Bournemouth University

'Shopping for Politics'

Does young people's relationship with brands affect their relationship with politics?

A dissertation submitted by
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In partial fulfilment of the requirements of the award of BA (Hons) Advertising with Marketing Communications

Submission date: 19th May 2014

I declare that this dissertation/project is all my own work and the sources of information and the material I have used (including the internet) have been fully identified and properly acknowledged.

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Word count: 7, 996

Abstract: *This research paper will investigate whether young people's relationship with brands affects their relationship with politics. In recent years the issue of youth political participation has become a highly contested one. It has become a circular discussion with no definitive answers. Between the ages of 18-24 young people experience a number of uncertainties, and they are now seeking structure in consumption. With the recent commodification of politics and the emergence of 'political brands', politics is now just another product on the shelf. This paper will adopt a qualitative approach that will take the form of 2 focus groups and 5 interviews. The findings suggest that political parties are, unbeknown to them, competing with brands for the hearts and minds of young people. Young people are looking for guidance, attention and control; brands now offer them that, subconsciously providing them with the crutch they need to be able to reject party politics.*

Keywords: Politics, brands, young people, qualitative research

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Acknowledgments

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

"The masses of America have elected Henry Ford. They have elected General Motors. They have elected the General Electric Company, and Woolworth's and all the other great industrial and business leaders of the day. They do not vote with ballots, but with dollars and quarters and dimes. They do not vote, moreover, upon what candidates promise that they will do in the future… they confer leadership upon a candidate only if what he has done has proven satisfactory."
(Filene and Wood 1932)

In recent years the issue of youth political participation has become a highly contested one. Are youth apathetic? Or are they disenfranchised? Is it their fault? Or should we blame our political system? It has become a circular discussion with no definitive answers. In the game of life society has moved from the role of the caring warden, into the position of one of the players, it has become the prime source of surprise and danger (Bauman 2001) causing British youth chronic instability. Young people are looking for attention, guidance and emotional stability, political parties no longer offer them that, brands do.

Unlike party politics, brands have been recognised for giving young people a sense of power and control, as well as providing benchmarks for them to shape their identity (Schroeder et al. 2006; Galinsky and Rucker 2008), and their social successes haven't gone unnoticed. Branding and franchising have more recently permeated into politics (Marsh and Fawcett 2011), which has seen voters become consumers, parties become brands, and politics become a product. If politics is now positioning itself as a commercial activity, then "parties are brands" (Smith and French 2009 p.211) and they will start having to compete with existing brands for the hearts and minds of young

people. Existing literature implores a top-down approach investigating the way branding affects politics, looking at campaign success, political strategies, and its impact on democracy. However prevailing academia fails to explore whether brands are now affecting politics from a bottom-up approach, from the perspective of the young voter/consumer.

This paper hopes to contribute to the existing debate surrounding young people and politics, changing the conversation by integrating the role of brands. More specifically this research will explore whether young people's (aged 18-24) relationship with brands, affects their relationship with politics.

Much of the existing literature on youth political engagement is based predominantly on quantitative research, and this has gone on to shape the methodological approach undertaken by this study. Previous studies tend to impose very narrow definitions of 'politics' and 'engagement' and very few explore how respondents themselves understand and relate to politics (Marsh et al. 2007). As this investigation seeks to uncover a deeper understanding of young people's relationship with both brands and politics a qualitative approach will be adopted. This will take the form of two focus groups and 5 in-depth interviews conducted with 10 Bournemouth University students between the ages of 18-24.

This paper will start with a brief review and critical analysis of the existing literature, which will be categorised into 3 main sections; 'The Current Debate', 'The Existing reasons' and 'The Role of Brands'. The second section will discuss the methodological approach adopted by this investigation, and the reasons for this decision. Discussion here will involve the research design, sampling process and conceptualisation of the key terms. The subsequent section will identify and interpret the research findings and key themes. The final section will conclude this investigation,

highlighting its contribution to the academic debate.

British young people keep being told how "apathetic" and "disengaged" (Phillips 1998; White et al. 2000; Henn et al. 2005) they are in regards to politics, but as far as this paper is concerned, not only is this incorrect, but it's also extremely detrimental to the future of British democracy. Young people are political, they are voting, but similar to the behaviour exhibited in the Edward Filene (1932) quote above, they are voting with their money and looking for proof not promises.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

When 'youth' and 'politics' are mentioned in the same sentence, the phrase 'politically apathetic' usually doesn't follow too far behind. Young people are being hounded and criticized for their apparent 'apathy' but the findings initiating and supporting this view, are somewhat flawed. This chapter will provide a brief overview of the existing literature, highlighting some of the research inadequacies that this study hopes to rectify. The first section will briefly discuss the current academic debate regarding youth political engagement identifying some of the arguments that this study will be either be adding to, or disagreeing with. The following section will then discuss three existing reasons currently used to explain the increase in youth dis-engagement, highlighting the flaws, and the omitted presence of brands. The final section will discuss the role of brands, the risk they pose to 'politics', and the current weighted debate about the relationship between politics and brands.

2.1 The Current Debate

Until fairly recently, the academic debate surrounding youth political engagement has relied heavily on quantitative analysis (Henn et al. 2005; Marsh et al. 2007). Much of the research was designed to uncover why the 'uninterested' and 'politically apathetic' youth (Phillips 1998; Henn et al. 2005) were the way they were, and whether their "heterodox views and habits" was making the 'generation gap' more marked (Phillips 1998). Attitudinal engagement was measured by voter registration and turnout, along with party membership figures (Parry et al. 1992; Phillips 1998), and it's the findings from these investigations that usually go on to inform this perception of 'youth apathy' (Kimberlee 2002).

Whilst it is unarguable that youth voting figures are on the decline, the extent of participation, or non-participation at general elections is never entirely clear, making it almost impossible to quantify (Johnston & Pattie 1997 cited by Kimberlee 2002). Also as mentioned in the introduction, this quantitative approach often adopts a very narrow conception of politics (Henn et al. 2005; Marsh et al. 2007) undermining the validity of the findings. That said, the quantitative project undertaken by Pattie et al (2004) challenges this 'politically apathetic' view. They identify that young citizens haven't contracted out of politics, whilst collectivist forms of participation may have declined; overall individualistic forms of participation have actually increased (Pattie et al. 2004).

This is a perspective supported by a number of qualitative investigations (White et al., 2000; Norris 2003; Henn et al. 2002; Loader 2007; Rossi 2009; Mycock and Tonge 2012), which have found that the picture appears one less of apathy or inactivity, and more of different forms of engagement (Marsh et al. 2007). Henn et al (2002)

cultivates findings that are a great starting point for this paper, they conclude that young people are interested in politics, and if they are a generation apart it has less to do with apathy, and more to do with their 'engaged scepticism' about 'formal' politics. Norris (2003) supports many of Henn et al' (2002) conclusions but argues that there has been a diversification of the repertoires of political action. She believes that young people's political repertoires are different to other cohorts and one important characteristic of theirs is this increased engagement with 'consumer' and 'lifestyle' politics (Norris 2003).

This section has briefly summarised the debate that this research paper will be entering into, whilst also demonstrating the discrepancy in academic opinion regarding young people's relationship with politics. It has also provided the context for the following section, which will be discussing some of the existing reasons given for the decline in youth political engagement.

2.2 The Existing Reasons

So whilst the 'apathetic' or 'different' debate rages on, what is the source of this apparent aversion to formal politics (Henn et al. 2005)? Drawing from both political science and youth studies Kimberlee (2002) identifies four broad explanations for young people's apparent lack of political participation; this paper will discuss three of them.

2.2.1 Youth Focused Explanation

The first is 'youth focused' and is the explanation that seems to inform most media discourses on non-participation (Kimberlee 2002). It adopts the belief that young

people aren't 'engaging' with politics owing to their 'lifestyle' or personal characteristics, like their social class (Kimberlee 2002). Parry et al (1992) argue that young people tend to face 'start up' problems due to their mobility and inability to develop a voting pattern. This is supported by Johnston & Pattie (1997) who believe that most youth voting abstention is due to involuntary, rather than voluntary factors; things like not living close to polling stations, or not being registered.

It is unlikely that this 'youth focused' explanation is an adequate account for low political engagement, as it tends to locate the cause of non-participation within each individual, refusing to account for the role of other factors (Kimberlee 2002). This explanation also suggests that a mere increase of polling stations would upsurge 'participation' when arguably the issue lies not with convenience, but instead with making young people 'want' to vote.

2.2.2 Politics Focused Explanation

Directly disagreeing with the above reason is the 'politics focused' explanation. This suggests that the decline in youth political engagement and participation is instead a consequence of "the country's out-dated electoral institutions and the failure of political parties to attract young people" (Kimberlee 2002, p.88). Political parties also seem out of touch with the needs and experiences of the British youth (Henn et al. 2002) and many young people feel that their opinions are considered irrelevant (White et al. 2000). It is therefore conceivable that young people may be failing to vote, not because of start up, lifestyle difficulties, but instead because politicians are, for a variety of reasons, remote and irrelevant (Kimberlee 2002). The rejection of arrogant and self-absorbed professional politics might not be cynical withdrawal, but instead the beginnings of a legitimate opposition (Loader 2007).

2.2.3 Alternative Value Explanation

The final explanation that this paper will address is the view that "young people have adopted alternative values that are different to those of older generations" (Kimberlee 2002, p.90). It adopts the view that young people are rejecting orthodox, party based politics (National Opinion Poll Research Group 1995 cited by Kimberlee 2002) due to an increased interest in identity, environmental and human rights politics (Kimberlee 2002). Fornäs and Bolin (1995) accredit this generation with the potential to develop new forms of politics, which reflect the changing world in which they have arrived (Fornäs and Bolin 1995). It has been argued that the growing concern with identity politics is due to young people's 'inner-directed needs' which has seen a growing emphasis on 'inner growth', 'personal autonomy, 'empathy' and 'correctness' (Wilkinson 1994). According to Kimberlee (2002) young people have been seen as being at the forefront of this new politics', which has shifted the focus away from the class-structured politics of the past.

2.2.4 Discussion

Whilst all have valid points, standing alone they are far too limited. Certain 'lifestyle' factors will affect youth participation and engagement, however class is no longer the most influential (Kimberlee 2002). Arguably the mobility and flexibility enjoyed by many young people (Johnston & Pattie 1997; Fornäs and Bolin 1995) does explain why the binding and somewhat limited nature of political parties may no longer seem attractive to them. Also these explanations address only the obvious, with no emphasis on influential factors outside of the political sphere, i.e. brands. This paper will argue that young people's rejection of political parties is not due to apathy or disinterest (Phillips 1998; Henn et al 2005), but is instead a form of political

emancipation. Young people's lives are changing, they are reacting to the world, and as Fornäs and Bolin (1995) noted, are now developing new forms of politics.

2.3 Brands

As illustrated above, academic literature is starting to acknowledge the changing nature of politics with the move away from class-based politics (Kimberlee 2002) and the introduction of consumer and lifestyle politics (Norris 2003). Nonetheless it still remains somewhat undeveloped, as brands dominant role in the lives of young people has been largely overlooked in the debate surrounding youth dis-engagement. Whilst there is a considerable amount of academic work focusing on the relationship between branding and politics, as reviewed in the introduction it is very one-sided. This next section will discuss the increasingly affective relationship between brands and young people, and the weighted existing literature exploring the relationship between brands and politics.

2.3.1 The Power of Brands

As mentioned in previously, young people are experiencing a number of uncertainties leaving them with little sense of power or control (Kimberlee 2002), and according to Bauman (2001) this uncertainty generated anxiety is the very substance that makes individualised society fertile for consumerist purposes. Young people are now seeking structure in consumption as a means of dealing with low feelings of personal control (Cutright 2012), which has seen their attention divert away from politics and onto brands. Life turns into a shopping spree (Beck 1992 cited by Bauman 2001) and as party politics looses its authenticity and relevance, young people are buying into brands, and leaving politics on the shelf.

According to Schroeder et al (2006) "a brand is a narrative entity that imposes itself as a natural source of ideological and biological power" that have the ability to govern the way we consider our daily universe and most of our daily actions. Dissimilar to political governance brands tend to work from below by shaping the context in which freedom is exercised (Arvidsson 2005). Holt (2004) believes that "customers flock to brands that embody the ideals they admire, helping them express who they want to be", a similar criterion often adopted when joining or endorsing political parties.

The social construction of political identity is further complicated for young people (Giddens 1991) as the old values and affinities associated with social class identity are being transformed and replaced with the prospect of multiple identities (Fahmy 2006). Young people's disconnection with social class and political institutions means that they are now required to take more responsibility for managing both their lifestyle choices (Giddens 1991) and the construction of their identity. Political parties are no longer helping them with this, brands are.

2.3.2 Politics and Brands

For some, the connection between politics and brands may be considered a tedious one, and whilst there is a small amount of literature examining their relationship, as mentioned in the introduction, it is very one-sided. Brands are now providing young people with guidance, values, stability and control (Kimberlee 2002; Holt 2004; Cutright 2012), and whilst this may seem irrelevant to political parties and politicians, it is in fact affecting their relationship with young people. The commodification of politics has further positioned politics as akin to shopping, with parties transforming into brands (Smith and French 2009), forcing them to compete with existing brands for young people's attention and support.

Branding has permeated politics in a number of ways, all of which reinforcing this analogy between buying and voting. Needham (2005) recognizes the discernable similarities between elections and point of sale, which is grounded in the view that consumers now have knowledge structures of political parties, in the same way they have for brands (Smith and French 2009). Smith and French (2009) argue that political parties are brands because they act as brands to consumers, which is supported by a number of academic's who also recognise the existence of 'political brands' (Kavanagh 1995; Smith 2001; Needham 2006; Marsh and Fawcett 2011). Smith and French (2009) publically acknowledge political parties as brands, highlighting the benefits they provide to their consumers; community involvement, cultural identity, self-concept reinforcement and epistemic value, to name but a few. But in doing so they reinforce exactly what it is that 'political brands' aren't doing for young people, which may be why they are now turning to commercial brands instead.

2.4 Conclusion

Whilst some argue 'apathetic', and others argue 'different' there is an inarguable decline, or difference in the way young people engage with politics. Key reasons have been identified in academic literature however none seem to explore and acknowledge the significant relationship young people have with brands and whether it impacts on their relationship with politics. Brands are now shaping our ability "to look, fantasize, sympathize, or sometimes simply to act and feel" (Arvidsson 2005) and with the recent permeation of political branding, political parties are now having to compete with them. Brands are giving young people control, power and attention, politics and politicians

aren't. So it prompts the question: Does young people's relationship with brands, affect their relationship with politics?

2.4.1 This research paper aims to achieve the following three objectives:

R^1: To understand young people's perception of party politics.

R^2: To explore young people's relationship with brands.

R^3: To investigate whether young people expect more from brands or politicians.

The next chapter will discuss how the methodological approach adopted by this paper intends to answer the proposed research question and three research objectives.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

To explore whether young people's relationship with brands affects their relationship with politics, a qualitative approach was adopted allowing the researcher to develop a deep, insightful understanding (Bryman 2008). As discussed previously, a critique of much of the existing literature on youth political engagement is that it adopts a quantitative approach, focused heavily on narrow, restricted conceptions of the 'political' (Marsh et al. 2007). This investigation wanted to really understand how young people themselves conceive the political, which means that no attempt was made by the researcher to define 'politics'. This chapter will briefly outline the research design, the sample used, and how 'politics' and 'brands were conceptualised. It will also provide a detailed explanation of why focus groups and in-depth interviews were

the methods chosen to investigate whether young people's relationship with brands affects their relationship with politics.

