YOUNG PEOPLE AND BRITISH IDENTITY

Research Study Conducted for The Camelot Foundation by Ipsos MORI

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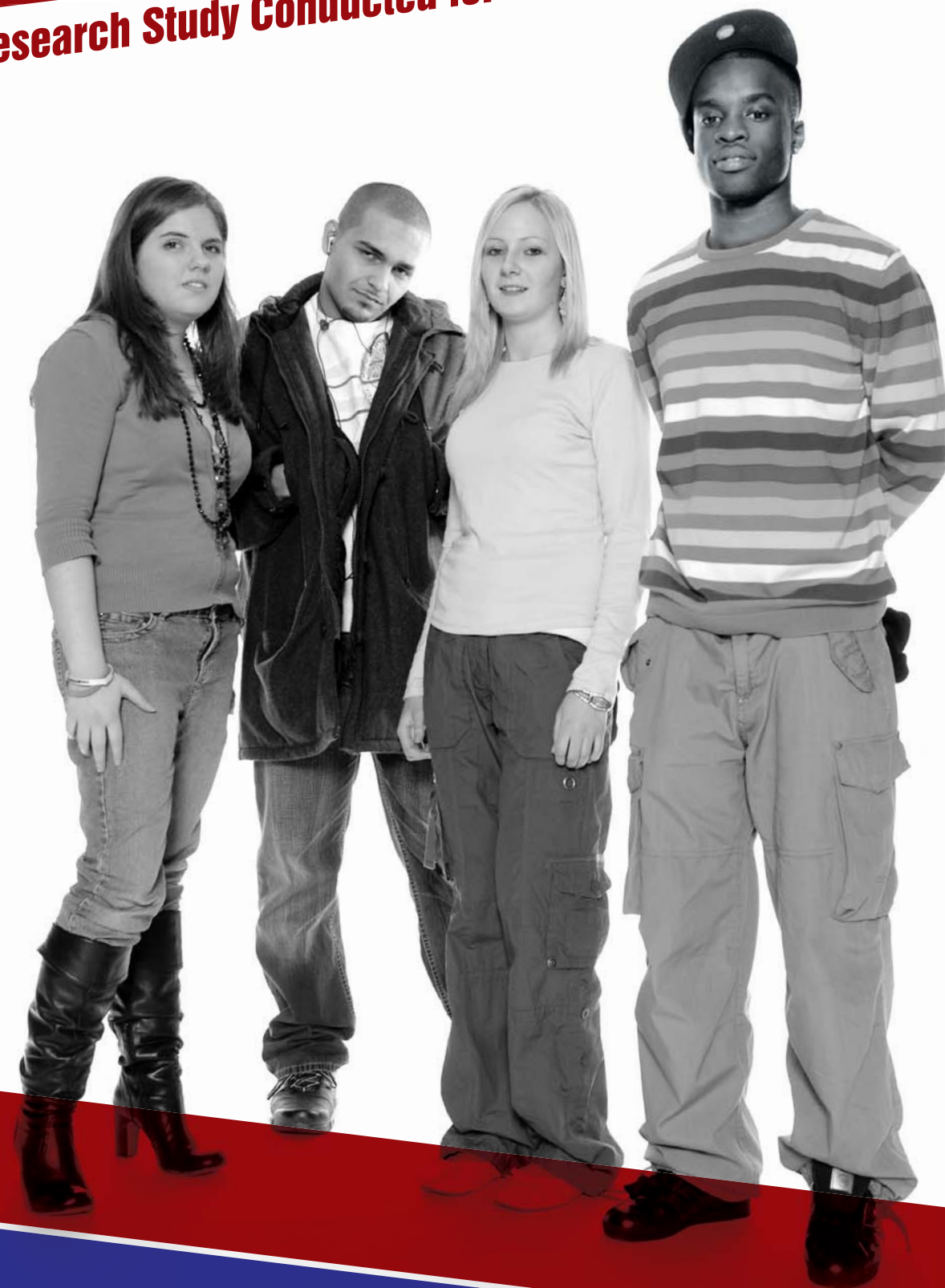Joe Lancaster
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Forward

The idea for this research grew from a seminar that The Foundation held on 13th July 2005, only two days after the tragedy of the London bombings, as we have read and seen in the media there was an immense sense of solidarity as we were united in our grief and shock – it lead to many questions about the sense of identity and Britishness at our seminar for the young people that attended.   Our former Director, Susan Elizabeth, developed this research at the outset; her role in shaping this work was fundamental.

One of the many virtues of this work is that it has served as a reminder of some of the facts that face young people everyday and through commissioning Ipsos MORI we wanted to connect directly with the voice of those young people.

The Foundation considers itself unique through its combination of targeted grant giving and direct programme delivery. We aim to make a real difference to the lives of the most disadvantaged young people and show that they have a positive role to play in shaping their own futures and the future of their communities. When we review our grant making and programme delivery we do so with an unblinking focus on reaching the marginalised young people that The Foundation was set up to serve by Camelot Group plc in 1997.   The commitment of our Trustees and sponsor allows us to strive for innovation and to tackle issues that will secure real change in policy and practice.

It is always a privilege to work directly with our young people and this report is a product of their support too – the photographs are of young people that have been on the 4front journey; a development programme for young people that aims to develop skills, broaden thinking and encourage leadership. To the participants of the research we owe great thanks for sharing their views. We are confident that this research will mark the beginning of a new journey for The Foundation and inform our thinking and that of others for the future.

Samantha Hyde
Acting Director

Acknowledgements

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Ipsos MORI was commissioned by The Camelot Foundation to conduct research among young people, aged 16 to 21 years, on the meaning of Britishness as a national identity. The study has been commissioned to bring to the debate young people's perspectives on what a national identity means to them, the relevance it has to their lives and its currency in present day culture.

The three main objectives of this research are to:

• Explore young people's views of Britishness
• Explore young people's views on national identity
• Explore what Britishness means in everyday life

Methodology

To meet these objectives, the methodology comprised qualitative group discussions, a quantitative survey as well as semiotic analysis of youth and British culture.

Qualitative phase

The qualitative research comprised 12 group discussions across six areas of the UK including a mixture of urban, rural, suburban, and deprived locations. In each area, two group discussions were conducted: one with 16 to 18 year olds, and the other with 18 to 21 year olds. Each group consisted of eight participants. In total 96 young people participated in the group discussion.

Quotas were set according to age, education status, employment status, ethnicity and gender. Participants were also given a pre-task to complete before they attended the discussion. Six of the 12 groups were given a 'life-book' or diary to complete and the others were given a Polaroid camera with the task of taking pictures that represented their local community or their nation.

Fieldwork was conducted between 30 August and 20 September 2006 in London, Birmingham, Plymouth, Cardiff, Belfast and Glasgow.

FIGURE 1
GROUP COMPOSITION

Group No.	Age & work status	Gender	Location	Ethnicity	Social Class and area type	Pre-task
1	16 to 17; In education	Male and Female	England, London, Hackney and surrounding boroughs	Mixed race (Black Caribbean or African and white)	BC1	Life books
2	18 to 21; In work or education	Male and female	England, Midlands, Aston and Lozells/ Handsworth	White, black and Asian/Asian split	C1C2DE Urban Marginalised	Cameras
3	16 to 17; 3 in education/3 not; 2 of either	Male and female		Black	DE Marginalised	Cameras
4	18 to 21; Half in work or education: rest not	Male and female		White, black and Asian – even split	C1C2DE Urban	Life books
5	16 to 17; In education	Male and female	Wales, Cardiff	White	BC1 Suburban	Cameras
6	18 to 21; Half in work/half not in work or education	Female		White	C2DE Urban	Life books
7	18 to 21; 3 in work or education; 3 not in either; 2 of either	Male	England, Cornwall, Plymouth	White	C2DE Marginalised	Cameras
8	16 to 17; In education	Female		White	C2DE Rural	Cameras
9	18 to 21; In work or education	Male and Female	N. Ireland, Belfast	White	C1C2 Urban, Protestant	Life books
10	16 to 17; In education	Male and Female		White	C1C2 Urban, Catholic	Cameras
11	16 to 17; In education	Male and Female	Scotland, Glasgow	Asian	C1C2 Urban	Life books
12	18-21; 2 in work; 2 in Education; 4 not in work or education	Male and Female		White, black and Asian – even split	C2DE Marginalised	Cameras

Quantitative phase

The quantitative phase was conducted among a nationally representative face-to-face omnibus of 672 young people aged 16-21 years in Great Britain between 14th and 21st September 2006. Quotas were set and the data is weighted to match the national profile. Fieldwork was carried out by LVQ Research.

Interpretation of qualitative research

It is perhaps important at this stage to include a brief explanation about why we conducted qualitative research with this audience and, furthermore, the strengths and limitations of this approach. Qualitative research provides a depth of understanding which cannot be achieved from a structured questionnaire. The free-flowing format of the discussions provides an insight into participants' views and concerns, while seeking to identify not only what they know and think, but also why they do so. It is a flexible and interactive process and, therefore, it is possible to respond to the individual circumstances of each participant and to bring their experiences to light. Considering the complexity and wide scope of the topic of identity, a qualitative approach is essential to bring new insights to light.

Qualitative research is particularly useful when exploring attitudes towards, and perceptions of complex, often subconscious issues such as one's individual and group identity. It can often be the case that when talking about an issue that is relatively subconscious, qualitative research works much more effectively than a quantitative approach. It allows participants to be reflexive and examine their own thoughts and behaviour – it gives them the freedom to express the issues that are salient to them as they are not restricted in their thoughts by a structured questionnaire.

When analysing results from the quantitative findings it is important to note that the questionnaire was administered with the aid of prompted lists.

It is important to mention that qualitative research focuses on perceptions and not facts. However, perceptions are facts to those that hold them and, as such, are important to bear in mind even if the information is, technically, incorrect. Furthermore, qualitative research does not allow for the production of statistics from the data it produces. As such, throughout this report we have used terms such as 'majority' to infer a commonly held viewpoint across all young people and 'minority' to mean an opinion that was only expressed by a small number.

Verbatim comments provide evidence for the qualitative findings. To protect the participants' anonymity their comments have been attributed according to gender, ethnic identity and/or religious (where this is of relevance), age and location. In some cases, the area or ethnic background from which the young person comes from lends a certain meaning to the comment and has been included especially.

Throughout this report 16 to 17 year olds are referred to as 'younger participants' and 18 to 21 year olds are referred to as 'older participants'. When referring to themes that are common to both age groups, they are referred to as 'young people'.

Semiotics

Semiotic analysis was undertaken to look at how British identity is constructed and how it operates in the context of youth culture. This phase was conducted because young people find it difficult to talk about the potential of different cultural ideas to shift their expectations and beliefs. While qualitative research takes an inside-out approach by asking people what they feel and think about an issue, semiotics takes an outside-in approach by understanding how culture shapes people's perceptions and world views.

Qualitative research gives us a clear picture of how things are now and how people feel and perceive their social reality but it is limited in terms of how far it can 'see into the future' and identify potential for concepts and ideas to appeal. Some of these concepts are just too abstract, too transparent and are so ingrained as a part of the everyday landscape that it is hard to express their meaning.

A key element of semiotic analysis is to triangulate ideas found in one place in the culture with similar themes in quite different places. In this way, semiotics looks very widely to find themes which are so big and so 'taken for granted' in culture, individuals cannot always articulate them.

Semiotics is a process of desk research and observational research. It uses as its data all the 'raw materials' of cultural analysis such as print media, websites, comments, fashions, images, music under the name of 'texts'. A text is simply a created item or element that carries cultural meaning.

A basic premise of semiotic questioning is to look at what is 'taken for granted' or 'normal' in the text; why is it that way, rather than another way? What does transparency hide?

In this study we looked at the mechanisms of identity, and how these are constructed across texts. Some of the key texts examined include British sport, books, magazines, film, television, advertising, music, online forums, historical narratives, school curriculum, the retail environment and general observation of shoppers, markets etc. More detail on the exact texts used can be found in the appendices. In examining all these sources we remained alert to our key questions, took notes and collected examples and snippets that related to Britishness, identity and youth. As this process progressed we met to compare findings, exchange ideas and brainstorm what we had found to see what patterns and contrasts were emerging across these many texts. This allowed the process to remain iterative and flexible, with our exploration of texts and different areas being re-focused or expanded as our analysis progressed.

The semiotician investigates the artefacts of culture which surround young people, and questions the way they 'make meaning', rather than asking individuals what they think. In this project, we posed ourselves three different questions:

• What ideas, themes, and styles relate to identity for young people?
• What ideas, themes and styles relate to Britishness in culture today?
• Where is the potential positive overlap between them?

To answer the questions, we looked at a vast range of 'texts' or cultural artefacts, over a range of media and sources, to get a broad and deep reading on cultural messages, codes and patterns. The semiotic process involves looking at the texts and then interrogating them by asking a very clearly structured set of questions, about the 'choices' made by the text. These include looking at:

• Design
• Wording, language, discourse
• Imagery, colours, layout
• Topic selection, the way the topic has been approached
• What has been left out?

These are just a few relevant semiotic questions we asked of the texts in this study. A basic premise of semiotic questioning is to look at what is 'taken for granted' or 'normal' in the text; why is it that way, rather than another way? What does transparency hide? In answering these questions, we discover underlying cultural assumptions which are played out in the text, perhaps without the awareness or intention of the person who constructed it.

Interpretation of semiotics

Semiotics lets us identify important codes and patterns of meaning in contemporary culture, and in this study specifically, about Britishness and youth culture. Codes are signals found in texts that carry meaning. Codes can be clustered to create 'families of meaning' that can relate to a cultural area such as food or the internet.

It is important to remember these codes will keep changing because culture is dynamic and changes over time through 'paradigm shifts'[2]. Semiotics can spot the points where codes change, by observing the cultural tension or energy around new ideas and 'contested codes'.

By looking at different bundles of signals, and analysing how they met together to form codes, we identified:

• codes of British identity today
• codes of youth today

We were therefore able to analyse potential overlaps between the two; we also identified examples of emergent areas within the culture, where there are signs that the two types of code already coexist fruitfully.

[2]See appendices 'Paradigm Shifts' page number 138

Report structure

The report has been divided into four chapters:

Chapter 1 Young people in Britain today, sets the context of young people's lives today and their spontaneous views on the advantages of living in Britain.

Chapter 2 National and ethnic identities, examines in detail how young people in different parts of the country and from different ethnic and religious background within the nations feel about everyday life, their national identity and their views on Britishness.

Chapter 3 The challenge of Britishness, addresses the common underlying themes that have emerged from across the research when young people attempt to reconcile their national, ethnic, religious and cultural identities with a British identity.

Chapter 4 Where next for British youth identity? takes a semiotic perspective of how to re-position and revitalise Britishness in a way that appeals to young people and some basic principles of what needs to change in the future for a British identity to become relevant in young people's lives.

Publication of data

As Camelot Foundation has engaged Ipsos MORI to undertake an objective programme of research, it is important to protect everyone's interests by ensuring that the research findings are accurately reflected in any press release or publication. As part of our standard terms and conditions, the publication of the findings of this report is therefore subject to the advance approval of Ipsos MORI and The Camelot Foundation. Such approval will only be refused on the grounds of inaccuracy or misrepresentation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This summary provides an overview of the key findings from the qualitative, quantitative and semiotic research. For more detail on any element of this summary please refer to the main report and for detailed evidence of the semiotic findings.

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Young people's lives today

The research illustrates the range of physical, emotional and mental change that young people go through, and that they are constantly figuring out their place in the world. Being young involves crafting different facets of one's personal identity including tastes and preferences in music, sport, fashion, hobbies, humour, television, gaming, and the internet to name a few. Defining these attributes is a decisive pre-occupation for young people and determines social standing, group status and personal trajectory.

In this context, Britishness is relatively less important and does not feature on the list of personal traits which helps define personal identity. This is because young people see British identity as a legal construct used only in official circumstances. There is a fundamental lack of emotional resonance with the concept: Britishness is seen as an unchanging static attribute that cannot be changed or re-configured, which goes against the 'project of being young' and the state of flux that comes with adolescence. Additionally, being Welsh, Scottish or Irish has far more emotional resonance than Britishness.

Spontaneous associations with Britain include the Queen, tea and crumpets, and Big Ben etc, which are rather "old world" versions and do not reflect a contemporary Britain or social reality. For many young people, Britain represents an old, hierarchical, traditional, political discourse that does not fit with the fresh, inventive, messy and often chaotic world of a teenager. Furthermore, many young people in this research do not know the geo-political story of Great Britain or the United Kingdom.

However this does not necessarily mean that young people consider Britishness unimportant. Indeed, far more people say that Britishness means something to them than feel it doesn't (56% compared with 24%) and overall three quarters say a shared sense of Britishness is important to the country (77%) and important to how they see themselves personally (74%). On a rational level they recognise a number of advantages to living here, such as the strong economy, good public services like the NHS, institutions like the BBC, good education and coveted universities, basic law and order and social rules and the knowledge that personal freedoms and human rights will be protected. They also point out that the four nations, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, working together particularly for economic stability and the armed forces is a good thing. Being British becomes relevant when abroad on holiday – a concept labelled as 'othering', where one's national identity becomes stronger in the face of a culture that is not your own. However, being British does not seem to add anything to the daily narrative or the social reality that young people are faced with. There is a degree of cynicism about career prospects and the state of British society which poses a number of challenges if Britishness is to resonate with young people.

Both black and Asian participants experience a complex layering of national and ethnic identities which become important in different circumstances.

The challenge of Britishness

In Wales, Scotland and for Catholic participants in Northern Ireland they see the English as arrogant, superior and aggressive. Their opposition to the English means that they are hesitant in accepting a British identity because they think it places them in the same camp as the English. These nations want to be recognised as culturally and attitudinally different from the English. They also want to be seen as distinct and rich cultures in themselves. For Catholic participants in Northern Ireland the political, religious and historical baggage that accompanies the 'British' cannot be overstated.

However, young white people in England find it hard to distinguish between being English and British: the two appear interchangeable. The quantitative research also supports this theory highlighting that English young people are far less likely to think their English identity is more important than their British identity, than young Scots or Welsh people (38% among English people compared with 60% in Wales and 85% in Scotland). It begs the questions whether Britishness as a concept is propagated by, and only significant to, the white English population.

In that light, multiculturalism throws up a number of interesting questions. Ethnic identities have far more emotional resonance with black and Asian young people. Both black and Asian participants experience a complex layering of national and ethnic identities which become important in different circumstances. There are a number of emotional bonds to their parent's country of origin, and the message for instance that 'You are Nigerian' is constantly reinforced as their parents remind them of their heritage and their 'otherness' from the white community. This is despite the fact that young people acknowledge that at times they are caught between feeling part of their heritage and not being fully accepted by people in their 'home country'. Again this is supported by the quantitative evidence with young ethnic minorities far more likely to disagree with the statement 'Being British is more important to my sense of identity than my family's country of origin' (43% compared with 29% among young white people).

This, coupled with cultural differences (types of food, dress, beliefs about marriage, sex, alcohol etc) between their heritage and British society and the reality of racial discrimination, means they find their claim to Britishness is all too often denied. Participants argue that if 'white England' does not accept black and Asian people as 'truly' British then the concept of Britishness is a non-starter.

However, there are differences based on nationality: ethnic minorities living in England find it hard to adopt an English identity. This could be because on legal forms there is no box which has 'English Pakistani'. The official descriptor is 'British Pakistani'. It is assumed that Englishness is a matter of lineage and bloodlines. It appears that young people living in England have no choice but to adopt a 'British' identity. However, Scottishness is not seen in the same way. For instance, young people of Pakistani origin feel comfortable saying they are 'Scottish Asian'. It is this sense of authenticity, of having the right to be called Scottish or Muslim that has emotional significance and one that Britishness does not provide them with.

Participants question the fundamental ideology that a single universal identity such as Britishness can co-exist with multiple identities, such as being Scottish or a Scottish Muslim. Fundamentally, young people believe that the singular nature of a British identity is imposed on them. Given the inescapable nature of plural identities, it is generally the case that we decide in which contexts particular affiliations and associations take the lead. It is the inevitability of Britishness as an identity that is imposed or the idea that we are supposed to feel British to which participants are opposed. It is this 'parent-child' discourse that does not sit well with young people.

They see local identities, such as being a Glaswegian, and national identities, such as being a Scot, and any ethnic identity as more important and emotionally relevant than the 'supra' British identity. The loose rule of Britishness holding together disparate cultures, histories and peoples leaves participants unconvinced. Some believe that trying to pin down or map out what it is to be British highlights differences between the nations and different ethnic communities, rather than creating a unifying banner which symbolises inclusiveness or social cohesion.

Furthermore, some feel that discussing Britishness or trying to pin down any values causes more confusion and dissent rather than being a solution to a problem – a problem they suspect is multiculturalism and integration. Some participants say that it is this fuzzy quality of Britishness that has so far allowed it to encompass the national and ethnic identities by default rather than by design. Britishness is to them a myth of unity, not a reality.

This collective identity highlights difference rather than brings people together. So, as an agent of social cohesion Britishness is problematic, not least for many white young people who perceive ethnic minority communities to be different from the British norm in their social and cultural beliefs. In some instances, young people feel threatened by the increased competition for jobs, resources and their freedom to question these differences between cultures and not appear to be 'non-PC' or even racist. As an agent of social cohesion young people are unable to see how Britishness as a shared social identity can work, taking into consideration multiple identities and ethnic, religious, social and cultural differences between communities.

Where next for British youth identity?

Given the challenges facing the 'brand guardians' of Britishness, the semiotic analysis asks a number of significant questions:

- How do we leverage powerful, motivating identities and ideas for young people in the service of Britishness?
- How can we identify the aspects of Britishness which do have resonance, given that when the whole package of Britishness is considered, it does not appeal?

How do we link the two – ideas which are important to young people linked with a revitalised idea of Britishness?

The semiotic and qualitative analysis shows that the codes of Britishness are outdated (residual) and do not fit with the dominant contemporary society. Five key themes around dominant codes of our culture and specifically youth identity are: DIY identities focused on self determination where the re-invention and 'project of the self' is key; a democracy of creativity and the opportunities to share and display that creativity through new technologies; a dominant voice of the child on display in many facets of society, and across all ages where showing emotion and using that to one's advantage is acceptable (in contrast to the stiff upper lip code of 'Old Britain'); a sense of an increasingly extreme meritocracy with society divided into winners and losers rather than equal opportunities for all; and, the centrality of personal history and very localised connections to identity.

> The social contract has historically served as a tool for developing state-society relations; to teach values and gain loyalty.

These themes reflect the dominant interests and codes. These are important because if Britishness is to resonate particularly with young people, it is unlikely to 'connect' with modern society if it appears to clash with or not be accommodating of the features of these dominant themes. The dominant codes need to be considered because Britishness cannot simply be 're-packaged' into these to revitalise it.

However, the wheels of individualism may be coming off. With concerns around the health of consumer society living in debt, the 'want it now' maxim starts to look particularly short-sighted; this element of modern culture is literally in danger of becoming bankrupt. There is a moral questioning of those whose focus is so heavily upon exterior beauty and conspicuous consumption.

The social contract has historically served as a tool for developing state-society relations; to teach values and gain loyalty. In Britain this was achieved through strong public services and the armed forces, nationally owned industries, and a welfare state focused on a 'big tent' mentality – where there were enough resources for all, given out by a secure British state. Now, our social contract is the subject of debate in contemporary culture. The assumed political deal young people strike with society is the focus of much discourse, especially on web discussions and in the press; and the tone is dissatisfied.

The challenge then in creating a new emergent sense of Britishness is to identify how the best of our residual 'Old Britain' and dominant codes of contemporary Britain can be brought into line. One way to build a new narrative of Britishness is to look at the ways such narratives have been constructed in the past and using the positive stories to bridge the gap between the old and new to make this nostalgia fit with the modern world.

Another way of doing that is to look for stories with an element of competition and distinctiveness, in particular narratives of Britishness about 'being first' and 'being best'. For example, there was a lot of comment in the press that the British public made the greatest level of personal donations after the 2005 Tsunami, reflecting our generosity, international outlook and environmental concerns. There are also plenty of British idols who sum up 'being the best' in industry, inventiveness, daring and courage – such as Richard Dyson and Ellen McArthur.

The spirit of inventiveness expressed in DIY fundraising or campaigning is what makes this an example of new British identity, as is the way enjoyment and serious issues are seen to go hand-in-hand, marrying the responsible, concerned attitude of 'old' Britishness with today's focus on 'enjoying the journey'. On a smaller scale, young people are already taking this approach in their own lives where they volunteer, or act as mentors or role models in sports projects and other skills projects.

