, to ascribe an identification like *trans* would compromise a genuine understanding of gender and sexual identity in the past, as 'we rely on the co-evolution of identities and the words available to describe them in order to provide the script for how to interpret our feelings and possibilities — the things we can *be* and embrace' (Burns 2018:8). Similar to a term like *transgender*, searching for a term like *bisexual* would have been equally inappropriate as it would have unlikely referred to a sexual identity as it has undergone considerable semantic variation since, at least, the 1950s (Wilkinson 2019). With this in mind, a preliminary search of the TDA was conducted using the search terms *lesbian** and *homosex**. The asterisks acted as wild cards in that they would also capture morphological variation such as *lesbianism* as well as antiquated terms such as *homosexualism.* It was also decided to cast a rather wide net by beginning with the period 1900-1945. The rationale for this was that the language of sexual identity was only just emerging at the end of the 19th century and would, therefore, be unlikely to appear in *The Times* before the beginning of the 20th century and may not have increased a great deal in frequency much before the end of World War II (WWII). Perhaps unsurprisingly then, the search term *homosex** only returned 13 results. Similarly, while *lesbian** did return 58 results, these all referred to products from the Greek island of Lesbos, e.g. 'lesbian cheese' and 'lesbian wine', or to an actual shipping vessel named *The Lesbian.*

It was then decided to look at the 10 years following the end of WWII (1946-1955). The end of the war was significant in that British society began to change rapidly during this period. The conflict had, in part, triggered the beginning of the end of the British Empire; a strong Labour Movement had

brought about a radical Labour government in 1948 that would establish the modern Welfare State as well as the National Health Service (NHS); and — as noted by Weeks (2016) — the post-war era saw a significant increase in discourses surrounding what would come to be known as 'homosexual law reform'. Again, using *lesbian** and *homosex**, an initial search showed that the frequency of *lesbian** had actually fallen to only 7 occurrences. Despite this decrease, all 7 occurrences explicitly referred to women who were identified as lesbians. During the same period, the frequency of occurrences emerging from the search term, *homosex** saw a significant increase (see Table 4.2). A brief reading of the results in context revealed that this was largely due to several scandals that had occurred during the early half of the 1950s. These included the conviction of actor, John Gielgud, for 'cottaging' — a term that referred to sex in a public lavatory (Cook *et al.* 2007). There was also the public defection to the Soviet Union of Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean who were described as 'sex perverts' and explicitly as 'homosexuals' (Cook *et al.* 2007:168). Finally, the trial of Edward Douglas-Scott-Monatgu (Lord Montagu), Michael Pitt Rivers, and Peter Wildeblood received a tremendous amount of media coverage, accounting for a majority of the results from *homosex**. Around this time, in 1954, *The Times* also began to discuss the forthcoming publication of *The Wolfenden Report on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution.* Known colloquially as the Wolfenden Report, it was commissioned by the Conservative government at the time with a remit to reassess the ways in which the British State criminalised and prosecuted sexual 'deviancy' such as sex between men as well as prostitution (Cook *et al.* 2007). This was partially a result of what Weeks (2016:165) identified as the 'sickness theory' pertaining to homosexuality. This theory regarded sexual desire between men as a pathology and — it was argued — in a more compassionate society, those who are ill should not be criminalised. Indeed, between 1938 and 1955, the number of criminal cases involving 'sodomy, gross indecency, and indecent assault' had increased from 719 to 2,504 (Cooks *et al.* 2007:169) and the total percentage of prisoners incarcerated for 'homosexual offences' in 1954 accounted for 4% of the total prison population (Weeks 2016:166). The Wolfenden Report was not to be published until 1957 at which point the frequency of terms related to *homosex** and *lesbian** increased significantly. In the 10 years between the publication of The Wolfenden Report and the passing of the *Sexual Offences Act 1967* (SOA), the total occurrences were 853 and 83 respectively. It was therefore decided that the most appropriate time frame for analysing how *The Times* had discursively constructed queer identities was between the publication of The Wolfenden Report and the year that research for this thesis began in 2017.

Time period	*lesbian**	*homosex**
1900-1945	58	13
1946-1955	7	117
1957-1967	83	853

Table 4.1 — Preliminary search results from *The Times Digital Archive* for the terms *lesbian** and *homosex** in the first half of the 20th century

4.3 — Segmenting the corpus data for analysis

Once an overall timeframe was established, a method of analysing the data was required that would facilitate an analysis of diachronic variation and similarity identified in research questions #2 and #3. As diachronic analysis is inherently comparative in its approach, this required 'dividing up the data' (Marchi 2018) into appropriate sections or sub-corpora in order to map how representations of LGBTQI people have resulted in the appearance of 'fixed' queer subject positions across the 60 years in question. According to Marchi (2018:174), 'the way we divide up the data, i.e. what we choose to compare, determines what we see' — a crucial point as the results of this study would, therefore, be contingent on choices made at this step of the analysis. Marchi (2018) provides a comprehensive outline of the various methods used in determining how to conduct a diachronic comparison of data sets. Some notable examples that were published before I began my study include the seminal work on representations of refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants, and migrants (RASIM) (see Gabrielatos and Baker 2005; Baker *et al.* 2012), representations of Islam in the British Press (Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery 2013a; Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery 2013b) as well as the Modern-Diachronic Corpus Assisted Discourse Studies (MD-CADS) most notably applied using the SiBol corpus (see Marchi 2010; Taylor 2010; and Partington 2010). More recently, McEnery, Brezina, and Baker (2019) have pioneered Usage Fluctuation Analysis (UFA) as a method of developing an earlier study by McEnery and Baker (2017a) which considered collocation patterns as a method of studying representations of prostitution in the EEBO corpus. In their study, the data was not divided according to time period, but rather by using a 'sliding window' approach which could capture diachronic variation at different levels of granularity, e.g. decades or years (McEnery, Brezina, and Baker 2019:422-423). Clarke, Brookes and McEnery (2022) also returned to an earlier study, i.e. representations of Islam, and have developed the analysis by using Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) — a method that considers the co-occurrence of keywords and how their backgrounding and foregrounding at various points over 60-day intervals reveal how variations in the representation of Islam and Muslims. Most of these studies approach the segmentation of data according to one (or a combination of) the following three kinds of diachronic analysis (Stanyer & Mihelj 2016: 273 cited in Marchi 2018:176-177):

1. Trend mapping — tracking the development of a chosen phenomenon over time;
2. Temporal comparison — comparing two moments in time;
3. Turning points — defining *a priori* critical junctures and comparing before and after.

While the majority of studies apply the first two approaches, there are examples such as Motschenbacher (2019) which divides the corpus into before and after the Puerto Rican singer-songwriter, Ricky Martin, came out as gay.

Using the preceding studies as a guide for how the present corpus could be built, I also took into account some of the following considerations that were significant to this particular study: granularity; the disparity in corpus size between the earlier and later years; as well as how many sub-corpora were appropriate in order to answer the research questions. In terms of granularity, it would have been impractical to divide the corpus by month or even year. This is because, unlike the MCA approach which analysed 60 days' worth of language data (Clarke, Brookes and McEnery 2022) or even the RASIM studies which initially focused on 11 years, the present corpus took into account 60 years. Following on from the issue of granularity was the likelihood that there would be a great disparity in corpus size depending on how the data was divided. If sub-corpora built from language in the earlier decades were simply too small, e.g. less than a decade, the analysis of discourse would no longer warrant a corpus-based approach due to the limited number of tokens. Finally, a decision had to be made as to whether the sub-corpora would contain equally determined time periods. For example, if the first sub-corpus were to be constituted by language data between 1957-1967, it would be an option to divide the data into 6 sub-corpora that were each constituted by 10 years. The issue with sub-corpora that were divided equally, however, was that this may not have mapped onto eras that were historically significant in the UK or that had had a significant impact on the development of the queer subject as represented in the language of *The Times*. This would complicate the capacity for this study to answer research question #3 which was concerned with the historical contingency in the formation of hegemonic queer subject positions. For instance, the premiership of Margaret Thatcher had a significant impact on the histories of the UK and the LGBTQI population. If the data were divided into 6 contiguous sub-corpora, then this era would necessarily be divided between 1978-1987 and 1988-1997, dividing the premiership and producing very different results. It was, therefore, decided that the corpora should be divided according to historical context rather than reflecting equal amounts of time.

Using a similar approach and dataset, Wilkinson (2019) divided the 60-year corpus into 5 contiguous and historically relevant sub-corpora. While this approach was appropriate when only analysing one signifier, *bisexual*, it was decided that, due to the breadth of search terms that would be used to build the corpus (see section 4.4), comparing five contiguous sub-corpora would be beyond the scope of this thesis. It was, therefore, decided to base the analysis around three *non*-contiguous time periods as the gaps would present an opportunity to more acutely map the variation and similarity across the 60

years of the corpus. The three sub-corpora are, therefore, constituted by the years 1957-1967, 1979-1990, and 2003-2017. Their historical significance is discussed below.

4.3.1 — 1957-1967

The first sub-corpus begins with the publication of *The Wolfenden Report on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution* which recommended the partial decriminalisation of homosexual sex between consenting adults and concludes with the passing of *The Sexual Offences Act 1967* which implemented many of Wolfenden's recommendations. A critical document in the history of queer people in the UK, the Wolfenden Report was commissioned by the Conservative government of the time and sought, not to legalise or legitimate same-sex relationships, but to reassess how the 'social problem' of homosexuality could be most effectively handled. The result was a set of recommendations that, above all else, advocated for an amended understanding regarding the role of criminal law — namely, that the function of the law should be to maintain public order, 'not to impose a particular pattern of moral behaviour' (Weeks 2016:165). Based on this, the Wolfenden Report recommended the decriminalisation of consensual sex between men in private over the age of 21; that buggery should be reclassified from a felony to a misdemeanour (thus reducing sentencing); and that offences older than 12 months should not be prosecuted (Wolfenden 1957).

The impetus for reform, however, did not come from the Conservative government. It was rather a response to the increasing press coverage of high-profile prosecutions as well as the changing attitudes of the public when it came to the notion of 'homosexualism' (Cook *et al.* 2007; Weeks 2016). With the parliamentary debates that followed the publication of Wolfenden's recommendations, the media discourses that emerged concerning homosexuality continued to increase until the passing of the *Sexual Offences Act 1967* by Harold Wilson's Labour government. This decade, therefore, provides relevant linguistic evidence for how the queer subject was beginning to take shape in the language of *The Times* during the post-war era.

4.3.2 — 1979-1990

Not only did the years between 1979-1990 bear witness to crucial events in the history of queer people in Britain, but they also mark a significant ideological shift — beginning with the election of Margaret Thatcher in 1979 — that would continue to affect how the LGBTQI population was represented and understood into the 21st century.

During the 1980s, the HIV/AIDS epidemic took a significant toll on the LGBTQI population. Not only were gay, bi, men who have sex with men (MSM) and trans people most adversely affected, but

they also became the victims of a public backlash that perceived the 'gay plague' as retribution for the immorality of so-called gay 'lifestyles' — a perception that Cook *et al.* (2007:200) argue 're-inscribed the old connection between homosexuality and pathology'. While many across the LGBTQI population began to organise in an effort address the educational, social and medical shortcomings resulting from a hostile Conservative government (Jennings 2007), there was an equally robust and aggressive attack from the new right which culminated in the passing of Section 28 in 1988 (Weeks 2016: Baker 2021). Section 28 sought to limit the ability of local councils and schools to 'intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality' or 'promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship' (legislation.gov.uk 2022).

In addition to discursive and legislative attacks specifically aimed at the LGBTQI population, Thatcher's premiership fundamentally transformed the socio-economic and political architecture of Britain (Hall 2011). Thatcherism placed so-called individual freedom(s) over and above the needs of society such that democracy and equality became secondary to individual liberty, economic liberty and private property (Mouffe 2018). While the emergence of neoliberalism during the 1980s was embedded within social conservatism, many of the goals of contemporary 'gay rights' and, indeed, 'LGBT rights' movements reflect the ideological commitment of neoliberalism and the privileging of individual civil rights over the interests of community and the redistribution of social, economic, and political power.

4.3.3 — 2003-2017

The final sub-corpus begins with the repeal of Section 28 in 2003 and concludes with the year that research for this thesis began. Within that time, there has arguably been a substantial amount of progress made concerning the status and rights afforded to many within the LGBTQI population, not the least of which concern the legislative gains made in recognition of same-sex couples (Weeks 2016). Shortly after the repeal of Section 28, the *Civil Partnership Act 2004* was passed which granted most of the same rights and responsibilities afforded heterosexual marriage. Within a decade, however, the *Marriage (Same-Sex Couples) Act 2013* — passed by David Cameron's Conservative Party in coalition with the Liberal Democrats — provided for full parity between same-sex and different-sex couples. Complementing such measures of inclusion within heteronormative structures of family organisation, was the *Human Fertilization and Embryo Act 2008* which provided equal parenting rights for same-sex couples who received IVF treatment.

Another significant shift has been the increased visibility of trans people which, in *The Times*, arguably began with the passing of the *Gender Recognition Act 2004*. The subsequent proliferation of

discourses around trans people has, however, been framed as 'issues' or 'debates' concerning the legitimacy of trans rights and, more fundamentally, trans identity. At best, such coverage has been unsympathetic, thus harkening back to some of the same discursive strategies used against gay men and lesbians in the 1960s and 1980s. How the discursive construction of queer subjectivities has diverged or remained consistent is thus evidenced in this final section of the corpus.

4.4 — Identifying search terms

With the time-periods for each of the sub-corpora established, it was then necessary to compile a list of search terms that could potentially locate queer identities in the past and begin to answer research questions #2 and #3. As discussed in section 4.2, however, the language used in discourses of gender and sexuality have changed significantly between 1957-2017. In order to build 3 sub-corpora that considered the historically contingent language used to signify individuals who, today, would likely identify somewhere under the umbrella term LGBTQI, required a consideration of which signifiers for identity had changed over time, which had not existed in the past, and which had existed in the past, but had fallen out of use in the present era. The following discussion provides a brief overview of how search terms were developed.

4.4.1 — Search terms: 1957-1967

Similar to other historical studies that have used corpus linguistic approaches to identify marginal identities (McEnery and Baker 2017a; 2017b), this first set of search terms was developed by drawing on lexical items that were obtained from historical research (D'Emilio & Freedman 1997; Baker 2005; Cook *et al.* 2007; Jennings 2007; Weeks 2016) and relevant literature from the mid-20th century (Vidal 1948; Baldwin 1956; Rechy 1964; Isherwood 1976). From these sources, an initial list of 33 items was developed that included both words, e.g. *homosexual*, and bigrams, e.g. *sexual deviant*. These terms were then searched in the *Oxford English Dictionary's Historical Thesaurus* (OED, 2017) so as to obtain additional language that may have been missed. With results dating back to 1150 AD, the OED (2017) documented a total of 361 different historical synonyms for lesbian, gay, bi, and trans ranging from euphemisms (e.g. *that way*) and slang (e.g. *poof*) to rare historical terms (e.g. *tenderling*). As all entries provide the date of its first recorded occurrence in English, only terms that occurred after the 19th century were included. The logic for this was that many of the earlier terms would likely have fallen out of use by 1957. Certain exceptions were made, however, such as *sapphic* and *effeminate* whose origins are in the 18th and 17th centuries respectively, but were used well into the contemporary era. Similarly, there were many phrases and terms that were specific to the United States that would not likely have been used frequently in *The Times*. Finally, I assumed that other terms that would likely be absent from *The Times* were slang terms that would have been

considered too vulgar to print, e.g. *arse-bandit* and *cunt-sucker*. The remaining list included 123 terms that were divided into standard terms, euphemisms, and slang. These were then searched according to date in the TDA. With many euphemistic and slang terms occurring rarely, it was decided to omit terms that occurred less than 10 times between 1957-1967. The remaining list included:

bisex[9], bugger*, effemina*, heterosex*[10], homosex*, lesbian*, pederast*, sodomy, sodom*, transsex*, transvest**

4.4.2 — Search terms: 1979-1990

In order to establish which search terms were relevant in the years between 1979-1990, I began by searching the TDA for the terms used above. Subsequently, a list was compiled of more contemporary terms such as *gay* or *sexual orientation* which came into common usage during this period. Many of these emerged from knowledge of the subject as well as by including results from derivative terms in the OED, e.g. *gaydom* and *lesbo*. Finally, a primary search was conducted in order to establish whether any of the proposed terms were rare (occurring less than 10 times between 1979-1990). The subsequent list included:

bisex, bugger*, gay, gays, heterosex*, homosex*, homophobi*, intersex*, lesbian*, pederast*, "same-sex"[11], "sexual orientation", "sexual preference", sodomy, sodomi*, transgender*, transsex*, transvest*.*

4.4.3 — Search terms: 2003-2017

The final sub-corpus was compiled by drawing on the previous two lists as well as by adding terms that emerged after 1990 and were reasonably frequent in the years between 2003-2017. Again, many of these emerged from contemporary knowledge of the subject and personal usage as well as by

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[9] The use of an asterisk allows the search engine to retrieve morphological variations of a word form, e.g. *bisexual, bisexuality, bisexuals,* etc.

[10] While the guiding question for this thesis is concerned with how *The Times* has used language to discursively construct *queer* subject positions, a term such as *heterosex** is still essential in locating discourses surrounding sexual identity. This is because it is highly unlikely that *The Times* would use a term such as *heterosexual* if it were not used in relation to a discussion of, for example, 'homosexual law reform' in the 1960s or the HIV/AIDS pandemic during the 1980s. In other words, because heterosexuality is assumed to be a universal subject position, its markedness in a particular discourse almost always indicates a discussion of transgressive sexual identities.

[11] Placing phrases in quotations ensured that the results included the fixed phrase as opposed to all articles that included *sexual* or *orientation.*

searching for derivative terms in the OED's *Historical Thesaurus* (2017), e.g. *lady-love*, *twink*, and *biphobic*. In addition to terms for identity, government acts were also included due to the increase in legislative developments that impacted on the LGBTQI population. The final list of terms includes the following:

asex, bicurious*, bigender, biphobi*, bisex*, cisgender*, cisnormativ*, "civil partnership*", civil partner*, drag king*, drag queen*, "employment equality regulation", "equality act", "equality act regulation*", gay*, "gender binary", "gender identit*", "gender non-conforming", "gender recognition act", genderqueer, GLBT, hemaphrodit*, heterosexual*, homophobi*, homosex*, "human fertilisation and embryology act", intersex*, lesbian*, LGBT, LGBTQ, LGBTQ+, LGBTQI, "marriage act", MSM, pansex*, "pride parade*", queer*, same-sex*, "section 28", "sexual identit*", "sexual offences act", "sexual orientation", "sexual preference*", sexualit*, "trans* man", "trans* men", "trans woman", "trans women", trans*, transgender*, transphobi*, transsex*, transvestit**

4.4.4 — Database

Accessing data from *The Times* required the use of different databases for different time periods. For instance, many studies that use a corpus-based approach to the analysis of queer representation, (e.g. Baker 2014b; Gupta 2019; Heritage and Baker 2021) use the online platform *Nexis* in order to obtain language data. This is because *Nexis* provides access to thousands of digitised newspapers, magazines, news transcripts and journals which can be sorted, *inter alia*, by language, region, and type. These can then be downloaded in .rtf or .docx formats in batches of 500 files at a time which are readable using most concordancing software. At the time the corpora were compiled, however, *Nexis* only provided copies of *The Times* after 1998. It was, therefore, the case that *Nexis* could only be used to compile the 2003-2017 sub-corpus. Using the search terms above, every article containing any of the search terms anywhere in the article was included in the sub-corpus. For 1957-1967 and 1979-1990, however, it was necessary to download articles from the TDA. At the time the corpora were being compiled, the TDA had digitised scans of all issues of *The Times* between 1785-2011. These could be explored by, *inter alia*, search term, date range, publication section, or document type. Like the *Nexis* search, the criteria were set to find any article that contained any of the search terms anywhere in the article. Nevertheless, using the TDA did present a problem. As the articles were scanned copies, they were, therefore, only available as PDF files or as Optical Character Recognition (OCR) texts. While the latter were plain text files and would, therefore, be compatible with most concordancing software, poor quality scanning of the original papers meant that the OCR texts were frequently inaccurate. Corrections, therefore, had to made manually by comparing the original PDF

articles against the OCR files in order to complete the first two sub-corpora. The size of each corpus is listed below in Table 4.2.

Time period	1957-1967	1979-1990	2003-2017
Tokens	912,612	2,527,525	15,086,855

Table 4.2 — Number of tokens in each of the sub-corpora

4.5 — Analysing the data with corpus-based techniques

4.5.1 — Selecting concordancing software and a reference corpus

With the 3 sub-corpora compiled, it was decided to begin with a 'naïve' approach to the analysis. In other words, while the historical context of each of the sub-corpora certainly indicated which discourses were likely to be salient, the first step of the analysis was to garner a sense of which discourses were most frequent by generating a list of keywords and key *terms*. In order to do so, it was decided to use *Sketch Engine* (Kilgarriff *et al.* 2014). There were two main reasons for this. In terms of practicality, popular concordancing software like *Word Smith Tools* would have required that the installation of a Windows operating system on my MacBook. *Sketch Engine*, however, is an online tool which meant that I could conduct the analysis and store the data on the website without having to change operating systems. In terms of methodology, however, *Sketch Engine* not only provides key*words*, but also provides key *terms* (KT) which are typically noun phrases that are identified as salient by using the 'simple Maths' approach developed by Kilgarriff *et al.* (2014). KTs are useful in that they provide a preliminary look into collocations that are present in the text. For instance, the keyword *virus* is indicative of discourses concerning HIV/AIDS but is only interpreted as such if the researcher expects that the virus in question is HIV. On the other hand, without having to look at collocates, the KT function automatically highlights *human immunodeficiency virus*.
Comparing KTs with keywords also provides a more rounded picture of the discourses that are salient within the corpus. For instance, while KTs like *conservative mp* and *loony left* gestured towards pertinent political allegiances, keywords like *Whitelaw* and *Tatchell* provided insight into exactly *who* was implicated in the histories of LGBTQI people as represented in *The Times*. It was, therefore, decided to begin the analysis by generating lists of the top 50 most frequent KTs and top 50 most frequent keywords (see Appendix A) in each of the sub-corpora so as to begin the process of ascertaining how the discursive construction of the queer subject was embedded within the language of *The Times* between 1957-2017.

In order to establish which terms and words were 'key', an appropriate reference corpus was required. Initially, I considered comparing the sub-corpora against one another. The problem with this approach, however, was that, even if the 1957-1967 and 1979-1990 sub-corpora were combined, they would still be too small to use as a reference corpus for the 2003-2017 sub-corpus. As an alternative, I considered using two different approaches. One approach would be to use reference corpora that had been compiled during similar historical eras, e.g. *enTenTen 2013* for the 2003-2017 sub-corpus, the BNC (see section 2.3.1) for the 1979-1990 sub-corpus, and the LOB for the 1957-1967 corpus. The other approach would be to use the same reference corpus for all three sub-corpora, e.g. the BNC. While the former could potentially present methodological issues such as variations in text type and register that would need to be accounted for, the latter would likely impact the analysis by generating keywords that were the result of historical changes in language use. In order to evaluate how these differences might be borne out in the analysis, I decided to compare the 2003-2017 sub-corpus against both the 100-million-word BNC and the 19-billion-word *enTenTen 2013*. While both reference corpora generated keywords pertaining to transgressive sexual and gender identities, e.g. *gay*, *transgender*, and *homophobic*, the other keywords were quite different as a result of the language data used to build the respective corpora. On the one hand, due to the historical distance between the 2003-2017 sub-corpus and the BNC, many of the most significant keywords indicated technological changes in communication, e.g. *website*, *twitter* and *internet*. On the other hand, when comparing the 2003-2017 sub-corpus to *enTenTen 2013*, many of the most significant keywords concerned religion, e.g. *anglican*, *gledhill*, and *archbishop*. A closer look at the concordance lines revealed that the majority of these keywords were used in discussions of the Anglican Church and whether it would allow equal marriage or openly gay bishops. These keywords were likely a result of the fact that the *enTenTen* family of corpora are compiled from web content generated from a wide variety of primarily English language domains such as .com, .org, and .net, but also from region specific domains such as .au (Australia), .ca (Canada), and .uk (United Kingdom). As web content from the UK only accounts for less than 10% of the *enTenTen* corpora (*Sketch Engine*, 2024), this would likely explain why keywords pertaining to the Church of England were salient when using *enTenTen 2013* as a reference but not when using the BNC. Having explored these two reference corpora, it therefore appeared as though the quality and quantity of keywords that emerged as a result of historical change was not any more substantial than that of keywords which resulted from geographic variation when using e*nTenTen 2013*. And while such differences would have likely provided for equally interesting avenues of analysis, they also suggest that, echoing Scott (2009), there is no perfect reference corpus.

With the above in mind, it was, therefore, decided to use the BNC as a reference corpus for all 3 of the sub-corpora. The final rationale doing so was as follows. First, as the BNC is compiled using British English spelling, American spellings would not register as key, thus ensuring that topical keyness was revealed as opposed to orthographical variation. Secondly, the majority of the BNC was published

between 1985 and 1993 which means that, while the lexis used would be most similar to the 1979-1990 sub-corpus it would, arguably, be quite similar to (if not always the same as) the sub-corpora from 1957-1967 and 2003-2017. This would ensure that semantic variation of terms outside of sexual identifications would be relatively rare and, thus, allow for the focus of the analysis to be on gender and sexual identity. Finally, the size of the BNC rendered it appropriate for all 3 of the sub-corpora and provided a consistent variable against which to measure keyness.

4.5.2 — Identifying discourses through a thematic categorisation of keywords and KTs

After generating the lists of keywords and KTs, they were then organised into thematic categories. This was done by looking at their meaning in context as opposed to their surface meaning. For example, *intravenous drug* refers to a narcotic that is typically taken through a hypodermic needle. In the context of the analysis, however, *intravenous drug* generally occurred in a discussion of HIV transmission and was thus placed in a category pertaining to the HIV/AIDS crisis. Similarly, where a KT was ambiguous, e.g. *report stage*, a brief concordance analysis was conducted in order to clarify its meaning. In this case, *report stage* referred to a parliamentary process and was therefore classified alongside other terms related to *party politics*. A close reading of concordance lines was not always suitable though, as many KTs and keywords required historical knowledge that was not necessarily conveyed through a concordance analysis. This was especially true with the significant number of proper names that appeared in the top 50 keywords for each sub-corpus. For instance, it was possible to establish that the names *Abse* or *Whitelaw* referred to a politician, however a close reading of multiple texts within the corpora was necessary in order to establish how they were relevant to the story of LGBTQI identities in Britain and how they might fit into the thematic categories mentioned above.

After both the KTs and keywords were categorised, the two sets of themes were combined in order to provide a broader picture of how queer subjects had been represented, and thus discursively constructed between 1957-2017 (see Appendix B). The KTs had largely been divided into *practice, identity, community, law reform, crime, relationships, party politics, HIV/AIDS, religion, gender identity, international security, queer spaces, media and the arts,* and *medicine*, as well as several KTs which were miscellaneous or concerned with a single issue. Interestingly, many of the key*words* had also been classed according to these same categories, however, in addition to the themes mentioned above, the keyword categories also included *scandal* and *location* while *community*, *relationships* and q*ueer spaces* did not emerge as relevant categories (Table 4.3). Many of the lexical items in the 17 thematic categories index events and developments are unsurprising. For instance, in the 1960s, a significant number of KTs and keywords pertained to the Wolfenden Report and the

subsequent debates concerning the legality of homosexuality leading up to the SOA 1967. In the 1980s, there were a plethora of terms which pertained to the HIV/AIDS crisis as well as many that concerned the debates around Section 28. Finally, in the 2000s, the majority of terms pertained to the legal status of same-sex relationships as well as new terms that emerged for gender identity. It has been argued that, through the apparatus of the state and the extension of legal reforms to the LGBTQI population, the lived experiences of queer people in the UK have been steadily improving over the past two decades. Nevertheless, while legal reforms such as the *Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013* have undoubtedly benefitted many within the queer population, such progress has been both inconsistent and has come at a cost for those whose multiple and intersecting identities are faced with multiple forms of oppression. With this in mind, a closer look at the themes suggested that there were salient discourses that traversed multiple time periods and which complicated the narrative of consistent progress. In the following section, it will be argued that — within *The Times* corpus — there are distinct trajectories that emerge which have discursively constructed the queer subject according to the political, economic and social interests of the British Establishment. In other words, the very notion of an LGBTQI population has been operationalised to uphold hegemonic formations by deploying discourses that either marginalise or integrate certain queer subjects into narratives of British identity, capitalism and the legitimacy of the state. This process has not always been at the expense of LGBTQI people; nor is it necessarily a conscious decision. It is, nevertheless, the case that, in *The Times*, the queer subject is a historically contingent identification which has developed within the historical trajectories of the past 60 years. It will, therefore, be argued that the answers to research questions #1 through #4 can be explored through an analysis of the following three historical trajectories: Biopolitics and the management of queer bodies; how the queer subject has both threatened and, ultimately, been co-opted by the capitalist Establishment; and the erasure of diversity within the queer population of the UK.

KT thematic categories	Keyword thematic categories
Sexual identity	Sexual identity
Gender identity	Gender identity
Community	
Practice	Practice
Relationships	
Queer spaces	
Party politics	Party politics
International security	International security
Law, crime and law reform	Law, crime and law reform
HIV/AIDS	HIV/AIDS

Medicine and reproduction	Medicine and reproduction
Religion	Religion
Media and the arts	Media and the arts
Single issue	Single issue
	Scandal
	Location
Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous

Table 4.3 — Thematic categories constituted by the top 50 keywords and KTs for each of the three sub-corpora

4.6 — Analysing the data through PDT and CDA

4.6.1 — Identifying discursive trajectories

Unlike the initial stages of the analysis which were, first, guided by the statistical significance of keywords and KTs and, second, developed through the categorisation of keywords and KTs according to their usage in context, this third stage in the analysis took a decidedly different approach. This is because, while the corpus-based methods revealed which discourses were most salient, the interpretation of and explanation for why such discourses were salient relied, in part, on the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 3. In other words, this next stage of the analysis relied on the ontological framing provided by PDT which regards all identities as inherently political and the result of discursive choices which, through a process of sedimentation, have resulted in identities which appear 'fixed' — their political origins having been 'forgotten' (Laclau 1990; Smith 1998: Norval 2000; Phelan and Dahlberg 2011). In addition, this stage was also explicitly informed by my own political commitments to the radical left and intellectual allegiance to socialist political theorists such as Antonio Gramsci, Chantal Mouffe and Stuart Hall who would argue that, in a political and economic system predicated on inequality, it is necessarily the case that the discursive production of identities are, as a matter of course, produced by the same signification practices (e.g. the media) that (re)produce electoral blocs in order to maintain consent for exploitation, extractivism, and Racial Capitalism. This next section, therefore, explicitly *and* intentionally diverges from other studies in CADS which purport to be predicated on the idea that the discourse *analyst* can take a more objective or 'scientific' approach to an analysis of the media — dismissing 'politicised discourse analysts' as being 'happy to concoct dark agendas and media conspiracies' (Partington *et al.* 2013:339) when confronted with the common news value of negative reporting. Instead, the identification of the following discursive trajectories are *not* a result of an impartial or 'scientific' approach, but rather observations which are explicitly informed by my politics and a conviction, articulated most elegantly

by Graeber (2015:52) that 'the ultimate, hidden truth of the world is that it is something we make, and could just as easily (be made) differently'. In addition to my explicit political position, the following discursive trajectories attempt to answer research question #1 by applying three theoretical frameworks which form a novel approach to traditional corpus-based CDA. In other words, where previous work in CADS which focuses on the representation of the LGBTQI population has tended to be focused primarily on negative representation, the discursive trajectories identified below provide a more nuanced account of how the queer subject is discursively (re)produced — a process that is not simply about whether representations are trans-, bi-, or homophobic. Rather, in an attempt to answer research question #4, it will be argued that, through a dialectical process, queer subjects are both discursively constructed by *Biopolitics*, *Capitalism* and *Erasure* while simultaneously being represented in such a way that they manufacture consent for hegemonic ideologies. The following section will, therefore, provide a brief explanation for how the discursive trajectories of biopolitics, capitalism and erasure emerged from the data.

4.6.1.1 — Biopolitics

The first discursive trajectory to be identified was *Biopolitics* — a theory developed by Foucault (1979b) which sought to explain how modern states govern their citizens through 'the disciplining of the individual body and the regulatory control of the population' (Foucault 1980:139 cited in Lemke, Casper, and Moore 2011:36). Foucault (1979b:137) argued that biopolitics (frequently referred to as *biopower*) was a form of governmentality that emerged in the modern era and marked a historical break with earlier forms of state power which, rather than governing through the threat of death, sought to 'administer, optimize and multiply' life.

This discursive trajectory emerged from the categories: *practice, law, crime, relationships, HIV/AIDS, gender identity* and *medicine*, as well as from some of the keywords and KTs in the miscellaneous categories (see Appendix C). Between 1957-1967, this is because keywords and KTs such as *homosexual conduct*, *criminal offence*, and *Wolfenden*, indicated that the question of 'homosexual law reform' was, at its core, about biopower, and the extent to which the state could legislate what one can and cannot do with their body. Between 1979-1990, keywords and KTs such as *Aids, human immunodeficiency virus,* and *heterosexual population* from the HIV/AIDS category indicated discourses of biopolitics that were concerned with both the regulation and surveillance of sexuality as well as the 'biological vigor' and health of the population at large, i.e. *heterosexual population*. Finally, the period between 2003-2017 saw many of the KTs and keywords in the categories of *relationships, gender identity,* and *medicine* point directly to biopolitical interventions by the state. Some of the most notable include the radical changes made to what constitutes a normative relationship under the law such as *civil partnership, same-sex marriage* and *gay wedding*. Similarly,

KTs and keywords such as *gay adoption, IVF,* and *sperm donor* signalled radical changes in what constituted a normative familial relationship — especially after the era of Section 28 wherein even the teaching of 'pretended family relationships' was against the law (Weeks 2016; Baker 2022). But, perhaps, the most radical change in how the state controlled, regulated, and surveilled the queer subject was in relation to gender identity and KTs such as *gender reassignment* and *sex change*. Debates concerning what constitutes a normative gender identity gesture at the heart of the biopolitical state and the supposed liberalisation of how governments regard political subjects. The 3 sub-corpora, therefore, all represent a trajectory wherein the biopower of the state is rendered hegemonic. Even if the interests of the state in regard to sexuality and gender is different in each of the time periods, the consistency with which biopolitics is represented as inevitable results in the sedimentation of this particular discourse.

4.6.1.2 — Capitalism

The second discursive trajectory to be identified was *Capitalism*. This did not, however, emerge from lexis or discourses that referred to economic processes, but rather, capitalism as a 'totality' (Marx 2005; Harvey 2010; Laclau and Mouffe 2014) or social formation that 'shapes our relationships with others, our sense of ourselves and our capacities, practices, and actions in the material world' (Cole and Ferrarese 2018:105). Thus, language that indexed how capitalist *society* has discursively constructed the queer subject emerged from keywords and KTs that pointed to British foreign policy; the ideological role of the media; the creation of 'chains of equivalence' or electoral blocs predicated on antagonism between left and right (Laclau and Mouffe 2014; Mouffe 2005); as well as the ways in which the constantly transforming interests of Capital have resulted in certain queer subjectivities being co-opted or integrated into 'social, cultural and political processes' that maintain consent for the hegemony of capitalist society (Delanty 2019:11).

The specific keywords and KTs which suggested capitalism was a discursive trajectory emerged from categories including, *party politics, international security, location* and *single issue* as well as *relationships* which overlapped with the biopolitics trajectory (see Appendix D). Specifically, between 1957-1967 a brief concordance analysis revealed that many of the KTs in the *international security* category such as *security risk, spy ring, spy case, security service,* and *embassy staff* referred to the fear that homosexual men were more likely to be sympathetic to communist ideologies and were, also, more likely to be spies working for the Soviet Union. This discursive trajectory continued in the 1980s when considering the category of *party politics* and *location*. Keywords such as *GLC, Livingstone* and *Haringey* as well as KTs such as *loony left* and *hard left* all appeared to gesture in the direction of this ongoing ideological battle between right (capitalist) and left (communist/socialist) being fought within the UK. Specifically, organisations like the Greater London Council (GLC) as

well as councils like Haringey were believed to be in the 'control' of members from the 'hard left' of the Labour Party and the Labour Movement more generally. This connection begins to fracture, however, when considering the 2003-2017 sub-corpus. Harvey (2010) argues that capitalism, as a social formation, is never static and that its crises lead to an imminent adaptation to new social realities. KTs such as *gay marriage, civil partnership, same-sex marriage, gay couple,* and *gay wedding* all indicate the ways in which the definition of a nuclear family has been expanded to include certain gay men and lesbians. As the nuclear family is one of the social and cultural foundations of contemporary capitalism (see D'Emilio 1993 and Hennessy 2000), the 'folding in' (Puar 2007) of certain queer subjects represents a significant adaptation to new social, cultural and political realities of the 21st century.

4.6.1.3 — Erasure

The third and final discursive trajectory identified from an analysis of the thematic categories was that of *Erasure*. In the context of this study, erasure refers to a sedimentation of discourse whereby the inherent diversity within the LGBTQI population in Britain is erased or subsumed within more frequent representations wherein the queer subject is often — but not always — assumed to be white, middle-class, non-disabled, cisgender, gay and male. For simplicity, this section of the analysis uses the language of erasure, but other terms such as 'invisibility' (Myers 2013) and 'intersectionality' (Crenshaw 1989) are also crucial concepts in understanding how this discursive trajectory is established.