3.1 Research Design

This study wanted to uncover an authentic understanding of young people's relationship with politics and brands, so wasn't seeking a methodology that uncovered 'generalizable truths' (Marsh et al. 2007). This led to the use of two focus groups involving 10 respondents, and follow up semi-structured interviews with 5 of the participants.

3.2 Sample

Owing to the nature of this research project, it would have been impossible to obtain a completely representative sample of young people, however respondents were selected on their ability to add to the 'richness' of data collected (Barbour 2008). All respondents were university students aged between 18-24, and diversity was ensured across 7 variables: gender, age, hometown, race, degree, sexuality and class, which were self-identified (see Appendix D). As Patton (2002) stresses "Any common patterns that emerge from great variation are of particular interest and value in capturing the core experiences and central, shared aspects".

3.3 Conceptualising 'Politics'

To avoid imposing narrow conceptions onto the respondents, the first questions asked in the focus group were used to elicit their definition of 'politics'. They were asked to describe their instant associations with the word politics, and were then invited to elaborate on these responses through the use of images (see Appendix F), an increasingly popular social research technique (Marsh et al. 2007). The respondents

were asked to pick 5 images out of a potential 10 that they most associated with 'politics', both groups picked 4 of the same. They both selected a photo of British media, a picture of Ed Milliband, Nick Clegg and David Cameron stood together, an image of a voting card, and a road sign with the key parties pointing in different directions. The findings from this suggested that young people's definition of 'politics' is very 'party' based.

3.4 Conceptualising 'Brands'

Respondents were also asked to define what a 'brand' meant to them. Their responses were generic and basic; it was defined as 'a label' or 'name' with a 'bit of personality behind it'. They spoke about it from a very detached, rational perspective, which supported the hypothesis that young people are largely unaware of just how influential brands are in their lives.

3.5 Focus Groups

Focus groups are a qualitative method that have recently gained in popularity in media and marketing studies, however are by no means a new technique (Bryman 2008). They were utilized by this study to elicit honest and valid responses to the proposed research objectives outlined in section 2.4. Similar to Henn et al' 2002 study which was investigating youth and political participation in Britain, the focus groups were used to uncover some of the deeper perceptions and meanings that young people attach to politics and political activity (Henn et al. 2002).

Information rich cases (Patton 2002) were heavily utilized in these focus groups in order to enhance the richness of the data. Both focus groups had one participant who was currently doing a 'politics' degree, which added a very interesting dynamic to the

discussions. The focus groups were also used to explore 'class collective identity' and whether it still exists for young people. They also investigated the way the respondents cope with uncertainties and disappointments, which supported Cutright' (2012) findings that consumption is now used to deal with low feelings of control. The respondents were also asked to list 3 characteristics that both a brand and a politician needs in order to be successful, which was completed individually at first, then discussed within the group. Not only did this question highlight the similarity in characteristics they now prescribe to brands and politicians, but it also enhanced the generalizability of the findings, as their individual responses were very similar.

3.6 Interviews

Similar to O'Toole et al' investigation into young people and politics in the UK, the data generated in the focus groups was followed up by individual in-depth interviews (Marsh et al. 2007). The interviews were used to strengthen the findings from the focus groups, which meant generating a deeper understanding of respondents 'perceptions', and expectations' of brands and politics, as well as their 'relationship' with both. The interviews were used to explore personal experiences in greater detail and the affect it has on their relationship with brands and politics.

The interviews focused on eliciting biographical information like class and lifestyle, they were also asked about political and brand allegiances, their current life stage, buying habits, past experiences and family influences. The follow up interviews were used to solidify existing key findings, but to also investigate whether there were any 'group' influenced opinions. The interviews were semi-structured, so the researcher had an interview guide with a list of questions (Bryman 2008), but the interviewee

could lead and direct the conversation. Respondent diversity was also ensured in the follow up interviews.

3.7 Limitations

Whilst focus groups and interviews were definitely the method most suited to this study, there were a number of limitations, the first being the unrepresentative size of the sample. Only 10 respondents were used, all of which were studying at Bournemouth University, which minimised the generalizability and reliability of the findings. The second limitation is that responses may have been influenced by the desire for moderator approval, and the fear of peer disapproval (Smithson 2000). The most intrusive limitation is researcher bias, which must always be acknowledged when utilizing qualitative research. Regardless of how impartial one tries to remain, personal opinions and experiences are likely to influence the research collection and interpretation.

3.8 Conclusion

Overall this methodology reflected the theoretical concerns with a lot of the existing literature. Qualitative methods were used to elicit, deep insightful understandings of young people's 'perception of party politics', their 'relationship with brands' and 'whether they expect more from brands or politicians'. Participant diversity was crucial, as although this study isn't focused on generating generalizable findings, it wanted to explore any shared or differentiating opinions that may be based on identity qualities. These methods were designed to explore the way young people conceive both brands and politics and whether they have any affect on one another, and the subsequent chapter will provide all the answers.

4.0 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The findings from this paper suggest that young people are politically engaged, however they have employed a 'party' centric definition. Political parties are something they have become disaffected by, and their disengagement with them is not apathetic, but instead a conscious form of political rejection. Brands on the other hand offer young people attention, control and symbolic value, things that they are now no longer looking for from political parties and politicians. Does young people's relationship with brands affect their relationship with politics? In short, the answer to this question is yes.

This chapter will identify 5 key themes, and pit the analysis within a discussion of the existing literature. The first theme explores young people's relationship with politics. The second theme explores their relationship with brands. The third theme discusses the declining influence of class boundaries and the increasing influence of brand choice. The fourth theme compares young people's perceptions and expectations of brands and politics. And the final theme highlights that young people are largely unaware of the relationship between their buying and their voting.

4.1 Their Relationship with Politics

4.1.1 Their Definition

The findings from this investigation oppose the conclusions from previous academic studies that explored the 'uninterested' 'apathetic youth' (Phillips 1998; Henn et al. 2005) and argue that their limited conceptions of the political are having a profound affect on youth engagement. According to 20 year old, Advertising student Jules, *"we will stand up for shit that we don't want to take, but we don't know that were*

necessarily being involved in politics. The creation and perpetuation of 'party' based 'youth apathy' has been internalised by many young people, where they themselves now measure their political interest and engagement, around this preconceived narrow definition of 'politics'.

For 21-year-old Advertising student Jake, politics is like *"a really interesting series that I missed the first two seasons of and now there's no way for me to be involved".* For these participants politics means politicians and it's become a closed, London centred activity that they would love to be involved with, but can't. They see politics as an action in itself, the images symbolising racism; gay rights and personal protest (see Appendix F) were largely ignored when communicating their definition of politics, and according to 21-year-old Advertising student Marissa *"you can switch on and off politics and mine always seems to be off".*

According to Jane who is a 21-year-old Politics student:

"I don't think that people, when they think of politics, have a definition that

they can go to, so they think of the House of Commons… and the party leaders".

This narrow, predefined, party based conception of 'politics' is restricting young people's perceived engagement with politics, heightening their political insecurities and extending the generation gap (Phillips 1998). The academic world propose the 'youth based', 'politics based', 'value based' reasons for the decline in youth disengagement (Parry et al. 1992; Wilkinson 1994; Johnston & Pattie 1997; White et al. 2000; Henn et al. 2002; Kimberlee 2002), but the findings from this study suggest that 'academic based' needs to be added to that list.

4.1.2 Party Politics

This narrow 'party' based definition is made more detrimental as this happens to be the main aspect of politics that many young people seem to reject. The findings from this study will go on to support Kimberlee' (2002) 'politics' focused explanation.

As discussed in section 2.2.2, Henn et al (2002) believe that political parties seem out of touch with the needs and experiences of the British youth, and according to 21-year-old Jane, *"they don't understand us, we don't understand them"*. This mutual lack of understanding creates an unspoken irrelevance, where young people are aware that they don't serve the interests of politicians, but politicians then become as equally insignificant to them.

This is then worsened as according to Jules:

"we feel like our voices aren't being heard, but we have a lot to say, and what we do have to say is probably quite good, and they should listen to us".

This opposes the 'apathetic' argument, and reinforces just how politically extraneous young people feel. Jules' comment is also supported by White et al' (2000) research, which found that many young people feel that their opinions are considered irrelevant, a factor that could very easily lead to political disillusionment. Thus supporting the notion that declining voter turnout is not necessarily due to an inability to get to polling stations (Johnston & Pattie 1997) or apathy, but instead could be a form of legitimate opposition (Loader 2007).

Alongside politicians inability to understand young people and their perceived political irrelevance, political parties no longer provide clear identity value. 21-year-old Ellie who is a middle class Advertising student believes that:

> *"They aren't staying true to their party, and are quite confused in themselves, and that's why many people don't have a strong attachment to them"*.

If parties no longer know what they stand for, they wont be able to help young people shape their own identities. As discussed previously, Giddens (1991) notes that young people are now required to take more responsibility for the construction of their identities owing to their increasing disconnection with political institutions.

According to the findings of this study, when young people think, 'politics' they think political parties, which unfortunately happens to be one of the main facets of politics that have disillusioned the British youth. This narrow conception means that young people internalise this 'apathetic' view, as they themselves don't recognize that they are engaging with politics outside of this limited definition. This inhibits their political confidence, and essentially positions 'politics' as a taboo subject amongst the younger generation. Congruent with the 'politics focused' explanation (Kimberlee 2002), political parties ignore young people and cease to provide any identity value, forcing young people to look elsewhere.

4.2 Their Relationship with Brands

As touched upon in the introduction, anxieties and instability often prompt individuals to live their lives as a string of shopping expeditions (Bauman 2001), and with political parties increasing inability to satisfy young people's needs, they have moved on to the next best thing, brands.

4.2.1 The Power of Brands

For this generation of young people *"brands aren't lifeless discriminators, they're animate objects"(Advertising student Jake)* and according to Belk (1988 p. 139) "knowingly or unknowingly, intentionally or unintentionally we regard our possessions as parts of ourselves". Ellie believes that *"you start to build affective feelings towards a brand"* where it becomes so much more than just a functional product, and has the ability to govern (Schroeder et al 2006) young people's lives. During the follow up interview with Marissa, she was asked how she would feel if the brand she admired (which happened to be Nike), strayed away from its key values, her response was; *"I don't think I would be able to trust them to help me on my self improvement journey"*. This single comment highlights the overwhelming amount of influence some brands have been ascribed, and supports Tuan' (1980. P472 cited in Belk 1988) observation that "our fragile sense of self needs support, and this we get by having and possessing things".

4.2.2 The Importance of Values

As discussed throughout, young people are now required to take more responsibility for the construction of their identity (Giddens 1991). This means that they are buying things that will stabilize and communicate the values they want to espouse as "people seek, express, confirm, and ascertain a sense of being through what they have" (Belk 1988, p.146). According to Jake he will only buy brands *"that are congruent with my values",* which means that brands are now having to make a concerted effort to appeal to young people's emotional needs as well as their functional ones. Marissa wouldn't want to *"buy into something that didn't fit into my values"* supporting Malar et al' (2011) findings that people buy brands that achieve self-congruence, and affirm their sense of self.

For the respondents of this study, when they buy into brands, they are *"paying for attention" and "to have something that I identify with" (Marissa).* Young people should be able to identify with political parties, and apart from Ed who is currently studying politics, not one of them mentioned the identity value offered by political parties. The findings also suggest that, similar to the way Sut Jhally (2006) recognises advertisings ability to fill commodities with desired meanings; young people are now subconsciously injecting themselves into brands, filling them with their desired meaning, creating an interchangeable entity. When Jake was talking about one of his favourite brands Google, he mentioned that *"in terms of personality as well, they're not very far from someone like me"*, and when Marissa was asked to describe what type of politician Nike would be she said *"female".* Whilst it would be impossible to make any profound generalisations based on these findings alone, throughout the 2 focus groups and 5 in-depth interviews, it is all too apparent that young people's relationship with brands is extremely complex, with young people putting as much meaning into brands, as they receive.

4.2.3 Discussion of Themes 1 & 2

The two themes above have addressed my first two research aims, as they have uncovered the respondent's perception of party politics, and also explored their relationship with brands. Owing to the elite, out-dated nature of party politics (Kimberlee 2002) many young people are now consciously rejecting and disengaging with political parties. Meanwhile brands are offering young people attention and identity value, continually increasing their expectations, and then fulfilling them. The following theme will discuss the declining role of fixed class categories, and the emerging presence of class within consumption.

4.3 The Role of Class

In recent years the effect of class on social and political outcomes has become a highly contested subject (Marsh et al. 2007), and as discussed in section 2.1, the class-structured politics of the past seems to be declining (Kimberlee 2002). As consumption is now the basis of contemporary social cleavages and the chief source of individual identity (Pakulski and Waters 2006), Pakulski and Waters (2006) go so far as to argue that class no longer exists. This study rejects their notion that class is dead, suggesting instead that class is now being consumed, understood, and perpetuated through branded consumption. The research shows that not only are brands now shaping and fulfilling young people's expectations, they are also influencing the way young people understand social constructions, like class.

4.3.1 The Decline of Fixed Class Boundaries

In much of the existing academic literature, the respondent's class was often determined by their father's occupation (Marsh et al. 2007). Not only does this implore very old fashioned, patriarchal assumptions, but it also assumes that that all young people identify to a class. As mentioned previously, this study wanted to avoid imposing any personal conceptions onto the participants, so they were asked to self identify, based on their decided variables (see Appendix D). Of the 10 participants, 6 identified themselves as middle class, 2 as working class, and 2 were unable to identify to any class.

The findings suggest that for these respondents class is no longer a fixed category fundamental in the construction of their identity, but instead something attached to their upbringing, which can be ignored or changed. According to Ellie who self identified as middle class, *"you never really attach that [class] to yourself, its more*

something that's projected onto you by other things". She went on to talk about how her parents are both conservative which she has politically challenged as *"its embarrassing that we are that stereotypical"*. For 21 year old English student Bea who self identified as working class, she emphasised just how much she dislikes defining herself by class boundaries because, *"I would hope, and I do believe that within our society now we do not have these strict class boundaries"*.

Whilst the responses above suggest that for these young people, fixed class categories are no longer important in the construction of their identities, similar to Marsh et al' (2007) conclusions, this study will argue that whilst 'class' may not be a concept that young people use easily or frequently they still live and experience class, they just do it differently.

4.3.2 Buying Class

Marsh et al (2007) rejected most empiricist approaches to class; by arguing that class is not a fixed category but rather something we live. This study will add to that, suggesting as well as being something that we live, class is now also something that young people can buy. Berger (2008) talks about publicity and its promise of happiness as judged from the outside of others, and this study will draw parallels between that and the way brands work, except their promise is not one of happiness, but instead a desired class association.

Bea believes that with some brands *"you're buying into a lifestyle you wish you had, and by buying it you think you will have it"*. Brands are providing young people the physical access they think they require in order to become a certain type of person, or live a certain type of lifestyle. For Jake, his clothes from Zara are *"equipping me to*

move in the circles in which I see myself, its kind of an access thing". Brands also allow young people to communicate a number of things about themselves all at once, and as discussed in section 2.4, class based identity and affinity, is being replaced with the prospect of multiple identities (Fahmy 2006). The consumer market is now offering young people choice complete with the reassurance that the choice is right (Bauman 2001).

As class is now ingrained within young people's consumption habits, it means that young people cannot only buy their desired class, but they can also change it. This was demonstrated by Jake who self-identified as middle-class in the pre-focus group questionnaire, but in the interview disclosed that he's actually from a working class background. His association with middle class was *"largely to do with the people with whom I associate"* similar to the reason he gave for buying clothes at Zara, which was because *"the people I associate with are likely to wear stuff like that".* According to Bauman (2001), when long-term commitments are liabilities, the future can be grasped only as a succession of 'nows', and young people's ability to buy and change their class is one of their 'nows'.