There is a lot of evidence pointing to the return of the community and teamwork not just via internet communities but also in sport and on television. One example of teamwork is the resurrection of Robin Hood by the BBC. The new version opens with Robin's band of fighters amassing – each with a snippet of back-story, a sense of the family they leave behind, clear regional loyalties and accents, special skills and motivations. Their heritage and provenance are central to setting up these individuals, but also to building a new group. Indeed, this new group does not just learn to work together, but is depicted as forming a strong group identity akin to a new family. The portrayal of Robin shows the way he encapsulates some key contradictions – he is both the cynical, savvy modern individual, and also the responsible, moral and caring leader. This builds a classic 'adult' character – independent but not selfish, experienced but not too jaded to try and spur change.

Crucially, when engaging young people and talking about Britishness, an 'Adult to Adult' tone needs to be employed to dispel notions that Britishness is an identity that is being imposed on people. Young people need to see the value of being British through a change in their social reality. They need to be presented with real aims and tangible outcomes and the language of respect should be reserved for those students who have gone through a process, rather than for the judges (in contradiction to the X Factor). The tone of voice throughout needs to be 'Adult to Adult', giving young people the power to make decisions and rational judgments without appealing primarily to their 'Child' emotions. This 'Adult' voice has the potential to form a strong part of the new British identity. It is confident, discerning, self-determining but kind. It is constructive and pragmatic.

However, there is a price associated with this communication. For this to work, and cut through effectively, young people must also believe that the 'Adult to Adult' tone of voice offers them real choices and life chances. To paraphrase an old saying, we must ask not what young people can do for Britishness, but what Britishness can do for young people. If their associations with Britishness are within a discriminatory, punitive public sphere, where they are not given the resources and the chance to make a positive commitment, any new approach to communicating British identity will be unlikely to affect their feelings about their nation.

Therefore, a new Britishness may need to focus on the communications about young people as well as the communications to them; and communicators may also need to push for policy interventions to create places in young people's lives where they can feel proud to be British.

YOUNG PEOPLE IN BRITAIN TODAY

This chapter considers what is important in young people's lives and what influences their identity. The research shows that young people go through a number of physical, emotional and mental changes while constantly figuring out their place in society. A central ingredient to this is for teenagers to work out the different facets of their personal identity. Their tastes and preferences in music, fashion, humour, and television for instance, are vital in crafting personal identity. Also their exposure to wide circles of people and ideas, for instance when they leave home, and the overall breadth of their life experiences is influential in shaping their outlook and identity.

In this context, Britishness is relatively less important and does not feature on the list of personal traits which helps define personal identity. This is because British identity is considered to be a legal construct used only in official circumstances; many young people do not know the geo-political story of Great Britain or the United Kingdom; and national identity is an unchanging attribute that does not sit well within the changing preferences of young people. However, they recognise a number of advantages to living in Britain and the four nations, England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland working together particularly during times of crisis, such as wars or events like the 2005 bombings in London or for economic stability.

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YOUNG PEOP LE'S LIVES TODAY

In order to understand young people's views on Britishness and its relevance in their lives, it is first important to understand the context of young people's lives today. Insight into a young person's ambitions, concerns, and things that matter to them is useful when discussing the relevance that Britishness has in their lives and the meaning it carries. In this chapter, findings from the group discussions are discussed to set the scene for the discussion on young people and their views on living in Britain.

My identity

When asked to describe themselves[3] or their personality, most young people defined themselves through physical appearance such as gender, height, weight, hair or eye colour; their personality or talents, such as having a sense of humour, being polite, caring, impatient, judgemental; or through their interests, such as football, music, watching television, fashion. The key feature is that young people in this research did not choose to define themselves as being British and a minority identified themselves by their national identity such as being Scottish or Welsh, etc, or by their religion. Some of their responses are shown here.

"I'm X [name], everyone calls me 'Ginge'. I'm 5' 7" with ginger hair and freckles. I enjoy going out with my friends and playing rugby and hanging out with my mate's band. Sometimes I get a bit merry"
Male, white, 16 to 17 yrs, Suburban Cardiff

"I am a loving and caring person. I'm the type of person who would do anything to change the world to a better place. I love being with my friends and family 'cos they are the most important people in my life. I am always trying to aim high in life"
Female, black, 16 to 17 yrs, Birmingham

"I'm 5ft 7, blue eyes, brown hair. I'm sarcastic, don't have much common sense, love horror films. I like all music except club and rave. My favourite colour is green. My favourite food is honey. I'm a bit of a geek. I'm competitive and argumentative"
Female, black, 16 to 17 yrs, Belfast

"I'm a bubbly 18 year old, female who likes to be with the people I love like my friends. I like going out drinking and socialising. I hate cheeky people – they get on my nerves. I also hate the rain"
Female, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Cardiff

"Name: X; Age: 16; Sex: Male; Location: Hackney; Hobbies: listening to people, playing sports, going out and music. Future plans: work in an office one day. Occupation: student. I like a nice day out shopping in the West End. I expect from people the same way that I treat them they should treat me"
Male, black, 16 to 17 yrs, London

[3]*During the discussion each participant was given an individual task where they were asked to describe their identity.*

Adolescence is generally characterised by a period of change. Young people are in a constant state of flux and are constantly working out their place in the world. Much like adults, young people endeavour to define themselves and seek ways to express their identity through the clothes they wear, hobbies, talents, and so on.

Those aged 16 to 18 years old appear more determined to pin down their identity by assigning themselves definite likes and dislikes. For a young person, this is a decisive pre-occupation and one that helps define their social standing. Young people are most susceptible to a tribal mentality where the group you belong to and group dynamics plays a major part in daily life. Defining these attributes – a definitive statement about your personality that must be fine-tuned or face ridicule and group exclusion – appears all consuming. From past research[4] we know that in today's society being young means that your mind and body are 'your project'/ a DIY identity[5] – clothes, taste in music, sport and body image are just some of the facets of your personality that are important to work on and that you can keep changing and refining till you get the 'right' or desired look. Indeed, there is a desire to be accepted by the group for who you are while not getting lost in the crowd. The ability to define the trajectory of your personality by expressing your individuality and at the same time being part of the group is the true 'project'.

"I try to be my own person, not blend into crowds"
Female, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Cardiff

"I'd like to be like me but I have a group of friends too so I don't want to be alone or anything"
Female, black, 16 to 17 yrs, London

For younger participants from more deprived[6] backgrounds, the desire to prove that you can 'hold your own' is stronger than for their peers living in more wealthy suburban areas, which could be attributed to their upbringing, experiencing more hardships and perhaps therefore a stronger need to present yourself as a strong and secure person to not be left behind. For example, when asked to state some of their personal qualities, a number of participants from deprived backgrounds mentioned not trusting or believing people until they had proven whether they were a friend or foe. While their peers from more advantaged backgrounds may hold the same sentiments, they choose to express more personal ambitions such as succeeding in their career or being accepting of others, and open to new experiences such as travelling the world.

"You can't believe in no one, just yourself. You best off not trusting nobody or you might get banged"
Male, black, 16 to 17 yrs, Birmingham

"I don't want to be like anyone except myself"
Female, black, 16 to 17 yrs, Birmingham

"I respect Mohammed Ali 'cos originally he was Cassius Clay, a Christian but he wasn't afraid to say that he wanted to become a Muslim that he wanted to change his ways. I want to be like that, to be able to stand up for what I believe"
Male, Scottish Muslim, 16 to 17 yrs, Glasgow

[4]Young people and alcohol advertising: a study to measure the impact of regulatory change, Ofcom and ASA, 2005
[5]The concept, prevalence and scope for DIY identities in British culture is fully explored in semiotic analysis in Chapter 4
[6]In London, Birmingham, Plymouth, Glasgow and Cardiff young people from areas with high Index of Mass Deprivation were interviewed

My local area

All the young people taking part in this research say that their local area did not have much to offer them by way of leisure facilities or career prospects. For instance, in both rural and urban areas groups of young people hanging around street corners is seen as a result of the lack of after school facilities to engage young people in sport or creative pursuits. This is considered by most young people in this research to be the biggest downfall of their local area. They argue that a lack of 'something to do' leads to boredom, dejection and a lower sense of self-worth.

"It's just so boring around here. There's nothing to do, no where to go. You can't go into town 'cos everything's expensive"

Male, white, 16 to 17 yrs, Catholic, Belfast

"This place is a dump. There's nothing to do. We all just hang around 'cos the community centre is really rough"

Male, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Kingston

"There's nothing to do round here. So the kids just hang about and I understand that they end up causing trouble 'cos they are just so bored and desperate to keep busy. I bet if you gave them a sports centre or an arts centre they would be so keen on doing it"

Female, white, 18 to 21yrs, Cardiff

"There's nothing to do here. It's seen as the ghetto so no one cares about doing anything. There are no facilities for young people"

Female, black, 16 to 17 yrs, Birmingham

Young people are also sceptical about social cohesion within their local area and perceive a general apathy among local communities.

"In five years' time I think nothing's going to change because I've realised myself, after putting so much effort in, getting people to sign petitions and stuff that the community is not bothered"

Male, Scottish Muslim, 16 to 17 yrs, Glasgow

"People are suspicious of each other. People are getting stabbed everywhere, outside their front door. So I don't think people trust anybody else. You trust your family but that's it. Keep your friends real close"

Female, Scottish Muslim, 16 to 17 yrs, Glasgow

Young people living in deprived areas, such as Handsworth, Lozells[7], and Hackney say that the negative media representation is out of proportion with reality. They argue that because of the prevalence of negative news stories their areas are seen as ghettoes, but in reality it is not all that bad. However, many have experienced or witnessed regular stop and searches, police cautions, racial tension especially against asylum seekers, racist comments and vandalism to name a few. This is illustrated in the two quotes below by the same young black male from Birmingham who says that the area he lives in is negatively promoted by the media but his own experiences of being stopped and cautioned by the police appear contradictory.

"The area's not that bad – people just think it is because the media reports all the negative stories. I have been stopped and searched many times. Sometimes the same police do it. I got a list of cautions at home"

Male, black, 16 to 17 yrs, Birmingham

Ipsos MORI's previous research suggests that this contradiction could be because young people living in deprived areas are more likely to feel that what they experience in their local area is the norm, rather than an anomaly. They are also less likely to feel that things can change for the better or feel personal agency in fostering better community relations.

"As soon as they hear Lozells or Handsworth straightaway they think it's dirty and violent. But that's all the media man, they're the ones giving us a bad name. I'm not a victim of crime. I think it's alright place to live"

Male, Muslim, 18 to 21yrs, Birmingham

"Hackney's got a bad reputation. They are trying to make it better. But it's really not that bad. In the media you only hear bad stories about Hackney and the stabbings and muggings. But it's not like that. You know where you supposed to be and where you ain't. So don't go to the places you ain't supposed to go"

Male, black, 18 to 21 yrs, London

[4]In October 2005 violent riots between Black and Asian communities broke out in the Handsworth and Lozells areas west of Birmingham. Young people from these deprived wards were recruited for the discussion groups.

"People see a black boy walking round the streets at night and they think we're out for trouble. I'll only cause trouble if it comes looking for me. Like one night a bunch of Asian lads harassing people so we showed them. Our boys showed them"

Younger participants generally have fewer life experiences outside of their family, friend circle, local area or even postcode. This is more so for younger participants living in deprived areas where awareness of territory and no-go areas are more pronounced.

"I'd say I was from B7 or Handsworth or even Birmingham"
Male, black, 16 to 17 yrs, Birmingham

The importance of the local area to which you belong is felt particularly strongly in Belfast. For example, kerb stones painted in Loyalist colours is a visual marker of which community lives there and those that are not welcome. Young people in Belfast, compared with other parts of the UK, are particularly savvy about territorial affiliations and no-go areas.

"There are some places you just wouldn't go to. You just know which ones they are – you don't need to ask. It's like you've always known"
Male, white, 16 to 17 yrs, Catholic, Belfast

For most young people the extent of meaningful interactions with people of different age groups, social classes and ethnicities is limited and confined to transitory encounters or media representations and their knowledge of other cultures is relatively limited. Therefore, they tend to have a more parochial view of the world and the importance of their local area cannot be underestimated. In light of this, a national identity could be a hard concept to relate to.

"Before I went to uni a lot of my friends were from my school, and I went to a faith school so we were all of the same faith and we were all white British and then when I went to uni I met a lot of different people who I maybe wouldn't have met if I hadn't have gone away"
Female, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Cardiff

Summary

To recap, young people are pre-occupied with establishing and creating their personal identity. Britishness as part of their identity ranks low compared to other facets of their identity, probably because they have not had many reasons to think about it, they cannot change this aspect of their identity and because they tend to have a limited breadth of experiences that are confined to their local area, friends and family. For these reasons, the concept of a national identity may be hard for them to grasp. In spite of this, young people do have a number of views on living in Britain and what Britishness contributes to their identity, as is discussed in the following section.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS ON LIVING IN BRITAIN

Overall, young people do not think that Britishness is an important aspect of their personal identity. In general young people say that a 'British' identity is not important in their everyday life and only comes into play in specific, usually more official circumstances. For example, when asked to recall instances when they have referred to themselves as British, applying or using your passport and when filling in forms is top of the mind. The British identity can be seen as more of a legal requirement or construct.

"A national identity, we'd have to fill out the form, tick a box, besides that I don't ever think about it"
Female, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Birmingham

"The only real part of Britishness is that it says 'British' on my passport"
Female, white, 16 to 17 yrs, Cardiff

"My nationality is British, if I've to write it on a, filling out a form. It has be British because that's the only thing that they recognise"
Male, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Protestant, Belfast

But once prompted to start thinking about the issue of Britishness young people are more insightful. For instance, when prompted in the quantitative research the importance of being British to their own identity is more important to those living in England (76% compared with 63% in Wales and 59% in Scotland), and from higher social grades (AB=80%).

However, the qualitative discussions show that in comparison with having a sense of humour, being a good person or personal interests, nationality ranks low as a facet of a young person's identity. This is primarily because, as discussed, young people are more pre-occupied with working out their own personal identity and therefore for most their national identity is not on their radar. This could be because nationality is a 'given' and therefore is an aspect of their identity that they cannot change.

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Crucially, from the qualitative research it is clear that not all participants are aware of the geographical and political differences between the United Kingdom and Great Britain. This is especially predominant in the South West of England, but participants across all locations did seek clarification of the geo-political story of the United Kingdom. Participants in England, Wales and Scotland also tend to refer to Northern Ireland as Ireland, implying the Republic of Ireland. Others were not aware that Great Britain does not include Northern Ireland. This lack of knowledge of the political, geographical and historical legacy of the country mirrors their lack of engagement in the concept of Britishness.

"I've been filling out my UCAS form for university and it puts like on your nationality you've got to fill it out and it's like UK nationality and I was like UK's not really, I think of Britain, but UK's not really a country"
Female, white, 16 to 17, Cardiff

Participants in Northern Ireland are the exception; they are considerably more aware of the political history and geographical differences of the United Kingdom. Indeed, nationality is far more pertinent to everyday life in Northern Ireland than it might be for young people in the rest of the UK. For these participants a discussion on identity is never far from religious, territorial and/or political allegiances.
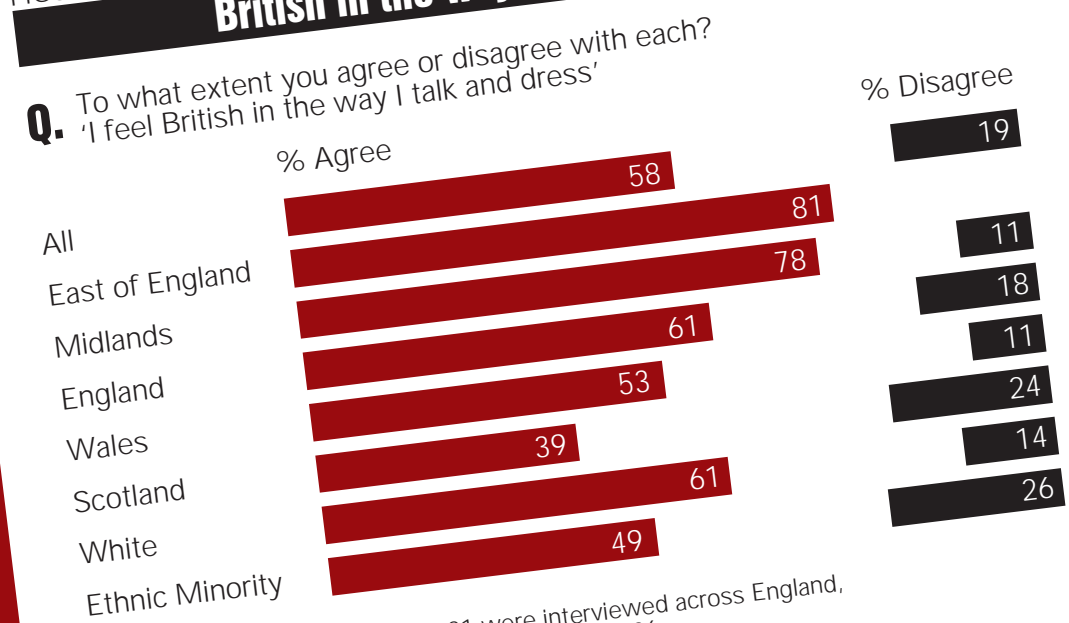
When is the concept of Britain relevant?
The quantitative research shows that young people feel British in the way they dress and talk, with those living in England and Wales (61% and 53%) more likely to feel this way than young Scots (39%). White British young people are more likely to feel this way than ethnic minorities (61% compared with 49%).

FIGURE 2
British in the way I talk and dress

Q. To what extent you agree or disagree with each? 'I feel British in the way I talk and dress'

% Agree / % Disagree

	% Agree	% Disagree
All	58	19
East of England	81	11
Midlands	78	18
England	61	11
Wales	53	24
Scotland	39	14
White	61	26
Ethnic Minority	49	

Base: 672 young people aged 16-21 were interviewed across England, Wales and Scotland between 14-21 September 2006

From the qualitative research, we know that regional accents are also an important aspect of personal identity, and 'speaking English' could also refer to the cultural references, 'in-jokes' and slang that, for example a recent immigrant or an non-British person from an English speaking country may not understand. However, none of this necessarily means that Britishness is motivating for them or relevant to their daily life.

National identity is considered to become important when you are travelling in another country or when meeting someone who is not from the UK[8]. They also say they would describe themselves as being from the UK or from Britain to people they did not know very well, especially foreigners. According to them, the more you get to know a person the less relevant your national identity becomes. The quantitative results mirror the sentiments expressed in the discussions. Britishness is seen to be most important to how young people see themselves when they are on holiday overseas (22%) and less important, although only marginally, when hanging out with friends and people they know (17%). Perhaps more interesting is the fact that one in four (24%) say Britishness is important in none of these situations or they don't know where Britishness is important. Again, this highlights that the concept of Britishness is not something which has much salience in the day to day lives of young people.
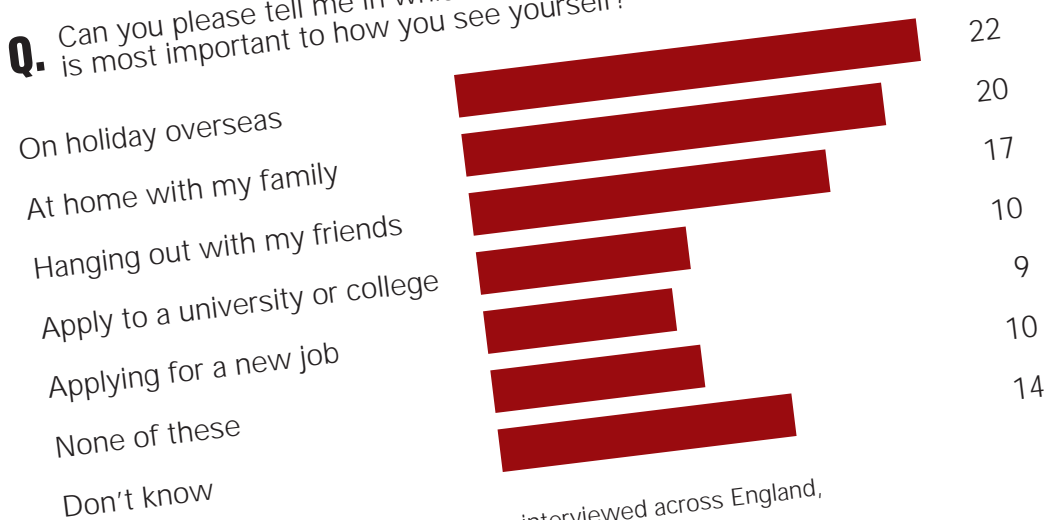
[8]As most social theory suggests, identity becomes important or more prominent when faced with 'other' which can be customs or type of people that are different from you and your beliefs. 'Othering as a concept is discussed in detail in the semiotic analysis in Chapter 4

FIGURE 3

Feel more British when on holiday

Q. Can you please tell me in which of these a sense of being British is most important to how you see yourself?

On holiday overseas	22
At home with my family	20
Hanging out with my friends	17
Apply to a university or college	10
Applying for a new job	9
None of these	10
Don't know	14

Base: 672 young people aged 16-21 were interviewed across England, Wales and Scotland between 14-21 September 2006

Young people also say that using the term British as a reference is important when discussing war and referring to the armed forces. Due to the war in Iraq and conflict in Afghanistan, young people now hear more about the British army than they used to. They point out that for example when reporting casualties, soldiers are referred to as 'British' rather than 'Welsh' or 'Scottish' which to them creates a sense of the country being united.

"But then our army is all mixed from different places in Britain and we all fight together, and they haven't got a problem about it"

Female, white, 18 to 21yrs, Cardiff

"They stick together, well basically everyone forward for Britain and they're all from different parts of Britain and they're all going together, they've got nothing against each other, they're all going for one reason and that's Britain. They don't see it as only the English or anything like that. Overall it's Britain isn't it?"

Female, white, 18 to 21yrs,

"They never tell you whether it's a Welsh soldier who died or a Scottish one. They just say, 'British soldier killed in Iraq'. So everyone feels bad"

Female, white, 16 to 17 yrs, Cardiff

Across the UK many participants see advantages to the four nations working together. This is particularly voiced by participants in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland who say that an advantage of being part of the United Kingdom is the economic stability that all four nations give to each other but more importantly that these nations would not be economically solvent if it were not for the support of England.

"The United Kingdom has to stay because the likes of Scotland couldn't survive on its own as an economic country, Wales wouldn't be able to survive, Northern Ireland would definitely not survive. So pretty much without English taxpayers' money, all three countries would be in decline, rather than booming"

Male, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Protestant, Belfast

Participants cite a number of advantages to living in Britain but none of these are thought to impact of their everyday life or necessarily contribute to their personal identity. Some of these advantages include the strength of the Pound, iconic public services such as the NHS and the BBC, the high standards of the education system, the freedom to express opinions and a belief that human rights will be respected. The quantitative research shows that young people feel the best things about Britain are the education system (34%), the NHS (32%) and the countryside (30%). Pride in being British is mentioned, but it is considerably lower down in terms of priority (17%)[9].

FIGURE 4

Best things about Britain

Q. What do you think are the best things about Britain?
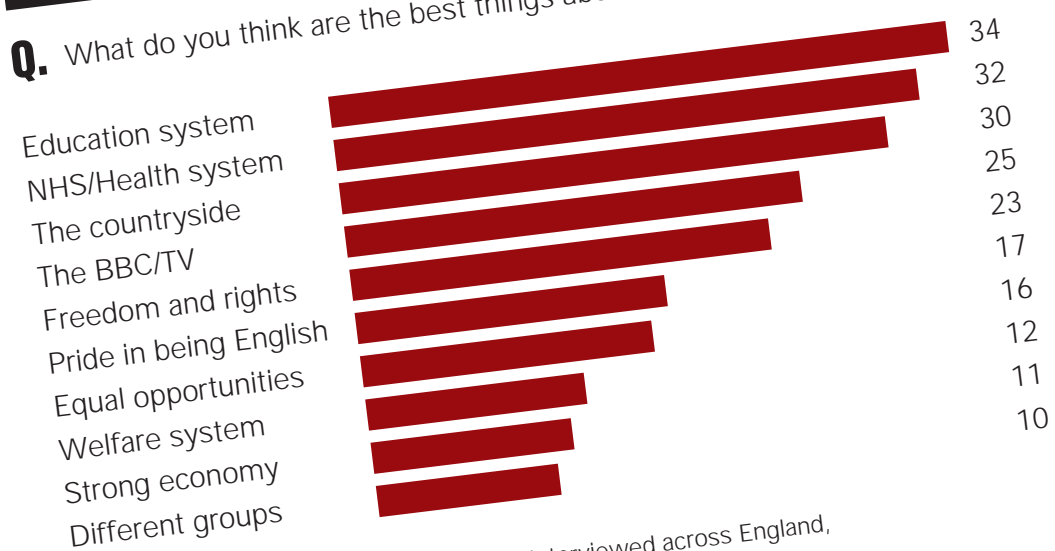
Education system	34
NHS/Health system	32
The countryside	30
The BBC/TV	25
Freedom and rights	23
Pride in being English	17
Equal opportunities	16
Welfare system	12
Strong economy	11
Different groups	10

Base: 672 young people aged 16-21 were interviewed across England, Wales and Scotland between 14-21 September 2006

9 This ties in with research conducted by ICM on behalf of CSV Make A Difference day which found that younger people are most concerned about losing countryside and green spaces (54% of 25-34 year olds compared with 34% of over 65s). This research also found that 18-24 year olds seem to treasure our national heritage most with nearly one in five concerned about losing historical buildings. http://www.csv. org.uk/Campaigns/Make+a+Difference+Day /Media+Centre/News+2006/ Vanishing+Britain.htm

However, there is a sense that there is competition for resources relating to services like housing, employment or sport facilities and respondents feel that a shared national identity does not necessarily contribute to success in securing these opportunities or services.