An analysis that included a consideration of erasure, invisibility and intersectionality emerged primarily from the thematic categories, *sexual identity*, *gender identity*, *community* and *queer spaces* (see Appendix E). For instance, in the 1957-1967 sub-corpus, the only keywords that represented a sexual identity in the top 50 were *homosexual* (1,217) and *homosexuality* (446). As mentioned above, this is not because signifiers for sexual identity such as *lesbian* did not exist, but rather because discourses of sexual identities in *The Times* were only concerned with homosexual men. The privileging of men's sexual identities continued to be salient between 1979-1990 as *homosexua*l (3,415) and *gay* (1,480) both ranked in the top 20 keywords while *lesbian* (668) occurred 7 times less frequently, *transvestite* (155) occurred 31 times less frequently, and *transsexual* (42) occurred 116 times less frequently. In addition to the erasure of sexual identities aside from gay men, *The Times* also frequently referred to the *homosexual community* or *gay community* as signifiers for a population that included a tremendous amount of gender and sexual diversity. This erasure through conflation continued into the final sub-corpus. Between 2003-2017, *gay* (29,179) was the second most significant keyword while *gay man* (658) was the 5th most significant KT. The 2000s did, however, see the emergence of the acronym *LGBT* (994) which was the 5th most significant keyword. While

‘LGBT’ is ostensibly a gesture towards greater inclusion when discussing sexual and gender variance, a closer look at the concordance lines also showed that it functions to elide or conflate a group that is necessarily diverse.

With these three discursive trajectories identified, it should be noted at this point that not all of the keyword and KTs could be included. This means that, while these were the three discursive trajectories that appeared most salient, there are still other stories that could have emerged from the data — an observation that will be discussed in more detail when addressing research question #5 in the Conclusion. In spite of the omission of some keywords and KTs, it was still the case that there were 300 KTs and keywords that could be analysed. The next section will, therefore, explain and justify the use of nodal points or ‘privileged signifiers’ (Howarth and Stavrakakis 2000; Laclau and Mouffe 2014) as a ‘way in’ to an analysis of each of the three sub-corpora. In addition to being used as a theoretical and methodological tool to explore the discursive trajectories that have shaped how LGBTQI identities have been represented and, thus, constructed, in the language of *The Times*, this approach also helps to answer research question #4 which asks how non-linguistic theories can support an analysis of how queer subject positions were discursively constructed.

4.7 — Identifying nodal points

As discussed in section 3.4, PDT and corpus-based CDA complement one another in that both are powerful tools that can be used to analyse discourses at the macro-level — an assertion that is especially true when considering diachronic analyses of change and/or consistency. But where corpus-approaches offer a very clear entry point for a more micro-level analysis of texts through the use of collocates and concordance lines, PDT is much less explicit regarding how to move from a theoretical discussion of hegemony or discourse to a micro-level analysis of particular social events, historical conjunctures, or indeed, identities. While this is, in many ways, an affordance, in that PDT can be used with a wide range of analytical tools (see Laclau 1990; Stavrakakis 1999; Glynos 2008), it has also been one of the most consistent critiques of PDT (Howarth 2004; Montessori 2011). As discussed in section 1.8, one of the aims of this thesis is, therefore, to contribute to discourse theoretical analysis by further exploring the ways in which PDT can be combined with corpus-linguistic approaches like those used by Nikisianis *et al.* (2019), Brown (2020), Brown and Mondon (2021), as well as Brown, Mondon and Winter (2021). In the following analyses of the 1957-1967, 1979-1990, and 2003-2017 sub-corpora, it will be argued and then demonstrated that, through the use of nodal points identified, in part, by statistically significant KTs and keywords, the discursive construction of queer subject positions can be mapped across time — ultimately revealing how certain subject positions achieved hegemony while others did not.

As discussed in section 3.3.4, nodal points are considered 'privileged signifiers' (Howarth and Stravrakakis 2000:11) in that they 'partially fix meaning' (Çelik 2000:195) in a discursive formation by acting as a kind of discursive centrifugal force that gives meaning to a constellation of discourses and signifiers that fall within its orbit. In effect, a nodal point, e.g. *sexuality*, stabilises floating signifiers, e.g. *bisexual*, whose meanings may have changed or become nebulous over time. Identifying nodal points and the ways in which they articulate other discourses and signifiers is, therefore, a useful method for analysing a particular discursive formation or historical moment. A clear example of how the identification of a nodal point can illuminate an entire discursive formation is demonstrated in a study by Dudink (2017) wherein, through an analysis of debates over multiculturalism in the Netherlands, it was revealed how the signifier 'homosexuality' resignified ideas like 'democracy' and what it means to be Dutch, i.e. 'Dutchness'. By representing the acceptance, and even celebration, of 'homosexuality' as a non-negotiable moral position, Muslims and immigrants to the Netherlands who were represented as not sharing this position were also resignified as being a 'threat' to democracy and 'Dutchness' as opposed to being initially represented as a symbol of Dutch liberalism. As the media colluded with right-wing politicians to (re)produce discourses of the 'intolerant' and 'backward' Muslim, 'homosexuality' became the central point around which Dutch and foreign, i.e. Muslim, cultures were represented as irreconcilable — ultimately bringing an end to 'consociational democracy' which had been the core of Dutch democracy through much of the 20th century. While Dudink (2017) was able to identify 'homosexuality' as a nodal point through political analysis, the following chapters will, in most cases, use the statistical significance of KTs and keywords in order to identify how a particular signifier became a nodal point. In addition to their statistical significance, however, the nodal points have also been identified according to the discursive trajectories identified in section 4.6.

The following three analysis chapters will, therefore, be structured according to discursive trajectory and the analysis of a nodal point from each of the three sub-corpora. The discursive trajectories, i.e. *Biopolitics*, *Capitalism*, and *Erasure*, will help to answer research question #4 which asks in which ways non-linguistic theoretical frameworks can support the analysis of how queer subject positions were constructed in the language of *The Times*. In addition to addressing this particular research question, the use of nodal points as a 'way in' to the analysis of language data in *The Times* will contribute to an emerging method (see Nikisianis *et al.* 2019; Brown 2020, Brown and Mondon 2021, as well as Brown, Mondon and Winter 2021) which seeks to combine PDT with corpus-based approaches to CDA. The nine nodal points that emerged from this stage of the analysis are listed below in Table 4.4. In the proceeding discussion, I will briefly explain the rationale for why these particular signifiers constitute a nodal point that binds together discourses pertaining to *Biopolitics*, *Capitalism* and *Erasure* in each of the three time periods.

Discursive trajectory	1957-1967	1979-1990	2003-2017
Biopolitics	*homosexual conduct*	*Aids*	*gender identity*
Capitalism	*Vassall*	*GLC*	*gay marriage*
Erasure	*lesbian*	*gay*	*LGBT*

Table 4.4 — *Nodal Points* identified in each of the three sub-corpora that bind together discourses connected to *Biopolitics, Capitalism,* and *Erasure*

Chapter 5 is concerned with the ways in which the discursive construction of queer subject positions have been either structured by state *biopolitics* (Foucault 1979b) or have been represented in such a way as to maintain consent for biopolitical power. This will be argued by analysing the nodal points *homosexual conduct* between 1957-1967, *Aids* between 1979-1990, and *gender identity* between 2003-2017 and considering the ways in which their usage led to a discursive sedimentation that (re)produced the hegemony of *biopower*. Each of these three nodal points were selected for similar reasons. Nevertheless, there are some key differences between them that will be discussed here. In the 1957-1967 sub-corpus, *homosexual conduct* was the most significant KT. As will be discussed in more detail in section 5.2, *homosexual act* and *homosexual behaviour* were also among the most significant KTs suggesting that it was homosexual *practice* generally that was a central concern that informed the majority of reportage concerning transgressive sexual identities. A closer look at the context in which *homosexual conduct* occurred revealed that this coverage was mostly concerned with debates surrounding the Wolfenden Report as well as those which led to the passing of the SOA 1967. In fact, 25 of the 31 keywords and KTs in the thematic category, *Law, crime and law reform* all indexed traces of discourse pertaining to Wolfenden and the SOA 1967. As both were primarily concerned with the extent to which the state should be able to legislate what its citizens can and cannot do with their bodies, *homosexual conduct* acted as a nodal point around which such discourses were structured. In other words, it functioned as a privileged signifier that both contributed to the discursive construction of a queer subject position while simultaneously demonstrating how state biopower was represented in *The Times* as 'common sense' and, therefore, unremarkable. Between 1979-1990, the most significant keyword was *Aids.* In addition to being statistically significant, the signifier *Aids* became inextricably linked with gay men, bi men, MSM and trans people. Not only was *Aids* the most statistically significant keyword, but there were a further 15 keywords and KTs that also contributed to discourses that explicitly connected the HIV/AIDS pandemic with representations of a queer subject. This association between HIV/AIDS and the queer population both functioned to pathologise many queer people, but it also revealed how the biopolitical state could abdicate responsibility for certain sectors of the population. This marked a significant departure from biopolitics in relation to *homosexual conduct.* This is because, while biopolitics is typically

understood to refer to the ways in which the state seeks to optimise the health and biological vigour of its population, the reticence of Margaret Thatcher's government to act on — let alone acknowledge the existence of — HIV/AIDS, showed how biopower can also be contingent on the marginalisation of certain populations which are represented as a social pathogen — a process that creates chains of equivalence through the exclusion of an Other. Through an analysis supported by Mbembe's theory of *necropolitics* (2003), it will be argued that *Aids* functioned as a nodal point that structured representations of the queer subject, while simultaneously revealing the limitations of biopower and a more nuanced understanding of biopolitics. Finally, in the 2003-2017 sub-corpus, the signifier *gender identity* is identified as a nodal point in that it demonstrates how the biopolitical state continues to regulate queer bodies. Unlike the preceding two nodal points, *gender identity* is the 20th most significant KT in the sub-corpus. While less statistically significant, discourses surrounding gender identity and, ultimately, what legally constitutes a normatively gendered body indicate how the discursive trajectory of biopower has maintained its hegemony into the 21st century. This was also evident in the significance of the KTs *sex change, gender reassignment* and, of course, *trans* and *transgender*. *Gender identity,* therefore, binds together a series of discourses that demonstrate how *The Times* (re)produces consent for the ongoing biopolitical power of the state while at the same time discursively constructing certain queer subjects as a social pathogen. As a nodal point, *gender identity,* not only acts as a centrifugal discursive force in its own time period, but it also demonstrates how representations of the queer subject contribute to the continuing hegemony of *biopower* — a hegemony that is facilitated through processes of discursive sedimentation between 1957-2017.

In Chapter 6, the discursive construction of a queer subject position is both shaped by and functions to maintain consent for the hegemony of *capitalism.* As will be explained in section 6.1, this is a dialectical process that does not emerge through a materialist discussion of the economic base, but is rather primarily concerned with the ideological apparatuses of British capitalism and the ways in which, through signification practices, the queer subject is construed as either an internal threat to British capitalism or represented as a signifier of its exceptionalism. The nodal points that have been identified to analyse this process are *Vassall* between 1957-1967, *GLC* between 1979-1990, and *gay marriage* between 2003-2017. Like the nodal points discussed above, one of the primary criteria for choosing a keyword or KT as a privileged signifier was its statistical significance. Between 1957-1967, the most significant keyword was, indeed, *Vassall* and referred to an individual who had acted as a spy for the Soviet Union. Not only did the coverage of John Vassall reinscribe a fear at the time that homosexual men were predisposed to communist sympathies, but it also revealed the ways in which *The Times* represented homosexual men as more susceptible to blackmail and, therefore, treason. So notable was the Vassall affair that a significant number of other keywords and KTs also index the ubiquity of this story in *The Times*, e.g. *security risk, spy ring, spy case, security service, embassy staff, Galbraith,* and *Admiralty.* It will, therefore, be argued that *Vassall* acted as a nodal

point in that both the individual — John Vassall — as well as the very *idea* of an internal homosexual threat bound together a series of discourses that connected homosexuality, communism and a fear that capitalist Britain was at risk from within. Unlike *Vassall*, *GLC* was not the most significant keyword, but was still ranked 8th and represented a salient discourse that both revealed a sedimentation of discourse from the previous sub-corpus while, at the same time, binding together a constellation of discourses in the 1979-1990 sub-corpus. The Greater London Council (GLC) was a local government administrative body which, throughout much of the 1980s, was represented in *The Times* as being associated with the 'loony left' — a term that caricatured social movements associated with, *inter alia*, lesbian and gay rights, anti-racism, and feminism. *GLC* became a signifier for what *The Times* argued were the excesses of the radical left while simultaneously becoming a privileged signifier in the discursive construction of the queer subject — a discursive process which continued to connect queer subject positions with anti-capitalist ideologies. The GLC, with its associations to the lesbian and gay rights movement were not, however, represented as a benign or insignificant force within British political life. Rather, a significant number of the most frequent keywords and KTs are connected to the GLC, including *loony left, hard left, Livingstone, Tatchell, ILEA, Haringey* and, ostensibly, *sex education, sexual morality, promoting homosexuality,* and *public school.* These latter terms index the development and implementation of Section 28 which was, in many ways, a response from Thatcher's government to what was perceived as a legitimate internal threat. In this way, *GLC* acts as a nodal point in that it binds together discursive formations that continued to represent transgressive sexual identities as imbricated with the far left and were, thus, a threat to capitalism. In the final sub-corpus, *gay marriage* acts as a nodal point for several reasons. First, *gay marriage* was the most significant KT followed by both *civil partnership* and *same-sex marriage* which were both in the top five KTs. While the *Civil Partnership Act 2004* and the *Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013* provided different rights and responsibilities for couples who identified as the same gender, both mark a significant shift in the legal status of certain types of queer relationships. Whereas the previous two nodal points had indexed the ways in which the queer subject was represented as a threat to capitalist Britain, representations of *gay marriage* in *The Times* signify the ways in which so-called 'LGBT rights' have become a symbol for the success of capitalism. This is because, where the lesbian and gay rights movement of the 1980s had been represented as deeply imbricated with other leftist movements, e.g. anti-racism and feminism, the pursuit of marriage as a political goal signalled a shift away from redistributive politics towards one more concerned with individual civil rights. By seeking inclusion as opposed to transformation, gay marriage, in many ways, signalled the success of neoliberal capitalism and the privileging of the individual over the collective. *Gay marriage,* therefore, functions as a nodal point in that it binds together a series of discourses that represent this political shift while, at the same time, signifying the ways in which consent for the hegemony of capitalism has been ensured through the 'folding in' of *certain* queer subjects. This latter point is

important in that, it will be argued that the discursive construction of a queer subject position that is produced through associations with biopolitics and capitalism fails to account for the inherent diversity within the LGBTQI population in Britain. This results in an erasure of identities that are constituted at the intersections of, *inter alia,* 'race', gender, ethnicity, class, ability, and region — a discursive process that is discussed through three final nodal points in Chapter 7.

Unlike the nodal points that were identified in Chapters 5 and 6, the nodal points that are associated with the discursive trajectory of *erasure* were chosen for very different reasons. This is because, *erasure* indicates an absence and, as such, warranted an exploration of keywords and KTs that were not necessarily frequent, but that signified how certain subject positions were marginalised to the extent that the queer subject came to be represented as primarily middle-class, white, gay, cisgender and male. The following nodal points were not identified because of the way they bound together a constellation of discourses that constituted sexual identity. Rather, they act as privileged signifiers that inform an analysis of the data that is primarily constituted by theories of lesbian invisibility, critical whiteness studies, and erasure. With this in mind, the nodal points identified included *lesbian* between 1957-1967, *gay* between 1979-1990, and *LGBT* between 2003-2017. *Lesbian* was chosen as a privileged signifier in the *erasure* trajectory because it was the only other keyword for sexual identity between 1957-1967. Unlike the previous nodal points discussed in the preceding paragraphs, *lesbian* was not, in fact, included in the top 50 keywords. Rather, at only 90 occurrences, *lesbian* ranked 192 in the list of keywords. As such, it can be argued that it does not, in fact, function as a nodal point in the discursive construction of queer subject positions in the language of *The Times.* Rather, the signifier *lesbian* was so peripheral to the discursive construction of a queer subject position that it serves a very different function to a nodal point as conceptualised by Laclau and Mouffe (2014). This is because, its marginality is primarily significant when considering the consistent and ongoing invisibility of lesbian women that traverses across all 3 sub-corpora. Rather than a nodal point that binds together a series of discourses within its own time period, it is, therefore, better understood as a privileged signifier that marks the beginning of an invisibility that informs the analysis for the rest of the chapter. Unlike *lesbian*, *gay* was indeed one of the most frequent keywords in the 1979-1990 sub-corpus. And while this certainly positioned it as a potential candidate for its identification as a nodal point, it is not its frequency that placed it in a privileged position. Rather, informed by anti-racist theorists and critical whiteness studies scholars, *gay* functioned as a nodal point in the analysis of how racial and ethnic diversity was erased, thus leading to the deracialisation of a queer subject position in the language of *The Times*. In other words, an analysis of the signifier *gay* demonstrates how it functioned as a central discursive force that positioned 'race' and sexual identity as mutually exclusive categories. Finally, between 2003-2017, *LGBT* was identified as a nodal point due to its statistical significance as well as its function in continuing to erase the inherent

diversity within the queer population of Britain. Much like the nodal points discussed in the *biopolitics* and *capitalism* trajectories, *LGBT* acts as a centrifugal force that inscribes meaning to many other signifiers in its orbit. *Lesbian, gay, bi,* and *trans* are, thus, not frequently represented as discrete identities, but are rather represented as different branches of a 'community'. In this way, the erasure of difference and diversity is accomplished through a process of inclusion or, indeed, conflation. *LGBT* as an umbrella term, conceals as much as it reveals about the subject positions it is supposed to represent and is thus a privileged signifier in a discussion of how, through a process of erasure, queer subjects came to be represented as primarily white, gay, cisgender and male in the language of *The Times.*

4.8 — Analysing the nodal points

The identification of these nine nodal points allowed for the analysis to be guided by privileged signifiers that bound together a variety discourses which cumulatively led to the discursive construction of LGBTQI identities in *The Times.* It also provided a 'way in' to begin analysing the language in each of the three sub-corpora that encompassed the discourses that would likely have emerged from an analysis of the majority of keywords and KTs identified in section 4.5. It should be noted, however, that the nodal points that were identified did not encompass all of the discourses. For instance, many of the keywords and KTs in *The Arts & Media* category did not necessarily fit into any of the three discursive trajectories identified. Similarly, other issues concerning *Religion*, e.g. *synod,* or *Party Politics* from other countries, e.g. *Obama*, were not explicitly accounted for. What the discursive trajectories and nodal points *were* able to do is provide evidence for the ontological foundations of queer subject positions in *The Times* while also providing a different narrative to what has already been accounted for in other studies looking at representations of the LGBTQI population in British newspapers — namely, that the discourses that constitute the development of queer representation are not always constituted by misrepresentation, but are rather more complicated, and contingent on historical conjunctures.

In order to begin the analysis of the nodal points, however, there were methodological issues to consider. The first major issue had to do with the disparity in corpus size between the three different time periods. For instance, in the 1957-1967 sub-corpus, the number of tokens to be considered was significantly lower than in the later sub-corpora. For instance, in the chapter on *biopolitics*, *homosexual conduct* only occurs 55 times between 1957-1967 where *Aids* occurred *4,107* times between 1979-1990. This disparity could, in many cases, be accounted for by the increasingly 'visibility' of certain queer subject positions, but it could also be accounted for by the salience of the story in *The Times.* For instance, in the same chapter on *biopolitics*, *gender identity* only occurs 215 times between 2013-2017. In spite of the differences in frequency, the analysis nevertheless tended to

follow a conventional corpus-based approach.

In Chapter 5, the analysis of each nodal point began by identifying the top five collocates using the logDice measure of collocation. Not only is logDice one of the default measures in *Sketch Engine*, but it is also unaffected by the size of a corpus (Baker 2023), making it an appropriate measure for all three of the sub-corpora. For this reason, it was also used in the initial stages of the analysis in both chapters 6 and 7. After identifying the collocates, a concordance analysis of each collocate followed. Where necessary, there were also sections where a close reading of an entire article was necessary in order to understand the discursive context in which a nodal point occurred. What was unique in this chapter, however, was the fact that there were collocates from each of the three nodal points that all signified the potential for queerness to act as a *social contagion* that not only corrupted youth, but also represented queerness as the primary driver behind a *biological* pathogen. Through the identification of collocates that were the same, similar, or acted in similar ways, the discursive sedimentation of queerness as a social pathogen was rendered both salient and central to how the queer subject, as represented in *The Times*, both maintained consent for *biopower* while also problematising it.

In Chapter 6, the analysis of each nodal point took a decidedly different approach. In the case of *Vassall*, a wider net was cast and the analysis began by looking at the top 10 collocates as opposed to only 5. The rationale for this was that some of the top five collocates such as *had* appeared, at first glance, to not reveal much. What became obvious in this particular chapter on *capitalism* was that an analysis of the nodal points *Vassall* and *GLC* were not only enhanced by looking at their collocates, but also through a close reading of concordance lines and context that revealed the ways in which queer subject positions were represented as being imbricated with anti-capitalism through 'signification spirals' (Hall *et al.* 1978:223) — a process of representation that amplifies a particular form of deviancy through the convergence, or linking together, of multiple social threats. Unlike the first two nodal points, however, an analysis of the top five collocates for *gay marriage* led to a close reading of concordance lines and, in some cases, entire articles which demonstrated how the queer subject had transitioned from being represented as a threat to the ideological foundations of capitalism to becoming a symbol of capitalism's success.

Finally, Chapter 7 also employed a variety of methods that were crucial in establishing how certain privileged signifiers acted dialectically such that they were both structured by erasure while also contributing to a discursive construction of the queer subject that acted to elide the inherent diversity within the LGBTQI population in the UK. As *lesbian* was a marginalised identity, the analysis sought to explore how lesbian women were represented. The analysis was, thus, predicated on an analysis of the top 5 collocates. This then led to an analysis of concordance lines as well as the close reading of

certain texts. Unlike *lesbian, gay* — between 1979-1990 — was chosen to analyse the ways in which other identities became subsumed through 'gay' representation. It was, therefore, decided to only look at collocates that also signified other aspects of identity, e.g. gender, ethnicity, 'race', class, region, and ability. This led to an analysis that signalled the deracialisation of queer subject positions in the language of *The Times*. The final nodal point to be analysed was *LGBT* and, again, began by considering the top 5 collocates. These were then explored in more detail by conducting a close reading of the concordance lines.

In each of the proceeding chapters, it will be argued that these nodal points and the discourses that are stabilised through their use, partially fix queer identities such that they appear immutable and stable during a particular historical conjuncture, i.e. 1957-1967, 1979-1990, and 2003-2017. It will also be argued that, through a dialectical process, queer identities were both shaped by biopolitics, capitalism, and erasure, while at the same time (re)producing those same discourses such that they also maintained their hegemonic position in British society. Ultimately, this should reveal how the language of *The Times* has led to the discursive construction of queer identities as these 3 discursive trajectories have converged and become sedimented over the past 60 years.

Chapter 5 — Biopolitics

5.1 — Introduction

The following chapter considers how the language of *The Times* has, over the past 60 years, (re)produced *biopolitical discourses* that have contributed to the discursive construction of LGBTQI identities. It will be demonstrated that the signifiers, *homosexual conduct*, *Aids*[12], and *gender identity*, have functioned as nodal points that bind these discourses together, resulting in a historical trajectory of state biopower that is salient in each of the three time periods under investigation. Furthermore, it will also be argued that anxieties around 'deviant' sexual and gender identities have been manifested through the language of contagion. Not only has the consistent framing of queer 'spread' resulted in a discursive sedimentation that represents certain queer subjects as vectors of transmission, but it also indicates which gender and sexual identities have achieved hegemony.

Emerging from his analysis of power — not simply as a repressive force but rather as an action that produces subjects (Foucault 1982) — Foucault's (1979a; 1979b) concept of biopolitics is primarily concerned with the ways in which modern liberal states seek to administer, optimise and multiply life by 'subjecting it to precise controls and comprehensive regulations' (Foucault 1979a:137). In other words, the biopolitical function of the state aims to ensure the survival and flourishing of a state's population such that the 'success' and power of a nation is partially constituted by the health and longevity of its citizens. Foucault (1979b) argues that, as a result of this, for the first time in recorded history, information such as birth rates, infant mortality, and life expectancy are recorded as metrics of a nation's status. Concurrently, the emergence of bio*power* means that, for the first time, states begin to regulate what bodies can *do* and what bodies can *be* through means such as, *inter alia*, the regulation of reproductive rights, a legal age of consent, and the centrality of documentation practices such as birth certificates and state identification documents. But whereas state biopower is partially constituted through legislation, it is a distinctly modern form of power in that 'the law operates more and more as a norm, and that the judicial institution is increasingly incorporated into a continuum of apparatuses (medical, administrative, and so on) whose functions are for the most part regulatory' (Foucault 1979a:144). Biopower is, therefore, not a result of repressive force but is rather administered through 'liberal forms of social regulation and individual self-governance' (Lemke, Casper and Moore 2011:33), i.e. norms. This focus on norms dovetails with Laclau and Mouffe's

[12] It should be noted that the use of *Aids* as opposed to the capitalised form *AIDS* is a feature of *The Times* during this period and will be used only when referring to text from the corpus.

(2014) emphasis on hegemony. Biopower and biopolitical subjects are, in these complementary theories, not coerced but are rather upheld through consent as they become accepted as common sense (Puar 2007).

In this biopolitical framework, sexuality and gender maintain a privileged position. This is because the effects of biopower 'are situated on both the microlevel of the body and on the macrolevel of the population' (Lemke 2011:38). In other words, the hegemony of sexual morality and normatively gendered bodies are seen as necessary for the reproduction of the population. Any deviation from these norms is, therefore, perceived as a threat to the state's 'political energy and its biological vigor' (Foucault 1979a:146). The subsequent chapter will, therefore, begin with an analysis of the signifier *homosexual conduct* from the 1957-1967 sub-corpus in order to show how homosexual law reform in the 1960s was discursively constructed as leading to the potential spread of sexual deviancy[13]. Debates surrounding decriminalisation raised questions about *where* sex between men could be permissible; *at what age* one could make the 'decision' to engage in sexual intercourse with another man; as well as what it meant to *consent* to sex. These questions were, in addition to being about the juridical power of the state, also about norms — the ways in which individuals become subject, not only to forms of social regulation, but also how they become responsible for their 'individual self-governance' (Lemke, Casper and Moore 2011:33). It is important to note that the recommendations in the Wolfenden Report constitute precisely the kind of governmentality that Foucault (1979b) was describing in his lectures and writings on biopolitics. This is because, Wolfenden was not suggesting that sex between men was morally acceptable, but rather, that through the simultaneous relaxation of judicial punishments alongside the extension of liberal regulations and 'treatment', this particular social problem could be more effectively surveilled and regulated. Next, an analysis of the keyword, *Aids*, from the 1979-1990 sub-corpus will also show how fear of a 'homosexual disease' spreading through the heterosexual population led to an abstention by the state to adequately address the epidemic. In this way, however, HIV/AIDS posed a particular challenge for both the *biopower* of the state but also for the *theory* of *biopolitics*. This is because, while the decriminalisation of homosexuality alongside the liberalisation of attitudes towards sex were examples of how biopolitics had evolved in the UK, controlling and preventing the spread of the virus required an intervention by the state — an intervention that did not happen soon enough. While the HIV/AIDS epidemic

[13] In spite of attempts during the 1920s to extend the *Criminal Law Amendment Act* 1885 (see footnote 14), sex between women was never criminalised. While indeed considered equally deviant and pathological, criminal legislation was never passed as members of the House of Lords argued that this would only draw attention to the issue as 'the vast majority of the female population were unaware of the possibilities of lesbian sexual expression' (Jennings 2007:113). As a result, any discussion of law reform is necessarily limited to debates concerning sex between men.

complicates a more conventional understanding of biopolitics, it was nevertheless included in this discursive trajectory as the connections and tensions between sex and the population became increasingly salient during this period. Finally, an analysis of the signifier *gender identity* from the 2003-2017 sub-corpus will demonstrate how trans identities are represented as a 'trend' that is spreading through the youth population in the UK. By mediating a moral panic during each of these three time periods, *The Times* does not only repeatedly villainise queer people, but it also functions to uphold hegemonic gender and sexual identities that are deemed essential to the functioning of society.

5.2 — *Homosexual conduct*

Homosexual conduct is the top KT in the 1957-1967 sub-corpus, with a frequency of 55 (602.7 per million tokens). It should be noted, however, that *homosexual behaviour* (47) and *homosexual act* (20) are also in the top 10 KTs in this sub-corpus and that their semantic meaning is often used interchangeably with that of *homosexual conduct.* This is because all 3 terms were primarily used in reportage concerning the Wolfenden Report recommendations that were eventually implemented in the *Sexual Offences Act (SOA) 1967*. The report and the Act both stated that homosexual *conduct*, *behaviour*, or *acts* in private between consenting adults over the age of 21 should no longer be considered a criminal offence. However, whereas *homosexual behaviour* occurred more frequently in the earlier years of the corpus, *homosexual act* appeared more frequently in the latter years of the corpus. This was likely due to the preference for the use of *homosexual behaviour* in the Wolfenden Report published in 1957 and *homosexual act* in relation to the SOA 1967. The use of *homosexual conduct* is, therefore, indicative of two discursive choices made by *The Times.* First, as the reference corpus was published in the 1990s, the significance of *homosexual conduct* likely indicates that this was a term that was salient in the 1960s but fell out of usage later. Secondly, it could also indicate that the use of the term *conduct* was an editorial choice by *The Times* (the term does not occur in the Wolfenden Report or the SOA) — a telling choice as *homosexual conduct* also appears to have a negative discourse prosody.

In order to get a sense of what kinds of encoded concepts are primed when encountering the noun *conduct,* it was decided to look at the most common modifier in a Word Sketch using the BNC. Table 5.1 shows how the majority of modifiers for *conduct* are adjectives that index negative discourses. Such negative discourse prosodies are perhaps unsurprising considering the context in which *homosexual conduct* occurs in *The Times.* While Wolfenden and the SOA signified a change in how the law prosecuted so-called 'homosexual offences', the private lives of homosexual men continued to be perceived as *improper*, *offensive* and *criminal*.

conduct	*disorderly, improper, professional, violent, offensive, homosexual, criminal, oppressive, sexual, safe*

Table 5.1 — Most frequent modifiers of *conduct* in the BNC

In the data from *The Times*, however, there is never an explanation as to what constitutes *homosexual conduct*. One reason for this could be that, prior to the SOA 1967, the homosexual did not exist as a legal subject (Gleeson 2007; Weeks 2016). On the contrary, while there existed 'crimes of indecency and abomination…they were not understood in terms of his legal (or personal) identity' (Gleeson 2007:337). Rather, in the contemporary legislation that criminalised sexual acts between men, the terms used included *sodomy, buggery* and *gross indecency*. Again, however, these terms were not explicitly defined. For example, in the 1957-1967 corpus, there are dozens of cases in which *sodomy* refers to a sexual act between a man and a woman. Presuming that sodomy (and buggery) referred to anal penetration, then these sexual acts could not be said to be exclusively *homosexual* even if they were illegal. Similarly, while the term 'gross indecency' had entered into the language of British jurisprudence via the Labouchère Amendment in 1885[14], the term itself appears to have been intentionally left undefined (Weeks 2016). This lack of definition suggests that, not only was *homosexual conduct* a privileged signifier in that it binds together biopolitical discourses in the 1960s, but that it was also a floating signifier whose meaning was not yet fixed (Smith 1998). Its semantic ambiguity meant that it could ultimately be used to serve different purposes through different articulations (Howarth, Norval and Stavrakakis 2000; Jørgensen and Philips 2002) such that gathering in a venue frequented by gay men or even wearing perceived effeminate clothing could constitute *homosexual conduct* and, therefore, arrest. This was not just the case for *homosexual conduct* though. It was also true for many of its top collocates.

5.2.1 — Collocation analysis of *homosexual conduct*

In the 1957-67 *Times* sub-corpus The top 10 collocates (+/-3) for *homosexual conduct* are *legalize* (6), *consenting* (14), *adults* (13), *spread* (3), *between* (19), *private* (6), *law* (8), *on* (9), *which* (3), and *in* (11). The majority of these collocates occur in examples such as the following headline from June 21st 1967: "The Bill to *legalize homosexual conduct between consenting adults in private* is coming under last minute attack" (emphasis added). With this in mind, the following analysis does not consider each

[14] The Labouchère Amendment refers to a clause in the *Criminal Law Amendment Act* of 1885 which stated that 'any male person, who, in public or private commits…any act of gross indecency with another male person shall be guilty of a misdemeanour' (Cook *et al.* 2007:112) which, at the time, could result in a two-year prison sentence.

collocate separately. Rather, due to the relatively low frequency of *homosexual conduct* and the repetitious relationship between the majority of the collocates, the following analysis will consider the phrase '*between consenting adults in private*' followed by an analysis of the collocate *spread.*

5.2.1.1 — *'Legalize homosexual conduct between consenting adults in private'*

A version of this phrase occurs dozens of times in the 1957-67 sub corpus and is used in articles relating to the passage of the 1967 SOA, e.g.

> This is the Bill marshalled through the Commons by Mr. Abse, Labour member for Pontypool, and which seeks to legalize homosexual conduct between consenting adults in private (*The Times* 1967*).*

In the preceding example, *The Times* does not appear to explicitly approve or disapprove of the SOA, but simply reports on the debates in parliament. My analysis of this phrase, therefore, is concerned with *The Times*' summary of the Wolfenden Report which reads 'a homosexual act in private shall not be an offence provided that the parties consent thereto and have attained the age of twenty one years'. *The Times* uses these terms uncritically, thus reproducing the hegemonic discourse concerning homosexuality at the time. With this in mind, the following analysis particularly focuses on the meaning of the collocates *consenting*, *private* and *adults*.

The idea that the government might decriminalise homosexual conduct 'between consenting adults in private' is the basis upon which 10 years of debates was argued. And yet the foundational concepts of *consent* and *privacy* remained nebulous terms up to and certainly after the passing of the SOA 1967. Like the argument that *homosexual conduct* acted as a floating signifier, the imprecise definitions of *consent* and *privacy* provided the scope for police and the courts to increase the prosecution of gay men, bi men and MSM in subsequent decades (Gleeson 2007; Weeks 2016). For instance, according to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), there was no legal definition of *consent* until 2003 when, in the updated SOA, Section 74 defined consent as occurring 'if he agrees by choice, and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice' (CPS 2003, NP). Similarly, *in private* was also an ambiguous term that was central to the Wolfenden recommendations and yet poorly defined. Moran (1995) and Gleeson (2007) have both argued that this was not unintentional and that, by recommending the decriminalisation of homosexual behaviour in private, it was hoped that homosexual conduct might disappear into a realm exterior to the law and thus society at large. But while privacy remained both an elusive and central concept to the debate, it was eventually the notion of *public* (not a collocate) that was provided with a definition. In 1967, The SOA defined *public* such that it included any situation '(a) when more than two persons take part or are present; or (b) in a

lavatory to which the public have or are permitted to have access, whether on payment or otherwise' (SOA 1967:1). Like the uncertainty of terms such as *consent* and *privacy*, this definition of public — especially 'section a' — provided the necessary ambiguity that resulted in the expanded surveillance and criminalisation of homosexual subjects.

Unlike *privacy* and *consent*, the concept of *adulthood* was clearly defined and yet could also be argued to be a floating signifier when it came to the question of sexuality. This is because, while the age of consent for heterosexual sex was 16, the age of consent for homosexual sex was set at 21 and considered to be subject to several factors which would not impact heterosexual sexual acts. The concept of adulthood was, thus, articulated differently and to serve different functions when addressing sexuality. According to the Wolfenden Report (1957:25), adulthood was a particularly challenging concept and was to be interpreted on four criteria:

> The first is connected with the need to protect young and immature persons; the second is connected with the age at which the pattern of a man's sexual development is said to be fixed; the third is connected with the meaning of the word "adult" in the sense of "responsible for his own actions"; and the fourth is connected with the consequences which would follow from the fixing of any particular age.

All four of these considerations led to a different answer ranging between 16 and 21. What is perhaps most notable in a thesis which questions how language was used to discursively construct queer identities, is the second criterion which considered 'the age at which the pattern of a man's sexual development is said to be fixed' (Wolfenden 1957:25). Not only does this suggest that there was, to some extent, a consensus that sexuality was not 'fixed' until into puberty; it also suggests that the notion of an individual being pre-discursively endowed with *a* sexuality may not have yet been a hegemonic idea. While the idea of 'fluid' sexuality may be perceived as a contemporary idea, the understanding in the 1950s and 1960s that sexuality was dynamic and susceptible to change had an altogether different consequence. Because heterosexuality was implicitly fragile, it was susceptible to undue influence and the spread of deviant sexualities. The following section explores this idea in more detail by looking at the collocate, *spread.*

5.2.1.2 — Spread

While there are only three occurrences of the collocate *spread*, the concordance analysis of *homosexual conduct* revealed 17 examples that indicate how *The Times* constructed the potential 'legalization' of homosexual conduct as a catalyst that could potentially encourage the normalisation and spread of homosexual conduct throughout the population. This particular line of argument

supports two significant threads that I have argued are essential to understanding the function of the privileged signifier *homosexual conduct.* First of all, *homosexual conduct* refers to an arguably vague behaviour that is perceived as both a significant problem and a signifier for a legislative argument, namely, whether the juridical power of the state should control the private actions of individuals. Secondly, the privileged position of and use of *homosexual conduct* in the following examples also indicates the extent to which the ostensibly heterosexual population is viewed as vulnerable. If homosexual conduct were not perceived as a vector for the further spread of immoral behaviour, then it would not be newsworthy. The possibility of homosexual *spread,* however, suggests that heterosexuality is permeable — a theme that will be born out in section 5.3 when we discuss the fear surrounding the spread of HIV/AIDS to the heterosexual population. Before considering all 17 examples, Table 5.2 shows the three occurrences in which *spread* explicitly collocates with *homosexual conduct*.

1. The second line of inquiry was a study not of individual homosexuality but of groups, with particular reference to the means by which and the extent to which homosexual conduct spread within society.
2. Would the removal of legal sanctions make it more difficult, or less, for the bi-sexual and young to resist temptation, and would homosexuals be more ready, or less, to break their associations and to seek medical treatment? Would homosexual conduct spread, or losing the glamour of rebellion would it decline?
3. Dr. Godfrey says that Roman Catholic moral teaching is that homosexual acts are grievously sinful, and that in view of the public consequences of those acts (e.g., the harm which would result to the common good if homosexual conduct became wide spread or an accepted mode of conduct in the public mind) the civil law does not exceed its legitimate scope if it attempts to control them by making them crimes.