4.3.3 Discussion

According to Marsh et al, (2007), in contemporary society class is a social construction, existing only in terms of our understanding of it and these findings show that young people now understand class not in predefined fixed categories, but instead in terms of the clothes people wear and the things they buy. This ability to use brands to create and communicate class equips young people with a sense of control, and the belief that they have the ability to change their future simply with their buying.

4.4 The Relationship between Brands and Politics

4.4.1 What They Provide

During the follow up interviews respondents were asked to listen to 5 statements and explain whether they related to either political parties or brands. This method was used to investigate the ideological and biological power offered by brands (Schroeder et al. 2006), and to also discover whether there was anything left that only politics could offer young people. The phrases were as follows:

1. I will pick a *INSERT WORD* that embody the ideals I admire and help me express who I want to be

2. *INSERT WORD* Influence the way I consider our daily universe and my actions

3. *INSERT WORD* provide extraordinary identity value because they address and support anxieties and values I may have

4. *INSERT WORD* tend to have clear and consistent values and beliefs

5. *INSERT WORD* gives me a sense of control

Of all 5 statements, political parties only gained the majority vote on the second phrase, and out of a potential 25 mentions, political parties were only selected as the missing word 4 times. According to the findings from this, only brands 'give young people a sense of control', 'embody ideals they admire', 'help them express who they want to be' and 'have clear and consistent values and beliefs'. These findings highlight exactly what it is that young people are now receiving from brands instead of politics. This method also reinforced the similarity in the way young people perceive, and use brands and politics, as most of the responses required careful consideration, suggesting that neither brands nor politics 'owned' a specific benefit.

4.4.2 Young People's Expectations

At different periods throughout the focus groups the respondents were asked what they 'expected' from both brands and politicians (see Appendix A). These were two identical questions that received polar opposite responses. The respondents expected consistency and sincerity from brands, as according to 21-year-old Dan you "*expect their values to always be the same, and expect them not to change"*. Bea accredited them with the ability to improve moods, as *"you feel like its gonna make you feel better as you're improving yourself"* and Ellie expected them not to change once you've made the *"investment of the relationship."* Brands are creating and maintaining connections with young people built on trust, and authenticity, which, unfortunately for politicians, is now something young people always expect.

Owing to the importance young people currently place on trust, the first focus group expected nothing from politicians as they knew that "*politics can be based on what multi-national corporations think" and "political thought is persuaded by somebody that owns all the newspapers" (Dan aged 21).* This singular comment suggests transference in the way young people now perceive brands and politicians, with brands now considered the trust worthier of the two, and politicians being associated with the faceless power of multi-national corporations. According to Advertising student Marissa*, "I think you give the same characteristics to politicians as you do to brands… and politicians become almost more like brands".*

4.4.3 Discussion

The second focus group did have expectations, but they were unsatisfied expectations highlighting a number of politicians perceived failures. Jules expected "*equal rights and representation*", Jake wanted them to "*do what's right for the*

country, the planet and people" and Tom wanted "*pragmatism… in decision making*".

Brands seem to be shaping and fulfilling young people's expectations, selling young

people the things they no longer receive from politicians, and in doing so, they continue

to minimize young people's need or desire for politics.

4.5 Their Behaviour is Subconscious

For this generation of young people, brands have always governed the way they

consider themselves and their daily universe (Schroeder 2006), and politics hasn't.

Whilst this paper has discussed young people's 'engaged scepticism' (Henn et al. 2002)

and their ability to create a new type of politics (Fornäs and Bolin 1995), their

increasingly extensive relationship with brands isn't a conscious form of political

liberation.

In both focus groups the respondents were asked to define a 'brand', and in both

sessions, the responses were very basic (see Appendix E for focus group 1 responses)**.**

Neither group explained the identity value offered, their expectations, or any of the

other findings that have been discussed above. This suggests that young people are

largely unaware of their complex relationship with brands, and it's only when they are

pushed to talk about it, that they realise the influential role brands have in their lives.

When young people buy the latest Nike trainers, or a Zara shirt, they aren't

thinking about politics and the perceived failures of politicians, they are thinking about

themselves and the maintenance of their identity (Schroeder 2006). They are buying

brands that they trust, brands that have proved themselves and brands that embody the

ideals they admire (Holt 2004), similar to the criteria adopted when voting for political

candidates (Smith and French 2009). When asked to explain their relationship with both, *"I don't feel a connection between brands and politics"* (Bea) was mentioned more than once. Brands allow young people to act and think for themselves, they give them a sense of power and control (Cutright 2012), they offer themselves as an alternative option to politics, but this isn't a connection that has been made in the minds of the voter/consumer.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The findings from this study suggest that political parties are, unbeknown to them, competing with brands for the hearts and minds of young people, which is a competition they are currently losing. The recent permeation of political branding, has further positioned politics as akin to shopping, transforming political parties into political brands (Smith and French 2009). They now have to compete for young people's time and attention, and whilst they're ignoring and scorning young people (Kimberlee 2002), brands are raising their expectations and fulfilling them. Young people are looking for guidance, attention and control; brands now offer them that, subconsciously providing them with the crutch they need to be able to reject party politics. The findings from this investigation suggest that, brands are slowly replacing young people's need and desire for party politics. The purpose of this paper was to investigate whether young people's relationship with brands affects their relationship with politics, and this final section will present the overall conclusion, providing answers to the research objectives, as well as a retrospective evaluation of the study.

In answering my research objectives outlined in section 2.4.1 the findings from this investigation disagree with Phillips' (1998) notion of 'political apathy' and instead

support Henn' (2002) belief that they are 'engaged sceptics'. Throughout the focus groups and interviews, the respondents discussed the mutual lack of understanding between themselves and politicians and their ignored voices. The findings show that political parties are something that these young people disliked, distrusted, and are learning to live without. This significantly contrasted with their affective relationship with brands, which were described as 'animate objects' that help them with 'self-improvement' and stabilising identity. Their relationship with brands also permeated into the way they experience social constructions like class as consumption equips them with the power to control class, and communicate multiple identities, which supports the argument that the introduction of consumer politics (Norris 2003) has seen the move away from class-based politics (Kimberlee 2002). In regards to their expectations, they expect a considerable amount more from brands than they do politicians. When asked about brand expectations, respondents talked about trust, consistency and the ability to lift moods, in comparison to political expectations, which was met with extreme scepticism. Unfortunately this is a finding that can neither be supported nor critiqued by previous work owing to the lack of existing literature investigating this topic.

As documented throughout, a qualitative research method was adopted in order to develop a deep insightful understanding of the topic. Whilst this has enhanced the richness and validity of the investigation, there are a number of limitations, and as discussed in section 3.7, the most prominent being the role of the researcher. This research topic was selected owing to personal interest, and regardless of how professional and detached one tries to remain, personal experience and opinion will have influenced the collection and interpretation of the findings. In order to overcome this potential restriction in future research, an external independent supervisor would be

employed to help minimize the potential bias, which would involve regular meetings to discuss and analyse the emerging themes.

These research paper findings are incredibly important as they oppose the view that young people are apathetic (Parry at al. 1992; Phillips 1998; Henn et al. 2005) and integrate the role of brands into the debate. This paper has used young people's voice to dispel this view of apathy, challenging the pessimistic literature capable of generating self-fulfilling prophecies. This investigation emphasizes the importance, relevance and validity of this research topic, which will hopefully ensue in a full-scale research study investigating the affect young people's relationship with brands, has on politics. A finding that I would like to expand on in the future would be whether these conclusions would differ cross-culturally. Young people are political, they are voting, but similar to the behaviour exhibited in the Edward Filene (1932) quote presented in the introduction, they are voting with their money and looking for proof not promises.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Focus Group Guide

INTRODUCTION/ WELCOME

- Welcome and thank respondents for agreeing to take part, and thank them for filling in the introductory questionnaire.
- Invite them to help themselves to snacks
- Explain that everything said will remain confidential, and all names and identities will be changed when used in the research
- Explain that the recording is for transcribing purposes only

- Explain that we are here to discuss young peoples feelings about politics and brands
- Explain the nature of the dissertation and that I am exploring whether there are any links between young peoples relationships with politics and brands
- Gap in the market… so a lot of research on why, but all ignore our fairly influential relationship with brands

- Explain that ALL thoughts and feelings are welcome, and everything is open for discussion and debate
- This is not about who knows what about politics, its not about political knowledge, its about the role it takes in your life… there is no right or wrong answers
- Would remind people to be respectful of everyone's opinions

Ok so just a quick question to break the ice and get everyone talking, could we just go around the group and introduce yourselves and tell us where you are from (where you spend most of your time when you're not at uni)…

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS (10 MINS)

'Politics' prompters
- What are the first few things that come into your head when I say Politics?

TRANSITION QUESTIONS (15 MINS)

Image activity… what is Politics?
- Ok so leading on from the previous question, I have gathered a number of images, and I would like you to sort through the pictures and select the 5 that best symbolize 'politics'.
- … so what is it about those pictures that caused you to associate them with politics?
- And if you could only pick one picture, which one would it be?

Clarity on the word 'Brand'

- Just before we continue I do want to double check that everyone knows what a brand is? How would you describe a brand?
- … any other definitions?

'Owed' by brands
- What do you guys expect from brands? (If needed... so a particular level of service, values, online activity)

KEY QUESTIONS (30 MINS)

How power is attained
- So this next question is just to help me understand how you cope with say uncertainties or disappointments… (with bad things basically)
- So say you did badly on a test, or broke up with a girlfriend or boyfriend, or perhaps did badly in a job interview… how would you make yourself feel better? What would you do, where would you go?

3 characteristics
- So this is where the paper in front of you will come in handy *(could you all please write your name at the top, just I know who said what)*
- So in your opinion what three characteristics do you think a politician needs in order to be successful
- *So could you take the next 30 seconds to write that down on paper and then we will share*
- Ok so out of those three, which do you think is the most important

- Now id like to repeat that exercise but in relation to brands…
- So in your opinion what three characteristics do you think a brand needs in order to be successful
- Ok so out of those three, which do you think is the most important

Expectations of your politicians
- Do you guys expect anything from our politicians, or current political system? If so, what?

The key cause?
- I briefly mentioned at the beginning that there are a number of reasons currently being held responsible for young peoples declining engagement with politics, but I was just wondering what you guys thought? This doesn't have to be the sole reason, it can be smaller influencers.

What do you think is impacting on the decline in youth engagement with politics?

ENDING QUESTIONS

Summary
- Ok so we have discussed a little about brands and politics and what they do, and need to do in order to be successful…

- Go in to detail… highlight certain comments

<u>All things considered</u>
- Ok so with all things considered
- Go around and really briefly describe the relationship that you have with politics, and the relationship you have with brand.. (Importance, role, frequency of contact time, impact on mood, identity)

<u>Insurance question</u>
- Ok so this focus group was intended to explore your relationship with both brands and politics
- Do you think that it has done that?
- Is there anything else that maybe could have been focused on?
- All feedback really is useful… will help with the second one.

Appendix B: Interview Guide

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

CLASS

- On the pre-focus group questionnaire you identified yourself as -----

- Could you explain a little more about why?
- What did you base that on??

- Do you think that your class affects your day-to-day life?

- What is your family's relationship with politics?
- Do they vote?
- Support a particular party?
- Do you discuss them?

- What's your family's relationship with brands?
- Are they important?
- Do they have favorite ones?
- Do you discuss them?

YOU

- Could you describe a little bit about yourself
- Might be easier to describe how you think your friend would see you

- Key values and beliefs
- Any political allegiance's
- Any brand allegiance's

- Any brand or political party that you hate?

LIFE STAGE/ WORLD VIEW

- Current stage in life?
- Any anxieties?
- Plans
- Your role in society

POLITICS

VOTE

- Do you vote?
- If so, who for?
- Why them?

- If not, why?
- Finish this sentence "I would be more likely to vote if…"

- What do you think encourages people to vote?

<u>PARTIES</u>

- Do you support a party?
- Do you like any?
- If so, why?
- If not, why?

- Why do you think people support parties?

- Do you have anything that gives you that?

- Do your friends support any parties?

<u>BRANDS</u>

<u>FAVOURITE'S</u>

- Do you have a favourite brand?
- If yes, which one?
- Why?

- If not, a few brands you like?
- What are they?
- Why?

- What do they do for you?
- What are you paying for?

- Why did you pick that one over its competitor?
- What do they do, that the other doesn't?

- Do you know what ---- stands for?
- Do they tie in with your values?

- Would you buy ---- if they were openly racist and homophobic?
- Why not?

<u>BUYING</u>

- Can you remember the first time you bought it?
- Was it a spontaneous purchase or thought out?

- If it was thought out, what was the process you took?
- What were you looking for?
-
- How do you feel when you have/ or use -----
- What do you think it says about you? (FG finding)
- What would people think about you?

- Do you know your friends favorite brands?
- What are they?

- Any similarities?
- If so why do you think that is?

- Think about a competitor brand…
- Finish this sentence, "I would be more likely to buy – if…"

BOTH

STATEMENTS

I will read 4 statements, and I would like you to tell me whether FOR YOU this applies to brands or political parties there are no right or wrong answers

INSERT WORD-

I will pick a INSERT WORD that embody the ideals I admire and help me express who I want to be

INSERT WORD Influence the way I consider our daily universe and my actions

INSERT WORD *provide extraordinary identity value because they address and support anxieties and values I may have*

INSERT WORD *tend to have clear and consistent values and beliefs*

INSERT WORD gives me a sense of control

ROLE PLAY

Ok so if --- (favorite brand) was a politician what type of politician do you think they would be?

Appearance
Values
Success
Management

Describe in 3 words…

So if David Cameron was a brand, what type of brand would he be?

Brand personality?
Appearance?
Product?
Popularity?

Describe in 3 words…

Appendix C: Participant Consent Form

Research Name: Shopping for Politics Dissertation
Researcher Name: Lauren Russ-Constant

Participant Name:

Participant Contact email:

What is the Research?
You have been asked to participate in a university based research study that is exploring young peoples (18-24) relationship with both politics and brands.

Voluntary Participation
This discussion is voluntary, so if any questions make you feel uncomfortable you do not have to answer them, and you may leave the group at any time for any reason.

Privacy
Your privacy will be protected.
Your name will not be used in the final report.
The discussion will be kept strictly confidential.

Audiotape
The discussion will be recorded on a mobile device but only for the purpose of transcribing. The footage will be destroyed once the discussion has been typed and analyzed.

I confirm that I have read the information above, and agree to participate in the study.

Signature:

Date:

Appendix D: Participant Pre-Focus Group Questionnaire

PRE-FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Before the session on Wednesday I was wondering whether you could answer a few quick questions? The responses will be kept strictly confidential, and will help enhance the quality of my study.

Full Name:

Age:

Gender:

Ethnicity:

Current Education:

Course:

Hometown:

Class:
(I appreciate that this is a difficult question, but there is no right or wrong answer and you can base it entirely on your personal opinion. If you could also explain why, that would be incredibly helpful)

Thank you.

Appendix E: Focus group 1 Full Transcript

Transcript of Focus Group 1

Duration: 1:09:51

(The respondents' real names have been changed owing to privacy issues)

INTRODUCTION

Moderator: So before I start, Id like to thank you for agreeing to participate and for also doing the introductory questionnaire that I asked you guys to do. Um everything obviously said here will remain completely confidential, you guys hopefully know your names wont be used in the research project, and this is just for transcribing purposes, I'm not gonna upload it to iTunes and make a song out of it. (laugh)

Um, basically my dissertation, I was explaining it a little bit to Sam earlier, is about the relationship young people have with politics and the relationship young people have with brands, and just seeing if there's any links, or potentially influences.