"It's hard going man, you got to fight for your right. You got to fight to get a place on the course, a place on the team. They haven't got enough facilities to train everyone to become good to then qualify for the team. There are kids out there doing nothing with their time 'cos there's no facilities given to them"

Male, black, 18 to 21 yrs, Hackney

However, black and Asian participants say that it can be beneficial to use the term British on a job application form, rather than identify oneself as only black African/Caribbean or Asian. They consider the term 'British' to indicate to others that you have been born and educated in this country according to British standards and you are not a recent immigrant. There is a sense that your prospects in the job market can be lowered if you are seen as a recent immigrant to the UK.

"If you're applying for a job it's easier to say British"

Male, black, 18 to 21 yrs, black, London

"I'm from the black race but you're not going to say you come from Uganda originally on an application form. I still class myself as black British 'cos then they know I was schooled in this country and the British education is the best"

Male, black, 18 to 21 yrs, London

From the qualitative research, black and Asian participants in particular mention the lack of rampant corruption in government as compared to Asian and African countries, and some European countries like Italy, as an advantage of living in Britain.

"There is less corruption in the government if you compare it with countries like India and Bangladesh. And that's what we expect in Britain"

Male, British Asian, 18 to 21yrs, Birmingham

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In summary:

For young people crafting their personal identity through the type of clothes they wear, music they listen to, humour or the group they belong to is important to them. Comparatively, a national identity does not have any relevance or emotional resonance in their lives.

16 to 17 year olds have limited breadth of experiences confined to their family, friend circle and local area. In light of this, a national identity or being able to identify with a large group can be hard to do. 18 to 21 year olds are beginning to expand their sphere of influence as employment and education takes them out of their local area. However, they too find it hard to express their connection with a national identity but their views can be more informed.

However, the concept of Britain or Britishness is not totally defunct. Young people see a number of advantages of living in Britain and for economic and military reasons why the four nations need to be united as one country. For ethnic minorities particularly, having a British education and identifying yourself as British has some advantages in the job market and this could signal that the importance of being British is relative to one's position. Overall, participants are unlikely to say that being British improves their life chances when competing for resources within the UK.

However, as part of their everyday lives young people are not immediately able to envisage how the narrative of Britishness adds to their personal identity. Britishness is a less immediate and relevant identity than others and as a result Britishness seems to suffer by comparison.

NATIONAL & ETHNIC IDENTITIES

This chapter addresses young people's views according to where they live in the UK and their ethnicity. The research finds that patriotic emotion sticks fervently to a Scottish, Welsh or Irish identity but the same feelings do not extend to a British identity. This is because Britishness does not appear to add anything to these more meaningful identities. Young people in Scotland and Wales and Catholics in Northern Ireland see Britishness as an identity propagated by the English. For them adopting a British identity implies that they are accepting Englishness, which they are opposed to.

However, young people, particularly in Scotland, are quite pragmatic about their national identity, especially when it comes to personal ambition or preferences. For instance, they would not refuse a place on the British basketball team just because they are Scottish. As discussed earlier, national identity is comparatively less important an issue than personal success or one's personality or personal preferences.

ENGLAND

The research in England included white, black and Asian young people. In marginalised areas of Hackney in inner London, the research included mainly black participants; and white participants from lower socio-economic backgrounds from Kingston in outer London. In the Midlands, the research included black and Asian participants from the marginalised areas of Lozells and Handsworth in Birmingham. In the South of West of England, white male and female participants come from marginalised and rural areas of Plymouth.

Every day life

Young people in England experience much the same concerns as those in the rest of the UK. Both younger and older participants say there is a lack of facilities for younger people, including leisure, sport and creative activities.

As discussed earlier, there is strong affiliation to the local area and postcode, such as being from Kingston or Hackney as opposed to London, or Handsworth or B7 rather than from Birmingham. These local identities are generally thought to be more descriptive and distinct. There is also a general feeling that areas such as Hackney in London or Lozells and Handsworth in Birmingham receive more negative publicity than they deserve.

Older participants have a number of concerns about employment and the impact of European migrants such as the Polish accepting cheaper wages. They are concerned that they might get priced out of the employment market.

"We got all these Polish people coming into the country working for £20 a day when we need to work for £50 'cos we need to pay the rent"
Male, white, 18 to 21 yrs, London

Views on Englishness

In general, there is confusion among white young people in England about the geographical and political distinction between the UK and Great Britain, Plymouth is an example of this. This could be important when considering how young people choose to define their national identity.

Definitions of national identity in England vary depending on which ethnic group is asked. Most white young people from London and Plymouth see themselves as English and British, the two being interchangeable.

"We're British but I know I'm English. So I'm both"

Male, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Plymouth

"Being English or British, it's the same to me"

Female, white, 18 to 21 yrs, London

Young black people in Hackney and 18 to 21 year old black people in Birmingham see themselves as being black British. Young Asians in Birmingham see themselves as being British Asian or British Muslim. For these groups, their ethnic and religious background forms an integral part of their national and personal identity. Both these groups do not identify themselves as being English and consider Englishness to be exclusively people who are white or come from white parentage and lineage. Englishness is assumed as a right only by blood and lineage. White participants tend to agree that being English implies you are white.

"You actually wonder who are the English because there are so many different cultures living in Britain. I'm not being racist but it's hard to know who is really British or English"

Male, white, 18 to 21 yrs, London

"I think that you're English, it's in your bloodline. You could be Chinese or Jamaican, lived here, bred here but you're not English really"

Female, white, 18 to 21yrs, London

"I think if you say you are English, most people would assume you are white"

Male, white, 18 to 21yrs, Plymouth

"We're all white and we speak English so we're British"

Female, white, 18 to 21 yrs, London

However, 16 to 17 year old young black people in Birmingham are the exception to this view and identify themselves as being English and British. Their main reason is that they are born in England, not in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland and this gives them the right to claim an English identity.

"I'm African but I say English cos I was born here"

Female, black, 16 to 17 yrs, Birmingham

"I wasn't born in Scotland or Wales but in England, so I'm English. If I was born there I'd be Scottish"

Male, black, 16 to 17 yrs, Birmingham

However, this same group of 16 to 17 year old black young people recognise that they are different from the white English community and their black heritage or their parent's country of origin is usually the identity that is more important to them. Most noticeably they see these differences in everyday life, such as traditional food they eat at home, traditional dress they may wear at religious festivals or at church. There is a strong aversion to what they consider English food, such as bacon sandwiches and beans on toast and they recognise the difference between their own heritage and English culture. In other words, they are English by virtue of their birth: their parents' country of origin makes them culturally different and this sets people apart.

"I don't know what them British people eat, bacon sandwiches and beans and all them nasty things. We need hot food, chicken, rice, now that's real food"

Male, black, 16 to 17yrs, Birmingham

In general young people in England consider people who live in the North of England as different from those living in the South. They do not consider people from the North of England to be 'really English'. There is a distinct North-South divide, which has been well documented by other studies[10]. In the quote below the male participant makes this distinct North-South divide when he refers to himself as English but does not extend the same label to Northerners.

"Northerners are more cocky. If you walk into a pub and it's full of Northerners and you're English, well you've got no chance"

Male, white, 18 to 21 yrs, London

They are English to an extent but when you go up North it's like really different over there

Female, white, 18 to 21yrs, London

[10]Taylor, P 'Which Britain? Which England? Which North?' in British Cultural Studies, D, Morley and K, Robins, OUP 2001 p127

Views on Britishness

As mentioned, when asked to distinguish between English and British, participants generally found this hard to do, particularly young white people living in England. The general view is that Englishness and Britishness are either interchangeable or inseparable.

"English and British is mixed, it's the same"

Male, black, 16 to 17yrs, Birmingham

However, this does not necessarily mean that young people consider Britishness unimportant. Indeed, far more people say that Britishness means something to them, than feel it doesn't (56% compared with 24%) with those in England and Yorkshire particularly likely to see it as important. As echoed in the qualitative research, 44% of young people from Scotland and 31% in Wales agree that Britishness doesn't really mean anything to them. It begs the question whether Britishness is more important to the English than the other nations.

FIGURE 5

Britishness more important to the English

Q. To what extent you agree or disagree with each?
'Britishness doesnt really mean anything to me'
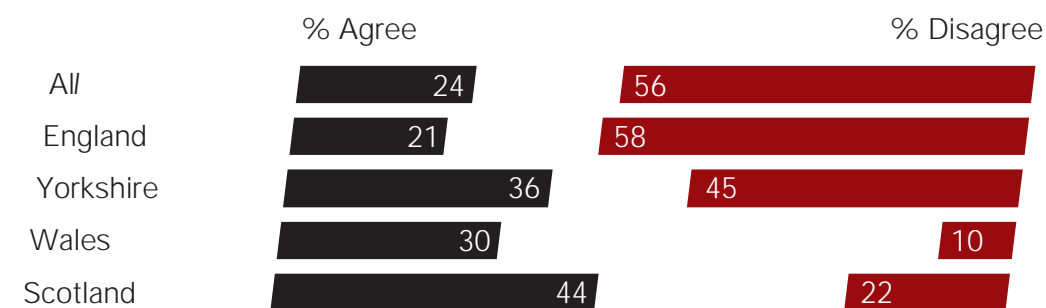
	% Agree	% Disagree
All	24	56
England	21	58
Yorkshire	36	45
Wales	30	10
Scotland	44	22

Base: 672 young people aged 16-21 were interviewed across England, Wales and Scotland between 14-21 September 2006

Young white participants and 16 to 17 year old young black people in Birmingham perceive people who are upper class to be British, or see themselves as British, and people who are lower class to be English. But this is not the same for black and Asian participants (who consider themselves as hyphenated Brits i.e. black-British, British-Asian) who see the situation in the reverse way. There is a clear divide between how young white people and ethnic minorities living in England view their identity and their understanding of Britishness, not least influenced by age, social class and location.

"Children from England, basically, won't call themselves British unless they're from an upper-class area or from a posh family, or something, and people tend to call themselves English more than British nowadays"

Female, black, 16 to 17 yrs, Birmingham

In summary

The question of Englishness is influenced by ethnicity. Young white people tend to see Englishness and Britishness as interchangeable. Black and Asian participants tend to see themselves as black British or British Asian and consider 'English' to refer only to the white community. The exception is 16 to 17 year old black young people in Birmingham who consider themselves as English by virtue of being born in England, rather than Scotland or Wales etc.

A further challenge for an English identity, and indeed Britishness is the perceived North-South England divide. If young people living in the South of England perceive Northerners to not be 'really English' this could pose a challenge of English and British nationalism.

But overall the quantitative data shows that it is young people who live in England who are more likely to feel that Britishness is a key part of their identity. This could indicate that Britishness has more meaning in this corner of the UK and that Englishness and Britishness are interchangeable concepts and identities.

"James Bond and the Queen is all well posh. That's British, when he's on Majesty's Secret Service."

In Scotland the research was conducted in Glasgow with one group of 16 to 17 year old male and female Muslims of mostly Pakistani origin; and one mixed group of 18 to 21 year olds male and female participants from white, black and Asian backgrounds. Where it is relevant the verbatim comments identify the ethnic and/or religious background of the participant.

Everyday life

Young people in Scotland experience the same disillusionment with the lack of leisure facilities and creative outlets outside school for young people, as seen in other parts of the UK in this research. However, there are some specific concerns such as football sectarianism, crime and poor housing, racism towards non-white communities and class tensions within the white community.

SCOTLAND 48

Football and sectarianism

18 to 21 year old participants say that a prominent feature of life in their local area of Glasgow is football sectarianism typified by the rivalry between Rangers and Celtic supporters. They perceive that most areas in the city are noticeably segregated based on football allegiances and that violence, though unpredictable in its scale, often ensues in their local area after a match. Participants say that many local areas suffer from high crime rates because of football related violence and sectarianism.

"The area that I live in is extremely Rangers based. When there's a home game the streets are really overrun by fans. It gets really busy and there can be quite a lot of trouble at night. There's a lot of pubs, as well, so when alcohol is mixed in then it takes off"

Male, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Glasgow

"It can get quite out of control. I think there were about 12 police cars up last time. They had to put a barrier of policemen walking down the street. It's not the first time it's happened"

Male, white, 18 to 21yrs, Glasgow

"I'm a Rangers fan, and I like it when Rangers win themselves. But living in that area it's a bit of a downer 'cos of all the violence"

Male, Scottish Asian, 18 to 21 years, Glasgow

When talking about football, participants refer to specific areas and streets that are supported by either Rangers or Celtic fans that often sit in close proximity to each other, illustrating the sectarian nature of football allegiances. They are aware of the various divisions within the city and some of the female participants say they avoid certain areas of the city during match time because they are afraid that they may get caught up in the unpredictable violence.

"I come from Ibrox, Goven, that's just Rangers mad"

Male, black, 18 to 21 years, Glasgow

"My boyfriend stays in the East End, in Dennieston, and it's the exact same over there. Even though it's just a couple of yards away from Parkhead, Celtic. Duke Street's just full of all their Rangers pals"

Female, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Glasgow

"It's like two different worlds, the south side and the east side. But actually it's all just the same 'cos they're mad about their team. It's in their blood to support their team. I don't like the area I stay in because of that"

Female, white, 18 to 21yrs, Glasgow

Crime and poor housing

Crime and poor housing are also cited as key issues for older participants. They argue that old style tenement housing does not appear to benefit a community and there is more crime in these areas. There is also a sense that the trappings of money and the status that come with, for example owning an expensive car, is more attractive to people than creating a good home environment. There is general agreement that problems of crime arise when people's priorities are focussed on status rather than good values.

"The high rise flats I don't know whether they're going to take them down. I think it's going to be good for the community, 'cos people get to live in nice new houses next to each other opening onto a street makes it more friendly"

Female, black, 18 to 21 yrs, Glasgow

"Outside the houses you see nice BMWs but the house is a mess and all run down. Some guy cares more about having a Mercedes, than he does living in a nice house. He hasn't got his priorities right"

Male, black, 18 to 21yrs, Glasgow

There is also a growing scepticism that local people cannot canvass local and central government on specific community issues and genuinely be heard by government. Recent events such as protest marches in London prior to the invasion of Iraq, the demonstrations in Scotland during the G8 summit, and perceived ineffectual local governments have made young people here feel that no one is listening to local people. Lobbying for ones rights can be a futile exercise.

"No one really listens to the people these days. All the protest marches in London, even here in Scotland at G8 and none of the politicians care. I'm not surprised that people have given up"

Male, Scottish Asian, 18 to 21 yrs, Glasgow

"You don't feel like anyone listens to the community these days. I've been trying for five years to get petitions signed. I bet our local MP doesn't even tell them in Westminster what we tell him in Glasgow. He's a Muslim but he doesn't stand up for the community"

Male, Scottish Muslim, 16 to 17yrs, Glasgow

"If you have a good friend they don't really ask you about it [Islam]. But some people want to know because they are nosey, not because they care"

Racism

16 to 17 year old Asian Muslim participants say they have experienced racism on a number of different levels, from the overt, such as verbal abuse, to the more subtle. They suspect that the focus of racism today is directed more towards Muslims rather than all Asians. However, prejudice against Muslims can translate into a prejudice against all Asians – unless a person is wearing traditional Islamic dress, such as a woman has her head covered, it is hard for many people to visually distinguish between an Asian or black Muslim and a non-Muslim.

"Some people, I don't know what word to use for those people, whether to call them illiterate, but some people are just going to point the finger at Asians, just anyone who's dark brown or light brown and call them a Muslim"

Female, Scottish Muslim, 16 to 17 yrs, Glasgow

Some participants say that explaining Islamic practices and beliefs to their white peers is a futile exercise because the cultural and religious values of their peers are poles apart from the Islamic way of life, especially with regards to alcohol and smoking. They say that it is hard to feel a sense of closeness to a white group of friends and they often don't need to because they already have a group of Muslim friends with whom they do not have to explain the whys and hows of their culture. According to them, a true friend that is not Muslim would not need an explanation or rationale for believing in Islam. Therefore, some participants suggest that this could lead to segregation between Muslims and other communities.

"Being Muslim is just the way I feel. I couldn't be bothered to sit there and explain it to them – it would just take too long. I think it's because I've got my own group of friends understand 'cos they're the same religion as me"

Female, Scottish Muslim, 16 to 17 yrs, Glasgow

"If you have a good friend they don't really ask you about it [Islam]. But some people want to know because they are nosey, not because they care"

Female, Scottish Muslim, 16 to 17 yrs, Glasgow

"I used to live down south [London]. I've lived down south for three years. Then I moved up here in 2004. And I think up here, in Glasgow, it's so right. 'Cos you live a quiet life. Myself, I just live a quiet life. 'Cos I, when I was down south I used to know loads of people. But here, you can just keep yourself to yourself, and do your things quietly. So that's one thing I like about Glasgow"

Female, black, 18 to 21 yrs, Glasgow

Some black participants speculate that Scots can be more accepting of non-white people, especially if they have a Scottish accent. However, participants who are recent immigrants say they have experienced considerably more racism in Scotland compared to London. They say this could be because Scotland is less ethnically diverse than London or indeed the South of England.

"We're getting a lot of immigrants from all over the place coming in. I don't know if that's a good thing or a bad thing. But from my point of view it's a good thing. 'Cos you're getting people like myself. And a lot of people will disagree with that. But I think Glasgow is, on the whole, welcoming, and accepting of people from all over the place. I think that that's a good thing"

Male, black, 18 to 21yrs, Glasgow

"I think people in Glasgow are more different with people down south. I think people down south are more used to people from different countries. In Glasgow, I think, people are still getting used to people, to new people, like people from Africa, sort of thing. Some people can show you that they don't like you at all. And some people can show that they like you and stuff. People are just different."

Female, black, 18 to 21yrs, Glasgow

White participants tend to agree that racism is a problem in Scotland. They attribute comments made by their own elderly white relatives, that can be construed as racist to a lack of knowledge of and familiarity with people from non-white backgrounds. However, they perceive that many Scottish people irrespective of their age, are racist towards immigrant communities, including Eastern European workers or refugees.

"If you're taking ethnics coming into the country, I think a lot of people think 'Oh, well you're not the same as me. So I don't want to associate with you', and it shows in their behaviour. I have got quite a few Asian friends but I know a few people that haven't really taken to ethnics and not everybody from Scotland's like that but there are quite a few"

Female, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Glasgow

"I think Glasgow is quite racist, and things need to be done about it. And it's that same feeling between Rangers and Celtic fans, like a meaningless hatred. I think that's the only downfall Glasgow's got"

Male, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Glasgow

Poverty and a lack of life chances

White participants say that racism is not the only reason for prejudice or segregation because within the white community there a number of divisions, most noticeably class divisions. They believe that poverty, a lack of opportunities, a lack of jobs and a bleak view of the future can lead young people to lash out, either through violence against the white community or through racism towards immigrant groups. This basic discontent with life can lead to segregation between and within communities. The reality of low social mobility and a sense of discontent with life chances is echoed strongly in Northern Ireland for both economic and cross-community building.

"I got a car for my birthday. And people are just jealous. Just because I live in the area doesn't mean my mum and dad don't work. My mum and dad got me a car. They saved up. I've never been spoiled, or anything. But I got a nice car for my birthday, because they had saved that money. And now I've had my tires slashed. Just neds, just people that are jealous of my car"
Female, white, 18 to 21yrs, Glasgow

"A lot of community people have got no hope, nothing to live for. It's like, they've got no ambition. They just wake up every day, 'oh, I'll go down, put a bet on, get a bottle of Bucky, and come back to the house.' It's like they haven't got anything in their lives, and they see someone do something with their life, like you said, a little bit of jealousy"
Male, black, 18 to 21yrs, Glasgow

However, some participants also see Glasgow as a city that is trying to shed its associations with extreme poverty, with more money being invested in regenerating the city centre.

Views on Scottish identity

Overall, all participants in Scotland say they feel a strong emotional connection and pride with being Scottish. They say that the Scots are a very patriotic people. Participants usually compare the character of the Scottish with that of people 'down south', implying London or England in general. They believe people in Scotland are friendlier, easy going and calmer than in London and that Scottish cities are becoming more cosmopolitan.

"Scottish people are very passionate about their country"
Male, black, 18 to 21 yrs, Glasgow

"I love Glasgow. I was living down south, in London, and then, you compare the two it's, it's a small, busy London. But people are more friendly up here. It's cosmopolitan, or it's getting that way these days"
Male, black, 18 to 21yrs, Glasgow

"I'm from Scotland. And then they ask, where in Scotland? Then you can say Glasgow"
Female, 18 to 21yrs, Glasgow

In some cases, along with their Scottish identity participants also feel a strong Glaswegian identity; this is especially the case for participants whose parents have grown up in Glasgow. They say there are a number of stereotypes about Glaswegians such as a reputation for being tough, having a distinct accent and using specific slang compared with any other part of Scotland, which they say is not too far from the reality. Other perceived stereotypes about Glaswegians and Scottish people in general include poverty, bad diet and eating a lot of fried foods and football sectarianism.

"I think most people come to hear our Glaswegian slang. A lot of people take that into consideration when they see a Glaswegian. They think you're going to start talking slang, and they won't understand. But that's only in some areas not all"
Female, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Glasgow

"I'd just say Scottish. When people say, where are you from? I would say Glasgow. I think when you say you're Glaswegian to start off with, then people think they don't want to mess with you"
Female, white, 18 to 21yrs, Glasgow

"It depends on your accent again though. 'Cos you get, the higher you go up, the accent changes - like in Falkirk or Dundee. But Glasgow's got very, very distinctive accent"
Female, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Glasgow

The strength of language and regional accents in creating bonds of identification and belonging cannot be undermined. Older participants say that the Glaswegian accent is so distinct and one that they are proud of, that when they are outside Scotland either 'down South' in England or abroad on holiday, hearing a Glaswegian accent creates a sense of familiarity and you are able to identify with that person. However, this does not always mean you would approach that person but it is a more subtle understanding. Participants are keen to point out that it is distinctness of the Glaswegian accent, as opposed to a Scottish accent, that creates the connection. The Glaswegian accent seems an unchanging source of identification.

"When I was down south, I thought it was like, in a busy place, HMV, or somewhere, and you hear someone with a Glaswegian accent and its so unexpected your ears go up like a dog... 'cos you recognise it straight away and smile to yourself"
Male, black, 18 to 21 yrs, Glasgow

"When you are outside of Scotland and you hear a Scottish accent you feel as if you should communicate with them, because they're from the same place as you. It's like, if you heard someone talking Urdu, or French, or whatever, I don't think I would run over to talk to them as much if you had heard somebody talking that was Scottish, or Glaswegian"

Female, white, 18 to 21yrs, Glasgow

Black/Asian and Scottish identity

The 16 to 17 years old participants are all Muslim whose roots link back to Pakistan. Older black African and Asian participants moved to Scotland as young as five years old or have lived in Scotland for over 10 years.

Both black and Asian participants in Scotland experience a complex layering of national and ethnic identities which become important in different circumstances. For instance, a Sikh participant who identifies himself as being a Scottish Indian (but does not wear a turban) says that he feels more Sikh than Scottish when he goes to the temple to pray with his family and feels more Indian than specifically Sikh or Scottish in terms of the music he listens to (which, in this case is Bhangra and Bollywood film tunes). However, most of the time he feels Scottish because he is born and raised in Scotland, has a Scottish education, and a Scottish accent.

Younger Muslim participants tend to see themselves as 'Scottish Muslim'. Being born and raised in Scotland is often the main reason they feel they have a right to be Scottish and feel an affiliation with Scotland. So for these young people, unlike their counterparts in England, they do not see Scottish ness as an identity exclusive to the white population.