Table 5.2 — Collocation of *spread* and *homosexual conduct* (1957-1967 sub-corpus)

In the first two examples, *spread* is used as a verb while in the third example, *spread* is part of the compound noun *widespread,* here written as two separate words, i.e. *wide spread*. In each of the examples, however, the connotation is the same — that homosexual conduct has the potential to spread and that this is newsworthy as the state considers amendments to the law. The first example of this refers to a Birkbeck College study funded by the Home Office in 1960 that sought to 'compar(e) the psychology and other characteristics of homosexuals from different groups' (*The Times* 1960). Under the heading 'Further progress was being made', the article describes the scope and findings of an ongoing project that seeks to identify, measure and then control the spread of homosexual conduct

through ‘psychotherapy or by medical means, such as oestrogen’ (*The Times*, 1960). The tone and subject of this article is therefore an archetypal example of how a modern state like Britain seeks to optimise the health of its population through biopolitical processes. In other words, the move away from a juridical form of control towards one based on identification, measurement, and treatment echoes the function of the state when encountering a biological threat such as a foreign pathogen or epidemic. While the goal of finding a cure could be seen as a method of fostering and optimising the health of the population (Foucault 1979b) — in this case, the epidemic is a group of people and the pathogen is *homosexual conduct*. Here, again, *homosexual conduct* functions as a privileged signifier that binds together a constellation of discourses that view both individuals and behaviours as an internal threat that needs to be identified and eliminated. In the latter two examples, this position is more explicitly born out in affective language.

Example 2 comes from the same 1960 article discussed above and expounds upon a line of questioning that is relevant to all state attempts to regulate through norms as opposed to juridical forms power (Foucault 1979a; 1979b). In other words, is it the case that the removal of legal sanctions will also reduce the moral sanctions against a particular form of perceived undesirable behaviour, namely, homosexual conduct? Here, the author speculates as to whether ‘the bi-sexual (*sic*) and young’ would be able to ‘resist temptation’ should the threat of the law no longer weigh in on their sexual behaviour. Similarly, the question is asked whether homosexual men would be more likely to seek treatment if there were no legal repercussions for coming forward — what is, based on the discussion above, one of the goals of decriminalisation. But the final question — ‘*would homosexual conduct spread, or losing the glamour of rebellion would it decline?’* — confuses the biopolitical model being deployed in this article and places a certain amount of agency back on individuals who engage in homosexual conduct. Here the question implies that, like a fad or sub-culture whose lure is predicated on counter-cultural rebellion, homosexual conduct is something that may become more or less desirable based on its legal standing. This assumption that sexual or gender non-conforming behaviour is a fad is a thread that reappears later in the discussion of *gender identity* in section 5.4.

Finally, example 3 from December 2nd, 1957 represents both the biopolitical conception of the population as a collective organism that is vulnerable to the degeneration of morality as well as a traditionally reactionary position based on the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. Here, the argument is predicated on the idea that what is ‘grievously sinful’ is necessarily criminal as is the case with murder or theft. To decriminalise homosexual conduct would therefore result in its becoming ‘wide spread’ and resulting in ‘harm…to the common good’. This particular line of argumentation is echoed in many of the following 14 examples from the corpus that suggest decriminalisation would

‘weaken the moral sanctions against homosexual conduct’, be ‘injurious to society’ and pose ‘serious harm to others’. In other words, one of the most common arguments against decriminalisation is that weakened moral sanctions would facilitate the spread of homosexual conduct throughout society. This argument circles back to the biopolitical understanding of power that suggests the regulatory principle governing any society is that norms, and not prohibitions, are what constitute individual and collective behaviours. The fear that an ‘approval’ of homosexual conduct would lead to its spread is addressed in the following 7 examples from the corpus in Table 5.3. Terms such as ‘condone’, ‘approve’, ‘countenance’ or even ‘be in favour of buggery’, suggest that one of the most substantial arguments was that changing the law would lead to a change in norms. If norms are in fact the mechanism through which biopower functions in a liberal democracy, then such concerns were not without merit. However, with the benefit of hindsight, we now know that this was not the case. With decriminalisation came an increase in the amount of arrests for *homosexual conduct* (Gleeson, 2007). Whether or not there was actually a ‘spread of homosexual conduct’ is impossible to say; however, what we can be sure of was that there was indeed a further spread of police oppression and an increase in the numbers of gay men, bi men and MSM who faced the full force of the law and the ongoing juridical power of the state. This irony is noted by Gleeson (2007:329) who claims ‘it took decriminalisation for homosexuality to be targeted by the law’.

1. And, since homosexual acts between consenting males are now crimes in law, would a change in the law harm the common good by seeming to condone homosexual conduct?
2. The impression had gone around, which he did not think was fair to the Wolfenden Committee, that the committee desired to legalize homosexual conduct. That gave the impression they wished to make it easier.
3. He would not like a division result to go out to the country which would be interpreted by many people that the Lords approved of homosexual conduct -or, to put it vulgarly, that it was in favour of buggery.
4. If leave was given there could not possibly be in the minds of anyone that the Bill would in any way mean that the House approved or condoned homosexual practices, or would in any way countenance any act of indecency against youngsters or any public display of homosexual conduct.
5. There was no doubt from inquiries and researches he had made that many members, and many people outside, would misunderstand a removal of the prohibition if not approval as at least a condonation by the legislature of homosexual conduct.

6. He based this decision on the fact that there is at present a very large section of the population who strongly repudiate homosexual conduct and whose moral sense would be offended by an alteration of the law which would seem to imply approval or tolerance of what they regard as a great social evil.
7. The familiar attack upon the conclusions of the Wolfenden Committee — namely, that to take homosexual conduct between consenting adults out of the category of crimes would be tantamount to signifying society's approval of such conduct.

Table 5.3 — Examples demonstrating the fear that a change in law will lead to a change in norms (1957-1967 sub-corpus)

The preceding discussion not only demonstrates the centrality of sexual morality to biopolitics, but it also demonstrates that hegemonic norms are never fixed (Hall 1987a) — a fact that is highlighted by the state's preoccupation with regulating sexuality within the framework of the law. In other words, if the heterosexual population was not perceived as vulnerable to the spread of *homosexual conduct* then there would be no need to attempt to fix sexual norms through legislation. This fear of queer 'spread' is evident again in the next section wherein the signifier *Aids* binds together a constellation of discourses that see gay men, bi men and MSM represented as vectors for disease, culpable for their own deaths, and a threat to the heterosexual population.

5.3 — *Aids*

The word *Aids* is a privileged signifier or nodal point in the 1979-1990 corpus for several reasons. First, when compared against the BNC, it is one of the most significant keywords — ranking both number four and having a raw frequency of 4,107 (1,318.4 per million). But it is also a privileged signifier in the story of how queer people were discursively constructed by *The Times,* in that HIV/AIDS bind together many of the discourses and politics that emerged from this era. For instance, in the British Social Attitudes Survey, those who saw 'sexual relations between two adults of the same sex' as 'always wrong' increased from 50% in 1983 to 64% in 1987, arguably as a result of the HIV/AIDS epidemic (Park *et al.* 2013). This backlash against so-called 'homosexual lifestyles' laid the groundwork and created an environment for what would later become legislated in the language of Section 28 which sought to erase any discussion — essentially to erase from language — the existence of homosexual relationships and, in effect, queer people in their entirety. And finally, the later centrality of 'gay marriage' to so-called 'LGBT politics' can be traced in many ways back to the height of the HIV/AIDS epidemic when the partners and lovers of people living with and dying from AIDS were denied visitation rights in hospital and inheritance rights upon their passing. The

HIV/AIDS pandemic is not yet over with over 33 million deaths to date and 38 million active cases globally. For many communities living in the Global North, however, HIV and AIDS have become a 'managed' health status with HIV positive people living long and healthy lives. Between 1979-1990 though, HIV/AIDS was not only perceived as a death sentence, but it was also represented as a disease that primarily affected gay men, bi men, MSM and trans people. The following discussion looks at how the signifier *Aids* became intrinsically linked with queer identities such that queer identities became associated with death and disease. In order to illustrate this discursive trajectory, the analysis will primarily focus on the collocate *spread* which, like the *spread* of *homosexual conduct* in the 1960s, discursively constructed gay men, bi men and MSM as a threat to the ostensibly heterosexual majority.

5.3.1 — Collocation analysis of *Aids*

The top 5 collocates (+/-3) of *Aids* were *virus* (302), *cases* (201), *spread* (148), *patients* (103), and *victims* (102). As it is also a collocate of *homosexual conduct* from the 1957-1967 corpus, *spread* will be discussed in more detail below in order to demonstrate how and to what extent this collocate has been consistently used to discursively construct queer subject positions in the language of *The Times*. The remaining collocates will be briefly discussed first.

Virus was the most frequent collocate of *Aids* and occurred most frequently in the term 'Aids virus'. This use of the term is notable for several reasons. First, HIV was isolated as the virus that caused AIDS as early as 1983 and was well known by 1985 when the HIV test was first used (Gallo and Montagnier 2003). That *The Times* continued to use what was inaccurate terminology suggests either ignorance or editorial choice by its writers. Similarly, there are very few concordance lines that suggest that 'Aids virus' was a disambiguation of HIV, e.g. 'the Aids virus, now known as HIV-1' (*The Times*, 1987).

The second most frequent collocate was *cases* which tended to collocate with numerical information or language for describing frequency such as, *one third, 85 per cent, almost all, fewer, number of, increase in, more,* and *most*, e.g. 'There have been 14 cases of AIDS in Britain so far' (*The Times*, 1983). While the quantification of cases is not necessarily unusual, it is nonetheless a method of abstraction that dehumanises the people living with or dying from AIDS. As in Van Leeuwen's (1996) taxonomy of social actors, it can be argued that the focus on numbers has the effect of erasing the individual lives and stories of people living with and dying from AIDS. Where people were not reduced to a number, they tended to be referred to as *patients* or *victims* which ranked third and fourth in the most frequent collocates for *Aids.* A close reading of the concordance lines appeared to show that there was an affective aspect to how and when *patient* or *victim* was used to describe someone

living with HIV/AIDS. For instance, a close reading tended to demonstrate that *patient* indexed a more negative discourse prosody with examples such as: ‘The government has already said it would be prepared to use powers to detain "dangerously infectious" Aids patients’ (*The Times*, 1985). On the other hand, *victim* tended to be used in discourses of compassion as in the following headline from the same year: ‘Aids victims “should not lose their jobs”’ (*The Times*, 1985). Nevertheless, both cases tended to collectivise the experiences of a diverse group of people such that, as in the example of *cases*, the language used to describe people living with AIDS tended to erase the fact that they were, first and foremost, people. In the next section, an analysis of the collocate *spread* will illustrate how HIV/AIDS became seen as a ‘gay disease’ for which gay men, bi men and MSM were seen as culpable.

5.3.1.1 — Spread

The collocate, *spread*, is the third most significant collocate of *Aids* in the 1979-1990 sub-corpus and will be the main focus for the remainder of this section. An analysis of concordance lines shows that the most frequent use of *spread* occurred in the phrase, ‘spread of Aids’. A significant number of these occurrences are also preceded by verbs such as *curb, control, halt, prevent,* and *slow* indicating that *The Times* was primarily concerned with stories discussing how to stop the ‘spread’ of HIV/AIDS. At first glance, such discourses do not immediately reveal how the use of ‘spread’ in reference to HIV/AIDS was used to discursively construct queer subjects in the 1980s. The concordances were therefore categorised by asking questions like, according to *The Times*: How is AIDS spread? To whom will it spread? And how far will it spread? The following categories emerged from a close reading of the 148 concordance lines:

- AIDS is spread through homosexual promiscuity (34 lines)
- AIDS is spread through intravenous drug use (10 lines)
- AIDS will spread/is spreading among the heterosexual population (in the UK/Other regions in the Global North) (28 lines)
- AIDS will spread/is spreading among the heterosexual population (Sub-Saharan Africa) (8 lines)
- How quickly/how far will HIV/AIDS spread? (11 lines)
- How can the spread of HIV/AIDS be stopped? (39 lines)
- Miscellaneous (descriptions of AIDS; concerns over ‘spread’ in hair dressers, tattoo parlours, Holy Communion, etc.) (14 lines)

After establishing the preceding categories, it became apparent that ‘AIDS is spread through homosexual promiscuity’ as well as ‘AIDS will spread/is spreading among the heterosexual

population (in the UK/Other regions in the Global North)' both indicated the ways in which *The Times'* coverage of the spread of HIV/AIDS constituted the discursive construction of queer subjectivities.

Category 1: 'AIDS is spread through homosexual promiscuity'

The 34 concordance lines in this category almost all reveal the ways in which 'homosexual promiscuity' was represented as the primary vector for HIV transmission. This framing had significant consequences for how gay, bisexual and MSM were discursively constructed in *The Times.* First, by consistently associating HIV/AIDS with queer sexual practices, the illness became increasingly perceived as a 'gay disease', thus 'reinsrib(ing) the old connection of homosexuality and pathology' (Cook *et al.* 2007:199-200). The focus on 'promiscuity' also resulted in queer men being represented as culpable for their illness and therefore deserving of death. As will be discussed later, this also meant that the heterosexual population was lulled into a false sense that HIV/AIDS only affected gay, bisexual and MSM — a fact that would eventually lead to HIV becoming endemic throughout the population more broadly.

An example of such representation was clear in some of the earliest reporting of HIV/AIDS wherein it was argued that 'the sexually promiscuous homosexual community — by regularly fighting so many infections, their immune system is exhausted, and that the disease is transmitted when blood vessels burst in violent anal penetration' (*The Times*, 1983). This not only claimed that HIV could only be spread when one's immune system had become overwhelmed but also that it was *only* anal intercourse that could lead to infection. Not only were such reports untrue, but they would propagate the notion that people living with AIDS had brought the disease on themselves solely through 'promiscuity' and sexual practices that were represented as 'violent' and, thus, somehow deviant. Even as late as 1985, it continued to be claimed in *The Times* that 'Aids is spread principally by the promiscuous homosexual activity which occurs, among other places, in the "gay" bathhouses of major United States cities' (*The Times*, 1985). The cumulative effect of such reporting was, therefore, a sedimentation of discourse that represented all gay men as promiscuous, all people living with AIDS as gay, and homosexual sex as the primary means through which HIV was able to spread.

It should be noted, however, that the majority of concordance lines discussed HIV *prevention* — a line of reporting that, while ostensibly more sympathetic, relied on the same premise, namely that, if homosexual men were to be less promiscuous, then the rate of new HIV infections would decrease. Not only did this continue to frame HIV infection as contingent upon gay sex, but it also vindicated, albeit irrationally, a new conservative morality that had been promoted by Thatcher (Weeks 2016). Values such as monogamy and sexual abstinence were promoted at the expense of a discussion

surrounding safer sexual practices. To illustrate this point, the word ‘condom’ only occurred in 6 out of the 148 concordance lines discussing the *spread* of HIV. On the contrary, the following concordance lines show how even the Church were represented in *The Times* as willing to contemplate ‘a church blessing ceremony’ rather than discuss the use of contraception.

1. A Cambridge University theologian believes a church blessing ceremony would promote fidelity among homosexual couples and help stem the spread of Aids.
2. The Board for Social Responsibility notes that there is a division of opinion in the Church of England concerning the morality of homosexual activity in a stable exclusive relationship. The traditional teaching in favour of total sexual abstinence would prevent the spread of Aids, as would the more liberal insistence on loyalty to one partner.
3. Church's quest to find a convincing sexual ethic has as one of its central sentences: To be effective in combating the spread of Aids, a public campaign of moral education will have to appeal explicitly to the natural and well-known phenomenon of human pair-bonding.
4. And since Aids (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) is spread by promiscuity, not by homosexuality, our so-called Christian teaching could actually be helping to spread Aids.

Table 5.4 — Examples of the Church’s response to the spread of HIV among gay, bisexual and MSM (1979-1990 sub-corpus)

The consistent message that HIV is spread through homosexual promiscuity demonstrates how the signifier *Aids* contributed to the discursive construction of queer subjects in the 1980s. According to Laclau and Mouffe (2014), however, all subject positions are radically contingent, meaning an identity is always constituted by its relationships to other identities. The conflation of HIV/AIDS with gay, bisexual and MSM was, therefore, not only achieved through the explicit coupling of virus with ‘homosexual promiscuity’. Rather, the following section shows how representations of the spread of HIV in the *heterosexual* population also contributed to the notion that HIV/AIDS was a gay disease and that queerness was imbricated with pathology.

Category 2: ‘AIDS will spread/is spreading among the heterosexual population (in the UK/Other regions in the Global North)’

In contrast to the preceding examples, wherein *The Times* represented ‘homosexual promiscuity’ as the primary vector of HIV transmission, the concordance lines in this category barely mentioned sexuality at all. In fact, of the 28 concordance lines in this category, only 4 of them explicitly mentioned ‘heterosexual intercourse’. The remaining examples either omitted the means of

transmission entirely or simply insinuated that sexual intercourse could potentially lead to infection. For instance, 'the spread of Aids' in this category rarely had a grammatical subject that was human. For instance, common sentence constructions included the following: 'If Aids continues to spread', 'Aids could spread to heterosexuals', or 'the spread of Aids in the heterosexual community'. Here, AIDS seems to be its own agent, spreading through the heterosexual population regardless of their behaviour. This is a striking contrast to the concordance lines in 'AIDS is spread through homosexual promiscuity'. For here, even when the nominalisation 'the spread of Aids' grammatically obscured agency, the context made agency unambiguous. It was the sexual practices — and ostensibly the identities — of gay, bisexual and MSM that was responsible for the spread of HIV.

Where there is agency attributed to behaviours or groups of people, British heterosexual people are largely absent. In fact, the concordance lines below show how the spread of HIV was more often attributed to groups such as 'African men and women attending clinics in Britain', 'British expatriate workers who have been in Africa', sex workers, men in prison, and of course, homosexuals. The erasure of heterosexual intercourse as a vector of transmission had several effects. The first was that HIV/AIDS continued to be seen primarily as a 'gay disease', a discursive construction that, due to its sedimentation, has persisted well into the 21st century. Where it was clear that gay, bisexual, and MSM were not the only 'carriers of the "plague"' (Cook *et al.* 2007: 199), sex workers and Africans were held accountable for the spread of HIV into the heterosexual population. This reticence on the part of *The Times* to report on how HIV was actually being spread in the heterosexual population led to a general complacency within the population at large — one that was to have dire consequences. It would not be until 1990 that *The Times* reported that, 'when prejudices suggesting that Aids is essentially a homosexual disease were inflamed by the well-publicised statements of ignorant but influential individuals, warnings of the risks to heterosexuals were disregarded' (*The Times*, 1990) — a statement that ignored the complicity of *The Times*.

1. Mr John Townend (Bridlington, C) said there was public concern that the campaign had been even-handed between homosexual and heterosexual activity despite the fact that the spread of Aids had come particularly from homosexuals.
2. The recommendation is made in The Lancet, published today, after doctors found high levels of HIV infection among African men and women attending clinics in Britain. British expatriate workers who have been in Africa may also be at higher risk of infection. The two groups could add to the heterosexual spread of Aids in this country.
3. Dr Richard Dawood, editor of Travellers' Health, said yesterday: "Heterosexual spread of Aids is a growing problem and has been found among prostitutes in every continent."

4. Mr John Townend (Bridlington, C) and Mr Patrick Nicholls (Teignbridge, C) suggested that the Government had minimised the extent to which the spread of Aids had mainly come from homosexuals.
5. "Prisons should now issue free condoms to prevent the spread of Aids to the heterosexual population", Mr Key, vice-chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Aids, said.
6. The women demonstrators said in a letter to the US Ambassador that the presence of the Navy encouraged prostitution and helped, to spread Aids.
7. Dr Ward Cates, of the US Center for Disease Control. has said recently that anyone can see the potential from this disease being much more than anything mankind has seen before and fears are growing in the United States that the Aids endemic may spread beyond homosexuals and other high risk groups to threaten the population at large.

Table 5.5 — Examples demonstrating how the spread of HIV/AIDS in the heterosexual population is largely attributed to Africans, prisoners, sex workers and homosexuals (1979-1990 sub-corpus)

5.3.2 — *Necropolitics* and *Precarious Life*

The preceding analysis demonstrates how *The Times* used language to discursively construct gay, bisexual and MSM as not just the primary 'carriers' of HIV, but also as deserving victims whose identities and sexual practices made them culpable for their illness. In contrast, the 'heterosexual population' were spared this verdict through language that construed HIV as a virus that would spread on its own — a disease without vectors but with innocent victims. Such discourses of blame were not, however, simply another example of homophobia. Rather, *The Times* was complicit in (re)producing a narrative in which the state's abdication of responsibility for queer lives was obfuscated by a deliberate focus on 'choice' and 'behaviour' within this particular sector of the population. In this way, the signifier *Aids* serves several semiotic functions. First, the language surrounding HIV/AIDS and people living with AIDS constructed gay, bisexual and MSM as both bearers and subjects of death. At the same time, however, the signifier *Aids* also disrupts the concept of biopolitics that ties this chapter together. This is because, unlike legislation that sought to decriminalise sex between men or legislate trans and non-binary bodily autonomy, the British state, in the context of HIV/AIDS, did almost nothing to protect the sick and ill against a new disease with a significant death rate. In fact, it was not until 1986, when it became clear that HIV infection was increasing throughout the heterosexual population, that the Thatcher government finally set up a unit within the Department of Health and Social Security with the specific remit of preventing the further proliferation of HIV (Cook *et al.* 2007; Weeks 2016). Such abdication of responsibility for the lives of its citizens during

the early 1980s is therefore not an example of biopolitics proper wherein the state seeks to 'administer, secure, develop, and foster life' (Lemke, Casper and Moore 2011:35). Rather the following section will argue that the government's unwillingness to protect a sector of its population is symptomatic of what Mbembe (2003) has termed *necropolitics.* As this is a theory primarily concerned with postcolonialism, the following discussion will also consider Butler's (1996; 2004a) discussions of AIDS and what constitutes a 'precarious life' in order to fully elucidate the ways in which the discourses surrounding HIV/AIDS have been used to construct queer subjects as bearers of death.

Mbembe (2003:39) has argued that biopolitics 'is insufficient to account for contemporary forms of subjugation of life to the power of death'. In other words, Mbembe (2003) is arguing that the Foucauldian notion that liberal democracies are primarily concerned with the administration, optimisation and multiplication of life (Foucault 1979a:137), does not and cannot account for colonialism, war, and genocide as well as the array of state sanctioned violences carried out against domestic as well as international populations. In order to explain this key component of the modern nation state, Mbembe (2003:39-40) developed the idea of *necropolitics* in order to account for the 'new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of living dead'. Deploying examples from the Atlantic Slave Trade to the Israeli Occupation of Palestine, Mbembe (2003:27) offers a genealogy of necropower that shows how the state's capacity to govern is also contingent on its 'capacity to define who matters and who does not, who is disposable and who is not'. It is important to note that the effectiveness of necropolitical power, however, is maintained through hegemony — the acquiescence of a population to accept that the death or suffering of one sector of the population is just, rational, or deserved. While Mbembe's theory emerged from a postcolonial analysis, the same logic of necropolitics can be applied to the emergence of HIV in Britain during the 1980s. In this context, gay men, bi men and MSM were dying from a novel disease that seemed to be passed through what were perceived as deviant sexual practices. That the disease seemed to primarily affect queer men as well as intravenous drug users and other 'undesirable minorities' (*The Times*, 1988) meant that the government could abstain from action with little objection from the population. This served the Thatcher government well in that they could continue to promote the re-moralising of society through traditional family values (Weeks 2016), but more importantly, that a discourse of blame corresponded to the neoliberal focus on individual responsibility and the shrinking of the state (Hall 2011; Mouffe 2018). According to this ideological position, one's success and, in this case, one's health was a result of personal choice and beyond the purview of the government. In this way, a necropolitical strategy allowed the government to both advance their agenda *and* represent the deaths of British citizens as entirely rational. Such discourses were then reproduced by a broadsheet like *The Times* which continued to

advance the myth that HIV/AIDS was a disease that 'was spread by specific homosexual practices' (*The Times*, 1986). Their consistent reproduction of such discourses over a sustained period of time led to a sedimentation of this discourse that influences discussions around HIV/AIDS to this day.

Echoing Mbembe's (2003) theory of necropolitics is Butler's (2004a) treatise on 'precarious life'. Like the necropolitical, Butler also argues that there are certain sectors of any population that are defined by their precarity or vulnerability to both violence and death. Such precarity is not, however, an accident, but rather the logical conclusion of state practices that deem certain lives as worthy of protection while others 'will not even qualify as "grievable"' (Butler 2004a:32). Included among the 'ungrievable' are certain gendered/sexualised and racialised bodies (i.e., queer people in the west and Sub-Saharan African populations) that have died of AIDS in the greatest numbers. In the case of the former, Butler (1996:72) has argued that this is because their deaths were 'understood as a necessary compensation for homosexual desire'. As in the language of *The Times* that conflated HIV/AIDS with 'homosexual promiscuity', Butler (1996:61) contends that 'the male homosexual is figured time and again as one whose desire is somehow structured by death, either as the desire to die or as one whose desire is inherently punishable by death'. Homosexuality is therefore represented as a 'death-bearing practice' (Butler 1996:71) — a representation that is exemplified in the pages of *The Times* between 1979-1990.

Homosexuality was indeed conflated with HIV/AIDS such that AIDS continued to be seen as a 'gay disease' for many years after this analysis ends in 1990 (Cook *et al.* 2007; Weeks 2016). It is important to note, however, that the focus on the alleged promiscuity of gay men, bi men, and MSM allowed writers at *The Times* to reproduce the notion that HIV infection was a consequence of choice. The focus on *choice* is fundamental to how this particular manifestation of necropower gained consent. Individual choice — in both the market and in one's private life — was central to the emergent hegemony of neoliberal ideology that centred 'individual freedoms' (Hall 2011) as paramount and thus allowed the state to abdicate responsibility for the 'private lives' of its citizens. The next section, however, shows how, in the early 21st century, there continued to be a tension between neoliberalism — with its focus on 'individual freedom' — and the biopower of the state that continued to legislate what did and did not constitute a properly gendered body.

5.4 — *Gender identity*

In this final section, the key phrase *gender identity* will be analysed as a privileged signifier or nodal point for the 2003-2017 corpus. This is because, like *homosexual conduct* in the 1960s and *AIDS* in the 1980s, the phrase *gender identity* binds together a series of discourses that index how state biopower seeks to regulate queer bodies. However, whereas *homosexual conduct* revealed what the

state permitted queer bodies to *do*, and *AIDS* revealed which lives were rendered precarious, the following analysis of *gender identity* will indicate what the state permits queer bodies to *be.* In other words, it will be argued that the language of *The Times* (re)produces an anxiety around what constitutes a normatively gendered body. Moreover, the analysis will reveal that a 'moral panic' (Cohen 1972) has emerged around the alleged increase in use of so-called 'puberty blockers' — representing both a tension between the biopolitics of gender identity and the regulatory power of the state as well as the biopolitics of childhood and the regulatory power of state healthcare. Like the fear surrounding the 'spread' of *homosexual conduct* in the 1960s, so too is gender variance represented as a 'social contagion' (Slothouber 2020) to which the young are especially vulnerable.

5.4.1 — Collocation analysis of gender identity

Gender identity has a raw frequency of 215 (14.25 per million) and is the 20th most significant key phrase in the 2003-2017 corpus. It should be noted though that, in the language of *The Times, gender identity* is not being used to discuss gender identities in general. Rather, the term is employed in contexts that focus explicitly on the gender identities of trans, non-binary and gender diverse individuals. Whereas a term like *transgender* was more frequent in the corpus, it was often used as part of the initialisation, 'LGBT', rendering *gender identity* a more useful signifier in the analysis of how trans bodies have been subject to state biopower. A collocation analysis showed that its top 5 collocates were *disorder (19), criteria (5), orientation (18), GID (3)* and *clinic (7)* with *criteria* and *orientation* being largely unrelated to the following discussion. This is because *criteria* only occurred as a part of the phrase 'Gender Identity Criteria' in reference to the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index which is a 'benchmarking tool for employers to measure their progress on lesbian, gay, bi and trans inclusion in the workplace' (Stonewall 2021:NP). While the addition of 'Gender Identity Criteria' to the Workplace Index in 2016 was considered newsworthy, the concordance lines did not directly address the biopolitical discourses discussed in the introduction to this chapter. Similarly, *orientation* tended to be used in phrases such as 'sexual orientation and gender identity' when discussing anti-discrimination legislation such as the *Equality Act 2010*. While this latter collocate could have indicated some of the ways in which trans and non-binary identities were constructed in *The Times*, the majority of occurrences demonstrated that *gender identity* was not discussed specifically but rather as part of a broader discussion around the politics of anti-discrimination policies.

The remaining collocates — *disorder, GID* and *clinic* — all revealed the ways in which gender variance was represented as a 'social contagion' (Slothouber 2020) that was both spreading within the general population and specifically 'targeting' young people. For instance, *disorder* was used in the phrase 'Gender Identity Disorder' which also accounts for the collocate *GID* and is a term that *had*

been used to refer to the distress caused by one's gender identity being incongruent with their assigned gender at birth. The statistical significance of *disorder* and *GID*, however, is indicative of how trans people are represented in *The Times* specifically. This is because *GID* had gradually been replaced by the less medicalised term, *gender dysphoria*, from at least 2013 when the 5th edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) had opted to remove the term *disorder* in an attempt to de-pathologise the stress that many trans people experienced regarding their gender identity. This choice, based on the stigma attached to the term *disorder,* is also born out in a collocation analysis of *disorder* in the BNC wherein its most significant collocates include terms such as 'mental disorder', 'psychiatric disorder' and 'eating disorder'. While the DSM is an American classification system used to assess mental health treatment, its terminology is pervasive throughout the English-speaking world. Thus, while gender dysphoria *did* begin to appear in the latter years of the corpus, the decision by *The Times* to continue framing trans and non-binary identities as a 'disorder' is not only indicative of their political orientation, but was also a contributing factor in the moral panic that emerged surrounding a perceived increase in gender variance. This moral panic is also salient in the concordances for the collocate *clinic* which occurred in the phrase 'Gender Identity Clinic' which usually referred to the Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS) at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust. Also known as the Tavistock Clinic, this service has featured heavily in discussions surrounding trans people in the UK as it is the only clinic that provides healthcare for gender diverse youth under the age of 17. The following discussion will analyse many of the concordance lines featuring the collocates *disorder, GID* and *clinic*, however, in order to get a broader sense of how gender diverse individuals are being represented in *The Times,* other examples have been included, e.g. tables 5.6 and 5.7. These examples of text have all been taken from the same articles as those featuring the collocates and have been included to provide more evidence for the proceeding argument.

Taken together, the collocates *disorder, GID,* and *clinic* all primarily occurred in articles wherein the newsworthiness of gender variance reflected an apparent increase in the numbers of people who were seeking support for gender dysphoria in the UK. For instance, in an article from 2012, *The Times* leads with the claim that a 'diagnosis of GID used to be pretty rare' but that 'between 1998 and 2010 the total trebled to around 12,500, a growth of about 11% per annum' (*The Times*, 2012). Like the use of the collocate *cases* in the preceding section on *Aids*, this focus on measurement and numerical information, i.e. percentages, functions to dehumanise trans and non-binary people who are seeking support. Their stories — and indeed their voices — are omitted in favour of statistics that focus on the spread of gender dysphoria as though it were a disease or pathogen. And, as in the coverage of a spreading disease, there is a significant focus on causation. For instance, several articles focused on the question of *why* more people were identifying as trans or non-binary as in the following example

where the director of the Tavistock Clinic is quoted as saying: '"In the year to April we had 1,500 referrals. The numbers just keep on rising but we don't know why"' (*The Times* 2013). This concern with causation and indeed the increase in people identifying as trans or non-binary is even more pronounced in articles concerning young people or 'children'.

Articles discussing the rise in young people seeking support for gender dysphoria follow a similar pattern to those concerned with an alleged adult increase. The key difference, however, is that there is a greater focus on causation as well as the use of medical interventions such as GnRHa (gonadotropin releasing hormone analogues) or so-called 'puberty blockers'. Like the examples above which discussed adults seeking support for their gender dysphoria, the examples in Table 5.6 (all featuring the word *children*) foreground the alleged 'sharp rise' or 'huge increase' in the number of young people seeking support for gender dysphoria. These terms, however, are imbued with a negative discourse prosody. According to the BNC, 'sharp rise' collocates most frequently with 'unemployment' while 'huge increase' tended to collocate with terms that suggested prices and costs were increasing. Thus, by framing trans healthcare for young people in this way, the authors present a deeply ideological position in what is ostensibly objective reporting. Similarly, like the focus on causation in the adult population, the first example in Table 5.6 suggests that there is a similar preoccupation with trans youth. Here, the author cites unnamed 'critics' who attribute this rise to a 'lifestyle choice' — a phrase which echoes homophobic arguments in the past (see Weeks [2016] below). This focus on lifestyle is not only problematic in that it reduces one's gender identity to choice, but also that a collocation analysis of the term *lifestyle* in the BNC shows that its most frequent collocates include terms like *healthy*, *hectic,* and *lavish* — words that imply temporary states and not identifications. Finally, the combined outcome of evaluative language like 'lifestyle' and 'sharp increase' plays into the idea that this lifestyle is like a trend — or worse, a disease — that is spreading. This notion of a social contagion is born out in the following example as well. In an opinion piece from 2017, the Deputy Editor of *The Times,* Sarah Baxter, wrote that 'at the Tavistock, the number of referrals to its gender identity clinic has soared along with the new fashion for gender fluidity, beautiful transgender models and life-affirming YouTube "transition" (*sic*) videos featuring self-perceived ugly duckling teenagers who turn into swans' (*The Times* 2017). Not only does Baxter comment on the 'soar(ing)' number of referrals, but she also attributes these to causal factors such as 'fashion', 'YouTube videos', and the proverbial 'ugly duckling' story. This framing, in particular, is significant because Baxter has the editorial influence to shape the discursive position of stories concerning gender diverse youth. It could therefore be argued that the focus on social causation — along with terms such as 'fashion' — seeks to delegitimise the experiences of trans, non-binary and gender diverse youth as well as the support being provided at the Tavistock Clinic. Perhaps unsurprisingly, there is also a tendency to attribute social causation to education. Much like the

coverage of homosexuality in the 1980s that eventually led to a ban on the teaching of 'homosexual lifestyles' (Baker 2021), headlines such as 'Children as young as three are being read books in nurseries and schools that encourage them to question their gender' (*The Times* 2017) and 'Primary school pupils to be taught about cross-dressing' (*The Times* 2008), imply that young children are being indoctrinated. Like the 'spread of Aids' in the 1979-1990 corpus, so too is the 'number of referrals' to the Tavistock clinic represented as a problem that is growing and primarily affecting children. Nowhere is this anxiety more pervasive than in the coverage of 'puberty blockers'.

1. There has been a huge increase in UK children seeking treatment for transgender issues, But critics say it has become a lifestyle choice.
2. With a sharp rise in under-tens being treated for gender dysphoria in Britain, Ben Machell meets the transgender children taking hormone treatments before adolescence arrives.
3. The growth rate of referrals for children was 68%.
4. Among children the growth was even more pronounced: 15% per annum.

Table 5.6 — Coverage of children receiving support for gender dysphoria (2003-2017 sub-corpus)

GnRHa have been used to treat precocious puberty in young people since the 1980s (Baker *et al.* 2021). Recently, however, countries such as the Netherlands and, until recently, the UK have begun to prescribe 'puberty blockers' to young people who are experiencing profound distress as a result of their assigned gender. This is because, by delaying puberty, the development of secondary sex characteristics is suspended, thus reducing the need for gender affirming surgeries later on should they decide to fully transition (Beattie 2022). This also allows young people the time to explore their gender identity which has been proven to reduce mental distress and suicidality (Rew *et al.* 2021). But while GnRHa do not appear to have any long-term physical consequences with puberty beginning as soon as the treatment is stopped (Giordano *et al.* 2021), the following concordance lines (all referencing the use of GnRHa on children) demonstrate that a moral panic has developed around the use of this particular treatment.

1. It is now considering whether to treat more children diagnosed with gender identity disorder, including a boy of 10.
2. Livvy, 10, is among 12,500 people in Britain being treated for gender identity disorder (GID).

3. Children as young as nine will be allowed to take drugs to block puberty, which doctors say provides a crucial delay to allow them to decide whether to undergo gender reassignment later.
4. GP gave child, 12, sex change drug.

Table 5.7 — Coverage of young people receiving support for GnRHa (2003-2017 sub-corpus)

Ordered chronologically, there appears to be an escalation in the moral panic surrounding the use of GnRHa. For instance, the first two examples are focused on the increase in use, thus echoing the examples from Table 5.6 as well as the discussion concerning trans healthcare for adults. The focus on numbers seems to imply that the need for trans healthcare is spreading and is, therefore, reminiscent of the way a pathogen or disease would be covered in the news. The references to age are included as significant, but are both foregrounded and backgrounded in the sentences suggesting that while age is a concern, it is not the only concern. By 2014, however, the tone begins to change. In the third example, the use of the phrase 'as young as nine' indicates that the author's position is that this is far too young for endocrine treatment. In the same sentence, however, it is stated that 'doctors say (GnRHa) provides a crucial delay'. By structuring the information in this way, the author backgrounds the benefits of endocrine treatment in order to further the narrative that these treatments are somehow extreme for children. Finally, by 2017, the moral panic surrounding GnRHa has developed to a stage where *The Times* is propagating misinformation through the use of terms such as 'sex change drug'. GnRHa is here falsely equated with the use of cross-sex hormones — a treatment that is not available until at least the age of 16 (Giordano *et al.* 2021). Furthermore, the role of the doctor in this headline is also misrepresented. The use of the phrase 'GP gave child, 12' suggests that the doctor encouraged or forced GnRHa upon the child, thus omitting the legal requirement of consent in the process of receiving gender affirming endocrine treatment. In the UK, a person of 12 would either require a parent or guardian to provide consent or, in the case of a young person lacking such support, would need to demonstrate Gillick competence — a legal precedent which claims that consent is not based solely on age but also 'depends on whether the individual child has achieved sufficient maturity to understand what is proposed' (Giordano *et al.* 2021:1).