So at the moment youth disengagement is something that's quite widely researched, and usually the main arguments are that young people are apathetic, young people or volatile, or young people just interact with politics differently. And then there's a number of reasons as to why, and if I categorize them into the simplest ways, there's the youth argument, so this is the belief that it's that youth are apathetic, and selfish and they don't care, and this is the perceptive taken by the media and its usually linked to quantitative research, like low voter turnouts and low participation and stuff. Um, and then there's the traditional, politics as the reason, so this is the argument that actually the reason young people aren't engaging with politics is because its old, its quite disengaging, the language used, the issues don't actually directly affect young people, the lack of trust in politicians, and its that kind of argument. And then there's the value argument, so this is the idea that young people just care about different things than previously so, we're more likely to get engaged in identity politics, or single-issue politics. Um and then there's also the generational one, so this is the idea that there's things going around, like unemployment, benefits, things that happen in our generation that are obviously going to impact on the way we engage with politics, and that's that argument that people are understanding that politics and the way people engage, is a consequence of their life in general.

So the reason that I'm doing what I'm doing, is that, there's aspects of them that I agree with, but non of them actually explicitly look at the relationship between consumption and brands and young people, and whether that has any influence on their engagement with politics.

So I have to say that everything and all thoughts and feelings are completely welcome, so you can say whatever you want. It isn't about what you know about politics, like this isn't going to be about individual issues or policies. I don't actually know that much about "politics" in general, it's just about the way that

you engage with it, and the way you think about it. And obviously as cliché as it sounds, there aren't any right or wrong answers (laugh). And also I would remind everyone to be respectful, so if someone says something, don't be an idiot and say something mean, everything is completely welcome.

So just to break the ice, even though we have kinda spoken a little, bit, um if you could just go round the group, and don't worry you don't have to say an interesting fact, your name and where you live when you're not in Bournemouth. I will start, I'm Lauren and I live in Bristol, that's where I'm from originally.

M: I'm Marissa and I live in France when I'm not in Bournemouth
D: I'm Dan and I live in Bradford when I'm not in Bournemouth
E: I'm Ellie and I live in surrey when I'm not in Bournemouth
E: I'm Ed and I live in Berkshire when I'm not in Bournemouth.
S: I'm Sarah and I live in London when I'm not in Bournemouth

Moderator: **Also if I could just remind you guys if possible to speak up as much as possible and as clearly as possible, as I have to transcribe all of this**

QUESTION 1
Moderator:**: Ok, so the first question is what are the first few things that come into your head when I say the word politics.**

E: Old men
S: don't get it
Ed: Politicians
D: the House of Commons
M: yep, ummm, yeah, not much actually (pause) if I think about it, when you say politics it just sort of scares me, so I wouldn't (pause), nothing really comes to mind straight away, id say prime minister (pause) nothings on the top of my mind
D: it's quite a heavy term

Moderator: Heavy, what do you mean by heavy

D: its like politics (hand movements giving it emphasis), its like, I don't know, its like, once you talk about that compared to other things, it would be deemed, like, quite a hefty subject
S: there's so many different topics, you just don't know where to start:
D: yeah and like, dya'know when people, ask like, what's your favourite music, its like that, but worse
(all laugh)
E: there's no like, start and end point to that conversation, like you can be like, what music do you like this band this band oh ok cool, I like this one
D: Yeahhh
E: so many layers and so much history and everything to do with the topic of politics, its just quite murky
D: I agree

Moderator: so you said old men, any reason in particular that you said that?

E: well obviously the point that they are trying to get more women into parliament, is because that perception already I suppose of old men kinda dominating the scene, and

also your supposed to become more interested in politics as you get older as you have more to lose almost, like you have more money to lose, you have a property maybe, you have a family, like there's more um to gain per say by actually voting, and like old men just (pause), when you flick through the TV, and you go on BBC parliament, there's umm quite a few old men on it (laugh), and also the have I got news for you show, like I'll watch that, but its mainly male dominated talking about men, and obviously we've only had one female prime minister, Margaret thatcher.
(pause)

Moderator: is there anything else any one would like to add, about what they think of when they hear the word politics

Ed: umm, I guess, Labour
Moderator: **could you explain why you said that?**

Ed: I guess its just the party I identify with the most

Moderator: is there anything about that party in particular? You said identify, so I'm just wondering if there's anything in particular that you identify with?

Ed: umm, I'm kinda more liberal than I am conservative, so

(Silence)

Moderator: Anything else anyone would like to add?

(Pause)

Moderator: No? Well that's fine, as this leads nicely into our next question…

QUESTION 2
Moderator: I have 10 images and it's a bit of a group exercise, I'm going to have to move the food Marissa, I'm sorry

M: laughs… its fine

Moderator: **I would like you guys to spend a bit of time looking at the images and decide which 5 you think best symbolize politics.. I'll give you guys a little bit of time to do this**

M: are we doing this as a group?

Moderator: yep.

M: ok so which ones would you guys gravitate towards first:
Ed: (picks up Banksy) I guess this one
M: so for you would it be that one
Ed: yeah, I think its banksy
M: um yeah it is

M: Ok so if I were to pick, I would go towards that one (points at 3 men)

S (at the same time): I would go straight towards that one, because that's like the 3 leaders who everyone knows about

E: I would have probably gone for the newspapers,

S: uhh huh (in agreement)

E: only because I feel like its more about people pleasing than policies at the moment,

M: uhh huhh

E: so, I mean, obviously this is news papers, but there's that online, kinda forum as well, I feel like they only do things necessarily, like there's a lot of PR and spin in politics and that makes it harder

M: Uh huh (in agreement)

E: (to Ed) is this like grass roots activism for you?

Ed: um, I mean, it's just, its just kinda making a political point

M: um huuh

Ed: annnd

M: yeah definitely

E: cause I feel like that would probably be kinda like traditional politics, and I feel like its been diluted, there all trying to chase each others policies to please people

Ed: yeaah

E: what do other people think?

D: you could pick this one (house of commons) because, because of where I'm from, I'd say that politics is very London centric and there's like a north/south divide, and people think politics is very like London based, and especially like where I'm from, people feel really really far away from it, and then when things happen, people feel, ooooh, like they don't have a say because they don't live in

M: ok, what do we think about him (Barack Obama)

E: (laughs)

M: I'd also go… if it was up to me id go that one, that one, that one

Moderator: **Just to make it easier for me, if you guys could say like, I know it sounds annoying, but say like Barack Obama, House of Commons, just because I might forget which ones you're referring to**

M: so which ones can we kinda agree on?

E: I'm just tryna, the Jew jitsu I'm picking up, um "it's the ancient deadly hebru Martial art for which there is no defence"... I don't get it

S: If I was picking, my top one would have been that one just because I just know there face better

E: that's the 3,

S: my top one would be that one (3 men) just because I know their faces

Moderator: This one is essentially symbolising racism

E: I feel like, like that with politics its more sexist than racist, only because, I don't know, its seems to be that your more likely, in like, in like your constituencies (pause) if the majority population is say black, they'd rather vote for a black person not per say, but like feel more connected with the issues, because like with these guys (3 men) there all white, and everyone knows how white they are

(laugh)

E: like its an actual problem, and urr, and so I feel like they are trying to get more people, like more diverse people to represent their constituencies, I feel that race is more likely to be a bigger differentiator than sex

S: its like, when Obama was running for presidency, wasn't he against Hilary Clinton? So its either you get your first black president, or your first female president
M: yeah.. And which is more important, and what's a more topical issue

D: have we talked about this one (the protest one).
M: the banner, oh the protest one against legal abortion, (pause). No not against, for legal abortion
D:I feel like, that that one, that sometimes you think of this, like the image of people on the street protesting, like I always think of that as like an old thing, like think of the 70's, like something like that, but that like still happens now, obviously its happened a lot with like
M: with like the raise student finance
D: yeah things like that, but that was kinda in the media, and it was made trivial, and I think in the time that this picture was taken, it would have been a massive deal
M: yeah like people taking to the street
D: yeah like a HUGE deal, whereas not it's just like people, like there's a view that people will just take to the streets over anything
M: and I think that there's a view that when young people take to the streets, its just like 'ohhh we can get off work' and just protest for a bit
D: Oh climate change is happening, but people don't really take it seriously,
M: yeah like it used to be taken more seriously
D: yeah like this, like abortion, would have been taken so seriously

S: when the whole raising of student fees went up did anyone do anything? Like in Bradford or surrey? Because I was in London, and everyone sort of skipped school, but its like down the road for us.
M: did you actually go to the protest?
S: I didn't because I couldn't be bothered, but like loads of my friends were like, oh it's a day off school, we might as well go down to the protests, but because it was close to us, but did anyone else?
M: I didn't either and in France they were protesting to, and I didn't
E: I mean I live in surrey, and by general point of view it is quite an affluent area, so for me I'd be like your not the people that need to be protesting per say, like it's the people who want an equal opportunity and cant necessarily afford it without government help, and for me like, I just (pause) rebel without a cause, like its, (pause) our generation I feel are quite lazy, even how they protest
(laugh)
E: like do you remember that Kony thing?
S: oh yeah
E: like we thought we were doing something, without actually doing something
D: like 'clicktivism'
M: Yeah like made you feel like you were doing something without doing it
Ed: I mean, I duno, but I would this this generation is just as you 'know as engaged with politics, as any previous generation, I just think, there more likely to protest or go by different means, and they may not go into actual politics itself
E: go deeper you mean? So more superficially
Ed: I mean like, there more likely to protest, orr campaign for a particular issue, rather than become a politician
E: well I mean we haven't really talked about this one (arrows with parties on), I mean they go in different directions, because a lot of people feel that a lot of them go in the same direction. But that's why I was saying about the papers picture

M: cause what, you feel that they're different?

E: well, its like, not so much going from bottom up anymore, it is sorry, as in there not saying, this is our party, these are our policies, its much more like "what do the people want"?, like I said, people pleasing. Because its like when, its like supermarket wars, if there's a price war going on there not gonna just sit back and let it happen, like labour, conservative, Lib Dems, the three main parties, they're all trying to outdo each other but at the same time whilst doing that they lose sight of their actual party

M: like charities in a way, of they're fighting for the same cause like blood donations, but they're all competing against each other, surely they're sorta missing the point which is actually get blood in the first place and save lives rather than competing against each other

Moderator: So what 5 do you reckon you guys would pick?

M: Could we agree on 5 though (laugh)

Ed: I guess like the actual one with the voting would be one of the 5, because that's kind of,

E: how you actually get involved

Ed: Yeah I guess it's the basis of democracy

M: ok so can we pick 5, so we are agreed on this one (the 3 people), um Barack,

E: yeah his a global

M: yeah a global politician

Ed: and newspapers have like a very big influence in politics,

E: yeah there's a whole show about it, 'have I got news for you?', the kinda satire, its quite British as well and without those 3 plonkers they wouldn't have a show (laugh)

M: no that's true, they do feature in most of their memes, umm ok, I don't know how I feel, but I wouldn't put that one (newspapers), but that's me, I don't know why, I just don't associate them with political orientations

D: I think that in terms of like news papers there's so many issues that I think, like wouldn't be as big in politics, if it wasn't for the newspapers, like things like benefits, like people on benefits, the media is like really not nice about people who are on benefits, and those issues, like the newspapers make a big deal out of that

S: I don't think phone hacking would have been as bad if

D: yeah it wouldn't be made a big deal out of, if its wasn't in the news papers so much, its such a weird concept that something in like politics wouldn't be as much of an issue if it wasn't for the newspapers

M: because of the news papers

E: well and also a lot of newspapers take a political stance, so they're kinda by affiliation how they spin their stories

M: yeah, but I'd say if it was just the word politics then id associate newspapers with class, rather than politics

D: that's interesting

M: which class is politics, but I see them different classes, rather than different political views, but then again I guess politics and class are on the same..

S: yeah you could say different classes go for different politics, with their views

M: yeah

Moderator: What do you reckon your final picture would be then?

Ed: I would go, well just me, but I would go for this one, like ya'know, you said, like it represents activism

M: umm (in agreement)

Ed: which is just like another form of politics, just ya'know a very different one

Moderator: We can have individual ones if there's individual ones that you guys would add, that's fine… so Ed would say Bansky…

M: I'd say they could all be in the top 5 in a way, cause they're all addressing some form of political thing, I might go, just because it seems more relevant to me, umm I would pick the Macklemore, because he's like raising recent political, well political issues like gay rights, and fighting actively through his songs, in a way of like speaking his mind and his views

Moderator: **OK, so adapting from what you guys have done, you guys have picked a picture each, instead to make it easier, what one picture would you guys pick then? And explain a little bit about why**

E: I would pick probably the directions, um only because I think that's probably the biggest shift in recent years for politics, in terms of, it kinda for me, interlinks with the papers and kind of umm, like the, its basically more of a PR kind of view, that I feel like a lot of what they are doing is based on what another party has done, its not necessarily an isolation of what they are staying true to, in their party, I just think that they're kinda confused in themselves, and I feel like that's part of the reason why a lot of people don't have a strong sense of kind of attachment to a certain party, because there's not really much to have a strong attachment to

D: umm I would probably, umm, I'm torn between picking the Macklemore one because, I think when you're thinking about politics, and specifically like young people, then like out of all the pictures that's the only thing that young people have that old people don't have, like because, like older people don't have the pop culture that we have, and don't have that, like, affiliation with pop stars and they wouldn't be able to be on that level because they're not part of that generation, so that's the only one, that like stands out, because it doesn't really link to the others. But really i like this one, the one with the um, big ben, London, because I think for me symbolizes politics being very based around a few people in a small place and there's loads of things in politics where, like examples of people being out of touch with people in society, and like things like that, and I think that picture represents it

Moderator: **What about you Sarah?**

S: I would probably pick the one with the three people, that one, because I'm really useless in terms of politics, but I see them as like the face of politics, so obviously Macklemore, popular culture and everyone behind it, but if I was to go into politics, I would listen to what they would say.

QUESTION 3
Moderator: **Um, so the other thing that I'm really interested in, is brands, so just before we continue I just wanted to double check that you all have a similar definition of what a brand is, and we can see whether people agree, or have different opinions or definitions**

M: umm, I'd say a brand is the face of a product, uhhh, of a commodity, and its basically the name at the forefront of the company that defines all the products and all the services that come out of that company

Moderator: **Do people agree with that? Is there any other different ones**

Ed: yeah, that's pretty much it
S: I'd say a bit more than that, because like, you can say your names Marissa but, you wouldn't be like, ohh what does that mean, id say more like the personality behind it
M: yeah yeah
E: the intangible assets of a company or organization that adds value
D: Yeah.

QUESTION 4
Moderator: **so what do you guys expect from brands, what do you feel like you are owed anything?**

Ed: Depends like, like if it's a really like massively popular brand, like I don't know, coke or something, then I guess you expect like better quality just because its, ya'know such a huge brand

Moderator: When you say quality, what kinda comes into that

Ed: I mean, like you would automatically think coke would be better than just like regular cola, but usually that might just be because, ya'know its coke
M: yeah you sort of trust brands that you know, based on the facts its just a brand, the name, and you do have higher expectations of a brands whether, and depending on the level of the brand, so if it's a lidl coke then you have less expectations, but if it's the actually coke then you would have more expectations, and trust that brand more
D: could you say that you expect consistency from the brand, so, um in that you expect that values to always be the same, and expect them not to change, because it's a brand and it has a clear identity, and you know what it is and you expect it to be consistent
E: I'd say its like similar to someone's personality, so its similar to what they've built themselves up to be, so if you know that the person or the brand is a trustworthy thing, then that's what you expect, and a lot of it is built on the promises made at the beginning from the relationship, what they say is what you expect, so like what you guys said, consistency, and just being true to itself and not going off in a tangent or tryna suddenly change what it means once you've made the investment of the relationship.