"I feel Scottish. It's just that I was born here and lived here my whole life, so you can't really say you're not Scottish"

Male, Scottish Muslim, 16 to 17yrs, Glasgow

"I've got a Pakistani background, I've got a Pakistani family, but I was born and lived my whole life in Scotland, so that makes me Scottish"

Female, Scottish Muslim, 16 to 17yrs, Glasgow

However, they can also be quite pragmatic about their identity, especially when it comes to sport and personal ambition. The quote below by a young Scottish Muslim of Pakistani origin illustrates how one's identity can be a matter of pragmatism and choosing the better team where the love of the game or the desire for personal success does not have to be rooted in matters of personal identity. It also suggests that while national and religious identity is important it does not obliterate personal ambition.

"If I was a professional cricketer and had a chance to play for Pakistan or Scotland I would pick Pakistan because it's a better team. But when it came to football Pakistan don't have a football team or they do, but they're not very good, so then I'd pick Scotland"

Male, Scottish Muslim, 16 to 17yrs, Glasgow

It is important to note that this pragmatism is also true for white participants in Scotland as illustrated in the quote below.

"If they gave me a place on the British Basketball team then sure I'll take it. I'm not going to turn it down am I just because I feel more Scottish"

Female, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Glasgow

Black participants say that while they have been raised in Scotland and identify themselves as being Scottish, there is a strong connection with their African roots. There is a sentiment that Scotland may only be their second home because generations of family are originally from elsewhere.

"I was born in Uganda. That's where I'm from, so I don't see myself really as Scottish, even though I've lived here most of my life. I just think it's a second home. I love Scotland but it's not where I'm from"

Male, black, 18 to 21 yrs, Glasgow

"I'm not going to be Scottish in the same way they're Scottish. Their grandparents are from here. Their parents are from here. Generations, and generations, they've got a bit of history. I don't. I've got wee cousins, and all that, who were born here and they might feel differently. They'd probably say,' I'm Scottish even though they get taken on holiday to Africa to know what it's like to be from Africa"

Male, black, 18 to 21 years, Glasgow

This dual identity (e.g. of being Ugandan and Scottish or Asian and Scottish) can be used in different situations. For example, in Scotland you can choose to assert your Ugandan identity in some situations (and be 'other') or you can choose to 'blend in' and assert your Scottish identity. The choice of identity and the strength with which your 'otherness' is asserted depends on the context and the company – and it is not always a conscious thing.

For example, the same black male participant says that he would support Scotland in any competitive sphere, especially if it was against England. When in England he is Scottish first and then Ugandan – this is both how he thinks people in England perceive him and how he positions his own identity. There is more emotional value in being Scottish when faced with the English because the Scottish-English connection or opposition is stronger and carries more (historic) meaning/ significance than a Ugandan-English one. On the other hand, when he is in Scotland he is perceived to be (and sees himself as) Ugandan before Scottish. There is a sense that because Scotland is closer to him, and his home, be it first or second, he has the freedom to be both Ugandan and Scottish.

"I have a strong connection with Scotland. If there's anything between Scotland and England, I'm a Scottish fan always. When I was working down south, people at my work considered me to be a Scottish boy. And I find that quite strange. Up here, I'm a drunken, African boy. If you go down there, you're a drunken Scots boy. So it was weird for me"

Male, black, 18 to 21yrs, Glasgow

While these dual identities are not conflicting there appears to be a search for the more authentic identity depending on the situation: what your roots say about you and what your nationality says about you are relevant or more revealing and used depending on the circumstance. For example, the Scottish participant from Uganda says that while he understands Ugandan, he can't speak it. So if he heard someone speaking it, which is rare, he wouldn't necessarily befriend them because he does not feel connected to the Ugandan way of life on an everyday basis. While he does feel that his roots belong in Uganda, his way of life and experiences are not.

"My native tongue is Ugandan. I don't speak it, but I can understand it. If I hear it, my ears prick up and I listen to the conversation. But I won't go up to them and say, 'I'm from Uganda', 'cos then, being very few Ugandans here, they'll think we're best buddies and they'll talk to you. 'Can I get your phone number?' all the rest of it and I don't really want that"

Male, black, 18 to 21 yrs, Glasgow

"I don't feel Scottish, because I'm proud of my roots. I'm proud of where I'm from. So I'm never going to deny that. And if I start saying I'm Scottish, I feel like I'm not really"

Male, black, 18 to 21 yrs, Glasgow

There is also a feeling that parents have a strong influence in reminding their children of their roots rather than where they have been raised. The need for parents to assert 'nature' over 'nurture' is consistent when talking to young people from black and Asian families across the UK in this research.

"I've got other friends my age who are born and bred in Scotland but of African heritage. And we slag the boys, 'Scots boy this, and Scots boy that.' And they're like 'No, no, I'm Ghanaian, I'm Nigerian' or whatever. They're proud of where they're from, I think cos their parents instil it in them growing up and never let them forget where they are from"

Male, black, 18 to 21 yrs, Glasgow

Like other black and Asian participants in this research, Scottish participants say that visiting their 'home country' can be particularly revealing. They say that it takes a while to adjust to the new country. People can tell by the way they walk, their clothes and the way they carry themselves that they have not grown up in the home country. Participants say it makes them appreciate their life in Scotland more. This contrast can make them feel more Scottish.

"I appreciate here more when I come back [from Pakistan] because when you're there you see there's quite a lot of like really poor people, there's a lot of poverty, it's a completely different lifestyle. So you actually appreciate what we've got here. You're more grateful that it's not so bad here after all"

Male, Scottish Muslim, 16 to 17 yrs, Glasgow

However, as with black and Asian participants in England, participants who identified themselves as Scottish Muslim say that it is only when they are discriminated against through racist comments or 'looks' that they feel less Scottish and more 'other'. There is a sense of feeling betrayed by one's own group because of your cultural or religious background and your right to a Scottish national identity is denied. It is at these times when they are seen as socially and culturally different by their home country and culturally different from the Scots that there is a stark dissonance in where their identity sits.

"It's like you're neither here nor there. They don't accept you as one of them and if people here don't accept you then where do you go?"
Female, Scottish Muslim, 16 to 17 yrs, Glasgow

Views on Britishness

In Scotland, participants from all backgrounds feel they have a much stronger, emotional affiliation with Scottishness than with Britishness.

One of the main reasons for resisting a British identity is because Scottish participants associate Britishness almost exclusively with the English, of whom they do not have a favourable opinion. They are therefore resistant to adopting a British identity as this would mean that they are admitting to share something in common with the English. They want to be recognised for their differences from the English and saying one is British is accepting to be in the same camp as the English. They perceive the English as smug, aggressive and conceited. This perception appears to have been inherited from Scottish culture per se rather than their own families.

"It's all that English stuff: the Queen and the monarchy I just can't stand it, don't want to be a part of it"
Male, Scottish Muslim, 16 to 17yrs, Glasgow

"When their fans are going abroad, English people are normally causing trouble"
Male, Scottish Muslim, 16 to17yrs, Glasgow

"It probably is the accent that makes them sound all stuck up. But it's just the attitude they have as well"
Female, Scottish Muslim, 16 to17yrs, Glasgow

Participants believe that Britishness is a construct propagated by the English for their own convenience. For example, when the tennis player Tim Henman is playing well he is called an English player but Andrew Murray, the Scottish tennis player, is called British. However, when Andrew Murray is playing badly and eventually lost in one of last few rounds of Wimbledon he was then relegated to being a Scottish player. Many examples such as this were cited.

> "You've got Tim Henman who is an English player, so they all love to big up Tim Henman. But when it comes to Andy Murray…they make him British rather than Scottish"
>
> Male, Scottish Muslim, 16 to 17yrs, Glasgow

> "And when Andy Murray lost it was because he suddenly became Scottish and rubbish to them – when he lost he wasn't British anymore"
>
> Male, white, 18 to 21yrs, Glasgow

Participants say that the historic rivalry between the Scots and the English cannot be ignored and has carried on in to the present day. Participants also say that there is a great deal of pride taken in the fact that Scotland, despite being the smaller country fought and defeated the larger English army.

> "The history of Scotland, how one small, tiny nation defeated a nation 10 times its size. Generation to generation the Scots have been taught, we were raped, and we were tortured by the English. And then, the kids build it up, that kind of hate"
>
> Male, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Glasgow

Notably, participants in Scotland (and Northern Ireland) appear to have more historical knowledge of their country and its founding myths, than young people in England, and use history as one source to anchor national identity. As will also be seen in the semiotics, historical myths and founding stories hold considerable currency in creating national myths to identity with. Furthermore, participants are quite pragmatic that the size of the country makes it easier for England to achieve success because it has a larger population and a bigger pot of talent to choose from. But they perceive that the physical size of the nation translates into a sense of superiority.

> "They're a much bigger country, there's that. And you've got about ten times more people. And they are bound to be better in sports, and things like that"
>
> Male, black, 18 to 21 yrs, Glasgow

> "They just got a bigger pool of people to pick from. It's like any walk of life"
>
> Male, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Glasgow

To Scottish participants the English superiority and clout is further illustrated by Gordon Brown's fervent promotion of Britishness, which a few believe to be so that he appears less Scottish and more English to the middle England voters, especially if he becomes Prime Minister.

> "He [Gordon Brown] is just making all these speeches and saying he's British 'cos he's scared all the people in England will think he's too Scottish and won't vote for him. He's just doing it to get in with them [the English]"
>
> Male, Scottish Muslim, 16 to 17 yrs, Glasgow

The quote below also illustrates the difficulty participants throughout the research have, in surrendering one's Scottishness or Welshness for being British, which is what they tend to think subscribing to a British identity entails. It is a fear of giving up something, a compromise, rather than gaining from association with the other cultures – a concept promoted by Gordon Brown[11].

> "If I'm going to say I'm British or English or whatever does not mean I'm not Scottish anymore? Cos that's not good"
>
> Male, Scottish Muslim, 16 to 17 yrs, Glasgow

> "I'm not saying he [Gordon Brown] shouldn't be promoting Britain, he should be adding Scotland's name as well. It doesn't matter if it's small, it should still exist considering he is from Scotland. So I think he needs a good slap for that"
>
> Male, Scottish Muslim, 16 to 17yrs, Glasgow

The perception that the English are aggressive is also held by Scottish Muslim participants. According to them, Asians (including Muslims) who live in England have similar characteristics of aggression and superiority as the white English population. They believe that English Muslims are less devout. They argue that this could be because the Muslim community in Scotland is smaller and therefore more closely knit. Whereas they argue that in England the communities are larger and one can exist in relative anonymity. There is a sense that English culture has infiltrated or rubbed off onto Asians in England.

> "Even the Asians are more corrupt in England"
>
> Female, Scottish Muslim, 16 to17yrs, Glasgow

> "Muslims in England that I know are much less practising of the faith. They will actually do things which are forbidden, which I would say does happen here as well, but on a much larger scale over there. So that's one thing, the different lifestyle"
>
> Male, Scottish Muslim, 16 to 17yrs, Glasgow

They are keen to dissociate themselves from Muslims in England. However, they argue that most people are unlikely to be able to differentiate between Scottish Muslims and a Muslim living in England. They fear that if all Muslims are painted with the same brush there is a chance that the white Scottish community may think that Scottish Muslims have similar characteristics of aggression to the Muslims in England.

> "People watching the news are not going to differentiate between an English Muslim and a Scottish Muslim. They'll say 'Muslim' and that's the first thing they say. So they won't know the difference between what country you're from"
>
> Male, Scottish Muslim, 16 to 17 yrs, Glasgow

> "It's the people from London who did all these terrorist attacks and then a lot of people turned on us as well. After the terrorist alerts if they see like an Asian guy with a beard and if he was going abroad they would take his suitcase and rip it open because they don't really trust a Muslim"
>
> Male, Scottish Muslim, 16 to 17 yrs, Glasgow

In summary

Young people in Scotland, irrespective of their ethnic origin feel more Scottish than British. Furthermore, young Muslim and black participants feel they are able to comfortably retain or assimilate their religious and ethnic identities with their Scottish identity, without much conflict, although their relative importance changes depending on the situation.

Young people in Scotland resist adopting a British identity because to them it means adopting Englishness as well. Historic rivalry between the Scottish and the English and a general disapproval of English culture and behaviour makes young people in Scotland oppose the English. Participants did not spontaneously mention the effect of a devolved Scottish government having an effect on their sense of Britishness. Furthermore, young Muslims say that English superiority tends to rub off onto Muslims living in England and has repercussions for Scottish Muslims (who they consider more devout). For instance, some participants argue that it was Muslims living in England, as opposed to Scottish Muslims, who committed a terrorist attack on the London Underground system. But young people in this research say that society does not distinguish between Scottish and English Muslims resulting in Muslims being stereotyped as one homogenous community.

Black participants say that there exists for them a dual identity where the different layers of one's ethnic identity are played out in different situations. For instance, when in London one participant is perceived by others to be Scottish but when he is in Scotland he is considered Ugandan. Participants from black and ethnic minority communities say that this fluidity is a subconscious part of everyday life but when one is either discriminated against or visits one's parents country of origin their different alliances to ethnic heritage and where they live tend to be examined.

WALES

In Wales the research includes young male and female participants aged 16 to 17 from suburban and rural areas around Cardiff. One group all female, white, 18 to 21 year olds from urban and marginalised areas of Cardiff was also conducted. At least four participants in this older group are teenage mothers.

Everyday life

16 to 17 year old participants in Wales express the same concerns about their future prospects and have similar strategies for dealing with their everyday lives as young people in the rest of the UK. They suspect that in most respects there is no immediate difference between themselves and the rest of the country apart from their accent.

These participants, living in suburban and rural areas around Cardiff say there is a lack of facilities for young people – there are few shops and no leisure or sports facilities in the village that they live in.

"Lots of people go out like all together in like big gangs. And they all like, they hang out by the Spar and that's the cool place to be"

Male, white, 16 to 17yrs, Suburban, Cardiff

"Our Spar's opposite a church, so we look a bit weird because we're hanging around outside the church"

Female, white, 16 to 17yrs, Suburban, Cardiff

Some participants suggest that unless you have lived in a village or a small community all your life it is hard to move into a Welsh community and be accepted. Some young people, who have recently moved to the village they now live in say there are excluded and teased by their peers and sometimes older people do not take much notice of them.

"I used to live in the Valleys and I'm used to people saying, 'Oh, hello' and everything, but some people just like ignore you completely 'cos you're not from here"

Male, white, 16 to 17, Suburban, Cardiff

"If you don't know everyone then they're quite funny to you. I walk from the train station and people like look at you and shout at you and stuff like that. So you've just got to not bother and just walk away"

Male, white, 16 to 17yrs, Suburban, Cardiff

Older female participants (18 to 21yrs), living in marginalised areas of Cardiff, especially those who are unemployed and teenage mothers, demonstrate a deep sense of discontent with their lives, and a strong need to start again, preferably in another country where they perceive there are more opportunities, mostly informed by friends and family and the media. Along with this general discontent with life chances are strong feelings against asylum seekers and immigrant communities.

"Our own people from our own country are not getting help, or homes, or money, and then someone comes in on a lorry and they're housed, clothed, everything"

Female, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Cardiff

These participants perceive that non-white communities are receiving housing, jobs and education over the white community. For example, the visibility of internet cafes, learning centres or language courses catering to specific immigrant communities creates a perception that the system gives preferential treatment to immigrants over established communities. Participants in this group show limited knowledge of cultural issues ranging from who an asylum seeker is and reasons why the social landscape they have always known is now changing.

"At the end of the day our country's got to look after our own country. Fair enough we get a couple of them others but we're not even looking after our own country. Why isn't their country not looking after them? Are they just jealous of what we've got here?"

Female, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Cardiff

"We're too soft. I'd send them back to their own country on the lorry, with no food or water, I would just tell them to go back"

Female, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Cardiff

"Some of them who do come in, they do contribute to our country, but then others just come here because they expect that our country's going to give them everything, 'cos that's what they all think, and that's why they all come to our country, instead of going to other countries 'cos they get houses and benefits and everything else"

Female, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Cardiff

Views on Welsh identity

Unanimously participants who have grown up in Wales and have Welsh parents or lineage say they feel more Welsh than British. They say they feel proud of their Welsh culture, heritage, language and people. The resurgence of the Welsh language is cited by participants as an affirmation of Welsh traditions.

"I told one of my friends that I was going to do this thing on being British and he said, 'Oh, but you're not really British, you're Welsh'. And I see the point in that because I don't really feel British at all"

Female, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Cardiff

"I think it's great to have our own language because it makes us unique and that, but like I can't. It's like too hard, it's too hard for me to learn because I like can't absorb it. I'm not good with languages"

Male, white, 16 to 17 yrs, Cardiff

Participants recognise that there are two ways of understanding what being Welsh means, one is what they think of themselves and the second is what they perceive others think of the Welsh as a nation. Notably some of their descriptions of Welshness are made in comparison to the English. Participants believe that Welsh people are stereotyped as being less intelligent, having odd accents, the under-dog and being parochial in their views and experiences.

They argue that perhaps because Wales is smaller than England, the Welsh identity has a more local feel which they believe reflects a closer affiliation to people and place. There is a sense that in spite of new uprisings of hooliganism in Welsh rugby, there is still an innocence or softer side to Welsh pride. This is in comparison with the 'aggressive nationalism' perceived to be practiced by the English. Some participants say that the English can take their nationalism to an extreme, which is at odds with what they see as the humbleness of the Welsh people.

"I think being Welsh is just like being a Brummie or something. It's not particularly a country, it's just from where you're from and it's not so much nationality, it's just the area because it's quite a small area really"

Female, white, 16 to 17yrs, Cardiff

"I think the Welsh tend to stick together probably because we're a smaller part of the country and then, and then we're not really involved in really big political things"

Female, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Cardiff

"My friend, Sean, he moved from England and when he came over all he was going on to us was how the English are class and all this and he was trying to like say that in England it's good life…it was doing my head in"

Male, white, 16 to 17 yrs, Cardiff

"One of my close friends, he's English and whenever I go over his house he's got like all this England stuff up and his like Grand Slam or whatever it was like in the bathroom and it's like all these posters and shirts, and it's not offensive but it's just too much, over the top. They take it real serious"

Female, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Urban, Cardiff

"I think Welsh supporters have more spirit with like singing and also like choirs and stuff. I know it's dying out, but I think there seems to be more spirit"

Views on Britishness

Welsh participants say they feel more Welsh than British. They see the term British used only in official circumstances such as their passport or filling in a form where they have to identify themselves as being British. They also say that they usually hear the term British in reference to the armed forces, wars or in reference to colonial history.

"I think of British mostly in terms of Second World War, or World War 1. But then it goes into Battle of Bosworth and its not about the Welsh fighting English or English and Scottish, it seems to be the army and the country as joined together when it's like a big battle and that's mostly when we are British"

Male, white, 16 to 17yrs, Cardiff

From the quantitative results, a third (32%) of young Welsh people say British identity is more important when they are aboard on holiday. However, in the qualitative discussions young people explain that most people abroad do not know where Wales is and so they have to say they are from Britain, closely qualifying it by saying they are Welsh. Furthermore, only 15% of young people in Wales say that a British identity is important to them when at home indicating that they consider their Welsh identity to be more meaningful than their British identity.

"When I'm on holiday I will use, I'm British, but they always ask like, oh, what part of Britain are you from? And then you're Welsh. But I think like being Welsh is like stronger, I don't mean like stronger, I mean like you feel more Welsh than you are British"

Male, white, 16 to 17yrs, Suburban, Cardiff

"I'd say Wales and then … straight after I'd say it's part of Britain, but I wouldn't say that I was British"

Female, white, 16 to 17yrs, Suburban, Cardiff

One of the main reasons why they resist adopting a British identity is because they see it as then having to identify with the English, and as discussed earlier, they see a fundamental difference between the Welsh and the English. Welsh participants position their culture in opposition to the English. They say there is probably a Celtic affiliation between the Welsh and the Scots but they see their history and culture as different from the English.

"To me Britain is like England as well and I don't know what it is about England to be honest, it's just Wales and England never quite got on"

Female, white, 18 to 21yrs, Urban, Cardiff

"I think the British culture is probably more dominated by the English and no one wants to be dominated"

Female, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Cardiff

"They're fellow Celts I suppose, so we probably have more affinity with Scotland"

Female, white, 16 to 17 yrs, Cardiff

However, when Welsh participants talk about ethnic minority or immigrant communities they are far more likely to refer to themselves as 'British citizens' or refer to 'our country' or 'we' implying the United Kingdom rather than Wales specifically. The quotes below illustrate (relevant words underlined) the different discourse participants use when talking about Britain in relation to immigrant communities.

"I'm not like Christian myself, but sacrificing like the beliefs of the country and like the whole Christianity of the <u>country</u> just for other religions. And personally I don't think those religions are as important because they're <u>not native to this country</u>"

Female, white, 18 to 21 years, Cardiff

"So I think it's stupid that <u>we've</u> been so lenient with their religion and letting them do whatever they want in <u>this country</u> basically and <u>they're not British citizens</u>. Well, they are British citizens some of them, but as soon as they come over here their religion's set up for them"

Male, white, 16 to 17 yrs, Cardiff

In summary

Young white people in Wales see themselves as more Welsh than British. Their main concern with adopting a British identity is that they are being placed in the same group as the English, who they perceive have a different social and cultural mentality to the Welsh, as was found in Scotland. Furthermore, participants made virtually no reference to the devolved government. The powers of the Welsh Assembly do not necessarily quite capture what being Welsh means to these young people. But when referring to ethnic minorities and the perceived preferential treatment they receive in terms of being able to practice their religion or wear traditional dress, young people in Wales talk in terms of the effects this has on the United Kingdom as a whole rather than Wales specifically, usually employing a 'them versus us' discourse. Immigration is the only issue that arose where young people in Wales speak in terms of the whole country and tend to refer to themselves as 'British' in that context.

In Northern Ireland the discussion group include a younger group of 16 to 17 year old Catholic young people, while the older group of 18 to 21 year olds includes Protestant young people.

Catholic and Protestant participants hold distinct and divergent views on national identity and Britishness. It is only in Northern Ireland that participants are very conscious of the debate on national and British identity. The debate is not new or strange to them, as it is in other parts of the UK in this research. The political, religious and personal family stories are palpable, significant, and continue to affect and concern young people here in their everyday lives.

The local area

The key feature for many young people living in Northern Ireland and the main reason for a number of other issues is sectarianism. However, many participants seem to accept sectarianism as the status quo, perhaps because this is what they have grown up around.

"There's always going to be fighting between Catholics and Protestant that's just the way it is"

Female, white, 16 to 17yrs, Catholic, Belfast

"It's a real dump around here because there's paramilitaries"

Male, white, 16 to 17 yrs, Catholic, Belfast

"I know it's awful and I sound really old for a 20 year old, but there's always going to be sectarianism no matter how many youth clubs and cross community groups there is, there's always going to be people that was brought up in the Short Strand, there's always going to be people like me who were brought up on the Cregagh estate and you've just been brought up your whole life a certain way and nobody's going to be able to change your mind that those people over there that are just so involved with the other people, they're actually really nice and you can get on with them"

Female, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Protestant, Belfast

Some Catholic and Protestant participants feel that it is their parents and generations before them who have experienced the worst of the Troubles and it is they who propagate sectarianism. But today's generation with mixed schools and mixed housing estates experience sectarianism in a less harsh and stark manner. They attribute their parents' fervour to strict upbringing at a time when religion had a lot more significance than it does now in 'peace time'.

NORTHERN IRELAND

"They had stricter upbringings when it came to religion. They had to go to church every week without fail and if they didn't go it was really, really serious. They would've got punished for that. Whereas nowadays children don't see it as that serious if you don't go for a week. Your religion and following it was really all your identity and now they try to rub it off on you a wee bit but young people have got other things as well now"

Female, white, 16 to 17 yrs, Catholic, Belfast

"Both my parents are Catholic and we have to go to Mass every week no questions asked"

Male, white, 16 to 17 yrs, Catholic, Belfast

Young people from mixed Catholic and Protestant families are more likely to say that the present generation of young people will integrate more and be less religious in the next twenty odd years. 16 to 17 year old participants from mixed religious backgrounds but who identify themselves as Catholic say it is their mothers who are more religious and remind them that 'they are Irish, not Protestant'.

"My dad's a Protestant and my mum's a Catholic but I feel brought up as a Catholics because my dad never really went to church so it's not a big deal for him. But my mum she's more religious and lived with it all her life and tries to push on ideas like you're Irish to me even though she is married to a Protestant"

Male, white, 16 to 17 yrs, Catholic, Belfast

"I think more Catholics and Protestants will be living together, getting married, sharing. That may not be my generation but probably my kids. If we start teaching the young ones now that there is no difference, then there's some chance of hope"

Female, white, 16 to 17yrs, Catholic, Belfast

Some young people feel it is hard to break free from the strong beliefs propagated by parents and grandparents. For instance, one female Protestant participant says she would not marry a Catholic boy because it would create too much tension and distress within her family, although she would have Catholic friends. This sentiment was echoed by others in the group. In the following quote being sectarianism is talked about as related to violence rather than a more discreet but equally worrying indictment on the relationships young people engage in.