Phrases such as 'sex change drug' are particularly pernicious in that they misrepresent the function of GnRHa, thus contributing to the moral panic that has emerged around support for gender diverse youth. In fact, there appears to be an editorial line that emerges, particularly from 2016 — and which continues to this day — that insinuates medical interventions are being used on children to, in the words of one article, 'obliterate distinctions between the sexes' (*The Times*, 2017). In the following section, it will be argued that discourses of *gender identity* in *The Times* (re)produce profound

anxieties around what constitutes a normatively gendered body and, perhaps more so, how gendered bodies should be expressed in children. Furthermore, it will be argued that the fear of a 'rise in referrals' actually represents a rise in transphobia and that the actual social contagion is a pernicious anti-trans agenda being mediated in the language of *The Times.*

5.4.2 — Gender variance as social contagion

It should first be noted that the increasingly hostile coverage surrounding GnRHa is largely based on a profound misrepresentation of gender affirming hormone therapies — namely, that puberty blockers are a 'sex change drug' akin to gender-affirmative endocrine treatments. Misrepresenting puberty blockers as an irreversible treatment that begins the process of changing one's physical sex is, therefore, not only irresponsible journalism, but is factually inaccurate as puberty resumes as soon as one ceases treatment (Baker *et al.* 2021; Rew *et al.*, 2020). In addition to this conflation, Giordano *et al.* (2021) have also observed how fundamental misunderstandings of puberty blockers are prevalent even in more nuanced discussions wherein a distinction between GnRHa and cross-sex endocrine treatments is made. They note how the high correlation of young people who receive GnRHa and their later medical transition is represented as a 'conveyor belt' effect whereby young people and their families feel compelled by institutions such as Tavistock to progress from one therapy to the next. Girodano *et al.* (2021) as well as Slothouber (2020) both argue that the logical (yet often omitted) conclusion to be drawn from this correlation is that the young people who go on to take cross-sex hormones are, in fact, trans and that it is the *need* and not the *treatment* that results in this ongoing medical process. Another misrepresentation is that there is a significant cohort of young people who, after receiving GnRHa, later 'desist' or 'detransition' to their assigned gender at birth. While there are indeed individuals who have desisted, the numbers appear to be exaggerated (Wiepjes *et al.*, 2018; Slothouber, 2020) and, as argued by Giordano *et al.* (2021:3), young people 'desist' because 'the psychosexual trajectory of adolescents is not always predictable' (Giordano *et al.* 2021:3) — not because they are being pushed into gender affirming endocrine treatment. And while the emotional and mental distress caused by 'detransitioning' may be significant, the resistance to 'puberty blockers' fails to take into account their many benefits. For instance, GnRHa treatment in trans, non-binary and gender diverse youth has been associated with a reduction in suicidality and an improvement in mental health outcomes overall (Turban *et al.* 2020; Achille *et al.* 2020). This would, therefore, suggest that the resistance to GnRHa has less to do with what is best for young people and more to do with preventing the very existence of trans, non-binary and gender diverse youth.

The fear of hormonal therapies is pervasive in the language of *The Times* and indicates the ways in which gender diversity is represented as a social contagion that is spreading throughout the population. In addition to the obvious biopolitical implications of how medical interventions are

regulated, the spectre of the trans child is also demonstrative of biopolitical discourse in *The Times*. Rose (1999:123) famously argued that 'childhood is the most intensively governed sector of personal existence' such that 'the health, welfare, and rearing of children have been linked in thought and practice to the destiny of the nation and the responsibilities of the state'. Similarly, Edelman (2004:11) has also argued that all politics is based upon the 'fantasy of a future' which is necessarily contingent upon the 'figure of the child'. In this analysis, therefore, children are not simply represented as incapable of consent, but are rather vehicles through which our culture and political economy are reproduced. For those with a vested interest in maintaining the current hegemonic formation, it is therefore a logical reaction to oppose changes in the development of normatively gendered bodies.

In this section, an analysis of the signifier, *gender identity*, has revealed the ways in which trans, non-binary and gender diverse youth represent a conjuncture between the biopolitics of childhood and the biopolitics of gender. But where the biopolitics of childhood are primarily concerned with futurity (Rose 1999; Edelman 2004; Lee and Motzkau 2011), the biopolitics of gender are about power and subordination. As noted by Stryker (2014:39) the biopolitical force of gender 'creates material effects through bureaucratic tracking that begins with birth, ends with death, and traverses all manner of state-issued or state-sanctioned documentation practices in between'. The material effects of gender are, therefore, not simply about bodies, but are rather about access to political, economic, and socio-cultural power. For trans and non-binary people, therefore, their gender identity makes them more vulnerable to violence, poverty, and other forms of political, social, and economic marginalisation. Before concluding, it is therefore important to note that, while denying gender affirming medical interventions is wrong, seeking trans liberation through a medical model alone is also inadequate. Instead, we should seek to disrupt gender hegemony by affirming gender identities and expressions that exist outside of the gender binary — what Butler (2004b) has referred to as multiple avenues for gender self-determination. Only then can a diversity of genders become normalised, thus disrupting the hegemonic formations that primarily value white, middle-class, non-disabled, cisgender heterosexual men over and above everyone else.

5.5 — Concluding remarks

This chapter has demonstrated how *The Times* used language to (re)produce the biopolitical goals of the British state by mediating and, thus, reifying its interests. In each of the three time periods, it was shown how a privileged signifier can bind together a constellation of discourses that function to regulate sexual morality and normatively gendered bodies such that the hegemony of certain historically contingent sexualities and gender formations remain uncontested. Each privileged signifier also revealed the scope — as well as the limits — of biopolitics as an analytical framework

for the history of LGBTQI representation in *The Times*. For instance, *homosexual conduct* in the 1960s demonstrated how biopower enacted through legislation can produce entirely new legal subjects while, in the 1980s, biopolitics, as conceived by Foucault, could not adequately account for the ways in which certain lives were rendered precarious, ungrievable and thus marked for death in the necropolitical conjuncture of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Finally, it should also be noted that the way in which *The Times* represented healthcare for gender diverse youth has contributed in no small part to the repeal of GnRHa treatment in late 2020 (Faye 2021). As noted by Foucault (1979a; 1979b), biopower does not just function through legislation but through the production of norms generated by the multiple and intersecting disciplinary apparatuses that govern liberal societies. Therefore, as a 'respectable' broadsheet, *The Times* contributed to the maintenance of hegemonic gender norms as they apply to minors as well as the limits of endocrine interventions.

What has remained consistent throughout each of the time periods in question is the ways in which *The Times* uses language to represent biopolitical interventions by the state as a natural state of affairs. This discursive sedimentation renders what is contestable as common sense and what is contingent as fixed (Laclau and Mouffe 2014). In the next chapter, this process of discursive sedimentation will again be demonstrated through an analysis of privileged signifiers that reveal the ways in which queer subjects have been discursively constructed in relation to British capitalism from the 1960s until the early 21st century.

Chapter 6 — Capitalism

6.1 — Introduction

Hall (1988; 2011) has argued that British capitalism has been in crisis for much of the past century. Between 1957-2017, examples of such crises include the end of the Keynsian welfare state, the shock of Thatcherism and the subsequent rise of neoliberalism, as well as the financial crash of 2007/2008 which has, in many ways, ushered in a new stage of capitalism which is still taking shape (Varoufakis 2023). By considering the nodal points *Vassall*, *GLC* and *gay marriage*, the following chapter will argue that queer identities, as they have been discursively constructed in the language of *The Times*, have been indelibly shaped through such crises. Each of these signifiers represents the central point in a constellation of discourses that were produced, respectively, during the 1960s, 1980s and 2000s-2010s in order to uphold and sustain consent for a political-economic system that not only produces rampant inequalities, but is also rife with contradictions. This practice of manufacturing consent (Chomsky 2010) is, therefore, primarily about ideology and the how *The Times*, as a pillar of British capitalism's ideological state apparatuses (Althusser 1971), (re)produces belief systems that create antagonisms within the electorate and ensure that the British Establishment maintains its enduring hegemony (Laclau and Mouffe 2014). In the following analysis then, it will be argued that popular consent for capitalism has partly been achieved by positioning queer people as both a threat to capitalism, and much later, as a symbol of its success.

It should be noted, however, that the emergence of capitalism as a discursive trajectory is perhaps unsurprising. This is, firstly, because the history of Britain has been structured by capitalism as a political and economic system which 'is embedded in social relations and produces systemic crises that have the effect of constantly transforming the social fabric of societies' (Delanty 2019:14). In other words, the discursive construction of any and all subject positions in the UK will always be informed by the development of capitalism. Secondly, because capitalism is both a social relation and an economic process, the ideological as well as the material conditions, e.g. wage labour (D'Emilio 1993), of the past 60 years will have indelibly impacted on the discursive construction of sexual and gender identities. This is because both sexuality and gender maintain a privileged space in social reproduction and are, therefore, crucial to an economic system which has maintained its primacy in the UK since the 16th century (Harvey 2010; Delanty 2019).

This connection between capitalism and sexual identity has been theorised by historians and Marxist feminists such as D'Emilio (1993) and Hennessy (2000) who have taken a Historical Materialist approach to the analysis of how capitalism has shaped queer identities during the 20th and early 21st centuries. For instance, D'Emilio (1993) has argued that, while same-sex desire and relationships

have always existed, communities of people organised around sexual identity only became possible as a result of the relations of capitalism. Urbanisation and wage labour provided the material conditions necessary for individuals to forge relationships and communities outside the traditional family ties necessary in an agrarian economy (D'Emilio 1993). But herein lies one of the primary contradictions of capitalism: that by creating an economy structured around free labour, the material foundations that fostered the creation of traditional family units were eroded, i.e. one no longer needed a family to survive. In order to ensure that heterosexual coupling practices continued, thus reproducing new generations of workers, one of the primary ideological discourses of contemporary capitalism has, therefore, been the nuclear family — not as a necessary economic unit — but as our primary source of 'love, affection, and emotional security, the place where our need for stable, intimate, human relationships is satisfied' (D'Emilio 1993:473). So even while the same economic conditions created both queer communities and nuclear families, it appears that only the latter ensured the reproduction of capitalism while the former highlighted one of the contradictions generated by this new political- economic settlement. It is partially for this reason that, for the majority of the past 60 years, queer people have been represented as transgressive and dangerous — representations which will be demonstrated in the following analyses of *Vassall* and the *GLC*.

Hennessy (2000), on the other hand, considers sexual identity under neoliberalism or 'Late capitalism'. Like D'Emilio (1993), Hennessy (2000) also argues that the history of sexual identity has been shaped through wage labour and commodity production, but also increasingly through consumption practices. The accelerated development of consumer culture — driven by mass media and the advertising industry — has resulted in societies (like the UK) where one's identity is as much tied to the symbolic arena of pleasure, lifestyle, and fashion as it is to one's class position. The tethering of identity to consumption practices is, therefore, a crucial component of neoliberalism in that it pacifies political subjectivity by compensating the unmet needs of the working classes with new desires and pleasures which are easily fulfilled, thereby generating consent for a system which is increasingly unequal (Hennessy 2000). The contradiction within this system is that, in order to continually increase profits, markets must be continually expanded. Hennessy (1995; 2000) suggests that this accounts for why certain demographics within the queer population are now seen to possess a 'market virility' (Puar 2007:26) which has facilitated their acceptance within mainstream society. On the one hand, new arenas for profit have been opened up through the marketing of commodities to middle-class gay men and lesbians, e.g. the so-called 'Pink Pound'. On the other hand, market expansion has been achieved by commodifying or making desirable cultural products or identities which have until now been seen as transgressive, e.g. the marketisation of 'Pride Parades' through the inclusion of corporate sponsors. Neoliberal capitalism therefore sustains itself by consistently negotiating a changing cultural landscape — a process which is evident in the passing of the *Marriage (Same-sex) Act 2014* and the following analysis of the signifier, *gay marriage*.

But while the preceding discussion considers Marxist analyses focused on how the material conditions of capitalism affected sexual identity, the following chapter takes a *post*-Marxist approach (Laclau and Mouffe 2014) by focusing on how sexual identities have been discursively constructed in order to maintain consent for British capitalism in its various forms during the past 60 years. Indeed, the hegemonic project of capitalism has, at various conjunctures, relied on the queer subject in order to build 'chains of equivalence' (Laclau and Mouffe 2014:148) — a process whereby socio-political identifications are constructed that traverse traditional class positions in order to establish who is on the 'inside' or the 'outside' of a particular historical bloc (Gramsci 1971). The queer subject has, thus, been altered — moving from the 'outside' to the 'inside' — as capitalist ideology has also altered. In this way, the discourse of capitalist ideologies has had as much of an impact on the queer subject as have the material conditions of capitalism that rendered such identities possible in the first instance.

6.2 — *Vassall*

The first nodal point in this discursive trajectory is *Vassall* — the surname of British civil servant, John Vassall, who acted as a Soviet spy between 1952-1962. While John Vassall is a complex historical figure whose place in history is both contentious and disputed, the following discussion will argue that the signifier, *Vassall*, functioned as a nodal point around which a series of discourses coalesced in the early to mid-1960s. In the 1957-1967 sub-corpus, *Vassall* ranks as the top keyword and has a frequency of 912 (9,99.33 per million) making it more salient in the data than even the *Wolfenden Report* (2,00.49 per million). This is because, at the height of the Cold War, the idea of *Vassall* not only sparked fears that there were networks of KGB spies who had infiltrated the government, but also that these networks were largely constituted by homosexual[15] men whose alleged perversion made them prone to communist sympathies at best and treason at worst. The unfortunate irony for Vassall was that it appears he was not a communist at all. And while his homosexuality was one of the factors that led him to become a spy for the USSR, this was due to blackmail as opposed to any ideological allegiances. As will be demonstrated, the signifier *Vassall* functioned to reinforce a connection between homosexuality and communism that had been fomenting in public discourse since at least the 1950s. In addition to this, however, it should be noted that the ease with which a civil servant could be blackmailed due to their sexuality may also have been a contributing factor in arguments to decriminalise homosexuality. The following discussion will begin with a brief discussion concerning the perceived connection between homosexuality and

[15] While *homosexual* is not used to refer to gay men in other sections of this thesis, it will be used here in order to reflect the language used in the coverage of the Vassall case.

communism. Subsequently, an analysis of collocates and concordance lines will highlight how Vassall's sexuality was exploited by the press to reinforce hegemonic discourses of masculinity and patriotism.

6.2.1 — The Lavender Scare

In addition to military antagonism and the threat of nuclear warfare, the Cold War was also an ideological battle between the expanding reach and appeal of communism in Eastern Europe, Asia as well as Africa and the post-war capitalist consensus in the west (Chomsky and Herman 1988; Chomsky 2003; Harvey 2007). Unlike contemporary forms of capitalist political economy though, the post-war consensus was effectively a compromise between the Labour movement and Capital (Hall 2011). The middle classes were growing, unions were strong, and for certain populations (those who were perceived as white and as proper citizens) there was a reduction in the kind of inequality that existed prior to World War II (and that has resurfaced again under neoliberalism and the techno-feudalism of the early 21st century) (Varoufakis 2023). While this détente was largely due to the accomplishments of organised labour, it also reflected a strategy by the Establishment. Unlike revisionist histories that argue communist regimes were always doomed to collapse (Fukuyama 1989), in the early half of the 20th century, communism was a viable alternative that, at its zenith, was an organising political ideology for over 1.5 billion people or one third of the world's population. Communism was, therefore, an ideological threat that needed to be mitigated against through an assemblage of concessions to organised labour, the mediation of anti-communist discourse, nuclear proliferation and counter-espionage measures.

In countries such as the UK, USA, and Canada, public defections to the USSR as well as counter-espionage measures revealed that a number of Soviet spies were, in fact, homosexual (Shibusawa 2012; Johnson 2013). In Britain, the most famous of these were a group of spies who would, over time, become known as the Cambridge Five. While the final number of individuals involved was not known until 1990, three of the five had already publicly defected to the USSR at the time Vassall was convicted of espionage. At the time, it was known that Donald Maclean, Guy Burgess, and Harold 'Kim' Philby had met at Cambridge University where they had been recruited by the KGB (Cook *et al.* 2007). Unlike Vassall, however, each man believed strongly that the only way to address rampant inequalities in Britain was through a radical redistribution of wealth from the Establishment to the people. Their commitment to communism suggests that they actively pursued work with the KGB within the UK. Stories like this reinforced a growing fear that homosexuals were somehow predisposed to communist sympathies (Shibusawa 2012; Johnson 2013). This was compounded by the fact that, due to anti-sodomy laws that rendered homosexuality illegal, homosexual men could be easily blackmailed by the Soviets should their sexuality be discovered (Cook *et al.* 2007; Weeks

2016). Exacerbated by existing prejudices against homosexual men, there emerged what would become known as the 'Lavender Scare' on both sides of the Atlantic — the fear that homosexual men posed a unique and significant threat to the supremacy of capitalism in the west. Against this backdrop, the case of John Vassall emerged as a national scandal — a story that reinforced the fears that had been generated by the espionage and defection of Maclean, Burgess, and Philby (Weeks 2016). In the following analysis of language data from *The Times*, however, there appears to be an effort made to discredit Vassall — representing his homosexuality, not as a cause, but as a weakness and defect that ultimately led to his downfall.

6.2.2 — Collocation analysis of *Vassall*

The top 10 collocates for *Vassall* are *Galbraith* (51), *case* (37), *had* (119), *known* (25), *arrest* (16), *was* (170), *flat* (18), *that* (197), *?* (41), and *about* (38). While a close reading of concordance lines revealed multiple and often contradictory representations of Vassall, it will be argued that, through 'signification spirals' (Hall *et al.* 1978:223), *Vassall* was represented as effeminate, ostentatious and greedy — character traits that were implied to be linked to his homosexuality and, ultimately, compelled him toward treason. But while many of the discourses that emerged from the analysis appear to be used to discredit Vassall, there is also a parallel discourse that emerges, namely concerning the extent to which it was known that he was homosexual, whether he was connected to other homosexuals and, if it was the case that there was a network of homosexuals in the civil service, why MI5 did not investigate any possible connections to the KGB. The following will be discussed below.

Effeminacy, greed, homosexuality, espionage and treason are linked through what Hall *et al.* (1978) has described as 'signification spirals' — a process of representation that amplifies a particular form of deviancy through the convergence, or linking together, of multiple social threats. This process implicitly or explicitly draws parallels between a multiplicity of social problems until they reach a 'threshold' that legitimises a response (Hall *et al.* 1978). In the case of Vassall, it will be argued that *The Times* represents the socially unacceptable characteristics of effeminacy, ostentatiousness and greed in such a way that they converge with homosexuality and, ultimately, espionage. Taking each of these characteristics separately helps to demonstrate how the spiral manifested.

The collocate *was* includes many concordance lines describing how Vassall *was* perceived by those who knew him. Table 6.1 shows how *The Times* was particularly interested in reporting on the fact that Vassall was known amongst his colleagues as "Auntie". While "auntie" could be used as a term of endearment within certain social circles, its use here is clearly to emphasise the negative representation of Vassall as an effeminate man. His alleged effeminacy is a recurring and prevalent

focus in how Vassall is represented. For instance, in addition to 24 other concordance lines mentioning the nickname “Auntie”, Vassall is also described as ‘strutting around Moscow like a dressed-up doll’ (*The Times* 1963), ‘being as effeminate as a schoolboy’ (*The Times* 1963) and having been ‘known to have bought women's clothes in the West End’ (*The Times* 1963). *The Times* recounts how colleagues described him as a ‘rather pansy little man’ (*The Times* 1963), ‘used the word “Miss” in connexion (*sic*) with his effeminate appearance’ (*The Times* 1963) and how, according to one witness at his trial, ‘his handicap of an irritating, effeminate personality’ was based on his ‘extravagance of dress…upon meeting Vassall at the door dressed to go out skating and wearing “a sort of woollen bonnet and an excessively long scarf”’ (*The Times* 1963). None of these details would appear to be significant to an espionage trial, unless the purpose of such information was to signal connections between effeminacy (and thus homosexuality) with espionage and treason.

1. Vassall was known as "Auntie" in the office
2. Vassall was a known homosexual and he was known to his colleagues as "Auntie ".
3. Mr. Kirby said that Mr. Mulholland, of the Daily Mail, told him that Vassall was called "Auntie" by his colleagues
4. One of the things Mr. Mulholland has refused to reveal to the tribunal is who told him that Vassall was known as "Auntie".
5. It is said that it was you who provided the information that Vassall was known as "Auntie" in the Admiralty.
6. The first certificate referred to a statement that Vassall was known as Auntie in the office and that he was recognized by his colleagues as a homosexual.

Table 6.1 — Collocations between *Vassall was* and *auntie*

In addition to the effeminisation of Vassall, *The Times* also focussed intently on his spending and source of money — both of which were used to highlight Vassall’s greed and thirst for luxury and privilege. For instance, while the collocate *flat* is used 18 times to discuss both ‘affectionate’ letters from other men found in his flat as well as whether his superior, Sir Thomas Galbraith, had been a visitor in his home, a further analysis of concordance lines concerning Vassall’s flat demonstrates how *The Times* used signifiers such as his ‘Dolphin Square Flat’ in order to demonstrate his extravagance. A development of luxury flats in Pimlico near Chelsea in London, Dolphin Square was expensive and, as is pointed out in the examples below, well beyond the means of an Admiralty Clerk such as Vassall. While *The Times* simultaneously argued that this type of opulence should have raised his colleagues’ suspicions, this focus on luxury was also used to represent Vassall as having insatiable tastes — a greed befitting an effeminate man who would risk exposure just to satiate ‘his lust’ (*The*

Times 1962) for luxury. A close reading of the concordance lines shows that this 'greed' was represented by frequent references to his 'immaculate and expensive suiting' (*The Times* 1963), 'extensive wardrobe of very expensive suits' (*The Times* 1963), an 'impression of affluence' (*The Times* 1963), as well as descriptions from witnesses concerning his 'ostentatious life' (*The Times* 1963) which was evidenced by his 'Dolphin Square flat, his holidays and his extensive wardrobe'(*The Times* 1963). Such holidays included Egypt, Greece and the USA, all of which gave the impression to one acquaintance that 'Vassall was at least a £3,000 a year undersecretary at the Admiralty, because he gave such an impression of affluence' (*The Times* 1963). Signifiers such as expensive suits and lavish holidays, when read together with the descriptions of a man 'strutting around Moscow like a dressed-up doll' (*The Times* 1963) create a signification spiral that links together a chain of signifiers such as effeminacy, greed, and luxury that all functions to discredit Vassall. Indeed, even in his final sentencing, the judge told him that: 'I take the view that one of the compelling reasons for what you did was pure selfish greed' (*The Times* 1962). This is crucial because, while the link between homosexuality and communism remained intact, the Establishment — with the assistance of *The Times* — attempted to break the link between homosexuality and an *ideological* commitment to communism as a legitimate socio-political alternative. Vassall was represented as a greedy, effeminate man whose defects were used to legitimise support for capitalism and the Establishment while, at the same time, further caricaturing homosexual men in the press, such that they were not only pitied, but reviled.

1. Suspicion might have been aroused a least three years ago, when he moved into his Dolphin Square flat.
2. It was said he lived above his income in Dolphin Square.
3. Top men at the Admiralty did not notice that their £13 10 s. a week clerk was renting a flat costing £10 a week
4. Vassall's expensive Dolphin Square flat.
5. It is said that you were living in Dolphin Square at the rate of £3,000 per annum.

Table 6.2 — *Dolphin Square* as a signifier for Vassall's greed and opulence

While representations of Vassall as an opportunist as opposed to an *ideologically* committed communist went some way to assuaging the 'Lavender Scare' in the UK, it also left many questions unanswered, namely that, if Vassall was so obviously a homosexual - and, by virtue of this, likely to be blackmailed into treason or ideologically committed to the USSR - then how was it that he was able to work as a civil servant 'undetected' (*The Times* 1962) for so long? Such concerns are born out in the following analysis of how *The Times* represented Vassall's professional and personal relationships as well as whether individuals had known he was a homosexual or indeed a potential

spy.

The most significant collocate of *Vassall* is *Galbraith* — referring to the Civil Lord of the Admiralty who had been Vassall's superior at the time of his arrest. It should also be noted that, *Galbraith* is not only the most significant collocate of *Vassall*, but also the second most significant key term in the 1957-1967 corpus with a frequency of 411 (4,503.6 per 100,000). This suggests that, in addition to the Wolfenden Report or debates around Homosexual Law Reform, it was the relationship between these two men that preoccupied *The Times* during the early 1960s. As a collocate of *Vassall*, the majority of the concordance lines are excerpts from coverage of *The Radcliffe Report* — an investigation issued by the Macmillan government in order to ascertain whether Vassall had worked alone and whether Galbraith (as well as others in the civil service) had suspected that Vassall was homosexual and thus a potential security threat (Dunton 2019). It is important to note that *The Radcliffe Report* was, in many ways, an opportunity to rebuke the impression generated by the media that there was a network of homosexual KGB spies who had infiltrated the security services (Dunton 2019). Tabloids such as *The Daily Sketch* had run several stories about the alleged homosexual relationship between Vassall and Galbraith under headlines such as, 'My dearest Vassall', claiming that 'affectionate letters' had been exchanged between them after having spent holidays together in Galbraith's Scotland manor. While the goal of *The Radcliffe Report* was, therefore, ostensibly to investigate such claims, its ultimate goal was to allay fears that communist homosexuals could have so easily infiltrated the government — a prospect that Prime Minister Harold Macmillan feared would bring down the government (Dunton 2019).

The investigation which led to *The Radcliffe Report* was covered extensively by *The Times* with the cumulative outcome of the investigation being that the tabloids and their sources had misrepresented the relationship between Vassall and Galbraith. While a crime reporter claimed he 'had been told by someone at Scotland Yard or in Admiralty security, that the man the press should keep their eye on was not Vassall but Mr.Galbraith' (*The Times* 1963), a close reading of the concordance lines shows that witnesses claimed there was never enough evidence to support the claims against Galbraith and that the story had simply been fodder for the tabloids. Rather, with respected witnesses from the British Establishment claiming that they 'had no information whatsoever to activate…that there might be a homosexual relationship between Mr.Galbraith and Vassall' and that 'Mr. Galbraith's moral conduct was of the very highest standard' (*The Times* 1965) the Civil Lord was ultimately exonerated. But, while the exoneration of Galbraith appeared to have been rather straightforward, the fourth most significant collocate of *Vassall* in the data was *known* — a collocate that appeared most frequently in statements pertaining to whether or not Vassall was 'a known homosexual' or indeed a 'known pervert' (Table 6.3). In other words, even if Galbraith had not been in a relationship with Vassall, the Admiralty's inability to 'detect' (*The Times* 1963) a homosexual amongst its ranks was still a

discursive current that ran through much of the coverage of the Vassall affair. Indeed, several of the concordance lines in Table 6.3 even suggest that there were those who knew about Vassall's sexuality and work with the KGB since his time stationed in Moscow in the early 1950s. Even as *The Times* and *The Radcliffe Report* attempted to sever the ideological link between Communism and homosexuality, it was still the case that, if his colleagues knew that he was a homosexual, then they must also have known that he was a prime candidate to be compromised into espionage due to the illegality of homosexuality in both the UK and the USSR.

In the end, a great deal of effort was made to discredit Vassall and the damage that was done through his work for the KGB. *The Times* represented his alleged greed, opulence, effeminacy and homosexuality as a chain of signifiers that indexed his degeneracy — a 'signification spiral' of defects that violated the national values of both masculinity and patriotism. In 1962, upon his conviction for espionage, it was even suggested that he was not a particularly effective spy. It was argued that he 'collected information haphazardly and passed it on the same way' and that many of the documents he collected would have 'incurred little or no risk' (*The Times* 1963). It has even been suggested that Macmillan had not wanted him prosecuted as the *idea* of a KGB spy was far more dangerous to Britain's morale and reputation than the *actual* espionage itself (Dunton 2019). But while the discursive efforts to discredit Vassall were certainly effective as a character assassination, they did little to break the chain of signification that linked homosexuality to communism. Rather, the signifier of the homosexual as a 'security threat' was likely to have been strengthened by the Vassall case, especially as Cold War tensions heightened in the 1960s. The media frenzy surrounding Vassall coincided with the Cuban Missile Crisis and the ramping up of the 'Space Race' — a simultaneity that did little to assuage fears that there was a clear and indisputable link between homosexuality, communism, espionage and treason. One legacy of this moral panic was a restriction on foreign assignments for gay civil servants up until 1991 when it was finally overturned by John Major (Dunton 2019). This was, perhaps, not coincidentally after the disintegration of the USSR. In the next section, the signifier *GLC* will highlight how, through the process of discursive sedimentation, a connection between the radical left and queer Britons continued to be maintained albeit for different political reasons and in a significantly different political climate.

1. He agreed that the editorial comment contained a reference to Vassall being a known pervert.
2. Mr. Kirby said he took responsibility for the information that Vassall was a known pervert.
3. He had contributed a reference to Vassall being a known homosexual.

4. The first concerned the allegation that Vassall was a known homosexual.
5. Mr. Waller was then asked if there was any newspaper article he particularly had in mind in repeating the allegation that Vassall was known as a homosexual.
6. Vassall was known to British diplomats in Moscow as a homosexual.
7. Were you told any person who could be described as a British diplomat to whom it was known that Vassall was a homosexual.
8. I was asked to make inquiries to establish whether Vassall was a known homosexual, whether he kept homosexual company or was an effeminate man, and whether it was obvious that he was living beyond his means, and anything about his flat.
9. I understood that what the tribunal wanted to know was whether Vassall was known as a homosexual in his office.
10. The first certificate referred to a statement that Vassall was known as Auntie in the office and that he was recognized by his colleagues as a homosexual.
11. It is said that it was you who provided the information that Vassall was known as "Auntie" in the Admiralty
12. One of the things Mr. Mulholland has refused to reveal to the tribunal is who told him that Vassall was known as "Auntie".
13. He was told that Vassall was known to have bought women's clothes in the West End
14. "I found a very strong feeling which I thought it my duty to effect in the paper that in fact Vassall's behaviour was known in Moscow, that his contacts with the Russians were known.
15. I formed the very strong impression that it was felt by responsible members that a good deal about Vassall was known in Moscow.

Table 6.3 — Collocations of *known* that suggest Vassall was neither heterosexual, masculine, or patriotic and was, therefore, a threat that should have been 'detected' sooner.

6.3 — *GLC*

The case of John Vassall had arguably strengthened the link between communism and homosexuality — a chain of signification which cast a long shadow across the proceeding decades. It will therefore be argued that, between 1979-1990, this association was maintained in the language of *The Times.* Through a process of discursive 'sedimentation' (Norval 2000), queer people were represented as key actors within and benefactors of the 'hard left' and that, while no longer associated with a foreign communist state, they continued to be seen as a threat to the ostensibly heterosexual majority as well as the British Establishment. This is evident in keywords and KTs such as *GLC* (Greater London Council), *loony left*, and *hard left* which were not just among the most significant, but were also

frequently used when representing lesbian and gay politics[16] during the 1980s. As the most frequent of the three, it will be argued that *GLC* (298 or 95.66 per million) functioned as a nodal point or privileged signifier around which many of these discourses were structured. Specifically, through a close reading of concordance lines, it will be demonstrated how lesbian and gay politics (and people) were, through 'signification spirals' (Hall *et al.* 1978), associated with radical socialism, feminism, anti-racism and even the IRA.

6.3.1 — Background on The Greater London Council

The Greater London Council (GLC) was a local government administrative body which had existed from 1965 until its abolition by Thatcher's government in 1986 (Jacobs 1986). At the time, the GLC had been run by Labour's Ken Livingstone since 1981. Dubbed 'Red Ken' by the popular press (as well as by many commentators in *The Times*), Livingstone introduced a new left movement in London's local government whose socialist policies of redistribution were effectively wed with the liberation struggles of feminism, anti-racism, and lesbian and gay liberation (Jacobs 1986). In practice, this meant Livingstone's GLC not only legislated for the expansion of universal services and job creation in the poorest of London's constituencies (by 1984 the unemployed population had reached 4 million), but also provided significant funding for third sector organisations specifically aimed at redressing issues of representation, participation and access for Black, Asian and other minority ethnic populations; women from all backgrounds; disabled people; as well as the lesbian and gay population who, *inter alia*, received £750,000 for the *Lesbian and Gay Community Centre* (Gilroy 1987; Hall 1994; Robinson 2008). Such a radical approach to local government was a deliberate and necessary countermovement to Thatcher's economic policies which had led to the decimation of the welfare state, rising unemployment, and an effective end to collective bargaining (Mouffe 2018). Thatcher's neoliberal onslaught which effectively brought an end to the post-war compromise between Labour and Capital was predicated on the idea that Britain should be 'liberat(ed) from the oppressive power of the state' (Mouffe 2018:30); that individual freedom should be valued over and above the needs of society; and that democracy and equality were secondary to individual liberty, economic liberty and private property (Hall 2011). While the material effects of Thatcher's neoliberal shocks had dire material consequences, the 'deep symbiosis' between Thatcher and much of the British press meant that these economic shocks were framed as necessary sacrifices that would, in the future, return the United Kingdom to an imaginary past glory (Hall 1987b:33). In this way,

[16] The phrase 'lesbian and gay' will be used for the duration of this section in order to reflect the language used in the coverage of the GLC.

Thatcherism, more than any political project that had come before, was one of images and language (Hall 1987b; Hall 2011; Mouffe 2018). Through 'chains of equivalence' (Laclau and Mouffe 2014), Thatcher was able to create a new social bloc — including sections of the working class — who were, in many ways, willing to vote against their own material interests on the basis of ideology that was largely disseminated through the language of the press, including *The Times.* But the hegemony of Thatcher's project — 'to transform the state in order to restructure society' (Hall 1987a:17) — did not happen quickly and organisations like the GLC posed a legitimate threat to Thatcher's programme. Indeed, while the GLC may be remembered by many as a project of the 'loony left', Hall (1994:172) argued that, by cutting across traditional class lines and including an array of social movements, the GLC was able to create an alternative social bloc that, at the time, seemed like the only 'political strategy on the left capable of matching, in depth, complexity and novelty, the radical thrust of Thatcherism's project at the national level'. It was perhaps for this reason that *The Times*, a broadsheet which vehemently supported Thatcherism, sought to discredit the GLC through discursive strategies that echo those used against Vassall in the 1960s.

6.3.2 — Concordance analysis

One of the key tenets of neoliberalism is a belief in so-called 'free markets' and the privatisation of goods and services which may, during the post-war consensus, have been provided by the state (Harvey 2007). Anathema to this belief system was, therefore, the agenda of the GLC which still believed in public spending and the state's role in supporting its citizens through the use of redistributive taxation (Jacobs 1986). In order to discredit the GLC, *The Times* constructed a narrative whereby services paid for 'on the rates' (i.e. by the taxpayer) were represented as an 'abuse of the London public' (*The Times* 1983). This was primarily accomplished by focusing on extremely high figures (e.g. '£1.1 billion' for the Inner London Education Authority [*The Times* 1983]), a significant increase in spending (e.g. 'GLC budget doubles under Labour' [*The Times* 1983]) and, crucially, by focusing on what it will cost London 'ratepayers' but *not* on how they will benefit. For example, a reduction and freeze on fees for *London Transport* required a 5% tax increase, but reduced the cost of public transportation by 32% (Jacobs 1986) — an outcome that was glossed over by *The Times.* In order then to distract from potentially popular spending initiatives, it appears that *The Times* focused instead on GLC spending specifically connected to so-called 'single issue' groups, e.g. the funding of the *London Lesbian and Gay Centre*, whose mandates were represented as excessive at best and depraved at worst.

It is through the discursive strategy to delegitimise the socialist programmes of the GLC that terms such as 'loony left' emerged during the 1980s (Hall 1988). Indeed, the spectre of the 'hard' or 'loony' left was, in many ways, specifically connected to the initiatives of the GLC and was based on the

notion that supporting lesbians and gays, feminists and ethnic minorities was not in the public interest — a discursive strategy that necessarily implied such groups were not deserving members of the public and that supporting them meant that crucial funds were being diverted from elsewhere. For instance, by emphasising how 'more than £5 million' has been spent on supporting groups such as the 'Gay Arts Sub-Group Festival; Babies against the Bomb; Lesbian Line Campaign against Racist Laws; Fantasy Factory Video Ltd; Chile Democratico, GB; Black Media Workers Association; Gay London Police Monitoring Group and the Karl Marx centenary' (*The Times* 1983), *The Times* was creating an antagonism between the average 'ratepayer' versus a class of minorities who are represented as getting more than their fair share. This was not only accomplished by highlighting the sums of money spent, but also by mocking the inclusion of minority groups such as lesbian and gay people in the redistributive agenda of the GLC. For example, a writer at *The Times* ridiculed the GLC in the following fictional account of their 'tax and spend' policies:

> You are no doubt aware that the GLC has decided to cease subsidizing such centres as Covent Garden and the National Theatre, since they put on entertainment which is biased, elitist, imperialist-fascist and generally beyond the comprehension of the working class, and give the money instead to such centres of artistic excellence as Single-Parent Black Lesbians Against Killer Asbestos (*The Times* 1982).