Moderator: **investment of relationship, what do you mean?**

E: as in you start to build affective feelings towards a brand, so whether you trust them, so whether you go back to them, what your opinion is of them in relation to other brands in the same category, who do the same things and just general perception of image, because like you walk into a lecture theatre and you see everyone's laptops you instantly have an opinion on whether they're using an apple or a Microsoft laptop, like you get you the, uhhh entity of using that laptop is, its not to say that against the person, but what that actually means, like you've bought apple, and a lot of that comes from the feeling that you've probably got something in common with the brand, like same sort of values

S: yeah I get that, like if your names something, you have to live up to what you say, so like if you go airlines, like easy jet, have never said that there really high quality, we make you really comfortable, its basically easy jet is pretty much just a – b. but if you go monarch you expect something better and expect them to justify it

Ed: there can be like negative sides to having a brand though, say your brand gets associated with something you don't want it to be associated with, that damages everything under that brand name, and probably the company itself as well.

Moderator: **Brilliant, is there anything else you guys would like to add before we move on?**

M: I think in terms of the relationship that we have with brands, if we have high expectations and they've built themselves up to be this thing, then you can make quick decisions about things, so if the brand is on something, or quick decisions about people too, so if someone's wearing a brand and you can recognize that brand and you know it, and you know what it stands for, you can make quick decisions about that person that's wearing the brand too, so it just helps in everyday life to categorize things.

QUESTION 5
Moderator: **Ok so the next question is just to help me understand how you guys cope with disappointments or uncertainties, so basically you did badly on a test, or you broke up with a girlfriend of boyfriend, or you did badly in a job interview, how would you make yourself feel better, so what would you do, where would you go…**

M: I'd go probably immediately to friends and family for moral support, and id go and talk to people about things, so if id done badly in a job interview, I'd rather not talk about relationships (laugh), umm I'd, yeah, id go to my mum or my parents probably and they'd reassure me and tell me that everything is going to be alright, yeah, probably just straight to other people
S: yeah I think it depends on what, if it was a job interview id go to parents, if it was like a relationship I'd probably go to a really close friend, if its was like a failed test, I'd be like anyone near me (laugh)
E:I think also like expectations, so if you expected to get the job, or you expected to get good mark, when there's that difference between expectation and reality that's when it hurts more, because its more of a shock, because if you expected the worse and the worst happened, then there's less of a kinda feeling of loss because you kind of mentally prepared yourself. I mean I personally, id probably go to a bar with a friend because either way, like commiserations, or celebrations, the bar is a nice place to just get out of that mindset and also um, id probably do like a plan of action, so like what's happened has happened, I cant change it, so what am I gonna do, so like pick yourself back up kinda thing, and don't let it delay you either doing well next time in something else
M: yeah, take it as a lesson kind of thing
E: yeah, like don't try and dwell on it to much because it will just be wasted energy, and it will make you feel worse

Moderator: **So Ellie said what, and you guys both mentioned who, but is there anything else, so like Ellie would go to the bar, is there anything else you would physically do**

D: Probably go shopping, (everyone laugh)
S: retail therapy

Moderator: Could you expand what you mean by that

D: Like when I'm really stressed, like when I'm in the library writing essays, I just like shop when I'm doing it, and then like by the time I've finished the essay, I'm like, shit I've bought loads of stuff

Moderator: Is there a reason why?

D: because when I've done something bad, or something Is going badly, then I need to think of things for my self to look forward to, so like right now I'm planning for summer, when I'm trying to write my dissertation, like why am I doing that, like because I need like things to look forward to, to like keep me motivated
M: umm, I guess if I failed at something to, I'd probably go out drinking, either go out drinking or stay in and eat chocolate, and ice cream, and things like that, its often followed by something to consume

Moderator: **Sarah, you also said retail therapy, could you just explain, why, what...**

S: when I failed my driving test I told my mum, I was like mum I failed my driving test, she bough me a onsie, (all laugh), she bought me the onsie regardless, like if you pass you got a onsie, if you fail, you got a onesie
M: did it make you feel better?
S: it was soo cosy

(all laugh)

Ed: I mean, I would probably just keep it to myself, and try to forget about it, and probably waste time on the Internet

Moderator: **What would you do on the Internet?**

Ed: I guess anything, like go on YouTube, of Facebook or something
E: I find it interesting that you guys reward yourself when its going badly (all laugh), cause I think I do the opposite. So its like, I'll punish myself if its going badly by being like 'no I cannot have new clothes, I don't deserve new clothes' kind of thing, and then if I do well then I'm like, no I deserve it, I don't have the money, but I deserve it

D: I'm just like, life is rubbish, I feel like I need short term fixes, like all the time, like maybe if the long term isn't going well you can just give yourself little things to make you feel better
M: I'm not that hard on myself, I'm like I deserve it anytime
D: I think that I deserve a treat all the time, just for like getting out of bed

QUESTION 6
Moderator: **So this is another activity, it feels a little school like, but could you guys also write your name on the pieces of paper in front of you, just cause I'll collect them after and then I'll know who said what**

Moderator: **So this questions is, so I will ask the question and you guys write your answers on this, and then afterwards we will share, but in your opinion, what 3 characteristics do you think a politician needs in order to be successful?**

(Short break whilst they write their answers down)

Moderator: **ok so starting with Marissa, what are the three that you said?**

M: umm, I put appealing character, so someone who is, I've put attractiveness in brackets because I think, that someone who isn't attractive or doesn't appeal to you cant be powerful, in order to be successful you to be appreciated you need to be appealing, people need to want to look at you and want to listen to you, so if you're not appealing to them and attractive in some sort of ways, even if its not physically attractive, I'm not saying that the politicians we have now are necessarily attractive, but

E: presentable.

M: yeah they're presentable and its also just about character, and have some sort of, so people recognize them, people know. If not saying that our politicians are attractive, at all in the slightest but they're not unattractive in a way, they could be a lot worse.
M: I said powerful speech or speaking skills because they could be saying anything about anything, but as long as they've got a really good presentation umm no-ones really listening to what they're saying anyway, sooo, they just have to be able to speak really well and get the message across
M: and I said good influential people advising him or her, because they could just be the front kind of man, or women, although most likely man, and just have good people advising them in the background, and they can just be the front sort of poster

Moderator: **What about you Dan?**

D: I wrote like, mines really similar to Marissa's, I wrote like sincerity, because they could be saying something, or trying to pull the wool over your eyes, so saying something that they don't necessarily believe and they need to be able to tell you anything in a sincere way, so that if it sounds like they believe it then you will believe it.

D: I wrote like, charismatic, um because they need to be like a presence, and like command attention, like command a room, I think that's important.
D: and then I wrote like, umm I couldn't really think of the word I was trying to say, but like I wrote like public speaking, but in the way of, umm like when politicians speaking they do it in, (pause) like a persuasive speaker, because when you watch like debates and things like that, between the two candidates, they like have specific ways that like politicians speak, and like to get their point across, like for example, really right wing politicians use a lot of anecdotes, "last week I was speaking to jenny in her council house and she said this to me.." where as left wing ones also have there own conventions of how they speak and how they get their message across, like be able to debate

Moderator: What about Ellie?

E: umm the first two came quite quickly, transparent and authentic, umm because with like Dan's sincerity, it would be an ideal world if politicians told us the truth, umm and also being transparent about how they are competing against one other, because theres a lot of trying to cut the other one with something bigger and better, even though they're not necessarily telling the truth. And the second one was authentic, so I mean, I don't think many are transparent or authentic, because I guess you'll never really know until

its too late, and like you said, you never really know whose behind them, umm and one person cant know everything about anything, so you need a good set of people behind the person so authenticity and transparency is more about the person, and then the third one, I thought I should put something about what they actually do, so I put stays true to their cause, that more of a respect and trust thing because, like Obama with his healthcare, hes not doing that to please republicans, he's doing that because he believes in the cause, umm and I just feel like what's the point of putting someone in parliament who then decides to change their mind because of pressure.

D: like Nick Clegg

E: Yeah like Nick Clegg, because they're kinda all connected, and to stay true to a cause, I think, even if its not something you necessarily believe in, is something il respect that.

Moderator: **What about you Ed?**

Ed: I put, well I kinda put the ideal politician here first, trustworthy, moral and understanding, although if I'm honest, a lot of times, like, there are a lot of politicians who are just there because they're quite wealthy, or they have like wealthy sponsors backing them, but yeah

Moderator: And what about you Sarah?

S: I put trustworthy, concise and clear, and I was really stuck, to be honest I would have just settled for trustworthy, because there's loads of things that come into it, so for someone to be a politician in my eyes to be perfect they would have like, they would have to know what they were saying, so they would have to be intelligent, they would have to come across like they care, like there's loads of different characteristics that come with it, attractiveness is one as well, you're not going to trust an ugly prime minister (laugh), um concise is like, if they're going to keep babbling and waffling, then if you're not going to understand you're not going to believe what they're saying if you don't understand, so that's why I put concise and clear, its like, clear, like this is what we are going to do, and this is how we are going to do it, I think its more believable\

Moderator: **So Sarah there kinda said the one she thought was most, she would pick if she was only able to pick one, so is there one out of those 3 that you picked, what one word would it be that you think is most needed, or most important**

E: In my head it would be authentic, only because within that come like being trustworthy, transparent, like having a cause and staying true to it, umm, whether it be true authenticity or not, the perception of authenticity, in being like they are who they are, and aren't trying to fool everyone and get everyone to like, like ohh got you, ohh you all voted for me

D: I would say sincerity as well echoing what Ellie said, because, um its important for people to seem as if they care, that's a really big issue because I feel like a lot of people feel like they cant relate to people, and like prime minister David Cameron tries to make himself seem really relatable, and people in parties try to make themselves seem really relatable, like George Osborne name is Gideon, but nobody knows because he calls himself George because he wants to seem more relatable, and that he's not really really rich, so yeah I thinks it important to seem like sincere

M: I'd, say, I think if you'd said what would make a good prime minister, I would have said something else, but if its successful, I would say it would have to be appealing just appealing in general, because out of what I've said, just attractiveness, and people

have to want to want to listen to them, and I think Obama is very appealing in everything that he's done, and his campaigns he's done, and everything he represents you don't have to believe anything he's going to say, you don't really, I mean you do have to trust in it, but as long as he's putting it across in a good way then you are probably going to believe it anyway, so yeah I think appealing would be the best

Moderator: So you said that I've id asked you what would make them good, so what word would you have said, if I'd asked that question

M: well I would have gone for trustworthy and sincerity and things like that

Moderator: Could you explain what the difference is

M: well there's a big difference between successful and 'good' – good, would be yes would be in the interest in all the people and doing good, but I don't see politicians as they say they're going to do good, but its not really about the good that they will do its more about how they will get elected and how are they gonna get lots of people to follow them rather than doing good eventually

Moderator: And what about you Ed? What would be the one word you would pick?

Ed: I, I guess, like I guess to be a really good politician you need to have strong morals, I mean at least I would hope so

Moderator: Do you think any politicians at the moment; are there any that you think have strong morals?

Ed: I don't really know, I mean like, its kinda difficult to pick between morals and ya'know wealthy, I know that's kinda a negative factor

QUESTION 7
Moderator: So basically I would like you to do the same exercise, but the questions this time is, what 3 characters do you think makes a brand successful?

(Short break whilst they write their answers down)

Moderator Are we done? Sarah do you want to start, we can go this way this time

S: the three I put for a brand is, true to their core, live up to expectations and sincere, cause, mainly, the one I'm mainly focusing on is living up to expectations because if they say they're going to do something they should do it. So like, say like when I bought this dress off misguided, and they said, its like a proper sundress, the model is 5ft 6, and I tried it on and I cant even wear it as a dress I have to wear it as a top, and I was like I'm never gonna use it again, because now I know everything on there is too short (laugh), and like I tried to send it back and they charged me delivery, its like, no its your fault, like everything is too small, so they're not sincere. I'm just too tall

MODERATOR: What about you Ed?

Ed: I put that it has to have the right look, umm, I guess the write colour scheme, I mean I guess that's kinda similar to the right look, umm and effectiveness, so like how

effective it is at what its tryna do, so if its food it should be tasty, or if its like I don't know, cleaner, it should clean really well

E: Um I put desirable, distinctive and consistent, I kinda of suppose, as soon as you say brands like for me the top kind of things that come into my head are the aspirational branding, like clothes and make up and that sort of stuff, I don't think like ooh washing machines (laugh) oh practicality. So for desirable they have something that I want to be associated with, umm it means that its going to make a difference if I buy that brand compared to another brand, like its competitors, give me something to compare it to, and then consistent, cause obviously if your buying into this image then you don't want it to suddenly change and be like, hand on a second I didn't want to be associated with those things.

D: I wrote consistent and I wrote unique, but then, the last one I wrote cool, but like I feel like, we've been talking a lot about people need to be charismatic, and attractive, but I think like, when you're talking about a brand you can say, just like say have something about it and just be like cool, when you cant necessarily put your finger on it but it just has something

M: like underestimated?

D: Yeahhh, a bit like that

M: I also put consistent like you guys, because obviously its really important that if your saying that you're something you stick to it, rather than changing, because you're only going to cause confusion for the people who are listening, and it just needs to seem seamless the whole time as if its come naturally. I said attractive personality again, so same thing, when you say brands the first things that pop into my head are the top ones, so I think coke, I think of Nike, I think of apple, and il think what is it about them, and they just have to seem appealing to the masses, but also like seem like they are talking to you individually, so I think its really important for brands to like, to target people, but them seem like they're targeting you personally, so you can feel like your related to the brand

Moderator: [Talking to Ed] did you want to add something?

Ed: like how the two are kinda similar, is that they both heavily rely on PR,

Moderator: Yeah can you explain what you mean by that?

Ed: so PR, is basically, kinda like the polite term for propaganda, basically politicians are trying to sell their party, or their political ideals, or a particular politician, like um, I remember they had those billboard ads, and those TV adverts and they are always trying to kind of, sell a particular image of their party or a top politician, and that's kinda the same, I guess that's the same with brands… sorry that's kind of obvious

D: one thing that's interesting between the difference between like brands and politics is that, I feel like, when we think about politicians we think about them as like a person, and when we thing of a brand we don't think of them as a person so I think that its interesting for our politicians that, we give them things like the 'benefit of the doubt' and the things we give to people because its like a face, and like so if misguided is giving her like shit customer service, she's like ok whatever this is rubbish I deserve more, but with a political party and they're not doing what you want then its like, ohhh but there's existential factors or like, oh dya'know what I mean, like oh it was the economy, you think of more reasons why they couldn't do it but with a brand and a shop you just expect it to just be done.

M: but do you really? I think you give the same characteristics to politicians as you do to brands, in a way that say for example apple, like everyone knows someone who has had a problem with an iPhone but people will relentlessly go back to it, and trust it,

D: umm that's true actually

M: because it is the brand, so I feel like you do give them the benefit of the doubt because you give them as many personable characteristics that you do to people, and politicians become almost more like brands and you expect THEM to be more reliable, almost MORE than brands

S: like to be fair I've never had anything apple related because I've heard everyone complaining about it, so it's the same, as like, I've heard loads of bad things about Labour so I'll vote Conservative, the logic is sort of applied there

Ed: I mean one major difference I see between the two is that brands can get away with far more than politicians can, like politicians, anything can damage their image and they will be torn apart, if there's some kinda scandal going on, but brands ya'know regularly involved in scandal, whether its that they've been using sweat shops or child Labour or just other bad practices

D: Yeah that's true actually

Moderator: I mean is there any particular reason that you guys think that is? Why do you think that's the case?

