

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

‘An Exploration of the Internal/External Brand Orientations of David  
Cameron’s Conservative Party’

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by

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## Abstract

The majority of research in political branding has tended to adopt a measurable, singular, quantitative approach (French and Smith 2010; Schneider 2004). Furthermore research in this area deserves more attention (Peng and Hack 2009; Rawson 2007; Schneider 2004; Smith 2009; Van Ham 2001; White and de Chernatony 2002). This thesis fulfils an identified gap in the body of knowledge in that there is no in-depth understanding of a political brand from an internal and external orientation. Ultimately this thesis considers the question *how can we understand the complexity of the UK Conservative Party brand from an internal and external perspective under the leadership of David Cameron?* To answer this question this study explores the ‘brand identity’ and ‘brand image’ of the UK Conservative Party and considers the transfer potential (Schneider 2004) of Kapferer’s (2008) brand identity prism and Bosch’s *et al.* (2006) brand image framework.

Thirty in-depth interviews with internal stakeholders of the UK Conservative Party along with eight focus group discussions with external stakeholders aged 18-24 years were conducted prior the 2010 UK General Election. The transcribed in-depth interviews and focus groups discussions were thematically analysed using a two-staged process based on the work of Butler-Kisber (2010).

Just as Norton (1996) suggested that the UK Conservative Party is complex, this research demonstrates that the political brand is equally complex. This research highlights the lack of internal coherency to the UK Conservative Party ‘brand identity’. Furthermore the UK Conservative Party ‘brand image’ is ambiguous and remains associated with previously held perceptions. In addition, this research indicated some disparity between the concepts of brand identity and brand image. Nevertheless this study provided deep insight and highlighted some detoxification of the ‘Tory brand’. Finally, this research uncovered some key problems that still face the UK Conservative Party and that they focus upon the paradox of a ‘broad church’ whilst factional in nature.

Keywords: Brand Identity, Brand Image, Political Brand, Political Marketing

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## 1 Introduction

The UK Conservative Party has been described as a leading UK political brand (Lloyd 2006) and the oldest political party in the English-speaking world (Campbell 2008). It is also often acknowledged as the ‘natural’ party of government in British politics (Denham and O’Hara 2007:168). Furthermore, the UK Conservative Party has been considered complex and diverse with often contrasting values and interests (Budge *et al.* 2001; Kavanagh 2000; Lee and Beech 2009) and with “*no single nature*” (Norton 1996:83).

After three failed elections and three Conservative Party leaders, the UK Conservative Party failed in its attempt to modernise, reinvent and reconnect with the electorate (Denham and O’Hara 2007; Smith 2009). In December 2005, David Cameron was elected as leader of the UK Conservative Party and vowed to be different from previous leaders (Campbell 2008), arguing it was time to modernise (Denham and O’Hara 2007), and unite the party in order to make the UK Conservative Party electable again. Thus he attempted to reshape the UK Conservative Party which was perceived to be out-of-touch, focused on immigration and representative of the rich and privileged few (Ashcroft 2010).

David Cameron’s aim was to decontaminate the ‘Tory brand’ (Ashcroft 2010; Bale 2011; Jones 2010) and develop a coherent, consistent political brand. Since the demise of Margaret Thatcher the UK Conservative Party failed to identify with the common ground Thatcher had held, resulting in four unprecedented, successful election campaigns (Lee and Beech 2009:4). Furthermore after three changes of leadership the brand had become toxic and for the party to succeed they needed to address the “*largely negative brand image*” of the UK Conservative Party (Bale 2011:268).

The application of branding theory to politics has recently been examined as a sub discipline in political marketing literature. Political marketing has been described as a vibrant research area in the marketing discipline (Harris and Lock 2010; Henneberg and O'Shaughnessy 2007), nevertheless the application remains under-researched and requires further conceptualisation and development (Harris and Lock 2010; Henneberg and O'shaughnessy 2007; Moufahim and Lim 2009; Lees-Marshment 2009; Lilleker *et al.* 2006; Osuagwu 2008).

Political branding has been described as a new area of political marketing (Lees-Marshment 2009) nevertheless, conceiving political entities such as parties, politicians, candidates, organisations and initiatives as 'brands' is nothing new (Bale 2008; Peng and Hackley 2009; Smith 2001; White and de Chernatony 2002). What the 'new' seems to represent is the increased emphasis and greater specialisation of branding concepts and techniques to a political context. Although it is evident that some research in political branding has been conducted, for example (Bale 2008; French and Smith 2010; Guzman and Sierra 2009; Lilleker 2005; Needham 2005; Needham 2006; Peng and Hackley 2009; Phipps *et al.* 2010; Rawson 2007; Schneider 2004; Smith and French 2009; Smith 2005; Smith 2009; Van Ham 2001; White and de Chernatony 2002) research into political branding deserves more attention (Peng and Hackley 2009; Rawson 2007; Reeves *et al.* 2006; Robinson 2004; Schneider 2004; Smith 2009; Van Ham 2001).

The majority of research in this area has tended to adopt a measurable, quantitative, (French and Smith 2010) singular approach (Schneider 2004; Smith and French 2009). Peng and Hackley (2009) however argue that more exploratory, qualitative research required. Moreover there is a need to understand political brands in greater detail (Rawson 2007; Smith 2005) both internally (Needham 2006; Schneider 2004; Van Ham

2001) and externally (French and Smith 2010; Peng and Hackley 2009; Phipps *et al.* 2010; Schneider 2004). Ultimately the existing literature highlights a distinct gap in the body of knowledge in that there is no in-depth understanding of a political brand from both an internal and external orientation. Hence, the aim of this research is twofold; firstly, to understand the complexity of the UK Conservative Party and secondly, to examine the contradiction between internal and external branding. In order to generate a current yet in-depth exploration of the UK Conservative Party brand one must explore the “*transfer potential*” (Schneider 2004:60) of consumer branding concepts and tools that have not yet been applied to political branding.

The concepts of brand identity and brand image are considered useful approaches to generate a deeper understanding of a brand from an internal and external perspective. Despite the various conceptualisations of brand identity and brand image, these are often used interchangeably and occasionally misunderstood (Nandan 2005; Wong 2010). Nevertheless there appears to be a degree of consensus in the existing literature. Brand identity can be seen as the current and envisaged associations desired by the brands creator and communicated to the external audience (Gylling and Lindberg-Repo 2006; Joachimsthaler and Aaker 1997) and often conceptualised as the brand identity prism, (Kapferer 2008). In contrast, brand image can be considered as the current associations perceived and formulated in the mind of the consumer often out of control of the brand’s creator (Aaker and Joachimsthaler 2002; Nandan 2005; Rekom *et al.* 2006) and can be conceptualised as six variables outlined by Bosch *et al.* (2006).

Kapferer’s brand identity prism (2008) has been applied to brands in multiple applications (de Chernatony 1999; Harris and de Chernatony 2001). Nevertheless the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008) to date has not been operationalized. Additionally, insight into brand image is lean with greater elaboration required (Chen

2010; Cretu and Brodie 2007; Guzman and Sierra 2009; Henrik and Fredrik 2006; Johns and Gylmothy 2008; Knox and Freeman 2006; Poiesz 1989; Smith 2001) especially in the context of political marketing (Guzman and Sierra 2009).

The concepts of brand identity and brand image are considered relational but distinct (Dinnie 2008; Nandan 2005), and can be used to explore whether communication discrepancy gaps exist between the two concepts. Nandan (2005) and Bosch *et al.* (2006) argued that a brand's envisaged identity may not be perceived in the same way by the consumer, with separate viewpoints existing. Furthermore, the discrepancy gaps need to be as small as possible and ultimately narrowed or eliminated in order for the brand to be considered strong, trusted and valued (Nandan 2005). There have been a few attempts at exploring the identity and image of a brand comparatively (Bosch *et al.* 2006; de Chernatony 1999; Harris and de Chernatony 2001; Roy and Banerjee 2007; Davies and Chun 2002). Additionally Davies and Chun (2002) argue that it is virtually impossible to qualitatively compare the concepts of brand identity and brand image. This research study questions this assumption. This thesis therefore attempts to explore and operationalise the concepts of both brand identity and brand image in the context of the UK Conservative Party. Leading on from this, the research objectives of the study are defined as:

- Explore the envisaged and current brand identity of the UK Conservative brand from the perspective of internal stakeholders.
- Generate a deeper understanding of the brand image of the UK Conservative Party from the perspective of external stakeholders.
- Examine the consistency and coherency between the envisaged brand identity held by internal stakeholders and the brand image of the UK Conservative Party projected by external stakeholders.



The structure of this thesis is as follows. The first section of the literature review chapter discusses the history of the UK Conservative Party in terms of its complex heritage and the tensions inhibiting modernisation. This is followed by a discussion on David Cameron's election as Party Leader in 2005 and his desire to decontaminate the 'Tory brand' (Jones 2010), by reshaping the UK Conservative Party (Cameron 2010; Jones 2008; Smith 2009). Many discussed the UK Conservative Party 'brand' (Ashcroft 2010; Ashcroft 2005; Bale 2011; Bale 2008; Lee and Beech 2009; Smith 2009), but fail to provide elaboration and understanding. The context of political marketing and more specifically political branding is presented as an appropriate area to explore the UK Conservative Party brand. The existing literature on political branding is discussed and the gaps in the body of knowledge are highlighted. This is followed by a discussion on whether brands can be explored from both an internal and external perspective.

After presenting the aims, objectives and research question, chapter two focuses on the methodology of the thesis including the philosophical underpinnings. In order to explore the multiple variations of reality (Creswell 2007) of the UK Conservative Party brand, this thesis adopts a subjective ontological stance (Mick and Buhl 1992). Furthermore this study follows the interpretivist tradition as the epistemological assumption of the thesis. After discussing the philosophical assumptions, including the process of knowledge generation, a justification for the application of qualitative research, to investigate the aim and objectives of the thesis is laid out.

Chapter two presents the proposed research methods, critically evaluating their suitability to the research study. Phase one of the research study involves thirty in-depth interviews with internal stakeholders of the UK Conservative Party, spanning all three elements; Parliamentary, Professional and Voluntary. Participants were selected via a purposive sampling framework. Phase two of the research study involves eight focus

group discussions (forty-six participants in total) with external stakeholders aged eighteen to twenty four years. Focus group discussions were enhanced with a number of projective techniques designed to delve beneath the surface and build a more complete picture of the political brand image. Again a purposive sampling frame was adopted, and focus group discussions were conducted in three areas of England; North, Midlands and South with participants of all political leaning and educational levels.

The models provided by Kapferer (2008) and Bosch *et al.* (2006), serve as conceptual frameworks to explore the findings generated from the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The interview/focus group guides were developed by adopting principles set out by Creswell (2007), Langford and McDonagh (2003), Rubin and Rubin (1995) Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) and Warren and Karner (2005).

Chapter two draws to a close with a discussion of the data analysis process and issues to consider in qualitative inquiry. A thematic analytical process was adopted. Furthermore this thesis adopts and adapts Butler-Kisber's (2010) two stage thematic inquiry analytical process to analyse the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Additionally, Butler-Kisber's (2010) two-stage thematic inquiry analytical process has been developed into a systematic framework for interpreting the subjective expressions projected by external participants in the projective techniques. This methodological approach is intended to provide a rigorous process for the analysing and interpreting projective expressions.

Chapter's three to five report and discuss the main findings. The first section of the discussion explores the brand identity of the UK Conservative Party brand from an internal perspective, with the aid of Kapferer's (2008) brand identity prism. Furthermore, this section assesses the applicability of the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008) to the findings generated in the exploration of the brand identity of the UK

Conservative Party. The second section of the discussion chapter generates a deeper understanding of the UK Conservative Party brand from an external perspective (citizens 18-24 years) with the aid of the brand image framework (Bosch *et al.* 2006). This section also assesses the applicability of the brand image framework (Bosch *et al.* 2006) to the findings generated in the exploration of the brand image of the UK Conservative Party.

The third section of the discussion chapter examines the consistency of the brand identity and brand image of the UK Conservative Party. This is achieved by amalgamating the applied frameworks outlined by Kapferer (2008) and Bosch *et al.* (2006) into one model. The final section of the discussion chapter focuses on the development of the amalgamated comparable framework now known as the '*brand identity-image network*'. The development process builds on the work of Kapferer (2008) and Bosch *et al.* (2006) and takes into consideration the critical assessment and applicability of the findings to the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008) and the brand image framework (Bosch *et al.* 2006). The discussion chapter is succeeded by chapter six which presents the limitations of the research study.

The final chapter (chapter seven) addresses the main conclusions of the thesis including managerial, methodological and theoretical contributions and issues for future research. After exploring the brand identity (Kapferer 2008) of the UK Conservative Party from the perspective of thirty stakeholders; the brand identity was seen as complex, deep-seated and multi-layered. The six-faceted brand identity prism not only revealed coherent and supportive elements but also contradictions, tensions, and more importantly, a limited understanding of the electorate and internal aspects of the UK Conservative Party brand identity (Needham 2006). In addition, the UK Conservative Party brand identity, when mapped on to Kapferer's six dimensions (Kapferer 2008),

showed inconsistency and a lack of integration. This was seen as largely to blame for the failure of the UK Conservative Party brand to communicate a coherent message and demonstrate a consistent approach in promoting the political brand. Nevertheless, the brand identity prism also highlighted the profound nature of the brand identity of the UK Conservative Party by revealing numerous 'sub-cultures' (de Chernatony 1999) which not only highlighted tensions but also strengthened the UK Conservative Party's 'broad church' position. Furthermore, the self-image dimension revealed the presence of 'multiple brand identities' each unique to the individual, again consistent with the 'broad church' culture dimension. This in turn suggests that the UK Conservative Party is an amalgamation of 'multiple individual identities' united by the core 'broad church' Conservative values. It was however these 'multiple brand identities' that often undermined the UK Conservative Party brand.

This research confirmed that the brand image of the UK Conservative Party, under the leadership of David Cameron, is complex and lacks an authentic political message. Crucially, this is inconsistent with the existing literature on successful political brands (Gurau and Ayadi 2011; Needham 2006; Needham 2005; Norris *et al.* 1999; Smith and French 2009; Smith and Saunder 1990). The six variables of brand image (Bosch *et al.* 2006) highlighted that the UK Conservative Party had made some progress in refocusing the image of their political brand; a key problem acknowledged by David Cameron in December 2005 (Smith 2009). Nonetheless this research suggests that the UK Conservative Party had not managed to completely dispel the perception that it was the party of the rich and privileged (Ashcroft 2010; Bale 2011; Burgmann 2005; French and Smith 2010; Helm 2010; Jones 2008; Snowdon 2010) especially in the minds of Conservative supporters and floating voters.

Moreover this thesis argues that the UK Conservative Party brand failed to clearly communicate a coherent political brand message. It demonstrates that there was limited understanding about what to expect from a Conservative administration and that external stakeholders therefore often relied on their past knowledge to evaluate David Cameron's Conservative Party. Nevertheless, the findings concur with Phipps *et al.* (2010) in that there was a duality to political brands. Additionally the findings highlighted that there are distinct 'multiple individual political brands', which add to the complex nature of political brands and have the potential to broaden the support base.

It is important to point out the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008) and the six variables of brand image (Bosch *et al.* 2006) have never been operationalized and that this research identifies clear problems with the applicability of the models. Nevertheless this thesis demonstrates that the findings can be applied to both the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008) and the brand image framework (Bosch *et al.* 2006), but only with adaptation. The clarified and rearticulated conceptualisations, along with the applied findings provide a stronger conceptualisation of the relationship between brand identity and brand image (Kapferer 2008; Bosch *et al.* 2006).

This thesis argues that the combination of the conceptual frameworks (Kapferer 2008; Bosch *et al.* 2006) provides a mechanism to highlight both inconsistencies and consistencies between the brand identity and brand image of the UK Conservative Party. Despite this research demonstrating that the concepts of brand identity and brand image can be comparatively explored from a qualitative standpoint, the research indicates that there are areas of improvement for the amalgamated framework. The amalgamated framework was developed into the '*brand identity-image network*' by building on the work of Kapferer (2008) and Bosch *et al.* (2006) and considering the critical applicability of the findings to the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008) and the

brand image framework (Bosch *et al.* 2006). The ‘brand identity-image network’ therefore enables researchers to explore the internal brand identity and external brand image with greater clarity without undermining the related yet distinct nature of brand identity and brand image.

The UK Conservative Party brand identity needs to pay close attention to the lack of internal coherency. The UK Conservative Party brand image is contentious, ambiguous and remains associated with previously held perceptions and imagery. In addition, the discrepancy gaps between the concepts of brand identity and brand image also require attention. Nevertheless this study provides deep insight into the brand identity and brand image of the UK Conservative Party and highlights some detoxification of the ‘Tory brand’. Furthermore this study has uncovered a small number of consistencies between the brand identity and brand image of the UK Conservative Party. Finally, this research has uncovered some key problems that still face the UK Conservative Party and focuses upon the paradox of a ‘broad church’ whilst factional in nature.

## 2 Literature Review

This chapter firstly introduces the background literature and reviews the existing research in the area of political marketing. This is followed by identifying the gaps in the body of knowledge that form part of the research purpose of this study.

It begins by presenting the background of the UK Conservative Party brand. Next, it introduces the sub-field of political marketing with particular focus on the application of political branding. This is followed by highlighting the current consumer branding literature and considers the transfer potential of consumer branding frameworks to the context of political branding. After presenting the existing literature, the chapter concludes by stating the gap in the body of knowledge and the overall aim of this study. The following chapter introduces the methodological framework of the thesis which includes the aim, objectives and research question that are needed to address this gap in the existing research.

### 2.1 Political Brands: The UK Conservative Party

The UK Conservative Party has been described as one of “*the two foremost UK political brands*” (Lloyd 2006:59). Furthermore, after New Labour’s landslide victory in 1997 (Snowdon 2010), the UK Conservative Party have been the official opposition in the UK Parliament (Campbell 2008; White and de Chernatony 2002). The UK Conservative Party may be considered the world’s oldest and most successful political party in the English-speaking world (Bale 2011; Campbell 2008). Moreover it has been suggested that after “*periods of extended dominance*” the UK Conservatives can be considered the “*natural*” party of government in British politics (Denham and O’Hara 2007:168).

According to Norton (1996) the UK Conservative Party was founded in the early nineteenth century and can trace its origins back to a political faction known as the ‘*Tories*’, dating back to the seventeenth century. However, the UK Conservative Party

as we know it today also has ancestry links with the seventeenth century political faction known as the ‘*Whigs*’. The Whigs tended to favour free trade, industry, constitutional monarchy and were disposed to a degree of change. In contrast, the Tories tended to represent the landed gentry, supporters of absolute monarchy, traditionalists and opposed change in all its forms (Budge *et al.* 2001; Hickson 2005; Ludlam and Smith 1996). Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century, both factions suffered from regular defections. Many Tories defected to the Whigs and vice-versa due to policy standpoint ranging from social responsibility to free trade (Norton 1996; Stewart 1978). Therefore it can be seen that the political landscape continually changed with both factions frequently adapting in terms of appearance.

These two factions embodied different philosophical values and strands of Conservative thought (Norton 1996:83), defined by basic tenets ranging from society, acceptance to change, law and order, property ownership, role of government, economic positioning, wealth creation and the idea of one nation at home and abroad (Budge *et al.* 2001; Kavanagh 2000; Norton 1996). Ultimately, the UK Conservative Party can be considered complex, with often contrasting values and interests (Budge *et al.* 2001; Kavanagh 2000; Lee and Beech 2009) and “*no single nature*” (Norton 1996:83).

Throughout its long history, since the party changed its name in 1834 from ‘*The Tory Party*’ to ‘*The Conservative Party*’ (Norton 1996), the party emphasis has moved from left-to-right/right-to-left of right-of-centre on the ideological continuum on many occasions, dependent on the leader of the day. For example, the attitudes and thought of *Benjamin Disraeli* Conservative leader from 1852 and founder of *One Nation Toryism* believed in a classless but strong United Kingdom at home and abroad (Willett and Forsdyke 1999), and the idea of state intervention in matters of social responsibility, society and duty (Hickson 2005; Kavanagh 2000). Furthermore, a One Nation



standpoint considers “*the Conservative [party] stands for the unity of a nation, and of all interests, classes and creeds within*” (Willetts and Forsdyke 1999:34). This is in sharp contrast with the heroic (Ludlam and Smith 1996), iconic figure of *Margaret Thatcher*, who promoted the idea of neo-liberalism, of limited but strong aggressive government, low taxation and government spending, Victorian values and focused more on economic prudence rather than social responsibility (Hickson 2005; Kavanagh 2000; Ludlam and Smith 1996; Norton 1996). Therefore, the UK Conservative Party has always been a broadly centre-right party and these two examples demonstrate the diverse strands within the UK Conservative Party and that the emphasis of the party will be dependent on the party leader.

The notion of social class and politics can be considered a complex area (Butler and Stokes 1974; Denver 2003; Elebash 1984; Worcester and Mortimore 2001; Wring 2005) and is beyond the scope of this research. Nevertheless, it is important to briefly acknowledge social class in relation to the UK Conservative Party. Burgmann (2005) proposed that the UK Conservative Party was traditionally perceived as the party for the middle-upper classes and social class has long been an indicator to explain party allegiance (Butler and Stokes 1974). Furthermore, “*the Conservatives have been stereotyped by their membership as an aging, white, middle-class party with concomitant negative party personality connotations*” (Smith 2009:216). Jones (2008:106) argued that “*still the message persists that the Labour Party is for the workers, and the Tory Party is for the owners*”. However, Hickson (2005) argued the UK Conservative Party has always had a working-class support base dating back to the Disraeli era but not on the scale of support with the *Labour Party* (Butler and Kavanagh 2002; Kavanagh 2000). Hickson (2005:14) continued, the UK Conservative Party “*has always been proud of being considered a national party*”, inclusive with something to attract all classes (Hickson 2005; Willetts and Forsdyke 1999). Therefore social class

and the UK Conservative Party remains a debatable and complex area. Furthermore, it would be interesting to explore the current imagery ascribed to the UK Conservative Party and assess whether social class perceptions are currently associated with the party.