"I was brought up in the Cregagh estate and there's not a chance in hell I would marry a Catholic. I could meet a Catholic in the street and think he's a lovely person, he's a really nice guy and I would not have a problem being friends with him, that's grand, and he could come into my house and have a cup of tea and my mum and dad wouldn't look down on him. But if I brought him home and said, 'This is my boyfriend', it would be a completely different story. My mum and dad aren't nasty people. My nana was from Sandy Row, my mum's from Sandy Row, my dad's from the Woodstock I don't think that's me being sectarian 'cos I don't like throw bottles at Catholics"

Female, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Protestant, Belfast

Participants are keen to assert that not all people hold sectarian views and that it is only 'some' people in both communities that still harbour prejudice towards each other.

"If I say I'm from Northern Ireland there are all different people with different accents. Like people from Londonderry or Derry and they would talk and even think differently from say people down in Belfast. So it just depends what particular part you're looking to describe. You can't box people together"

Female, 16 to 17 yrs, Catholic, Belfast

There is some consensus that people in lower socio-economic groups in deprived housing estates have a legacy of strong sectarian feelings. 18 to 21 year old Protestant participants see a strong link between socio-economic deprivation and an affinity for sectarian views which in turn they believe is related to a cycle of deprivation reinforced by low social mobility.

Some participants believe, as the quote below suggests, that no one is born with sectarian hatred but they are nurtured in communities that still harbour these feelings where they are exposed to symbols of sectarianism such as painted kerb stones and flags strung across pavements indicating Protestant and Catholic only areas. It is the visibility of these symbols that some participants say is still powerful in reinforcing sectarianism.

"It's a nurture thing, and that's a problem. If you look at most people who have a sectarian tendency they come from a low socio economic group and housing estates"

Male, white, 18 to 21yrs, Protestant, Belfast

"I'm a Protestant I wouldn't move to a Catholic area, so then I would move to a very Protestant area, 'cos that's where the houses are cheaper and I couldn't afford to live anywhere else. So then I probably would be affected by the things that I see, the people that I meet and talk to. Then it becomes the things you get involved in, you go to the local bars instead of into town where there's mixed type of people. Then maybe you go out on the 12th. It would mean I would be putting that onto my son. So it's sort of changing the tables, putting him into that situation where I wasn't brought up that way. I was told that if you go watch the bands that's fine, but if you don't it's nothing wrong. Because I don't have money I'll have to move into an area where they take the 12th[12] really serious"

Female, 18 to 21yrs, Protestant, Belfast

But some Protestant participants say that sectarianism is on the decline and there are now more cross-community areas, where Catholic and Protestant residents live or are educated together. However, some are still sceptical as they do not believe that cross-community efforts are being replicated across the whole of Belfast or Northern Ireland.

"For every cross community group that there is, there is made, there's another family being born in East or West Belfast being brought up the same way and then passing on to their family and they go to school with their friends who are influenced by, and I'm not saying, yeah, I think it's great that people are for the change. I personally think it'll make a dent but it will never, it'll never go away. There will always, always be sectarianism"

Male, white, 18 to 21 years, Protestant

[12]On the 12th of July the parade to the Protestant Prince William of Orange's victory over the Catholic King James II at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. Many of the parades have been the cause of sectarian clashes between Unionist Protestants and Nationalist Roman Catholics

Both Catholic and Protestant participants express despondency over the current political deadlock in Northern Ireland governance and see it as pointless warring among people who are stuck in the past. Participants in Northern Ireland want to resist the idea that relations between different communities will be fraught in the future and are keen to shrug off the Troubles as the main symbol of Northern Ireland. This is illustrated in type of images chosen to represented their local area, such as Queens College representing 'the best education in the UK' and a school with pupils from diverse cultural backgrounds. Some participants point out that sectarianism in the future may take on a different hue and become a united prejudice against European and Asian immigrants.

"It shows that it's a mixed estate that I'm in and no-one's really sectarian or anything. No flags put up or anything"
Female, white, 16 to 17 years, Catholic, Belfast

"If you look at people that move out of housing estates and move into more new developments, there's, the new development will have less flags, it'll have less painting the kerbs, they'll be showing their national identity less"
Female, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Protestant, Belfast

"If you have somebody, like most of our parents would probably be more sectarian than what we would probably be, and eventually sectarianism will give way to other feelings, and at the moment that's being seen because of the influx of all these different other new people coming into Northern Ireland through immigration, the Poles, the Czechs, the blacks, Asians, and what have you, we've become more of a metropolitan society and our old sectarian rivalries are now being taken away and exchanged for those rivalries of now them and us"
Male, white, 18 to 21yrs, Protestant

Views on Northern Irish identity

Both Catholic and Protestant participants spontaneously say that defining one's national identity raises controversy in light of the Troubles and sectarianism. Both groups of young people still feel that the Northern Irish representation of national identity is caught up with religious preference, territorialisation and poverty. However, they perceive that for the next generation these feelings and realities could change.

16 to 17 year old Catholic boys and girls in this research say they have a strong Irish identity. Some participants say that in spite of their passports stating 'Great Britain' they still consider themselves to belong to the Republic of Ireland.

"No-one says they're British because they know they're Irish"
Male, white, 16 to 17 yrs, Catholic, Belfast

"Yes, if they said I was British I would correct them and say I'm Irish"
Male, white, 16 to 17 yrs, Catholic, Belfast

"Even though my passport says Great Britain, I'm still Irish not British. I'd rather have a Republic [of Ireland] passport"
Female, white, 16 to 17yrs, Catholic, Belfast

In terms of typical Irish characteristics, Catholic participants say that the Irish are known for their humour, laid back mentality and a capacity for alcohol. There is a consensus that the Irish have a tendency to constantly re-affirm their Irish heritage through a number of ways. For instance, they say that when the Irish go on holiday they seek out Irish pubs and tend to stick together and not mix with others. However, they do not like this attitude and feel that it does not prove that you are Irish by always being around Irish people or promoting symbols of Irish culture. However, there are certain times like on St. Patrick's Day when they feel more Irish and certain streets of Belfast feel like 'home', i.e. like the Republic of Ireland.

"They all like the way Irish people are on holiday. They go to the Irish pubs and see other Irish people. There's just no point"
Male, white, 16 to 17 yrs, Catholic, Belfast

"You don't need to be going on about being Irish if you are Irish. It's just the perception of Paddys and potatoes. But we can drink a lot so it's good to be Irish"
Male, white, 16 to 17 yrs, Catholic, Belfast

"On St Patrick's Day you would feel Irish and you would think of it as a home instead of feeling separated from Ireland"
Male, white, 16 to 17yrs, Catholic, Belfast

18 to 21 year old Protestant participants either have a strong British identity or say they are Northern Irish. Protestant participants are unequivocal in their feelings of belonging – they do not feel Irish and they see themselves as British. However, some Protestant participants believe that Northern Ireland has its own identity separate from Britain. They do not think that it is only characterised by the Troubles or should be a Northern Ireland for Protestants.

"I definitely see myself as British and Protestant"
Female, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Protestant, Belfast

"I class myself as British but I think you can have just a Northern Irish identity that doesn't have to mean it's all about the Troubles"
Male, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Protestant, Belfast

Both Catholic and Protestant young people point out that depending on who is asking they would be cautious when answering questions of national identity. Some believe that saying you are Irish places you in the Catholic camp and saying you are British places you in the Loyalist Protestant camp. With a view to causing less controversy some participants distinguish themselves by saying they are Northern Irish. Saying you are Irish or Protestant sends out an important message about one's sectarian allegiances.

"You have to think about it carefully 'cos if you say you're Irish they're going to be thinking you are Catholic. So you're going to have to think before you come out your answer 'cos you might be giving something away you don't want to"
Female, white, 16 to 17 yrs, Catholic, Belfast

"If you say British, you're saying you are a Protestant Loyalist"
Male, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Protestant, Belfast

"If you say you're Irish, you're putting a statement you are an Irish Nationalist, you'd rather have Northern Ireland part of the island of Ireland. By saying British I believe that you're now saying that you would rather be a part of the British, as in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland"
Male, white, 18 to 21yrs, Protestant, Belfast

There is a common feeling of 'keeping your head down' and not attracting too much attention to one's religious affiliation. One Protestant participant mentioned that he had hidden his pre-task diary (which had a combination of red, white and blue colours on the front cover) under his jacket on the way to the discussion venue, in case it looked like the Union Jack. Another Protestant participant says that when driving down the Falls Road, an infamous Catholic area, he becomes very conscious of his Protestant identity. He says he makes sure the car doors are locked, and the car radio turned down so as not to attract any attention. He says that rationally he knows that nothing will happen to him but he feels more secure taking precautions.

"But even seeing this here wee book, it's got a bit of a British flag, red, white and blue, so see when we were coming up here, I had to put it in my jacket, just in case someone took offence to it"

Male, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Protestant, Belfast

"When driving down the Falls Road it's just a reflex to make sure the doors are locked, music is down, head down, don't attract any attention. I know it's a bit silly but it's an instant reaction, and it does make me feel more safe even though I know nothing could happen"

Male, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Protestant, Belfast

Young people in Northern Ireland recognise that the codes of cultural and national identity are intensely contested and reasserted by members of the two opposing groups, with colours symbolising and provoking powerful emotion: Orange marches, white, red and blue colour coded stretches of pavement; Union Jack flags across streets; the unfurling of the Irish tricolour and green, white and gold flags. These symbols such as the Union Jack or the Falls Road reinforce the presence of sectarianism and disunity that young people see around them.

"Being in an area where there's green, white and gold flags, that would scare the absolute crap out of me"

Female, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Protestant, Belfast

"When I see the Irish tri-colour I don't know why but I get so mad sometimes"

Female, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Protestant, Belfast

"If you see the Union Jack somewhere you just stay away 'cos you know you'll get trouble"

Male, white, 16 to 17 yrs, Catholic, Belfast

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Views on Britishness

Catholic participants do not identify themselves as being British. They associate Britishness with traditional symbols such as the Union Jack, the Queen, tea and crumpets, London buses and black taxis. As in the other nations the term 'British' has strong alliances with the English and a history of persecution.

"If you say you are British when you're on holiday they think, 'oh he's from England"
Male, white, 16 to 17 yrs, Catholic, Belfast

However, some young people say that there is no single descriptor for a British person so no one is typically British. However they can be typically English or Welsh and so on. They also perceive that the typically British person is Protestant and that dissociates Catholic participants.

"You'd be able to describe an English person but not a British person"
Female, white, 16 to 17 yrs, Catholic, Belfast

"They'd usually be Protestant because you'd consider British people to be all Protestants. They'd usually have tattoos as well"
Female, white, 16 to 17 yrs, Catholic, Belfast

"Fairly loud, the English hooligans and the like"
Female, white, 16 to 17 yrs, Catholic, Belfast

Protestant participants all say they are British, with only one saying that he is both Northern Irish and British. Young people from mixed Protestant and Catholic families all say they identify themselves as being Irish. They say it is their mothers who are from Catholic backgrounds that enforce the religion and national identity on to them, however, they do recognise the contradiction that their fathers are Protestant and probably identify with being British. In the following quote, the authenticity of the young person's identity is questioned.

"My mum's Catholic and my dad's Protestant. He doesn't care about religion or like to talk about it. But mum goes on about how we are Catholic and Irish and how can she keep saying that when she herself is married to a Protestant. How can she say we are Irish? I know I feel Irish but actually I'm not full Irish"
Female, white, 16 to 17 yrs, Catholic, Belfast

In terms of how they view events in the rest of the UK, some Protestant participants argue that the British Empire was in effect ruled by England. However, with the devolution of the Scottish parliament, there is a perception that England has lost its authority. Now Scotland has control over its own political affairs and Scottish MPs can vote on British laws, or more specifically laws that affect England, but the reverse is not true. Some suspect that this tension, which they say could be a form of racism, may be inflicted on Gordon Brown because they perceive English MPs will not want a Scotsman in charge of the country.

"The British Empire is ruled by England, by English monarch, English MPs and I think now, especially with this whole Gordon Brown thing taking over from Tony Blair, it's, all of a sudden a racism thing. They're saying he can't be trusted because he's Scottish, and because Scotland has a devolved Government, because English MPs can't rule on Scottish laws, why should a Scottish man rule England? And that is straight down racism, and I think the English people like to have an English PM"
Male, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Protestant, Belfast

As discussed by Scottish Muslim participants, some Protestant participants argue that the reason why Gordon Brown is promoting the debate on Britishness is because if he promotes his Scottish identity he could lose the support of English voters. They believe he is trying to align himself with a British identity that can also appeal to English voters.

"Scots are very, very proud people, and if Gordon Brown's going shouting about, 'I'm Scottish, I'm Scottish', the English people's backs are going to get up. He can't say he's English, 'cos he's not English, so the next thing he has to say is he's British. He has to align himself with something that the English people can align themselves with"
Male, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Protestant, Belfast

The problem for most young people in this research is that they are unsure of what makes up a Northern Irish identity that is not negative or associated with the Troubles and is not determined by religion or associated with the British.

"Down South their culture is all these beautiful places and I'm like thinking, well what is there in Northern Ireland? I could say it's my culture, apart from the fact that I'm a Protestant, and the whole Protestant story"
Female, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Protestant, Belfast

"I don't like to think that that's the only thing I can say about myself is my culture is Protestantism"
Female, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Protestant, Belfast

"The Northern Irish history, the history you learn is the history that is dividing us"
Male, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Protestant, Belfast

Some participants suspect that with greater economic equality, co-operation between Catholics and Protestants through cross-community housing and education a 'hybrid' Northern Irish identity for a new generation (that has not experienced the Troubles) can be forged.

"You can be Northern Irish and not think of yourself as Irish or British"
Female, white, 16 to 17 yrs, Catholic, Belfast

"I have Protestant friends and I go to a mixed school but that's a new thing. There'll be more of that in the future and then may be we'll forget about the Troubles"
Female, white, 16 to 17 yrs, Catholic, Belfast

"I think you can be just Northern Irish without saying you're British or you're Irish, you're Catholic or you're Protestant. But it's not possible if people are still living on those estates where it's all about sectarianism and they're seeing the flags everyday. It may not happen for us but maybe our children will be less sectarian. Maybe they can have a pure Northern Irish identity that is positive"
Male, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Protestant, Belfast

In summary

For young people in Northern Ireland everyday life continues to be coloured by sectarianism: the cultural and generational legacy of the Troubles continues to assert itself in some decisions young people choose to make, such as relationships with their friends and the opposite sex. Added to this is what some participants say is a factor of low social mobility where young people continue to be nurtured in communities that harbour sectarian prejudice. It posits a key factor in determining national identity: young Catholic participants say they feel Irish and do not identify with a British nationality. Young Protestants are more likely to say they are British and in some cases Northern Irish.

But there is an intimation that a new Northern Irish identity that does not focus on the Troubles can be created for a new generation. Some foresee in generations to come more cross-community schools and estates where greater integration could forge a national identity in a time distant from the Troubles.

THE CHALLENGES OF BRITISHNESS

This chapter summarises the key themes articulated by young people across the UK when talking about the challenge that a British identity poses. For young people today, Britishness lacks an emotional bond and is less relevant in everyday life than other aspects of their identity.

In Wales, Scotland and for Catholic participants in Northern Ireland, their opposition to the English means that they are hesitant in accepting a British identity because they think it places them in the same camp as the English. These nations want to be recognised as culturally and attitudinally different from the English. They also want to be seen as distinct and rich cultures in themselves.

Young people tend to feel that the singular nature of a British identity is imposed on them. In their view, this collective identity highlights difference rather than brings people together. So, as an agent of social cohesion, Britishness is problematic, not least for many white young people who perceive ethnic minority communities to be different from the British norm in their social and cultural beliefs, and in some instances feel threatened by the increased competition for jobs, resources and their freedom to question these differences between cultures and not appear to be 'non-PC' or even racist.

For ethnic minorities there are a number of factors such as parental pressure to retain their cultural heritage, infrequent contact with their 'home' country and a perception that their right to claim a place in British society is under threat.

There are a number of reasons why, currently, Britishness is a difficult concept for young people to grasp.

Lack of an emotional resonance

Overall, Britishness is seen as a political or legal construct, and therefore not something that has much resonance for young people today. Participants find it easier to talk about Britain as a territory or a landmass and the benefits of living in Britain. But this does not automatically translate into being comfortable with feeling British or talking about Britishness. To them, ideally, Britishness (or any national identity for that matter) should imply a sense of belonging or an emotional bond but this is not what they experience.

"People say they're proud to be black, proud to be white, proud to be Asian, they don't say they're proud to be British"

Male, black, 16 to 17 yrs, Birmingham

This lack of an emotional bond could be because Britishness does not have a contemporary feel to it. For instance, young people's spontaneous associations with Britishness or a typical British person are the Queen, countryside, high tea and crumpets which are traditional views of a Colonial Britain rather than contemporary Britain. Many say that they haven't had to think about what Britishness means. They say that celebrating Britishness has never been encouraged, or even expected of them, and they would not know what the symbols of a contemporary Britain are.

The image of Britishness that young people have is a traditional, hierarchical world and talked about with a political discourse. However, the world of youth is often typified by its chaos, mess, changeability and freshness. There is also a sense, as will be discussed later, that Britishness is thought of as a parent-child relationship rather than an adult to adult conversation, which again goes against the project of growing up.

Furthermore, young people in all parts of the UK in this research have a very bleak view of their local area and are unsure of what the future holds for them. The narrative of Britishness does not help solve everyday problems or concerns for them such as employment, financial stability and achieving their goals or aspirations.

"All the politics is in Westminster and that's in England so its like it doesn't matter if its Britain 'cos we all get told what to do by England"

FIGURE 6
Mismatch between British and youth themes

The way Britishness is talked about does not match the youth themes - and this emphasises the lack of an emotional connection

British themes

- Old
- Traditional
- Hierarchical
- Distant from everyday life
- Political discourse
- Parent to child

Perennial themes of youth

- Fresh, new or reinvented
- Instant gratification
- Appeal of mess and chaos
- Intensity of experience
- "DIY Identity" discourse
- Want to be treated like adults
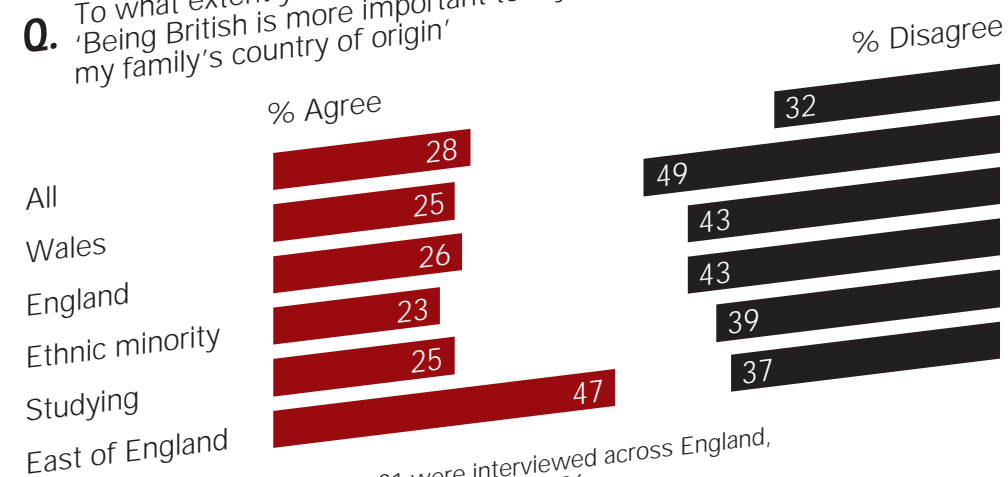
Opposition to the English

One of the main reasons why Britishness is a hard concept for many young people to buy into is because they see Britishness primarily as propagated by the English.

For instance, the quantitative data shows that those more likely see their family's country of origin as more important than their British identity are from Wales (49%), Scotland (43%), ethnic minority backgrounds (43%), and those studying at school or college (39%). The only subgroup where the opposite holds true, and Britishness is considered more important than country of origin is specifically the East of England (47%) – where most respondents are likely to be of white English background. For people from Scotland or ethnic minorities, family origins are more important. For a little less than half of young white English people surveyed, being from English heritage sparks similar connotation to being British. The qualitative discussions suggest that being English and being British can be interchangeable.

FIGURE 7
Family's country of origin is more important

Q. To what extent you agree or disagree with each?
'Being British is more important to my sense of identity than my family's country of origin'

% Agree / % Disagree

	% Agree	% Disagree
All	28	49
Wales	25	43
England	26	43
Ethnic minority	23	39
Studying	25	37
East of England	47	32

Base: 672 young people aged 16-21 were interviewed across England, Wales and Scotland between 14-21 September 2006

There is a lot of resistance in all the nations (except Protestant young people in Belfast) to the culture and behaviour of the English. To them saying you are British means that you are admitting to having something in common with the English, which is met with great disapproval. Young people in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland see the English as smug and superior, and the way they express their pride in being English is seen as aggressive and often violent: the BNP and football hooliganism are cited as examples of this.

There is one perspective that the four nations are historically different and it might be worthwhile to concentrate on these national identities instead of Britishness. But some participants in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland argue that their countries need England for economic stability it brings. However, they believe that the negative reputation that England has can be salvaged by its association with the other nations

"We were all separate countries before we became one, and there's still that underlying feeling that we are different, and I think that the Government would be better served concentrating on the national identities. But then again, there's certain things that those three countries could bring to the English economy and improves the English standing and all that together is Britishness. That is what the United Kingdom is: 'united'. It's better working together as one than falling apart separately"

Male, white, 18 to 21yrs, Protestant, Belfast

Another example of the perceived supremacy and importance of the English is that the seat of government and ultimately political control over the country is controlled by Westminster in England. A number of participants associate political Britain with London because it is the centre of government. Similarly, the Olympic games were not mentioned by young people as they primarily see it as a 'London thing'.

"London is where everything happens, where all the decisions are taken"

Female, 16 to 17yrs, Birmingham

All the politics is in Westminster and that's in England so its like it doesn't matter if its Britain 'cos we all get told what to do by England

Female, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Cardiff

Ethnic identity and Britishness

The potentially divisive nature of a British identity has already been discussed. Coupled with that, the concept of Britishness is further complicated when aligned with young people's ethnic and religious identities. For instance, young Muslims in Glasgow recognise that they have different parts to their identity, possibly more complex than for a white Scot, because they are Muslim, as well as of Pakistani origin, a Glaswegian and Scottish. However, they do not consider exerting their Muslim identity as a matter of choice – they see themselves as always Muslim irrespective of the context; they do not choose when this identity is more important than other aspects of their life. All other identities that they choose to exert, for instance being an environmentalist, operate within the sphere of being a Muslim. Some say that being a Muslim is so obvious that they don't even need to mention it.

"All of us sitting here, I don't feel it's important to say British Muslim because we all found at the start that we all are Muslims anyway"

Female, Scottish Muslim, 16 to 17 yrs, Glasgow

For ethnic minorities many of their cultural or religious values are not the same as those they perceive as British or English, such as food, smoking, drinking, sex before marriage. The descriptive weakness of a singular identity such as Britishness diminishes the political, cultural and social richness that an ethnic or religious identity can bring to young people (and this includes the white ethnicities).

"If I say I'm British then I'm not really because I'm also a Muslim. And some of our Muslim values are not what English people believe in"

Male, British Muslim, 18 to 21yrs, Birmingham

There are a number of factors that reinforce ethnic background over Britishness and a feeling of 'otherness':

Parental pressure

Black and Asian participants across the UK say that their parents, many of whom came to the UK when they were very young, constantly reinforce their black or Asian roots and heritage. Much of this is inherent in their everyday life, such as traditional food eaten at home or traditional clothes worn during festivals or religious worship. This adds another layer to their sense of belonging, for while young people say they may feel Scottish or English they do not feel part of the white community and are not part of the white lineage. This feeling is reinforced by their parents who often remind them of their roots and heritage and their 'otherness' from the white community.

"Some of my beliefs, just the way I am, to be honest, I can't really describe it, it's just I'm Nigerian…I'm just straight up standing tall Nigerian. But I'm also from Stokey"

Male, black, 18 to 21 yrs, Birmingham

"Our parents are always saying, 'You're Nigerian, you are Nigerian, you're Nigerian', and it is said constantly. They're saying that you are where you come from and you have to carry your tradition wherever you go"

Male, black, 18 to 21 yrs, Birmingham

"Obviously officially I'm British to hold a real passport, but you can't be 100% British because of my origin, but I am British"

Male, British Muslim, 18 to 21yrs, Birmingham

Racial discrimination

In spite of having a British passport, black and Asian participants, particularly males, say they are asked the question 'Where do you come from' at airports and immigration checkpoints and when they say 'Britain' they are questioned again as to where they 'originally' come from. Participants say they are faced with having to accept not being British. In the face of this a discussion on Britishness as a cohesive identity does not feel realistic to them.