M: I think brands can recover better from that because they're not a person in that sense, they can just change personality, and the way that they are, and the way that they go about business, and they can sort of wipe over the fact that they've had sweat shops and be sort of like, that was a mistake, and we've learnt from it and we will position ourselves as something else, where as if it's the same person in a political party, you cant change that person, you cant make over their personality and completely change the, they will still be there, so that doesn't change until the next election

E: and just from what Dan said, like with big companies, unless you're in the industry yourself, of like the service industry for a particular brand, your not necessarily gonna know who the CEO is, or whose responsibility it was, so like you said, the brand is always gonna be that brand, but with political parties the struggle is that there always having to re elect and change around faces and people, and even with the, urr what's that called, I cant think of it, the kinda tier below, so the heads of the departments, I cant think of the word, like the department for working pensions secretary or something, its always changing so to be committed to um a political party you have to be able to see past all of that movement, but with a brand, you're singing up to it because you know regardless of whether the CEO is gonna change from year to year their still working towards the same brand, but with people like, human behaviour, you cant exactly turn that into a business, it's a lot more difficult, and there's a lot more feeling towards it.

M: yeah, also they don't have the consistency, so like what we were just talking about, brands have, they have to be consistent, but like a political party can be consistent, but the people within it aren't so

S: just going from what you said earlier, and like with a brand, like when they mess up like with child labour or something, it doesn't directly effect us, but when politicians mess up it will actually effect us, like fees going up, everyone I know was like, ohh it's a day of school but fees are going up, if we don't get in this year we have to pay 9 grand, but if its like child labour, like child labour is wrong but you don't see as many people, like all of use, we will say its wrong but we wont campaign against it

D: People like, when you talk about politics there's more emphasis on like, behind the scenes' things, like what's going on, like people want to know like about people's

personal lives, where as in a business they can very much be a big brand name and then hide behind it, whereas you cant do that if you're a politician

QUESTION 8
Moderator: Um, so talking about politicians, do you guys expect anything from our politicians, or our current political situations, and if so, what?

E: NO (laugh)

Moderator: And when I say do you expect, I mean in relation to now, but also in an ideal world, like do you expect anything? Is there anything you think they should do? And this doesn't necessarily mean that they're doing it, its what you think maybe they should do, and if they're doing it state it, and if they're not doing it state it again

E: Well I think personally, like I did politics at a level, and what I found really difficult to get my head round, and what I found really disheartening, is that its such a game, and its so much more tactical than you think as well, like people will vote against someone just because they don't want them to win, not because they don't want the cause to happen. Its like, it just a rat race, it's the fact that I feel like, because people change to much, like even sectary's that are in charge of like the business department or the working departments, they change too quickly to even have a connection to what they're doing, its more of a job for them and less of a cause I think. So its like the expectations, I just think that they see it as black and white pieces on paper, if they've got good PR, I think its really hard to feel that people genially care, and when they throw peoples names out when they're doing the debates, like 'jenny from the council estate' its like, you don't care about jenny, like you just care about getting your votes, and that's all you want. So I kinda feel like they're motivations are never in the right place, so they are just gonna do what they want anyway.

Moderator R: I mean what politics is, and what the political system is though, are they're certain things you think should happen, that aren't, like that you wish that you could expect and people would do?

E: I mean obviously before, say labour get in next time, they're promising things but they haven't seen the books, they don't know what money they have to play around with, they don't know the funds that they have, so I feel like however genuine or good they want to be there is always going to be that restrain on the practicalities of things, like there's some things that you will expect, everyone has a cause to be going after and its unrealistic to think that it could all be done in one parliamentary sitting of 4 years, I think its just, I don't know, I think they have a difficult job definitely, and there's not enough money every to fix everything, and socially there's so many problems that they try and fix, but they don't try to reduce for the future, I think that's something as well, its not preventative strategies, its like the opposite, so they're just letting things happen then trying to fix it, but it would be a lot cheaper to like, sort it out before

Moderator: Anyone else? What do you guys expect from them?

M: I don't really have any expectations, or wished they did anything as I don't know much about it, so I don't now what I should expect from them, I guess that's not really a good thing in a way. Umm but just sort of being able to know, that if you had a cause,

and a number of people around you that believed in the same thing, whatever it is, that there would be someone there to listen to it, and try and do something, just knowing that there's something, or some body of people that would listen to what you had so say, and try and help, then that's better than not being anything. But then also not pretend that they are going to solve all the world problems, and be this superhero that there not, just be honest and be there

D: I think having expectations is like, talking about expectations is weird, like for us as a generation as we have grown up with media all around us, more than previous generations and the internet, and we're so like, we could become so knowledgeable if we wanted to be and, having expectations is weird because we like know loads of facts, we know that politics, like can be based on like, what multi-national corporations think and not necessarily what the government thinks. Or we know that peoples political thought is persuaded by somebody that owns all the newspapers in the world, like 1 person, and we have this feeling of just like, we know that its not necessarily the people in the room that make the decisions, its just like business and banking, and things like that, like macro issues

M: I think we make our own expectations, its like, you don't want to expect anything from anyone outside of you and around you, because like you said, you can make up your own opinions from the media and what you can search for, rather than putting your expectations into someone else when you're not really listened to

D: I agree, I think that if you think about the 1960s people were very idealistic and I think that, we're not, we know too much to be idealistic enough to have expectations, so like what geo was saying, we don't expect much from other people because as a generation we not idealistic

M: yeah we are like pragmatic

Moderator: Ed or Sarah, is there anything else you would like to add?

Ed: sorry cant think of anything

Moderator: **no that's fine, I just didn't want to miss you out**

QUESTION 9
Moderator: Ok so I briefly mentioned at the beginning when I was talking about the reason I'm doing my dissertation, that there are a number of academics who coming up with reasons for why young people aren't engaging with politics, but I was just wondering, with you guys being young people, if there are any reasons that you think that maybe there is a decline between young people and politics, and it doesn't have to be the main one, it can be little things that you think impact

E: fragmentation of like families, and you're not gonna live in the same house as all your family members, like you're immediate family and have that kind of 'pass the torch on' of this is our family, this is what we believe in as a family, this is our class, this is that. I feel like, like what you said with the internet, we are a lot more aware now of everything else, we have like the power in ourselves to kinda not have to be associated with what our parents think as much, and I think that the combination of that, and just the general issues that we've all mentioned, so like lack of direction, and things never actually getting done, its really disheartening I think

D: I think like what Ellie said when she was talking about us not having things passed down from our parents and having very in family views we could, say that as a generation we are really outer-directed rather than being inner directed, so we don't like take our beliefs from people like our family and from like school, we don't take that and

then have our views and stick to them, we are very outer directed and are trying to find our views from loads and loads and loads of different places, and its like when no-ne, if we cant get that from anywhere, like we aren't getting it from our family, like where are we getting it from

Ed: I don't really believe the idea that there's less political engagement, I think that there might be less people going into actual politics but there are different kinds of political engagement and I think that people writing like blogs, or going on twitter, or just campaigning, I think that's more likely what young people would do

M: umm, I think there's a contrast between what you were saying about things not really that moving that fast in politics and how fast we as a generation moves, so getting everything from small tiny bits of information on twitter to just rushing through everything, that doesn't really fit with the sort of way that we see politics as a slow moving, slow process, nothing really getting done, no one really being heard, and the way that we want our information, and the way that we want to move forward doesn't really fit together, so yeah I think that maybe if, I don't know about the disengagement that much but maybe we would react to politics in a completely different way and use social media and activism and loads of different other ways to engage with politics

D: maybe we feel as a generation that, we are like a weird generation because we're like one of the only generations that's told 'you can do whatever you want' so I think we all feel like we are special, and we all feel like really self important as a generation, and its like politics doesn't, like, it isn't in tune with our self importance, so we just think like oh well 'I'm different to what they think, or like 'I'm an individual' and we don't have this collectivist like mentality that previous generations had, as we are very individualistic

Moderator: **Ok, anything else? Ok so we have, we have come quite quickly to the end of our focus group basically, so I'm just going to recap on what we've learnt, and then get some final points. So we have been discussing our relationship with brands and politics and we've talked about what we expect from politicians, what we expect from brands, what makes great brands, what makes great politicians, potentially the way that we react when bad things happen to us, and then a little bit more about politics in general and any expectations that we've had. So all things considered and going on what we've talked about…**

QUESTION 10
Moderator: If we just go round the circle, and if you could really really quickly tell me whether you think that you have a stronger relationship with brands or politics, or which take a more prominent, kind of importance within your lives, or if you don't know, and you think its different say that, just basically summarise, the relationship between both, and if there's any more that's more dominant or less dominant or if they're combined, or completely different.

M: ok well have never been that engaged with politics, I don't think my parents have been, and I've kinda lived in a different country which also must effect it, but technically I should be voting here in England, which I've never done. Umm but id say definitely a closer relationship to brands, because they're all around me the whole time, I mean you wear brands, you eat brands, you live with brands on a day to day basis, whereas you can switch on and off politics and mine seems to be always off because I don't engage with them at all and its just very easy to switch off from them and pretend its got nothing to do with you, where as brand you cant get away from I think, so yeah I'd say it like that, like all around me and switched off

D: could you say the question again?

Moderator: Yes, so its kind of summarizing what we've talked about, so whether you think you have a stronger relationship with either politics, or you think the relationships are interconnected, or if you think one influences the other, so just to summarise the main kind of conversation topic of this focus group

D: Its weird because feel like, in some ways they're really comparable and in some ways they're not. But I think that's its really easy to become, like find brands relatable, and become like associated with brands because they are very accessible, whereas I think politics is less accessible, so unless you like, like with a brand you can stumble into it, and just be like everyone else has got it, I'll get it, and just stumble into it, but I feel like politics is like, brands like pretend they have these views, and values, and they do definitely, but then politics is about your personal values and like, so to say that you identify with the 'Labour party' versus to say that you identify with like Addidas, is different because one is really superficial and one is sooooo deep, so its like really hard, you have to know, like be secure in yourself to find something relatable and as a generation we are not very secure in ourselves, and we are told that we can have our own views and it doesn't matter, its doesn't matter what party we fit into, we are just aloud to think what we want to think, so we are all, its hard to be related to politics rather than brands.
E: I think I relate more to brands than politics, but I think that the currency that both work in is so different, obviously politicians want you votes and brands want your money, and with a brand there's and instant gratification, its like a win win, your getting something from it and so are they, but with politics, its like you'll never know if its gonna make that difference or not it's a very term thinking to be invested in politics, and also I think they are both similar in the way that people like seeing things that are related to them and what they are doing, you're gonna get along with someone that's probably more similar to you than the complete opposite, so I think that there's definitely that reflection element, like a brand you see yourself in it and a politician you see your values in them
Ed: I guess I would relate more to politics, just because I think its vastly more important than brands. Umm I've never really related that much to brands and I guess politics seems to just be, involved a lot in, with brands, but it's a much more important factor
S: Umm I would say the relationship between brands and politicians you expect the same things, so if someone is gonna say that they will do something you expect them to do it. Personally I relate a lot more to brands than politicians, because call me superficial but I don't understand politics because its not relevant to my life, like I'm 21, I don't need to buy a house, I'm not interested in health care and that kind of stuff, I don't need health care or anything, because its not relevant to me, I don't really care about it, I don't understand it, and brands are always around me so I'm more involved in that.

Moderator: And this final question is about feedback, so just anything you think that maybe we could have, or should have discussed, or anything I could improve on because I do have another focus group, yeah basically anything…

S: more Doritos
M: um just in the picture thingys I think it would have been good if you'd said, pick one out that you think isn't relevant to politics

Moderator: yeah, really good one, anything else?, No, ok well thank you.

Appendix F: 'Political' Images used in Focus Groups

Appendix G: Full Transcript of Interview with Bea

Transcript of Interview with Bea*

Duration: 59:47

(*The respondent's real name has been changed owing to privacy issues)

Interviewer: Ok so I just want to start off with a little bit more about you, and your experiences and who you are, so on the pre-focus group questionnaire you identified yourself as working class, and I know you briefly explained a little bit about why, but I was wondering if you could go into a tiny bit more detail

CLASS

B: ok if I can just journey back I think I said, ok well I would say I would identify myself as working class because my definition, or my definition of working class is people who work to gain a living, or maintain their lifestyle and I believe that's exactly what I do, and what my family do, so therefore I would class myself as working class. But I also would say that I don't like to define myself in a class boundary, because I would hope, and I do believe that within our society now we do not have these strict class boundaries, and I don't think we need to have the categories that we once did of working class, middle class, higher class, because I feel like there's a mergence of classes now and I feel like maybe there needs to be a new category thing, maybe working middle class, like maybe merge them together. I also don't like the way people define themselves in class like its and important thing, I think its shouldn't be an important definition of your life, it should be something you put forward, not, I'm not ashamed of the term working class, if someone wanted to call me working class, I wouldn't have a problem with it, but I know that some people would, because there is a stigma against it, and I think there's a stereotypical image that people get in their heads of, ya'know, poor kinda hard done by, ya'know struggling, but I don't think that's the case, I think if you really just look at the term working class, I think most people if they were going to be accurate are working class, because they do have to work for living, there's nothing wrong with that. But I do get annoyed when some people say like 'ohh I'm middle class, ohh I won't associate with people of the lower class'.

Interviewer: Do you think it's a big thing in our generation then, in the younger generation?

B: I don't think it is in the younger generation, but its when I talk to my grandparents or my parents, my parents strongly believe they are working class and they have no problem with it, umm but my grandmother, like she regularly says that she's middle class although she's worked all of her life, and although yeah she lives in a nice house, and she owns the house, like I don't see, like its fine to define yourself in a class, but when it becomes something that is used to judge people by, then it becomes a bit of a problem, and I just don't see it as an important factor, it shouldn't be an important factor in peoples lives.

Interviewer: Do you think your class affects your day-to-day life?

B: "No not at all". Well I guess if I thought I was working class and I didn't like the term then I guess maybe it would, and I would think, oh my god why cant I be like people who don't have to work for a living, but then I don't like the concept of not having to work for a living, because I don't know what you would do with all that free time. Umm I don't know, it doesn't concern me, I get annoyed when people bring it up and talk about it, because I don't feel like it's a necessary thing, and I don't like it when people put people in boxes anyway, so to kinda talk about class its kinda like, whenever anyone mentions class its to figure out whether they are above you or not, to kind of place you, and kind of assess, like and then they assume from that your intelligence, your lifestyle, how you conduct yourself, what kind of person you are, and I just think that's kinda wrong, and the only way those conversations are brought up is because people just want to put you in a box and make themselves feel better about themselves.

Interviewer: Are there any things in particular that you think are linked to class, like the way people would think about you?

B: umm I think, if you say you are working class, like, like I said they think you live on an estate, they think you work 12 hours a day for tupance, they think that you're not intelligent, they think that you don't have a broad spectrum of knowledge, or that you're not very well cultured, and um, yeah a lot of things I think, and then if you think of middle class people, I think people assume that those people are kind of doctors, and professors, and again they still work for a living so that, doesn't make any sense either. But then I guess people of upper class have the same kind of problem really, cause if you are upper class you have then the stereotype of you being posh, or um, arrogant maybe, privileged, and then again you make assumptions about their intelligence and what they like and probably how they treat other people, because if you thought they were upper class maybe you'd think that they didn't like, or didn't associate with people of upper class.

FAMILY

Interviewer: um so still kinda about you, but about your family as well, what's your families relationship with politics? Do they vote?