Since New Labour's landslide victory in 1997 and up to 2005, the UK Conservative Party had failed in its attempts to modernise and reinvent the Party (Bale 2011; Denham and O'Hara 2007; Snowdon 2010). In fact previous Conservative leaders William Hague, Iain Duncan-Smith and Michael Howard "*barely dented Labour's popularity*" during their time in opposition, despite all three leaders promoting the idea of modernisation (Bale 2011; Denham and O'Hara 2007:178; Smith 2009; Snowdon 2010). For example, William Hague attempted to reposition the Party (Campbell 2008), by projecting a young, 'trendy', persona by visiting London's Notting Hill Carnival, theme parks and spouting a baseball cap in public, (Smith 2009). Nevertheless in terms of policy "*Hague was not strong enough to impose his own views on the party and panicked and veered rightwards*" (Campbell 2008:34), and focused on traditional Conservative policy such as crime, immigration and Europe. Furthermore, "*both Iain Duncan-smith and Michael Howard fell into the same trap*" by panicking and reverting to safe policy area (Campbell 2008:34). Denham and O'Hara (2007:178) added that:

*"all three [Hague, Duncan-Smith and Howard] in their different ways were thus capable to some degree for the failure of the Conservatives to make more progress...all attempted to modernise but either not modernise enough or were spooked and retreated to familiar ground".*

The 2005 General Election defeat resulted in the resignation of Michael Howard and the search for a new Conservative Party leader. Bale (2011:6) argued the Conservative Party:

*“needed a leader who would cause it consistently, cohesively and therefore convincingly to project some kind of progress to the moderate mainstream or centre ground of which British elections are generally won or lost”.*

Similarly Beech and Lee (2008) suggested that a party is more likely to win a general election if it can occupy the centre-ground. Subsequently in December 2005 David Cameron was elected leader of the UK Conservative Party, with the aim making the party electable at the 2010 UK General Election ([www.conservatives.com](http://www.conservatives.com)). The UK Conservative Party had been perceived as *“hostile to gays, foreigners, immigrants, single mothers, women generally and probably many others as well”*. This along with divisions over Europe, perceived as ‘the Nasty Party’ (Hickson 2005; Lee and Beech 2009; Snowden 2010), considered out-of-touch, sleaze ridden, divided, weak and no authenticity (Denver 2003; Lee and Beech 2009; Kavanagh and Butler 2005; Snowden 2010; Watt 1997) added to the negative party image. However according to Jones (2010) David Cameron’s aim was to decontaminate the ‘Tory brand’ by quietly dropping some of the more hard-line right-wing policy areas and to broaden the support base and become more inclusive (Jones 2010). Furthermore David Cameron attempted to present the UK Conservatives as a pragmatic alternative to New Labour (Bale 2011). Smith (2009:210) suggested that *“Cameron [David] began his leadership acceptance speech by acknowledging the party’s image problem and the need to change how the party is perceived”*. In a newspaper interview published in the Daily Telegraph 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2010 Cameron recounts how the Conservative Party needed to revive after the 2001 General Election defeat:

*“The party has to change its language, change its approach, start with a blank sheet of paper and try to work out why our base is not broader. We need a clear, positive, engaging agenda on public services. Nine years on, and the party has confronted its shortcomings. It has changed. Up and down the land it is presenting a new face to the electorate with ambitious new policies and brilliant new candidates”*, (Cameron 2010:8).

Jones (2008:90) argued that David Cameron “*changed his party almost beyond recognition, modernising its policies, presenting a fresh and wild face to the electorate*”...Cameron wanted the electorate to “*feel good about being Conservatives again*” (Jones 2008:83). Preceding the 2005 UK General Election the UK Conservative Party needed to address a critical area if they were going to start winning elections again: the UK Conservative brand (Ashcroft 2010). In addition David Cameron’s “*task was to reshape the Conservative Party in his own image*” (Ashcroft 2010:25), as the Conservative Party appeared “*out-of-touch, focused on immigration and people had the impression we cared most about the privileged few*” (Ashcroft 2010:11). These were the findings presented to newly-elected leader David Cameron in December 2005 (Ashcroft 2010:11). Nevertheless, Bale (2008:270) argued, “*brand perceptions are very sticky: people do not change their mind about a party easily or quickly, even when a new man or woman takes over*”.

Even so, David Cameron “*began by vowing to be different*” (Campbell 2008:34), “*modernise or die*” (Denham and O’Hara 2007:185), was concerned with new non-Conservative policy areas or “*un-Tory themes*” (Ashcroft 2010:13) such as the environment, Green-Taxes, understanding troubled-teens and world poverty (Bale 2008; Campbell 2008; Dorey 2007; Helm 2010). Moreover Helm (2010:1) noted that David Cameron attempted to “*shed the Tories image as the party of the rich and privileged*” in the penultimate months to the 2010 General Election by pledging a number of non-traditional Conservative policies such as the NHS and the environment in an attempt to woo citizens. Smith (2009:214) argued that:

*“Cameron has lost no time in exhibiting his dynamism and modernity by cycling to work, wearing designer sneakers, using an iPod, associating with fair-trade products...all these behaviours have the purpose to illustrate the political brand”.*

Beech and Lee (2008) proposed David Cameron addressed issues on which he personally believed the UK Conservative Party needed to change. David Cameron implemented a number of controversial acts with the aim of repositioning and reinventing the party including “*authorising the redesign*” of the flaming torch party logo with a new blue/green *oak tree* symbol (Bale 2008; Beech and Lee 2008:11; Campbell 2009). The physical changes were not only restricted to the UK Conservative Party logo. David Cameron’s leadership election bid was modern, fresh and distinct from previous election bids. Conservative Party Conferences post December 2005 were seen as positive optimistic events, attracted a diverse support base including an increase in young delegates, and invited a varied team to join the Shadow Cabinet (Bale 2008; Cadwalladr 2009; Snowden 2010). Furthermore David Cameron and the UK Conservative Party desired to reacquire a key asset acquired during Margaret Thatcher’s reign; a reputation for economic competence (Ludlam and Smith 1996). On Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 1992 infamously known as ‘Black Wednesday’, Britain was forced to leave the European Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) (Budge *et al.* 2001; Snowden 2010). This moment ultimately damaged the UK Conservative Party’s reputation for economic credibility (Budge *et al.* 2001; Norris *et al.* 1999; Snowden 2010).

Bale (2011) proposed David Cameron professionally attempted to communicate to the electorate that the UK Conservative Party was changing, was distinct from previous Conservative Party’s, was moving back to the centre-ground and adapting Conservative values to current thinking. Furthermore Cameron acknowledged the achievements brought about by New Labour (Beech and Lee 2008; Snowden 2010), apologised for his Party’s failures of the past and admitted the Party had “*got it wrong*” (Bale 2011; Bale 2008:283; Lee and Beech 2009) in regards to policies implemented by Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s (Lee and Beech 2009; Morris 2009). For example, Mr Cameron

apologised “*to the citizens of Scotland for the Thatcher Government’s treatment of them as guinea pigs for the poll tax, which was implemented north of the border, a year before being introduced in England and Wales*”, (Dorey 2007:144).

Additionally David Cameron developed an action plan entitled ‘Built to Last’, which provided a foundation where his policies were based and apparently adopted a “*mixed bag*” approach in terms of ideology (Lee and Beech 2009:30). David Cameron’s action plan ‘Built to Last’ contained six major policy reviews some considered “*un-Thatcherite*” and in contrast to former Conservative policy (Dorey 2007:149). Furthermore, each policy review group comprised of a committee of six to twelve members, “*many of whom were recruited from beyond the world of politics and selected instead on the basis of their relevant experience*” (Dorey 2007:148). Some of these members included Zac Goldsmith, an environmentalist who publicly joined the Party in 2005 and was made deputy chairman of the Conservative Quality of Life Policy Group (Dorey 2007; Smith 2009). In February 2009 appointed television-star of ‘Countdown’, Carol Vorderman as a new Maths Taskforce initiative leader for secondary schools ([www.conservatives.com](http://www.conservatives.com)). At the 2009 Conservative Party Conference, a number of high profile figures endorsed a range of Conservative policies including Dame Kelly Holmes, Sir Bob Geldoff, Bono, Sir James Dyson and the former head of the British Army General Sir Richard Dannatt (Jones 2008; Smith 2009; [www.news.bbc.co.uk](http://www.news.bbc.co.uk)). Furthermore, a number of high profile figures announced personal party support for Cameron’s Conservatives including the fashion designer Vivienne Westwood, television presenter Kirsty Allsopp (Jones 2008), and gained the backing of Britain’s most read newspaper, ‘The Sun’, in October 2009 ([www.telegraph.co.uk](http://www.telegraph.co.uk)).

David Cameron also claimed to ignore ideology in favour of pragmatism, liberalism and the common-centre ground values (Bale 2011; Beech and Lee 2008; Jones 2010; Lee

and Beech 2009; Snowden 2010). This was similar to Tony Blair's 'Third Way' promoted in the early years of New Labour (Norris *et al.* 1999). Nevertheless Lee and Beech (2009) suggested that David Cameron's ideology of 'Liberal Conservatism' (Jones 2008) was a mixed bag of Thatcherism economics and European stance amalgamated with elements of Disraeli's classless, social and moral responsibility. According to David Cameron cited in Dorey (2007:143):

*"At the next election, a whole generation of people will be voting who were born after Margaret Thatcher left office. So when it comes to tackling the big challenges our society faces, I won't be the prisoner of an ideological past".*

Ultimately, David Cameron's 'modern, compassionate conservatism' (Jones 2008) was broad in appeal in an effort to broaden the support base. Nevertheless David Cameron's attempts at reshaping and refreshing the UK Conservative Party involved many actions and approaches something mirrored in the reshaping and repositioning the Labour Party under the leadership of Tony Blair (Norris *et al.* 1999). Further to this, Jones (2008:17) believed that David Cameron was "*as central to his project to reinvent the Tories as Tony Blair was to his reinvention of New Labour*". According to Norris *et al.* (1999), within six months of 'Black Wednesday', New Labour had transformed its position in the opinion polls and after the unexpected death of Labour leader John Smith; Tony Blair inherited the leadership in 1994. The UK Labour Party aimed to establish a new identity, 'New Labour', and attempted to position itself as a party for the majority rather than the few. Similar to the UK Conservative Party under David Cameron; New Labour wanted to be seen as different (Norris *et al.* 1999). More specifically, New Labour aimed to portray a belief in style balanced with substance, demonstrated pragmatic common-sense politics and gained the endorsement of numerous celebrities designed to strengthen the credibility of New Labour and emphasise that the Labour Party's image had changed (Norris *et al.* 1999). Therefore "*the party [Tony] Blair led to power in May*

1997 was radically transformed in image” (Norris *et al.* 1999:59), which appeared comparable with David Cameron’s attempts to transform the image of the UK Conservative Party prior the 2010 UK General Election.

In addition, Norris *et al.* (1999) argued that political communication played a central role in New Labour’s landslide in 1997. In 1997, New Labour communicated a coherent professional political message which was vague yet optimistic but paradoxically combined with specific pledges of improvements. Furthermore, while it is often difficult for political parties to stay ‘on message’ especially with the development of communication outlets; New Labour successfully managed to stay ‘on message’ prior the 1997 UK General Election resulting in an historic win (Norris *et al.* 1999). In contrast the UK Conservative Party were considered the least coherent and consistent compared with the three main political parties prior the 1997 UK General Election and often failed to stay ‘on message’ (Norris *et al.* 1999). Additionally, before the 1997 UK General Election the UK Conservative Party often communicated a negative political message and were seen as divided, incompetent, sleazy and arrogant (Norris *et al.* 1999). Subsequently, Norris *et al.* (1999) argued that successful strategic communications depend upon consistency, fighting professional campaigns and staying ‘on message’.

Nonetheless, Campbell (2008) proposed that the British electorate had become tired of a New Labour Government (Bale 2008; Jones 2008; Smith 2009) and Prime Minister Gordon Brown (Bale 2008; Jones 2008). Ultimately, the British electorate desired change (Campbell 2008). Despite the increased popularity of the UK Conservative Party in the opinion polls, many continued to raise questions about the UK Conservative Party and David Cameron (Bale 2008; Daley 2009; Portas 2010). Bale (2011:268) considered that Lord Ashcroft’s *Smell the Coffee: a wake-up Call for the Conservative Party*



(2005) warned the only way to electoral success was to address the “*largely negative brand image*” of the UK Conservative Party, a problem identified during Iain Duncan-Smith’s stewardship of the UK Conservative Party. This problem was echoed by Ashcroft (2010) and Lee and Beech (2009:4).

Accordingly, many discuss the UK Conservative Party ‘brand’ (Ashcroft 2010; Ashcroft 2005; Bale 2011; Bale 2008; Lee and Beech 2009; Lloyd 2006; Smith 2009), nevertheless there is a lack of clarity and understanding of UK Conservative Party ‘brand’. In addition, this section highlighted a number of points for example what is the UK Conservative Party image or brand under David Cameron’s leadership, is it complex with no single nature, and has David Cameron’s emphasis managed to disassociate the UK Conservative Party brand from negative and traditional associations. Given the similarities with the transformation of the Labour Party under Tony Blair, has David Cameron radically transformed the image of the UK Conservative Party and has David Cameron’s Conservatives communicated a consistent and coherent political brand that is ‘on message’. In order to investigate some of these points and establish if the UK Conservative Party brand has changed under the leadership of David Cameron; the UK Conservative Party brand has to be explored. Rather than focus on the strategic communication process of the UK Conservative Party under the leadership of David Cameron, the political image otherwise known as the ‘political brand’ must be explored in the first instance. Therefore the literature and key points contribute to the broader question ‘how can we understand the complexity of the UK Conservative Party brand under the leadership of David Cameron’. Perhaps the discipline of marketing will prove to be an appropriate place to start the exploration of the UK Conservative Party ‘brand’.

## 2.2 Political Marketing

Marketing can be considered a diverse discipline comprised of many specialised sub-areas each with a unique focus connected by common theories and concepts (Rawson 2007; Wilkie and Moore 2003). Moreover, political marketing can be seen as the product of the fragmented yet broadened debate of mainstream marketing (Henneberg and O'shaughnessy 2007:8). Over the last twenty years "*political marketing has moved from being the relatively obscure concern of a small group of academic marketers*" (Harris and Lock 2010:297), and now represents a dynamic research area which forms part of the marketing discipline (Henneberg and O'shaughnessy 2007; Harris and Lock 2010).

Despite political marketing considered a specialised application of marketing (Henneberg and O'shaughnessy 2007:26), there are various conceptualisations of political marketing (Baines *et al.* 2010; Harris and Lock 2010; Henneberg and O'shaughnessy 2007; Hayes and McAllister 1996; Lees-Marshment 2009; Lilleker *et al.* 2006; Moufahim and Lim 2009; Newman 1999; Osuagwu 2008; Panwar 2004; Scammell 1995; Wring 2005), with no standard definition (Savigny 2008). Furthermore the applicability of marketing theories and concepts to the political arena can be considered problematic something contested inside (Lilleker *et al.* 2006; Lock and Harris 1996; Moufahim and Lim 2009; Moufahim *et al.* 2007; Niffenegger 1989; Panwar 2004) and outside the realms of marketing (Henneberg and O'shaughnessy 2007).

Nevertheless marketing theories and concepts applied to the political context is nothing new (Elebash 1984; Scammell 1995; Watts 1997) and in some shape or form been applied for centuries (Hayes and McAllister 1996; Helm 2010; Osuagwu 2008; Panwar 2004; Savigny 2008; Scammell 1995; Watts 1997; Wring 2005). Furthermore this

continues to be the case (Ashcroft 2010; Ashcroft 2005; Brams 1985; Elebash 1984; Esser *et al.* 2000; Watts 1997; Wring 2005). What seems to be ‘new’ is the increased specialisation and adaptability of marketing terminology and theory to the political arena. Harris and Lock (2010:305) stated the “*increased sophistication of the concepts, constructs and analytic methods being deployed*” in political marketing are generating deep insight and allowing the application to identify the gaps which need further elaboration “*based on good empirical studies*” (Harris and Lock 2010:305).

Henneberg and O’shaughnessy (2007:11) also argued that “*political marketing concepts and theories depend on borrowing and adaptation of existing theories of both marketing and political science*”. Osuagwu (2008:805) accepted the applicability of marketing concepts, principles and methods to the political arena and proposes further political marketing research requires a more “*comprehensive holistic approach*”, possibly adopting a wider, interdisciplinary perspective (Henneberg and O’shaughnessy 2007; Moufahim and Lim 2009; Osuagwu 2008). Lock and Harris (1996) considered the application of marketing wholesale to politics can be challenging with some tools and concepts applicable and some inapt. Similarly Lees-Marshment (2009) proposed tools and theories need to be stretched and tailored to the political landscape and cannot be simply imposed without appropriate adaptation and modification. This view is consistent with Mauser (1983), Lock and Harris (1996) and Panwar (2004).

Development of political marketing requires “*revisiting*” or to “*first visit*” core areas of political marketing that initially borrowed and adapted existing theories from the field of marketing and beyond (Henneberg and O’shaughnessy 2007:26). Lilleker (2005) considered that an important development in political marketing research in the last five years is the introduction of principles borrowed from the area of ‘branding’. Moreover Alsem and Kosteljik (2008) suggested that research in branding could benefit other

disciplines and highlight a new area of knowledge generation. Furthermore branding theory may address how we can explore the UK Conservative Party brand, which may benefit the political arena. Subsequently, ‘revisiting’ political branding, a core area of political marketing may identify gaps in the body of knowledge and highlight appropriate tools and concepts to explore the UK Conservative Party brand. This in turn will add to the under-researched theory and application of political marketing (Harris and Lock 2010; Henneberg and O’shaughnessy 2007; Moufahim and Lim 2009; Lees-Marshment 2009; Lilleker *et al.* 2006; Osuagwu 2008).

### 2.3 Political Branding

In recent years consumer branding theory has broadened its application (Bergstrom *et al.* 2002; Reeves *et al.* 2006; Smith 2009). More specifically consumer branding theory has been applied to destinations, countries, cities, politics (Bily 2008; Blythe 2006; Morgan *et al.* 2002; Peng and Hackley 2009; Reeves *et al.* 2006; Robinson 2004; White and de Chernatony 2002), stately homes (Adams 2010:5), religion, sports teams, rock bands, people (Einstein 2008), universities and the metropolitan police. Therefore “*virtually every setting is branded*” (Smith 2009:210).

White and de Chernatony (2002) argued a political party can be conceived as a brand to be subsequently developed to promote functional and emotional characteristics to the electorate. This point is shared by Bale (2008:280) whereby “*political parties are complex organisations with multiple levels, sites of authority and goals. They are also brands; heuristic short cuts for voters who have little time and little interest in politics*”. Peng and Hackley (2009) acknowledged that the concept of branding has been widely adopted in marketing commercial products and services to consumers and also political parties, politicians, candidates and political issues. This suggests the applicability of branding theory to the political arena is not restricted to political parties but can be

extended to other political entities such as politicians, candidates and political organisations (Guzman and Sierra 2009; Peng and Hackley 2009; Smith 2001) hence political brands can be conceived as multifaceted.

Political brands can build loyalty, reinforce existing beliefs, and build a sense of identification (Peng and Hackley 2009). They can also communicate political brand values (White and de Chernatony 2002). In addition Lees-Marshment (2009) argued that political branding can help reposition a party or candidate. More importantly political brands provide reassurance to the electorate and offer a long-term vision for the future (Needham 2005; Peng and Hackley 2009). Additionally Van Ham (2001) suggested that the applicability of branding theory to the political arena provides a degree of excitement and distinction which otherwise would be mundane and predictable.

For a political brand to succeed it needs to be “*simple, aspirational and clearly differentiated from other parties*” (Needham 2005:183), and adhere to their brand promise if they are to be believed and adopted by the electorate (Needham 2005; White and de Chernatony 2002). Successful political brands should ensure a degree of consistency in regards to their brand principles (Smith and French 2009; Smith and Saunders 1990) and communicated message (Gurau and Ayadi 2011). However, political brands that fail to provide a clear understandable message and communicate consistent principles can become ambiguous and ultimately lack authenticity (Gurau and Ayadi 2011; Smith and French 2009; Smith and Saunders 1990). Furthermore Smith and French (2009:213) suggested that “*when a party becomes disunited and/or sends conflicting messages to voters, the perceived cohesion of the party brand breaks down, its credibility is lost – and voters are notoriously disinclined to support a disunited party*”. Political brands are “*also judged by past elections and previous party*

*behaviour*” (Lees-Marshment 2009:112), and political brands “*need to be authentic, need to deliver and has to change overtime to be successful...a party’s failure in government can haunt it for a long time in opposition*” (Lees-Marshment 2009:118). Therefore the application of branding theory to the political arena provides a number of benefits and opportunities for political brands.

Despite Lees-Marshment (2009:279) proposing that “*branding is a new area of political marketing*”, which is of growing interest yet has not been researched extensively (Lilleker 2005; Peng and Hackley 2009; Rawson 2007; Reeves *et al.* 2006; Robinson 2004; Van Ham 2001); numerous research studies have been conducted in the context of political branding. Furthermore a visual aid to highlight the existing research conducted in the context of political branding can be seen in table 1 below.

**Table 1: Existing Political Branding Literature**

Reference	Research Focus
<b>Smith (2009)</b>	Tested Aaker (1997) model in the political arena
<b>Guzman and Sierra (2009)</b>	Measured brand image of political candidates using brand personalities scales (Aaker 1997 and Caprara <i>et al.</i> 2001).
<b>Phipps <i>et al.</i> (2010)</b>	Compared the corporate brand of a political party and brand image of two local politicians with the Aaker brand equity ten model.
<b>French and Smith (2010)</b>	Measured political brand equity of the UK Conservative and Labour Parties
<b>Smith (2005)</b>	Examined political party positioning during the 2005 UK General Election
<b>Smith and French (2009)</b>	Discussed how consumers learn and adopt political brands.
<b>Needham (2005)</b>	Focused on relationship marketing and branding in relation to Clinton-Blair
<b>Needham (2006)</b>	Discussed political brands and political loyalty
<b>Lilleker (2005)</b>	Critical evaluated political marketing and branding in reference to New Labour
<b>White and de Chernatony (2002)</b>	Focused on the creation, development and demise of the New Labour brand
<b>Peng and Hackley (2009)</b>	Qualitatively explored the voter-consumer analogy
<b>Bale (2008)</b>	Discussed the changes to the UK Conservative Party ‘brand’ under David Cameron.
<b>Schneider (2004)</b>	Broadly discussed branding in politics; manifestations, relevance and identity-orientated management.
<b>Smith (2001)</b>	Focused on the factors influencing brand image of parties and their leaders.

Smith (2009) conceptualised and tested the Aaker (1997) brand personality model and applied it to British political parties. He concluded that Aaker’s (1997) model in its current state is inappropriate for the use in politics and a ‘new’ personality scale was devised for British politics. The new conceptual model has yet to be empirically tested and calls for further research to replicate and test the model. Furthermore, Smith

(2009:225) raised a topical question in reference to the UK Conservative Party brand; *“will voters believe in personality change in a party as signalled by the leader if the rank and file of the party appear largely unchanged? This is the issue facing David Cameron over the next few years”*. Nevertheless this question raised the broader point such as do voters believe that the UK Conservative Party brand has changed under David Cameron’s leadership. Finally, Smith (2009:225) considered that *“much more research is needed as overall this paper highlights just how much is not understood in this area”* of political branding. Therefore an understanding of the UK Conservative Party brand from the electorates’ perspective is required.

While Smith (2009) critically applied Aaker’s (1997) brand personality model to political parties, Guzman and Sierra (2009) critically applied the brand personality model (Aaker’s 1997) to political candidates. Guzman and Sierra (2009) argued political candidates along with political parties can be seen as brands. Hence they also focused on Aaker’s brand personality scale to analyse a candidate’s brand image in the context of the 2006 Mexican Election. Aaker’s brand personality scale was criticised due to its generalisability (Guzman and Sierra 2009). Furthermore, the definition of brand personality was considered too general and it was argued that the scale itself did not measure brand personality. Therefore, Guzman and Sierra (2009) combined the Aaker scale with Caprara *et al.* (2001) brand personality scale, and developed a broader and strengthened approach to analyse the brand image of candidates. Guzman and Sierra (2009) concluded that Mexican presidential candidates were evaluated according to their personality, and developed a brand image framework embedded in the brand personality literature (Aaker 1997; Caprara *et al.* 2001). Furthermore, *“the results of this study provide a first step to understanding why and how it is that citizens view candidates as brands”* (Guzman and Sierra 2009:216). Guzman and Sierra (2009) called

for further research in this area. This indicated that there is a need to understand the image of political entities including candidates and parties.