"Whenever you go to the airport, they stop you. You're British, obviously, you've got your own passport, they ask you, so where are you from? Britain, no, where are you from? Your origin, Bangladesh, so where does that leave you"
Male, British Muslim, 18 to 21 yrs, Birmingham

"You are forced to accept that you are not British, but yet you are British"
Male, black, 18 to 21yrs, Birmingham

The research finds that young black and Asian people are generally not comfortable with, or used to the idea of British being anything more than a legal title. In particular they find it difficult to call themselves British because of their race or cultural background; through hurtful 'jokes' or blatant racist abuse they find their claim to British is all too often denied. Participants imply that if 'white England' does not accept black and Asian people as 'truly' British then the concept of Britishness is a non-starter.

"The country can exclude you, so why do you want to be something when people don't appreciate you for being here. If you're … half-English, they just deny as being English, so there's no point trying"
Female, black, 16 to 17 yrs, Birmingham

"I think even if you're born here and you're black you go to them areas, the British don't come out, all they see is the black. And it's not like you can show them or say, 'I'm British, I'm British, accept me' cos some people just don't want to know. All them people in Essex or Devon who never seen a black or Asian person before, are they going to be part of this British thing or accept us?"
Male, black, 18 to 21 yrs, London

"You live in a society where you just have to blend in. But then you try to be accepted, you try to be British but they white folk don't want you. How can Tony Blair want me to be British when them ordinary people don't want to talk to me"
Male, black, 18 to 21yrs, London

Indeed many young Asian and black participants across all locations of this research have a real fear and belief that they may get 'kicked out' of the country, in spite of being British citizens. According to them, not being white qualified you for extradition to your 'home country' or country of your parent's origin. This is particularly the case for young Muslims and these feelings stem from the current climate of fear surrounding terrorism.

"I believe that I'm from Bangladesh, although I'm British, but that's where I'm from really. If anything happens, they'll kick us out, and tell us to go back to your own country, so it's no use being a British man, is it? Happy to go back home there, could be a certain day that that comes, kick you out of the country, so that's your country really, Bangladesh is, where you're from"
Male, British Muslim, 18 to 21 yrs, Birmingham

However, when these young people go back to their 'home country' they do not always feel they belong or are welcomed with open arms. They say that people in their 'home country' consider them to be British or English or even from London – this is true for Scottish participants as well. They say that even if they are in traditional dress there is something about the way they are: the way they carry themselves and their confidence that sets them apart from their peers in that country.

"Just the way we dress and the way we act and the way we speak. They've always got something, they stare at you. I've been to Faizabad a few times and you walk around and they're just staring at you"
Male, Scottish Muslim, 16 to 17 yrs, Glasgow

"It's like they know even if you don't like dress differently or anything it's like when they look at you they know that you're different"
Female, Scottish Muslim, 16 to 17 yrs, Glasgow

There are stark social and economic differences between Britain and the 'home country, such as running water, electricity and social etiquette that takes a while to adjust to. They say it makes them appreciate the conveniences of life in Britain more.

"Every year I go on holiday there [Pakistan], but I don't enjoy it very much, so I'm always in a rush to get back. It's probably such a change and an extreme change, that's why I find it difficult. But if I was brought up there I might have a different opinion"
Male, Scottish Muslim, 16 to 17 yrs, Glasgow

"I appreciate here more when I come back because when you're there you see there's quite a lot of like really poor people, there's a lot of poverty, it's a completely different lifestyle. So you actually appreciate what we've got here. You're more grateful that it's not so bad here after all"
Male, Scottish Muslim 16 to 17 yrs, Glasgow

However, they recognise that people in their home country are proud of their heritage and culture, whereas participants say they are caught between feeling part of their heritage and not being fully accepted by people in their 'home country'. The search for the authentic identity can create a disjointed national and cultural identity.

"It's weird, 'cos when I went there, they take pride in who they are, 'cos it's like, it's … you say you're black British because you know that's where you're from and you're black, so basically you're not white, so you say black British 'cos it's from where you are, and there they're all like, they appreciate where they're from, and they know too"
Female, black, 16 to 17 yrs, Birmingham

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Ethnic minorities living in England find it hard to adopt an English identity. This could be because legally there is no box which has 'English Pakistani'. The official descriptor is 'British Pakistani'. It is assumed that Englishness is a matter of lineage and bloodlines. It appears that young people living in England have no choice but to adopt a 'British' identity. However, Scottishness is not seen in the same way. For instance, young people of Pakistani origin feel comfortable saying they are 'Scottish Asian'. It is this sense of authenticity, of having the right to be called Scottish or Muslim that has emotional significance.

Multiple identities and a myth of unity

Participants imply that one's identity is a complex and changing thing: you can be female, Welsh, a teenage mother, a Christian and white which all go towards giving that person a particular identity. However, none of them can be taken to be a person's single identity or character. Given the inescapable nature of plural identities, it is generally the case that we decide in which contexts particular affiliations and associations take the lead. It is the inevitability of Britishness as an identity that is imposed, or that we are supposed to feel, that participants are opposed to.

"I think you're by yourself, you're not part of the country, you are yourself"
Male, black, 16 to 17 yrs, Birmingham

"Maybe I don't want to be British. We are all so different and I'm like different to different people, not like a hypocrite but behave differently with my parents or friends. So are they telling me I have to be British or I'm not like allowed to be here or something?"
Female, black, 16 to 17yrs, Birmingham

"When you're writing legal documents, yeah, you're black British. When you're on the road you're black, or whatever"
Male, black, 16 to 17 yrs, Birmingham

Participants question the fundamental ideology that a single universal identity such as Britishness can co-exist with multiple identities, such as being Scottish or a Scottish Muslim. It is the loose rule of Britishness holding together disparate cultures and peoples that leaves participants unconvinced. This is mainly because they see local identities, such as being a Glaswegian, and national identities, such as being a Scot, as more important and emotionally relevant than the 'supra' British identity.

The quantitative results show that 85% of Scottish participants and 60% of Welsh participants feel that Britishness is less important than a Scottish or Welsh identity. Young people say that adopting a solely British identity is an imposition that dilutes or aims to negate other identities. Forcing people to choose between being British, Welsh/Scottish, etc, does not capture the subtleties of identity, instead it appears to dwarf their other identities which they perceive as more meaningful, authentic and emotionally significant.

"We're all actually very different cultures. I don't think people in Scotland really care what goes on in Wales. They have all these stereotypes of us as sheep shaggers and what not but that's still better than them calling us just British. I'd rather be a Welsh sheep shagger than British 'cos at least being Welsh means something to me"
Male, white, 16 to 17 yrs, Suburban, Cardiff

Furthermore, just over two in five (43%) young people feel that a shared sense of British identity is unrealistic because people are so different, with those living in Scotland (51%) and the East of England (54%), especially likely to feel this way.

Adopting a single identity or having one imposed is felt to be counterproductive to a young person's creation of a unique identity, which helps them to fit into and move between different groups. For example, some people may play rugby and hang out with the rugby team, but also play guitar and be part of a band which has no interest in rugby. This fluidity that comes with a young person's identity does not sit well with a static understanding of what a British identity is.

"I play rugby so I'm with the rugby boys for part of the day. But I don't like hang out with them. My mates are in a band and I usually hang out there after school. But in school I might hang out with some other people. There's no one group"
Male, white, 16 to 17 yrs, Cardiff

"I have about 14 friends that I hang out with and they're all different and have different views and interest. I wouldn't like to hang out with people who were just the same as me"
Female, white, 16 to 17yrs, Cardiff

Participants find it hard to move away from the idea that Britishness imposes a singular affiliation[13] and adopt Gordon Brown's more inclusive view of Britishness where plural identities can thrive[14], because they see Britain or the United Kingdom as a legal or political term that is an artificial construct created to bring the different nations and cultures together. This is why they find it hard to think of Britishness as anything other than an attempt to merge identities which they would rather have flourish on their own.

Some participants believe that trying to pin down or map out what it is to be British highlights differences between the nations and different ethnic communities, rather than creating a unifying banner which symbolises inclusiveness or social cohesion. Furthermore, some feel that discussing Britishness or trying to pin down any values causes more confusion and dissent rather than being a solution to a problem – a problem they suspect is multiculturalism and integration. Some participants say that it is this fuzzy quality of Britishness that has so far allowed it to encompass the national and ethnic identities by default rather than by design. Britishness is to them a myth of unity, not a reality.

[13]A term used by Amartya Sen to mean assuming that any persona pre-eminently belongs, for all practical purposes, to one collectivity only – no more and no less' Identity and Violence, page 20.
[14]The Future of Britishness, Gordon Brown's speech to the Fabian Society, 14/01/06, Imperial College London.
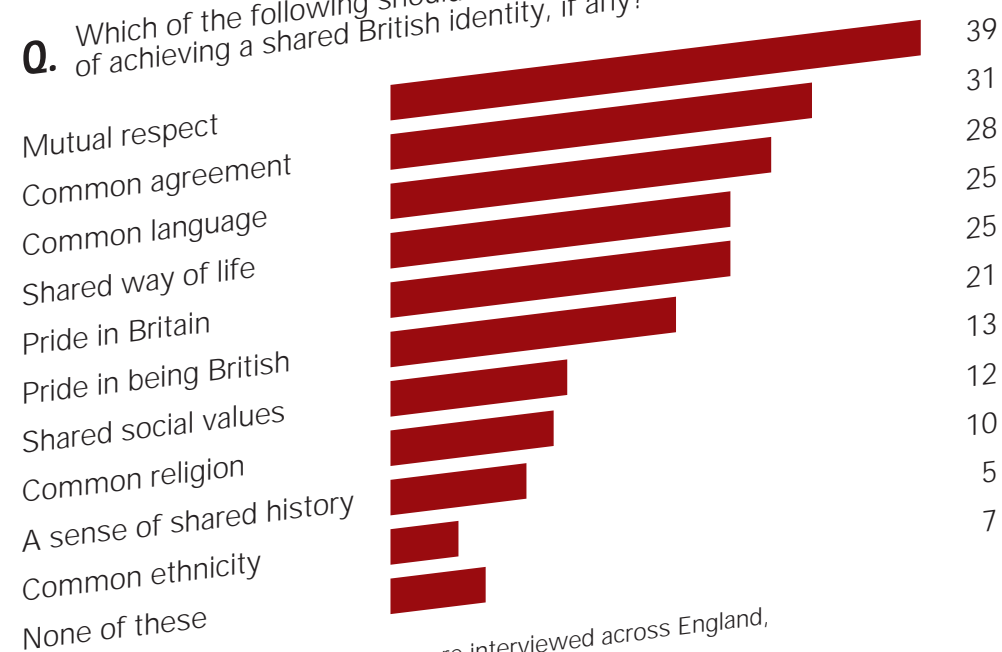
Britishness and social cohesion

Britain's multicultural society raises an important question of whether a British identity can exist along with other ethnic and religious identities (including a white ethnic identity) and whether Britishness, or a shared sense of a British identity, can bring about social cohesion. When asked which aspects should Britain strive for in terms of achieving a shared sense of British identity, mutual respect for difference, common cultural values, common language and shared way of life rank higher than factors linked with homogeneity like a common religion or ethnicity, indicating that what people value about Britishness is diversity. Indeed, the 2005 BBC Ipsos MORI study on multiculturalism[15] finds that young people are nearly twice as likely as the population overall to think that people who come to live in Britain should be free to live their lives by the values and traditions of their own culture (67% compared with 35% overall) highlighting the value that young people place on freedom and diversity.

FIGURE 8
Commonalities vs Pride

Q. Which of the following should we as a country strive for in terms of achieving a shared British identity, if any?

Mutual respect	39
Common agreement	31
Common language	28
Shared way of life	25
Pride in Britain	25
Pride in being British	21
Shared social values	13
Common religion	12
A sense of shared history	10
Common ethnicity	5
None of these	7

Base: 672 young people aged 16-21 were interviewed across England, Wales and Scotland between 14-21 September 2006

[15]http://www.ipsos-mori.com/polls/2005/bbc050809.shtml

From the qualitative research we know that many young white participants perceive that black (and specifically Asian) communities are fundamentally different in terms of their food, language, dress, cultural beliefs and practices. There is also a perception that these communities get more privileges and support from the government than the white community, such as faith schools, being allowed to wear the turban or the veil, the building of mosques, to name a few.

"Some of them have been here for ages, they run all the shops but can't speak a word of English"
Male, white, 18 to 21 yrs, London (Kingston)

"Let's say Sikhs, they wouldn't let them wear their turbans in France, so why can't we be like that here? I don't really, the thing that like I found, what I find weird is that the government are saying, yeah, don't be racist against Muslims, Sikhs, Jews, whatever, but we're like, I'm not like Christian myself, but sacrificing like the beliefs of the country and like the whole Christianity of the country just for other religions. And personally I don't think those religions are as important because they're not native to this country"
Female, white, 18 to 21 years, Cardiff

"They're not allowed to hold hands, they're not allowed to kiss in the street and everything, but in this country we built like mosques and all stuff like that for other people's religions. So I think it's stupid that we've been so lenient with their religion and letting them do whatever they want in this country basically and they're not like British citizens. Well, they are British citizens some of them, but like they like, as soon as they come over here their religion's set up for them whereas if we go over there we're not allowed to do anything"
Male, white, 16 to 17 years, Cardiff

Both black and white participants agree that Asian communities tend to stick together and live in whole streets in an area and do not integrate with other communities. Black participants in Birmingham say that while they respect the hard work that Asian families put in and the way their families support each other, they control most of the local businesses in the area and only employ other Asians. There is a perception among non-Asians that the Asian community is 'not playing fair' by isolating themselves.

"I don't think it matters for people live near you as long as they like talk to you and if they're not doing any harm, if they don't like … Because like common courtesy is what you want really, isn't it like? People who say hello and people that make eye contact or whatever like. But like if they're like really rude then obviously I wouldn't like them"
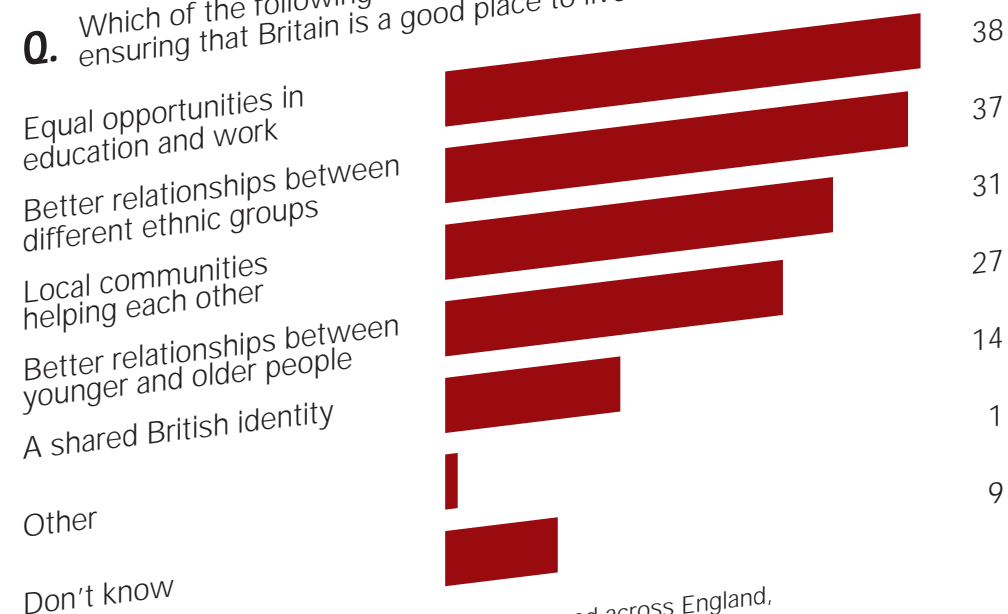Male, white, 16 to 17 years, Cardiff

On these lines, the findings from the quantitative research illustrate that young people could be more concerned about better relationships between ethnic groups than a shared British identity because these issues are currently more salient. When asked (through a prompted list) which of a number of social issues are most important to ensuring Britain is a good place to live around one in seven (14%) say a shared sense of British identity is important. However, equal opportunities in education and work (38%) and better relationships between ethnic and religious groups (37%) are more than twice as likely to be seen as important, highlighting that a common national identity is not utmost in young people's concerns.

FIGURE 9

Important social issues

Q. Which of the following social issues are most important for ensuring that Britain is a good place to live?

Equal opportunities in education and work	38
Better relationships between different ethnic groups	37
Local communities helping each other	31
Better relationships between younger and older people	27
A shared British identity	14
Other	1
Don't know	9

Base: 672 young people aged 16-21 were interviewed across England, Wales and Scotland between 14-21 September 2006

In the qualitative discussions, young people in general, but particularly black and Asian participants, believe that Britain is a good place to live because of the freedom of speech. However, young white people across the UK increasingly feel that their rights to question and debate the value of diversity and the social and cultural beliefs of different ethnic communities are being curtailed. As the table above shows, a shared British identity is the least of their concerns at the moment and young people are still grappling with equal opportunities and better relations between ethnic groups. This signals that multiculturalism and ethnic difference are issues that young people need answers to and they are unable to see how a shared British identity can solve the issues.

A few young people expressed that to be able to accept you are British you need to be secure in your own identity first and differences need to be valued rather than tolerated before a unifying British identity can be accepted.

"Essentially to be able to accept you're British, you need to have your own identity. I still think of it as a team. Each person in a football team or a hockey team is different, but together they're for one, so really you can't just clone people to think, right, you must think like that. I really think that people have to find their own culture, their own identity before they can come together as united front. But it can work but it's better if everyone has their own separateness, somewhere they can say home is home, but yet they do feel, as you say, that link"

Male, white, 18 to 21 yrs, Protestant, Belfast

The quantitative evidence paints a slightly different picture on this matter. This is likely to reflect the fact that quantitative surveys tend to gather top of mind responses and not probe beneath or get respondents to think about why they have responded in a particular way. That said, there does appear to be some surface level support for encouraging a sense of Britishness. Two in five (39%) feel that Britishness should be taught at schools and to new residents. Three in ten (31%) feel that it should be encouraged although not formally taught or written down and only one in five (20%) feel it's not appropriate to promote Britishness in a specific way.

In line with their more negative opinions about Britain and England generally, young people living in Wales (32%) and ethnic minorities (30%) are more likely to say it's inappropriate to promote Britishness, while those in work or who are unemployed (47%), those in England (41%) and white British (41%) young people are more likely to say it should be taught.

" Each person in a football team or a hockey team is different, but together they're for one, so really you can't just clone people to think, right, you must think like that."

In summary

Britishness, as understood by young people, is an exterior and formal identity and lacks the emotional bonds that a national and ethnic identity i.e. white, Pakistani, or even cultural identity i.e. being a Goth has for young people.

Britishness is also problematic and a declining feature of identification even for young white people, especially when it carries political baggage for many Irish in Britain or when it is eclipsed by Scottishness in Scotland.

For young ethnic minorities, there are emotional bonds to their parent's country of origin which their parents continue to nurture and re-enforce. This, coupled with cultural differences and the reality of racial discrimination, means the value of Britishness and the right to be British loses its shine.

Currently, Britishness becomes relatively dispensable because emotional bonds with ethnic, religious or cultural identity are considered to be a more authentic and meaningful description for individual identities. As an agent of social cohesion, young people are unable to see how Britishness as a shared social identity can work, taking into consideration multiple identities and ethnic, religious, social and cultural differences between communities. That said, on a surface level there is some support for a shared sense of Britishness.

The final chapter of this report sets out the learnings from the semiotic study, and draws some conclusions as to potentially motivating directions for communicating and framing a new discourse around Britishness to young people. The challenges facing the British 'brand guardians', in the light of the qualitative research, are as follows:

How do we a leverage powerful, motivating British identity for young people?

Are there aspects of Britishness which do have resonance, given that when the whole package of Britishness is considered, it does not appeal to young people?

How do we link the two – ideas which are important to young people with a revitalised idea of Britishness?

A semiotic analysis was therefore conducted, alongside the qualitative research, to help answer some of these questions. So while the qualitative research explores how young people think and feel about Britishness, the semiotics takes an 'outside-in' approach to explore the cultural influences operating in our culture that could affect these ideas of Britishness.

The semiotics identifies the best qualities of past British codes, current British and youth codes, and the potential emergent codes of British youth identity.

WHERE NEXT FOR BRITISH YOUTH IDENTITY?

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Throughout the semiotic analysis we will refer to and structure the semiotic findings according to the following types of codes :

• Residual codes of Britishness: signs and symbols of Britishness that hark back to the past and are not signs of contemporary Britain that have emotional weight; however there are residual codes of Britishness that can be salvaged as the 'best' of British culture in creating new ideas about Britishness
• Dominant codes: current codes in British society that are relevant to both young people and adults; and there are parts of dominant codes in society that can also be harnessed in the service of a British identity
• Emergent codes: new ways in which Britishness could have emotional resonance for young people by combining the best of old Britain or residual codes of Britishness and re-shaping the current cultural codes in British society

It is important to note that for this project the semiotics is a wider macro level investigation of past, current and potentially future ways in which Britishness and youth identity operate. While the qualitative research has seen what Britishness means to young people across the four UK nations and ethnic identities, the semiotics takes a wider look at British culture in general. A semiotic analysis of each of the individual nations and within ethnic groups would need to be undertaken to test some of these hypotheses, which is a strand of research for future investigation. Qualitative research takes an inside-in approach, asking young people across the UK, their perceptions of British identity while semiotic analysis looks a at the wider culture in which those perceptions are influenced and shaped.

Cultures, as well as individuals, can speak in the voice of one of the aspects of the personality. 'Old Britain' projects a strong 'Parent' voice perhaps most classically evoked by the 1950s public information films, which has been parodied by comedians ever since. Current contemporary Britain often speaks in the voice of the 'Child', which we will discuss in detail. At best, of course, a culture and a personality has aspects of all three identities; in the case of Britishness, the culture could be in transition between them, of which more below.

Throughout this chapter we will make reference to the 'Parent' 'Adult' and 'Child' voices, created by the psychological theory Transactional Analysis. These could be described as the three parts of an individual's personality: the rational ego, which weighs up and judges events (the Adult), the super-ego which provides checks and restraints (the Parent) and the id, which is responsible for our passionate and demanding desires (the Child).

The residual codes of British identity today

As we have already been told by the young people in the qualitative study, there are some aspects of Britishness which are top of mind such as the Queen, Big Ben, tea and crumpets to name a few. From a semiotic point of view, these are often linked to an old fashioned vision of Britain as a hierarchical, traditional society. The comments by the young people in this research, and the cultural artefacts which surround them, often include the following elements:

Firstly, a formal, stylised, authoritative voice is often used, to set the context. This is, importantly, a voice associated with the Parent part of the British character; morals, obligation and duty and making reference to a strict set of rules and truths rather than being open to different points of view is the image projected. Advertising such as Pot Noodle's 'Fuel of Britain' campaign, or the comedy Little Britain poke fun at the 'voice of authority' by using a comic voice over.

• Secondly, cultural practices or images that appear static because they are perennial, such as landmarks, like Big Ben, the Crown, or the flag are used. Even activities that are not inherently 'static' such as, the changing of the guard, teatime, or roast beef dinners are presented as fixed, framed, unchanging ideas of British culture, because they are still a part of British culture

Thirdly, images evoking the past, such as classical music, Shakespeare, old-fashioned film stock from the 1970s, rural imagery of the English countryside, or the industrial past of smoking factory chimneys appear as a montage of British life, which in their own right are a part of our culture although may not be relevant for the future

All of these are residual codes, for while they are still at the front of people's minds, and are widely associated with Britishness, there is little connection with day-to-day lifestyles and identities of young people. It is misguided, then, to take these residual codes as the sole aspect of Britishness, with the power to motivate, simply because they tend to crop up first.

However, there are some codes which, although dated, are important to investigate, as they continue to resonate and appear in some modern texts. Politeness, pride of ownership, craftsmanship, satire, and historical stories of stoicism are just some of them discussed below. It is these perennial themes of British culture that can be salvaged for building a new Britishness.

Modern pop culture still celebrates those who fit into residual codes of politeness and courtesy, a good example being the image of Will Young as a modern British 'gentleman'. The traditionally stoical nature of Britons is still referred to in descriptions such as, the 'undaunted' response to terrorism after the July 7th attacks on London, with London commuters queuing orderly for buses the next day.

The British traditional sense of pride in ownership is still important culturally, with the focus on the domestic interior, the private home or garden owned by the individual: 'an Englishman's home is his castle'. This is reflected in a continued British love of DIY, where property is seen as both a financial investment and a way to make concrete individual status, style, and family relationships. Property 'makeovers', buying and building homes abroad are highly popular, and reflect this focus on ownership and improvement.