B: yes, they do vote, I went and voted with my parents last year actually, my older brother, he, I don't think he's ever voted, um he's two years older than me, and I have a younger brother but he's not old enough to vote yet, but yeah I voted with my parents, and they do take, they watch a lot of news and they are very informed. Umm, they have strong opinions about candidates and I guess they do know quite a lot, they don't go out and research, but they do watch a lot of news, and they are aware, and they do know when to vote, like they know what's coming up, and kind of who they are gonna vote for and we do have regular discussions about things that are going on, especially when the student loans thing came about, and obviously that directly affected me, and obviously it will affect my younger brother now because he does want to go to university, that was definitely a discussion around the dinner table, and my older brother doesn't vote, I'm not sure why, I've never spoken to him about it, but I think he might have mentioned stuff like, it kinda doesn't make a difference if he votes, or it wouldn't matter if he voted or not, or that he just doesn't know a lot about it, I haven't really ever heard him speak about politics, my parents definitely do

Interviewer: **you said that you went with them, was that like a family thing intentionally? Or was it more logistically?**

B: No it was, it was just, I don't know, I was at home, and they, and we were living in a little village, and we had the polling station in the village hall, so um we just kind of walked down there together because we were like, oh we're in, we did decide that we were going to vote that day anyway, um, we were all just in anyway so it was just lets go down and vote sort of thing, logistically wise, its wasn't like, oh lets make a family trip out of it, it was only like 5 minutes down the road, we didn't tell each other who we'd voted for, we had all discussed things, but, I don't know, I think we all kind of kept it a bit private, um

Interviewer: **Is that your mum and your dad as well?**

B: yeah, they um, I don't know, I think maybe its because they didn't want to influence my vote, because obviously I'm new to voting so I think they wanted me to make my own decision, and my own choice, because I think they have a biased against certain parties because of things that have happened in the past and think, um because obviously they grew up with Margaret thatcher and stuff, and I don't think they agreed with a lot of things she did um and they kinda go on what's happened to them personally, but obviously didn't want to influence my vote, because obviously you can only go by what you've experienced from your own kinda life with politics, so I think that's why we didn't discuss it.

Interviewer: **are there any things that you feel like you've experienced in your life with politics that would determine the way you think about it, or the way you would vote, or wouldn't vote?**

B: I think I've definitely been influenced by the fact that the Lib Dems said that they wouldn't raise student fees, and then they did. I think that's a huge thing because, that's a direct interest to me, because I've gone to uni, and I know that my brother wants to go to university and now its going to be very difficult for him to go, um I that was a huge thing because it was a distrust, and you kind of, like voted for them , and they just didn't go with what they were gonna say, and I think that kinda made people angry, because they thought, why the hell did I bother to vote in the first place if they weren't gonna do what they actually said they were gonna do. Big issues like decisions on gay rights and things like that, I think that's quite a big interest to me, things like taxes don't necessarily affect me because I don't pay taxes currently, umm but when I did when I was working that was an interest to me, and I did know kinda what was going on there. Also things that affected my parents like mortgages, especially when we were renovating our house and we were having to sell it, and it took 2 years to sell because of the housing thing, things like that, things that directly affected me, I've taken an interest in, but a lot of it, maybe health, maybe education, like only health recently because of personal experiences but the good experience I've had with the NHS, and them thinking about cutting NHS help for mental illness, just things like that, but things like immigration, umm, there's just too many issues to think about, and I don't really take the time to look into individual parties to see what there policies are about, I kinda just watch the news, or hear things, that policies, but maybe only the massive ones that get put on the media that you kind of, take notice, like ohh ok, they're doing this, that's really good, or, oh they're not doing this that's really bad.

Interviewer: **I mean do your parents support a particular party that would have, or could have influenced you?**

B: I'm not sure, I'm not sure, they're quite, umm, what's the word, not flexible, but like, they do consider what the parties do, its not like they have a blind allegiance to one, because obviously what happened with Labour last time, with Gordon Brown, they didn't like that, but they've never really liked the Conservatives, but um, I think they go by, because they are informed, what they're doing now, and if things are improving then they are like, oh well this is good, like they have done good things and, but I think they were, if I remember rightly, I think they were a bit sceptical of change because Labour was in power for a long time, and then they've had the Conservative Lib Dem, so I think they were a bit scared that Labour was going to go out, because things were ok for them, so, ya'know no-one really likes change, so I think when things are ok, you're kind of sceptical for anyone new to step in, but no they've never really had a blind allegiance to a party, they've always kind of weighed up and talked about and what they've heard, they've made an informed decision basically.

BRANDS

Interviewer: **so what's your family's relationship with brands?**

B: oh lord, um (laugh), they, um ok, my brothers, I guess in a sense have a quite an allegiance to brands, I mean my older brother has an iPhone, a Mac, they both like Nike trainers. I mean my little brother is very into his fashion but a lot of his stuff isn't branded, but then he does have a lot of things that are branded, say like a plain t-shirt, he wont just buy a plain t-shirt from like a high-street store, he will buy one from Fred Perry or he'll buy Dr Martins, things like that. My parents, they're not, I wouldn't say they're branded at all in terms of clothing and their own personal style, they seek comfort, and because money is quite tight, they kinda just go for that. Umm I guess I'm talking about labels, brand wise I guess my dad likes Marks and Spencer's, but that's just one of this things, but again technology wise I guess maybe they are, my dad takes pride in technical things that he buys, things have to be Samsung, or my mums just bought an Ipad, phone wise they're not at all, but yeah, big electrical appliances and his, I think all his tools are a certain brand, they're all Bogita, because he knows they they're reliable and he's always used them so, but, its hard, they've never really spoken about brands as such, but yeah I guess when I think about it they do give presence to brands, in terms of technology and devices and things like that.

YOU

Interviewer: **So just a bit more about you generally, so, this is quite a big question but um, could you describe yourself a bit, so an easy way to do it, might be think about how a friend would describe you, so maybe your personality or how you come across**

B: ok so you don't want the age, date of birth thing you want the, my personality

Interviewer: yeah like psychographic

B: ok I would, let start from the basics, I would say I'm quite an introvert in terms of big social situations but my fiends would probably say that when they see me I'm quite an extrovert, in the sense that I'm quite crazy sometimes, I'm quite loud, I'm quite rowdy at times, but then I can be very quiet, um I'm organized, very sensible, I'm a worrier, umm very sensitive, if I'm going to be honest, I like to analyse and think a lot,

rather than based on logic, I go on emotions rather than practicality, ummm, what else…"

Interviewer: how about appearance wise?

B: I'm short (laughs)

Interviewer: **so like style, if you would fit into t category, or if you don't..**

B: umm, I don't know if I fit into a category, I guess in a certain way I do follow trends, because of like social pressures, and I do kinda read fashion magazines, and look online about what's going on, hum a certain category, I guess I'm quite girly, but not so much that you would describe as a girly girl, I don't think I could be put in a box, I don't know, my friends would have to say if I could be put in a box or not, I would probably say that..

Interviewer: Is there any that you identify with? Any trends, types of people, or if you'd like someone to say that you were like something.

B: Oh god this is a hard question, umm I guess I would say that I'm quite casual, dress wise, like I'm a jeans and t-shirt girl, ok, I try and be one of those girls that looks like they haven't made much effort, but I've actually thought quite a lot about what I've put on , and I have done my hair, but I don't ever get my hair cut, and I don't colour it because it kind of looks bohemian, but its not, because it is thought out, I don't wear that much make up, but its there, so I guess understated pretty if we are going to put it into a category, not that I'm calling myself pretty, but that's what I would put myself in. I guess, yeah I don't think that there's a group of girls that I would put myself in, cause if I think of categories of girls style then I would say like, really girly girl, like ya'know dresses, I don't ever wear dresses, tom boy, I don't think I'm that far that way, ummm, the kind of sporty girl, then there's kinda like chic fashionista, so I would, ok so I would say I'm more bohemian, yeah, throw it together type girl, we got there in the end (laughs)

VALUES AND BELIEFS

Interviewer: **um so about values and beliefs, do you have any key values and beliefs?**

B: ohh we could be here for days, um I believe that, oh god, I believe strongly in equality, that people can believe what they believe as long as it makes them happy and it doesn't deter from anyone else's happiness. Umm, I believe that people have the right to follow any religion they wish, umm although I'm particularly not religious, but I am quite spiritual and I'm open to a lot of things, umm values wise, values and beliefs are the same thing really, I guess just kind of, beliefs of stepping away from western determination to do everything all at once, which I was not that long ago, but I'm kinda learning to step back, and kinda the belief in the simple life, and happiness through fiends and family and simple pleasures, rather that big, empirical massive, kind of career drive thing, but yeah I guess belief wise, definitely equality and happiness basically, that people's happiness doesn't infringe on anyone else's "

POLITICAL ALLEGENCE

Interviewer: do you have any political allegiances?

B: no, no I don't. I like my parents, when it comes to the elections, like the month before, I'll have a look and see what's going on because there's a lot of news coverage about it, so I do watch the news, and I read the news on my phone a lot, so I kinda make my decision their. But no I don't have any allegiances.

BRAND ALLEGENCIES

Interviewer: what about any brand allegiances?

B: umm, I don't know, because I switch a lot, but then I guess would you say Topshop's a brand? Like I used to buy Topshop all the time, it's the only place I would buy anything, but like, Samsung, like everything used to Samsung, trainers I guess, I do change but I have just bought Nike trainers, but Clinique, all my stuff face wise is Clinique because I just trust them, because when I had really bad spots I used all their products and it worked absolute wonders so from then on I've always bought their foundation, I've always kinda bough their products, umm, apart from that.

Interviewer: **and is there any brand or political party, or political candidate that you hate?**

B: ummm, any brand I hate, umm I don't think there's a brand I dislike because I don't think you take notice the ones you dislike, I think you take notice of the ones you do like, if they don't capture your attention, that I think, I think that's how I define something as a good brand, if it captures my attention and gives me a message to think about, I think you then discard all the others, I don't think you give them the time of day because why would you remember a bad brand because the whole point of a good brand is that you remember it. Umm so no I cant remember, I don't know a bad brand. I don't know, if I'm going to be honest many individual politicians, I obviously know who's the prime minister, and then if I said I didn't like them it would completely be on face value, it would be appearance, personality and show man ship that I didn't agree with, umm probably Ed Milliband who I find quite annoying, but because of his voice, probably not because of what he stands for. Yeah it can be quite important, because if you don't engage with someone because they're not charismatic and they don't present themselves well, then you're not going to listen to what they are say… so really in essence, probably not rightly, but a politician does need to be charismatic and put himself across well. I mean I would probably judge a politician first of all which any one would, which any one would, on face value, and if you don't like their face value then you're not gonna listen to what they are saying.

LIFESTAGE

Interviewer: **so then this is another quite a big broad question but its just to understand you life stage and your opinion on the world. So what's your current stage in life?**

B: my stage in life? Can you define what you mean by stage in life?

Interviewer: **so, yeah, would you say, well obviously you're at university, so its kinda where you are, so its about what you're currently doing, any anxieties that**

you have, umm any plans for the future, so say then next few months or year, kind of where you think you're going, and you're not young, your not a kid anymore…

B: oh ok, right well yeah, I'm a Student, I'm in my third year of university, so obviously, right now I'm in the process of doing the last bits of university work, finishing my dissertation, finishing up (laughs), doing my dissertation, I would love to say finishing up my dissertation. Umm and ohh yeah, there's plenty of anxieties, obviously about doing the dissertation, getting that done, graduating, what grade we are gonna come out with, what I'm going to do, having to move home, not living with my friends anymore, what I'm gonna do for a job, the list is endless. But yeah, I'm probably at the stage, that I'm semi-comfortable in where I am right now, in the fact that I know who I am more than I have done, umm being 22 and kind of growing over the last couple of years, but kind of, not scared for the future, but this is a kind of cross roads period where I think a lot of things are going to change and alter, and yeah I think there are a lot of anxieties, but its maybe a transition stage of life"

Interviewer: **um, another very big question, do you feel like you have a role in society?**

B: ohhhh, on a dark note, no, not really. Umm I'd love to say that I did but I, I, society is a huge thing, and even if you asked me if I felt part of a community I still wouldn't say yes because I feel like 'community is a lost concept and everyone moving around so much, and you don't know your neighbours and you don't have that massive sense of community, and you don't really feel part of anything. Well no I don't feel a part of it because I wouldn't be able to effect any thing of it, I wouldn't know how do, ummm no I don't feel like I play a key role in society"

POLITICS

Interviewer: **so moving back on to politics a bit more, you mentioned earlier that you have voted, so would you class yourself as someone who voted?**

B: yes

Interviewer: and again this is personal, so feel free to say no, but do you have a particular party that you vote for or candidate?

B: do you want me to say who I voted for last time?

Interviewer: Yeah, as long as that something that your comfortable with

B: yeah, I voted, oh god, I think I voted for labour last time, have I voted, yeah I've only voted once before, when was the last election, so yeah I've only voted once, and I voted labour, I voted labour because, I think because, if I'm going to be honest, I think because I didn't know enough and I thought I might as well vote for the party that's already in because I don't really know, and I think it kind of was almost a last minute decision, think I walked into the little booth and kinda was like, yeah, no I'll vote for them because they are doing alright at the moment and life is pretty good (laughs), might as well keep them in"

Interviewer: so my next question was why them, so it was just..

B: yeah because I didn't know enough about it, and I hadn't done a lot of research, I mean we had people come in and talk about each party at school, uhh but by then I had already left school and obviously couldn't remember, and I didn't go and research what they were doing, I heard a few things on the news that I cant recall now, umm but I think I just remember thinking, life's good, my parents aren't complaining that much, and my life is ok right now, pretty selfish probably, and uhh, so, probably not to mess things up, like I might as well vote for the people that are already in, because they are doing an alright job and nothing is really that bad"

Interviewer: um so, why do you think people vote? Like what is it you think encourages them, or inspires them?

B: I think because it gives the sense of power, it gives them the sense that they have a chance to contribute to the larger picture, and the larger community, and there's probably loads of things that throughout the 4 years that they've complained about, or thought oh this could be so much better, why don't they do this and stuff, and this party is promising to do this, so if I back them I might actually contribute and push that forward, that could give me a sense that, I am actually taking a role in society, that I'm actually contributing, I think that's what motivates people, I don't see why else people would vote, if they didn't think that they're vote was going to count. Umm maybe some people think that its part of being British, that its part of being part of the country, you just have to vote, its just a necessary thing, but I think most people are engaged and do know that there's issues and they want to affect those issues and like we all think, I think, that politicians and the greater power above us are the people that are going to do it, so this is your little contribution, this is your little way of being able to influence that"

Interviewer: **and again, we've talked about this already a little briefly, but would you say that you supported a particular party?**

B: No, no because, I don't know enough about them, I mean I voted Labour in my first voting experience, but as I said it was because I didn't know enough about it, and I thought that I might as well vote for the people that were already in, umm, but I felt like I had to vote, because I was given the responsibility and the power to vote so I might as well use it, I think it's a bit wasted if you don't vote. Umm but no I don't have a favourite because I think they do change and policies change, and issues change, so I don't think you should stick, I think that's really wrong to stick to a party, because people change and develop and issues come up that they are gonna have to deal with, and your own opinions change and ya'know know the country changes and I don't think blind allegiance to a party is a very good thing to do, I think you need to consider, like I didn't, I think you need to consider all the points and your own personal wants, and your own personal issues and what you really believe in, and make an informed decision, like with all the parties in mind"

Interviewer: **so why do you think that people, do as you said, blindly support parties?**

B: because they cant be bothered, because maybe one year they kind of, they did something good, maybe they had a good policy with something, and they went ohh yeah I'll vote for them, and it comes round again, and they don't really know what's going on, but oh yeah, they did this like last time, I'll vote for them again. I think they blindly

do it because you cant be bothered to think about it, and you feel like you have to vote because you're part of the country, like your just gonna go along with it, and yeah, because investigating into another party is effort, to the average person, it means research, it means time, it means engaging with issues which you maybe don't concern yourself with, and I think once a party is in power and the country is going ok, and you only gage whether the country is ok if you watch the news, or things, and probably selfishly people probably think, oh well my life's alright, like taxes aren't really affecting me, like this is ok, my mortgage is alright, I'll vote for them again, I think that's kinda the consideration.