Phipps *et al.* (2010) investigated brand equity (Aaker 1996) and the impact consumers have on political brands opposed to politicians and political parties in the context of the Australian political arena. Phipps *et al.* (2010:508) also established that local brand equity of the candidate often “*outweighed the negative connotations of the political parties’ corporate brand*”. In one case the political party corporate brand was hindering the electoral success of the locally supported candidate. Furthermore, it was argued that “*the brand image of individual politicians is influenced by the corporate brand of the political party and the political climate but as people they still have an element of control over their personal brand image*”, (Phipps *et al.* 2010:497). Additionally, Phipps *et al.* (2010:500) proposed an established image “*exists until consumers have a chance to update their perceptions*”. Furthermore, this paper argued there is a duality to political brands. Therefore political brands can be seen as complex due to their inherent dual nature which can be inconsistent.

French and Smith (2010) measured the brand equity of the UK Conservative Party brand and the New Labour Party brand from the perspective of voters by mapping their associations with the political brands. Furthermore French and Smith (2010:462) defined a political brand from a consumer perspective as “*an associative network of interconnected political information, held in memory and accessible when stimulated from the memory of the voter*”. It was argued that to date political marketing research “*has typically sought to measure*” attitudes, views and opinions of political parties, political leaders and party policies (French and Smith 2010:462).

Further to this Keller (2002:171) as cited in French and Smith (2010:460) also argued that “*as branding is applied in more and more different settings, branding theory and*



*best practice guidelines need to be refined to reflect the unique realities of those settings*”. Therefore, branding concepts and theories may be need to adapted and refined to reflect the unique and different environment of the political arena (French and Smith 2010). It was also found that negative brand equity was associated with the UK Conservative Party prior the election of David Cameron as party leader in 2005. By 2006 the negative effect had all but disappeared (French and Smith 2010). French and Smith (2010) provided both positive and negative associations with the UK Conservative Party. However, there is a need to understand the antecedents of these associations, how they resonate with the electorate and how this builds the UK Conservative brand.

Smith (2005) examined the positioning strategies of the three main political parties (Labour, Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats) during the 2005 UK General Election. Moreover, Smith (2005) focused on three distinct elements of the overall positioning strategies. This included investigating the long term positioning of the parties, more specifically how the three main political brands were understood in relation to electorally important issues. Secondly, this paper evaluated the national campaigns. The final element of the overall positioning strategy focused on the appraisal of the development and execution of the local positioning strategies. According to Smith (2005), political brands should adopt a number of political positioning approaches during election campaigns. Furthermore optimum positioning entails political brands adopting clear points of difference (POD) combined with points of parity (POP) with political competitors (Smith 2005).

It was found that from the beginning of the 2005 UK General Election all three political brands faced political positioning “*dilemmas*” (Smith 2005:1137). This included the UK Conservative Party brand. The UK Conservative Party brand had improved its political

positioning from the 1997 and 2001 UK General Election. Nevertheless, during the 2005 UK General Election the UK Conservative Party brand faced the dilemma of appealing not only the previously silenced pro-European wing of the party but also the core anti-European constituency (Smith 2005). In addition the UK Conservative brand was still positioned by their party's past. More specifically, the UK Conservative Party brand failed to develop clear differences and similarities with political competitors especially Labour, continued to be positioned as the opposition party and not a credible government in waiting and continued to be seen as negative and uncaring (Smith 2005). Furthermore, the UK Conservative Party failed to produce an integrated long term positioning strategy. It would be interesting to assess whether the UK Conservative Party brand under the leadership of David Cameron continues to be positioned by their past.

Smith (2005) concluded that future research could focus on the examination of political positioning strategies in future elections and understand how political brands position themselves. This suggested that there are two areas of future study. One specifically focusing on the positioning strategies of political brands and the second focusing on the image of the political brand particularly what is the position otherwise known as the understanding of a political brand in the mind of the stakeholder. This point is strengthened as Smith (2005) argued that image is an important element of positioning and image can be seen as a basis for differentiation. Therefore, understanding political brands in greater detail or understanding the image of political brands requires equal attention as the examination of political positioning strategies.

Despite that Smith (2005) argued that there is a paucity of positioning research in political marketing, there has been some progress made in this area (Baines 1999; Baines *et al.* 1999; Collins and Butler 2002; Gurau and Ayadi 2011; Newman 1999;

O'Shaughnessy and Baines 2009; Smith 2005; Smith and Saunders 1990). Particularly, political positioning research has focused on voter segmentation and targeting (Baines 1999), voter behaviour (Newman 1999; Smith and Saunders 1990), models of consumer choice behaviour (Johnson 1971), strategic and tactical considerations (Collins and Butler 2002; Wring 2002), and the communication process (Baines *et al.* 1999; Gurau and Ayadi 2011; O'Shaughnessy and Baines 2009). Wring (2002:181) proposed that:

*“The concept of positioning has a central place in political marketing analysis. Downs’ (1957) classic study of party competition was based on a market model in which rival organisations maximised electoral support by moving themselves towards the electoral centre ground. More recently, other theorists have developed alternative concepts of positioning that emphasis the value of continuity in the electoral offering and the importance of leading as well as following opinion”.*

It is worth noting that Baines *et al.* (1999) argued that political parties (political brands) will have a positioning problem if there is disunity within the political party and the political party is undermined by internal stakeholders. Therefore, to resolve the political positioning process problem a consistent image must be created, which is internally supported and communicated. However, in order assess whether a political brand has a positioning process problem, the political brand needs to be understood in the first instance. This ultimately forms part of a sequential process involving a number of stages (Baines *et al.* 1999) and the first stage inevitably involves exploration.

Nevertheless, there is a general consensus that political positioning in part is strategic in orientation. More specifically, voter segmentation, targeting, voter behaviour, and the communication process will ultimately develop and inform the political positioning strategy. In addition, the existing literature on political positioning also argued that identification and understanding precedes the positioning process (Baines 1999; Baines *et al.* 1999; Gurau and Ayadi 2011; Johnson 1971; Newman 1999; O'Shaughnessy and Baines 2009; Smith 2005; Smith and Saunders 1990). This is consistent with Morgan *et*

*al.* (2002). Morgan *et al.* (2002) suggested that a successful positioning strategy can only be formulated once the brand is fully understood and will be ineffective if the brand is not thoroughly researched. Therefore, it appears that exploration and identification of a political brand is precursory to the political positioning process and an in-depth understanding of a political brand will inform the strategically natured political positioning. This exploration and identification of a political brand's position is currently missing from the political positioning literature (Baines 1999; Baines *et al.* 1999; Gurau and Ayadi 2011; Johnson 1971; Newman 1999; O'Shaughnessy and Baines 2009; Smith 2005; Smith and Saunders 1990).

Smith and French (2009) acknowledged that there are two discrete ways of analysing political brands. One focuses on a brand management perspective namely the application of branding theories and frameworks to political brands. The second perspective focuses on a consumer-based approach and centres on how consumers understand political brands and how political brands influence consumer behaviour (Smith and French 2009). Subsequently, Smith and French (2009) focused on the second perspective and discussed how consumers learn about and adopt political brands. This also included an analysis of the potential benefits offered by political brands to the electorate (Smith and French 2009).

Additionally, Smith and French (2009) proposed that a political brand can be seen as a trinity. Subdivided into three distinct elements, the political party, politician (or leader) and party policy. Successful political brands should ensure all three elements of the trinity should be highly interrelated and non-contradictory (Smith and French 2009). However, it was found that this interrelation was not necessarily the case with all political brands and certain elements of the political brand such as the politician was often the strongest or weakest element of the trinity (Smith and French 2009). Smith

and French (2009) also found despite that Tony Blair's New Labour and David Cameron's UK Conservative Party had repositioned (or attempted to reposition) their political parties, the core brand values of Labour and the Conservative Party were largely unchanged in the mind of the electorate (Smith and French 2009). This suggested that there was a complexity to political brands, especially repositioned political parties and their actual core brand values. Thus, an in-depth exploration of a political brand was surely needed. Nevertheless, this paper (Smith and French 2009) does not provide a detailed understanding of the UK Conservative Party brand under the leadership of David Cameron and presents the opportunity to identify the meaning attached to a political brand.

Needham (2005) focused on the permanent campaign model in relation to incumbent and office seekers. Furthermore, Needham (2005) discussed the strategic use of branding techniques and relationship marketing adopted by Tony Blair and Bill Clinton in promoting their political brands. Needham (2006) built on previous work and broadly discussed political brands, brand loyalty in politics and the usefulness of relationship marketing and party leaders as brands. Needham (2006) critiqued the analysis of political branding and called for explanatory research with strategic implications rather than the existing descriptive research. It was also proposed that political parties often fail to recognise the importance of branding, suggesting that despite the increased adoption of branding terminology, concepts and techniques, the political community do not understand their worth. It would be interesting to explore whether Conservative politicians or political stakeholders actually understand their brand. Needham (2006) also argued that political brands reduce complexity and political leaders that promote personal brands focusing on a small number of key areas will be successful which supports the notion that the electorate uses heuristics to make their electoral decisions (Clarke *et al.* 2004). Furthermore, Needham (2006) concluded that the world of politics

needs to decide whether a leader-based or party-based political brand represents the best hope of long-term electoral success. Ultimately, there is a need for explanatory research in political branding (Needham 2006) and it is important to understand ‘political brands’ in greater detail both from an internal and external perspective.

White and de Chernatony (2002) discussed the creation, development and demise of New Labour in the context of political branding. They argued that:

*“New Labour as a brand was successful in part because of its ambiguity. It represented values with which large swathes of the population could identify with...the brand was an essential element in the modernisation of the party and a device to suggest and promise changes”* (White and de Chernatony 2002:49/50).

Both Lilleker (2005) and White and de Chernatony (2002) provided a sound articulation of the New Labour brand, however they do not explicitly highlight areas for future research. Whilst Bale (2008) discussed the changes to the UK Conservative Party under David Cameron’s leadership illustrating how the Conservative Party attempted to change since David Cameron became leader in December 2005.

Peng and Hackley (2009) qualitatively explored the voter-consumer analogy in the context of political marketing with reference to the application of branding. It was concluded that the voter-consumer analogy can be approached from a macro and micro level and at times voters can be considered different to consumers and vice-versa. Furthermore this study highlighted the need for more qualitative research in this area with particular emphasis on understanding the consumer engagement with political brands.

Smith (2001) focused on the factors influencing the brand images of political parties and party leaders and the increased importance of image in British politics. In addition Smith (2001) built on the work conducted by MORI which focused on party and leader images and the questions used in the study were initially derived from exploratory

qualitative research. It was argued that “*image in politics is of critical importance and as such merits further analysis*” (Smith 2001:992), and there are currently few qualitative studies that explore the UK Conservative Party and Conservative Party leader image.

Schneider (2004) focused on three areas of applicability of branding theory to the political arena namely manifestations, relevance and identity-orientated management. Firstly, Schneider discussed the manifestations and existence of political brands ranging from political parties to candidates with particular focus on brand familiarity and brand image; testing the awareness and status of German politicians. This was followed by a discussion of the relevance of political brands. It was also argued that “*for quite some time marketing theory has focused on perceptions of a brand in the eyes of the consumer in various different attribute dimensions that is on the external image of a brand as a central success factor in brand management*” (Schneider 2004:54).

Subsequently, there is a need to understand political brands in greater detail (Baines *et al.* 1999; Rawson 2007; Smith 2005; Smith and French 2009) both internally (Needham 2006; Schneider 2004; Van Ham 2001) and externally (French and Smith 2010; Peng and Hackley 2009; Phipps *et al.* 2010; Schneider 2004). Where existing branding tools and scales have been employed as part of the research study, they were often modified or extended to suit the unique environment (Guzman and Sierra 2009; Smith 2009). As commercial branding concepts and tools are increasingly applied to the political environment, refinements and adaptations may be required to meet the unique setting of political marketing and this may be the case for this research (French and Smith 2010; Keller 2002; Mauser 1983; Panwar 2004; Smith 2009; Smith and French 2009).

Furthermore, Schneider (2004) argued that previous research in political marketing had focused on a primarily external or internal perspective and presented the case for

combining both perspectives in approaching a political brand in future research. In addition, Schneider (2004:60) added that future research in political marketing needs to acknowledge the “*transfer potential from instruments developed for one branding context to others*”. Therefore, there is a case to explore the UK Conservative Party brand from both an internal and external orientation by transferring branding concepts or tools that have yet to be applied to the context of political marketing.

#### 2.4 Consumer Branding

It is important to acknowledge that even the term ‘brand’ can often lack clarity and has been interchangeably used in research (Bergstrom *et al.* 2002). In addition Henneberg and O’shaughnessy (2007) suggested that research in political marketing is often employed loosely in reference to conceptualisations employed as part of the research and in relation to other constructs. Therefore it is essential to clarify ‘branding’ concepts and constructs that form part of this research study.

A brand is not merely a name of a company, product, service or political party. A brand can be seen as a communication device, which represents the nature, values and personality of a company, product or even a political party (de Chernatony and McDonald 2002; Peng and Hackley 2009). According to Einstein (2008:70) “*a brand is the intangible sum of a product’s attributes: its name, packaging, price, its history, its reputation and the way it is advertised*”. Brands are multidimensional entities (Harris and de Chernatony 2001; White and de Chernatony 2002), socially constructed (Muniz and O’Guinn 2001) “*complex offerings*” (de Chernatony 2007:27), which are personally owned, formulated and embraced by the consumer (Neff 2009). Furthermore brands can be seen as “*a complex sign system*” (Healey 2010:70) or “*visions*” (Kapferer 2008:20) that embodies powerful symbolic value, which may differ from citizen to citizen (Andrews and Kim 2007; Lury 2005; Muniz and O’Guinn 2001).



Alsem and Kosteljik (2008) and Van Riel and Fombrun (2007) argued branding focuses on the creation of favourable images in the form of tangible or intangible associations, which in turn has the ability to create value and influence in the mind of the consumer. Brands have also been described as subjective (Azoulay and Kapferer 2003; Bosch *et al.* 2006; Lea Prevel 1994; Van Ham 2001) devices that are created, maintained and evaluated through the consumers' prism of their own subjectivity (Cova and Pace 2006; Nadeem 2007). Anana and Nique (2010:7) considered brands can be considered "*powerful entities*" that combine functional and emotional aspects (Anana and Nique 2010; Bergstrom *et al.* 2002).

This raises a number of points such as the importance of branding and key benefits of branding. Brands have been extensively used for centuries to differentiate against competitors (Einstein 2008), improve recognition, trust and add value (Devasagayam and Cheryl 2008). Brands also have the ability to reduce perceived risk (Kapferer 2008), provide symbolic quality insurance (Jobber 2004) and communicate beliefs and attitudes possessed by a brand (Aaker 1997; Andrews and Kim 2007; de Cherntony and McDonald 2002; Jobber 2004). Branding has also been described as a powerful heuristic device to aid decision making (Anana and Nique 2010; Asher 1997; Ries and Ries 2000; Smith 2009). In addition branding can assist in globally harmonising products, services or organisations (Rekom *et al.* 2006) and can be adopted to promote a niche market and even attract and retain consumers' (Morgan *et al.* 2002; Palazzo and Basu 2007).

Moreover, Lea Prevel (1994) argued that brands are incredibly valuable. In fact brands have been regarded as the most valuable asset an organisation can possess (Klink 2003; Smith 2009; Wallstrom *et al.* 2008) with the ability to reduce confusion in the mind of the consumer by offering a consistent message (Rekom *et al.* 2006). Reeves *et al.*

(2006:418) suggested that brands have become part of “*contemporary culture*”, an integral and influential part of people’s lives. Furthermore, Nilson and Surrey (1998:9) acknowledged that the idea that brands “*often represent continuity...the key element in this is to ensure that the brand delivers at least up to the expectations*”. A visual aid to portray the benefits of branding can be seen in figure 1 on p.50.



**Figure 1: What Do Brands Offer**

(Adapted from Aaker 1997; Andrews and Kim 2007; de Chernatony and McDonald 2002; Elliott and Wattanasuwan 1998; Jobber 2004; Lury 2005; Morgan *et al.* 2002; Pelsmacker *et al.* 2004; Rekom *et al.* 2006; Ries and Ries 2000)

Van Ham (2001) argued that branding theory can provide products, services and organisations with an emotional dimension with which consumers’ can identify. The values and emotions bestowed on a brand, which the consumer will resonate with may offer a unique selling point or competitive advantage to brands in highly saturated markets (Petromilli and Michalczyk 1999; Van Ham 2001). Additionally, Burnett and Hutton (2007) suggested that brands are powerful statements to signify membership and identification and express aspects of a consumer’s personality (Aaker 1997; Lavine and Gschwend 2006). This sense of belonging establishes and strengthens the relationship

between the consumer and brand, which in turn deepens the trust and respect between the two parties (Burnett and Hutton 2007; Nandan 2005; Stiff 2006).

Einstein (2008:70) acknowledged that branding “*is about meaning making and establishing relationships*”. While Johns and Glymothy (2008:268) stated that brands are “*symbolic markers and offer a complex perceptual dimension upon products or services associating feelings, meanings and symbols with the brand label but ultimately with the brand user*”. In addition Van Gelder (2005:35) proposed “*there are no two brands with exactly the same roots and heritage, values, purpose, ambitions and visual identity*”. While Healey (2010:70) argued “*branding is all about perceptions*” (Healey 2010:70). Similarly, Andrews and Kim (2007:353) suggested “*the power of a brand lies in the mind of consumers and stems from what they have experienced and learned about a brand over time*”.

Nonetheless, Caldwell and Freire (2004:51) equated a successful brand as an “*identifiable product, service or place*” in which the consumer or user perceives to possess relevant unique added values. Andrews and Kim (2007) suggested that no brand is safe from becoming meaningless and weak. Even the oldest or biggest brand can fail (Andrew and Kim 2007; Keller 1999). Furthermore, Szmigin *et al.* (2006) considered brands can possess unique meaning and this distinctive meaning can change over time. Similarly, Phipps *et al.* (2010:497) considered brands to be “*ever-changing social entities...take on a life of their own...significant amount of their identity controlled by consumers*”. Boyle (2007) suggested a long-term, unified strong brand is needed in the highly competitive market place and can be deemed successful if brands match consumers’ wants and needs (Boyle 2007). In addition, Nilson and Surrey (1998) proposed an important element of successful branding is consistency and brands that display consistent profiles are trusted more than brands that continuously change. This

was supported by Clifton and Simmons (2003). Further to this Petromilli and Michalczyk (1999) believed that successful brands leave no room for misperceptions and ambiguity. Therefore to build and maintain a strong brand, one must continually explore and monitor the current perceptions in the mind of the consumer in order to avoid symbolic meaning morphing into a meaningless pseudo like brand (Andrews and Kim 2007; Fill 2006; Keller 1999).

Only by exploring the current perceptions of the brand will the brand creator ascertain whether the envisaged direction and perceptions are resonating with the consumer in the desired fashion (Robinson 2004). Moreover, Keller (1999) argued that acquiring this deep knowledge will aid in the development of future strategies, desired direction, illuminate the relationship between brand-consumer and also formulate a contingency plan for any unforeseen events, which could tarnish the brand (Farquhar 2003). Ultimately, brands may be considered diverse, complex, powerful subjective devices, which need to be fully explored and understood before adaptations are instigated. Thus, understanding what brands represent is an important starting point (Asher 1997; Parrington 2009; Robinson 2004).

Nilson and Surrey (1998) proposed that the majority of brands are created in the mind of the consumer. However, brands are partly brought to life with a combination of the communications projected by the organisation, and practices the consumer has experienced with the brand (Nilson and Surrey 1998). Further to this Healey (2010) considered the aim of the organisation behind the brand is to project intangible imagery, ideas and insight into the mind of the consumer. Healey (2010) continued, all the tangible and intangible elements that constitute a 'brand' from its logo, name, product design, packaging design, visual identity, experience and communications must all be integrated in order for a brand to be conceived powerful and successful. Alike, Johns

and Glymothy (2008:268) argued that branding can be considered a long-term strategic communication process which aims to craft a consistent message about an organisation and understand how it is perceived by others. Ultimately, it appears that branding goes beyond being solely developed in the mind of the consumer.

Davies (2010:15) argued branding “*becomes the responsibility of the entire organisation*” and every person in every department can directly and indirectly influence the perceptions of the brand. According to Anana and Nique (2010:7), a brand can be approached from an internal (organisation) perspective or an external (consumer-centric) related standpoint. Therefore branding involves not only the consumer but also the organisation, which aims to bring the brand to life in the mind of the consumer. Subsequently, it can be suggested that multiple stakeholders are involved in the branding process. With this in mind, generating a deeper understanding of a brand not only involves exploring a brand from an external perspective but also from an internal perspective.

It has also been proposed that successful brands offer a long-term, consistent message, which is projected by every stakeholder and communication device (Boyle 2007; Petromilli and Michalczyk 1999; Robinson 2004). According to Freeman (1984) cited in Van Riel *et al.* (2007:162), the term stakeholder can be defined as “*any group or individual that can affect or is affected by the achievements of the organisation*”. Ultimately, Fill (2006) suggested that stakeholders can be distinguished as internal to the organisation such as employees or managerial members and also external stakeholders in the form of shareholders, competitors, supporters or local authorities. Stakeholders whether internal or external “*can differ in categories and orientation with some having influential powers, relationships*” (Fill 2006:204), and each group will have an interest in some aspect of the organisation (Martin 2001).

Simmons (2009:681) argued that recently, marketing literature has witnessed a paradigm shift that suggests that practitioners and researchers should adopt a more outward facing, holistic stakeholder oriented approach rather than a narrow consumer oriented approach. Subsequently, not only can ‘stakeholders’ be sub-divided into two broad categories (Fill 2006), both of which can be further sub-divided. Therefore, in order to explore a brand, there is a need to consider stakeholders in the “*broadest sense*” both internally and externally (Clifton and Simmons 2003:81). Similar points were raised by Petromilli and Michalczyk (1999) in that to ascertain a unified picture of a brand, perspectives of both internal and external stakeholders need to be explored.

### 2.5 Holistic Approach

Despite suggestions of a paradigm shift within the marketing literature of an increased focus on an holistic stakeholder orientated approach opposed to singular consumer orientated approach (Clifton and Simmons 2003; Simmons 2009); considering stakeholders in the broadest sense is recognised and practiced across the branding literature in sub-areas such as *corporate branding*, *employer branding* and *internal branding*. Nevertheless, it is not the intention to discuss each strand in detail as each strand can be considered complex and generally a broad research area (Chapleo 2004). However, since there is much overlap within the branding literature (Bergstrom *et al.* 2002; Chapleo 2004), it is important to recognise the similarities between the varied strands. This will ultimately inform and strengthen the research approach.

According to Hatch and Schultz (2001) corporate branding considers multiple stakeholders in relation to brands. This approach includes employees, consumers, local communities, and suppliers to name a few. Similar points were raised by Davies and Chun (2002:144):

*“corporate brands may need to appeal to a number of quite separate groups including potential employees and suppliers as well as customers...any corporate brand needs to appeal to an emotional level to both internal and external stakeholders and may have different perceptions regarding the brand”.*

This idea of considering multiple stakeholders, inside and outside the brand and accepting their importance to the success of the brand is shared by Balmer and Liao (2007), Foster *et al.* (2010), Wallstrom *et al.* (2008) and Chong (2007), and not only reserved in the corporate branding literature. Additionally de Chernatony (1999:159) suggested that *“traditionally branding theory has focused on segmented consumers”* while corporate branding focus on multiple stakeholders and interaction with numerous segments. Literature focusing on internal branding (Bergstrom *et al.* 2002; Devasagayam *et al.* 2010; Mahnert and Torres 2007; Tosti and Stotz 2001), and employer branding (Davies 2008; Lievens *et al.* 2007), also share the premise of an integrated holistic approach to branding and concur with the corporate branding literature that the internal market is as important as the external market.