Several interesting discursive strategies are being deployed here. First, by referencing an institution like the National Theatre, the author is signalling to the readership that their cultural artefacts could be under attack by the GLC. Secondly, the author attempts to break a traditional allegiance between the working-class and the Labour Party by insinuating that the 'loony left' faction in control of Labour at the GLC are not only misspending public funds, but that they also think the working-class cannot appreciate theatre or art. And finally, by mocking the 'artistic excellence' of a fictional 'Single-Parent Black Lesbians Against Killer Asbestos', the author again uses the kind of 'signification spiral' (Hall *et al.* 1978) that had been effectively deployed by authors at *The Times* to discredit much of the work of the GLC (echoing the attacks on Vassall's character during the 1960s). In other words, by associating single-parents, Black women, and lesbians together, the author is deliberately mocking what they perceive as excessive diversity while also signalling that a threshold has been crossed whereby minorities have become an economic threat to hard-working taxpayers who, *The Times* assumes, are necessarily white, cisgender, and heterosexual. Such 'signification spirals' therefore also indexed an overt moral angle whereby single Black mothers and lesbians are represented as Other and therefore undeserving. This is because, while Thatcher's transformation of the country had initially been focused on the economic and political, she had also promised to implement 'a revival of Victorian moral values' (Weeks 2016:237), i.e. a robust monetarist capitalism that was contingent upon a return to traditional 'family values' and a rejection of the socialism and sexual and ethnic

diversity championed by groups like the GLC. Table 6.4 shows how the connection between socialism and lesbian and gay rights was both discursively strengthened in the language of *The Times* while also being attacked as 'ratepayers saw their money being used for openly immoral purposes' (*The Times* 1982)

1. Mr Tim Brinton, a Conservative backbencher, changed the subject to how disgraceful it was for the GLC to give taxpayers, money to such bodies as the English Collective of Prostitutes, Lesbian Line, and the Teenage Gay Rights Group.
2. The Labour-controlled Greater London Council (GLC) is considering a plan to establish, at the ratepayers' expense, a community centre for the capital's homosexuals. A committee will be asked tomorrow to allot £300,000 to buy a building for the "London Lesbian and Gay Centre".
3. The other GLC is sometimes less visible, but often much more controversial. It spends large sums on "planning", shuffles public money from ratepayers to the London Lesbian and Gay Centre, and meets on the third Tuesday of the month in a Parliament-sized debating chamber to bicker and swop rhetoric between the parties in front of half a dozen yawning members of the public.
4. That is why he objects to the GLC's funding of lesbians and the bogus proletarian arts. It not only wastes public money but treats the freakish as normal, and threatens the distinction between the two.
5. Costly list of obscure GLC groups amazes Tories…The advertisements named 168 organizations which the GLC says are "just some of the organizations which may disappear if the council is abolished next year. About one-third of the organizations sponsor ethnic minority activities, homosexual support groups, and women's campaigns and groups
6. The Greater London Council is believed to be planning to transfer £70 million in payments to voluntary organizations, ranging from adventure playgrounds to gay and lesbian groups, as forward funding before abolition on March 31.
7. The latest hearty welcome being preferred by the GLC is to sadomasochists. Valerie Wise, chair of the women's committee, has decided that the boys in black leather should be allowed to use the council's Lesbian and Gay Centre - despite the protests of a group called Lesbians in Education.
8. Thus an equal opportunity officer for the GLC earlier this year was wanted for "career development and counselling," and specifically for developing "career paths" for women, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and gay (which in this context I have to tell readers does not mean carefree) men" (salary: £l4,781-L16,545.)

9. It was also hinted that the series would touch upon the possibility that Christ was a homosexual, which would suggest that those who devised the programmes suffered from a serious lack of imagination, for ordinary homosexuals are today ten a penny; had they insisted that Jesus was a Single-Parent Black Lesbian Against the Bomb they would almost certainly have been eligible for a grant from the GLC.
10. Apart from proposing a long list of services for gays, the manifesto promises a £150.000 Irish cultural centre, disturbingly reminiscent of a similar white elephant in Brent which cost the GLC vast sums of money.

Table 6.4 — Examples of how *The Times* represented GLC spending associated with the lesbian and gay population as wasteful and immoral

As in the examples which simply focused on the exorbitant spending of socialists, the preceding examples focus on *where* the money is being spent and for which 'immoral' purposes. For instance, funding allocated for organisations such as the English Collective of Prostitutes, Lesbian Line, and the Teenage Gay Rights Group is described as 'disgraceful' (line 1) while the notion that public money might be spent on lesbian organisations at all is described as treating 'the freakish as normal' — a practice that risks obscuring the 'distinction between the two' (line 4). There is even an insinuation that the method by which funding is being allocated is somehow nefarious. It is asserted that the GLC '*shuffles* public money from ratepayers to the London Lesbian and Gay Centre' (emphasis added) as though there were no official procedures but merely backroom deals that diverted public money to lesbians and gays, anti-racists and feminists (line 3). Indeed, of all of the community projects that could have been named explicitly, it is the Lesbian and Gay Community Centre that received the most significant amount of coverage (lines 2, 3 and 7). This is perhaps not only because £750,000 was allocated by the 'Labour-controlled Greater London Council (GLC)…to establish, at the ratepayers' expense, a community centre for the capital's homosexuals' (*The Times* 1983) but also because it became a signifier itself for how the GLC, under Livingstone had, according to *The Times*, lost the support of the working class. In 1985, a writer from *The Times* stated that, 'there may be enough terrorists, lesbians and other queer people in the GLC Labour parties to support Mr Livingstone's antics, but there is no support in the ranks of ordinary trade unionists' (*The Times* 1985). Not only then were lesbians and other queer people not considered 'ordinary', but it was also assumed that they could not also be involved in the trade union movement — an assumption that could not have been further from the truth (Robinson 2008). But perhaps most striking in this sentence is the inclusion of 'terrorists' in the list of those who supported Livingstone and the GLC.

Livingstone had long been represented as a 'red dictator' (*The Times* 1984) and 'overlord' (*The Times* 1983) of his 'personal socialist fiefdom' (*The Times* 1983), but he also came to be represented as a terrorist

sympathiser because of a proposed visit by Sinn Féin to meet with the GLC and various members of the Labour left (*The Times* 1982). While no explicit political links could be drawn between London's lesbian and gay organisations and the IRA, this did not stop *The Times* from linking them together through chains of signification (Laclau and Mouffe 2014). For instance, from as early as 1981, *The Times* had connected support for Irish Republicanism with support for lesbian and gay rights by representing them both as equally extreme and bound up in the socialist principles of the GLC. And, in 1981, *The Times* had reported that, 'fresh from espousing support for the H-block protest in Ulster, Mr Kenneth Livingstone, leader of the Greater London Council, moved to new pastures yesterday, the equally controversial area of rights for homosexuals' (*The Times* 1981). In this case, the so-called 'extremism' of Livingstone's politics was represented through a series of signifiers which included support for Bobby Sands and the Irish Republican hunger strike with the GLC's commitment to including lesbian and gay rights as a key component of their political platform. The phrase 'new pastures' even suggests that 'homosexual rights' are a fresh and yet logical progression from support for Sinn Féin. From this moment until its abolition, *The Times* would continue to draw loose associations between the two political projects as in the following argument for abolishing the GLC wherein it was argued that, in addition to its socialist spending programmes, 'the case for abolition does not solely rest on the lunatic antics of the Labour GLC in its desire to dish out lavish subsidies to organizations ranging from gay rights to supporters of the IRA bombers' (*The Times* 1983). Through the discursive association of gay rights and support for the IRA, it can therefore be argued that there was an intentional implication that queer people were a national security threat which, in many ways, echoed the 'Lavender Scare' of the 1950s and 1960s. In fact, in addition to the IRA, resistance to nuclear proliferation was also associated with the GLC and its queer members. In this way, the signifier *GLC* reignited some of the Cold War anxieties produced by the signifier *Vassall*. But whereas it was Vassall's actions and not his ideological motives that connected him to the Soviets, it was the GLC's ideological opposition to nuclear war that allowed *The Times* to represent them as unpatriotic.

In an era where the British Army was increasing its supply of nuclear weapons, the 'loony left', represented here by the GLC, was increasingly vocal in its opposition to nuclear proliferation (Robinson 2008). In fact, opposition to 'the bomb' even became a trope used to caricaturise the left. In a television review that mocked the 'the possibility that Christ was a homosexual', it was argued that, in fact, the writers lacked imagination as 'ordinary homosexuals are today ten a penny'. The writer instead quips that 'had they insisted that Jesus was a Single-Parent Black Lesbian Against the Bomb they would almost certainly have been eligible for a grant from the GLC' (*The Times* 1983). Again, the trope of the single-parent Black lesbian is used as a spiral of signification to mock the excesses of the GLC, but this time, she is not against 'killer asbestos' but rather 'the bomb'. Other references to 'Babies against the Bomb' occur more than once in the data while this final excerpt demonstrates the increasingly hyperbolic way in which support for nuclear disarmament by the GLC and its lesbian and gay members was dubiously represented as connected to support for the IRA. In

an article which imagines the GLC meeting with Gerry Adams, Martin McGuiness and Danny Morrison, the author quotes Livingstone's fictional final call to arms:

> "Ban the Bomb! RUC Out, Out, Out! IRA In, In, In! All Power to the Guardian Women's Page Against Sexism, Racism, Ageism, Heightism and Baldism!" (*The Times* 1982)

Not only does this example demonstrate how the extreme signification spirals deployed by *The Times* — connecting nuclear disarmament, the IRA, the Guardian, feminism, anti-racism and ageism as well as other imaginary '-isms' — illustrate how they intended to discredit the popular socialist policies of the GLC, but it also demonstrates a significant shift in register. From a contemporary perspective, the coverage of Vassall in *The Times* appears significantly more measured than the frankly unhinged coverage of the GLC during the 1980s. This could indicate an overall shift in the register of *The Times* as it tried to compete with the tabloid press. Equally, it could also indicate the extent to which writers at *The Times* would go to discredit socialist policies by using homophobic, racist and misogynist tropes. In the next section, there is again a marked difference. Whereas fears of the homosexual spy in the 1960s and disdain for the 'loony left' liberation politics of lesbians and gays in the 1980s associated queer people with both foreign communist 'threats' and 'hard left' politics in the UK, the 2000s sees a major shift in how some queer people — namely, cisgender gays and lesbians — are perceived in relation to the neoliberal state. Through an analysis of the signifier, *gay marriage,* it will be demonstrated how a new politics of assimilation transformed the 'LGBT community' into a signifier for how the values of neoliberalism (e.g. individual freedom, economic liberty, and even private property) triumphed over a politics of redistribution and collective liberation.

6.4 — *Gay marriage*

In this final section, the signifier *gay marriage* (2,710 or 179.62 per million) acts as a nodal point which binds together a series of discourses that reveal how *The Times* represented queer politics as having pivoted away from the radical redistributive and coalition-building politics of the 1980s, toward an 'LGBT rights' movement concerned primarily with individual civil liberties. This neoliberalisation of 'LGBT politics' becomes increasingly salient throughout the fourteen years between 2003-2017, with collocates and concordance lines demonstrating how the so-called 'LGBT community' is represented as being primarily invested in the legalisation of same-sex marriage — a goal which could be argued is inherently conservative as it seeks to uphold the institution of marriage rather than advocating for the same legal recognition for other types of relationships that may not

match heteronormative coupling practices already privileged by the state. This shift toward a politics based on domesticity and inclusion was not only represented as central to LGBT politics in the early 2000s-2010s, but — in stark contrast to the preceding analyses — was welcomed by the Conservative Party itself, with the *Marriage (Same-Sex Couples) Act 2013* being passed under the Tory leader, David Cameron. In the proceeding analysis, it will be argued, however, that this was not indicative of the Tory party becoming more progressive. Rather, it will be argued that *gay marriage* has come to act as a signifier for and measure of the success of neoliberal capitalism. Cameron's advocacy for gay marriage was, therefore, not about transforming the *status quo* established by Thatcher in the 1980s, but instead was about extending its influence through the folding in of certain types of gay men and lesbians who would contribute to and benefit from the neoliberal political-economic settlement. As he famously stated at the Tory Party Conference in 2011: 'I don't support gay marriage *despite* being a Conservative…I support gay marriage *because* I'm a Conservative' (emphasis added) (*The Times* 2013).

6.4.1 — Concordance analysis

The top 5 collocates for *gay marriage* included *legalise* (82), *abortion* (100), *ban* (84), *opposed* (58) and *opposition* (60). It should be noted that many of the other top collocates also included terms referencing debate such as, but not limited to, *support, against, favour, opponents,* and, unsurprisingly, *debate.* Before conducting a close reading of the concordance lines, this might have suggested that the majority of coverage pertaining to *gay marriage* was focused on who supported or opposed the passing of the *Marriage (Same-Sex Couples) Act 2013* (see Bachmann 2011; Love and Baker 2015). But, while this is partially true, a much more complex picture arises upon a closer analysis of the context in which these terms were used. Rather, the following analysis shows that the discourses associated with the signifier *gay marriage* provide crucial insight into how domestic attitudes towards gay marriage shifted over time, as well as how *The Times* covered gay marriage in other countries and regions around the world.

The most common collocates of *gay marriage* within the British context were *legalise, opposed,* and *opposition* while *ban* and *abortion* tended to be used solely in reference to debates surrounding same-sex marriage in other countries. For instance, up until 2013, 80% of the uses of *abortion* referenced the US and usually occurred in relation to elections. *Gay marriage* and *abortion* were frequently equated with other issues which were considered divisive such as gun rights, stem cell research, and healthcare reform. In fact, there were only three occurrences where *gay marriage* collocated with *abortion* in the UK context and a look at the concordance lines showed that each example was in regards to the views of Conservative MP, Maria Hutchings, who disagreed with David Cameron on "gay marriage, abortion and the EU" (*The Times* 2013). The fact that Hutchings' dissent was

considered newsworthy is notable because, at the time, the official position of the Tory Front Bench was to support same-sex marriage, resulting in Hutchings' views being represented as a fringe position. Not only was abortion legal, but same-sex marriage would become legal in a matter of months and membership in the EU had not yet become the dividing issue that it would in the coming years. The fact that *opposition* to gay marriage was newsworthy rather than *support* for gay marriage signals a significant shift in the political coverage of *The Times.* Like *abortion*, *ban* also occurred most frequently when discussing the US where constitutional amendments were being debated that would effectively enforce a *ban* on same-sex marriage in all states — an idea that was never mainstream within the UK. On the contrary, while there was certainly a significant opposition to same-sex marriage in the years leading up to the *Marriage (Same-Sex Couples) Act 2013*, there was a key difference between debates in the US and the UK. Whereas the dividing lines in American politics were drawn between liberal (Democrat) and conservative (Republican), the dividing lines in UK politics tended to be primarily drawn between the Conservative front bench and the more right-wing Conservative backbench.

This divide is born out in an analysis of the concordance lines for *legalise, opposed,* and *opposition.* In the years leading up to 2013, approximately half of the examples of the verb *legalise* refer to David Cameron's official position on same-sex marriage. Of these, *The Times* represents positions that are both in favour of and opposed to legalisation. For instance, the Tory party chair, Grant Shapps, was reported as saying that 'it was right to put controversial plans to legalise gay marriage to a Commons vote because it was possible that a majority of MPs supported them' (*The Times* 2012). In addition to sympathetic reporting on Cameron's conference speech (mentioned in the introduction to this section), *The Times* also ran stories with headlines such as 'Gay rights for the gay right: In the dark days of the Eighties and Section 28, who would have believed a Tory PM would plan to legalise gay marriage' (*The Times* 2011). For a broadsheet that vehemently supported Thatcher during the 1980s and ran stories that facilitated support for Section 28, it is striking that this same publication would now refer to these times as 'dark days'. Up until the passing of the Act, however, *The Times* also provided the perspective of those who opposed legalisation. According to their reporting, backbench Tory MPs remained resolute in their opposition to same-sex marriage which was, in part, motivated by opposition from 'rural voters' and 'traditional supporters' (*The Times* 2012) of the Conservative party. There were reports of mass defections of Conservative Party members to the UK Independence Party (UKIP) and, in the end, Cameron was unable to secure majority support from within his own party[17]. At the second reading of the Bill, it was reported that 'Tory MPs opposed to gay marriage look likely to leave David Cameron in a minority within his own parliamentary party' (*The Times* 2013) while terms like 'revolt' and 'rebellion' were used to describe the dissent. In addition to the Tory backbench, members of the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches were also among the most

vocal opponents. This is most evident in the concordance analyses of *opposed* and *opposition.*

In the years leading up to 2013, there is a substantial amount of space dedicated to representing the views of the Church as well as focusing on specific clergy. Members of both the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches were described as both 'passionately opposed to the gay marriage legislation' (*The Times* 2013), and 'resolutely opposed to gay marriage' (*The Times* 2012). Similarly, as it became inevitable that Cameron's Bill would pass with support from Labour, The Scottish National Party and the Liberal Democrats, *The Times* (2013) wrote that the 'the Catholic Church in England and Wales stepped up its opposition to gay marriage' and that, by redefining the institution of marriage, the government 'risked causing the biggest rupture between Church and State in 500 years.' In addition to the Church as an institution, there was also a focus on specific members of the Christian Establishment who continued to express their apprehension over same-sex marriage. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, was regularly pointed to as a consistent opponent of gay marriage as well as the Archbishop of York, John Sentamu, who — while having both studied and become ordained in the UK — was frequently referred to as 'Ugandan-born', as having 'fled Uganda', or as simply 'Ugandan'. This is significant because the birthplaces of other clergy were rarely mentioned. And while this may have been because the majority of Bishops in the UK were born in the UK, clergy members such as Michael Nazir-Ali who was born, ordained and practiced in Pakistan before becoming the Bishop of Rochester, was rarely referred to as Pakistani. It can therefore be argued that, by pointing out that Sentamu was originally from Uganda, *The Times* appears to be drawing a causal or even explanatory link between his Africanness and his opposition to same-sex marriage — a conflation of geography and values that is born out more explicitly in the years after 2013.

Between 2014-2017, the collocates *legalise, opposed, opposition, ban* and *abortion* begin to align in their usage such that the majority of the articles that feature these terms tend to be referring to countries and regions outside of the UK. *Abortion* and *ban* continue to be used almost exclusively when discussing US politics while *legalise, opposed,* and *opposition* provide insight into how *The Times* frames attitudes to same-sex marriage in other countries. For instance, coverage of Ireland's

[17] When the Bill received its Third Reading in the House of Commons, 118 Conservative MPs voted for it, with 127 against. Despite this, the Bill passed, due to an additional 194 Labour MPs and 48 MPs from other parties also voting for it.

decision to legalise same-sex marriage through popular vote was undeniably positive. *The Times* described how 'the "Yes vote" will prevail' — a term with a distinctly positive prosody[18] — while Ireland, as a nation, was described as having 'cast off its conservative past' and as celebrating 'the example they had set for the world' (*The Times* 2015). In contrast, the coverage regarding the Anglican schism over same-sex marriage in the Church's different provinces took a decidedly different tone, further indicating how far the editorial position of *The Times* has shifted. In an opinion piece from 2016 entitled 'On gay marriage, Justin Welby misreads history, morality and his job description', the author argues that, even if North American and African bishops 'air diametrically opposed views on gay marriage', there is 'only one side the Church of England should be on' (*The Times* 2016). By 2016, *opposition* to same-sex marriage is increasingly represented as a fringe position and primarily one held by foreign nations. This is especially true in the case of African countries such as Uganda, Nigeria, and Kenya where the Archbishop of Canterbury claimed it was '"impossible" for many African followers to accept homosexuality' (*The Times* 2014). Echoing this notion were articles by writers at *The Times* who lamented the 'narrative of great pain and desperate suffering' of 'homosexuals in Africa' (*The Times* 2015) and wondered 'why Africa is in denial about homosexuality on every level' (*The Times* 2016). Not only do these stories represent an 'offshoring' of contemporary homophobia, but they also signify a cultural amnesia that erases the recent history of homophobia in the UK. There is little to no reflection on the legal, institutional, and political forces that oppressed — and in many cases continue to oppress — queer people in Britain. But worse, there is certainly no reckoning with the colonial past in Africa which saw the imposition of British Anti-sodomy Laws which are the root of much of the institutional homophobia that exists today in countries like Kenya, Uganda, and Nigeria. In the following discussion, the concepts of *homonormativity* (Duggan 2003) and *homonationalism* (Puar 2007) help to explain the radical shift in how *The Times* represents *gay marriage* as inherently positive, while at the same time, using so-called LGBT rights as a way of Othering African nations who oppose same-sex marriage and the rights of queer people more generally.

6.4.2 — *Homonormativity* and *Homonationalism*

Homonormativity is a critical framework used to analyse processes of inclusion and exclusion within contemporary western capitalism wherein certain lesbian and gay citizens are represented as crucial to upholding the neoliberal consensus. Originating in trans-activism from the 1990s (Stryker 2008), the term was further developed by Duggan (2003:50) to mean:

[18] In the BNC, *prevail* collocates with terms such as *justice*, *common sense* and *majority*.

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

Homonormativity thus questions and destabilises previous claims that a society like the UK is necessarily grounded in a compulsory heterosexuality (Rich, 1980). Rather, through the logics of free-market capitalism, a new 21st century sociocultural and political class of lesbian and gay men have affirmed the *status quo* by redefining terms such as "equality" to simply mean 'narrow, formal access to a few conservatizing institutions' (Duggan 2003:66) such as marriage. And while homonormativity should primarily be seen as an analytical tool to understand sociocultural and political changes under neoliberalism and *not* as a moralising judgement against the 'conformist lifestyles of individual gays and lesbians' (Stoffel 2021:174), it is clear in the language of *The Times* that gay marriage has been framed as a moral victory that clearly put David Cameron and his 'compassionate conservatism' on the 'right side of history' (*The Times* 2013).

The problem with gay marriage — and homonormative politics more generally — is not simply that it plays a part in affirming and upholding a deeply inequitable society, but rather that it represents a fracturing of the potentiality for a new queer politics that could challenge the inequities of late capitalism (Duggan 2003; Monahan 2019). In the UK specifically, Monahan (2019:141) argues that gay marriage 'allayed…the multiplicity of gay identities across income brackets and family types' while solely targeting 'an affluent subsection of gay people — gay men in particular — and then prioritised their economic interest(s)' over and above the needs and interests of a much more diverse LGBTQI population. For instance, in an article describing the increasing expense of weddings in the UK, *The Times* argued that the 'legalisation of same-sex marriages raised the bar further' (*The Times*, 2015) with the author of a book titled *The A-List Family* quoted as saying:

> Most of my gay friends are high achievers in their forties, child-free with impeccable taste. There's no way you can turn up in last year's faded dress from Whistles or give them a teapot, unless it's Missoni (*The Times* 2015).

Such representations obfuscate the fact that the LGBTQI population in the UK experience increased barriers to healthcare, employment, education, and housing when compared with the heterosexual population[19] (GEO 2016; Lawrence and Taylor 2020). The signifier *gay marriage* and the alleged

[19] It should be noted that these barriers are not experienced uniformly across the queer population but are exacerbated by intersecting identifications such as 'race', ethnicity, gender identity, class, immigration status, ability, language, and region.

opulence of ‘gay weddings’ thus subsumes ‘LGBT rights’ within illusory discourses of the ‘pink pound’ (Monahan 2019:144) and the potential ‘market virility’ (Puar 2007:26) of a new consumer class of homonormative gay families whose interests are represented by *The Times* as being more closely aligned with the so-called ‘aspirational’ neoliberal policies of New Labour and the Tory Party. Monahan (2019), therefore, argues that concessions like gay marriage are imbricated with the ultimate goal of a ‘Tory-normativity’ that seeks to expand its electoral base while imposing austerity measures that have seen the accelerated shrinking of the welfare state, the greatest wage stagnation since the Napoleonic Wars (Bell 2017), and, according to some estimates, an excess death rate of approximately 120,000 people over the 7 years between 2010-2017 due to cuts to the NHS and social services (Watkins *et al.* 2017). Concessions like gay marriage thus, not only act as a distraction from the government’s draconian fiscal policies, but also as a ‘political sedative’ (Duggan 2003:62) in that it depoliticised ‘LGBT rights’ and welcomed a deracialised and normatively gendered gay and lesbian population into the neoliberal consensus.

The conceptual framework of homonormativity does not, however, fully account for how *The Times* represented divisions within the Anglican Church and the attention paid to Bishop Sentamu’s Ugandan background. In other words, what was ostensibly a theological divide was represented as a racialised outcome whereby Africans were positioned as inherently backward when juxtaposed with the exceptional progressivism of the west. This geopolitical homonormativity is, therefore, most adequately understood through the lens of *homonationalism* first conceptualised by Puar (2007). Often misunderstood as a synonym for ‘gay racism’, homonationalism is better understood as a critical framework for analysing ‘a facet of modernity and a historical shift marked by the entrance of (some) homosexual bodies as worthy of protection by nation-states, a constitutive and fundamental reorientation of the relationship between the state, capitalism, and sexuality’ (Puar 2013:337). Domestically then, *gay marriage* is a signifier for this reconfiguration in that it upholds the state as the supreme arbiter for what constitutes a normative sexuality, while simultaneously excluding non-normative relationships as well as relationships constrained by access to citizenship or ‘indefinite leave to remain’ (gov.uk) — the latter being a category primarily constituted by racialised Others. Such processes of inclusion and exclusion are not, however, solely symbolic as *gay marriage* bestows material and legal benefits such as inheritance rights, asset protections and tax breaks not available to those who choose not to or cannot marry as citizens of the UK.

After 2014, traces of homonationalist discourse become more frequent in *The Times*, especially when concerned with representations of African people and Muslims as being pathologically — and eternally — backward in their treatment of sexual and gender minorities. In this global context then, homonationalism ‘serves to position the equitable treatment of lesbians and gays as the icon of “civilisation” and “progress” and to portray societies that do not meet this standard as “barbaric”,

"uncivilised" and "unworthy"' (Milani and Levon 2016:70). *The Times'* (2016) declaration that 'Africa is in denial about homosexuality on every level' therefore, reduces the complexities of multiple cultures whose belief systems concerning sexual and gender roles are as varied as the 1.4 billion people who live on the continent, to a single reductive statement about 'Africa'. Such representations also elide the enduring role of colonial-era Anti-Sodomy Laws that have interacted with economic shocks to facilitate a resurgent institutionalised homophobia (Rao 2015). This erasure of historical context is also evident in the analogous processes of discursive collectivisation (Van Leeuwen 1996:49) extended to Russia and the 'Islamic world'. In the following examples, *The Times* deploys *gay marriage* as a signifier for British exceptionalism when compared against the barbarism of foreign Others:

> David Cameron says that enabling gay marriage is one of the greatest decisions he made as prime minister. It is easy to take this for granted but in much of Russia, Africa and throughout the Islamic world gay couples can still be hounded. So we should celebrate how relaxed Britain is about lesbians, gays and bisexuals now (*The Times* 2017).

> Today Cameron seems a failure, but look closer and his successes - from gay marriage to fighting Islamism - mount up (*The Times* 2016).

In the preceding two examples, *gay marriage* is not only used to 'pinkwash' (Schulman 2011) Cameron's failures as prime minister, but it is also used to simultaneously collectivise and villainise vast numbers of people around the globe by using terms which erase the complexity of intersecting identifications such as 'Russia', 'Africa' and the 'Islamic World'. Perhaps more dangerously, the proximity between 'gay marriage and fighting Islamism' suggests that one is necessarily connected to the other — a process whereby the assumed antagonism between the '(implicitly white) gay community against the (implicitly straight) Muslim community' (El-Tayeb 2012:82) is reified and used to justify both the further marginalisation of Muslims in Britain while at the same time facilitating support for the so-called 'War on Terror'. Positioning 'Africa', 'the Islamic World' and Russia as necessarily homophobic is not, therefore, simply benign misrepresentation. Rather, homonationalism is a tool to further expand the influence and hegemony of the west, motivated by the interests of capital and clothed in the language of progress. Analyses by Puar (2007), Haritaworn *et al.* (2008), Ahmed (2011), Raboin (2016) and Wilkinson (2021) have all demonstrated the ways in which 'the languages of freedom, including sexual freedom…can be used to justify the extension of state racism' (Ahmed 2011:125) both domestically and globally. Homonationalist discourse, i.e. liberal western democracy represented as uniquely positioned to emancipate queer people both at home and abroad, is, therefore, used to justify everything from foreign interventions to 'liberate' Iraqi and Afghan populations during the 'War on Terror', to denying asylum seekers refugee status because

they allegedly pose a danger to western liberal values of sexual freedom. International financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have even begun to withhold loans from countries such as Uganda that have enacted draconian anti-LGBT legislation (Rao, 2015). In an extraordinary statement from the former World Bank President, Jim Kim predicated his argument, *not* on protecting queer people in Uganda, but on economics, claiming that, 'when societies enact laws that prevent productive people from fully participating in the workforce, economies suffer' (Kim 2014 cited in Rao 2015:38). It is therefore the case that, in a marked shift from the politics of the 1960s and the 1980s, so-called 'LGBT rights' are now, not only good for the economy in the UK, but also another tool used to impose structural readjustment policies on countries from the Global South.

6.5 — Concluding remarks

Like D'Emilio (1993) and Hennessy's (2000) Marxist arguments for how capitalism has provided the *material conditions* necessary for the establishment and proliferation of LGBTQI identities, the preceding chapter demonstrated how the queer subject has been represented in the language of *The Times* in order to garner *ideological consent* for capitalism in spite of its inherently unequal political and economic outcomes. For instance, through an analysis of the nodal points *Vassall* and *GLC*, 'chains of equivalence' (Laclau and Mouffe 2014:182) were revealed that bound the queer subject to the political projects of communism in the 1960s and the radical left in the 1980s. Through a process of 'discursive sedimentation' (Norval 2000), the association between anti-capitalist politics — generally regarded as anti-western — and the queer subject eventually became common sense. Supporting Hall's (1987b:35) claim that politics does not reflect the majority, it constructs the majority — this hegemonic formation was politically expedient in order to maintain consent as the post-war consensus was dismantled and replaced with a de-industrialised financial capitalism under Thatcher. In other words, as long as the queer population of the UK was, not only represented as a social threat to the sexual and moral decency of the ostensibly heterosexual majority, but also — through 'signification spirals' — a threat to the nation and its institutions, electoral blocs could be manufactured that ensured consent for the advent of neoliberalism even as living standards were eroded.

Howarth (2018) argues, however, that political identities — like political settlements — do not have an essential character or disposition that is predicated on one's class position or historical affiliation to a particular party or ideology. At best, political identities should be viewed as 'as social constructions that are fabricated by complex political practices of inclusion and exclusion' (Howarth 2018:384). As capitalism evolved, therefore, so too did the 'chains of equivalence' between the queer subject and the capitalist state. For example, through an analysis of the nodal point *gay marriage*, it was demonstrated

how a changing moral landscape meant that certain members of the queer population could be 'folded in' to the neoliberal consensus by representing a new homonormative subject whose consumption practices were represented as aspirational and whose political aims to uphold conservative institutions like marriage were celebrated as inherently British (Puar 2007). In the wake of the Financial Crisis of 2007/2008 and the imposition of economic austerity policies under the coalition government of David Cameron, such celebratory representations of morally respectable gays and lesbians entering into traditional heterosexist coupling practices, therefore, functioned to uphold consent for a system in collapse in two ways. *First*, same-sex marriage allowed the draconian policies imposed under austerity to be obfuscated by a Conservative claim to compassion and modernisation which was represented in *The Times* as emblematic of British exceptionalism in the 21st century. *Secondly*, through the juxtaposition of marriage rights against the oppression and persecution of queer people in the Global South (especially Muslims), homonationalist discourses provided support for the War on Terror, the imposition of the Hostile Environment policy developed and enacted by Theresa May, and a continued belief that neoliberal capitalism was the only way to achieve liberation, freedom and equality for the majority.

The relationship between the discursive construction of the queer subject and an evolving capitalist state is, therefore, not only about manufacturing consent for a political and economic system which primarily benefits a minority of the population. Rather, the relationship between sexual identity and national identity also indexes how *The Times* represents Britain's place in the world and justifies aspects of their foreign policy and border regime (Wilkinson 2021). It is crucial to note, however, that the nodal points which have bound together discourses of sexual and, to an extent, gender identity have generally only revealed representations of gay men and lesbians. The erasure of bi, trans, and non-binary populations as well as those whose identities (and oppressions) exist at the intersections of, *inter alia,* gender, 'race', ethnicity, class, region and ability is crucial to an understanding of how the hegemonic queer subject has been discursively constructed. This is especially true as *The Times* now represents Britain as a bastion for liberalism against an illiberal and oppressive Global South. The next chapter will, therefore, attempt to chart how, through processes of discursive sedimentation, the queer subject has come to be perceived as gay, white, and male.

Chapter 7 — Erasure

7.1 — Introduction

In the previous two analysis chapters, the discursive trajectories which emerged during the initial categorisation of keywords and KTs were explored by focusing on a nodal point or privileged signifier from each of the three time periods. In chapter 6, the nodal points *homosexual conduct* (1957-1967), *Aids* (1979-1990), and *gender identity* (2003-2017) revealed how state biopolitics — as well as state necropolitics — had discursively produced queer identities in each of the sub-corpora. Similarly, *Vassall* (1957-1967), *GLC* (1979-1990) and *gay marriage* (2003-2017) showed how the discursive construction of queer identities have been indelibly shaped by British capitalism as it developed from the post-war settlement through to the era of Thatcherite market reforms and neoliberalism. But while the use of nodal points which are both statistically significant in the corpus as well as being discursively significant in the establishment of a hegemonic queer subject has been revealing, they have also revealed how, with the exception of *gender identity*, the history of queer representation in *The Times* has largely been the history of cisgender gay men. With that in mind, this final chapter will pivot away from considering frequency as essential in identifying nodal points. Rather, in order to address the discursive *erasure* of other queer identities which may be constituted at the intersections of, *inter alia*, sexuality, gender, ethnicity, 'race', ability, and region, the following analysis will consider which identities have been *absent* in *The Times*. This approach not only considers the sociopolitical implications of erasure, but is also concerned with the methodological issues that arise concerning the analysis of absence when using corpus-based methods.

Schröter (2018) contends that absence is a perennial concern in the analysis of discourse as the omission of certain discursive formations are as constitutive of social reality as are the presence of others. Indeed, Baker (2006:19) argues that, 'hegemonic discourse can be at its most powerful when it does not have to be invoked, because it is just taken for granted'. Absence is, therefore, an area of discourse that can reveal how ideology shapes or constrains how the world around us is represented and thereby constituted. Analysing absence, however, is itself constrained in that it is difficult to empirically measure 'something that is phenomenologically intangible because it lacks evident symbolic representation' (Schröter 2018:42). Furthermore, one must consider which absences are, in fact, meaningful and not simply the result of linguistic convention or irrelevance to the discourse being articulated. In order to address this, Schröter and Taylor (2018:6) argue that in order 'for absences to be meaningful, they require an arguable alternative of presence'. In a diachronic corpus, this could be done by showing how certain discourses are present or absent at different points in time (Schröter and Taylor 2018). However, as this thesis attempts to answer how language has been used by *The Times* to discursively construct queer subject positions, it is undoubtedly 'meaningful' that lexical items concerning lesbian, bi, trans and other queer subjectivities are almost entirely absent

from the nodal points which were, in part, determined by their keyness. I would therefore contend that, in addition to corpus-based methods of analysing absence (see Partington 2014; Duguid and Partington 2018), nodal points established by using sociocultural, historical and political knowledge are just as relevant in the identification of meaningful absence. Based on the criteria discussed below, it was, therefore, decided to treat *lesbian*, *gay*, and *LGBT* as privileged signifiers in order to explore to what extent the discourses in which they were embedded contributed to, or revealed, the erasure of certain queer identities in *The Times.*

The process of identifying nodal points in order to begin exploring the discursive processes through which erasure occurred was challenging for several reasons. First, the inherent diversity within the queer population meant that there would be a significant number of identities that had been backgrounded. Locating only *one* privileged signifier in each of the sub-corpora could, therefore, also contribute to an ongoing process of erasure not dissimilar from that which had already resulted in the centering of white, middle-class, non-disabled gay men. On the other hand, any gesture towards inclusivity that sought to analyse a broader spectrum of keywords or key terms would ultimately dilute the rigour of the analysis by casting too wide a net. The second challenge was that the marginal nature of many queer subjectivities meant that there would likely be no evident symbolic representation in *The Times*, especially in the earlier years of the corpus. As such, only identifications that were represented in language could have been meaningfully analysed, thus excluding significations of, for instance, gender variance in the earlier years of the corpus (see section 4.2 for a discussion of why contemporary signifiers for identity can compromise a meaningful analysis of gender and sexuality in the past). With this in mind, it was decided to take two parallel approaches to locating the discursive evidence of erasure — neither of which took a 'naïve' or bottom-up approach to the analysis. On the contrary, both approaches were informed by political critique and deductive reasoning based on the analysis so far.

First, between 1957-1967, the only other term for sexual identity that would warrant a corpus-based approach to the analysis was *lesbian* as the other search terms that could index an identity, i.e. *bisexual, transvestite* and *transsexual*, were too infrequent. The fact also remained that such lexical items did not necessarily signify an identity (see Wilkinson 2019 for a discussion of *bisexual* as a floating signifier) in the same way that could be argued of the signifier, *lesbian*. It was also the case that, in neither of the discursive trajectories analysed thus far — *biopolitics* or *capitalism* — had the lesbian subject been explored in any meaningful way. With this in mind, an analysis of the keyword *lesbian* rectified this analytical gap in the study and fulfilled a political commitment that considers lesbians as critical to an analysis of queer history and representation. The second approach to identifying a discursive nodal point emerged out of the same observations which had led to the identification of *erasure* as a discursive trajectory in the first instance. Early on (see section 4.6.1 for

a discussion on the identification of discursive trajectories) it became clear that the frequency and salience of terms like *gay* and *LGBT* necessarily made them both ideal candidates for an analysis of erasure in that both appeared to solely signify the gay male subject position. In contemporary terms, *gay* is indeed primarily a signifier for cisgender men whose sexual and romantic desire for other cisgender men is central to their sexual identity. However, even in the 1979-1990 sub-corpus in which *gay* also collocated with 'woman' in reference to lesbians, or 'rights' in an effort to describe queer politics at the time, the preceding analysis demonstrated that this was infrequent enough as to confirm that *gay* almost exclusively referenced cis men. For this reason, the signifier *gay* appeared to be an ideal candidate for an analysis of erasure in the 1979-1990 sub-corpus. In a similar fashion to the use of *gay* in the 1980s, the acronym *LGBT* in the early 21st century has also been a gesture towards inclusivity that falls short of its intended goal. The most common political critique is that it collapses or subsumes the specific experiences and oppressions of lesbian, bi and trans people — its discursive function, more often than not, simply being another signifier for gay men. For this reason, *LGBT* appeared to be a central discursive point in the process of erasure in the 2003-2017 sub-corpus. Finally, while the identification of these nodal points may suggest a circularity to the proceeding arguments, I would instead argue that their identification is based on a historical and political awareness of erasure. The development of research based on politics is not, in this instance problematic or illogical, but is rather a legitimate foundation for an analytical approach rooted in critical analysis and, indeed, critical theory.