Interviewer: Do you think there's any emotional benefit?

B: I think, I'm gonna go with my parents probably, because I haven't been in the game long enough, to really make an emotional attachment to a party, but I think that, I don't know, I think it was more a position, because they didn't like what Margaret thatcher did, so the Conservatives, so they then shifted to labour, the next best option, they just pledged their allegiance to Labour because obviously mostly parties kind of take the opposite end of the scale from each other to differentiate themselves, so I think that not liking what one parties done, kind of then made them shift to labour and I think then they gained that emotional attachment because they then were anti Thatcherism , so they were kinda on the same side as them, if you like, so I think if they're kinda saying and backing what you're saying then you're gonna probably associate with them and kind of be like, yeah they're saying what im saying, and yeah that's great, and you are kinda thinking, yeah, they're on my side, so I think you get that kind of support from them yourself.

Interviewer: Do your friends support any parties?

B: ummm, not that I know of, umm politics is very rarely spoken about in, kind of general, my generation kind of groups, I don't think its very well discussed, I mean.

Interviewer: **When you say politics, can you define what you mean?**

B: what I mean, ok

Interviewer: **When you say politics isn't discussed, what isn't discussed?**

B: oh ok I get you, umm I guess we discuss issues, like quite a lot of big issues like gay rights, and kind of uhh gay marriage and stuff like that, and we discuss feminism and feminist issues. We do discuss that a lot, but I don't think I've ever heard any of my friends having an allegiance to a party, I don't think we talk about the parties that much, umm and I've never heard any of them be like, oh I like this party, they do really good thing, like they do this, this this, I think we just talk about the larger issues and the larger things that are going on, umm and I think maybe then its just down to the political party that maybe backs that and then maybe they will identify with it, but I don't think its about allegiance to a certain party, but, its about identifying with an issue, and we are all very aware of issues that are going on, and especially issues that effect us and yeah, its more about the issues than which party.

Interviewer: **why do you think that, parties aren't conversation topic worthy?**

B: Personally, because they aren't as important as the issues, because at the end of that day, its not a personality contest, its not, you know whose the nicest looking party, whose presented by the nicest colour on their badge, its about the issues, that is what effect us day to day, they are the things that matter, the things that we need to discuss, its not about the party, obviously the parties are important in what they believe in, but I think that's the after thought, the thought to start with is, what's going on in the country, what's going on in the larger world, what do we need to do, what do we need to improve on… and then you go, whose gonna make that happen for us, whose gonna solve that problem for us, who do we need to communicate through, I think talking about parties, I guess probably we should because we are going to need to know which ones are going to do those issues for us, so it probably does need to be spoken about more, but issues are what get people talking, and issues get debates going and get people informed, parties are just the representative of where those issues are going to go.

Interviewer: **Ok so in your focus group, when asked the main images that were associated with politics, um it was the three politicians, it was the media the newspapers, it was protesting, it was the voting and it was the arrows with all the different parties, I just want to make sure that for you that still is the thing that best summarise the way you think about politics.**

BRANDS

Interviewer: **So we've briefly just discussed your opinion on politics, so this section is a bit more about, kind of brands, so do you have a favourite brand?**

B: umm, I'm looking round the room now, trying to think of brands to be honest with you, ummm its really tough, because I never really like buy a, I don't feel like a buy certain brand, I mean I probably do. Umm I mean, from things I've seen and things that they've done I mean like Nike, Cadbury, umm, apple, I think they would probably be my main ones"

Interviewer: Why?

B: why, well I like Cadbury probably superficially, because I think their adverts are really fun, and um I think they've kind of redeveloped themselves quite well over the years, I think they pushed forward the fun and quirky element, especially in their TV ads which I think is a really good way to engage with people, because I think we are all, a culture of entertainment, and kind of fun, rather than pushing products, and I think they kind of did that really well, and I think they're also very consistent, and I think that's really important in a brand, that kind of consistency, even from ya'know, from years and years back, they've kept their colours and they've kept their branding really similar, and I think you feel comfortable when things don't change, and you feel like you've kinda grown up with them a little bit. Umm Nike, I really like what they do, also one that's sprung to mind is, just because of one of the adverts they did, is sure deodorant ad, sure do loads of umm feminist adverts, especially with their deodorant, they really spoke to women, they didn't kind of do beauty products in the same way, they kind of showed it with women being sporty and just living their day to day lives, and they didn't have a really pretty girl in the advert, they just had normal women. umm but Nike yeah, I think they are really consistent and they have a good ethos behind them"

Interviewer: Do you know what there ethos is?

B: just about like, being better, and like, an ya'know just do it, and giving people the power to be what they want, not necessarily just in sport, but kind of in their every day life, I think that's what I get from it anyway, I don't know if that's what other people get from it, kind of, that you're and individual and you can be part of something and be better in everything you do. Apple just because about, how different they were from everything else out there, in their kind of industry, and um the innovation they brought about, and I don't know, they maybe put across more of a personality, than just, because obviously it's a technology brand, something that I normally wouldn't engage with because I'm not a huge technology buff, but they kind of gave it more of a personality, and I feel like they made it more user friendly in that way, its not an alien product that I don't know a lot about, its kind of open for everyday people to kind of use, and engage with.

Interviewer: Ok so what do, brands like these do for you?

B: They, in I sense, I think they give a source of comfort and familiarity, I think once you've bought into them, and invested your time and maybe your money into them, and you've bought into their ethos and idea, and they stay true to that, I think, especially with Cadbury like growing up with them, it just gives you a, I don't know, that sense of nostalgia. Umm Nike I feel like its empowering in a lot of ways and apple it just kind of, its quite nice, as I said its making technology, which is should be nowadays, more open to people, and less alien, and I guess, especially Nike and Apple, I think they give the power over to you I guess, I guess they give you a bit more freedom, and make things more relatable to you, rather than it being this product that, they don't make it like, this product is for these types of individuals, its kind of like you can be part of this, this is part of a wider community"

Interviewer: So what is it that you kinda think you are paying for?

B: well obviously you are paying for the product, but you're also paying for a lifestyle, you're paying for, to be part of what they are trying to exude, especially with magazines that I buy, you're buying into a lifestyle and a way of life, and what you think they represent. So with Nike you are buying something that is empowering, that is giving you the confidence to do something, so when you put your trainers on like, ya'know, you feel like you are also saying those things, you are also putting that out there, and umm, like with apple and stuff, you aren't just paying for the product, you're paying for the ethics, behind it and their own kind of emotion behind it, and you kind of feel that because you have that product you can also exude those things, and give off that thing that they're trying to give off.

Interviewer: So say, two pairs of trainers, why Nike, not Reebok, same price, same trainers?

B: Umm, on a superficial first note I would say like I think, Nike put more personality into their products, not just ethos, but with their colours and their designs, I think, cause I've got bright yellow ones, umm I don't know enough about Reebok, but when I think of Reebok I think white and blue. Umm, they're logo isn't as attractive, umm I think the tick itself is kinda like, that's just a positive entity anyway, that's ya'know giving you the tick, ya'know your wearing them, Nikes giving you that, that kind of approval, like

the tick is a mark of approval. Umm and from the products that I've had they're good quality, umm, ya'know they're reliable, like, but yeah, again I that that Reebok doesn't, for me, have anything behind it that I want to invest in, it doesn't have Nikes kind of principle of confidence and kind of empowerment, that Reebok does, so if I'm buying a product and they're both the same price, and maybe they are the same quality, I would prefer to buy into something that gives me those feelings, cause you don't just want a product, you want kind of the emotion behind it"

Interviewer: And you've kinda spoken about this anyway, but so do you believe that Nike and Clinique and Apple tie in with you values

B: Umm yeah definitely, I'm all about positivity anyway, so Nike, and that kind of self-confidence, and self esteem, like I've tried to develop that within myself a lot, because of personal things that I've been through, stuff like having an anxiety disorder, and that kind of, having a lot of discrimination against it, and kind of maybe feeling like you have to hide that, and trying to be confident and trying to be an individual and trying to be empowered, I think, what was the question? I've totally blanked out (laughs)

Interviewer: **So it was, whether they share the same values**

B: Oh yeah, Nike especially share the same values as me, as they are all about positivity and getting people to kind of see themselves as that confident person, I think they do that, Clinique I think, is about natural beauty, its about freshness, its about shedding, rather than piling on lots of make up, and I feel like that, comes with me, because although I do where make up, I wear their makeup, but freshness, and that, I think they give you a sense of freedom with that freshness, I think I do believe in that, and kind of, yeah, so yeah, they do share my values.

Interviewer: Say, Clinique and Nike came out and said that they didn't like gay people or they didn't like black people, would you keep buying their products.

B: Now, I was gonna say straight away no, but umm, me and my friend were having a discussion today about Starbucks, umm and about how I'm very aware of the fact that they owe a lot of taxes, and that they didn't support the armed forces when we asked them to, but she asked me if it would stop me buying my drink their, but it wouldn't, umm because I like the product and that's what I want. Umm I mean such a big issue as that, if they out rightly came out and said that, then no I probably wouldn't, as I said like, if there was another product like equally as good, but had better ethics and shared my values then I would buy them, if suddenly Nike didn't share my values anymore then I wouldn't feel like I wanted to support that, because I think if you buy into the product then you're buying into their ethics, and that's not the way I would think, and that's not what I believe, so I wouldn't want to be associated with that brand, because I didn't share what I fully believed"

Interviewer: So, this is a bit more about buying, but it's still related to brands, so, can you remember the first time you bought a Clinique product?

 B: I do, I must have been about 16, and mum took me to bath because I was having skin issues, and um she had always used Clinique, and she said she would treat me, to go and get all the face stuff because she said it was really good… it was probably the first range id bought into. And we went to see the women at the counter, and yeah I was 16, so yeah I was 16

Interviewer: Was it a spontaneous purchase or was it thought out?

B: no it wasn't a spontaneous purchase, it was thought out, because my mum, id basically told her of my problem and she said Clinique, so we specifically went to that shop for Clinique, that's what we knew we were gonna get. It was definitely a thought out thing, its wasn't spur of the moment.

Interviewer: So was there a process?

B: um I was thinking about what I wanted to get out of it, I had expectations because of my mums previous experience, umm and I had expectations of kind of knowing how good a brand they were from what my mum had said, and kind of how expensive they were, I had an expectation that it was going to work, that it was going to be a good product, um I think it was only after I had bought into the sort of product that I kind of got their branding and knew what they were about after

Interviewer: **So how do you feel when you have it? So that moment, that first time, can you remember how you felt when you had it?**

B: Well before I used it, when I bought it, I felt like this was gonna help me, so it gives you a kind of empowering thing like this product is going to make a difference to my life, because obviously, especially for a girl that, spots affect you, so I think there's that kind of moment of, I feel like it's a luxury brand, you kind of get it and you feel like this is going to be a really going product, like from like the branding, and like the bottles, and how it looks and stuff, so like the first time I used it, you feel good about using it, because of kind of what they say about it, and how they present themselves, you feel like it's a quality product, you feel like it's a quality brand that sort of prides itself on kind of natural beauty, and kind of yeah

Interviewer: **Do you still feel that way?**

B: yeah definitely, I mean, I don't use a lot of it, I use the make up still, but only because I'm a student now and cant afford it, but 100% there's no question that when I start working again, I will get all their stuff again

Interviewer: What do you think it says about you?

B: I think it says that I umm, I guess it says i have money, because it is an expensive brand and its high quality, I guess it says I take pride in my appearance, says that I buy luxury goods, I guess it kind of gives you that prestige, that kind of confidence, people are like ohh she uses Clinique, like I don't know, when anyone buys something quite luxurious, you kind of obviously gonna think that's a good thing, and um ya'know, she much have great skin, or like, she's taking charge of how she looks and stuff, and its obviously a good product and stuff

Interviewer: Do you know what your friend's favourite brands are?

B: umm, Nike is obviously up there, I think, they all have apple products, so they obviously invest in that, ummm, (long pause) but no because I'm not a very good listener. But going by what they use, I think we all have Venus razors, apart from that, no"

Interviewer: **Is there any similarities? Do you think there are similarities between your favourite brands, and your mates favourite brands**

B: I think definitely, because if they've heard of a brand, or if you've heard of a brand, and they've bought into it and they introduce you to it I think because you're going to be friends with people of similar disposition to you, and have similar beliefs and values then you'll gonna be like well if she's bought into it and she agrees with their beliefs and ethos then that's definitely going to appeal to me, and appeal to my beliefs and values and that's great, or vice versa, whether you found something, and yeah definitely, because you're friends are people, that I would of assumed you share similar issues, and beliefs' and values with"

Interviewer: Ok, so just to finish the kind of brand section, ok so, we used Reebok previously, so we will use it again, so finish this sentence. "I would be more likely to buy Reebok, if they…"

B: they presented themselves with more personality and they actively showed that they umm had similar beliefs and values to me

BOTH

Interviewer: **Ok, so we've briefly discussed you, briefly discussed politics, briefly discussed brands, so this next section, this final section is just about brands and politics combined.**

Interviewer: So I will read 4 statements and I would like you to tell me, whether for you, this applies to brands or politics, and there isn't any right or wrong answers, its just about which do this for you

B: Ok, yeah

Interviewer: **Ok so the first phrase is: I will pick a, political party, political candidate, brand that embody the ideals I admire and help me express who I want to be**

B: do you want me to say a brand, or just say which?

Interviewer: **No, just say whether brands do that or**

B: Brands

Interviewer: **Ok the second one, something… Influence the way I consider our daily universe and my actions**

B: Brands

Interviewer: **Something… provide extraordinary identity value because they address and support anxieties and values I may have**

B: Brands

Interviewer: Something… tend to have clear and consistent values and beliefs

B: Brands

Interviewer: And finally, something… gives me a sense of control

B: Brands

<u>ROLE PLAY</u>

Interviewer: **So then this is also the final activity and it involves a bit of role play, its not really, its just kind of switching it, so we've spoken about, lets go with Nike, So if Nike was a politician, what type of politician do you think they would be?**

B: Ok, right, appearance wise they would be charismatic, they would present themselves very well and clean cut, but they would also be cool and kind of try to appeal to the masses rather than be, I don't now a small limited, kind of, they wouldn't be a typical politician, lets just say that, umm ethos values wise, they would kind of pride themselves on not just empowering the party, but empowering people, giving the power over to people, giving people the confidence to speak up, giving people the confidence to kind of have control over their own lives, maybe hand over the power a bit more, umm they wouldn't talk over people or down to people, they would talk to them on a level, umm, they would be consistent with what they say, umm they would hold their values and beliefs very strongly, and they would abide by them, umm, they would present a very clear picture to their audience, umm and they would communicate their values and beliefs very effectively"

Interviewer: **In terms of popularity?**

B: I think they would be very popular, because I think, Nikes thing of empowering people, Nike don't just be like we're powerful, like invest in us, they spread that out, the kind of give that over to the people and I think that's what politicians need to do"

Interviewer: **Ok, so then, this is a flip reversal, so if David Cameron was a brand, what kind of brand do you think he would be? So again appearance, type of product, personality, popularity..**

B: ok, appearance wise he would be plain, he would be kind of uniform and structured um and kind of traditional, not very unique, consistency wise he would change every couple of years, umm values and beliefs would be sketchy and um kind of vague, an undrawn upon, umm make big statements then not really stick to them.

Interviewer: Is there a particular product you can think of? It might help you

B: umm, but I did say that the beginning that you don't remember a bad brand. Umm name and shame, umm, I genially cant, because I don't remember bad brands, umm the kind of brand that would chop and change with the tides, and kind of not really talk to the people, and kind of stand alone, and just be on a pedestal.

Interviewer: Brilliant well that is the interview, thank you very much for participating.