Chapleo (2004:9) proposed that *“it is widely accepted that leaders have a fundamental part to play in shaping brands of their organisations both internally and externally”*. Therefore an integrated internal-external approach to brand building is important in developing and sustaining a successful brand. However Stiff (2006) considered that some internal stakeholders including brand managers fail to understand their brand. Additionally, Stiff (2006) suggested that all stakeholders must believe the brand, with internal stakeholders collectively projecting the brand in a unified fashion. In addition de Chernatony (2007:128) stated that *“everyone inside the organisation needs to be behind the brand otherwise internal tension can damage it”*. Nilson and Surrey (1998:222) argued *“all parts of the organisation have a responsibility to guard, promote*

*and build the brand*” however to do so means that all parts of the organisation must understand the brand and be aware of the brand’s core essence.

Harris and de Chernatony (2001:1) reported that in corporate branding employees are considered “*central to building a strong brand and either reinforce or undermine the brand depending on their behaviour*”. In addition, Gylling and Lindberg-Repo (2006) proposed that internal stakeholders should not contradict the corporate brand’s core values. Davies and Chun (2002) agreed that employee’s behaviour can have an influence on how the corporate brand is perceived external to the organisation. Similarly, Foster *et al.* (2010:401) argued employee’s “*are central to corporate brand management*” and have the ability to positively and negatively affect the fortunes of a brand. Sartain (2005:89) suggested that internal stakeholders “*make or break the company’s brand*”, and an organisation that overlooks the internal aspect of a brand may find that it has a negative effect on the external aspect of the brand. Davies (2008) suggested that employees can also be considered consumers in their own right, while simultaneously acting as ambassadors for the brand, promoting the core values which can be projected through their actions. Not only does this suggest that employees have multiple roles, but also can have an impact on how the brand is perceived by external audiences (Davies 2008). In addition de Chernatony (1999:162) considered all organisations have “*sub-cultures*”, which need to consistently support to the “*core culture*” of the corporate brand.

Mahnert and Torres (2007:55) argued brands acquire meaning not only externally in the mind of the consumer but also in the mind of the internal stakeholder. Bronn *et al.* (2006:888) suggested “*it is quite possible that an organisation’s desired identity may conflict with how its identity is conceived which conflicts with the actual identity which in turn clashes with the communicated identity*”. Additionally, Lievens *et al.* (2007)



considered that an insiders and outsiders perspective of a brand may be different and *“even employees will have different perceptions of the core elements of a company’s identity”* (Van Riel and Fombrun 2007:85). Therefore internal branding requires the same attention as external branding (Tosti and Stotz 2001), as this may highlight discrepancies between the two orientations.

Hatch and Schultz (2001) focused on the brand image, vision and culture of British Airways from an internal stakeholder perspective and highlighted the importance of ascertaining not only the desired identity but also the brand image from the perspective of internal stakeholders. It was found that many internal stakeholders were sending conflicting messages, which contradicted the call for all elements of the corporate brand to be aligned and interwoven (Hatch and Schultz 2001). Hatch and Schultz (1997:358) suggested organisations that *“make strong and consistent use”* of their name, logo, values, communications and actions can help to create a unified identity for their organisation. This is supported by Klink (2003). Klink (2003:145) considered that the internal dimension of a brand needs to adopt a consistent approach to using and projecting the brand signals including visual elements such as the organisation’s name, logo, symbols and colour, which ultimately should have a positive impact and elicit valuable meaning. In addition, White and de Chernatony (2002:47) argued that *“powerful brands communicate their values through every point of contact with consumers”*. Furthermore the brand *“cannot act, think or feel”* (Fournier 1998:345) except through the actions and activities projected by internal stakeholders to the external arena. Similar points were raised by Gylling and Lindberg-Repo (2005:258) in that branding requires *“clear direction, a coherent focus and communication of a consistent message to all stakeholders”*.

This consistent approach is not only restricted to the brand identity signals. Foster *et al.* (2010) called for alignment of an organisation's vision and employee's values, which will have an impact externally. Chong (2007) considered internal stakeholders that are aligned with an organisation's values have the ability to attain a competitive advantage by providing external stakeholders with experiences and examples of these values. Strong brands ensure internal stakeholders are closely aligned with the organisation values, while internal stakeholders that are misaligned with the organisation values find it difficult to promote and coherently communicate the organisation values (Chong 2007). Additionally, Ackerman (2000) cited in Chong (2007) believed internal stakeholders need to understand and believe in their brand values to consistently and appropriately communicate their values to stakeholders at large. It has also been suggested that internal stakeholders need to be consistent with their brand in order to be deemed credible by the external stakeholders (Van Riel and Fombrun 2007). *"A company will never be perceived as authentic if its employees don't believe and express the company's shared values in their day-to-day interactions"* with external audiences (Van Riel and Fombrun 2007:62). Ultimately, a coherent approach is desired internally coupled with an envisaged relationship with external audiences, which in turn may equate to a strong, successful aligned corporate brand.

Subsequently, a coherent approach within the organisation should apply to the tangible and intangible elements of the brand and successful brands have the full support and belief of internal stakeholders. With this in mind de Chernatony (2007:47) argued *"thought also needs to be given to the way customers perceive the brand, since their perception may be different to the intended projection"*. Therefore there is a call for understanding a brand from multiple perspectives, as brands have a role to play not only externally but also internally (Nilson and Surrey 1998). Furthermore Lievens *et al.* (2007:56) proposed it seems *"worthwhile to explore other frameworks that may be*

*useful for identifying and integrating the various components constituting organisational identity and image*” with a call for more qualitative-oriented methods in exploration of these complex relationships.

However, continuing with this holistic approach of recognising stakeholders from an internal and external standpoint cannot be considered a new practice within the context of political marketing. According to Lock and Harris (1996) as cited in Dean and Croft (2001:1200) *“internal and external links suggesting that political marketing concentrates on communication with party members, media, prospectus sources of funding as well as the electorate”*. Despite this increased recognition, there are limited studies that explore both internal and external stakeholder perspectives of brands especially in the context of political marketing (Schneider 2004). To add to this Lees-Marshment (2009:142) suggested that:

*“the relationship between members and the organisation is often overlooked...the values, attitudes and beliefs of members are germane and are usually overlooked, but parties and candidates need to hold closely related values”*.

Dean and Croft (2001:1204), argued that *“marketing is coming to be seen as the management of relationships between stakeholder groups”*. Thus, it is important to generate a deeper understanding of these relationships with particular reference to the sub-discipline of political marketing.

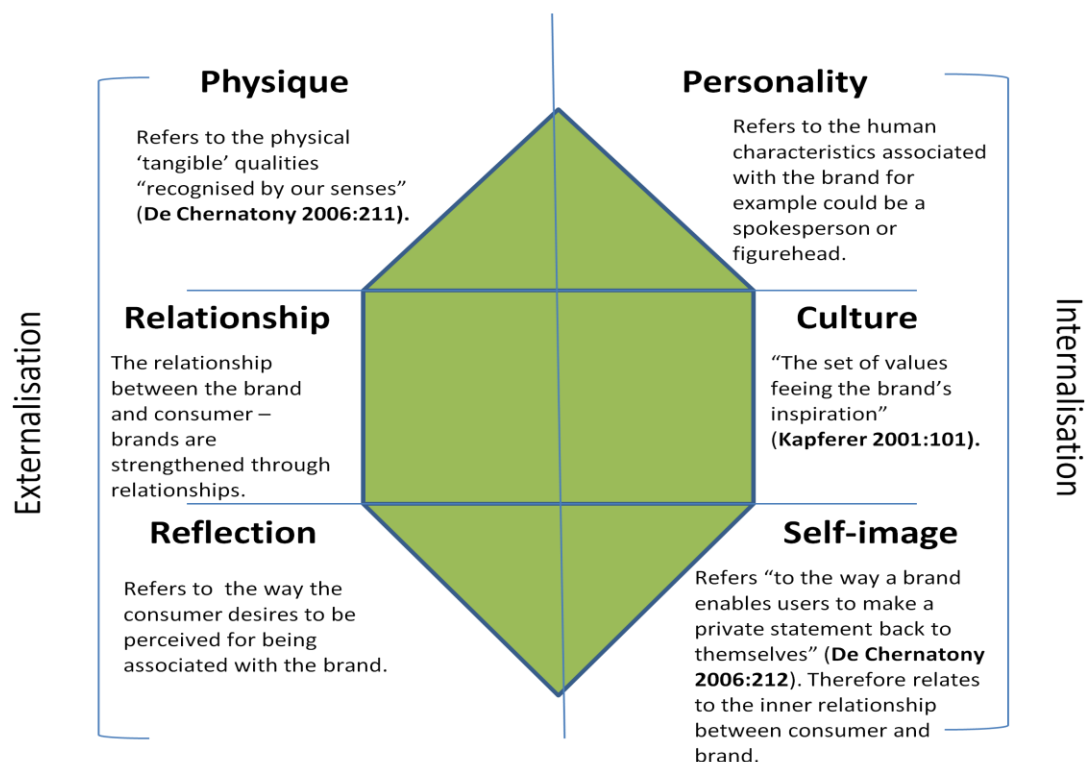
Consequently, this section demonstrated that there are strands within the branding literature that acknowledge the importance of understanding brands from the perspective of multiple stakeholders opposed to particular segments. This holistic approach in the existing branding literature also suggested that branding research can be viewed both internally and externally. Moreover, both perspectives require equal attention. Research in political marketing has recognised an holistic approach to stakeholders nevertheless there are no studies that explore both internal and external

perspectives of a political brand. Therefore the next step is to consider appropriate approaches within the branding literature that can assist in an internal and external exploration of a political brand.

## 2.6 Brand Identity

The concepts of *brand identity* and *brand image* may be useful approaches to generate a deeper understanding of the UK Conservative Party brand from an internal and external perspective. According to Kapferer (2008:171) the “*concept of brand identity is recent and slowly gaining worldwide recognition*” and growing in acceptance in academia and industry. Aaker (1996) considered a key to strengthening and building a brand is to assess and develop brand identity. Brand identity can be conceptualised as the intended projection formulated and communicated by the brand’s creator with the aim of attempting to establish a desired identity in the mind of the consumer (de Chernatony 2007; Joachimsthaler and Aaker 1997). Bosch *et al.* (2006:13) proposed brand identity is the “*aspired associations envisaged*” by internal stakeholders. In addition brand identity conveys what the brand stands for (Van Gelder 2005), “*represents the organisations reality*” (Nandan 2005:268), and regarded as an essential management tool (Kapferer 2008). Moreover the concept of brand identity focuses on the “*central ideas of a brand and how the brand communicates these ideas to stakeholders*” (de Chernatony 2007:45). Gylling and Lindberg-repo (2006:264) argued brand identity “*is defined as a set of brand associations which the marketer is aiming to create and obtain*”. In addition brand identity is all about vision and aspiration (Alsem and Kosteljik 2008), and “*has to be coherent, integrated, adaptable, durable and therefore dynamic and ready to change*” (Dahlen *et al.* 2010:204). The concept of brand identity is also complex and often explored under different conceptualisations and perspectives (Kapferer 2008:171).

According to de Chernatony (2006:211) there is a “*useful*” and “*powerful*” conceptualisation of brand identity provided by Kapferer (2008), known as the brand identity prism (de Chernatony 1999:165). de Chernatony (2006:213) considered that the brand identity prism not only assesses the competitive differentiation between competing brands “*but also provides an evaluation of the coherence of the brand. For an integrated brand each of the six identity components should reinforce each other*”. A visual aid to elaborate Kapferer’s brand identity prism can be seen below in figure 2.



**Figure 2: Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism**

(Reproduced from de Chernatony 2006; Fill 2006:397; Kapferer 2008)

According to Azoulay and Kapferer (2003:152) “*the brand identity prism captures the key facets of a brand's identity*”, and ultimately has the ability to generate a deeper understanding of a brand. Moreover, Kapferer’s “*graphical representation*” of brand identity (Dahlen *et al.* 2010:214), comprises of six facets or dimensions namely physique, personality, culture, relationship, reflection and self-image (Fill 2006; Kapferer 2008).

The *physique* dimension refers to the physical tangible qualities of a brand “*recognised by our senses*” (de Chernatony 2007:211). Kapferer (2008:182) described physique as “*both the brand’s backbone and its tangle added value...it is made of a combination of either salient objective features or emerging ones*”. These features are evident in the tactile packaging elements (Dahlen *et al.* 2010) of brands such as Orangina; in terms of the small round potion-like bottle, coca-cola; again in relation to the distinctive bottle which is present on all coca-cola branded products aimed to remind consumers of the brand’s heritage (Kapferer 2008). Furthermore the physical properties of confectionary brands such as Ferrero Rocher and After Eights, perfumery brands such as Chanel and Jean-Paul Gaultier contribute to their brand identities (Dahlen *et al.* 2010). Therefore it can be argued that the physique dimension may be extended to other tangible elements beyond a brand’s logo and colours.

The *personality* dimension refers to the figurehead/spokesperson of a brand (de Chernatony 2006; Kapferer 2001), and can also describe the brand’s distinctive style of communication (Gordon 1999). Harris and de Chernatony (2001:2) considered “*the brand’s emotional characteristics are represented by the metaphor personality, which amongst other sources evolves from the brand’s core values*”. In a corporate branding context brand personality traits are developed through associations with not only the brand’s figurehead but also internal and external stakeholders (Harris and de Chernatony 2001). Furthermore, Harris and de Chernatony (2001:2) conceived, “*managers therefore need to ensure that a brand’s personality is conveyed consistently by both its employees and external communications*”. Dahlen *et al.* (2010:215) ascribed “*the idea of a brand having a personality is manifest in the actual associations*” for example Sir Richard Branson and Virgin, and Anita Roddick and The Body Shop. The personality dimension can also include metaphorical associations such as Kellogg’s Frostie’s Tony the Tiger and Ronald the clown at McDonalds (Dahlen *et al.* 2010).

Gordon (1999:216) provided an example of brand personality in the context of the *Smirnoff Vodka* brand associating personality traits such as “*edgy, modern, assertive and surprising*” as a result of long-term communication campaigns.

de Chernatony (2007:212) proposed “*each brand comes from a unique culture*”. The culture of the Co-operative Bank brand has been described as ethically-orientated, while the culture of the Virgin brand has been proposed as ‘being a challenger’ (de Chernatony 1999). The *culture* dimension refers to “*the basic principles governing the brand in its outward signs...the set of values feeding the brand’s inspirational power*” which every product and communication should derive (Kapferer 2008:184). Similarly Dahlen *et al.* (2010:215) suggested the culture of a brand refers to the set of values that direct and inspire the brand’s focus. The Benetton brand’s focus on communicating innovation in producing colour while the Apple brand approach is to “*think outside the system*” which sets the organisation and brand apart from competition. Similarly the Mercedes brand conveys “*the spirit of order*” in Mercedes automobiles. In the context of corporate branding the cultural dimension outlined by Hatch and de Chernatony (2001:2) argued an organisation’s culture encompasses “*employee’s values and assumptions, which also guide their behaviour*”, and need to be consistent with the brand’s values as this may serve as a source of competitive advantage. Gordon (1999:216) builds on the *Smirnoff Vodka* brand example and portrays the culture as streetwise, cool, highly literate young drinkers and this is reflected in the marketing communications. In addition Gordon (1999:239) suggested a brand’s culture is also derived from the brand’s heritage which reveals a sense of belonging and purpose.

The *relationship* dimension reflects the relationship between the consumer and brand. de Chernatony (2007:212) considered brands succeed through relationships they develop with customers; while Kapferer (2008:185) argued “*brands are often at the*

*crux of transactions and exchanges between people*". Gordon (1999:217) acknowledged *"people have connections with brands just as they do with human beings. Some relationships are equal while others such as parent-child or teacher-student imply authority differences"*. For example, Nike suggests a *"peculiar relationship, based on provocation: it encourages us to let loose"* (Kapferer 2008:185). Similarly the Pot Noodle brand envisages an *"illicit"* somewhat *"sexual personality"* which equates to a *"guilty pleasure"* (Dahlen *et al.* 2010:215). Revisiting the Smirnoff vodka brand as an example the relationship is likened to *"two friends – one brave and extrovert"* which equates to Smirnoff while the consumer is considered *"in need of some encouragement"* (Gordon 1999:217). However, this dimension (Kapferer 2008) overlooks the relationship between internal stakeholders and the brand. Not only is there a relationship between internal stakeholders and the brand but to a certain extent internal stakeholders may be considered consumers too. This suggests the relationship dimension may be more complex than first thought.

Nonetheless this was recognised by de Chernatony (1999) and Harris and de Chernatony (2001). Furthermore, de Chernatony (1999) and Harris and de Chernatony (2001) built on Kapferer's (1997) *"brand-based view on identity"* (Harris and de Chernatony 2001:2) and applied the framework to a corporate branding context. Harris and de Chernatony (2001) suggested a reciprocal relationship exists between the consumer and brand, which is shaped by internal stakeholders namely employees. In addition *"managers need to help employees understand the types of relationships that are appropriate with other employees, consumers and other stakeholders, based on the brand's core values"* (Harris and de Chernatony 2001:3). Subsequently, it may be seen that there are multiple relationships in reference to the brand, which all actively participate and contribute to the consistency of the brand (de Chernatony 1999).



The *reflection* dimension of Kapferer's brand identity prism often termed the user-image (Gordon 1999), refers to the kind of person that would be associated with the brand. In addition the reflection dimension refers to the way the envisaged consumer desires to be perceived, which in turn provides a framework with which to identify (de Chernatony 2006; Gordon 1999; Kapferer 2001). Dahlen *et al.* (2010:215) argued "*the brand should be a reflection of who consumers would like to be not who they actually are*", suggesting the reflection is envisaged and not necessarily reality. Kapferer (2008:186) suggested reflection and targeting "*often get mixed up. The target describes the brand's potential purchasers or users. Reflecting the customer is not describing the target...it provides a model with which to identify*". Despite that there is often confusion between reflection and target audience all brands must control their reflection otherwise this may cause problems for the brand (Kapferer 2008). In addition Dahlen *et al.* (2010:215) proposed image building and self-creation is crucial with particular reference to high-street fashion brand Marks and Spencer. Marks and Spencer "*corrected the way their target audience is reflected in their communications by using aspirational role models such as Twiggy and Myleene Klass to convey idealised personalities and image*". This dimension provides insight into the characteristics in association with the brand and focuses on a reflected image desired by the consumer (Gordon 1999:239).

Finally, de Chernatony (2006:212) argued that the *self-image* dimension of Kapferer's identity prism refers "*to the way a brand enables users to make a private statement back to themselves*". This ultimately relates to the inner relationship between the consumer and brand (Kapferer 2001). Gordon (1999) suggested brands can be seen as badges that reflect certain characteristics of the individual and the self-image dimension provides insight into the symbolic meaning, personal opinion and beliefs not just about themselves but also brands. Dahlen *et al.* (2010:216) provided the example of Weight-

Watchers suggesting this reflects “*individuality, conscience, achievement, innovation, knowledge or conspicuous demonstration of wealth or status*”.

Dahlen *et al.* (2010) proposed the physique, relationship and reflection are considered social dimensions that form a brand's outward (external) expression. In contrast the personality, culture and self-image dimensions form a brand's inward (internal) expression (Dahlen *et al.* 2010) and “*are those incorporated within the brand itself, within its spirit*”, (Kapferer 2008:187). Therefore, Kapferer's brand identity prism is divided into outward and inward expressions; desired identity and internal current identity. Additionally the brand identity prism also includes a vertical division which can be subdivided into sender (physique and personality) and receiver (reflection and self-image). Moreover Kapferer (2008:187) suggested the relationship and culture dimensions “*bridge the gap between sender and recipient*”. Ultimately, this suggests that the identity of a brand is an important and complex construct (Dahlen *et al.* 2010).

Nevertheless, the distinction and divisions within the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008) present a number of key points. It is unclear whether the brand identity prism exclusively addresses the concept of ‘brand identity’ or addresses both ‘brand identity’ and ‘brand image’ as the framework discusses external/receiver. Moreover, Kapferer (2008) makes the distinction between ‘sender’ and ‘receiver’ and proposes the receiver refers to the way in which certain ‘groups’ opposed to ‘consumers’ decode all the signals emitted from the brand. Therefore, Kapferer (2008) makes the distinction yet does not articulate or elaborate on this in the brand identity prism or acknowledge the conceptualisation of ‘brand image’ within the brand identity prism. It must be remembered that brand identity and brand image are distinct yet related concepts (Dinnie 2008; Nandan 2005). Furthermore brand image will be discussed in detail later in this section.

Ultimately, it is unclear whether the brand identity prism can be used to explore an exclusively internal perspective or used to explore an internal and external perspective. Given that Kapferer (2008) made the distinction between sender and receiver, internal stakeholders can be considered 'receivers' equally as external stakeholders. Nonetheless, the existing literature fails to clearly articulate this point (Dahlen *et al.* 2010; Fill 2006; Kapferer 2008; Kapferer 2001; de Chernatony 2007; Harris and de Chernatony 2001). However de Chernatony (1999) and Harris and de Chernatony (2001) adopted and adapted the brand identity prism (Kapferer 1997) to a completely internal stakeholder perspective and explored the communication gaps between sender (identity) and receiver (reputation).

In addition, Kapferer (2008) fails to provide detailed clarification of the internal-external divisions within the brand identity prism, with some authors not acknowledging or conceptualising some of the divisions at all (Azoulay and Kapferer 2003; Dahlen *et al.* 2010; de Chernatony 2007; Harris and de Chernatony 2001). It is unknown whether this lack of clarity and understanding is intentional, allowing a degree of flexibility with the brand identity prism to be applied in different settings at the discretion of the researcher. Finally, the existing literature on the brand identity prism tends to adopt a descriptive illustration of brand identity (Kapferer 2008; Dahlen *et al.* 2010; Gordon 1999; Fill 2006), rather than an operational and exploratory approach. An operational and exploratory approach remains limited (de Chernatony 1999; Harris and de Chernatony 2001). Therefore, the brand identity prism requires greater articulation and understanding.

Nonetheless de Chernatony (2007) considered the brand identity prism is a tool to assess and evaluate the identity of a brand. Furthermore Kapferer (2008:187) proposed the six dimensions:

*“Define the identity of a brand as well as the boundaries within which it is free to change or to develop. The brand identity prism demonstrates that these facets are all interrelated and form a well-structured entity. The content of one facet echoes that of another”.*

Therefore, the concept of brand identity focuses on the envisaged vision of the brand from the perspective of internal stakeholders and also addresses the current internal dimensions of a brand's identity. In addition, Kapferer (2008:187) claimed that the brand identity prism “*helps us to understand the essence*” of a brand's identity and therefore may generate a deeper understanding of the current and envisaged identity of a political brand. Moreover, the applicability of Kapferer's conceptualisation of brand identity has not been extended to the context of political branding. This raises the proposition how applicable is the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008) to the context of political marketing. Therefore, it is useful to assess the transfer potential (Schneider 2004) of the six dimensions of brand identity (Kapferer 2008) in exploration of the UK Conservative Party brand from an internal perspective.