It is critical that a discussion of erasure be included in an analysis of how queer identities have been discursively constructed in the language of *The Times*. This is because, while erasure is a discursive process, its effects are not simply about representation. Rather the material consequences of erasure are such that they further marginalise groups which already have limited access to social, political, and economic capital. A key example of this is 'bisexual erasure' which refers to discursive processes that challenge the very concept of a bisexual *identity* such that it is denied the same ontological status as monosexual identities (Angelides 2001; Du Plessis 1996; MacDowall 2009; Yoshino 2000). In other words, bisexual identities are often represented as illegitimate or as temporary — a process that Wilkinson (2019) argued was accomplished through fictional and temporal displacement. Similarly, media representations often fetishise bisexual people as sexually voracious or pathologise them as vectors for the transmission of sexually transmitted infections like HIV (Worth 2003; Wilkinson 2019). Erasure is, therefore, not simply about invisibility, but also indicates the ways in which certain groups are discursively constructed as a threat. The cumulative effect of these processes is that bisexual people experience worse physical and mental health outcomes than both the general population as well as the gay and lesbian population (Johnson 2016). Erasure functions as a type of violence in that it produces negative material consequences that affect the quality of life and health of

a certain population. The following chapter will, therefore, seek to redress the erasure of certain queer populations by identifying their 'meaningful absence' in a particular time period as well as exploring how — and potentially why — certain choices in representation were made by *The Times.*

It should also be noted that, in addition to *erasure*, the terms *invisibility* (Myers 2013) and *intersectionality* (Crenshaw 1989) will also be used throughout this final chapter as they are both crucial concepts in understanding how this discursive trajectory is established. For example, the term *invisibility* is pertinent but was used most frequently in discussions of 'lesbian invisibility' — a process that refers to 'the virtual or total neglect of lesbian existence' in politics, culture, society and discourse (Rich 2003:13). Jennings (2007) also argues that lesbian women are virtually non-existent in historical records. This is partially a result of women, in general, being made invisible in historical records, but also because, until recently, the idea that a woman's sexuality is not contingent on a man was considered an impossibility. For this reason, lesbian sexuality, while considered deviant, was never officially criminalised in the UK. Contemporarily, lesbians continue to be 'buried, erased, occluded, distorted, misnamed, and driven underground' (Rich 2003:13) — an argument that is supported in the proceeding corpus analysis. Finally, the term *intersectionality* (Crenshaw 1989) is crucial to an understanding of the ways in which certain identities have been erased in the language of *The Times*. Originally coined by the critical legal scholar and activist Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectionality was used as a method of understanding and explaining how an individual or group's intersecting identities can result in multiple and simultaneous forms of oppression and discrimination. Originally used as a legal argument with which to challenge employment discrimination against Black women in the US, the term has been developed in the Social Sciences and Humanities to often refer, not simply, to intersecting oppressions, but to an analysis of how identities are constructed more broadly. While often a useful heuristic, this latter use has been challenged in that it can also erase the Black Feminist roots of the term (Alexander-Floyd 2012). In the proceeding analysis, where *intersectionality* is used, it will refer to the ways in which the identities that exist at the intersections of, *inter alia*, 'race', gender, class, sexuality, ability, and region have been erased in the discursive construction of queer subject positions.

Finally, as the terms to be analysed marginal identities even within the corpus, a different set of criteria was used to establish which term would be explored in each time period. It was, therefore, decided that the term had to be a signifier for a sexual or gender identity, that it had to be a keyword, and that it had to reveal how, through processes of conflation, invisibility, or obfuscation, its representation resulted in erasure. With this in mind, the first section will consider the signifier *lesbian** between 1957-1967 and the role of lesbian invisibility in the history of queer representation in *The Times.* Between 1979-1990, the signifier *gay** will be considered to establish how gay men became conflated with whiteness. And finally, between 2003-2017, the signifier *LGBT* will be analysed in order to show how the goal of using an inclusive acronym ultimately resulted in the

conflation of *LGBT* with *gay.*

7.2 — Lesbian*

Between 1957-1967, the signifier *lesbian**[20] only occurs 91 times (99.71 per million) — approximately 20 times less frequently than the signifier *homosexual** (1,855 occurrences or 2,032.62 per million)..In many ways, this is perhaps unsurprising as, during this time, the major stories regarding sexuality in *The Times* concerned the Wolfenden Report and debates surrounding the decriminalisation of sex between men (see Chapter 5) as well as the Vassall scandal which aroused fears that homosexual men were more likely to be sympathetic to communism or work for the USSR (see Chapter 6). It is also the case that, in the post-war period, lesbian political movements were still emerging in the UK (Jennings 2007), meaning that their coverage in *The Times* would have been unlikely (though not impossible). This relative invisibility, however, is not limited to the first sub-corpus. It should be noted that, between 1979-1990, *lesbian** occurs 1,040 times while *homosexual** and *gay** combined occur 7,346 times. Similarly, between 2003-2017, the term *lesbian* occurs a mere 7,018 times when compared with a total of 41,768 times for both *homosexual** and *gay**. There are, of course, instances when *gay* is used to refer to lesbian women and, in the latter sub-corpus, the initialisation, *LGBT*, seeks to include lesbians (as well as bi and trans people). Nevertheless, the disparity in raw frequency clearly indicates that the history of queer representation in *The Times* is largely the history of cisgender gay male representation.

'Lesbian invisibility' is a term that emerged in the early years of the Gay Liberation Movement and refers to:

> The omission of lesbians from popular culture, political discourse, and history, which is only made worse when the media and politicians conflate homosexuality/gay to mean male. In patriarchal culture, the lesbian woman who does not need men is the most reviled and obscured (Myers 2013:250).

There are many arguments for why lesbian invisibility has been so consistent and many of them are based on the socioeconomic and political status of women in British society more generally. This is because, until recently, British history has been written *by* men and *about* men which has resulted in the histories of women being obfuscated or ignored (Jennings 2007). In an attempt to redress certain aspects of this disparity, Jennings (2007) endeavoured to chart the history of lesbians in Britain between the sixteenth century and the present day — a task which was inherently difficult as there was very little historiographical evidence to analyse. While this is partially because contemporary

[20] The following analysis will consider all collocations and concordances generated by using the search term *lesbian**. In this case, the asterisk functions to include the plural form, *lesbians*, as well as the abstract noun, *lesbianism.*

notions of sexual identity cannot always be neatly mapped onto the experiences of people in the past, Jennings (2007:xi) claims that it is primarily because 'lesbian history has frequently been associated with silence, invisibility, and denial'. In fact, Jennings (2007:77) argued that, throughout much of the modern period, the belief that 'women could only respond to, but not initiate, sexual encounters rendered it theoretically impossible for two women to interact sexually, in the absence of a man'. This is likely one of the reasons why sex between women was never criminalised in the same way that it was between men. Even, in 1921, when a clause was introduced to the *Criminal Law Amendment Bill* that would have made lesbian sex a misdemeanour, it was defeated on the grounds that the bill would only 'advertise the existence of the offence' (Jennings 2007:114) — a concern that was predicated on the idea that 'the vast majority of the female population were unaware of the possibilities of lesbian sexual expression' (Jennings 2007:113). Reid (1986:47) argues that this is a specific kind of erasure that is not experienced by other minorities as their recorded history means that they are a 'link in the chain of the continuum of (their) oppression'. She claims that this lack of history impacts on her identity such that she has 'no context; I am contained in a vacuum' (Reid 1986:47). In addition to a lack of historiographical resources that render lesbian histories invisible, feminist scholars and theorists have also argued that there are socioeconomic and political structures that have institutionalised the invisibility of lesbian women.

Rich (2003:13) argued that the reason why lesbian individuals, relationships and communities have been 'crushed, invalidated, forced into hiding and disguise' is a result of a system of 'compulsory heterosexuality, through which lesbian experience is perceived on a scale ranging from deviant to abhorrent or simply rendered invisible'. In other words, heterosexuality should not be understood simply as a sexual identity, but rather as a political institution or discursive structure that shapes the very foundations of our thought. Like any hegemonic formation (Gramsci 1971), heterosexuality appears so natural and inevitable that, even 'the possibility of a woman who does not exist sexually for men—the lesbian possibility—is buried, erased, occluded, distorted, mis-named, and driven underground' (Rich 2003:40). Echoing this argument, Wittig (1980:107) also asserts that heterosexuality is discursively realised as *the* universal such that 'the straight mind cannot conceive of a culture, a society where heterosexuality would not order not only all human relationships but also its very production of concepts'. Wittig (1980), therefore, moves beyond the more materialist arguments posited by Rich (2003) and argues instead that there is 'another order of materiality, that of language' (Wittig 1980:108) that has led to the erasure of lesbianism. Not only then is lesbian invisibility simply a result of silence in discourse, but it is fundamentally a question of key concepts or binaries such as man/woman or gender/sex that have effectively limited our ability to properly express lesbianism in language.

While such theoretical arguments are compelling, the following analysis offers linguistic evidence

that demonstrates how lesbians were indeed largely absent from discourses in *The Times* between 1957-1967. This section will begin with a collocation analysis before moving on to look at the ways in which invisibility was manifest even when lesbians *were* represented in the language of *The Times.*

7.2.1 — Collocation analysis of *lesbian*

The top 5 collocates of *lesbian** are *tendencies* (4), *relationship* (5), *practices* (3), *treatment* (3), and *homosexuality* (4). A concordance analysis revealed that the most salient pattern of representation was not solely concerned with the *how* lesbians were represented in *The Times* but also *where* lesbians were represented. This is because twelve out of the nineteen concordances analysed, revealed that lesbians were frequently discussed in the reviews section of the paper. These included critiques of theatre productions, novels, and films where the reviewer would discuss a play's lesbian characters as well as reviews of documentaries and non-fiction books which dealt in lesbian representation and issues of censorship. While few in number, the consistency in how lesbians are represented could support the argument that lesbian invisibility between 1957-1967 was not only about absence, but also about fictionalisation and fetishisation (see Wilkinson 2019; Hall 1997b) — a process whereby a particular group is primarily represented in art but never (or rarely) as a group that exist as members of society. Such representations function to displace and disavow lesbians while, at the same time, providing an unrestricted voyeurism. It should be noted as well that the majority of the plays, novels and films reviewed were written or produced by men. At best, this arguably amounts to a kind of ventriloquising whereby mostly male authors are writing *about* lesbians without lending control of the narrative to lesbians themselves. This form of Othering is also manifest in the capitalisation of *Lesbian* in approximately one third of the occurrences. The capitalisation for a marker of identity is usually reserved for an ethnic or national identity and is almost never used for *homosexual* during the same time period. While this could potentially be attributed to the term's original association with the Greek island of Lesbos (and the poet Sappho), the use of capitalisation connotes a foreignness and is, thus, another way in which lesbian women are represented as inherently Other and abnormal in the language of *The Times.* After an analysis of the top 5 collocates, this argument will be further supported by considering all 91 concordance lines and what they reveal about lesbian invisibility as fictionalisation.

7.2.1.1 — Tendencies, Relationship, Treatment, and Homosexuality

While *practices* was more varied in its use — a pattern that will be discussed below — the collocates, *tendencies, relationship, treatment* and *homosexuality* were all primarily used to discuss lesbian characters. This meant that lesbians were not only being discursively constructed in an original piece of fiction, but also that such representations were being reproduced and mediated through the language of the reviewers at *The Times.* This intertextual process reveals several insights. First, a close reading of the concordance lines suggests that lesbian characters were often represented as

deceitful or, at least, as the narrative antagonist who was responsible for the conflict in a story. This is demonstrated in the concordance lines below (Table 7.1) where lesbian women are represented as plotting to deceive their husbands, arousing the suspicions of the men closest to them, and revealing affairs with women who are no longer alive. In a striking example from 1965, *The Times* reviewer even claims that a character's suicide 'brings more relief than pity' (*The Times*, 1965).

1. Paula, indeed, has strong Lesbian tendencies, and plans to plant her woman friend, the Comtesse de Morlaix, in Peter's bed so that she can get a divorce, a proceeding scarcely suggesting paragons of the liberal, or of any other tradition.
2. It is about a young girl with possibly Lesbian tendencies who marries an impotent older man.
3. She has hysterics at the hairdressers, admits to Lesbian tendencies and indifference to her husband, and longs for nothing but sleep. Her inability to face or accept anything in life is finally so convincing that her suicide brings more relief than pity.
4. It is still about a young man who gets involved with two young women who live together, and maybe a hint survives of Maupassant's theme, which is the hero's dawning suspicions of a lesbian relationship between his mistress and her friend.
5. Maggie, the Italian girl of the title, who was Otto's and Edmund's nurse, has had a lesbian relationship with their dead mother.

Table 7.1 — Examples of lesbian characters as narrative antagonists in fiction

It should also be noted that the collocates, *tendencies* and *treatment,* have negative discourse prosodies and suggest that lesbianism is something shameful or, in the case of the former, a personality trait or psychological issue that may plague a character and lead to their propensity for betrayal. For instance, the BNC shows that some of the most frequent collocates for the term *tendencies* are *suicidal, depressive, aggressive* and *anti-social* — all terms that suggest a mental health issue or negative personality trait. This could, therefore, suggest that the original authors and the reviewers at *The Times* see lesbianism as similarly troubling for both the characters themselves as well as for the other characters with whom they interact. While certainly negative, the collocation 'lesbian tendency' also functions to erase lesbian *identities*. *Tendency* suggests a potentiality or something impermanent — an action that exists within a certain period of time. Such phrasing renders lesbian identity invisible in that it suggests that desire between women can only ever be impermanent.

Echoing such negative discourse prosodies is the term *treatment* which primarily alludes to disease, criminality or immorality. This is, of course, because the term is primarily used to describe how one might treat an ailment — its top 5 collocates in the BNC being *medical, hospital, receiving, patients* and *sewage.* All three concordance lines in Table 7.2, however, use the phrase to discuss how lesbians are *represented* in theatre or television — a usage which could have a similar meaning to 'the portrayal of' or 'representations of'. The choice to use 'treatment', therefore, signals to the reader that lesbianism is a state or topic that is tantamount to being mentally ill or, at least, a subject that must be portrayed with care as it is potentially disturbing or problematic for an audience. Similar examples that support the claim that 'treatment' primes a negative discourse prosody when discussing fiction

include an article in *The Times* discussing the Ontario Theatre Board's 'dramatic *treatment* of the more sordid aspects of contemporary life' (*The Times* 1960) such as 'rape, adultery, premarital relations, homosexuality, vice, violence, horror, and even abortion among adolescents' as well as *The Crucible's* 'melodramatic treatment of a shameful episode in American history' (*The Times* 1958). In these cases as well then, *treatment of*, tends to insinuate that the subject matter under question is of questionable moral standing or is something shameful.

1. Mr. Ronald Duncan's treatment of Lesbian love, though comic, even flippant in tone, is unusually frank.
2. Earlier BBC-2's Man Alive dealt with the subject of lesbianism: the treatment was characteristically forthright, unsensational, and intelligent.
3. In fact the play's treatment of lesbianism brought a ban from the Lord Chamberlain's office until a representative of his staff was persuaded to see Marowitz's members only production at the Edinburgh Traverse earlier this year and so permit a London presentation.

Table 7.2 — Examples of *treatment of* with *lesbian**

Before discussing the collocates, *practices* and *homosexuality*, a broader look at all 91 concordance lines was conducted in order to ascertain to what extent the fictionalisation of lesbians between 1957-1967 was a salient pattern. A close reading showed that, indeed, the majority of occurrences represented lesbian women within the reviews section and, primarily, as fictional characters. This included thirty-two examples of lesbian characters being represented in the theatre reviews section, twelve in film, ten in novels, eleven in non-fiction books and seven in television. With over three quarters of the occurrences representing fictional lesbians, it can therefore be argued that lesbian invisibility in *The Times* was, in addition to absence, also the result of a process of fictionalisation wherein lesbian women were not represented as living in the 'real world'. And while occurrences of *lesbian** are few in number, there is arguably still a process of discursive sedimentation wherein the consistency in lesbian representation leads to an erasure through this process of fictionalisation. But this is not a varied and rounded fictionalisation of complex characters, but rather a recurring stereotype of the transgressive lesbian whose very existence is informed by her capacity for deceit and taboo — a lesbian who is more likely to be represented as a 'a satanic bald-headed lesbian attired in a velvet cat suit…who runs a brothel-bar' (*The Times* 1966) than a character whose existence is not meant to be exotic or titillating. The sedimentation of such representations culminates in 'the lesbian' archetype in fiction functioning as a type of fetish — one whose function is to provide the opportunity to engage with a taboo sexuality while at the same time denying its existence.

Marx (1887:48) as well as Laclau and Mouffe (2014) both describe the process of fetishisation as one where the actual use-value of a thing is concealed when it enters the market — its value becoming something separate from and, in fact, severed from the labour that produced it. In explaining the use of stereotypes in fiction, Hall (1997b) also argues that certain signification practices function to facilitate the fetishisation of certain groups of people. His argument is that, through processes of representation, the complexity, and indeed reality, of a represented group is 'displaced' and, through a process of fictionalisation, is also 'disavowed' (Hall 1997b). Like the Marxist concept of the commodity-fetish whose real value is displaced through exchange in the market, Hall's interpretation is that, in the economy of signification, what and *who* is considered taboo, can only be represented when it is displaced through fictionalisation. Not only does that allow an audience to become voyeurs of something that is considered forbidden, but— when considered historically and culturally — it also betrays quite a lot about the society in which this fetishisation has occurred. Between 1957-1967, lesbian sexuality is considered immoral, however it is not — like homosexuality — illegal. In a patriarchal society like the UK in the 1960s, men are the arbiters of what is considered normative sexuality. That there is even the possibility of sex without men is, therefore, considered at once threatening while, at the same time, exotic and mysterious. It can be argued therefore that, as sexual mores begin to change, the signifier of 'the lesbian' gradually emerges from obscurity — in the law, in public life, and in art — and enters the economy of representation. Representations of lesbian characters, therefore, exist in a space where fantasy and representation meet — a place where the lesbian population of the UK is not yet visible, but is, in fact further displaced through the act of representation. Like the 'signification spirals' (Hall *et al.* 1978) discussed in Chapter 6, the following examples in in Table 7.3 depict how lesbian fetishization occurs primarily through discussions of lesbian sex which is not only associated with the collocate, *homosexuality*, but also incest, rape, lunacy, violence, orgies and bestiality. The implication is that lesbian sex is not 'normal sex' (*The Times* 1967), but is rather represented as a festishised object meant to elicit the unadulterated male gaze and never allowing for the representation of lesbian women beyond 'sexual malpractice' (*The Times* 1967).

1. Modelling his play on the traditional elements of an English farce-mistaken identities, swinging doors, outrageous coincidences - Orton has spiced the formula with incest, rape, lesbianism, homosexuality, fetishism, lunacy and violence. It's the kinkiest play in town.
2. Advertisements in the magazines invited young men and women to partake in a situation where homosexuality, lesbianism and even bestiality were concerned and mentioned some of the paraphernalia with which sexual malpractices could be performed.

3. On their return to the stage the actors simulated a vivid orgy scene which depicted lesbianism, homosexuality, and, on at least one occasion, normal sex, in a fashion that might well merit attention from the Lord Chamberlain if the play reaches London.

Table 7.3 — 'Signification spirals' (Hall *et al.* 1978) that represent 'lesbianism' as a fetishized form of sexual 'malpractice'

7.2.1.2 — Practices

There were, however, several examples where lesbian representation transcended fictionalisation. The first of these occurred when considering the collocate *practices*. The first two examples of the phrase 'lesbian practices' occur in discussions about the Wolfenden Report and the recommendation to decriminalise consensual sex between men in private should they be over twenty-one. In both, the authors are making the argument that what may be 'regarded as sins against morality' (*The Times* 1957) should not be criminalised as equally 'immoral' behaviour such as 'lesbian practices, prostitution, adultery, fornication, or private drunkenness' (*The Times* 1958) are not punishable by law. 'Signification spirals' (Hall *et al.* 1978) are again a useful concept here as the listing of such 'practices' results in a conflation whereby their proximity to one another insinuates that they are all equally contemptible behaviour. What this elides is that lesbian and homosexual 'practices' will come to be seen as identities whereas adultery and fornication will remain something that one *does* and not what one *is.* This same conflation in reference to the Wolfenden Report also occurs in an article from 1957 where the Anglican Primate of Ireland and the Bishop of Chester are arguing that lesbian practices should also be criminalised along with fornication, adultery and prostitution. In this case, however, it is the latter three which should be subject to 'greater force' (*The Times* 1958).

The proximity of *lesbian** to discussions of criminality is something which occurs throughout several of the remaining examples of lesbian between 1957-1967. For instance, there are three court transcripts reported in *The Times* which deploy the presence of lesbian women, lesbian practices, and lesbian magazines as signifiers for further criminality. The first occurs in a transcript of a trial where Stephen Ward was being prosecuted for 'living off immoral earnings' (*The Times* 1963). In an effort to establish the extent of sexual debauchery that occurred in Ward's flat, the prosecutor questioned a witness named Miss Brown about sexual intercourse in the flat, the exchange of money, and whether any 'lesbian acts (were) suggested' — this last question being used to establish what was considered at the time sexual perversion. In another court transcript from a 1965 perjury case, 'lesbianism' is mentioned twice. In an attempt to discredit a witness who worked for the magazine, *London Confidential,* the prosecutor asked whether he was responsible for publishing 'a scandalous and wholly salacious form of journalism' which he associated 'with three main contents: lesbianism,

homosexuality, and prostitution' (*The Times* 1965). The prosecutor went on to reference article titles such as 'The boom in lesbianism' (*The Times* 1965) in order to make the point that this witness lacked credibility and moral standing. And finally, in the coverage of a divorce court case (Coffer v Coffer), it is first revealed that both the wife and the husband had extramarital affairs with a woman named Carmen who worked as their 'domestic help from Spain' (*The Times* 1964). But while both parties had engaged in adultery with Carmen, the judge found in favour of the husband as the 'homosexual practices' committed by the two women amounted to a more grievous crime — this, in spite of the fact that lesbian 'practices' had never been officially criminalised. In order to explain his decision, the judge argued that:

> It was clear that homosexual practices, or indeed activities by one spouse which raised a reasonable suspicion of such practices in the mind of the other spouse, could amount to cruelty. In the present case, the husband had suffered grievously in his physical and mental health as a result of the wife's conduct (*The Times* 1964).

In other words, adultery was grounds for divorce, but adultery occurring between two women amounted to a cruelty so severe that the husband suffered mentally and *physically.* The use of *lesbian* in the preceding cases functions much like a 'signification spiral' (Hall *et al.* 1978) in two ways. First, through proximity to criminality, lesbian women are therefore also associated with social deviancy. Secondly, that the signifier *lesbian* exacerbates the severity of the crime or discredits the accused, suggests that the audience must perceive such crimes or criminals to be more perverse than they would have otherwise been.

7.2.2 — Concluding remarks — *lesbian**

The preceding discussion demonstrated that lesbian identities between 1957-1967 were rendered invisible primarily through a process of fictionalisation and fetishisation. Furthermore, where lesbians *were* discussed beyond fiction, they were often associated with criminality and perversion. It is important to note, however, that erasure — both in *The Times* and more generally — is a complex process which is not only informed by sexuality, but, in the case of lesbian invisibility, is also imbricated with identifications associated with race, class, gender identity, ethnicity, region, and ability. Any analysis of the discursive construction of LGBTQI identities is, therefore, incomplete if it does not account for the ways in which these multiple subjectivities intersect, complement, and complicate the processes and effects of representation. In a critique of the seminal radical feminist text, *Gyn/Ecology* (Daly 1978), Audre Lorde (1984:61) made this point most clearly when she argued that even though 'the oppression of women knows no racial or ethnic boundaries…that does not mean that it is identical within those differences'. Rather, the theory and critique will always be incomplete

if it does not interrogate how those differences are manifest. Lorde (1984) warned that, by failing to represent the experiences of lesbian women of colour, radical lesbian feminists inadvertently upheld the same structures of oppression that led to their own marginalisation. In other words, 'when radical lesbian feminist theory dismisses us, it encourages its own demise' (Lorde 1984:60). In the following section, therefore, processes of deracialisation will be explored by looking at how cisgender gay men in *The Times* between 1979-1979 have been primarily represented as white, thus erasing the inherent diversity within the gay male population in Britain.

7.3 — *Gay**

Audre Lorde (1984) warned that, by failing to account for the intersections of 'race' and class, a liberationist feminist politics was doomed to reproduce the same systems of oppression that it sought to disrupt. And, while academic and activist circles working to dismantle white supremacist (heterosexist) capitalist patriarchy[21] have indeed been guilty of a myopia that fails to account for the intersecting oppressions of, *inter alia*, 'race', ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, region, and ability, the media is also complicit in (re)producing hegemonic formations that construct certain subject positions as discrete or mutually exclusive. Like the erasure of lesbian women in *The Times* through processes of elision and displacement, this next section will explore how, through discursive practices of deracialisation, *The Times* represented cisgender gay men between 1979-1990 as implicitly white. Similar to the preceding analysis, this discussion will also diverge from the more conventional analysis of frequency in corpus-based CDA and begin, instead, by looking for absence. This is not, however, a 'naïve' approach, but rather, one that emerges from an engagement with Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) and critiques from scholars and activists who argue that 'dominant notions of queerness' have been 'universalized and embedded in whiteness' (Johnson 2014:280).

7.3.2 — Critical Whiteness Studies

While contemporary CWS has largely emerged out of the academic fields of, *inter alia*, Critical Theory, Critical Race Theory, and Critical Pedagogy, the roots of CWS also owe their radical foundations to the work of authors such as Toni Morrison and James Baldwin — the latter, writing as

[21] hooks (Challenging Media 1997:7) adopted the phrase *white supremacist capitalist patriarchy* as a shorthand for 'the interlocking systems of domination that define our reality'. Rather than referring to racism, capitalism, or sexism as separate forces, the phrase attempts to show how the overlapping and interlocking nature of these ideologies function as structures that determine our socioeconomic and political relations to one other and to sites of power.

early as 1963, that 'whatever white people do not know about Negroes (sic) reveals, precisely and inexorably, what they do not know about themselves' (Baldwin 1963:44). In this passage from his seminal work, *The Fire Next Time* (1963), what Baldwin so astutely argues is that the status of Black Americans in society reveals far more about the politics of white supremacy and the mythologies of 'race' than it does the lives of the oppressed. Through this framing, whiteness is therefore not simply a signifier of racial identity but is instead understood as an ideology that structures society by imposing racialised hierarchies (Delgado and Stefancic 2014) — a system of binaries whereby one's 'race' is constituted by its opposition to the signifier 'white' and all racialised oppressions function to uphold the primacy of whiteness (Hall 1997a; Puar 2007; Reed 2016). But, while whiteness functions to oppress all those racialised as Other — providing the justification and means for slavery, colonialism and capitalism (hooks 1992a) — whiteness remains a power that functions largely by 'erasing its own tracks' (Trechter and Bucholtz 2001:10) thus remaining an unmarked category. This is especially true in contemporary Britain where historical racisms, such as segregation, are understood to be taboo, but where the maintenance of racialised hierarchies are still necessary to uphold the socio-political and economic *status quo* of Racial Capitalism (Robinson 1983). Dyer (1988:45) argues, therefore, that in order to maintain this system, the inherent inequality that emerges from the ideological power of whiteness must be passed off as 'normal as opposed to…superior'. It is therefore 'in its unmarked status that the power of whiteness lies' (Trechter and Bucholtz 2001:5) — an absence that means that it is difficult to analyse in text.

7.3.3 — Collocation Analysis of *gay**

In order to overcome these difficulties, the following analysis will attempt to connect theories from CWS with the analysis of absence discussed in the introduction to this chapter. By looking for collocates that indicate a racial identity, it will be argued that such markedness is, in fact, suggestive of an unmarked absence. In particular, a collocation search showed that, between 1979-1990, two of the collocates for the signifier *gay** (1,861 or 736.29 per million) were the racial signifiers *black* (6) and *blacks* (6). Crucially, *gay** did not collocate with any other racial signifiers such as *white*. It will, therefore, be argued that the statistical significance of a phrase like 'gay Black male' does not indicate that most gay men are Black, but rather that, by marking a particular gay man *as* Black, it is implied that the majority of gay men are represented as non-Black or, as simply deracialised — a process through which a particular group is understood to be without a 'race' and, therefore, white. Reed (2016:53) supports the claim that whiteness is synonymous with a *de*racialised identity as whiteness is understood to be 'an apolitical, historically untethered anti-identity' in a way that no other racialised identifications are. The following analysis is therefore predicated on the argument that the absence of other racialised terms, e.g. *white*, reveal hegemonic notions of who and what constitutes the *gay* subject in *The Times.* This line of argument is elaborated by highlighting two distinct patterns that

arguably contribute to the discursive construction of the prototypical gay subject as implicitly white. The more common pattern is mutual exclusivity wherein *gay* is contrasted with *black* such that they are presented as two distinct identifications that do not overlap or intersect. The second, albeit less frequent pattern, is when *black* becomes a marked term, e.g. a Black gay man, suggesting that the unmarked 'gay man' would be an implicitly deracialised subject. This argument also draws on the call for a linguistic analysis of whiteness made by Trechter and Bucholtz (2001) wherein they contend that, 'as a cultural sign, whiteness works much like a linguistic sign, taking its meaning from those surrounding categories to which it is structurally opposed' (Trechter and Bucholtz 2001:5).

7.3.3.1 — Blacks

The signifier *blacks* collocates with *gay** 6 times between 1979-1990. Before considering how this collocation functions in the discursive construction of cisgender gay male identities, it should be noted that the use of *blacks* as a plural noun and not as an adjective describing a person is an example a form of objectification that undermines a person's subjectivity. This process is mirrored in the use of *gays* with all six concordance lines in Table 7.4 also deploying *gay* as a plural noun. Such discursive choices, i.e. to reduce the description of a person to the one facet of their identity which renders them Other, does not appear to be simply a benign stylistic choice. Rather, the context in which the proceeding concordances occur echo the disdain many writers at *The Times* had for the 'loony left' and the policies championed by groups like the GLC for the rights and protections of minorities in Britain (see Chapter 6).

1. The ultras believe in getting the "across" votes of the class struggle, and then (in LCC's words) "expanding Labour's working-class base to encompass a new social alliance with the women's movement, blacks, gays, environmentalists and so on".
2. There is another important difference, which explains why Dr Vincent's proposed list of constituents for his new theology — women, blacks, gays, etc — sounds rather like the alliance of single issue causes which were adopted by Ken Livingstone's Greater London Council.
3. "At that time anyone who was organized went against the grain, but I believed that if you wanted to defend certain values — the rights of women, gays and blacks, easier abortion, less repressive drug laws — you had to have ammunition, and the best way to do that was to have independent means".
4. It is young, exciting, irreverent, open; it has "spoken for the first time" to women, gays, blacks, etc, etc, etc.

5.	Gobbets of what any particular producer regards as socially desirable behaviour regularly lard the text on such topics as working women, gays and blacks and kindness to old people.
6.	"Things in this country are terrible for minorities like blacks and gays and the unemployed".

Table 7.4 — Concordance lines showing the collocation of *gays* with *blacks*

For instance, in the first concordance line, the author mocks the politics of the Labour Coordinating Committee (LCC) who argue that 'capitalist society is not based solely on the division between capital and labour but on parallel hierarchies, notably of race and gender' (*The Times* 1985). The LCC's effort to build an electoral coalition that transcends traditional class alliances to include race, sexuality, and gender is derided as 'sectarian, silly and nothing to do with anything most people are thinking about' (*The Times* 1985). Racism, homophobia and misogyny are at once conflated as silly 'student politics' while also being presented as mutually exclusive oppressions that do not intersect. Similarly, in concordance lines two and four, the politics of the new left in the 1980s are again denigrated. In line two, the theological innovations of the president of the Methodist Conference, Dr Vincent, is compared to the 'single issue causes which were adopted by Ken Livingstone's Greater London Council' (*The Times* 1989) — causes against which writers at *The Times* were exceedingly hostile (see Chapter 6). Such hostility towards those who would dare to oppose, let alone *name*, the institutionalised racism and homophobia rampant in the UK are clearly illustrated in the mocking and dismissive tone found in line four where the description of a socialist project concerned with 'women, gays, blacks, etc, etc, etc' is described as a 'repetitive litany' (*The Times* 1986). These examples index an editorial line at *The Times* that sought to represent the politics of anti-racism, anti-homophobia, and feminism as — at once — both trivial *and* as implicitly separate concerns. Therefore, while the derision faced by marginalised populations in Britain certainly highlights how *The Times* framed the politics of liberation, the cumulative effect of separating 'gays' from 'blacks' and women led, on the one hand, to the erasure of individuals whose oppressions existed at the intersections of multiple identities and, on the other hand, it meant that the 'gays' were discursively constructed as a deracialised minority which, in the context of the UK, insinuates whiteness.

The erasure of 'race' from the identification 'gay' is echoed in the erasure of gender as well. In every concordance line above (save number six), 'women' or the 'women's movement' are listed with 'blacks' and 'gays' in the same phrase, implying that the political liberation of women is concerned only with straight white women, that the anti-racist justice movements of 'blacks' are limited to the benefit of Black heterosexual men and women, and that the political interests of 'gays' are reserved for white men alone. Positioning these identifications as mutually exclusive signals to the reader that

there are, indeed, no gay women to speak of, let alone lesbians of colour. Echoing the discussion from section 7.2, lesbian women are therefore omitted from the politics of queer representation. This is, of course, also true of bi, trans, non-binary, intersex and other queer populations who are also erased from the so-called 'gay politics' of the 1980s. Ultimately, the deracialisation and delimiting of queer politics to represent only the interests of cisgender white gay men not only erases the complex ways in which intersecting oppressions create systems of discrimination that operate at the intersections of multiple identifications (Crenshaw 1989), but it also serves the interests of the political and economic Establishment who are reliant on a fractured opposition and a focus on so-called 'single issue' politics.

7.3.3.2 — Black

In addition to concordance lines which presented Black and gay as discrete subject positions, Table 7.5 shows that *black* was also used as a marked term before the identification *gay* — a discursive choice wherein the *racialisation* of a small number of gay men suggests that whiteness is 'the implied "universal"' (Reed 2016:53). For instance, in line five, the author provides a hostile review of the documentary *Paris is Burning* which had recently aired on BBC2. In the opening sentence, they describe the film as featuring 'marauding gangs of gay black transvestites…roaming the streets of New York' (*The Times* 1990). In this example, the use of the marked term *black* suggests that, had the sentence simply read 'gay transvestites', their 'race' would have been silent — an omission which implies whiteness. It is also of import to note that the Blackness of the film's protagonists is placed in proximity to verbs such as 'marauding' and 'roaming' — terms whose discourse prosody when coupled with the 'the streets of New York' suggests an illegality or threat that is, had one seen the film, entirely misleading. As noted by Hall *et al.* (1978), however, the chains of equivalence manufactured in the press between Blackness and criminality are deeply embedded in the discourses mediated by the British press.

1. Mr Jacob Ecclestone, an executive member, said the decision affirmed that "the NCCL's natural constituency is among the oppressed, trade unions, women, gays, black people".
2. Mr Walker went on the claim that I had said that "the decision affirmed that the "NCCL's natural constituency is among the oppressed, trade unions, women, gays, black people".
3. The GLC is offering £13,000 for about three weeks' work. And you don't even have to be black, gay or feminist.
4. Six views of south London by young photographers including Balham Market, Brixton's gay community and black youth of Peckham.

5. Thirty years on from West Side Story, according to last night's Arena (BBC 2), marauding gangs of gay black transvestites named after such rival fashion houses as Chanel and St Laurent are roaming the streets of New York putting the fear of God into their mothers, if no one else.
6. A bibliography issued by the Inner London Education Authority had included one book which was described as "a hilarious story of a lesbian mother who lives with her lover, her children, a black, gay male child minder and 300 rabbits".

Table 7.5 — Concordance lines showing the collocation of *gay* and *black*

In another example of *black* as a marked term, the author describes a book which features a 'black, gay child minder" (*The Times* 1987). This example from line 6 again shows that, when a gay man is black, his racial identity is marked in a way that whiteness is not. Not only is *black* a marked term in this example, but the absence of examples in the corpus wherein a gay man is marked as white suggests that whiteness is seen as the 'universal' — and thus silent — racial formation associated with gay men. Indeed, the 'lesbian mother' in the same sentence is not racialised — an absence that, in contrast to the 'black, gay child minder' would imply the whiteness of lesbians as well unless otherwise articulated. It should be noted as well that this quote is taken from an article discussing a bill that would eventually become Section 28 (see section 4.3 for a discussion of Section 28). In the article, conservative MPs are 'angered at the alleged activities of left-wing Labour councils' (*The Times* 1987) that were 'promoting' homosexuality in schools. The example above is provided as evidence for these allegations. In addition to the obvious homophobia in this latter example, I would argue that, in both, blackness and gayness are used as signifiers for the excesses of the progressive left — another example wherein 'signification spirals' (Hall *et al.* 1978) are used to signify to the readership that a threshold has been crossed.

7.3.4 — Concluding remarks — *gay**

The salience of certain types of racialisation above suggests that the absence of language explicitly racialising subjects as *white* is, per Schröter and Taylor's (2018) criteria, a meaningful absence. Over time, the sedimentation of such discourse has resulted in the term *gay* being implicitly associated with whiteness. This analysis is echoed in works from Bérubé (2001:237) who argued that, in the United States, there are 'powerful whitening practices that daily construct, maintain, and fortify the idea that gay male means white' (Bérubé 2001:237). The evidence above suggests that these same processes are at work in the UK media as well, resulting in a hegemonic formation that consolidates a 'common sense' representation where 'the homosexual other is white, (and) the racial other is straight' (Puar 2007:32). This has persisted into the early twenty first century as the stereotype of the cisgender gay man continues to be represented as white (Wilkinson 2021). Such representations are not, however,

benign as the effect of such discourses have material consequences for queer people whose identities exist at the intersections of sexuality, gender, and 'race'. One such consequence is that racialised Others have, in recent years, been increasingly represented as a 'threat' to the so-called 'LGBT community' (see Chapter 6). Such homonationalist discourses mean that the rights of one minority, i.e. the LGBTQI population, have been used to further marginalise racialised Others who are already disproportionately victimised by the Hostile Environment Policy implemented by Theresa May and disproportionately villainised by discourses that emerged out of the so-called 'War on Terror' (Puar 2007; Puar 2013; Haritaworn, Tauqir, and Erdem 2008; Ahmed 2011; El Tayeb 2012). Similarly, as demonstrated by Wilkinson (2021:563), asylum claims based on sexual identity have been frequently rejected as racialised foreign Others are required to prove, through 'a series of signifiers…and cultural values', that they lead a 'gay lifestyle'. This nebulous term tacitly assumes that a '*gay lifestyle* is represented as a way of life that is inherently Western' and is, arguably, based on the imbrication of whiteness with gayness. The result has been the rejection of asylum claims for those genuinely at risk of persecution in their country of origin. The erasure of gay people of colour and, ostensibly, queer people of colour is, therefore, not simply about representation, but is also the grounds upon which state violences are inflicted upon this section of the population. It is, therefore, incumbent upon media outlets like *The Times* to represent the inherent diversity that exists in the LGBTQI population of the UK. In the present climate of 'culture wars' and manufactured antagonisms (Laclau and Mouffe 2014; Faye 2021), it is unlikely that *The Times* will move beyond framing liberation struggles as 'single issue' politics — a fallacy that divides rather than strengthens electoral coalitions that has a more nuanced understanding of how power works and that could, thus, challenge current hegemonies (Cohen 1997). As Audre Lorde (1982:133) so furtively maintained, 'there is no such thing as a single issue struggle because we do not live single issue lives'.