Similarly, the residual codes of 'artisan Britain', reflecting craftsmanship, pride in work, and respect for acquired skills, are still relevant in some areas. But the focus has shifted from traditional craftsman or highly skilled labour in industry to cultural areas such as modern music or sport. For example, the DJ or mixer now 'crafts' music with skill, the skateboarder hones their tricks with careful, patient practice.

VERSUS

British taste for satirical comedy that parodies authority is another code of Britishness which still has power. These texts are relevant for its popularity, and the fact that humour and satire is a strong vehicle of expression for British identity makes its messages all the more relevant in an analysis of Britishness. For example, in the 1980s, the Monty Python approach mocked a whole range of authorities and social structures, and the heritage continues through to today's taste for social comedy such as Catherine Tate, The Thick of It, Little Britain and The Office. The aim of these social satires is to underline the powerlessness or incompetence of those in authority. More importantly these programmes tend to rely on our own distrust of many of societies' Parent figures, from bosses, teachers, politicians through to parents themselves and those in a caring, responsible role. For example, where Catherine Tate's teenager reduces her teachers to stuttering wrecks with her 'Am I bovvered?' tirades, we relate to their frustration in dealing with her, but also laugh at their inability to find a comeback or way to contain her.

- Like all national identities, Britishness relies to some extent on a sense of history – a series of stories about Britain and British people that underpin our sense of our place in the world and our national character. The historical stories we choose to remember build on many of the residual codes we have seen so far. For instance, our common myths feature battles to defend our oceans and our borders, our pride of ownership in our own land: the Armada, Lord Nelson and the Battle of Trafalgar and the Battle of Britain. These battles are discussed in ways to express British 'scrappy-ness' to have 'unshakeable borders' as a 'proud island nation', to use ingenuity not might, to stand alone against mighty foes and emerge victorious. If the ongoing importance of these is in doubt, the recent discussions on YouTube, following old footage of the Battle of Britain, suggest they still spark a strong sense of identity and pride.

To build or revive a sense of British identity we will need to make use of myths and narratives about ourselves, perhaps developing entirely new narratives, at the very least adapting and updating those residual ones that still hold sway in our imagination.

In summary

While many of the residual codes of Britishness are still widely referenced as 'part' of Britishness, they are often weak in emotional connection or resonance in modern life. However, some codes associated with British culture such as politeness, stoicism, craftsmanship, pride in ownership and satire still have resonance today and evidence of this is present in everyday contemporary culture of which young people are a part.

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The dominant codes of youth identity today

Across the range of texts investigated, a range of themes that are associated with 'ways of being young' in mass British culture today can be identified. These themes reflect the kinds of identities and activities which feel current and fresh, in British culture. These are the dominant codes of identity for young people, i.e. the codes which have energy and young people engage with fully. For this reason, unlike the residual codes, they are not usually ironised or laughed at where they appear. The texts investigated highlight five significant themes which encode dominant modern identities and what in the qualitative research has been seen as issues and characteristics of youth identity;[19]

- DIY identity: you make your own identity
- The democracy of creativity: anyone can create culture
- A society veering towards extreme meritocracy of Winner and Losers
- A culture which speaks in the voice of the Child

DIY identity

As seen in the qualitative research young people continually express a desire to mark themselves out as individual and distinctive, be it often within a group. This encourages the individual to be self-determining and accountable to and for themselves. As such, there is a dominant trend of treating the self as a project to be managed, developed and bettered. The implications of this are that we have the ability to express ourselves and construct our own identity by the way we present ourselves to others in society. This pattern of DIY identities is a prime indicator of the dominance of individualism in our society.

There are many examples of this preoccupation in our culture. For instance, the world of fashion and celebrity has always told a story of 'Cinderella' – transforming one's personality to communicate a whole new identity through dress. Today, magazines such as Heat identify the elements of celebrity identity, breaking down overall style into lists of achievable purchases and behaviours. Pictures of stars are stripped down to specific body parts, clothes and jewellery. For example, the process by which Colleen McGloughlin transforms from track suited 'chav' to Chloe-clad princess is clearly delineated.

But there are concerns around the health of our consumer society: living in debt, the 'want it now' maxim starts to look particularly short-sighted making this element of modern culture literally in danger of becoming bankrupt. There is a moral questioning of those whose focus is so heavily upon exterior beauty and conspicuous consumption. The coverage of the 'WAGs' – wives and girlfriends of the England team, and the discernable consumption of celebrity culture in general, illustrates that we may be falling out of love with this glamorous but perhaps tasteless and unsubstantial mode of living.

The theme of a DIY identity gives priority to self determination and 'the right to one's own opinion'. However, this leaves little room for the harder compromises which living in a diverse multicultural society makes necessary. In a society where an individual's identity and desires are paramount, how do we make collective decisions about morals, ethics and behavior? And as illustrated in the qualitative research, how does this individualism fit with a singular British identity?

[19]That these 'encode' youth identity means these themes tend to signify, be associated with or mark our texts or artefacts as linked to youth and youth identities in particular.

British comedies, such as Little Britain, The Office, Ali G, or The League of Gentlemen, portray the maxim that all members of society are 'equal but different' as hollow and insincere. In The Office, for instance, the character of David Brent demonstrates the real opinions which lurk behind the rhetoric of political correctness, by continually getting the language of a fair, equitable manager wrong. He provides a cathartic way for the audience to laugh at the pressures faced in the modern workplace to be friendly, professional, meritocratic and politically correct, all at the same time.

Ideas of equality between ethnicities are also held to be lip service and insubstantial in these comedies. The culture therefore is exploring the contested area of individual identity, by presenting the clash between individual identities, which differentiate us and set us apart from each other, and showing that there is little common ground on which to build a compromise or shared social identity. This clash is vocalized by the young people in the qualitative research when they argue that differences between people and cultures is palpable in daily life which makes Britishness as a singular identity difficult to fathom. It is also the project of young people to hone these differentiating traits that exhibit their individuality.

Democracy of Creativity

Advances in technology and communications around the world have given rise to a new democratic platform for creativity. There has been huge growth in informal electronic networks via the internet and telecoms. Young people are particularly tuned in to new developments in and using creative technologies. In the case of the internet, the structures and content are malleable and users can change and interact with them. The structures, software, programming and content of this online environment have been explicitly designed to be repeatedly transformed by their users.

For example, open source software, like Freeware, has no copyright and invites programmers to work on it, promoting organic growth; file sharing encourages the free exchange of music, film and games between global networks. MSN Messenger, Skype, MySpace, YouTube[21] and telecoms allow young people various new virtual spaces of their own. They are also discrete, independent networks for communication away from parents and other authorities. Being mobile means being able to create personal freedom anywhere, affording privacy, control of space and mood. This kind of 'virtual' freedom, where you, as an individual, have the power to shape your own environment within both public and private space can be very attractive to the young person's project of creating or crafting out their own identity, as indicated in the qualitative research.

Beyond this, young people are making use of these informal networks as arenas for the exchange of thoughts, ideas and narratives. Within these fora, codes and conventions are laid down by the group. Unlike well-financed, top-down media, web space is very much made up of the sum of its parts. Websites can take on board and publicise the views of the collective.

For instance, David Cameron's website[22] (see Table 11) is a good example of where the appeal of user-generated content is harnessed. It suggests that issues are labelled in differing font sizes depending on the number of hits they receive. The title 'What everyone's talking about' focuses attention on what the users want, rather than a title which tells us 'This is what David Cameron thinks is important'. While it is unlikely to be purely user-generated, it demonstrates that the site owners have recognised that the lower-case, anti-authority (anti-Parent) approach to ordering information is contemporary and more appealing in this age where everyone has the right to create information.

[21]www.msn.com, www.skype.com, http://www.youtube.com, www.myspace.com
[22]www.webcameron.org.uk

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Information created and shared by online networks can be seen as knowledge within its own right; made with the participation of many, all of whom are co-authors of these relative areas of expertise. In many cases, this is of interest to those outside the group and third parties. This concept is epitomised by Wikipedia,[23] the photography advice and commentary of Flickr[24] and exchange of music through MySpace are examples of specialist areas of interest. Within these realms, users create and define the content so that the group decides what's important rather than external authorities.

In many ways, these networks are virtual clubs where individual members contribute to and build on each others perspectives. Public websites like Kaboodle and De.li.cio.us (online 'social' internet bookmarks) suggest that there is consolidation and discussion of these new areas of knowledge[25].

However, the rhetoric of a sense of unbounded opportunity clash with an equally prevalent sense that young people voice of inequality of opportunity and reduced life-chances. The creation of your own identity becomes somewhat limited when the social reality of unequal opportunities precludes you from achieving success. Young people are described in other cultural artifacts (such as newspapers and TV news) as embattled, in debt, and under pressure. School and university discourse is full of the language of competition for scarce resources; getting a job and a university place is described as a competition; rather than in terms of the glittering opportunity to achieve success.

[23]www.wikipedia.org
[24]www.flickr.com
[25]www.delicious.co.uk; www.kaboodle.co.uk

Extreme Meritocracy

In the texts examined, there is a focus on material wealth which makes superheroes of the winners in consumer society. The means of achieving this success are presented as more accessible than ever, with greater prizes at stake. What we are witnessing in the case of Big Brother is a culture of extreme meritocracy; the construction of a myth capable of transporting the everyday citizen into celebrity in a matter of weeks which begs the question whether in the 'real world' this translates into an equal opportunity for all young people to achieve what they choose to.

These programs offer the supreme goal: fame, wealth, adoration and the chance to live the dream. That they are open to all adds weight to the belief that huge success is attainable by everyone. But there can only be one winner and as wider society increasingly questions the sustainability of existing levels of growth and consumption. Competition for resources becomes more intensive – so we must win!

Gaming culture, in particular, illustrates how important winning and losing is; beating your rivals is not merely a consequence of winning but a necessary objective (see www.sissyfight.com)

A side effect of the popularity of winning is the way the vilification of losers has become entertainment in its own right. Popular culture is full of authoritarian experts picking on and laughing at failures. These mean judges, such as Anne Robinson and Simon Cowell build up their contestants to knock them down.

Furthermore, extreme meritocracy means that equal opportunity or resources for all to become winners, comes under threat. If young people are faced with a social reality where society is divided according to winners and losers, it means that equality of opportunity and fair outcomes is an uphill struggle. In the qualitative research, young people from all parts of the United Kingdom express a concern about what the future holds for them, with some considering that opportunities outside the UK could be more rewarding.

It throws into question what real opportunities British society can offer young people from all walks of life in terms of skills, careers and cultural and creative expression that could be a tangible outcome of what it means to live in British society today and indeed, for British identity. The social contract has historically served as a tool for developing state-society relations: to teach values and gain loyalty. In Britain, this was achieved through strong public services and the armed forces, nationally owned industries, and a welfare state focused on a secure British state, speaking, as we have indicated were enough resources for all, given out by a secure British state, speaking, as we have indicated above, in the tones of a Parent to a Child. Many of the residual codes of Britishness (such as the codes of industry, discipline, collaboration and the Parental voice) draw on this norm of an assumed social contract.

Now, the social contract between the state and the citizen is the subject of debate in central government. The assumed deal young people strike with society is the focus of much discourse, especially on web discussions and in the press: and the tone is dissatisfied. For young people today, the principle of 'equality of opportunity and fairness of outcomes for all' appears tarnished. Issues such as the postcode lottery for health and schools, tuition fees and loans for higher education, increased competition for university places, suggest young people generate a burden of debt from the outset.

All this means that the reality of contemporary culture often puts young people in situations where they are acutely aware that they risk becoming society's 'losers' - far from the imagined world of the winners. In parallel to this, we have the rhetoric of choice and self determination which is very powerful and prevalent. So, young people may feel they will inevitably be losers, while still under pressure to be responsible for finding a way to 'live the dream' and become winners, no matter how the odds, in practice, are stacked against them.

The voice of the Child

Modern British culture exhibits a number of qualities which demonstrate the 'voice of a Child' (the 'id' typifying our passionate and demanding desires) in public discussion and social debate, and leads us to charaterise modern identity as dominated by this voice over those of the Parent or Adult. Many of the concerns expressed in British culture about public behaviour are concerns with childish desires running out of control. Within many of the areas of culture examined, one can find the following: impulsiveness, sexual excess, 'crazy' behaviour (and undirected rule breaking), self-indulgence and informality, all presented as desirable or normal behaviours in the examples discussed below. These are also the perennial themes of youth.

In the construction of the idols of modern Britain such as celebrities, sports stars and musicians through magazine commentary, interviews, and television performances the Child is highly prized. Thus, showing off, selfishness and demanding behaviour are displayed positively as the key characteristics belonging to high status individuals such as Jennifer Lopez, P Diddy, Paris Hilton and hosts of demanding actors and actresses.

Television programs dedicated to offering us a window on this world reveal one of an entourage of carers (in the form of bodyguards, make-up artists, and managers), mood swings (and mood control through drugs) and little sense of proportion. The bottom line within 'living the dream' is the ability to have access to all of one's desires, immediately.

The X-Factor, the TV series which catapults everyday people into stars of the stage gives us many instances of extreme and juvenile behaviour. The ultimate prize (a £1 million recording contract) is immediate success. But when the contestants fail to win this, their response is often in the form of tantrums, tears and even falling over. Along the way, contestants are highly charged and motivated, 'giving it their best shot', and chancing it all: 'This means everything to me'. They, and the audience, are treated to moments of extreme joy and elation (akin to an evangelical church).

The individual's desires are the reasons why they should win the competition – the winner will be the one who 'wants it the most' rather than the one who satisfies objective criteria in terms of talent or skill ('This means the world to me', 'this is what I live for').

The excitement and energy of the Child world has drawn in followers from outside the usual parameters of the youth or Child-like world. Many middle aged and mature people now try to exhibit the traits of children or teenagers. In a phenomenon termed 'Kidult' or the 'Peter Pan Syndrome' the typically male personality has attributes such as irresponsibility, rebelliousness, anger, narcissism, dependency, manipulativeness, and the belief that he is beyond society's laws and norms. So individualism and the voice of the Child appear alive and well in our society today. That these are also typically youth themes or attitudes show that codes of contemporary British society reflect the perennial characteristics of young people. However, this link is an analysis of the way cultural artefacts operate and is not always obvious on a conscious level, especially for young people.

However, there are implications for the national culture, when the Child or individualistic voice of 'Contemporary Britain' displaces the Parent tonality of 'Old Britain'. In some texts now, the Child voice is questioned and debated: is this the right voice for our culture? Examples of this are to be found in the discourse of fear around law and order in society now. It is a scary world where the 'Child voice', appears to be in charge; there is nobody to 'put the brakes on' or restrain the demands of individuals' desires. This is expressed in the fears over law and order (in recent Ipsos MORI surveys, the British public does not believe that the Home Office will be able to tackle crime effectively) and in the rhetoric of fear around groups of 'rogue' British children as drivers of social chaos and fragmentation. The recent coverage of British teenagers as the 'worst' in Europe being a case in point.[26]

Another indication of "society out of control" is the comedy Little Britain, where initially, the name, Little, suggests childishness, pettiness, and the concerns of the individual, as when we see it we recognize it is deliberately contradicting our expectations of the name of the country, Great Britain. We are invited to reflect that the 'greatness' of the narrative of Britain has somehow passed away or is no longer relevant. Little Britain does this by positing those in authority as invariably corrupt, cynical, ambiguous, or somehow depraved – slaves to their childlike desires. Every authority is exploited in this world, from the call-centre manager fiddling the wages, or the authority of the disabled weight loss club proprietor who humiliates her customers, to the moral authority of the Prime Minister, with selfish, childish man who takes advantage of his carer, to the office of the Prime Minister, with selfish, childish staff. The setting is a grey and run-down world of suburbia, estates full of graffiti, no infrastructure or public services, a world of 'ASBO kids' and small-minded neighborhood militia.

On this basis we can see that some of the dominant codes of contemporary culture of individual achievement seem fundamentally at odds with other realities for 'being young in Britain today'. This creates a great tension and energy within cultural debate. Internet discussion groups, especially those focusing on music or faith issues for young people, return again and again to the idea of instant gratification as a dream more than a reality and the suspicion that the 'Winners and Losers' culture is dubious and does not really provide rewards.[27]

In summary
Having identified the residual codes of British identity some of these were found to lack in a contemporary feel while others have a lasting impact. The semiotic analysis then identifies some key themes around dominant codes of British society which mirror youth themes. The excesses of individualism and consumption seem to be unsustainable. Similarly, the sense of an increasingly extreme meritocracy sits uncomfortably in a society perceived to be less and less clear in the social contract it offers its citizens in terms of a 'fair deal' and the support in place for those who might otherwise be its 'losers'. The dominance of the Child voice leaves a vacuum for authority and a voice that sets boundaries on acceptable behaviour – the sense that elements of modern culture and society are out of control seems to lead to anxious, fearful commentary. As a collection of dominant signs, they point to a social reality dominated by the individual, the individual's right to create and express their own reality. Evidence of the promulgation of extreme meritocracy, and a social reality where city bonuses total almost £7 billion in payouts[28] increases the gulf between the rich and the poor. In the qualitative research, young people express their concerns about inequality of opportunity and the stiff competition for resources they already face, be it in securing a university place or skills training. If for young people the dominant social reality is clouded by individualism and inequality of opportunity, the task of Britishness to be a shared or collective identity would appear to be on trial.

[26]On every indicator of bad behaviour – drugs, alcohol, violence, promiscuity – the UK was near the top according to an Institute for Public Policy Research report see http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/breakfast/6108694.stm
[27]Lucy Siegle's article in the Observer reports on the New Puritans: "a generation of young, opinionated people who are determined to side-step the consumerist perils of modern life." http://lifeandhealth.guardian.co.uk/ethicalliving/story/0,,1661467,00.html
[29]ThisisLondon.co.uk (25.09.06) Labour Declares War on Fat City Bonuses http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/news/article-23368123-details/Labour%20declares%20war%20on%20fat%20City%20bonuses/article.do
[30]Here we use Robin Hood as just one example of the overall concept of teamwork. There are a number of other television and legend based texts examined that has led to the overall analysis.

Emergent codes of British youth identity

In semiotics, as mentioned earlier, evidence of strong positive and negative arguments, or divergent codes around a theme or idea, such as British youth identity, suggests that this theme is likely to be the site of a cultural transition or debate. There are several such 'contested areas' in the text examined. As shown above the wheels of individualism may be coming off and residual codes cannot simply be repackaged as a new British youth identity. So, dominant and residual codes on their own are unlikely to provide a promising basis for a new British identity. The challenge then in creating a new emergent sense of Britishness is to identify how the best of our residual and dominant codes and the perennial themes of youth can be brought into line.

Taking the best from residual and dominant codes, and weaving them into a new story of identity, with some myths and heroes, is a good start point for a new sense of Britishness. Some of the residual or 'Old British' codes which still have power for young people in Britain today include:

- Pride in ownership, a focus on the interior, looking after our 'boundaries'; though the things that young people are proud of owning might be different from the focus on property and land which traditional Britishness relates to
- Questioning authority – the debunking, witty voice which takes nothing for granted and undercuts authority and perceived insincerity
- Inventiveness, or in its modern recasting, innovation. Especially given the challenges to our economy by other developing economies, a story of British 'lateral thinking'
- Daring and brave, but down to earth
- A sense of inner responsibility, the heritage of the Parent voice of 'Old Britain'. Though this parental tone is limited, as it evokes an old, top-down authority which is outdated, an inner, personal responsibility still has the potential to feel British. There needs to be a shift from this Parental to a more Adult tone of voice – of which more below.

Dominant codes which have power and could be turned to the service of Britishness:

- Childlike energy and enthusiasm (rather than Child-ish selfishness)
- Individual creativity – everyone is able to have big dreams of how they would like to change the world
- Enjoying the process of life, the process of creating or re-invention (the journey or training), as well as the outcomes. Childlike mentality focuses on enjoying what you do, and doing what you enjoy. This could help combat the negatives of extreme meritocracy, where everyone is focused on outcomes not processes
- Personal history – family, friends, local connection make you who you are, so that everyone has their own story

Evidence of some emergent stories, which draw on these codes across the different texts we looked at, and which could be woven into a story of Britishness is discussed below. It is worth stressing that these ideas are still very much potential rather than actual – these are early indications of cultural change, and communicators of Britishness will need to develop and build on these.

DIY inventiveness and innovation

Ordinary people, from all walks of life in Britain, are getting involved with the issues they feel are important, at the grass roots. Make Poverty History is a good example of this, where people took part in all kinds of ways, from donations to demonstrations to musical performances in an event that (at least appeared) to develop a following and interest relatively organically. The spirit of inventiveness expressed in DIY fundraising or campaigning is what makes this an example of new British identity, as is the way enjoyment and serious issues are seen to go hand-in-hand, marrying the responsible, concerned attitude of 'old' Britishness with today's focus on 'enjoying the journey'. On a smaller scale, young people are already taking this approach in their lives where they volunteer, or act as mentors or role models in sports projects and other skills projects. If this could be encouraged and framed within the discourse of innovation, inventiveness and collectivity it can be harnessed in the service of Britishness.

The power of teamwork (group versus individual)

The Robin Hood story has recently been re-made by the BBC . This 'new' Robin contains several emergent codes, alongside some more traditional elements. The choice to remake this story at this time, (of a local, young hero fighting for social justice and building a nation in the face of internal and external threats), is interesting in itself. The new version opens with Robin's band of fighters amassing – each with a snippet of back-story, a sense of the family they leave behind, clear regional loyalties and accents, special skills and motivations. Their heritage and provenance are central to setting up these individuals, but also to building a new group. By bringing together these characters and showing their development from disparate outcasts to a new team, the show emphasises the power of skills and cooperation, and focuses on the process that shapes our 'heroes'.

Indeed, this new group does not just learn to work together, but is depicted as forming a strong group identity akin to a new family, established in part in opposition to the 'other' that surrounds them: the corrupt domain of Nottingham under the Sheriff. The 'other' also features in the form of the Sheriff's soldiers, who lack both loyalty and skill which leads to their defeat in battle after battle. The portrayal of Robin shows the way he encapsulates some key contradictions – he is both the cynical, savvy modern individual, and also the responsible, moral and caring leader. This builds a classic 'adult' character – independent but not selfish, experienced but not too jaded to try and spur change.

The re-interpretation is telling, showing how a classic story, with many 'residual' codes is adapted to reflect the way society is changing. The evolution of Robin Hood is an example in itself that narratives, and the mechanisms used to engage an audience with those narratives, cannot remain static but must employ new codes and mechanisms.

The return of the community – the internet

While the MySpace site provides a forum for individuals to display their individualism or market their personal 'brand', its popularity and success demonstrates the fundamental appeal of connections and networks. More than this, it reflects the longing for group identities which the individualistic culture might deny. Rather than in the early days of the internet, where anonymity was prized, today users build reliable 'reputations' through their interactions with others. Also, MySpace users build up 'friends' amongst other users and form networks through shared interest, and it is this organic, collaborative element that explains much of the site's success. It is a perfect example of how the playful individual expression and customization can be expressed, alongside group identities, as long as those groups are meaningful and connect in some way with their members.

Constructive Energy and 'Adult to Adult' tone - Ballet Hoo, The History Boys

In contrast to the meritocratic, winner-loser depiction of singing success of The X Factor, Ballet Hoo (Ballet changed my life) demonstrates a way of approaching young people which evokes emergent cultural codes. It is the story of a project run with professional dancers from Royal Birmingham Ballet and the charity Youth at Risk to help disadvantaged young people commit to learning the skill and discipline of ballet in the hope of providing the same order in their own chaotic lives.

At the end of the process, they dance in Romeo and Juliet alongside professional dancers. The style, framing, colour, design, narrative and editorial structure of the programme show the young people's energy as constructive rather than as dangerous, anti-social chaos. The choice of the ballet, Romeo and Juliet, also tacitly sends the signal that the passions of youth are eternal, strong, possibly dangerous, but ultimately acceptable to society. The association with Shakespeare as one of the great Britons is also notable.

Central to the success of the project is that the young people are presented with real aims and tangible outcomes and the language of respect is reserved for those students who have gone through a process, rather than for the judges (in contradiction to The X Factor). The tone of voice throughout is 'Adult to Adult' – one of the few places in the texts analysed where young people were constructed as Adult, with the power to make decisions and rational judgments without appealing primarily to their Child emotions.

This Adult voice has the potential to form a strong part of the new British identity. It is confident, discerning, self-determining but kind. It is constructive and pragmatic.