## 2.7 Brand Image

Brand image is in contrast to brand identity and focuses on the exploration of a brand from an external perspective. According to Keller (1993) brand image is recognised as an important concept in the field of marketing with an agreed understanding that some brands harbour images (Aaker and Biel 1993). However, “*since the 1950s marketers have struggled to come to grips with brand image*” (Aaker and Biel 1993:67) thus there has been far less consensus of what images are, how they are developed, how to understand them, the worth of brand images and no agreed universal definition (Aaker and Biel 1993; Keller 1993). Additionally, there are various conceptualisations of image (Aaker and Biel 1993; Gordon cited in Cowley 1999; Johns and Glymothy 2008), applied in many disciplines including marketing practice (Poiesz 1989). Subsequently,

despite brand image becoming a “*common term in marketing research and practice*” (Henrik and Fredrik 2006:32), the concept remains broad in definition and application, and “*sometimes inconsistent*” in terms of meaning in marketing literature (Knox and Freeman 2006:696).

For example, Dutton and Dukerich (1991), proposed *image* is how internal stakeholders of an organisation believe people outside the organisation perceive the organisation. Aaker and Biel (1993:69) considered brand image is a “*concept originated and owned by marketers and advertising specialists*”. Petromilli and Michalczyk (1999) suggested brand image is a combination of the current identity projected by the brand’s creator and persona seen as the personality of the brand ascribed by the consumer. Brand image has also been defined “*as the consumer’s mental picture of the offering*” (Cretu and Brodie 2007:231), and “*the current associations*” (Aaker and Joachimsthaler 2002:40). Mengxia (2007:36) proposed brand image “*is the set of mental representations, emotional and/or cognitive an individual or a group of individuals ascribe to a brand or to an organisation*”. de Chernatony (1999:173) considered brand image is a short-term perspective, which focuses “*on the most recent impression*” consumers ascribe to a brand.

Nevertheless, these definitions typically share the idea that brand image is a set of perceptions about a brand reflected by brand associations (Chen 2010). However the distinction appears to be in the ownership of brand image and whether brand image is created internally by the brand’s creators or created externally in the mind of the consumer. Davies and Chun (2002:145) considered brand image “*is defined as not what the company believes itself to be but what customers believe or feel about the company from their experiences and observations*”. Nandan (2005) addressed this distinction and sees *brand image* as consumer centric, created in the mind of the consumer whereas

*brand identity* represents the envisaged identity of the brand formulated and maintained by the organisation. An element of the manifestation of brand image is aided by the desired brand identity. However consumers can have an image of a brand even before receiving the internally constructed communications (Bosch *et al.* 2006; Nandan 2005). This suggests brand identity plays a role in brand image creation (Nandan 2005).

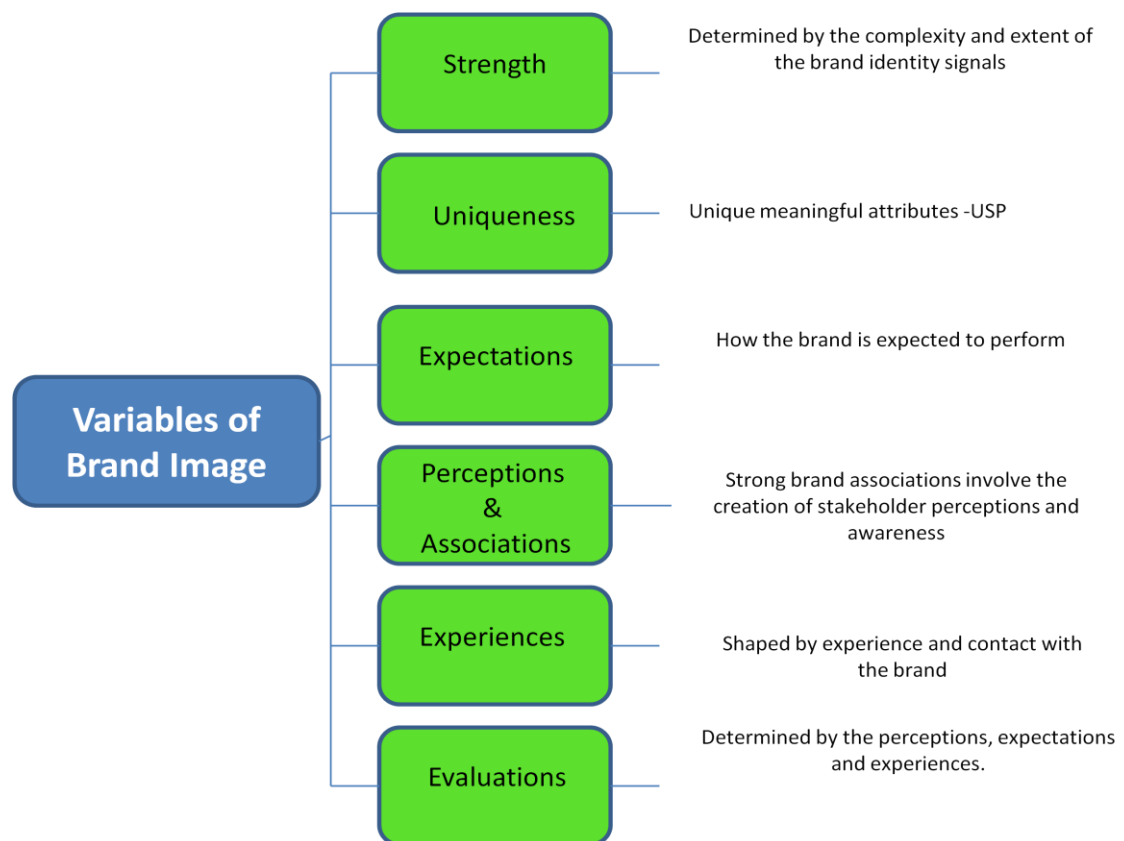
The concepts of brand image and brand identity are often used interchangeably and there is much misunderstanding of these two concepts (Nandan 2005; Wong 2010). This research accepts brand identity can be seen as the “*aspired associations envisaged by the brand creators*” (Bosch *et al.* 2006:13), and brand image can be seen as “*the perceptions of a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory*” (Bosch *et al.* 2006:13). Therefore, this research adopts the notion that brand image is created by the consumer and “*is the understanding that consumers derive from the total set of brand related activities engaged in by the organisation...image research focuses on the way in which certain groups perceive a product, service or brand*” (Bosch *et al.* 2006:38).

Having broadly conceptualised brand image, the next step was to explore brand image in greater detail and focus on the attributes of brand image (Nandan 2005). de Chernatony (2007:47) considered there is a need to understand “*the way customers perceive the brand, since their perceptions may be different from the intended projections*” and often out of control of the brand’s creator (Rekom *et al.* 2006). Padgett and Allen (1997:50) suggested the foundation of the concept of brand image “*is an understanding of the attributes and functional consequences, and the symbolic meanings, consumers associate*” with a brand. Similarly, Chen (2010:309) argued “*brand image covers functional benefits, symbolic benefits and experiential benefits*”

therefore the reasoned or emotional perceptions consumers ascribe to brands need to be understood (Cretu and Brodie 2007; Low and Lamb 2000).

McEnally and de Chernatony (1999) called for a greater understanding of the brand image creation process from a consumer perspective. Additionally, research specialising in brand image is leaner than brand identity (Chen 2010; Cretu and Brodie 2007; Guzman and Sierra 2009; Henrik and Fredrik 2006; Johns and Glymothy 2008; Knox and Freeman 2006; Poiesz 1989; Smith 2001) and there are calls for more empirical research in brand image (Alsem and Kosteljik 2008). Nevertheless, there are a limited number of studies which focus on the concept of brand image. Brand image has been broadly applied to the pub-chain Wetherspoon's (Jones *et al.* 2002), the healthcare profession (Petromilli and Michalczyk 1999), countries (Lee and Jain 2009), political entities (Guzman and Sierra 2009; Phipps *et al.* 2010; Schneider 2004) and traditional Danish pubs, (Johns and Glymothy 2008). Despite this, the majority of studies approach brand image from different perspectives in terms of definition, philosophical standpoint, and methodological approaches. Subsequently, with limited research into the exploration of brand image, researchers face the problem of how to conceptualise, structure and assess brand image research.

Nonetheless, Bosch *et al.* (2006) identified six variables from the existing literature on brand image. The six variables include *strength*, *uniqueness*, *expectations*, *perceptions* and *associations*, *experiences* and *evaluations*. Furthermore these six variables form the brand image framework (Bosch *et al.* 2006). A visual aid to illustrate these variables can be seen in figure 3 on p.72.



**Figure 3: The Brand Image Framework**

(Reproduced from Bosch et al. 2006)

Figure 3 provides a broad overview of each variable which shapes brand image and supports the idea that brand image is consumer centric and largely subjective (Bosch *et al.* 2006). The *strengths* variable is determined by the extent of the brand identity signals that external stakeholders are exposed to and the complexity of decoding the signals. The *uniqueness* is an important variable of brand image and includes identifying unique meaningful attributes which distinguishes the brand thus creating a competitive advantage. The uniqueness of the brand should also serve as a reason *why* stakeholders should embrace the brand and should be communicated by the internal stakeholders of the brand (Bosch *et al.* 2006). While the third variable of brand image proposed by Bosch *et al.* (2006), *expectations*, focuses on how consumers expect the brand to perform. These prospective attributes provide insight into the outlook consumers association with the brand. The fourth variable explores the *perceptions and*



*association's* external stakeholders ascribe to the brands and also highlight brand awareness and a greater understanding a brand's image. The *experiences* variable refers to the experience and contact the consumer has with the brand. While the *evaluations* variable refers to how brand users interpret and evaluate the brand and related marketing information determined by the perceptions and associations, expectations and experiences (Bosch *et al.* 2006).

The six associations presented by Bosch *et al.* (2006) provides a pragmatic approach to illustrate the image of a brand by revealing deeper associations and a greater understanding of the brand in question. However, this systematic framework outlined by Bosch *et al.* (2006) fails to explicitly provide a distinction between reasoned and emotional attributes unlike the limited brand image approaches/frameworks (Aaker and Biel 1993; Johns and Gylmothy 2008). Further to this, the brand image framework (Bosch *et al.* 2006) in part requires greater clarification as a number of the conceptualised variables appear vague and often confusing. More specifically, Bosch *et al.* (2006) provides clear and practical conceptualisation for the uniqueness variable, perceptions and association's variable and expectations variable. However, Bosch *et al.* (2006) provides limited elaboration for the strengths variable, and experiences variable. Bosch *et al.* (2006) fails to provide a detailed understanding of what is meant by the 'extent' and complexity' within the strengths variable. Similarly the conceptualisation of the experiences variable appears indistinct and also requires clarity (Bosch *et al.* 2006). Furthermore, the evaluations variable appears to be a replication of the expectations variable, perceptions and association's variable and experiences variable and seems to disregard the strengths variable and uniqueness variable (Bosch *et al.* 2006). Nonetheless, this confusion and vagueness within the brand image framework may be due to the fact that the framework has only been conceptualised and applied in one study and has not been transferred to research beyond Bosch *et al.* (2006).

Nevertheless, the conceptualisation provided by Bosch *et al.* (2006) is embedded in the current brand image literature and forms part of a published study investigating the impact of brand identity on the perceived brand image of a merged higher education institution. This raises the proposition how applicable is the brand image framework (Bosch *et al.* 2006) to the context of political marketing. Therefore, the framework outlined by Bosch *et al.* (2006) may provide a pragmatic and flexible tool to explore the external brand image of the UK Conservative Party. Further to this, the applicability of the six brand image variables to political marketing research will contribute to brand image research and political marketing research by transferring the brand image framework to a new area of study.

## 2.8 Brand Identity-Image

The concepts of brand identity and brand image are considered relational nevertheless distinct (Dinnie 2008; Nandan 2005) and can be adopted to explore whether a communication gap exists between the two concepts. Moreover, Dahlen *et al.* (2010:213) argued the “*distinction between brand identity and brand image is acute and is one which is fundamental to understanding how successful brands work*”. Despite the interchangeable nature and often contrasting perspectives of brand identity and brand image (Chapleo 2004, Davies and Chun 2002; Gylling and Lindberg-Repo 2006; Harris and de Chernatony 2001, Wong 2010), many authors including Alsem and Kosteljik 2008, Bosch *et al.* 2006, Dahlen *et al.* 2010, de Chernatony 1999, Healey 2010, Johns and Glymothy 2008, Jones *et al.* 2002, Kapferer 2008, Nandan 2005, Petromilli and Michalczyk 1999, Phipps *et al.* 2010, Schneider 2004, Turi and Brunet 2009 and Van Gelder 2005 broadly equate a distinction between the two concepts. Further to this, there have been few attempts of exploring the identity and image of a brand comparably, which can be seen in table 2 on p.75.

**Table 2: Existing Brand Identity and Brand Image Research**

Reference	Research Focus
<b>Bosch <i>et al.</i> (2006)</b>	Measured impact of brand identity on the perceived brand image NMMU
<b>de Chernatony (1999)</b>	Narrowing the gap between brand identity and brand reputation from an internal perspective
<b>Harris and de Chernatony (2001)</b>	Discussed the implications of corporate branding in managing internal brand resources with particular focus on brand identity and brand reputation.
<b>Roy and Banerjee (2007)</b>	Developed a strategic approach to integrate discrepancy gaps between identity and image
<b>Davies and Chun (2002)</b>	Measured gaps between internal and external perceptions of a corporate brand

Bosch *et al.* (2006) investigated the impact of brand identity on the perceived brand image of a merged higher education institution; the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. It was found that there were perceived differences between the brand identity and brand image of NMMU and these discrepancy gaps would need to be addressed by performing a comprehensive SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis (Bosch *et al.* 2006).

de Chernatony (1999) adapted the brand identity prism (Kapferer 1997). de Chernatony (1999) applied the brand identity prism to the context of corporate branding with particular focus on brand identity and brand reputation, organisational culture and addressed discrepancies between managers and employees. Rather than focusing on the concept of brand image, de Chernatony (1999:170) adopted the concept of ‘brand reputation’, considered more long-term and a stable understanding of perceptions while ‘image’ addresses the latest perceptions and considered more short-term, (de Chernatony 1999). When the identity-image gap becomes noticeable, it acts a trigger for change, and to base changes on short-term, current perceptions can be problematic, therefore ‘reputation’ rather than ‘image’ was more suitable in de Chernatony (1999). The ‘adapted’ brand identity prism (de Chernatony 1999) was employed to investigate *both* brand identity and brand reputation. However, brand identity and brand reputation are two separate yet related concepts and require greater distinction and elaboration especially in de Chernatony (1999), which focused more on brand identity with limited focus on brand reputation. Nevertheless, presenting a more comparable tool to

investigate brand identity and brand reputation would be welcomed and de Chernatony (1999) may be seen as a development towards achieving this.

The modified brand identity tool presented in de Chernatony (1999) was adopted by Harris and de Chernatony (2001) and explored the implications of corporate branding for the management of internal brand resources. In addition, Harris and de Chernatony (2001) proposed the adapted model provides a balanced approach in brand building by not only understanding internal identity components but also reputational components. It was proposed that “*corporate branding requires a consistent message about a brand’s identity and uniform delivery across all stakeholder groups to create a favourable brand reputation*” (Harris and de Chernatony 2001:3). Additionally, Harris and de Chernatony (2001:3) conceived “*internal consistency and congruency are vital to the successful external communication of corporate identity*”. Furthermore, Harris and de Chernatony (2001) provided distinct definitions of brand identity and brand reputation and suggested both concepts can be explored under one model. Brand identity was defined as how managers and employees envisage and communicate the identity of a brand, while reputation was considered the long-term and stable understanding of perceptions associated with the brand (de Chernatony 1999; Harris and de Chernatony 2001). Therefore, de Chernatony (1999) and Harris and de Chernatony (2001) recognised the two concepts can be explored under one model however the applicability of the model requires greater clarity which would ease comparability between identity and reputation. In addition, de Chernatony (1999) and Harris and de Chernatony (2001) have yet to publish further empirical testing relating to their ‘adapted’ brand identity prism.

Roy and Banerjee (2007) developed a systematic approach towards integrating a brand’s identity with its brand image once discrepancy gaps between identity and image

had been explored and determined. This conceptual paper concluded with the development of the 'BRAND DERBY MATRIX AND CARE-ing Strategy' that aims to constructively integrate the brand identity and brand image. Something desired by brand planners. Nevertheless, this approach has yet to be applied and does not address the exploration of the distinct yet related concepts of brand identity and brand image.

Davies and Chun (2002) quantitatively assessed the gaps between the internal and external perceptions of a corporate brand namely a department store. They proposed that the internal and external elements of the brand need to be aligned and adopted a standardised corporate personality scale to measure the internal identity and external image. There had been few attempts of assessing brand identity and brand image using a quantitative approach and argued that it is virtually impossible to comparably explore the identity and image of a brand qualitatively. This thesis will explore this claim. Moreover, this paper identified discrepancy gaps between the internally held brand identity and externally held brand image of department stores. This was the first occasion that discrepancy gaps between brand identity and brand image had been "*simultaneously*" (Davies and Chun 2002:146) identified and quantified. Nevertheless, this paper raised questions relating to why the gaps exist, something the research study could not answer.

Subsequently, Nandan (2005) and Bosch *et al.* (2006) argued that a brand's identity may not be perceived in the same way by the consumer, with separate constructs existing. Similarly, Dinnie (2008:42) considered "*evidently, there is frequently a gap between these two states. The identity-image gap tends to be a negative factor*" when the perceptions are not synchronised with the desired effect. Furthermore, the gap needs to be as small as possible or eliminated for the brand to be considered strong, trusted and valued which can also increase loyalty (Nandan 2005).

The possibility of gaps between identity and image need to be routinely monitored to prevent potential crises for the brand (Davies and Chun 2002; de Chernatony 1999). In corporate branding it is argued that gaps between identity and image can be considered negatively and ideally identity and image should be aligned (Davies and Chun 2002:145). Additionally, Davies and Chun (2002:146) argued that any identity-image gaps should concern an organisation and for gaps to be minimised, they have to be measured. Nevertheless, in order for identity-image gaps to be measured, the two concepts have to be explored and assessed to determine whether there are any gaps between brand identity and brand image (de Chernatony 2007).

Aligning these identities in the words of Bronn *et al.* (2006:888):

*“can be challenging...the key...lies in the examination of actual identity. Finding out ‘who we are’ can establish the basis for who we tell others we are...it is also clear that actual identity, the real ‘who we are’ starts with the employees”.*

In addition, *“the principle task of uncovering identity is exploration”* (Bronn *et al.* 2006:889). Nevertheless, in terms of generating an understanding of envisaged internal identity, exploratory research is required. This also applies to the exploration the brand from an external perspective, which may highlight internal and external discrepancies. Davies and Chun (2002) argued more research is needed to assess the way in which image and identity simultaneously develop, with calls for more empirical research devoted to external brand image and internal brand identity research (Alsem and Kosteljik 2008; Chen 2010; Cretu and Brodie 2007; Davies and Chun 2002; de Chernatony 2007; Guzman and Sierra 2009; Henrik and Fredrik 2006; Johns and Glymothy 2008; Kapferer 2008; Knox and Freeman 2006; Poiesz 1989).

## 2.9 Summary

Consequently, this chapter presented the existing literature and highlighted a distinct gap in the body of knowledge in that there is no in-depth qualitative exploration of a political brand from the perspective of both internal and external stakeholders. The majority of research in this area has tended to adopt a measurable, quantitative (French and Smith 2010), singular approach (Schneider 2004; Smith and French 2009) with exploratory and more qualitative research required (Peng and Hackley 2009; Smith 2005). Moreover, this study acknowledged a holistic view within the branding literature in understanding brands from the standpoint of multiple stakeholders accompanied with calls for useful frameworks to assist in this exploration (Hatch and Schultz 1997; Lievens *et al.* 2007). This chapter highlighted the “*transfer potential*” (Schneider 2004:60) of concepts within the branding literature that have yet to be applied to a political brand.

The concepts of brand identity (Kapferer 2008) and brand image (Bosch *et al.* 2006) may be appropriate and useful approaches in generating a deeper insight into the UK Conservative Party brand (de Chernatony 2006; Lievens *et al.* 2007). Furthermore there have been few attempts of exploring the identity and image of a brand comparably (Bosch *et al.* 2006; de Chernatony 1999; Harris and de Chernatony 2001). The majority of studies merely make reference to the two concepts and focus on either brand identity or brand image (Johns and Glymothy 2008; Turi and Brunet 2009). Moreover, there are no studies that comparably explore the identity and image of a ‘political brand’.

Given that the concept of brand identity focuses on the current and envisaged identity of a brand internally created and projected, the brand identity prism will be adopted to explore the brand identity of the UK Conservative Party from an internal stakeholder perspective. This will avoid contradiction of adopting the concept brand identity yet discussing ‘brand image’ or external elements. Thus internal stakeholders are seen as

both ‘sender’ and ‘receiver’; appropriate to explore the desired outwardly expressed identity (physique, relationship and reflection) and the inwardly current identity (personality, culture and self-image). Further to this, it could be argued that the conceptualisation is multifaceted, complex and requires greater understanding. Moreover, by critically evaluating the applicability of the brand identity prism to a new research area will go some way in addressing these points. Therefore, it is appropriate to extend the conceptualisation to political marketing and provide a much needed operational exploratory approach to brand identity prism research.

Additionally, the brand identity prism will provide a degree of structure to the exploration of the political brand from an internal perspective achieved by mapping the findings onto the six dimensions of brand identity (Kapferer 2008). The physique dimension of the brand identity prism will focus on the physical tangible qualities of the political brand and will go beyond the political brand’s logo and colours (Dahlen *et al.* 2010; de Chernatony 2007; Gordon 1999; Kapferer 2008). The personality dimension of the brand identity prism will reflect the figurehead/spokesperson of the UK Conservative Party brand (de Chernatony 2006; Kapferer 2001). The culture dimension of the brand identity prism will focus on the core values and heritage of the political brand (Gordon 1999; Kapferer 2001). The relationship dimension can be surmised as the relationship between the political brand and consumer (de Chernatony 2006; Kapferer 2001). The reflection dimension will provide insight into the desired image of the consumer and not necessarily the actual targeted consumer (Dahlen *et al.* 2010; Gordon 1999; Kapferer 2008). Finally, the self-image dimension will relate to the inner relationship between the internal stakeholder and political brand (Kapferer 2001). This is the first occasion the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008) has been applied to a political marketing context and adds to the limited operational application of the brand identity prism (de Chernatony 1999; Harris and de Chernatony 2001).



As the concept of brand image centres on the set of perceptions external stakeholders ascribe to a brand reflected in the brand associations (Chen 2010), the brand image framework (Bosch *et al.* 2006) will be adopted to generate a deeper understanding of the brand image of the UK Conservative Party brand from an external perspective. Furthermore, the concept of brand image is consistent with the exploration of the UK Conservative Party brand from an external perspective. Insight into brand image per se is lean with greater elaboration needed (Chen 2010; Cretu and Brodie 2007; Henrik and Fredrik 2006; Johns and Gylmothy 2008; Knox and Freeman 2006; Poiesz 1989; Smith 2001) especially in the context of political marketing (Guzman and Sierra 2009). In addition, there are limited studies that focus on brand image particularly the assessment and organisation of the qualitative data (Davies and Chun 2002).