7.4 — LGBT

In this final section of the chapter, an interrogation of the signifier *LGBT* (994 or 65.88 per million) will be undertaken in order to ascertain to what extent this acronym has resulted in a process of erasure through conflation — i.e. a discursive formation whereby diverse populations who transgress hetero- and cis-normativity through sexual and gender variance have come to be represented as a single minority with shared histories and sociopolitical goals. Ostensibly developed as a method of signalling inclusion and even solidarity, it has been argued that the initialisation of *lesbian, gay, bisexual,* and *transgender,* in fact, collapses difference by failing to acknowledge the specific discriminations or privileges experienced by the diverse groups included in the term (Bey 2021). Indeed, as argued by Spencer (2018:7), *LGBT* as well as its ever-growing iterations such as LGBTQI[22], LGBTQIAA+, among others, 'obscures as much as it clarifies' — a result which is primarily due to the conflation of sexual identity with gender identity (Spencer and Patterson 2017; Spencer 2018). In other

words, the 'T' in *LGBT* is often contextually inappropriate (Spencer and Patterson 2017), especially when considering the centrality of issues like same-sex marriage to so- called 'LGBT politics' in the UK and the obfuscation of issues like healthcare and housing which significantly affect trans populations (Faye 2021). Similarly, as transphobic rhetoric in *The Times* (see Chapter 5) and throughout the UK (Faye 2021) continues to rise, the 'moniker-style' politics of a signifier like *LGBT* seems to offer little in the way of liberation *or* solidarity and is, in fact, more useful as a neoliberal tool for corporate social responsibility departments charged with ensuring evidence of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) (Spencer and Patterson 2017).

While the implicitly cis-normative *LGBT* certainly seems to conflate sexual and gender identity thereby erasing the specific identities and discriminations faced by trans people in Britain, it is also the case that the 'B' in *LGBT* appears to be another case of erasure through conflation. In a diachronic study of bisexual representation in *The Times* (mentioned in section 7.1), Wilkinson (2019:14) revealed how, between 2004-2017, 50% of the examples of *bisexual* occurred as part of the acronym *LGBT*. Like *trans,* it seems that *bisexual* has also been 'collapsed' into a broad initialisation which obscures difference and obfuscates the inherent diversity within the queer population and the specific concerns of bisexual people (Wilkinson 2019; Bey 2021). The cumulative result is, therefore, that, in many contexts, the signifier *LGBT* functionally implies cisgender gay men and sometimes lesbians (Spencer and Patterson 2017; Spencer 2018). Similarly, as argued by Bey (2021), the contextual

[22] At this point in the discussion, it is important to reflect on my own use of LGBTQI in the present thesis. It is, indeed, the case that the discriminations, histories, and liberatory goals for each of these populations both overlap and diverge in many ways. I would contend, however, that there were two practical reasons for using the initialisation in both the research *and* writing of the thesis. First, in terms of research and building a corpus that could assist in answering the research question, it was necessary to cast a 'wide net' that considered a myriad of gender and sexual identities. The result, therefore, included search terms that were both antiquated and contemporary as well as being perhaps inappropriate from particular political or philosophical perspectives. However, as the goal was to look at how queer subjectivities were represented in *The Times*, it was inevitable that a term like LGBTQI would be included. Secondly, while the following discussion will demonstrate the limitations of the acronym, there *are* shared sociopolitical goals and, as demonstrated in chapter 5, there are also parallels between how gay men were represented in the past and how trans people are represented now. Similarly, the fictionalisation of bisexual identities in Wilkinson (2019) is an echo of the fictionalisation of lesbians discussed in section 7.2 of this chapter. It can, therefore, be argued that without using the initialisation in the present research, then certain aspects of discursive sedimentation and the resulting hegemonic sexual and gender formations revealed in the analysis would have remained undertheorised and unexplored. In a departure from Audre Lorde (1979) then, it is perhaps the case that the master's tools must be known *before* being abandoned in order to dismantle the master's house.

deployment of the term in the media, as well as its use in academic and activist circles, also implies an inherent whiteness not dissimilar from the deracialisation of gay men explored in section 7.3 of this chapter. The following analysis will, therefore, explore how *LGBT* has been used in the language of *The Times* and to what extent the preceding critiques comport with the evidence found in the corpus.

7.4.1 — Collocation analysis of *LGBT*

The top 5 collocates for *LGBT* (994 or 65.88 per million) are *network* (50), + (38), *transgender* (47), *community* (81), and *staff (45).* The proceeding analysis of these collocates will be conducted through a close reading of the concordances, but also of the articles in which these concordances occur. This is because, while a single concordance line may not indicate the ways in which *LGBT* both conflates and erases many of the populations it is purported to represent, the broader context often demonstrates how *LGBT* is conflated with *gay* such that they come to be used synonymously. In addition to conflation, however, it will also be demonstrated that *LGBT* appears to be a signifier widely deployed in the context of corporate EDI 'regimes' (Ahmed 2011). Often criticised for their use of 'equality' as a form of 'pinkwashing' (Schulman 2011), it is indeed the case that *network, +, community* and *staff* are frequently used in discussions of EDI achievements and, specifically, the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index[23] (WEI). As in chapter 6, another discourse that emerged in the analysis is homonationalism (Puar 2007) wherein comparisons between 'LGBT equality' in the UK are juxtaposed against a lack of 'LGBT rights' in places like Russia, China, the Islamic State, and 'Africa' (another example of conflation whereby fifty four countries and hundreds of cultures are represented as a singular entity).

7.4.1.1 — *Transgender*

Before elaborating on these themes, however, it is useful to point out that, like *bisexual* in Wilkinson (2019), all of the 47 concordances for the collocate, *transgender*, appeared as part of the phrase 'lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender'. In the concordance lines, *transgender* was then always followed by the initialised form in parentheses, *(LGBT).* In order to establish whether *transgender* was used as part of a collectivised group as frequently as *bisexual*, a search through the 1,569 occurrences of the term was conducted. When including alternative acronyms like 'GLBT' as well as

[23] Stonewall UK is the largest LGBTQ+ charity in the UK. As part of their remit to effect 'transformative change in the lives of LGBTQ+ people', Stonewall UK launched the Workplace Equality Index in 2001 in order for organisations to assess their 'achievements and progress on LGBT equality' (Stonewall 2021). It should be noted that, while many of the concordances and examples in the proceeding discussion mention their 'progress on LGBT equality', trans equality was omitted from the charity's 'benchmarking tools' up until 2015.

other lists of terms which conflated the gender identities of trans people with the sexual identities of lesbian, bi and gay people, it was revealed that almost 30% of the uses presented transgender people as part of a 'community' with lesbian, bi, and gay people as well. In comparison, only 10% of the uses of *lesbian* occurred as part of a collectivised phrase or acronym, while for *gay,* collectivisation and conflation only occurred in 1% of the occurrences. This likely indicates that gay men are often discussed as a discrete group that does not include lesbian, bi and trans people, but also, as will be shown below, that *gay* is often used interchangeably with *LGBT* — leading to the conflation of identities and the elevation of the signifier *gay* to a kind of metonymic term denoting everyone purportedly represented under the umbrella, *LGBT.*

7.4.1.2 — *network, +, community* and *staff*

The proceeding concordance analysis and close reading of the articles in which these concordances occur all indicate how the acronym *LGBT* conflates a diverse group of sexual and gender identities such that the signifiers *LGBT* and *gay* appear to be synonymous. Table 7.6 provides examples of this process wherein *LGBT* and *gay* appear to be used interchangeably even within the same sentence. This is not, however, benign as the use of *LGBT* and *gay* as synonyms erases other sexual and gender identities which are supposedly represented in the acronym *LGBT.* For instance, line 2 describes a straight 'ally' who joins a 'network for LGBT employees' in order to support his 'gay colleagues' (*The Times* 2015). Arguably, this sentence could be read in two ways. First, the reader could assume that 'LGBT employees' and 'gay colleagues' are groups who include the same type of people to which this individual wants to demonstrate his allyship. If one assumed the opposite, however — that *LGBT* and *gay* are not synonyms — then this individual is allied with gay men and perhaps gay women, but *not* with bi and/or trans individuals. As it is likely the former, the adjacent use of *LGBT* and *gay* effectively conflates the two, thereby excluding lesbian, bi, and trans subjectivities from a term designed to be inclusive and presenting the signifiers *LGBT* and *gay* as synonymous. In a similar example from line 6, Piara Powar, the executive director of Fare, European football's anti-discrimination group, warns that 'gay people' should 'be cautious in any place which is not seen to be welcoming to the LGBT community' (*The Times* 2017). Again, one can only assume that Powar is using *LGBT* and *gay* here as synonyms. Any alternative reading would have to assume that gay people are uniquely threatened in places that are not welcoming to the 'LGBT community' in a way in which lesbian, bi and trans people are not — an assumption that would be highly unlikely if not patently false. But where the examples in Table 7.6 demonstrate the conflation of *LGBT* and *gay* in the same sentence, there were dozens of examples where a close reading of the entire article also demonstrated the conflation of these two terms and, ultimately, the erasure of other identifications purportedly represented by the initialisation. These will be discussed by looking at articles concerning the discussion of workplace EDI initiatives as well as coverage of the Sochi Winter Olympics.

1. Her team surveyed staff they knew were **gay** but were not out, asking whether they would benefit from a network for **LGBT** issues.
2. He joined Globe, the professional services company's network for **LGBT** employees in the UK, and in December became one of its first "allies", a network through which straight members of staff demonstrate support for **gay** colleagues.
3. Sarah Thomson, co-chair of the university staff **LGBT** network, says: "There are some countries where it is illegal to be **gay**, so we have to be very careful how we market the scholarship.
4. Life's a drag: London's **LGBT** community take to the streets for **Gay** Pride last month.
5. On his watch Russia has outlawed the dissemination of information about **gay** lifestyles to young people, which Russia's own **LGBT** community says is an effective ban on public gay rights activism.
6. Piara Powar, Fare's executive director, said: "The guide will advise **gay** people to be cautious in any place which is not seen to be welcoming to the **LGBT** community.

Table 7.6 — Examples wherein *LGBT* and *gay* are used interchangeably, thereby conflating the two and effectively erasing lesbian, bi and trans subjects.

After the 47 occurrences of *transgender*, there were a remaining 214 occurrences of the collocates *network, +, community* and *staff*. Upon a closer reading of context, it was established that these occurred in a total of 106 articles. Of these, a clear majority conflate the term *LGBT* with the signifier *gay* when looking at the article in its entirety. This is also true of terms like *sexual orientation* which would exclude trans and non-binary identities. For instance, in an article about the security and defence branches of the UK government which had scored well on the Stonewall WEI, the concordance line reads 'In 2003, MI5's first LGBT network was formed' (*The Times* 2015). This piece of information is provided as evidence for how MI5 improved its treatment of 'LGBT staff'. As the article progresses, however, *The Times* points out that, while the organisation is 'now officially ranked as gay-friendly, this was not always the case'. Shortly after this, they mention that 'in 2008, the organisation approached Stonewall for help in actively recruiting more gay staff' and that there is now support for 'staff who may feel discriminated against, harassed or bullied on the basis of their sexual orientation'. What is not included in this section is any discussion of gender identity and, while 'sexual orientation' is acknowledged, the only signifier of sexual identity mentioned in the entirety of the article is *gay*. In spite of this, the article continues to shunt back and forth between, for example, 'openly-gay personnel' in one sentence and 'LGBT recruits' in another — a clear conflation of identities that contributes to the erasure of other sexual and gendered subject positions.

As in the above example, a significant number of the concordance lines occurred in articles about corporate EDI initiatives, many of which included the Stonewall WEI. And while an 'equality index' may amount to a certain amount of 'box-ticking' whereby a company's EDI policy is measured by how many gay board members they have regardless of the fact that they are all cisgender white men, a less critical interpretation of the Stonewall WEI is that it lets prospective and current employees know that they work for a company that values 'LGBT equality' (Stonewall 2021). In *The Times,* however, there were multiple examples of companies who explicitly linked their interest in 'LGBT equality' to an increase in profit. Not only had Stonewall published that the 'spending power of the LGBT population' was estimated to be between £17 and £22 billion a year, but they also argue that the 'LGBT community' are 'more likely to buy products if they think a company is LGBT friendly' (*The Times* 2017*)*. With this mind, many representatives of large corporations and firms made arguments such as: 'it is really helpful if our colleagues reflect the diversity of our customer base and community' as this will be better for the bottom line (*The Time* 2017). Further examples where members of a business explicitly described the commercial interest involved in applying to participate in the Stonewall WEI included, 'there is a business case for diversity and equality' (*The Times* 2016), 'there is a commercial impact at the end of it' (*The Times* 2013), and 'most (firms) recognise that it is in their economic interest' (*The Times* 2005). One interviewee even went so far as to claim that 'it is not just a "people" thing: it can produce better business results' and that, ultimately, 'diversity and inclusiveness is good for business' (*The Times* 2016). While it is not surprising that a company would be driven by a profit motive, the notion that a commitment to 'LGBT equality' had become a key component of a company's success echoes the discussion in Chapter 6, wherein it was demonstrated how queer identities continue to be shaped by capitalism. In this case, specifically, you see the 'inclusivity' of a term like *LGBT* become a signifier for profit and competition in a market that is increasingly informed by gestural corporate social responsibility politics. This, in spite of the fact, that LGBT inclusion may not include lesbian, bi, or trans employees at all. For instance, in an article titled 'Be the new guy, not the new gay' (*The Times* 2016), an interviewee discusses how the 'LGBT staff network' helps him be a 'more productive employee'. Claims to 'productivity' are obviously of benefit to his organisation, but like most of the examples, *LGBT* seems to be used here as a synonym for *gay*, beginning in the first instance with the title. The article then concludes with two references to the importance of accounting for 'sexual orientation' — a phrase which does not account for trans employees on the basis of their gender identity regardless of their sexuality.

LGBT has clearly become the preferred signifier used in the corporate and public sector when discussing sexual and gender diversity. With collocates like *network* and *staff*, it seems — particularly since around 2013 — that *LGBT* has become the preferred term to signal that a company's 'equality regime' (Ahmed 2011) is broad and inclusive. Nevertheless, several of the articles also show that erasure through conflation is not limited to sexual and gender variance beyond cisgender gay men, but that it also works to uphold homonationalist discourses that position Britain as a bastion of equality when compared to the backward and homophobic regimes of countries like Russia, China, as well as alleged communities like 'the Muslim World' (see also Gabrielatos, Baker and McEnery 2013a). For instance, in the lead up to the Winter Olympics held at Sochi in the Russian Federation, there were several articles which critiqued an amendment to a Child Protection Law passed by President Vladimir Putin which prohibited the 'promotion of homosexuality' (*The Times* 2013). Without ever acknowledging that it was only in 2003 that the UK repealed Section 28 which served a similar function and also banned the promotion of homosexuality in schools (Baker 2022), *The Times* featured several articles which positioned Russia as an outlier, with critics likening 'the persecution of gays to that of the Jews' (*The Times* 2013). Not only did this series of articles ignore the recent history of the UK while at the same time contrasting the exceptional progressivism of the UK with the backwardness and bigotry inherent in Russia, but it also conflated *LGBT* with *gay*. For instance, in one article, the Russian Foreign Ministry Rights Envoy, Konstantin Dolgov, explains that they 'believe promotion of homosexuality could harm (children)' (*The Times* 2013). Similarly, in several of the other articles discussing Sochi and the ban on '*homosexual* propaganda', writers at *The Times* describe boycotts out of 'solidarity with the *LGBT community*' (*The Times* 2013) and implore 'the *LGBT community* (in Russia) to stand up and have the strength and bravery to fight for what is right' (*The Times* 2013). Indeed, in this latter article, the author begins by discussing the Russian 'LGBT community' only to then claim that it is 'illegal to be gay' in Russia, that 'people in Russia are scared to be gay' and, absurdly, that 'the trouble with Russians is they don't know how to be gay' (*The Times* 2013) — this last comment appearing to refer to a lack of LGBT rights organisations and social spaces enjoyed in a country like the UK. Once more, *LGBT* is conflated with *gay* such that any nuance in how the propaganda laws in Russia are being implemented against different groups supposedly represented under the banner, *LGBT*, are effectively erased. The effect of this is that the reader only knows that gay men are affected whereas it is likely the case that lesbians, bi people and *especially* trans and non-binary people are also significantly impacted. For, as argued by Bey (2021), it is usually the transgression of gender norms — generally most identifiable in the trans and non-binary population — that is the source of oppression, persecution and violence both in countries of the 'west' as well as in countries like Russia.

7.4.2 — Concluding remarks — *LGBT*

The preceding analysis explores the ways in which *The Times* has used *LGBT* in such a way that it results in the erasure of other sexual and gender identities purportedly represented in the acronym by presenting them as a 'community' much the way one might speak of an ethic, racial or national identity. This conflation is exacerbated by the privileged role afforded to the subject position *gay* such that the two have become synonymous, often being used interchangeably throughout an article or even within the same sentence. This is not simply a benign rhetorical strategy, however, as, through a process of discursive sedimentation, this false equivalence has resulted in a perception that the oppressions and goals for liberation of the 'LGBT community' can be equated with those that primarily affect or benefit the 'gay community', e.g. same-sex marriage . Through this process of representation then, collocates of *LGBT* like *network, +, transgender, community* and *staff* have primarily acted as signifiers for the interests of gay men while the concerns of lesbians, bi and trans people have been subsumed within the shadow of the 'umbrella'. Thus, while structural as well as interpersonal discriminations and violences against bi, lesbian and trans people are specific and varied — requiring an equally varied and specific response — they have ultimately disappeared in the pages of *The Times* and in its use of *LGBT.*

The analysis also demonstrated how *LGBT* has also been used primarily in the language of corporate social responsibility and EDI, e.g. The Stonewall WEI. There are two consequences worth noting at the conclusion of this discussion. *First*, while 'equality indices' like the Stonewall WEI *do* benefit *some* LGBT employees, they also provide the opportunity for corporations with questionable moral and ethical track records to 'pinkwash' their image for readers of *The Times.* One such example would be a company like British Airways who claim to 'embrace diversity' through a partnership with Stonewall and the provision of an 'LGBT+ network' called 'Flying Proud' (British Airways 2023; Gay Times 2023). At the same time, British Airways also has a contract with the Home Office to deport asylum seekers who have failed to obtain refugee status in the UK (*Guardian* 2018). As many of these deportations include 'LGBT+' asylum seekers (Wilkinson 2021), it appears that British Airways is participating in state sponsored violence against queer people while also using their 'LGBT staff' to show they are a 'diverse and inclusive workplace' (British Airways 2022). The *second* issue relates to the fact that it is corporate social responsibility departments and EDI initiatives which appear to be conflating *LGBT* with *gay.* This means that, while the interests of gay employees have been at the core of EDI initiatives (especially before The Stonewall WEI introduced trans inclusion to their 'equality indices'), the challenges faced by many lesbian, bi and trans employees have not. Bey (2021) argues that similar processes occur when corporations as well as academics and activists use the phrase, 'People of Colour' (POC). Quoting an argument by Sexton (2010), Bey (2021:193) argues that the use of 'POC' which has resulted from 'purported attempts to broaden the

scope of justice by being more multicultural or universal are destined to be insufficient inasmuch as such universalizing gestures increasingly sideline the specificity, which is also a more genuine fundamentality, of black people and blackness'. By highlighting a parallel between POC and LGBT, Bey (2021) aims to disaggregate the conflation of trans subjectivities with 'LGB' because, like the erasure of blackness in 'POC', so too is transness erased when it simply becomes the 'T' tacked onto the end of the acronym. The case is also made that, like the centrality of anti-black racism to all racial hierarchies and violences, anti-trans violences operate along similar lines within the broader queer population. In other words, Bey (2021:202-203) argues that most homophobia and biphobia is about gender transgression which results in a violence better understood as 'transantagonism — that deeply specific reaction not simply to "being" gay, lesbian, or bisexual, but to how fracturing the integrity of gender cohesiveness, transgressing gender normativity, and interrogating gender's naturalization' threatens the hegemony of hetero- and cis-normativity.

7.5 — Concluding remarks

In a departure from the concept of the nodal point as a privileged signifier around which a range of discourses are structured and obtain meaning (Howarth and Stavrakakis 2000; Laclau and Mouffe 2014), this final chapter sought to interrogate the representation of three subject positions by focusing on absence. In other words, while nodal points have a surplus of meaning that can determine an entire discursive formation, the preceding analysis revealed how the erasure of certain identities is effected even when they are, in fact, being represented through language. In addition to a theoretical shift, a methodological shift was also required in order to establish which absences were most 'meaningful' as per the criteria of Schröter and Taylor (2018). Diverging from a more 'naïve' approach which focused on frequency, the selection of which subject positions to interrogate was informed by an engagement with theories such as feminism, Marxism, Critical Race Theory, CWS and erasure. *Lesbian*, gay** and *LGBT* were, thus, selected because, through processes of fictionalisation, markedness and conflation, they revealed the ways in which the histories of queer representation in the language of *The Times* have discursively constructed an 'LGBTQI' subject which is primarily understood to be white, cisgender, gay and male.

Howarth (2018:381) argued that 'human beings and social structures are not fully constituted essences, but incomplete and historically contingent entities that can be constructed in different ways by different forces and processes'. This radical historicity was demonstrated most clearly in the discussion of *lesbian** wherein broader ideological forces concerning sexuality and women in the 1960s meant that even the *possibility* of a lesbian sexual identity was rendered impossible. Lesbian representation, like much bisexual representation (Wilkinson 2019), thus only existed in fiction wherein deviant lesbian characters — primarily in theatre, novels and film — acted as a type of fetish

in the economy of signification. This meant that the public could engage with the *idea* of 'lesbianism' without having to consider the social implications as they did with, for example, the decriminalisation of sex between men. And while lesbian invisibility was only explored in depth in the 1957-1967 sub-corpus, lesbian erasure was present in the following two sub-corpora as well. In the 1980s, the frequent use of phrases such as 'lesbian and gay' (155 occurrences) and 'gay and lesbian' (85 occurrences) accounted for one quarter of all uses of the signifier *lesbian.* Echoing the discussion of conflation through inclusion in the 2003-2017 sub-corpus, such usage meant that the specific histories, politics, and goals of lesbian women in Britain were subsumed within a discussion on 'gay rights' which — often — simply indexed gay men. Specifically, significant historical events like the occupation of Greenham Common or the crucial legal battles for custody over children were, simply, rendered invisible. By the time the signifier *lesbian* was initialised into the acronym, *LGBT*, lesbians had, through a process of 'discursive sedimentation', largely been erased from the history of queer representation in *The Times.*

In the same way that the intersectional oppressions of gender and sexuality were obfuscated, so too was 'race' also largely absent from representations of the LGBTQI population in the UK. This was demonstrated by seeking out signifiers for 'race' in the collocates of *gay** during the 1980s only to find that the sole signifier indicating any kind of racialisation was *black* and *blacks.* Both terms either marked the subject positions of *gay* and *black* as mutually exclusive or deployed the signifier *black* as a marked term for a gay man. Like linguistic signs, signifiers for identity are also determined by their relationship to other identifications (Jørgensen and Philips 2002; Laclau and Mouffe 2014). These two relationships, therefore, indicate difference — an absence of intersectionality wherein the gay subject is *de*racialised to the extent that, in a discursive field in which whiteness is hegemonic, the signifier *gay** also becomes implicitly white. Confirming claims by many scholars working in, *inter alia*, CRT, history and QT, whiteness and gayness have become conflated such that gayness is embedded in whiteness (Bérubé 2001; Puar 2007; Johnson 2014). Like the historical erasure of lesbian women in the UK, so too have the histories of *racialised* queer people in Britain been rendered invisible. A search for stories pertaining to the contributions of black queer artists such as Ajamu or Isaac Julien are simply absent when deliberately searched for in *The Times.* Similarly, significant contributions from activists such as Olive Morris are entirely erased. This is not, however, a discursive process unique to the 1980s, but is also manifest in the analysis of the signifier *LGBT* where, again, the so-called 'LGBT community' is primarily represented as white, middle class, cisgender, gay and male. A sedimentation of discourses that are consistently produced over a sustained period of time has, therefore, erased racialised queer subject positions.

The erasure of a diverse LGBTQI population was, in many ways, sustained and finalised in the third section of this chapter wherein the signifier *LGBT* revealed how attempts at signifying diversity through an inclusive acronym actually resulted in a conflation — or collapsing (Bey 2021) — of identities. The result was that *LGBT* became synonymous with *gay* rendering *gay* a quasi-metonymic term for all queer subjectivities represented in the language of *The Times.* Not only does this erasure compromise *The Times'* ability to represent the specific social, economic and political goals of queer people who do not identify as gay, but it also erases the intersecting oppressions experienced by those who do not identify as cisgender and male as well as those who do not benefit from the deracialised status of whiteness in modern Britain. Amounting to a type of violence, this discursive erasure has material consequences for many queer people, both in the UK and abroad, wherein homonationalist discourses have construed aspects of British foreign policy as well as the possibility of queer asylum seekers seeking refuge in the UK (Wilkinson 2021). The erasure of lesbian women, the whiteness of gay men, and the gayness of the 'LGBT community', are, therefore, in many ways, not simply an accident of representation. Rather, while it is indeed true that all subject positions are radically contingent and constituted by what they are not, it is also the case that, through chains of equivalence, practices of representation — like discourses mediated through *The Times* — ensure the (re)production of electoral blocs. A depoliticised 'LGBT community' that is not represented as being imbricated with other oppressed peoples therefore functions to garner consent for a hegemonic formation which — at this particular historical conjuncture — is invested in maintaining Racial Capitalism despite the inequalities and suffering that it produces. Erasure, is therefore, not simply about invisibility, but is also about how discourse (re)produces hegemonic settlements that ensure 'the active and passive consent of key social actors in a particular historical bloc, while securing the compliance and coercion of others.' (Howarth 2018: 383). With this in mind, the following chapter will critically reflect on the preceding three discursive trajectories and the extent to which the integration of PDT with corpus-based CDA has revealed how *The Times* has discursively constructed a queer subject between 1957-2017.

Chapter 8 — Conclusion

Through the integration of PDT with the methodological affordances of corpus-based CDA, the preceding three analysis chapters have each argued that, through processes of discursive sedimentation, *The Times* has used language to discursively construct queer subject positions that are radically contingent and historically specific. This concluding chapter will, therefore, begin with a critical review and discussion of these results. Subsequently, a critical evaluation of the theory and methodology will be presented before proposing a series of recommendations for how the study design could have been formulated differently. I will then comment on the originality of the thesis and its implications for the politics of representation, before finally providing concluding remarks on how we could gainfully change the way we conceive of identity and solidarity for the 21st century.

8.1 — Discussion of the findings

This thesis began by asking how *The Times* has used language to discursively construct queer subject positions; whether or not such subject positions have changed or remained static; as well as considering to what extent their discursive construction was historically contingent. While there are certainly limitations and 'blind spots' which will be discussed below (see section 8.2 and 8.3 for a discussion regarding the limitations and affordances of applying theory from outside the discipline of linguistics — *especially* PDT), I will argue that the preceding three analysis chapters have not only answered the initial research questions outlined in section 1.7, but have also gone one step further. This is because, in addition to the discursive construction of the queer subject, queer representation in an Establishment newspaper such as *The Times* has also demonstrated how sexuality and gender are simultaneously constituted *by* and also constitutive *of* how the British Establishment and the British State are represented. In other words, at the particular historical conjunctures under consideration, the analysis revealed a dialectical relationship between representations of sexual and gender identities and the discursive construction of certain aspects of British culture. This was revealed through the sedimentation of certain discursive formations, significant shifts in the status of queer subjects, as well as the discursive erasure of certain queer identities entirely.

For example, in section 4.6.1, the identification of discursive trajectories through the categorisation of keywords and key terms generated using *Sketch Engine* suggested that that the histories of queer identities could, to an extent, be mapped on to the development of the biopolitical state, the dynamics of British capitalism, as well as the erasure of certain gendered and racialised populations. And while each of the analysis chapters revealed that, through processes of sedimentation, certain discursive formations became hegemonic, the clearest example was demonstrated in Chapter 5. The analysis of the nodal points, *homosexual conduct* (section 5.2), *Aids* (section 5.3) and *gender identity* (section

5.4), each revealed a moral panic wherein the queer subject was represented as a social pathogen. This was evidenced in the consistency of the collocate *spread* for both *homosexual conduct* (section 5.2.1.2) and *Aids* (section 5.3.1.1) as well as in the language associated with *gender identity* that focused on the increase in the numbers of people — especially children — identifying as trans (sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2). In addition to the discursive sedimentation of the queer subject as a threat, such discourses were simultaneously reproducing consent for state biopower. This is because, in each of the sub-corpora, *The Times* was effectively arguing that the state had the ultimate right to legislate what certain populations can and cannot do with their bodies. And, in the case of *Aids*, *The Times* also supported the state's abdication of responsibility for queer people diagnosed with HIV/AIDS (see section 5.3.2 for a discussion of *necropolitics* [Mbembe 2003]). The discursive sedimentation of the queer subject, therefore, demonstrated how an Establishment newspaper like *The Times* works in concert with the British state to ensure that the hegemony of biopolitics remains unchallenged. In addition to processes of sedimentation which evidenced a *consistent* dialectical relationship between the queer subject and the state, significant discursive *variation* also served a similar purpose.

In Chapter 6, the first two nodal points — *Vassall* (section 6.2) and *GLC* (section 6.3) — functioned in a similar way to the nodal points in Chapter 5 in that they both bound together a discursive formation wherein the queer subject was represented as an internal threat. This is because the discursive construction of fear surrounding 'homosexual spies' in the 1960s resonated with the critique of the 'loony left' in the 1980s as both representations associated the queer subject with communism and the far left during the Cold War. This not only rendered the queer subject in contravention of the dominant political and economic ideology of the time, but it also insinuated that transgressive gender and sexual identities were — again — an internal threat that, through its consistent representation, contributed to efforts by *The Times* to (re)produce consent for capitalism. Indeed, as argued in PDT (Torfing 1999; Howarth 2018; Laclau and Mouffe 2014), the production of a hegemonic bloc is contingent upon creating antagonisms between 'the people' and an Other. What was rendered salient in the analysis of the nodal point, *gay marriage*, however, was that the constitution of 'the people' is a fluid process wherein subject positions can be both included and excluded through processes of hegemonic struggle. This meant that, as the state struggled to maintain consent for neoliberal capitalism after the Financial Crash of 2007/2008, the domestic rights of certain queer subjects, e.g. cisgender, white, middle-class, non-disabled gay men and lesbians, were increasingly represented as simultaneously intrinsic to *and* emblematic of the notion that British capitalism has the capacity to 'lift up' all members of the population. This significant shift — marked most notably by the discursive formation constituted by the nodal point, *gay marriage* (section 6.4) — also meant that certain queer identities became signifiers for British exceptionalism in a world increasingly represented as illiberal and as an *external* threat. It can, thus, be argued that while

processes of discursive sedimentation consistently tethered the queer subject to the hegemonic project of British capitalism, queer identities were unfixed and, therefore, necessarily able to be represented in a variety of ways so as to maintain consent for a system which is, by design, predicated on inequality.

While Chapters Five and Six clearly demonstrate how representations of the queer subject have been construed to (re)produce consent for biopolitics and capitalism, *erasure* is not clearly a state project in the same way. The dialectical relationship identified above may, therefore, seem less obvious. I would argue, however, that the methodological shift away from primarily identifying nodal points according to their frequency revealed the ways in which certain populations are erased or rendered invisible in order to discursively construct antagonisms between particular groups or identities — such antagonisms ultimately functioning to fracture solidarity between marginalised groups. For instance, lesbian invisibility (see section 7.2) — from 1957 until now — has meant that the intersecting oppressions of gender discrimination and homophobia have been obfuscated. Similarly, a look at collocates for *gay* in section 7.3.2 revealed that the intersecting oppressions of racism and homophobia were discursively decoupled such that race and sexuality — unless explicitly marked — had a subtractive relationship in the language of *The Times.* And where an attempt at inclusion has been made, as was discussed in section 7.4 with the case of the signifier *LGBT*, the result has ultimately been erasure through conflation with the actual *usage* of the acronym becoming a quasi-metonymic term that generally refers to cisgender, white, middle-class, non-disabled gay men. The discursive trajectory of *erasure* is, therefore, another mechanism through which *The Times* has (re)produced discursive formations that would elide the intersectional nature of oppression in order to impede any possibility of solidarity and collective liberation. It should be noted though that, due to space limitations, this thesis *also* elides many of the intersectional identities that could have been included. Acknowledging this limitation in a doctoral thesis necessarily means that it, in a newspaper such as *The Times* where space is also limited, it is likely the case that the erasure of certain identities was not always intentional. Nevertheless, what erasure *does* convey is how *The Times* (re)produces discursive formations over a sustained period of time — the result being that a society divided along the lines of, *inter alia*, sexuality, gender, 'race', ethnicity, class, and ability, appears as 'common sense', 'natural', or as 'all there is'.

8.2 — On the successes and limitations of combining corpus-based Critical Discourse Analysis with Poststructuralist Discourse Theory

The findings discussed in section 8.1 are predicated on the idea that identities are discursively constructed *through* representation and that, as a result, they should be understood 'as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices' (Hall

1996:4). This argument by Stuart Hall resonated with the claims made by D'Emilio and Baldwin discussed in Chapter 1 of this thesis who both testified to the idea that there is no universal queer subject that can be read backwards in time. Rather, the signifiers that are used to represent queer people are flexible and the product of discourses that emerge from and reflect their historical conditions of emergence. If we assume, therefore, that there is no pre-discursive subject that is *being* represented then the more conventional theoretical approaches to corpus-based CDA would be insufficient. Basing the analysis on the social ontology of PDT, however, provided a theoretical framework that could rectify this issue while, at the same time, raising some important issues which will be discussed below. The following discussion will, therefore, respond to the research questions which asked to what extent non-linguistic theoretical frameworks could support the analysis of how queer subject positions were constructed in the language of *The Times*; as well as what the affordances and challenges were in employing a combination of PDT and corpus-based CDA.

There is a risk when beginning with a theoretical framework that the data and the results end up being shaped by the theory as opposed to "speaking for themselves". This would, therefore, open up the study to accusations of 'cherry picking' (Baker and Levon 2015) theory, thereby compromising the use of Corpus Linguistics as a method of dealing with bias. While I recognise that this is a potentiality, *all* corpus-based CDA and CADS begins with a theory of language and, in particular, a theory about how language *patterns* are significant in that they both reveal certain ways of representing the world through discourse as well as revealing how these particular discursive choices become naturalised through their consistent use. Similarly, in studies that address positionality and the identity of the analyst, it is accepted that one's results will necessarily be influenced by whether you identify as, *inter alia*, a feminist, an anti-racist or even a liberal centrist. It may, therefore, be the case that rooting the analysis in PDT has led to certain interpretations of the results, but I would argue that this is, indeed, always the case when an analyst with a particular set of politics and theoretical interests conducts an analysis of discourse.

A second issue that arose from adopting PDT from the outset is that much of the analysis was rooted in critical theory as opposed to strict linguistic theory. In other words, while the analysis of keywords, KTs, collocations and concordance lines was not entirely dissimilar from much work in corpus-assisted CDA, the use of nodal points, for example was a departure that may have closed off certain avenues of analysis. For example, while the adaptation of the nodal point as a 'way in' to the analysis was effective, it necessarily meant that there were other discourses that have yet to be explored. Having said that, I would argue that even in a conventional corpus-based study, the sheer volume of data means that there will always be some lines of analysis that are left out. Based on the quality of the analysis, I would, therefore, argue that this approach provided more affordances than challenges.

Finally, it should be noted again that PDT does not have a specific methodology and is, therefore, well positioned to be combined with other approaches. The integration of corpus-based CDA was, therefore, complementary in that it provided a method for identifying textual evidence for theoretical claims. PDT's methodological flexibility also meant that the emergence of other theoretical tools were not precluded. For example, 'signification spirals' (Hall *et al.* 1978) in the analysis of *Vassall* in Chapter 5 helped reveal how representations of effeminacy, greed, homosexuality, espionage and treason were linked in order to create chains of equivalence that rendered Vassall and, by association, all 'homosexuals', an internal threat. Similarly, Puar's (2007) theory of homonationalism in Chapter 6 was essential in explaining how *The Times* used the signifier *gay marriage* as a method of further Othering, *inter alia,* Muslims, Africans, and Russians. Not only did these theoretical tools support the analysis, but they also emerged *through* the data demonstrating that non-Linguistic theory can be applied flexibly at different points in the analysis.

Finally, by focusing on how *The Times* used language to discursively construct the queer subject as opposed to focusing on how queer people are represented, the overall analysis provides evidence for the claim in PDT that all identities and social phenomena are radically contingent. In other words, the lack of fixity and the resulting hegemonic struggle to stabilise a discursive formation was clearly evidenced in the language data from the 1957-2017 corpora. I would argue, therefore, that this study design has the potential to be applied to other subject positions and social phenomena moving forward.

8.3 — On the limitations of the study design and the potential for alternatives

In addition to the issues and affordances produced by combining the social ontology of Laclau and Mouffe (2014) with the methodology of corpus-based CDA, it is also crucial to reflect on the study design if such an approach was to be used again in the analysis of other identities or social phenomena. The following critical reflection will, therefore, focus primarily on the use of parallel corpora, and the focus on only one publication, as well as questions concerning reception theory.