The story of the film and play The History Boys is also evidence of the contest between the new 'Adult to Adult' tone and the old 'Parent to Child' tone in the field of education. Different teachers use different approaches, each with their own drawbacks and advantages.[31]

[31] The play consciously pits two very different theories of teaching and education against one another. The 'new' teacher seeking to take a very dictatorial approach where the boys must learn what is needed to pass the exams, the 'old' teacher seeking to engage them in a deeper sense of knowledge and self-development. The old teacher's approach also displays a very different interaction with these students, where they and their views are seen as relevant and important – it is up to them to find the answers and become 'educated'; the teacher is there to help and encourage them but not to tell them all the answers.

Meritocracy of skills with an Adult voice

The prominence of respect for skills is another code drawn from residual models which appears to hold real power in emergent codes. The idea that any skill that takes practice, time and determination to acquire deserves respect is found in many of the interests for young people – skateboarding, music, any work based on graphics or creativity and mastering new technologies.

Where people gather to share or demonstrate these skills, the Adult-to-Adult tone is invariably in attendance: observation of behaviour at a skate park reveals that small children and thirty-somethings practice with the same patience and determination, all united by the same desire to hone skills and the same conventions of turn taking and respect for the process of improvement of each trick.

The above themes, we believe, have the potential to be developed into more explicit stories of Britishness, and linked with the tastes and experiences of young people in order to revitalize Britishness. This might include any or all of the following:

- Adult to Adult tone
- Savvy, anti-spin, a renewed social contract
- Constructive youth energy, skills respected
- Individuals working together in teams for the good of themselves, and their families/regions/ communities

Conclusion: The price of engaging young people

The above themes, we believe, have the potential to be developed into more explicit stories of Britishness, and linked with the tastes and experiences of young people in order to revitalize Britishness. This might include any or all of the following:-

- Adult to adult tone
- Savvy, anti-spin
- Constructive youth energy, skills respected
- Individuals working together in teams for the good of themselves and their families / regions / communities

CONCLUSION

As outlined in the introduction, the objectives of this research were intentionally set to be broad to allow young people and the research process to be discursive as well as intuitive. In this process, a number of key conceptual, emotional, rational and historical foundations that are entwined with national identity and everyday life have been examined.
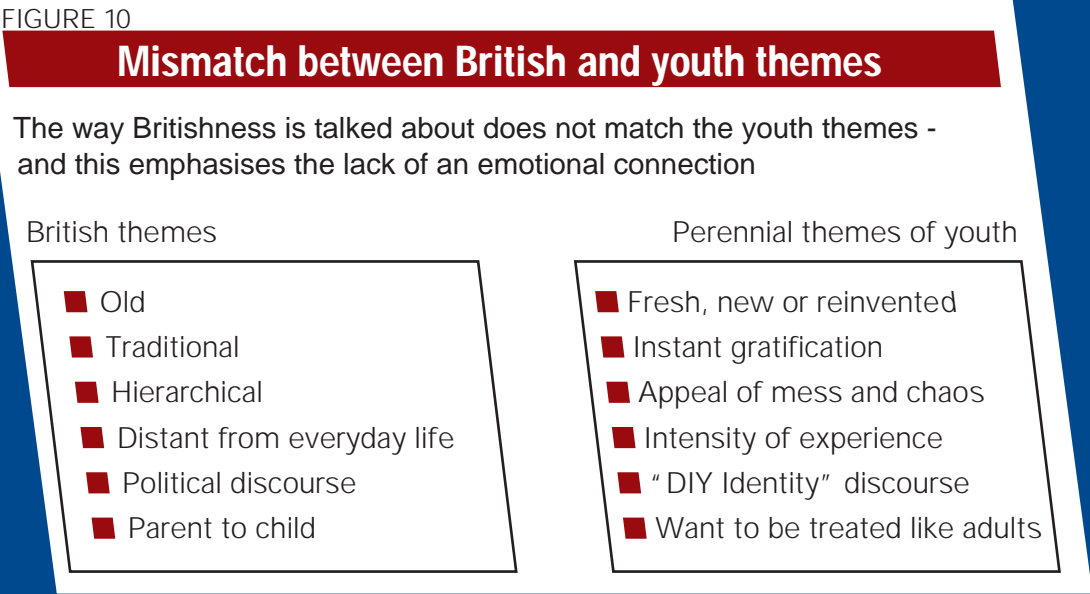
A number of insights into how young people talk about and rationalize their own lives and assess the validity and ascendancy of a national identity within it have also been uncovered. However, thinking about national identity or just identity per se is a subconscious pre-occupation for young people. The nature of identity is that it is a subliminal part of our subconscious and the events around us, the culture and history that shapes our society and the stuff of everyday life takes over and gets woven into the picture, almost with no effort on our part.

Despite often being considered collectively by adults, young people are not a homogenous group and have very different life experiences from each other. Many of the young people interviewed have limited experience of being abroad beyond package holidays and therefore are limited in their understanding of the relevance of national identity in the wider context. Exposure to other cultures or nationalities comes either from interactions on the internet or where young people live within a multicultural community in the UK. However, second generation ethnic minorities who visit their family or relations in their 'home country' say it takes a while to adjust to the new country, and that people can tell by the way they walk, their clothes and the way they carry themselves that they have not grown up in the home country; these reactions make living in Britain very real. However, regional identities can be stronger than a British identity. For instance, young ethnic minorities in Scotland, irrespective of their ethnic origin feel more Scottish than British.

Furthermore, young Muslim and black participants feel they are able to comfortably retain or assimilate their religious and ethnic identities with their Scottish identity, without much conflict, although the relative importance of a multiple identity changes depending on the situation. Participants from black and ethnic minority communities across the UK say that this fluidity is a subconscious part of everyday life but when one is either discriminated against or visits one's parents' country of origin their different alliances to ethnic heritage and where they live tend to be examined.

But there are also a number of unavoidable commonalities that form the foundation of issues that need to be addressed, or at least stay in one's peripheral vision, when discussing young people and a national identity; such as the dominance of 'Englishness' in 'Britishness' and people's historical and cultural points of reference in each of the nations. History, culture and religion, the realities of immigration and living in a multicultural society and the varying degrees of knowledge on the subject do play a part in how young people rationalize or attempt to internalize what a national British identity means to them. But the arguments are fraught. Young people see a number of hurdles in the way of creating a singular national identity: ethnic and cultural diversity; religious and historical tensions between Britain and Northern Ireland and within sects; a north-south divide within England; and a lack of clarity about what being British adds to their social reality and the narrative of their lives.

The semiotic analysis shows that there are areas where Britishness and the perennial themes of youth do not mix (see figure below) such as, the traditional associations of Britishness with the inventiveness of youth culture.

FIGURE 10

Mismatch between British and youth themes

The way Britishness is talked about does not match the youth themes - and this emphasises the lack of an emotional connection

British themes

- Old
- Traditional
- Hierarchical
- Distant from everyday life
- Political discourse
- Parent to child

Perennial themes of youth

- Fresh, new or reinvented
- Instant gratification
- Appeal of mess and chaos
- Intensity of experience
- "DIY Identity" discourse
- Want to be treated like adults

But it also reveals a number of characteristics of contemporary British culture that share common features with youth culture and vice versa, such as an individualism that pervades the importance of the creation of one's own identity; the freedom to use and create new technologies of expression; and an extreme meritocracy where equal opportunities and fair outcomes for all is not the social reality young people are faced with.

By taking the best of what we know of British culture that may seem traditional and combining it with what appeals to young people we find that the way Britishness is thought about and discussed needs to change if it is to have any currency with young people. The discourse is Parent to Child which is hierarchical rather than an 'Adult to Adult' tone especially as this is a subject that is being forced upon young people. There is also the opportunity to harness the creative energy and inventiveness that is inherent in youth culture to channel it in a constructive way that gives young people an opportunity to learn and express new skills.

The semiotics offers some conclusions as to how these ideas can be taken forward to meet young people half way and without adopting an authoritative tone to communicate it; some of these themes are universal to other age groups. However, there is a price associated with this communication. For this to work, young people must also believe that Britishness offers them real choices and life chances. To paraphrase an old saying, we must ask not what young people can do for Britishness, but what Britishness can do for young people. If their associations with Britishness are of a discriminatory, punitive public sphere, where they are not given the resources and the chance to make a positive commitment, a new approach to communicating British identity will be unlikely to affect their feelings about their nation.

Therefore a new Britishness may need to focus on the communications about young people as well as the communications to them; and communicators may also need to push for policy interventions to create places in young people's lives where they can feel proud to be British.

Some next steps for communicators

• Engaging young people in a debate about multiculturalism and reducing fear and prejudice (often inherited from media and adults), through educational initiatives that go beyond mandatory Citizenship lessons in school to more creative activities that harnesses their interest in other cultures and examining their own cultures.

• Young people need to know that there are advantages to living in Britain and being British. Communicating with young people on an 'Adult to Adult' tone as shown is important, giving them responsibility to use resources to better their future.

• Initiatives and opportunities, such as after school programmes to develop skills, train and pursue their interests with a sustainable outcome need to be made the norm for all young people, not just those with the financial means to hone their talents.

• Research into communications based on emergent codes – to assess their strength with real young people.

• Decisions to be made by campaigners as to how easily Britishness can be tied into policy innovations to make life genuinely better for young people today.

• The appeal of these new codes and narratives across the different regions nations and ethnic groups within Britain.

• An opportunity to harness the creative energy of youth by funding or creating projects where young people can work together, enjoy the process of learning a skill and be giving the responsibility to use that energy constructively.

APPENDICES

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Semiotic texts

The key texts for examined for the semiotic analysis are shown below:

British Sport Coverage and comment on famous players such as John Terry, David Beckham, skateboarders and skate parks, football in the park, rivalry between football clubs, sporting heros.
Books: 'The story of childhood: growing up in modern Britain', Libby Brooks. 'The fall of Public Man' Richard Sennett.; 'Social Justice: Building a fairer Britain', Nick Pearce and Will Paxton (Eds); 'Big Babies: Or, Why Can't We Just Grow Up?' Michael Bywater
Magazines: Newspaper coverage of youth and British issues, youth magazines such as Heat, Dazed, online magazines and blogs.
Film: Contemporary cinema with an interest in the national character, youth and history: The Queen, The History Boys, Children of Men, Borat.
TV shows: Ballet Hoo, the X Factor, Little Britain, The Office, Robin Hood.
Advertising: A whole range of advertising on TV and in print media.
Educational: National curriculum, citizenship and history.
Music: The British Indie scene, Online bands, My space, urban music scene, Coverage of bands and British music in magazines and web forums.
Online: Sites with a youth focus: msn, yahoo and google groups. Following links to specialist websites e.g. urban music forum, YouTube, MySpace; political websites

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Music: The British Indie scene, Online bands, My space, urban music scene, Coverage of bands and British music in magazines and web forums.
Online : Sites with a youth focus: msn, yahoo and google groups. Following links to specialist websites e.g. urban music forum, YouTube, MySpace; political websites e.g. www.webcameron.org.uk
Retail environment and behaviour: site visits to TopShop, Oxford Circus and Fonthill Road Market, London, looking at layout and look of shops.
Observation: Pupils entering and leaving school, looking at clothes, body language, etc. Shoppers and young people on the street, in parks etc.
Historical narratives: Popular British history and 'stories' of different ethnicities within Britain e.g. Windrush

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Cultural codes and paradigm shifts – an example

The signals we find in texts tend to cluster together and act as powerful codes. These codes relate to whole interrelated systems of signs.

Semiotics lets us identify important codes and patterns of meaning in contemporary culture about Britishness. It is important to remember these will keep changing. Culture is dynamic and changes over time through 'paradigm shifts'. Semiotics can spot the points where codes change, by observing the cultural tension or energy around new ideas and 'contested codes'. One semiotic theory is that culture works through opposition and antithesis. A paradigm shift occurs when a new opposition is created.

This may change the codes of communication. For example, codes for 'news' on the BBC once included imagery of clocks and times, the fixed time of the day bulletins; they included formal presenters with received pronunciation accents, speaking to camera in a 'top-down' authoritative fashion. If we see a man behind a desk, with a picture framed to his right, we recognise the old code for 'news'. This reflected cultural oppositions of 'us' and 'them' – the BBC were those in authority, telling us information.

However, turning on the television today gives us different codes for news. Today's news reflects a greater fluidity and less authority – presenters and reporters talk to each other rather than to us, scrolling banners give us updates on each story and more informal newsrooms contain presenters with a range of regional accents. In looking at such codes we have to assume these will continue to develop and change. By looking at other codes across culture, we might predict that the future codes of BBC News might include a greater focus on the viewer's involvement – perhaps reflecting the rise of the 'citizen journalist' and participation based on new technology, such as blogging and video camera phones.

An example of contested codes, or a shift in the opposition us/them, was the coverage of the 'newsreader sitting on the desk' innovation, brought about by five news. At the time, parodies and mentions of this innovation were rife, and this signalled the underlying change in our cultural assumptions.

By looking at different bundles of signals, and analysing how they met together to form codes, we identified:
• codes of British identity today
• codes of youth today
And were therefore able to analyse potential overlaps between the two; we also identified examples of emergent areas within the culture, where there are signs that the two types of code already coexist fruitfully.

Discussion guide
Young people and national identity
Discussion guide
Final (29/8/06)

Core objectives
• Explore young people's views on national identity
• Explore the role of national identity in young people's lives

Outline of research
• 12 mini groups across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
• 16 to 21 yr olds

No.	Discussion sections	Notes	Approx timing
	Introduction	Warm up/rules of the discussion	5 mins
1	Local area	Understanding how they see the 'local', importance of their area, their community, exploring any sense of belonging	10 mins
2	Young people today	Understanding behaviour and attitudes of young people today	10 mins
3	Identity	Exploring the issue of identity in general and its many facets	20 mins
4	National identity	Understanding views of national identity; national vs British vs ethnic	20 mins
5	Young people and national identity	do any of these mirror their own lives; when do they use their national identity	20 mins
6	Conclusion	Draws discussion to a close; distil key point	5 mins

Description	Aims and comments	Timing
INTRODUCTION Thank participants for agreeing take part, group should last about an hr and a half • Research commissioned by the young people's charity Camelot Foundation • The research is about young people and your lives today • Anonymity of respondents and Market Research Society (MRS) code of conduct and Data Protection Act • Permission to audio record- all confidential • Informal discussion, feel free to agree and disagree with others, respect each others' opinion • Introductions: name, WhO LIVE WITH (FAMILY SITUATION); WORK/STUDY; ONE THING YOU'RE REALLY INTO/LIKE AT THE MOMENT	Warm-up; explain the research; explain rules of the discussion; MRS and Data Protection Act	5 MINS
1. WARM UP/LOCAL AREA GENERAL DISCUSSION • Tell me a bit about yourself: Where do you like to hang out? Alone? With your friends? What do you like to do? What do you do to have fun? • How important are your friends/the group you are in? • Describe the local area where you live • What's good about the area? • What's not so good about this area? • What would you like to change about it? Why? • How would you describe the local community? Why do you say that? PROBE: diversity; community spirit; integrated; not integrated; wealth; poor; young; middle class; • What concerns you about your local community? What are some of the issues facing the people who live here? • Name some key people who you respect either in personal life, the community, the country, the world. Why do you say that? Why do respect them? What do you respect them for?	Need to initially get to grips with their lives and personal views, what they think of their local community before talking about distant issues such as the country. Probing for issues of diversity; identity; Understanding what qualities impresses them/ what kind of values they aspire to – how this relates to identity	10 MINS
2. YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY • What would you say are the most important things in your life today? INDIVIDUAL TASK – SECRET HAT. Answers placed in a hat – pull out a few and discuss. Why is this important? What makes something important? When does it lose its importance/significance? • What would you say makes you happy? PROBE: friends; family; chilling out; having fun; taking risks; being rebellious; learning new things; sport; relationships; music; drugs; alcohol; sex; which group I belong to; identity; • What makes you feel not so good? PROBE: with list above; and responses to previous question • What are you scared of? PROBE: with lists above • What changes have you experienced in the last couple of years in your life? PROBE: independence; smoking; drinking; sex; risks; adulthood; change in views on music, food, what is classified as cool or not; relationship with parents/siblings/opposite sex • Imagine yourself in 5 or 10 years time – what do you think your life will be life Probe: where will you live; your job; your friends; possessions; marriage, kids, your parents; your lifestyle USE ABOVE LIST • What are you looking forward to in the future? Why do you say that? How will that be a good thing? • How is your life different to your older brother/sister/your parents? Why?	Need to explore the individual first before they can think about the nation in general. Easier to talk about individual experiences Understanding issues important to young people – probe for issues relating to identity. Future scenarios – hopes, dreams Exploring the present by looking at the past	10 MINS (5 mins) (5 mins)

3. IDENTITY		20 MINS
INDIVIDUAL TASK: MY IDENTITY/PROFILE. If you were writing a profile for yourself how would you describe yourself. Write down all the things that best describes you. (5mins)	Exploring personal identifiers	
PROMT WITH: PHYSICAL ASPECTS (gender, hair/eye/skin colour, height, weight) PERSONALITY MARKERS (funny, quiet, average, noisy, rebellious); LOCATION BASED (street, borough, town, country; UNIQUE/PERSONAL TASTES (music, food, fashion style, mobile phone, ring tone)		(5 mins)
LIST responses ON FLIP CHART AND TRY TO CLUSTERS USING THE ABOVE PROMPTS. WE WILL RETURN TO THIS LATER WHEN DISCUSSING IDENTITY IN DETAIL		
TASK: SHOW PICTURES OF FAMOUS PEOPLE IN THEIR DIFFERENT ROLES START WITH David Beckham (to get the conversation flowing) then Mike Skinner or Lilly Allen; John Terry; Jaime Oliver; Ken Livingstone; Roy Keane, Kelly Holmes; Pierce Brosnan	Understanding group dynamics; group composition	(5 mins)
• Describe his/her identity		
• What gives people an identity?		
Probe with pictures of Beckham as footballer/and making a fashion statement/with wife/with kids;	For Wales use Catherine Zeta Jones; For Scotland Robert Carlyle; Gordon Ramsey; Sean Connery or	
REPEAT FOR the others		
Prompt: clothes they wear; food; world beliefs; politics; social class; education; car they drive; where they live; where they study; occupation; gender; ethnicity;	Understanding the concept of identity; bringing multiple identities to the debate	(10 mins)
NOW REVISIT 'MY IDENTITY' TASK– ANYTHING YOU WOULD ADD TO OR CHANGE? WHY?		
• MINDMAP: Thinking about these two tasks we've done: What comes to mind when I say identity? What does that mean?		
• How would you describe it?		

4. NATIONAL IDENTITY		20 MINS
SPONTANEOUS REACTIONS	Exploring English/ Scottish/Welsh/Irish identity and British – use relevant words as per the audience	
FLAG STIMULUS (5 mins per flag)		
SHOW PICTURE OF UNION JACK		
• What comes to mind when you see this? Why do you say that?		
• What do you associate with Britishness? Positive and negative things	FLAGS WILL BE ROTATED THROUGH THE GROUPS	
• Describe a typical British person		
Probe: Is there anything that is specifically/uniquely British?		
• What kind of people are the British? Why do you say that? Do you know anyone who is like what you just described?		
SHOW PICTURE OF curry; Monty Panesar; Countryside; BBC;		
• Out of these which do you think is the most British? Why do you say that? What makes it more British than the others?		
• What bits of Britishness do you see in yourself?		
• Do other cultures have those qualities too?		
Show picture of each national flag: St. George's Cross; Welsh Dragon; Scottish Saltier; Irish Soltaire.		
• What comes to mind when you see this? Why do say that? What does it represent?		
• If you think about X (the English, the Scottish etc) what comes to mind? What do you associate with Englishness? Positive and negative things	Looking at representation in the media. Identifying stereotypes. Are these stereotypes true?	
• Describe a typical English person. What kind of people are the English? Why do you say that? Do you know anyone like what you've just describe?		
• Is there anything that is specifically/uniquely English?		
• What bits of English do you see in yourself? REFER TO PROFILES		
• Do other cultures have those qualities too?		

5. YOUNG PEOPLE AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

20 MINS

• Would you ever describe yourself as English/Scottish/Welsh/ or British? Why?

• When? Which situation would you describe yourself as English/ Scottish/Welsh/N.Irish/

• When would you describe yourself as British?

• Why is that different to being English/Scottish/Welsh/Irish? How is it different? When is it different?

• Is there any situation when you feel it is beneficial to feel English/Scottish/Welsh/Irish?

Probe: when you go on holiday? When you meet people from other countries? When you watch foreign TV programmes?

TASK: PRESENT DIFFERENT 'Identity' SCENARIOS TBC e.g. when on holiday/in university; television

• What role does being English/Scottish/Welsh/Irish play in your every day life?

Prompt: when you go to school/work/college; in a shop; out with friends; at work; on the internet; the clothes you wear; food you eat; music listen to;

• Can you ever feel British/English/Scottish/Welsh/Irish

• Thinking about your ethnic background/where your family comes from, what makes you feel white/black/Asian?

• When do you feel white/black/Asian?

• Is there any situation when you feel it is beneficial to feel white/black/Asian?

Discussion of national identity is now made individual – this can then be compared with how they see it generally.

6. CONCLUSION

5 MINS

• Of all the things we've talked about today, what would you say best describes young people today?

• When would you say you feel a national identity/feel British?

• 672 young people aged 16-21 were interviewed across England, Wales and Scotland
• All interviews were conducted face to face an in-home between 14th and 21st September 2006
• All figures are given as percentages
• Base all (672) unless stated otherwise

Q1 What do you think are the best things about Britain?

PLACES/GOVERNMENT	81
Education system	34
NHS/Health system	32
The Countryside	30
The BBC/TV	25
Welfare system	12
Strong economy/The pound	11
Political system/democracy	8
Royal family/Buckingham Palace	8
Roads/transport system	8
Church of England	3
ATTITUDES/BEHAVIOUR	57
Freedom and rights	23
Pride in being British	17
Equal opportunities	16
Different groups/ Cultural diversity	10
Politeness	9
Fair trial/justice system	9
Tolerance	8
Other	2
Don't know	7

Q2	SHOWCARD (R) Which of the following social issues are most important for ensuring that Britain is a good place to live? (CODE UP TO TWO)	
	Equal opportunities in education and work	38
	Better relationships between different ethnic and religious groups	37
	Local communities helping each other	31
	Better relationships between younger and older people	27
	A shared British identity	14
	Other	1
	Don't know	9

INTRODUCTION: I am now going to ask some questions about Britishness and national identity

Q3	How important do you think it is to the well being of the country that people living here have a shared sense of British identity?		
Q4	SHOWCARD (R) And in terms of your own identity, how important is a sense of being British to how you see yourself? SINGLE CODE ONLY		
		Q3	Q4
	Very important	33	38
	Fairly important	45	36
	Not very important	10	14
	Not at all important	5	5
	Don't know	8	7
	Important	77	74
	Not important	15	19

	SHOWCARD (R) I am going to read a list of statements and I would like you to tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each? READ OUT. ROTATE ORDER. SINGLE CODE ONLY FOR EACH							
		Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor dis-agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion	Agree
Q5	Britishness doesn't really mean anything to me	7	16	18	26	30	3	24
Q6	Being British is more important to my sense of identity than my family's country of origin	8	20	25	19	13	16	28
Q7	A shared British identity is unrealistic as we are all so different	15	29	24	18	8	7	43
Q8	Being British is more important than being English/Welsh/ Scottish	13	15	21	20	23	9	28
Q9	It is wrong to encourage a shared sense of Britishness because it will restrict freedoms	5	17	26	30	12	10	22
Q10	I feel British in the way I talk and dress	31	27	16	11	8	6	58

Q11

SHOWCARD (R) Which of the following should we as a country strive for in terms of achieving a shared British identity, if any? Just read out the letters that apply. MULTICODE OK

A	Common religion	12	
B	Common ethnicity	5	
C	Common language	28	
D	A sense of shared history	10	
E	Shared way of life	25	
F	Pride in Britain and what it has to offer	25	
G	Pride in being British	21	
H	Common agreement about what is right and wrong	31	
I	Shared social and political values	13	
J	Mutual respect for differences between people	39	
	Other (WRITE IN)	-	
	None of these	7	
	Don't know		

Q12

SHOWCARD (R) People have different views about whether it is a good idea to have a shared sense of British identity. Which one of the following statements best reflects your views of this? SINGLE CODE ONLY

Britishness should be taught at schools and to new residents	39
Britishness should be encouraged, but not written down or taught	31
It is not appropriate to promote "Britishness" in a specific way (eg because people are so different)	20
Don't know	9

Q13

SHOWCARD (R) On this card are a number of different situations. Can you please tell me in which of these a sense of being British is most important to how you see yourself? Just read out the letters that apply. SINGLE CODE ONLY

On holiday overseas	22
At home with my family	20
Hanging out with my friends	17
Applying for a new job	9
Applying to a university or college	10
None of these	10
Don't know	14