Similar to phase one of this study, the brand image framework will provide a degree of structure to the exploration of the political brand from an external perspective achieved by mapping the findings onto the six variables of brand image (Bosch *et al.* 2006). The strengths variable of the brand image framework will focus on the brand identity signals communicated by the UK Conservative Party brand from the standpoint of external stakeholders. The uniqueness variable will broadly centre on the unique attributes external stakeholders relate to the UK Conservative Party brand. The expectations variable will focus on how external stakeholders expect the political brand to perform it were successful at the 2010 UK General Election. The perceptions and associations variable will refer to the mental representations that external stakeholders ascribe to the UK Conservative Party brand. The experiences variable will focus on the contact the external stakeholder has with the political brand. Finally, the evaluations variable will be determined by reconsidering the expectations, perceptions and associations and experiences variables. Ultimately, this study will assess the applicability of the six variables of brand image (Bosch *et al.* 2006) to a new research area. Furthermore, this

study will develop the understanding of the brand image framework and provide much needed clarity to the conceptualisation put forward by Bosch *et al.* (2006). Therefore, it is appropriate to extend the conceptualisation to a political context and provide a much needed exploratory approach to brand image research which will ultimately contribute to the limited research on brand image.

Accordingly this study will explore the UK Conservative Party brand from an internal and external perspective with the aid of the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008) and the brand image framework (Bosch *et al.* 2006) that have yet to be applied in the exploration of a political brand. Furthermore, this study will assess the applicability of the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008) and the brand image framework (Bosch *et al.* 2006) to a political marketing context. In addition, this will not only reveal insight from two perspectives but also highlight whether consistencies and discrepancies are present between the two concepts. Ultimately, this study will add to the under-researched and under-developed nature of political marketing (Harris and Lock 2010; Henneberg and O'shaughnessy 2007; Moufahim and Lim 2009; Lees-Marshment 2009; Lilleker *et al.* 2006; Osuagwu 2008; Smith 2009). The following chapter presents the methodological framework for the study.

### 3 Methodology

#### 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapters discussed the literature in the context of political marketing with particular focus on branding. This chapter will address the methodology of the study including the philosophical underpinnings, research approach, research methods, sampling and the analytical process. According to Creswell (2007), research begins with a problem or issue which serves as a cornerstone for the rationale of the study and gradually formulates the overall research question. This previous chapter identified that there had been no in-depth qualitative exploration of a political brand from the perspective of internal and external stakeholders particularly in the context of political marketing. This gap informed the research question (Creswell 2007). Ultimately, the overall research question for this thesis focuses on *‘how can we understand the complexity of the UK Conservative Party brand from an internal and external perspective under the leadership of David Cameron’*. Moreover, the research aim and objectives of the study were:

#### 3.2 Research Aim

- To understand the UK Conservative Party brand from an internal and external orientation and assess the transfer potential of the brand identity prism and brand image framework to political branding research.

### 3.3 Research Objectives


- Explore the envisaged and current brand identity of the UK Conservative brand from the perspective of internal stakeholders.
- Generate a deeper understanding of the brand image of the UK Conservative Party from the perspective of external stakeholders.
- Examine the consistency and coherency between the envisaged brand identity held by internal stakeholders and the brand image of the UK Conservative Party projected by external stakeholders.

### 3.4 Methodological Approach

After clearly identifying the research purpose (Creswell 2007), the focus turns to the development of a coherent and appropriate (Krueger 1998) methodological approach in which to address the aims, objectives and research question (Taylor and Bogdam 1984). Moreover, the research purpose along with the aims, objectives and research question drive the methodological approach (Ellram 1996; Graziano and Raulin 2004; Kvale 1996; Smircich 1980; Taylor and Bogdam 1984). This includes the ontological and epistemological assumptions (Van Maanen *et al.* 2007), selecting appropriate research methods (Graziano and Raulin 2004), analysis (Krueger 1996), and the researcher's own philosophical standpoint, (Taylor and Bogdam 1984). Difficulties are said to emerge when there is a mismatch between the aims, objectives and questions, and the methodological approach of the study including the suitability of the research methods (Graziano and Raulin 2004). Therefore, the methodological approach requires a degree of consistency and appropriateness to ensure a successful research study addresses the overall goal of the research (Ellram 1996; Krueger 1998; Kvale 1996; Taylor and Bogdam 1984).

By establishing the ontological and epistemological assumptions of the researcher it will assist to clarify research design, consider the evidence and highlight the appropriate methods in which to conduct the research (Ambert *et al.* 1995; Bryman and Bell 2003; Creswell 2007). Foddy (2001) argued that it is crucial to understand the philosophical assumptions as they inevitably influence the way researchers go about formulating research questions, collecting data and analysis. This is echoed by Creswell (2007) who argued that the research design process begins with grounding the philosophical assumptions. Additionally, it will highlight limitations and address the interpretation process (Proctor 2003). According to Smircich (1980), the philosophical debate can be divided into two assumptions, which are at polar opposites on the subjective/objective assumptions continuum. A table of basic assumptions characterising the subjective/objective debate can be seen in table 3 on p.85.

**Table 3: A Network of Basic Philosophical Assumptions**



	Subjectivist					Objectivist
<b>Ontological Assumptions</b>	Reality as a projection of human imagination	Reality as a social construction	Reality as a realm of symbolic discourse	Reality as a contextual field of information	Reality as a concrete process	Reality as a concrete structure
<b>Assumptions about Human Nature</b>	Man as pure spirit, consciousness being	Man as a social constructor, the symbolic creator	Man as an actor, the symbolic user	Man as an information processor	Man as an adaptor	Man as a responder
<b>Epistemological Stance</b>	To obtain phenomenological insight, revelation	To understand how social reality is created	To understand patterns of symbolic discourse	To map contexts	To study systems, process, change	To construct a positivist science
<b>Research Methods</b>	Exploration of pure subjectivity	Hermeneutics	Symbolic Analysis	Contextual Analysis of Gestalten	Historical Analysis	Lab experiments, surveys

(Reproduced from Smircich (1980:492) highlighting the subjective/objective debate within social science)

### 3.5 Ontology

Burrell and Morgan (1994) considered that the ontological assumption explores the very essence of the proposed research and focuses on *how* the researcher interprets reality (Creswell 2007). Furthermore the ontological nature raises interesting questions such as

whether the researcher views the world objectively or subjectively. Linking back to the continuum in table 3 on p.85, *objectivity* avoids using personal biases and beliefs and beholds the world (reality) as a concrete structure. Additionally, the ontological assumption from an objective perspective accepts:

*“that the social world is basically a mathematically ordered universe in which everything that exists, exists in number form and accordingly the objective data of a science of the social world must be quantifiable”, (Kvale 1996:67).*

Contrastingly, on the opposite end of the continuum displayed in table 3, *subjectivist*, researchers’ believe there is no external reality, reality is the creation of one’s own mind (Trochim and Donnelly 2007) thus there are multiple variations of reality (Creswell 2007). Mick and Buhl (1992:318) proposed that *“each person sees the world differently to a substantial degree, and human phenomena must be studied as they are subjectively lived and experienced”*. Furthermore, Proctor (2003) Goodall (2000) and Maitland-Gholson and Ettinger (1994) agreed that reality is socially constructed and accept that there is no single objective reality and that meaning is subjective from person to person and cannot be considered objectively (Goddard 1998). Similarly, Burrell and Morgan (1994:4) suggested that the social world is *“external to individual cognition made up of nothing more than names, concepts and labels which are used to structure reality”*. Nevertheless, these names, concepts and labels structure reality and can be seen as universally shared and can possess subjective and varied meaning from person to person (Goddard 1998).

Subsequently, in order to explore the multiple variations of reality and subjective unique interpretations of the UK Conservative Party brand, this research adopts a subjectivist ontological stance. Furthermore a subjectivist ontological stance can be considered consistent in exploring the multidimensional and socially constructed nature of brands (Azoulay and Kapferer 2003; Bosch *et al.* 2006; Cova and Pace 2006; Davidson *et al.*

2007; Hatch and Rubin 2006; Lea Prevel 1994; Mick and Buhl 1992; Morgan *et al.* 2002; Muniz and O'Guinn 2001; Nadeem 2007; Needham 2005; Szmigin *et al.* 2006; Vallaster and de Chernatony 2006; Van Ham 2001) and also appropriate in addressing to the aims, objectives and research question of the study.

### 3.6 Epistemology

The epistemological assumption focuses on the relationship of the research and analyst (Dwivedi 2007; McNeill 1990) and what constitutes as knowledge in the field (Saunders *et al.* 2007; Warren and Karner 2005). Further to this, an epistemological assumption addresses how the researcher understands the research (Creswell 2007; Trochim and Donnelly 2007). Linking back to table 3, at the *objectivist* end of the continuum, a researcher could possibly adopt a *positivist* stance whereby the researcher seeks concrete facts or causes of social phenomena apart from the subjective states of the individual (Taylor and Bogdan 1984). In addition, Gephardt (2004) suggested that a *positivist* researcher is emotionally detached from the research with the aim of discovering a concrete reality and remains bias free. Furthermore a *positivist* perspective also considers that knowledge is deductively structured and generated, and needs to be empirically tested and measured in order to accept or reject formulated hypotheses/propositions (Mick 1986; Smircich 1980). A deductive approach in the process of knowledge generation (Mick 1986) uncovers important relationships among variables and tests concrete propositions in order to prove or disprove test or measure findings (Bryman and Bell 2003; Gephardt 2004; Mick 1986).

This is in contrast to the *interpretive* approach on the epistemological continuum. Maitland-Gholson and Ettinger (1994) argued that the basic assumption of a researcher adopting an *interpretive* approach accepts that truth and reality are located in lived, experienced world of the subjects. An *interpretive* approach enables researchers' to

inductively gather rich information, which may deepen the understanding of the subject area (Gephart 2004; Maxwell 2005; Trochim and Donnelly 2007). An inductive approach claims theory is the outcome of research (Bryman and Bell 2003), building theory step-by-step (Rubin and Rubin 1995) and the researcher may make decisions for knowledge en-route (Krueger 1998). Furthermore, an inductive approach often allows a researcher to have a clearly defined purpose in regards to aims, objectives and research question(s) however does not begin with any predetermined hypotheses or propositions (Mick 1986; Saunders *et al.* 2007). Nonetheless, an interpretive perspective “*is committed to understanding social phenomena from the actor’s own perspective*” (Taylor and Bogdam 1984:2). Table 4 on p.88 presents the assumption, goal, tasks and methods related to the epistemological traditions.

**Table 4: Epistemological Assumptions**

Tradition	Positivism & Post Interpretive Research	Interpretive Research
<b>Assumptions about reality</b>	<b>Realism:</b> Objective reality	<b>Relativism:</b> Local inter-subjective realities
<b>Goal</b>	Discover Truth	Describe meanings, understandings
<b>Tasks</b>	Verify hypotheses or non-falsified hypotheses	Understand reality construction
<b>Unit of Analysis</b>	Variable	Verbal or nonverbal action
<b>Methods Focus</b>	Uncover facts, compare these to hypotheses or propositions	Recover and understand situated meanings, systematic divergences in meaning

(Based on Gephardt (1999), Guba and Lincoln (1994), and Lincoln and Guba (2000), adapted from Gephardt (2004:456).

Gephardt (2004) argued that the goal of the interpretive tradition is to understand and describe the in-depth meaning of the research phenomenon. Moreover the interpretive tradition accepts a socially constructed subjective reality, which is consistent with the accepted ontological perspective for this study (Gephardt 2004). Ellram (1996) and



Vallaster (2006) agreed that an interpretive approach is ideal at the exploration stage of a relatively unknown research area and provide depth and richness to the phenomena by focusing on “*how*” and “*why*” (Creswell 2007; Reason 1999). Additionally, Bloor *et al.* (2001) suggested exploratory research is needed in contexts that have not been well studied and when little is known about the subject, resulting in the revelation of informant’s ideas (Cayla and Eckhardt 2007).

According to Goodall (2000), it is crucial to understand the researcher’s personal stance as both the researcher and research are emotionally connected and cannot remain distinct. This point of view is consistent with the philosophical stance of an interpretive approach and is important to acknowledge at the beginning of the research process. Goulding (1999) proposed a researcher will have preconceived personal values, experiences and beliefs, which should not be discarded or ignored but actually considered to have an influence on the research (Creswell 2007). This in turn may be beneficial to the research study by highlighting new areas of thought and take advantage of the specialist skills or knowledge possessed by the researcher. Additionally, Flick (1998) suggested that a researcher will reflect on their actions, observations, impressions and feelings from the field, which ultimately becomes data in its own right and may even provide deep knowledge, illuminating future areas of research.

Ultimately, the researcher is an integrated element of the research process and must therefore consider the notion of reflexivity, which is a crucial factor of the interpretive tradition (Goodall 2000). May (1998) proposed reflexivity is a process of self-examination and questions the processes of research and analysis in reference to the research outcomes. Nightingale and Cromby (1999:228) argued that:

*“Reflexivity requires an awareness of the researcher’s contribution to the construction of meanings throughout the research process, and an acknowledgement of the impossibility of remaining ‘outside of’ one’s subject matter while conducting research. Reflexivity then, urges us to explore the ways in which a researcher’s involvement with a particular study influences, acts upon and informs such research”.*

Furthermore, reflexivity can be considered as a core element of any humanistic research study and the researcher must be aware of their personal position when interpreting multiple realities (Brannick and Coghlan 2006). Reflexivity suggests that the orientations of the researcher will be shaped by their social-historical background (Butler-Kisber 2010). This represents a rejection of the idea that social research can be carried out *“in some autonomous realm that is insulated from the wider society”* and from the particular social-historical biography of the researcher, and *“in such a way that its findings can be unaffected by social processes and personal characteristics”* (Hammersley 1997:16). This research accepted that *“...all research is contaminated to some extent by the value of the researcher”* (Silverman 2001:270), and *“who we are as researchers or our research identities, changes with time and experience just as our everyday identities do”* (Butler-Kisber 2010:19). Ultimately, insight may be overlooked and lost if the researcher fails to consider reflexivity. Reflexivity needs to be continually considered throughout the research study, from the design stage, right through to writing up the interpreted data. Therefore, it can be suggested that reflexivity binds the research project together, which needs to be acknowledged in order to have a coherent and successful research project (Saunders *et al.* 2007; Fill 2006).

Subsequently, this study adopts the interpretive tradition as the epistemological assumption of the thesis as the existing literature indicated that there are calls for greater understanding of the UK Conservative Party brand. Furthermore, this research accepts that an interpretive approach is appropriate to generate a deeper understanding of the multiple interpretations of the UK Conservative Party brand. The epistemological

assumption of this research shares the same methodological premise as Rawson (2007), McAlexander *et al.* (2002), Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) and Balmer and Liao (2007) and their research focus can be seen in table 5 on p.91.

**Table 5: Existing Research that share the Interpretive Epistemological Assumption**

Reference	Research Focus
<b>Rawson (2007)</b>	Explored the political brand of a nation; USA
<b>McAlexander <i>et al.</i> (2002)</b>	Explored building brand communities
<b>Muniz and O’Guinn (2001)</b>	Explored three brand communities
<b>Balmer and Liao (2007)</b>	Investigated student corporate brand identification towards three related corporate brands

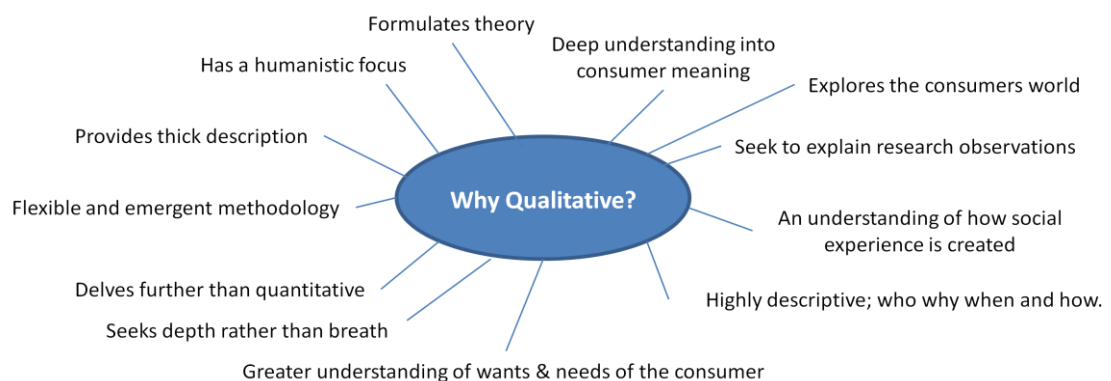
It can be argued that if a positivistic perspective had been adopted by the four studies, deep insight, thick description and valuable knowledge may have been overlooked (Krueger 1996). Therefore, the epistemological assumption adopted by this study can be considered consistent with the proposed ontological assumption. Furthermore the methodological assumptions are driven by the research purpose and considered appropriate in addressing the aims, objectives and research question of this study. This research accepts that reflexivity adds to the process of designing, conducting and interpreting the findings, therefore researchers must be aware of the continuous process of self-examination and the impossibility of remaining outside the research process (Goodall 2000; May 1998; Nightingale and Cromby 1999).

### 3.7 Qualitative/Quantitative

This study has so far discussed the ontological and epistemological assumptions that underpin the research and the process of knowledge generation in reference to the purpose, aims, objectives and research questions of the research study. The next step was to distinguish the types of research, which in turn relate to the philosophical assumptions and the rationale of the thesis. According to McCracken (1988:16), the goal of quantitative research “*is to isolate and define categories as precisely as possible before the study is undertaken and then to determine again with great precision the*

*relationship between them*”. Furthermore, quantitative research, deductive in nature envisages structured results with conclusive outcomes (Warren and Karner 2005).

In contrast, Bryman *et al.* (1999:75) proposed the aim of qualitative research is to “*document the world from the point of view of the people studied*” and allows the researcher to focus on precise situations; people or issues with an emphasis on words opposed to numbers (Gephardt 2004; Maxwell 2005; Rubin and Rubin 1995). In addition, qualitative research is often described as generating thick description (Geertz 1993) and emphasises meaning and intimate knowledge, depth rather than breadth (Ambert *et al.* 1995). Qualitative research is also useful at the early stages of a relatively unknown area (Davies and Chun 2002) and does not formulate hypotheses/propositions with the aim of research a conclusive end (Gephardt 2004; Maxwell 2005). The desirability of adopting qualitative research can provide the researcher with rich knowledge, hidden meaning and unique data which is achieved by delving deep into the respondent’s attitudes, feelings, perceptions and beliefs (Covaleski and Dirsmith 1990; Goulding 1999; Malhotra and Birks 2003; Rubin and Rubin 1995; Warren and Karner 2005). Figure 4 on p.92 presents the main factors for considering a qualitative research approach.



**Figure 4: Factors for Adopting a Qualitative Approach**

(Reproduced from Ambert *et al.* 1995; Geertz 1993; Gephart 2004; Goulding 1999; Malhotra and Birks 2003)

That is not to say qualitative research is superior to quantitative research. Qualitative research can be seen as answering questions that quantitative research cannot and attempts to understand the world from the respondents' point of view (Ambert *et al.* 1995; Kvale 1996) and takes into account the subjective perspective (Flick 1998), and vice versa.

Subsequently, this research adopts a qualitative approach to explore the UK Conservative Party brand. The majority of research in the context of political branding has tended to adopt a single perspective (Schneider 2004) or measurable, quantitative approach (French and Smith 2010). Additionally a qualitative approach will provide a deeper understanding and generated rich knowledge. Furthermore a qualitative approach has the potential to reveal unique data, achieved by exploring the respondent's attitudes, feelings, perceptions and beliefs (Covaleski and Dirsmith 1990; Goulding 1999; Malhotra and Birks 2003; Rubin and Rubin 1995; Warren and Karner 2005).

### 3.8 Research Methods

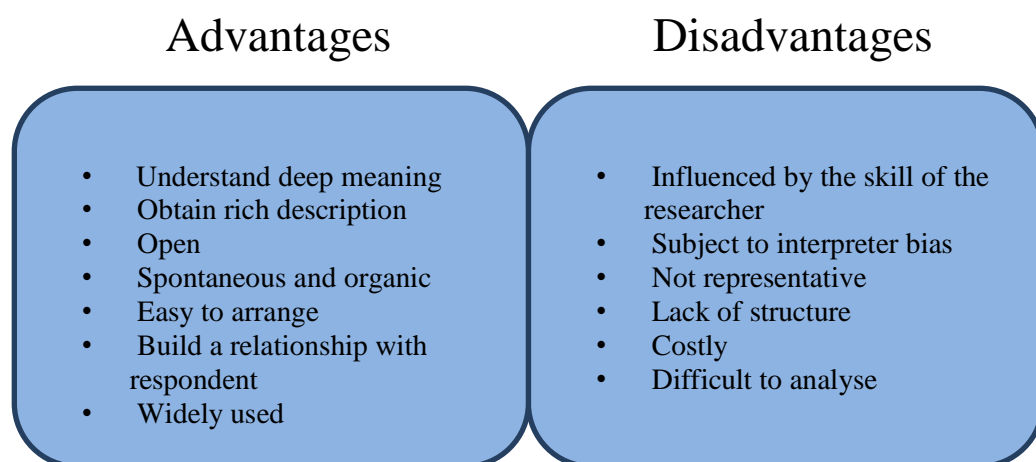
The previous section presented the methodological framework of the study. Following on from this is the research design process (Creswell 2007) and this includes presenting the appropriate research methods to achieve to the overall goal of the research and remain consistent with the already stated methodological framework (Bell 1993; Ellram 1996; Gillham 2005; Kvale 1996). Phase one of the research study explored the brand identity of the UK Conservative Party from the perspective of internal stakeholders. The sampling framework will be discussed following the research methods section.

#### *3.8.1 Phase One – In-depth Interviews*

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews can be seen as an appropriate research method for phase one of the study (Bell 1993; Gillham 2005; Warren and Karner 2005). However, there are many types of interviews (Foddy 2001; Ressler 2009; Rubin and Rubin 1995),

ranging from structured to unstructured and the type of interview technique will depend on the nature of the research topic (Rubin and Rubin 1995) and the desired goal of the research (Bell 1993). McCracken (1988:12) suggested a semi-structured interview “*is potentially a Pandora’s box generating endlessly various and abundant data*”, which may reveal important discoveries (Gillham 2005).

According to Gillham (2005:70) the semi-structured interview “*is the most important way of conducting a research interview because of its flexibility balanced by structure, and the quality of data so obtained*”. Furthermore Ressler (2009) stated at the Marketing Research Society seminar on ‘*Effective Depth Interviewing*’ that depth, semi-structured interviews are ideal tools to explore, discover and generate a deep enquiring conversation about a topic at hand. Therefore the semi-structured interview has the ability to reveal a wealth of rich information regarding the UK Conservative Party brand from the perspective of internal stakeholders and highlight a deeper understanding of the current and envisaged identity of a political brand. Figure 5 on p.94 presents the advantages and disadvantages of adopting in-depth semi-structured interviews.



**Figure 5: Advantages and Disadvantages of adopting Semi-structured Interviews**

(Reproduced from Baines and Chansarkar 2002; Bloor *et al.* 2001; Flick 1998; Krueger 1998; Kvale 1996; Malhotra and Birks 2003; McDaniel and Gates 2004; Proctor 2002; Taylor and Bogdan 1984; Tellstrom *et al* 2006; Vallaster and de Chernatony 2006; Vrantis and Papasolomou 2007; Wells and Dudash 2007; Zikmund 2003)

The methodological approach of this study was adopted by Cayla and Eckhardt (2007), Lawlor and Prothero (2007) and Peng and Hackley (2007) and their research focus can be seen in table 6 on p.95.