First, the choice to use non-contiguous diachronic corpora meant that there are discursive phenomena which will necessarily have been beyond the scope of this thesis. For instance, the 1970s and the 1990s were both significant eras in the development of an ostensibly queer 'culture' in the UK and, due to the data collection decisions that I describe in section 4.3, neither of these decades are included in the analysis. For instance, the lesbian and gay liberation movement of the 1970s is not only historically important in terms of queer politics, but in terms of language and signifiers for identity, the 1970s would have seen the emergence of the term 'gay' as opposed to 'homosexual' — a political choice that both reflected and provided a new language for the politics discussed in Chapter 6,

especially in relation to the GLC. Similarly, the omission of the 1990s means that an era in which the queer community fought back against the government's failure to effectively address the HIV/AIDS epidemic; the Cold War came to an end, thus transforming global and domestic politics; and terms such as 'queer' were reclaimed for a new politics, were necessarily omitted. The emergence of new signifiers for identity is something that, in a future study, could be addressed by adopting Clarke, Brookes and McEnery's (2022) approach of using Multiple Correspondence Analysis (see section 4.3) to track the changing prominence of certain keywords. In a contiguous corpus, one could, therefore, analyse when certain signifiers for identity, e.g. 'gay', became either foregrounded or backgrounded, likely indexing both changes in queer representation but also how these are related to sociocultural, political or economic factors at a particular historical conjuncture. This, of course, leads to another limitation of the study design: the use of *The Times* as opposed to a different publication or multiple publications.

As discussed in section 4.1 of the Data and Methodology chapter, I decided to focus on one British broadsheet in order to focus on diachronic change. The choice to use *The Times* though was also motivated by an interest in the British Establishment, political centrism, what is considered 'respectable' or 'common sense', while also avoiding the more sensationalist discourse would be found in a tabloid newspaper like *The Sun* or *The Daily Mail*. While the media ecology of Britain is overwhelmingly skewed to the right, I would still argue that looking at *The Times* was successful in the attempt to ascertain what the Establishment in Britain considered newsworthy, which discursive formations were hegemonic at a particular historical conjuncture, on which side of history they tended to stand, and — most significantly — how the queer subject was discursively constructed in language. Having said that, it could be argued that the readership of *The Daily Mail* is significantly higher than *The Times*, rendering its impact on the population more significant. A more crucial area of analysis that is missing though is how the LGBTQI population of the UK represented *ourselves* in media. For instance, the novel use of signifiers for identities, e.g. *trans*, were likely circulating in publications like *Attitude*, *Diva* or the *Gay Times* long before occurring in *The Times.* This is significant because, returning to PDT and the concept of the subject position as developed by Laclau and Mouffe (2014), processes of identification are based on one being 'interpellated' by a particular discursive formation. In order to provide linguistic evidence to support this claim, it would, therefore, enhance the study by investigating to what extent certain signifiers and discursive formations have been embraced or resisted. Similarly, comparing discursive formations foregrounded in *Diva* against discursive formations foregrounded in *The Times* could have, therefore, corroborated or challenged some of the conclusions presented in the current thesis.

To conclude this section, I would like to address two of the perennial issues that arise when discussing representation in discourse — namely, assigning intent to the producers of the discourse in question as well as establishing how such discourse might be received by an audience. For example, at *The Times*, I do not doubt that many of the journalists, especially those on the editorial team, were and continue to be politically and ideologically aligned to the right (whether that be the Conservative Party or New Labour). And while this does mean that much of their coverage can have damaging material and discursive consequences for marginalised populations, it does not, however, mean that they are in service of a nefarious agenda. Rather, like myself on the radical left, I perceive the world in a certain way, consider certain sociocultural, political and economic outcomes to be more desirable than others, and I reject much of the reporting that I believe further entrenches inequality, e.g. the contempt with which trans people in *The Times* have been covered. For this reason, when I have argued, for example, that *The Times* was 'complicit' in the reproduction of necropolitical discourses during the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the 1980s, my argument is predicated on the idea that certain discursive formations supported this type of reporting, that the identities of many of the journalists at *The Times* would have been interpellated by these discourses and, therefore — as subjects cannot transcend discourse — they were unable to recognise and appreciate the full extent of their linguistic choices and the deadly ramifications that this had for the population. In short, while the editorial line of *The Times* does render them complicit in deaths resulting from HIV/AIDS, the discursive terrain in which they were operating arguably precluded the possibility that the outcome could have ever been different.

Similar to assigning intent, much analysis in both corpus-based CDA and PDT has an underdeveloped explanation for what the effects are on audiences when certain discourses are mediated and become hegemonic. Tracing its roots back to Gramsci's conception of hegemonic struggle, it is implicit in the current analysis that certain identities and discourses become represented as 'all there is' — discursive formations thus functioning as a reduction of possibilities which means that alternatives are necessarily ignored (Jørgensen and Philips 2002; Laclau and Mouffe 2014). What this position can potentially elide, however, is a subject's agency. As discussed in section 3.3, Laclau and Mouffe (2014) are clear that there is always an exterior to a discursive formation, thus, ensuring the *possibility* of other discursive formations becoming hegemonic when there is a rupture or 'dislocation' (Laclau 1990) in the current hegemonic settlement. In later work by Laclau (1994) as well as in the works of Stavrakakis (1999; 2007) and Glynos (2008; 2021), the instability of the subject is further explored through a more thorough engagement with Lacanian psychoanalysis and the positions that no subject is ever able to be fully 'sutured' or to reach a sense of completeness. As a thorough discussion of Lacan is beyond the scope of this conclusion, the question of the audience's agency in interpreting or accepting discourse could also have benefitted from a more thorough

engagement with Hall's reception theory — most notably in his seminal essay, *Encoding/Decoding* (1980). In an analysis of television discourse, Hall (1980) challenged the traditional idea of communication which implied that messages were transmitted and then decoded by an audience. Hall (1980), however, argued that the agency of an audience necessarily implied that there were *at least* three possibilities for a how message could be decoded. Assuming, as I have throughout this thesis, that the media construes the world in a certain way so as to maintain particular ideological hegemonies, then the first type of reception posited by Hall (1980) would be that the audience decodes the message, i.e. discourse, simply by accepting it and assimilating it into their world view. The second possibility would be that a subject may partially decode the message according to the dominant/hegemonic position, but that this decoding would not be passive and may include some resistance based on the experiences and ideological position of the audience. The third possibility takes this one step further in that the subject or audience receives the message but actively opposes it based on their ideological position.

In the preceding three scenarios, there is always the possibility for the readership of *The Times* to reject the discursive construction of the queer subject based on any number of ideological positions. While I would argue that the omission of this discussion is, in part, due to space and, in part, because of the research questions asked, I would also contend that these are questions that cannot be ignored as many of the interpretations and explanations presented would benefit from a more rigorous engagement with theories of audience reception and agency.

8.4 — Future directions

While the preceding discussions have highlighted some of the potential limitations of the study, I will conclude by arguing that the combination of corpus-based CDA with PDT in the analysis of identity is a novel approach that has the opportunity to be extended in several different ways.

First, in terms of PDT, there are elements of the theoretical framework that would be highly valuable in further analyses of identity and group formation — especially in an age where the return of the far right and fascism as well as increasing political tensions both domestically and internationally pose an increasingly significant threat. The first of these would be to integrate the theory of *antagonism* (Laclau and Mouffe 2014: Mouffe 2000) more explicitly into an analysis of discourse. In short, Antagonistics is a theory of political conflict that accepts that there is *always* an 'us' versus 'them' in democratic politics. In the case of most European liberal democracies, like the UK, this leads to what Mouffe (2000) describes as the 'democratic paradox': that there will always be a tension between 'liberty' and 'equality' which cannot be reconciled without the subversion of one for the other. In an analysis of how subject positions and group formation occurs, further studies which combine PDT

with corpus-based CDA would benefit from a more thorough engagement with antagonistics. The second area of PDT — but also throughout the Social Sciences and Humanities — that would improve similar studies would be the inclusion of *affect* as one of the theoretical foundations of a study. Understood broadly as the ways in which emotions, sensations and feelings are not solely individual experiences, but are actually constitutive of politics, power dynamics and social relations (Ahmed 2004; 2014), affect is an area of opportunity that would enhance studies like that presented in this thesis. Not only would it help account for agency, but in a media landscape usually predicated more on persuasion than on facts, affect is perhaps the key in understanding why certain subjects become interpellated by a discursive formation while others become antagonistic to it.

Moving forward then, the theoretical affordances of a concept like antagonism (Mouffe 2000; Laclau and Mouffe 2014) coupled with the methodological advances in corpus-based CDA such as Multiple Correspondence Analysis (Clarke, Brookes and McEnery 2022) would provide the opportunity to recreate similar studies to that of this thesis. In order to do so, I would advocate for interdisciplinary teams including, *inter alia*, corpus linguistic scholars working alongside poststructuralist discourse theorists, historians, and political scientists who, together, could map how certain identifications — certain identities and subject positions — become hegemonic at a certain point *and* for whose benefit. In other words, such an interdisciplinary approach could answer questions such as: what are the histories of the social relations that currently appear as 'common sense' and why do some continue to persevere while others are beginning to fracture and erode?

8.5 — On the originality of this contribution

In spite of the areas for development outlined above, the following section will argue that this thesis has made an original contribution to the fields of both corpus-based CDA and PDT.

In terms of methodology, the integration of PDT with corpus-based CDA is a novel approach that, while having been explored recently in Political Science (see Nikisianis *et al.* [2019], Brown [2020] and Brown and Mondon [2021]) has not, to my knowledge, been explored by scholars working in corpus-based CDA or CADS. With this in mind, I would argue that our own discipline would benefit from a more active engagement with other theories of discourse, especially when dealing with questions of identity and representation. This is not only because a broader engagement with other theoretical frameworks might yield novel results or analyses, but also because — as argued in section 2.5 of the Literature Review — corpus-based CDA or CADS that addresses representation is at risk of becoming formulaic if it does not fully exploit the results provided by such a powerful methodology to also provide significant interpretative and explanatory critiques as well.

In terms of the findings discussed in section 8.1, I would argue that this thesis has also successfully destabilised two dominant narratives that, from my perspective, are not only problematic historically, but which also impede a new political agenda that moves beyond liberal identity politics. The first of these narratives was identified in the introduction — namely, that the history of queer rights in Britain has been a unidirectional march towards progress. What the results have actually shown is that the status of the queer subject has always been unstable and that gains in 'equality' can easily fluctuate based on sociocultural, political and economic conjunctures. Secondly, I would argue that the conventional perspective in much CDA — including other neo-Marxist or 'critical realist' (Fairclough, Jessop and Sayer 2004) approaches to analysis — begins from the premise that there is an oppressor and an oppressed. What the findings in the current thesis have suggested is that certain members of the LGBTQI population have, by virtue of their other identifications, been able to move into positions of sociocultural, political and economic power while others within the population have not. Acknowledging that power is a much more complex process of negotiating identifications opens up the possibility for a politics that is not solely based on sexual or gender identity, but also on our demands for a more equal and radically democratic society.

Finally, I would argue that this thesis has sought to bring an explicit political position back into corpus-based CDA at a time when this should be an imperative. From India to the UK and from the US to Italy, many nations are becoming increasingly shaped by discourses of the far right. With this in mind, I would argue that it is crucial that any critical approaches to linguistics — especially those concerned with representation and the analysis of identity and group formation — be rooted in an explicit political position that challenges the emerging hegemony of the far right and, indeed, fascism. The data analysed in the current study ends in 2017 at a time when the moral panic over trans and non-binary people was beginning to proliferate. Since then, so-called 'gender critical' views and debates over the *already established* legal rights of trans people, e.g. the *Equality Act 2010*, have accelerated, becoming more mainstream as the economy stalls and the far right Cabinet of the Conservative Party seeks new ways to divide the nation along lines of gender identity as well as immigration status, Trade Union affiliation, etc. This is not a dissimilar tactic to that used during the 1980s by the Thatcher government — in concert with *The Times* — when representations of the 'loony left' and the GLC were exploited in order to both assign blame for and distract from mass unemployment and the destruction of the Welfare State. It is also not dissimilar from the State — again, in concert with *The Times* — justifying the spread of HIV/AIDS through moral condemnation in order to obfuscate the government's refusal to address a growing epidemic within its borders. And today, these discursive tactics continue as headlines such as 'Trans extremists are putting equality at risk' (*The Times* 2018), 'Transgender status helps paedophile avoid prison' (*The Times* 2022), and 'Trans threats halt women's rights event' (*The Times* 2023), again demonstrate how *The Times*

(re)produces a moral panic that attempts to distract British people from the degradation of the state, e.g. falling living standards, growing inequality, a collapsing National Health Service, by focusing on the alleged 'threat' of a minority. This is evidence of a dangerous political and, indeed, discursive turn that has already resulted in violences — both symbolic and material — that, when taken in their historical context, are ominous at best. Hate crimes driven by transphobia increased by 56% between 2021 and 2022 (Home Office, 2022) while hate crimes overall have reached an all-time high in the UK[24]. This is not coincidental, but indeed, the result of language that is being normalised through British media outlets like *The Times.* This thesis reveals some of the ways in which these discursive processes have happened in the past and should not only be seen as historical events, but as possibilities or warnings for the future. Discourse shapes our social reality and it is, therefore, incumbent upon the analyst to highlight and critique forms of power that necessarily restrict equality and the safety of vulnerable populations both domestically and internationally.

8.6 — Concluding remarks

As with any study that provides a critique of media representation, the fundamental question is necessarily: what should be done? In most corpus-based CDA, the answer is to provide a normative critique — one that advocates for or recommends that the media disseminate *non*-ideological representations and use language that is committed to an objective and balanced account of the truth. As the current study is predicated on the premise recommended by Laclau and Mouffe (2014) that there is no such thing as non-ideological discourse, then the answer to this complicated question becomes even more difficult to answer.

For some scholars working within PDT, however, the answer is not dissimilar from that originally proposed by scholars such as Ruth Wodak, Norman Fairclough, and Teun van Dijk — namely, that there are reactionary forces that produce discourses which must be challenged in order to provide the basis for a more equal and democratic society. For instance, Mondon and Winter (2020) quite rightly challenge the use of the signifier *populism* in publications such as the *Guardian* as it has, over time, largely become a euphemism for discourses that are incontrovertibly far right or fascist. Their argument is that the media has a responsibility to not only accurately identify far right discourses, but also to stop platforming and, therefore, normalising fascism for the 21st century. On the other hand, Mouffe (2018) has argued that, since there will always be political antagonisms, the only solution is to radically expand the democratic sphere such that, even those with whom you disagree, are regarded as

[24] While these figures are exceptional, organisations such as Stonewall (2023) argue that the majority of hate crimes are actually unreported.

legitimate political actors. In so doing, you create a pluralistic democracy that can accommodate conflicting interests without resorting to violence or exclusion. While rejected by many within PDT, Mouffe argues that only by listening to the demands of 'the people' and providing them with a viable alternative, can we stop the growth of the far right. The goal is, therefore, *still* socialism, but rather one that acknowledges the inevitability of constant hegemonic struggles between competing interests, is therefore based on pluralism, and is, in effect, a *left* populism that creates political boundaries between an intersectional idea of 'the people' against 'the elite', e.g. billionaires who control the media, but who have no democratic legitimacy. Based on the analysis in the preceding thesis of how *The Times* has used language to discursively construct a queer subject position, I would argue that we need a much more radical reconfiguration of identity and, therefore, solidarity.

The preceding analysis chapters have demonstrated how transgressive sexual and gender identities are unstable, radically contingent, and in a dialectical relationship with the reproduction of the State. As was discussed in Chapter 3, so too are racial identities — phenotypical difference failing to signify any fundamental differences between groups of people, but rather being used to reproduce Racial Capitalism. While these are only two examples, the theoretical basis of PDT and the findings in this study suggest that, as argued by the late David Graeber, whatever is the case *can* — and likely *will* — be otherwise. Based on this logic, I would, therefore, argue that political organising based on liberal identity politics has, in many ways, run its course. In other words, while people who identify as queer should still resist inaccurate representations in *The Times* that, for example, ultimately result in State violence such as trans people losing access to vital healthcare, I would also argue that advocating for *accurate* representation, as in the example of trans people, will not achieve trans *liberation*. Like Nancy Fraser's (1995) seminal critique of recognition versus redistribution, there is a tendency for one to subvert the other. In other words, seeking recognition through accurate representation in an inherently unequal system does nothing to redress the inequalities that structure the UK. And, where Fraser (1995) argues for a politics that addresses both recognition *and* redistribution through coalition building, the past three decades have not seen this strategy come to fruition. Similarly, the evidence in this thesis suggests that, if identities are unstable and constantly open to hegemonic struggle, then so too would be the gains of a politics based on inclusion and acceptance within existing institutional structures, i.e. recognition. Rather, queer liberation, and indeed the liberation of all people, can arguably only be achieved by creating new identities and crafting new subject positions through novel discursive formations wherein the categories of sexuality, gender, 'race', ethnicity, and ability, are no longer central to our identity. Instead, a new media that centres the problems affecting all people, e.g. climate systems breakdown, falling living standards, growing inequality, would — over *time* and through processes of discursive sedimentation — create new subject positions that transgress the liberal identity politics that were, largely, only formed during the late 20th and early 21st century (see

also Faye [2021] and Sarkar [2023] for a socialist critique of liberal identity politics).

This is not, however, a new idea. Returning to the opening pages of this thesis, James Baldwin — one of the great 'LGBT authors' of the 20th century — argued that he never used the word 'gay' and, indeed, never identified with a sexual identity. It was too 'tribal', too limiting, and unable to reconcile the conflicts that plagued the world about which he wrote (Goldstein 1984). And so, to quote from the author who inspired this thesis, I will conclude with a passage that hints at the possibility of a new politics that transcends the language of identity — a possibility that, perhaps counterintuitively, would lead to the liberation of all queer people and, indeed, all people:

> *Baldwin: There is nothing in me that is not in everybody else, and nothing in everybody else that is not in me. We're trapped in language of course. But "homosexual" is not a noun. At least not in my book.*
>
> *Goldstein: What part of speech would it be?*
>
> *Baldwin: Perhaps a verb. You see, I can only talk about my own life. I loved a few people and they loved me. It had nothing to do with these labels. Of course, the world has all kinds of words for us. But that's the world's problem.*

Appendices

Appendix A — Top 50 keywords and top 50 key terms for each of *The Times* sub-corpora

1957-1967 corpus – 912,612 tokens

Key term	Score	Freq
homosexual conduct	55.54	55
homosexual behaviour	43.72	47
second reading	39.22	105
present law	34.2	46
common prostitute	33.85	34
homosexual law	30.69	28
law reform	26.44	36
gross indecency	23.83	31
homosexual law reform	23.26	21
homosexual act	22.2	20
last exit	22.04	22
conservative member	20.94	20
homosexual relationship	20.94	20
criminal offence	20.46	52
leading article	19.86	31
criminal law	19.08	90
third reading	18.78	25
public decency	17.91	18
parliamentary report	17.79	17
fair comment	17.64	26
committee stage	16.8	22
report stage	16.27	16
indecent assault	16.1	32
crime reporter	15.55	15
security service	15.53	19
homosexual offence	15.28	13
embassy staff	15.17	14
security risk	14.88	16
literary merit	14.69	14
next witness	14.64	13
witness box	14.56	20
adjournment debate	14.17	16
diminished responsibility	13.46	17
spy ring	13.38	13
spy case	12.87	11
first novel	12.62	25

free vote	12.11	16
special correspondent	12.02	11
clerical officer	11.93	11
lobby correspondent	11.89	10
money resolution	11.68	10
new clause	11.58	22
government motion	11.29	10
public opinion	11.23	81
new play	11.15	17
new novel	10.89	15
open prison	10.03	10
west end	9.97	49
male ward	9.79	8
ministerial responsibility	9.53	11

Score and frequency for the top 50 key terms between 1957-1967

Keyword	Score	Freq
vassall	912.61	911
galbraith	246.41	411
wolfenden	200.49	305
homosexual	127.69	1322
liberace	126.98	127
admiralty	107.84	334
homosexuality	77.55	506
mulholland	70.2	88
sodomy	66.61	84
horobin	65.89	66
abse	62.79	72
sketch	61.52	81
connexion	55.58	83
cusack	53.68	91
offences	52.93	85
prostitution	50.32	210
effeminate	46.22	61
tapsell	43.29	42
laughter	43.08	54
radcliffe	41.09	152
prostitute	40.77	273
attorney	38.9	164
littler	37.94	41

kirby	37.56	92
lab	37.03	136
rickard	36.83	35
critic	36.25	45
sexual	36.24	67
arran	36.16	32
berridge	35.49	38
maunsell	34.81	35
indecency	34.28	70
sodom	33.52	41
keighery	31.77	28
swabey	31.48	28
marlowe	30.9	63
guilty	30.5	35
importune	30.49	34
milmo	30.41	28
arran	28.73	69
boothby	28.68	31
girard	28.31	26
buggery	28.03	43
mccowan	27.69	29
odam	27.13	24
tullett	26.89	24
dramatist	26.89	46
fornication	26.71	34
law	26.65	54
fiction	26.34	38

Score and frequency for the top 50 keywords between 1957-1967

1979-1990 corpus – 2,527,525 tokens

Key term	**Score**	**Freq**
sexual orientation	50.6	164
computer genius	26.2	66
conservative mp	19.59	47
intravenous drug	19.54	64
homosexual community	17.86	45
homosexual activity	17.78	46

homosexual behaviour	16.27	47
deficiency syndrome	16.12	44
homosexual relationship	16.06	42
sex education	16.03	109
homosexual clergy	14.99	36
immune deficiency syndrome	14.5	39
riveting performance	14.47	35
gross indecency	14.13	50
marital status	14.05	75
gay community	13.79	45
wartime computer	13.66	32
wartime computer genius	13.66	32
immune deficiency	13.59	41
heterosexual population	13.43	32
human immunodeficiency	13.28	37
homosexual computer	12.87	30
acclaimed drama	12.87	30
homosexual computer genius	12.87	30
sexual morality	12.83	40
human immunodeficiency virus	12.7	35
immunodeficiency virus	12.6	35
male prostitute	12.6	31
promoting homosexuality	12.49	31
lesbian relationship	12.02	30
security risk	11.89	35
indecent assault	11.72	64
sexual behaviour	11.14	70
chief medical officer	10.92	28
homosexual love	10.81	26
loony left	10.75	28
homosexual lover	10.32	24
good-humoured comedy	10.1	23
hard left	10.04	26
first novel	9.39	51
homosexual practice	9.3	22
contaminated blood	9.25	25
opposition spokesman	8.97	26
public school	8.92	71
homosexual rape	8.54	20
love affair	8.41	53
sexual intercourse	8.28	106

witty musical	8.12	18
anonymous testing	8.12	18
heterosexual spread	8.06	18
heterosexual intercourse	7.99	20

Score and frequency for the top 50 key terms between 1979-1990

Keyword	Score	Freq
aids	235.21	4107
homosexual	127.06	4088
homosexuality	67.64	1288
heterosexual	47.98	598
bisexual	40.53	182
trestrail	39.81	99
kiessling	35.19	88
glc	35.06	288
blunt	33.15	173
synod	30.18	331
haymarket	29.77	137
gay	29.26	1861
transvestite	29.25	155
longley	29.03	80
nijinsky	27.91	95
worner	27.71	70
telling	27.46	78
buggery	27.25	116
fierstein	25.93	63
auden	24.96	124
turing	24.26	79
lesbian	24.26	942
mckellen	24	70
fassbinder	22.36	57
runcie	22.08	99
driberg	21.81	58
tatchell	20.71	54
whitelaw	20.44	114
haringey	20.34	96
herlinda	19.99	48
mondale	19.9	50
haemophiliac	19.74	86
abuser	19.07	101

homosexual	19.03	52
livingstone	18.49	164
confait	18.31	45
promiscuity	18.24	85
broadway	17.31	197
whitemore	17.25	43
lulu	17.21	58
sdp	17.11	135
hauser	16.91	111
bogdanov	16.81	46
sw1	16.65	83
panton	16.55	46
altman	16.45	62
anderton	16.42	77
virus	16.41	753
levin	16.38	89
connexion	16.35	66

Score and frequency for the top 50 keywords between 1979-1990

2003-2017 corpus – 15,086,855 tokens

Key term	**Score**	**Freq**
gay marriage	179.19	2710
civil partnership	63.17	938
sexual orientation	55.75	1080
same-sex marriage	54.16	802
gay man	38.76	658
anglican communion	35.77	606
voluntary service	26.21	489
gay sex	25.01	426
gay community	22.11	440
gay couple	20.19	303
gay pride	16.3	235
gay bishop	15.78	223
hate crime	14.06	197
same sex	13.94	328
gay clergy	13.52	196
conservative mp	13.33	186

lesbian couple	13.33	193
political correctness	12.31	235
reality tv	12.27	170
gender identity	11.96	215
gender reassignment	11.8	166
drag queen	11.57	175
positive score	11.05	153
civil partner	10.61	145
free speech	10.24	307
fertility treatment	9.85	152
sperm donor	9.78	135
female ratio	9.43	150
tory mp	9.15	123
employment tribunal	9.02	121
inpatient wait	8.69	116
box office	8.6	364
gay life	8.49	121
gay adoption	8.49	113
gay scene	8.22	122
love story	8.15	190
sex change	8.14	147
gay bar	8.1	118
gay wedding	7.96	105
21st century	7.94	221
gay culture	7.86	115
outpatient wait	7.76	102
first episode	7.68	143
staff turnover	7.62	151
episcopal church	7.61	109
pop star	7.53	228
tv show	7.33	183
gay club	7.24	100
private life	7.23	353
sex life	7.21	205

Score and frequency for the top 50 key terms between 2003-2017

Keyword	Score	Freq
obama	145.4	2198
gay	125.49	31493
website	95.72	1429

transgender	93.8	1400
lgbt	66.89	994
homophobic	64.51	1452
uk	60.97	1093
twitter	59.79	887
eu	58.93	969
putin	56.48	837
stonewall	53.48	842
formerly	52.11	820
internet	50.76	1412
cw	50.18	1234
bisexual	46.85	1258
homophobia	45.78	1155
facebook	44.55	657
ukip	43.35	973
homosexuality	43.24	4115
lesbian	42.91	6060
trump	39.56	1044
tweet	37.76	661
gledhill	35.87	632
romney	34.23	768
beckham	33.22	504
homosexual	31.95	5037
farage	31.29	457
viewing	31.04	474
welby	29.26	450
dvd	28.77	419
tatchell	27.8	438
barack	27.51	400
ivf	26.62	576
mckellen	26.44	462
gaga	26.02	381
anglican	25.61	2992
rowan	24.82	696
heterosexual	24.66	1827
trans	24.25	556
brexit	24.2	350
turing	23.64	459
teeman	22.61	326
youtube	22.54	325
sochi	22.47	339

mccain	22.45	393
paedophile	22.39	413
ebook	22.21	320
blog	22.08	318
itv1	21.72	333
www	21.35	307

Score and frequency for the top 50 keywords between 2003-2017

Appendix B — Thematic categories comprised of top 50 keywords and top 50 key terms

Theme	1957-1967	1979-1990	2003-2017
Sexual identity	homosexual (1,322), homosexuality (505)	sexual orientation (164), homosexual (4,088), homosexuality (1,288), heterosexual (598), bisexual (182), gay (1,861), lesbian (942)	sexual orientation (1,080), gay man (658), gay (31,493), lgbt (994), bisexual (1,258), homosexuality (4,115), lesbian (6,060), homosexual (5,037), heterosexual (1,827)
Gender identity		transvestite (155)	trans (556), transgender (1,400), gender identity (215), gender reassignment (166), drag queen (175), sex change (147)
Community		homosexual community (45), gay community (45)	gay community (440), gay scene (122), gay bar (118), gay club (100), gay culture (115), gay pride (235), gay life (121)
Practice	homosexual conduct (55), homosexual act (20), homosexual behaviour (47), sodomy (84), buggery (43), fornication (34), offences (85), prostitution (210)	homosexual activity (46), homosexual behaviour (47), sexual behaviour (70), homosexual practice (22), sexual intercourse (106), buggery (116), promiscuity (85)	gay sex (426), sex life (205)
Relationships	homosexual relationship (20)	marital status (75), homosexual relationship (42), lesbian relationship (30), homosexual	gay marriage (2,710), civil partnership (938), same-sex marriage (802), gay couple (303), same sex (328), lesbian

		love (26), homosexual lover (24), love affair (53), sexual intercourse (106)	couple (193), civil partner (145), gay wedding (105), sex life (205)
Queer spaces			gay scene (122), gay bar (118), gay club (100), gay pride (235), gay life (121)
Party politics	conservative member (20), parliamentary report (17), committee stage (22), report stage (16), free vote (16), government motion (10), public opinion (81), ministerial responsibility (11), abse (72), lab (136)	conservative mp (47), loony left (28), hard left (26), opposition spokesman (26), glc (288), whitelaw (114), tatchell (54), mondale (50), livingstone (164), sdp (135), sw1 (83)	conservative mp (186), tory mp (123), obama (2,198), putin (837), ukip (639), trump (1,044), romney (768), farage (457), tatchell (438), barack (400), brexit (350), mccain (393), cameron (3,007)
International security	security risk (16), spy ring (13), spy case (11), security service (19), embassy staff (14), vassall (911), galbraith (411), admiralty (334), mulholland (88), cusack (91), tapsell (42), radcliffe (152), kirby (92), maunsell (35), tullett (24)	security risk (35), blunt (173)	
Law, crime, and law reform	second reading (105), present law (46), common prostitute (34), homosexual law (28), law reform (36), gross indecency (31), homosexual law reform (21), criminal offence (52), leading article (31), criminal law (90), third reading (25), public decency (18), fair comment (26), indecent assault (32), crime reporter (15), homosexual offence (13), security risk (16), witness box (20), adjournment debate (16), diminished responsibility (17), open	gross indecency (50), male prostitute (31), indecent assault (64), homosexual rape (20), buggery (116), telling (78), anderton (77), abuser (101), confait (45),	hate crime (197), employment tribunal (121)

	prison (10), next witness (13), wolfenden (305), sexual (67), abse (72), arran (32), sodomy (84), prostitution (210), buggery (43), fornication (34), rickard (35), berridge (38), keighery (28), attorney (164), importune (34), guilty (35), indecency (70)		
HIV/AIDS		intravenous drug (64), deficiency syndrome (44), immune deficiency syndrome (39), immune deficiency (42), human immunodeficiency (37), human immunodeficiency virus (35), immunodeficiency virus (35), heterosexual population (32), chief medical officer (28), heterosexual intercourse (20), contaminated blood (25), anonymous testing (18), heterosexual spread (18), heterosexual intercourse 20), aids (4,107), haemophiliac (86), virus (753)	
Medicine and reproduction			fertility treatment (152), sperm donor (135), female ratio (150), inpatient wait (116), outpatient wait (102), gay adoption (113), cw (1,234), ivf (576)
Religion	sodom (41)	homosexual clergy (36), longley (80), synod (331), runcie (99)	anglican communion (606), gay bishop (223), episcopal church (109), gay clergy (196), gledhill (632), welby (450), anglican (2,992), rowan (692)

Media & arts	first novel (25), literary merit (14), new play (17), new novel (15), west end (49), last exit (22), special correspondent (11), sketch (81), critic (45)	computer genius (66), riveting performance (35), acclaimed drama (30), wartime computer (32), wartime computer genius (32), homosexual computer (30), homosexual computer genius (30), first novel (51), good humoured comedy (23), witty musical (18), haymarket (138), mckellen (70), nijinsky (95), auden (124), fierstein (63), fassbinder (57), broadway (197), herlinda (48), turing (79), whitemore (43), lulu (58), levin (89), altman (62), hauser (111), bogdanov (46), panton (46)	box office (364), love story (190), first episode (143), pop star (228), reality tv (170), tv show (183), website (1,429), twitter (887), internet (1,412), facebook (657), tweet (661), viewing (474), youtube (325), ebook (320), blog (318), itv1 (333), www (307), mckellan (462), gaga (381), teeman (326), dvd (419), email (365), google (285)
Single issue	marlowe (63), dramatist (46)		homophobic (1,452), stonewall (842), homophobia (1,155)
Location		haringey (96)	uk (1,093), eu (969)
Scandal	liberace (127), milmo (28), horobin (66), girard (26), littler (41), berridge (38), swabey (28), boothby (31), mccowan (29), odam (24)	trestrail (99), kiessling (88), worner (70) driberg (58),telling (78)	
Miscellaneous	clerical officer (11), lobby correspondent (10), money resolution (10), male ward (8), new clause (22), public opinion (81), connexion (83), laughter (54), effeminate (61)	sex education (109), sexual morality (40), promoting homosexuality (31), public school (71), connexion (66)	political correctness (235), free speech (307), positive score (153), staff turnover (151), 21st century (221), private life (353), voluntary service (489), formerly (842), beckham (504), turing (459), sochi (339), paedophile (413)

Appendix C — Keywords and key terms which constituted the discursive trajectory of *biopolitics*

BIOPOLITICS			
Gender identity		transvestite (155)	trans (556), transgender (1,400), gender identity (215), gender reassignment (166), drag queen (175), sex change (147)
Practice	homosexual conduct (55), homosexual act (20), homosexual behaviour (47), sodomy (84), buggery (43), fornication (34), offences (85), prostitution (210)	homosexual activity (46), homosexual behaviour (47), sexual behaviour (70), homosexual practice (22), sexual intercourse (106), buggery (116), promiscuity (85)	gay sex (426), sex life (205)
Relationships	homosexual relationship (20)	marital status (75), homosexual relationship (42), lesbian relationship (30), homosexual love (26), homosexual lover (24), love affair (53), sexual intercourse (106)	gay marriage (2,710), civil partnership (938), same-sex marriage (802), gay couple (303), same sex (328), lesbian couple (193), civil partner (145), gay wedding (105), sex life (205)
Law, crime, and law reform	second reading (105), present law (46), common prostitute (34), homosexual law (28), law reform (36), gross indecency (31), homosexual law reform (21), criminal offence (52), leading article (31), criminal law (90), third reading (25), public decency (18), fair comment (26), indecent assault (32), crime reporter (15), homosexual offence (13), security risk (16), witness box	gross indecency (50), male prostitute (31), indecent assault (64), homosexual rape (20), buggery (116), telling (78), anderton (77), abuser (101), confait (45),	hate crime (197), employment tribunal (121)

	(20), adjournment debate (16), diminished responsibility (17), open prison (10), next witness (13), wolfenden (305), sexual (67), abse (72), arran (32), sodomy (84), prostitution (210), buggery (43), fornication (34), rickard (35), berridge (38), keighery (28), attorney (164), importune (34), guilty (35), indecency (70)		
HIV/AIDS		intravenous drug (64), deficiency syndrome (44), immune deficiency syndrome (39), immune deficiency (42), human immunodeficiency (37), human immunodeficiency virus (35), immunodeficiency virus (35), heterosexual population (32), chief medical officer (28), heterosexual intercourse (20), contaminated blood (25), anonymous testing (18), heterosexual spread (18), heterosexual intercourse 20), aids (2,915), haemophiliac (86), virus (753)	
Medicine and reproduction			fertility treatment (152), sperm donor (135), female ratio (150), inpatient wait (116), outpatient wait (102), gay adoption (113), cw (1,234), ivf (576)
Miscellaneous	clerical officer (11), lobby correspondent (10), money resolution (10), male ward (8), new clause (22), public	sex education (109), sexual morality (40), promoting homosexuality (31), public school (71), connexion (66)	political correctness (235), free speech (307), positive score (153), staff turnover (151), 21st century

	opinion (81), connexion (83), laughter (54), effeminate (61)		(221), private life (353), voluntary service (489), formerly (842), beckham (504), turing (459), sochi (339), paedophile (413)

Appendix D — Keywords and key terms which constituted the discursive trajectory of *capitalism*

CAPITALISM			
Party politics	conservative member (20), parliamentary report (17), committee stage (22), report stage (16), free vote (16), government motion (10), public opinion (81), ministerial responsibility (11), abse (72), lab (136)	conservative mp (47), loony left (28), hard left (26), opposition spokesman (26), glc (288), whitelaw (114), tatchell (54), mondale (50), livingstone (164), sdp (135), sw1 (83)	conservative mp (186), tory mp (123), obama (2,198), putin (837), ukip (639), trump (1,044), romney (768), farage (457), tatchell (438), barack (400), brexit (350), mccain (393), cameron (3,007)
International security	security risk (16), spy ring (13), spy case (11), security service (19), embassy staff (14), vassall (911), galbraith (411), admiralty (334), mulholland (88), cusack (91), tapsell (42), radcliffe (152), kirby (92), maunsell (35), tullett (24)	security risk (35), blunt (173)	
Relationships	homosexual relationship (20)	marital status (75), homosexual relationship (42), lesbian relationship (30), homosexual love (26), homosexual lover (24), love affair (53), sexual intercourse (106)	gay marriage (2,710), civil partnership (938), same-sex marriage (802), gay couple (303), same sex (328), lesbian couple (193), civil partner (145), gay wedding (105), sex life (205)
Location		haringey (96)	uk (1,093), eu (969)
Single issue	marlowe (63), dramatist (46)		homophobic (1,452), stonewall (842), homophobia (1,155)

Appendix E — Keywords and key terms which constituted the discursive trajectory of *erasure*

ERASURE			
Sexual identity	homosexual (1,322), homosexuality (505)	sexual orientation (164), homosexual (4,088), homosexuality (1,288), heterosexual (598), bisexual (182), gay (1,861), lesbian (942)	sexual orientation (1,080), gay man (658), gay (31,493), lgbt (994), bisexual (1,258), homosexuality (4,115), lesbian (6,060), homosexual (5,037), heterosexual (1,827)
Gender identity		transvestite (155)	trans (556), transgender (1,400), gender identity (215), gender reassignment (166), drag queen (175), sex change (147)
Community		homosexual community (45), gay community (45)	gay community (440), gay scene (122), gay bar (118), gay club (100), gay culture (115), gay pride (235), gay life (121)
Queer spaces			gay scene (122), gay bar (118), gay club (100), gay pride (235), gay life (121)

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