**Table 6: Existing Research that Adopted the Semi-structured In-depth Interviews**

Reference	Research Focus
Cayla and Eckhardt (2007)	Explored perceptions of two regional Asian brands
Lawlor and Prothero (2008)	Explored children's understanding of television advertising
Peng and Hackley (2007)	Explored the communication campaigns of the UK and Taiwan

In all three cases, the methods were appropriate in answering the aims and objectives of the research (Lawlor and Prothero 2008), consistent with exploration (Peng and Hackley 2007), generated a deeper understanding (Lawlor and Prothero 2008) and provided rich data (Peng and Hackley 2007).

In-depth semi-structured interviews often termed 'social encounters' (Holstein and Gubrium 2003) embodies open-ended, non-direct questions (Rubin et al 1995; Schutt 2004), which "*influence answers the least because they give respondents considerable leeway to take their answers wherever they want*" (Holstein and Gubrium 2003:179). Rubin and Rubin (1995:6) argued "*all qualitative interviews share three pivotal characteristics that distinguish them from other forms of data gathering*". Firstly, considering an interview as an extended, modified, special conversation. Secondly, embraced to understand and provide an insight into the respondent's world. Thirdly, the content, flow and topics of the interview can be adapted to suit the individual respondent (Rubin and Rubin 1995; Schutt 2004).

According to Schutt (2004), the goal of a qualitative researcher is to build a comprehensive picture of the respondent's background, attitudes, feelings and experiences from the respondent's own words which go some way in meeting the research problem and not to presume to know the range of answers projected by the

respondent. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews can be seen as flexible in terms of topic area development, spontaneous regarding revealing information and exploratory in terms of understanding thick, rich, personal description (Gillham 2005; Holstein and Gubrium 2003; McCracken 1988; Rubin and Rubin 1995). Schutt (2004) noted that exploratory studies that aim to generate an understanding of the interviewee's interpretations of the unit of analysis does not have to flow in an ordered direction and the interviewee's experiences and interests should be allowed to flow.

Subsequently, the open-ended questions will allow the respondent to lead the interview, with the interviewer simply controlling the interview with the aid of prompts and probes. According to Gillham (2005:24), "*in a semi-structured interview you may not ask a large number of questions; but you will follow up the interviewee's responses with prompts and probes*". Bell (1993) suggested that a skilled interviewer will probe respondent's responses and investigate deeper and more information on a particular issue highlighted in the interview (Gillham 2005). Furthermore Foddy (2001:138) suggested "*probing improves the adequacy of respondent's answers*", by providing depth and clarification (Rubin and Rubin 1995). Additionally, the Marketing Research Society (2009:26) suggested probing allows the interview sound more like a natural conversation whereas prompts allow the researcher to explore and elaborate on a particular issue (Marketing Research Society Seminar 2009). Prompts are reminders for the interviewer (Gillham 2005) and should be placed in the interview guide/schedule at the end of each open-ended question (McCracken 1988). This in turn will establish rapport and decrease tension and stress, which may occur if a detailed interview guide/schedule is not developed and tested before the 'real' interviews begin (McCracken 1988; Warren and Karner 2005).



Therefore, a crucial aspect of successful interviewing is for the interviewer to listen and draw out information (McCracken 1988; Rubin and Rubin 1995; Warren and Karner 2005), otherwise this could jeopardise the research project and the discovery process (Gillham 2005; McCracken 1988). Creswell (2007:134) argued that “*a good interviewer is a good listener rather than a frequent speaker during an interview*”. This point was emphasised at the Marketing Research Society seminar in December 2009 stating the researcher “*is listening for significance, meaning, language, emotion and what is left out*” (Ressler 2009:17). By actively listening the researcher is able to frame questions to follow up on points made by the respondent, which ultimately may reveal rich information and illuminate new areas of thought (Ressler 2009).

Consequently, this research argues that in-depth semi-structured interviews are an appropriate research method for phase one of the research study (Bell 1993; Gillham 2005; Warren and Karner 2005). In addition semi-structured interviews are consistent with the philosophical assumptions, the process of knowledge generation, and the type of research and coherent with the aims, objectives and research question of the study. In-depth semi-structured interviews will provide the respondent with rich description, greater understanding, a degree of spontaneity, easy to arrange and are ideal for building a relationship with the participant (Baines and Chansarkar 2002; Bloor *et al.* 2001; Flick 1998; Krueger 1998; Kvale 1996; Malhotra and Birks 2003; McDaniel and Gates 2004; Proctor 2002; Taylor and Bogdan 1984; Tellstrom *et al.* 2006; Vallaster and de Chernatony 2006; Vrantis and Papasolomou 2007; Wells and Dudash 2007; Zikmund 2003).. The following section presents a suitable research method for phase two of the thesis and is succeeded by discussing the process of designing and developing the qualitative interview guide/schedule for phases one and two.

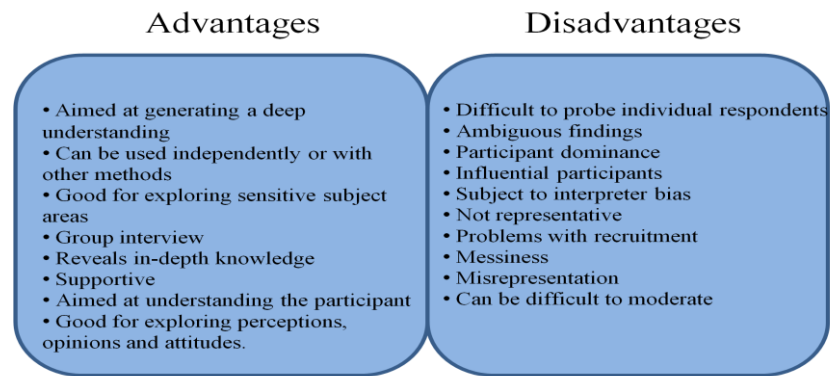
### 3.8.2 Phase Two: Focus Group Discussions with Projective Techniques

While in-depth semi-structured interviews are presented as an appropriate method in exploring the UK Conservative Party brand identity from the perspective of internal stakeholders; phase two of the thesis aims to generate a greater understanding of the brand image of the UK Conservative Party from the perspective of external stakeholders. Therefore, focus group discussions can be considered an appropriate method for phase two of the study (Bell 1993; Gillham 2005; Warren and Karner 2005).

According to Langford and McDonagh (2003:2) a focus group can be seen as:

*“A carefully planned discussion, designed to obtain the perceptions of the group members on a defined area of interest...the group based nature of the discussions enables the participants to build on the responses and ideas of others thus increasing the richness of information gained”.*

Stewart and Shamdasani (1990:51) continued with the notion that a focus group is *“it is a well-planned research endeavour that requires the same care and attention associated with any other type of scientific research”*. A focus group is also regarded as an unstructured interview with a small group of participants (Zikmund 2003) and can be used as a research tool on its own or in combination with other research methods (Bloor et al 2001; Flick 1998). Figure 6 on p.99 presents the advantages and disadvantages of adopting focus group discussions as a research method.



**Figure 6: Advantages and Disadvantages of Adopting Focus Group Discussions**

(Reproduced from Baines and Chansarkar 2002; Bloor *et al.* 2001; Flick 1998; Krueger 1998; Kvale 1996; Malhotra and Birks 2003; McDaniel and Gates 2004; Proctor 2002; Taylor and Bogdan 1984; Tellstrom et al 2006; Vallaster and de Chernatony 2006; Vrantis and Papasolomou 2007; Wells and Dudash 2007; Zikmund 2003)

Bloor *et al.* (2001:1) claimed that focus group discussions originated in the 1940s in the work of the Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia University with the aim of exploring an interviewing procedure for groups. Since then, focus groups have been adopted by many disciplines from marketing, social sciences, and psychology (Bloor *et al.* 2001; Hofstede *et al.* 2007), and can be often conducted to achieve different aims and objectives (Baines and Chansarkar 2002). Focus groups have the ability to identify trends, reveal perceptions and attitudes (Marshall and Rossman 1995), useful for giving insights into a desired sample and provides an understanding of the research problem (Baines and Chansarkar 2002; Proctor 2000). Additionally, Barbour (2007) suggested that focus groups can be used to explore people's perspectives and viewpoints. Furthermore, focus group discussions have the ability to stimulate a natural discussion (Bloor *et al.* 2001; Proctor 2000). 'Focused' group discussions (Krueger 1998) have been described as "*unpredictable*" and "*organic in nature*" (Bloor et al 2001:19), and ideal for exploratory research (Bloor *et al.* 2001; Zikmund 2003). Ultimately, new insights will emerge from the support and influence of other group members (Krueger 1998).

The focus group is guided and facilitated by the researcher (Langford and McDonagh 2003), that is facilitate and not control (Barbour 2007), and actively listen (Warren and Karner 2005). A successful researcher needs to possess good listening skills (Flick 1998) in order to enhance rapport, abstract detailed information and allow the group to reveal new areas of thought. Additionally, the researcher must remember that the focus group does not have to reach consensus (Krueger 1994), and not to be fazed by the prospect of the group discussing topics not on the interview guide therefore the facilitator needs to be prepared to change sequence (Barbour 2007). Furthermore, resisting this natural flow of sequence change may impact on the rapport and possible depth of information generated by the focus group.

Another method of enhancing rapport and revealing deeper insight may be the adoption of a number of projective techniques. Since the 1940s market research has “*borrowed*” (Boddy 2005:242) projective techniques from the field of psychology with some success and they are now commonly used in qualitative research to gain a deeper understanding of the research area (Broeckelmann 2010). Nevertheless, qualitative marketing research practitioners have distanced themselves from psychoanalytical projective techniques by adopting a more “*pedestrian and pragmatic*” (Boddy 2005:241) approach in using projective techniques. Projective techniques can be used as stimulus material and provide an insight into consumer’s views on brands delving beneath the surface of explicitly stated attitudes, associations and perceptions (Bond and Ramsey 2010; Day 1989; Gordon and Langmaid 2008; Kay 2001; Mulvey and Kavalam 2010).

According to Hofstede *et al.* (2007:301) projective research techniques can produce more informative results than standalone focus groups/interviews and “*are considered very useful in marketing practice...involve the use of stimulus that allow participants to*

*project their subjective or deep-seated beliefs onto other people or objects*". Furthermore, projective techniques can be subdivided into five categories (Bond and Ramsey 2010; Hofstede *et al.* 2007) and each method is explained in table 7 on p.101. Additionally, the number of categories adopted will be at the discretion of the researcher but must be appropriate to the aims, objectives and questions of the research.

**Table 7: Projective Technique Categories**

Category	Examples of Projective Technique Tasks
Association	Connecting the research object with images and thoughts.
Completion	Finishing sentences, stories, arguments.
Construction	Answering questions about feelings, beliefs, completing speech bubbles in cartoons.
Choice Ordering	Ranking product benefits.
Expressive	Role playing, storytelling, drawing.

(Adapted from Hofstede *et al.* 2007:301)

Projective techniques may be used as part of a focus group or interview or as an independent method of inquiry (Bond and Ramsey 2010; Pettigrew 2008), with the aim to elicit rich perceptions, deep-seated attitudes and in-depth feelings (De Carlo *et al.* 2009), which otherwise may remain hidden or repressed (Boddy 2005; Broeckelmann 2010; Mulvey and Kavalam 2010; Pettigrew 2008). However, according to Pettigrew (2008) there are a number of strengths and weaknesses in adopting projective techniques as additional methods as part of a focus group discussion. Disadvantages include the perceived lack of reliability and validity, the ambiguous nature and ability for the researcher to draw meaningful conclusions from the methods (Pettigrew 2008). Another disadvantage of using projective techniques is that they may reveal more of the inner world of the researcher rather than the perceptions and associations of the participant (Bell 1948; Boddy 2005; Ramsey *et al.* 2006). Langford and McDonagh (2003) added to this and consider projective techniques to be time consuming and some

participants may be unfamiliar with these techniques resulting in the variety of responses to be limited.

Strengths include that “*no pre-work required from participants, relatively uncomplicated, useful warm up exercise to help participants to relax and to get them involved*” (Langford and McDonagh 2003:180). Boddy (2005:247) acknowledged projective techniques allow respondents to express themselves “*in fuller, more subtle ways than they could in direct questioning*” and that makes projective techniques and so rewarding to market researchers (Broeckelmann 2010; Ramsey *et al.* 2006). Projective techniques can be light-hearted (Gordon and Langmaid 2008), stimuli can be ambiguous (Mulvey and Kavalam 2010), and helpful when providing stimulus material for ice-breakers (Barbour 2007). In addition, projective techniques can energise participants, ideal for dealing with sensitive information (Baines and Chansarkar 2002; Boddy 2005) and are easy to administer (Hammer 1958; Langford and McDonagh 2003). Besides, the practice of cross-checking data from different techniques can be adopted to add validity to the analysis (Boddy 2005). Consequently, the application of projective techniques can be troublesome but the benefits of a rigorous methodological approach can ameliorate disadvantages.

Hofstede *et al.* (2007), Moutinho *et al.* (2007) and De Carlo *et al.* (2009) adopted the focus group discussions combined with projective techniques as part of their method of inquiry and their research focus can be seen in table 8 on p.102.

**Table 8: Focus Group Research combined with Projective Techniques**

Reference	Research Focus
Hofstede <i>et al.</i> (2007)	Explored the brand image of four branded beers [Aaker brand personality scale]
Moutinho <i>et al.</i> (2007)	Explored the behaviour and attitudes of a brand community
De Carlo <i>et al.</i> (2009)	Explored the existing perceptions and associations of the Italian city of Milan

Furthermore focus group discussions combined with projective techniques provided all three studies (De Carlo *et al.* 2009; Hofstede *et al.* 2007; Moutinho *et al.* 2007) with a deeper understanding of the problem at hand.

Accordingly, this research argues that focus group discussions are an appropriate research method for phase two of the research study (Bell 1993; De Carlo *et al.* 2009; Gillham 2005; Hofstede *et al.* 2007; Moutinho *et al.* 2007; Warren and Karner 2005). In addition, focus group discussions combined with projective techniques are consistent with the philosophical assumptions, the process of knowledge generation, and consistent with the aims, objectives and research question of the study. Moreover, focus group discussions combined with projective techniques have the ability to generate a deeper understanding of the perceptions, highlight deep-seated associations, attitudes and feelings (Baines and Chansarkar 2002; Bloor *et al.* 2001; Flick 1998; Krueger 1998; Kvale 1996; Malhotra and Birks 2003; McDaniel and Gates 2004; Proctor 2002; Taylor and Bogdan 1984; Tellstrom *et al.* 2006; Vallaster and de Chernatony 2006; Vrantis and Papasolomou 2007; Wells and Dudash 2007; Zikmund 2003) assigned to brands. The following section will discuss the sampling framework of the study and will be succeeded by the conceptual framework of the thesis.

### 3.9 Sampling Framework

According to Schmidt and Hollensen (2006), once the data collection methods have been selected, the next step for a study is to design the sampling framework. Daymon and Holloway (2011) argued that there are two main principles the researcher needs to consider when designing a sampling framework, namely, what to sample and how to sample.

Daymon and Holloway (2011) suggested that in order to address what or who to sample it is important to consider the aim or purpose of study. The aim of this study was to

understand the UK Conservative Party brand from an internal and external orientation. More specifically, the first objective of this research aimed to explore the envisaged and current brand identity of the UK Conservative Party brand from the perspective of internal stakeholders. According to O'Cass (2001), 'internal stakeholders' can refer to a broad group of internally supporting subjects ranging from candidates, party managers, politicians, activists and party workers. Further to this the UK Conservative Party can be sub-divided into the three elements: *Parliamentary*, *Professional* and *Voluntary* ([www.conservatives.com](http://www.conservatives.com)). Therefore, participants connected or affiliated to the UK Conservative Party and from one of three elements of the UK Conservative Party were considered 'internal stakeholders'.

The second objective of this research intended to generate a deeper understanding of the brand image of the UK Conservative Party brand from the perspective of external stakeholders. Nevertheless, an 'external stakeholder' orientation can be considered a complex collection of several distinct stakeholder groups (Dean and Croft 2001; Ormrod *et al.* 2007), broadly categorised as the 'electorate' (O'Cass 2001). Furthermore, the 'electorate' otherwise known as external stakeholders remained an ambiguous sampling frame and required further explanation and rationalisation.

According to Worcester *et al.* (2011), young citizens aged 18-24 years were the weakest supporting group of the UK Conservative Party from 1992 to 2009. In 1992, 46% of the UK Conservative Party support came from the 55+, followed by 43% of citizens aged 35-54, 40% of citizens aged 25-34 years and 35% of young citizens aged 18-24 years. However, in 2009, 45% of support came from citizens aged 55+, 39% of citizens aged 35-54 years, 41% of citizens aged 25-34 years and 35% of young citizens aged 18-24 years (Worcester *et al.* 2011). Therefore, from 1992 to 2009, there had been no change in support of the UK Conservative Party from the 18-24 years segment (Worcester *et al.*



2011). Nevertheless, preceding the 2005 UK General Election Ashcroft (2005) reported that young citizens were more likely to change their mind in terms of voter affiliation compared with other demographic segments. Furthermore, following David Cameron's UK Conservative Party leadership victory in December 2005, the party attempted to target young citizens aged 18-24 years and increase the youth vote (Ashcroft 2010).

Despite that citizens aged 18-24 years could be seen as a potentially untapped market (Denver 2003; Hamilton 2004), "*young people are the most disengaged of all the electoral segments in Britain with them increasingly not voting as they become eligible and continuing not to vote throughout their lives*" (Dermody *et al.* 2010:422). Moreover, Dermody *et al.* (2010) proposed that in 1997, 43% of young citizens aged 18-24 years did not vote, followed by 61% in 2001 and 63% in 2005 (Dermody *et al.* 2010). Phelps (2005) added that at the 2005 UK General Election most age groups in terms of voter turnout increased slightly compared to previous elections. However, this was not the case with young citizens aged 18-24 years and this segment was the only group that decreased in regards to voter turnout in 2005 (Phelps 2005).

Subsequently, as young citizens aged 18-24 years constituted the weakest supporting group of the UK Conservative Party support base from 1992-2009 (Worcester *et al.* 2011) and was considered the most disengaged of all the electoral segments (Dermody *et al.* 2010), this study believed young citizens aged 18-24 years would be an interesting sample. Moreover, as young citizens aged 18-24 years were considered an untapped and potentially lucrative market and specifically targeted by David Cameron's Conservative Party (Charles 2009) it can be argued that it was appropriate to consider young citizens aged 18-24 years as external stakeholders.

The second principle to consider when designing a sampling framework was how to sample (Daymon and Holloway 2011) otherwise known as justifying the sampling

technique (Gorman and Clayton 2005; Schmidt and Hollensen 2006). According to Schmidt and Hollensen (2006), sampling techniques can be divided into two methods: probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling accepts that “*each element of the population has a chance of being selected. In such cases it is possible to compute sampling variation and project the results to the entire population*” (Schmidt and Hollensen 2006:159). In contrast, non-probability sampling is generally employed in qualitative exploratory research and does not make any claims to be representative of the sample and generalisable to the population at large (Alston and Bowles 2007). It can be argued that probability sampling would be an unsuitable method to address the aim and objectives of this study. Moreover this research accepted the limitations of a non-probability approach and did not aim or claim to be representative (Alston and Bowles 2007; Schmidt and Hollensen 2006) to the population of internal Conservative stakeholders or young citizens aged 18-24 years. Ultimately, as this research aims to explore the multiple variables of reality and subjective interpretations (Burrell and Morgan 1994; Creswell 2007) of the UK Conservative Party brand, a non-probability approach is considered an appropriate sampling method.

Alston and Bowles (2007) argued non-probability sampling can be subdivided into four key areas: accidental, quota, purposive and snowball. After reviewing the sampling literature purposive sampling appeared to be a suitable technique to develop the sampling framework (Alston and Bowles 2007; Daymon and Holloway 2011; Gorman and Clayton 2005; Sidin *et al.* 2008; Zikmund 2003). Purposive sampling, selects the sample for a specific purpose (Alston and Bowles 2007; Zikmund 2003) and usually researchers have one or more specific predefined groups. In addition, Zikmund (2003:380) proposed that a purposive sampling technique follows a convenience sampling procedure specifically “*obtaining units or people who are most conveniently available*” and ideally used in exploratory research. Similarly Daymon and Holloway

(2011) argued that a convenience sampling procedure allows the researcher to be opportunistic, based on well-defined sampling criteria. Moreover Zikmund (2003:382) suggested that a purposive sampling technique “*selects the sample based on his or her judgement about some appropriate characteristic required of the sampling members*”. Further to this Gunter *et al.* (2002:232) argued:

*“Representative samples are less important in the context of interpretive research where purposive sampling of special groups is the objective. In this instance, generalisation of findings to the greater population may not be as important as gaining an understanding of how certain types of people respond to particular questions and the ways they articulate their answers”.*

Similarly Gorman and Clayton (2005) argued that qualitative researchers tend to select a purposive sample technique as the aim is not to infer generalisations to the population but to gain an understanding of a particular phenomenon from the perspective of specific groups of individuals (Daymon and Holloway 2011; Gorman and Clayton 2005). Therefore the selection method of purposive sampling is rationalised by the appropriateness of participants in addressing the research objectives (Alston and Bowles 2007; Sidin *et al.* 2008:8).

Subsequently, this thesis adopts a purposive sampling technique to address the first objective (phase one) of this study. Purposive sampling is considered an appropriate sampling technique for phase one as the research had a specific purpose to explore the UK Conservative Party brand from the perspective of internal Conservative stakeholders (Alston and Bowles 2007; Zikmund 2003). Further to this a purposive sampling technique is adopted as the study presents a well-defined sampling criteria of ‘internal Conservative stakeholders’ ranging all three elements of the UK Conservative Party (Alston and Bowles 2007; Daymon and Holloway 2011). Moreover, a purposive sampling technique is considered appropriate as this is consistent with the interpretive tradition (Gunter *et al.* 2002) of this study. Furthermore, a purposive sampling approach

will allow the researcher to be opportunistic and interview available and accessible participants within the well-defined sampling criteria (Daymon and Holloway 2011; Gorman and Clayton 2005; Zikmund 2003).

While it was important to discuss the sampling technique, it was also important to determine the sample size. Unlike qualitative, quantitative research tends to set predetermined sample size required for the study, which are systematically linked to statistical theories of reliability, replicability and validity (Bryman and Bell 2003). Therefore, a quantitative study will be able to select a desired sample size in order to test, measure, prove or disprove findings which will be generalised to the population (Bryman and Bell 2003; Kvale 1996). However, interpretive research is quite different. It has been argued that data collection ceases when informants no longer add new insights resulting ‘knowledge saturation’ (Cayla and Eckhardt 2007). Additionally, according to Flick (1998), ‘theoretical saturation’ is the criterion for a researcher to judge when to stop exploring samples/respondents’ when no additional data is found. Rubin and Rubin (1995:72) believed this view of theoretical saturation whereby research continues “*until you are satisfied that you understand the complex cultural arena or multistep process*”. Krueger (1998) and Flick (1998) maintained that ‘theoretical saturation’ is at the discretion of the researcher and should answer the research aim and objectives.

Internal ‘Conservative’ stakeholders will be approached via direct mail, email, telephone and face-to-face meetings. A detailed outline of the internal stakeholder sample interviewed as part of this study can be seen in appendix F.1.1. The data collection process will cease after achieving theoretical saturation and the researcher is satisfied that the in-depth interviews had addressed the aim and objective of the research (Flick 1998; Krueger 1998; Rubin and Rubin 1995). Anonymity will be given to all

participants. The identifiable features will be disguised as a number of internal participants will be high profile figures of former Conservative Governments, members of the Shadow Cabinet or in distinguished positions.

A purposive sampling technique will also be adopted to address the second objective (phase two) of the study. Purposive sampling is an appropriate sampling technique for phase two as the research has a specific aim to generate a deeper understanding of the UK Conservative Party brand from the perspective of external stakeholders (Alston and Bowles 2007; Zikmund 2003). Moreover, a purposive sampling technique is used as the research presented a clear sampling criteria of 'external stakeholders' otherwise known as the electorate (citizens) aged 18-24 years (Alston and Bowles 2007; Daymon and Holloway 2011). Purposive sampling is considered a suitable technique as it allows the researcher to be opportunistic and conduct focus group discussions with available and accessible participants that are within the well-defined sampling criteria (Daymon and Holloway 2011; Gorman and Clayton 2005; Zikmund 2003). Finally, a purposive sampling approach is consistent with the philosophical framework of this study and the representativeness of the sample is not an important factor in this research (Gunter *et al.* 2002).

External stakeholders aged 18-24 years will be approached via youth groups, youth centres, colleges and universities, and contacted via email, telephone accompanied by advertising on the local [www.gumtree.co.uk](http://www.gumtree.co.uk) website. This research previously discussed the merits and appropriateness of not having to determine a sample size for in-depth interviews and focus group discussions due to the nature of this study. Nevertheless, formulating the optimum size of each focus group for phase two of the study needed to be considered. Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) and Flick (1998) argued that the optimal number of participants per focus group range from six to twelve people,

while Langford and McDonagh (2003) proposed a typical focus group to be between five and twelve participants. Bloor *et al.* (2001) advised the number of respondents to be between six and eight individuals. Nevertheless, it is not uncommon for focus groups to be as small as four or as large as twelve participants (Marshall and Rossman 1995). Smaller groups are considered more appropriate for research with a sensitive nature (Bloor *et al.* 2001), and participants are selected on the basis of the predetermined individual characteristics in relation to the research question, aims and objectives (Bloor *et al.* 2001; Langford and McDonagh 2003; Marshall and Rossman 1995). Krueger (1998:17) proposed “*more focus groups the better*” nevertheless the quality of focus group discussions is not dependent on the sample size (Krueger 1998). Therefore this thesis does not consider the size of the sample to be an important factor and the important goal is to achieve theoretical saturation (Cayla and Eckhardt 2007; Flick 1998; Krueger 1998:72; Rubin and Rubin 1995).

A detailed outline of the sample of external stakeholders can be seen in appendix F.2.1. Additionally, an outline of external stakeholder’s political affiliation can be seen in appendix E.4. The focus group discussions cease after reaching theoretical saturation (Flick 1998; Krueger 1998; Rubin and Rubin 1995). Furthermore theoretical saturation is at the discretion of the researcher having generated a deeper understanding of the UK Conservative Party brand from external stakeholders aged 18-24 years (Flick 1998; Krueger 1998; Rubin and Rubin 1995). Anonymity will be given to all participants. The identifiable features will be disguised and participants will be coded. In addition, the nomenclature used for citing verbatim or paraphrasing of the verbatim for the focus group discussions is presented at the beginning of the findings chapter.

Consequently, the purpose of this study is to explore the UK Conservative Party brand, with a defined focus on internal Conservative stakeholders and external young citizens

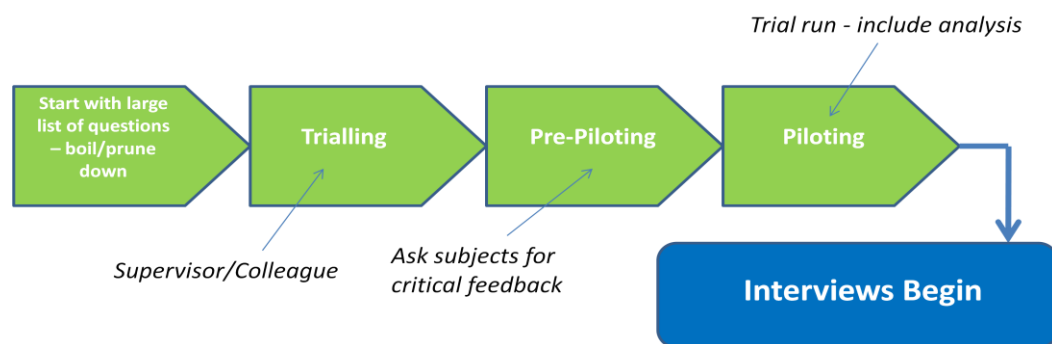
aged 18-24 years. Therefore, a purposive sampling technique is considered appropriate and consistent with the methodological underpinnings. This section addressed two main principles the researcher should consider when designing the sampling framework more specifically what to sample and how to sample (Daymon and Holloway 2011). Furthermore, this section presented the sampling framework for phases one and two of the study. The following section focuses on the development of the interview guide and focus group discussion guide.

### 3.10 Interview/Focus Group Guide Development

Creswell (2007) argued that there is no universally agreed structure of how to design a qualitative research study, nevertheless this section will broadly present the framework followed in designing the semi-structured interview guide (phase one) and the focus group discussion schedule (phase two).

In order to design a successful interview/focus-group guide, it has to be carefully planned (Barbour 2004; Bell 1993; Bloor *et al.* 2001; Foddy 2001; Gillham 2005; Stewart and Shamdasani 1990), and the researcher must revisit the research problem or gap in the body of knowledge (Creswell 2007; Stewart and Shamdasani 1990). This is followed by developing a central question which determines much of how the research will be conducted (Creswell 2007; Foddy 2001; Graziano and Raulin 2004; Krueger 1998). This is succeeded by clarifying the research objectives which serve as the main questions for each of the interview/focus-group guides (Creswell 2007; Rubin and Rubin 1995). The next step focuses on the development of a series of sub-questions or topic areas (Bell 1993; Gillham 2005; Warren and Karner 2005), which are continually pruned or boiled down (Gillham 2005) reducing the open-ended questions or topic areas to their essentials (Foddy 2001; Gillham 2005; Rubin and Rubin 1995).

Open-ended questions or topic areas are arranged in logical, natural sequence (Krueger 1994). Additionally two general principles in developing the interview/focus-group guide include questions are ordered from less focused to more specific and the questions valued with the greatest importance to be placed earlier in the interview guide with less significant questions near the end of the focus group session (Stewart and Shamdasani 1990). Langford and McDonagh (2003) suggested it is advisable to begin with unthreatening questions first, while Warren and Karner (2005) stated that the ideal opening question will be designed to capture the participant's imagination and interest, enhancing rapport, which in turn may reveal deeper more privileged information. Probe and follow-up-questions will become apparent in the field (Creswell 2007; Rubin and Rubin 1995). An initial interview/focus-group guide can be developed further by following a process of 'cyclical development' (Gillham 2005:22) a visual aid of which can be seen in figure 7 on p.112.



**Figure 7: The Process of Cyclical Development**

(Reproduced from Gillham 2005:22)

Figure 7 outlines the process of cyclical development proposed by Gillham (2005) and can be divided into individual steps, which are interrelated. Once the initial interview/focus-group guide has been established the succeeding steps are *trialling*, *pre-piloting* and *piloting* (Gillham 2005). Trialling involves allowing supervisors, colleagues or professionals to review the interview/focus-group guides to assess the structure, wording and topic areas, and this development forms part of the validation



strategy (Creswell 2007:207). In the case of this thesis both guides were reviewed by the first supervisor of the research study. In addition, interview/focus-group guides were reviewed by a seminar leader of the 'Marketing Research Society', the managing director of a design and branding company, and a brand manager of Boots UK.

The next step, pre-piloting, required the selection of a small number of respondents similar to the desired sample and asking for critical feedback (Gillham 2005). In the case of this research study both guides were critically evaluated by internal and external stakeholders respective of the sample of each phase of the research. Finally the piloting stage required a simulation of the 'real' interview/focus-group discussion with a small sample of respondents observing how well the guide works again relating to structure, style, pictures, wording and length. The piloting stage also encouraged the researcher to transcribe and conduct basic data analysis (Gillham 2005). After conducting the pilot study Converse and Presser (1986) as cited in Foddy (2001:185) recommended a researcher should follow a six point check list, which will allow the researcher to critically evaluate the interview/focus-group guides and highlight problems/issues that may not be apparent at first glance. These checks and procedures will merely strengthen the rigour and compliment the ever-developing interview guide.

Throughout the cyclical process open-ended questions/topics are developed, emerged and some were made redundant (Creswell 2007; Gillham 2005) resulting in a refined guide ready to conduct the interviews. However, issues and topics may still emerge/develop during the real interviews (Holstein *et al.* 2003; McCracken 1988), and throughout the study (Rubin and Rubin 1995). Furthermore, a researcher is free to modify or adapt procedures even in the middle of the 'real' data collection process (Graziano and Raulin 2004).

According to Gillham (2005:159) “*your research questions continue to develop...continually modifying those questions...nothing corrupt about modifying your research*”. Furthermore “*the aim is to represent what the people you interviewed told you, in response not just to the questions you asked them, but the purpose of the research*” (Gillham 2005:163). Therefore, a qualitative researcher is continually tweaking the interview guide to shape and prune the most appropriate guide in order to meet the aims and objectives of the research project. This flexibility (Bloor *et al.* 2001; Stewart and Shamdasani 1990) in adding, deleting, expanding or adapting the interview guide will not only tailor the research method to the research project but may also allow the researcher to delve deeper into the thickly descriptive data and reveal enlightening interpretations (Warren and Karner 2005). This section addressed process of developing the semi-structured interview guide and the focus group discussion schedule. A copy of the in-depth interview guide can be seen in appendix A. Additionally, a copy of the focus group discussion schedule can be seen in appendix B. The following section focuses on the analytical process of the findings.

### 3.11 Data Analysis

According to Butler-Kisber (2010) and Krueger (1998) a researcher needs to consider analysis from the very beginning of the study as everything is intrinsically linked to the data analysis process. Furthermore continuous reflection is needed and the researcher must remember the fundamental aims, objectives and research question(s), research plan and even consider the interview guide when attempting to analyse the generated data (Krueger 1998). Warren and Karner (2005:189) proposed a useful step for researchers attempting to analyse their data “*is to have some idea where you want to end up*”, again this will be dependent on only on the aims, objectives and research question(s) of the study but also determined by the actual insight generated from the in-depth interviews and focus groups.

Butler-Kisber (2010:8) suggested qualitative inquiry can be seen as an “*umbrella term for all kinds of inquiry that utilise interpretation*” and subsequently sub-divided into three types of qualitative inquiry namely: thematic, narrative and arts-informed. After reviewing the three types of qualitative inquiry, thematic analysis was deemed an appropriate type of inquiry for this research. Boyatzis (1998:29) cited in Roper and Shah (2007) proposed thematic analysis is the process of encoding data that uses “*categorising or the comparing and contrasting of units and categories of the field texts to produce conceptual understandings of experiences and/or phenomena that are ultimately constructed into larger themes*” (Butler-Kisber 2010:47). Butler-Kisber (2010:47) continued “*...these themes provide an explanation of the context under study that is grounded carefully in the field text materials*”. Thematic inquiry is considered appropriate for exploratory research (Roper and Shah 2007), can reveal sought-opinions and experiences (Paskins *et al.* 2010) and uncover feelings, perceptions and relationships (Bird *et al.* 2009). Subsequently thematic analysis is considered appropriate to analyse the perceptions, associations and opinions of the UK Conservative brand generated from the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions.

Warren and Karner (2005) suggested the first step of analysis is to become familiar with the data this involves reading, rereading, thinking, reflecting and rereading and subsequently themes begin to emerge with this cyclical process (Bird *et al.* 2009). An element of thematic analysis is open coding; a method of categorising data to identify themes, which can be done manually or electronically (Bird *et al.* 2009; Butler-Kisber 2010). In the case of Bird *et al.* (2009:20) “*the initial categories were modified from a broad and culturally appropriate list...following the first round of coding, categories were broken into sub-categories by identifying properties that described the content of*

*each category*”, therefore these categories/themes were created from the similarities, differences and patterns that emerged from the data.

Keeping thematic analysis in mind, Butler-Kisber (2010:30) argued the analytical process can be divided into the ‘coarse-gained’ and ‘fine-grained’ phases. Coarse-gained phase is when the researcher personally familiarises with the transcripts otherwise known as field texts and:

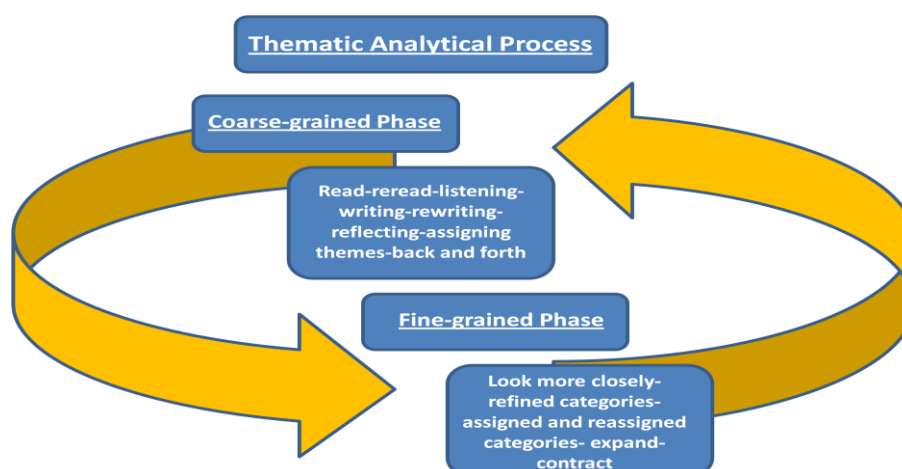
*“involves reading and re-reading or listening and viewing, dialoguing with himself about what is being revealed, writing reflective and analytical memos...playing with some broad categories...assigning names to these categories...working back and forth across these categories...expanding and contracting them as the analysis proceeds”* (Butler-Kisber 2010:30).

An example of a transcribed in-depth interview can be seen in appendix C and an example of a transcribed focus group discussion can be seen in appendix D. Nonetheless Wengraf (2001) recommended keeping one copy of each transcript as verbatim and work with copies of the same transcript, highlighting, numbering and adding memos and associations as the researcher continues to work with the transcript and become personally familiar. These theoretical memos can be continually adapted, can be seen as the development of the interpretation process and provides tangible material for the writing up process (Wengraf 2001). Whereas the fine-grained phase requires the researcher to narrow the analysis process and look more closely at the transcripts and defined themes (Butler-Kisber 2010). Butler-Kisber (2010:31) continued:

*“Chunks of field texts are reassembled into more refined categories and broken down into others, and these are assigned, and reassigned names or codes. This back-and-forth way, or accordion-like approach, expands and contracts categories and begins to reveal relationships across them”*.

The continuous writing and rewriting of theoretical memos also provides a foundation for valued reflection later in the analytical process having identified themes and thoughts at the beginning of the analytical process (Wengraf 2001). A visual aid to

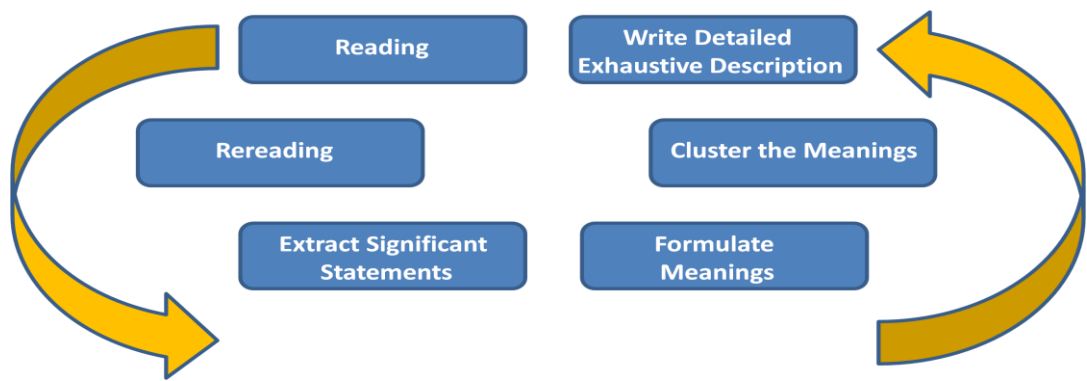
conceptualise the thematic analytical process for this research project can be seen in figure 8 on p.117.



**Figure 8: The Analytical Process of Thematic Inquiry**

(Adapted from Butler-Kisber 2010:30)

To accompany the coarse-grained and fine-grained analysis this research will also adopt analytical tools such as ‘concept mapping’ as it will provide the researcher a visual aid of expressing themes and linking the emerging themes together. Examples of ‘concept mapping’ used as part of the coding process from the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions can be seen in appendix E.1, E.2 and E.3. Butler-Kisber (2010:38) argued concept mapping is useful “*at a point when most of the material has been categorised and patterns begin to appear*”. Subsequently, this research considers the phases and analytical tools suggested by Butler-Kisber (2010) as a flexible framework for analysing the findings generated from conducting interviews/focus groups and accepts there is no best way (Butler-Kisber 2010; Wolcott 1994) of analysing qualitative data. Thematic inquiry is consistent with the interpretive perspective (Butler-Kisber 2010:50) and therefore consistent with the philosophical standpoint of this research. As previously stated there are no strict guidelines especially for conducting thematic analysis merely a number of points to consider and these can be seen in figure 9 on p.118.



**Figure 9: The Ongoing Process of Thematic Analysis**

(Adapted from Butler-Kisber 2010:53)

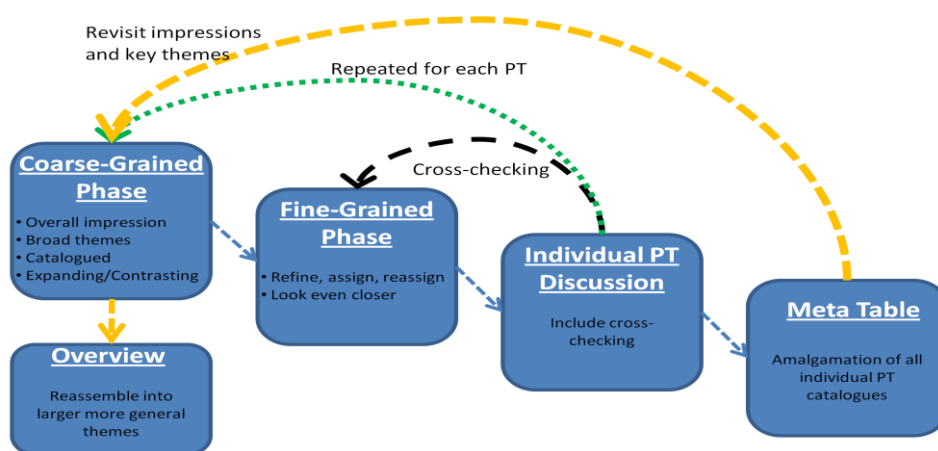
Themes and categories may eventually appear saturated with no further insight. The refined sub-categories are then reassembled into broader themes then relationally linked to each broad theme, which have emerged. This is where concept mapping may prove useful (Butler-Kisber 2010). It may be appropriate to finish with Butler-Kisber (2010:31) proposing the goal of thematic analysis:

*“Is to construct a plausible and persuasive explanation of what is transpiring from the emergent themes, recognising again all the explanations are partial by nature, and there are always multiple ways that experiences and/or phenomena can be explained”.*

### 3.11.1 Projective Technique Analysis

Hofstede *et al.* (2007:305) suggested that “*the most current way of analysing the results of projective research methods is by looking at the overall impression the participants associative activities make*” therefore proposing an holistic approach. Other approaches to the analysis of projected expressions have focused upon a thematic analysis, exploring key patterns, relationships and emerging themes (Noble *et al.* 2007). This approach has been described as useful but requires a form of qualitative content analysis that teases out similarities (Boddy 2005). Although there are difficulties in producing standardised responses when analysing projective techniques, researchers should also value the uniqueness of responses (Bell 1948). Interpretation should be objective, rigorous and systematic (Valentine 1996) but there is little guidance in the extant

literature regarding projective technique analysis and this remains under-researched (Boddy 2005; Bond and Ramsey 2010; Davidson and Skinner 2010; Ramsay *et al.* 2006; Valentine 1996). This thesis builds on the two-stage analytical approach outlined by Butler-Kisber (2010), with existing approaches to analyse projective techniques (Boddy 2005; Hofstede *et al.* 2007; Noble *et al.* 2007) and produced a broad systematic framework in which to analyse the findings generated from the projective techniques, which can be seen in figure 10 on p.119.



**Figure 10: A Systematic Framework for Interpreting Subjective Expressions**

(Adapted from Butler-Kisber 2010:30; Boddy 2005; Hofstede *et al.* 2007)

The first stage defined as the *coarse-grained phase* (Butler-Kisber 2010), proposed continuous assessing, reassessing the projected expressions, writing memos, formulating some broad categories and cyclically expanding and contrasting the broad categories and emerging themes (Butler-Kisber 2010). The coarse-grained phase is the starting point, all the projected expressions are categorised into individual-participant projections creating handbooks, containing all the projected illustrations expressed by each participant. After reviewing the projected expressions to understand the overall impression (Hofstede *et al.* 2007), the illustrations will be then catalogued to add structure, clarity and ease to the interpretive process. Demographical data provided by each participant will then assessed and their political affiliation catalogued in the individual handbooks. The individual handbooks are then reviewed again and assigned

one of four codes: positive, negative, neutral or uncertain to assess the attitudes and feelings that emerge from the expressions. These codes are not meant to be definitive categories but merely a starting point to analyse the depictions which become apparent from the overall impressions of the projected expressions. This will provide a loose framework of the perceptions, associations and attitudes presented by each participant. An example of the coding report developed from the construction projective technique can be seen in appendix E.5.1 and E.6.1.

The second phase of Butler-Kisber's (2010) two-stage analytical process is defined as the *fine-grained phase* which requires the researcher to look even closer at the expressions, refine the categories and assign and reassign themes, names or codes. This phase involves assessing individual participant's projected illustrations in the context they were set for example analysing and interpreting all the *expressive* categorised depictions. It is at the fine-grained phase that greater insight and a more detailed understanding of the UK Conservative brand image will become apparent. Broad themes established in the course-grained phase will be either strengthened, made redundant or sub-divided providing new areas of thought.

The *fine-grained phase* will be followed by the production of a discussion document which examines the findings uncovered from the interpretation process of each sub-divided projective technique. If participants reveal a number of non-standardised themes that cannot be easily categorised or interpreted at first the themes can appear meaningless to the researcher and will only acquire significance once the practice of cross-checking is employed (Boddy 2005). Cross-checking involves looking at all the projective expressions illustrated by each participant, reviewing the demographic data obtained at the beginning of the focus group and analysing the transcripts from the focus groups, where even more data linking to the projective expressions can be uncovered.



This in turn strengthens the validity of the projective expression analysis and provides further insight which may be disregarded if cross-checking was not adopted.

This pragmatic process will be repeated for each sub-divided projective technique and the analysis and interpretation of each projected expression will cease when categories and themes become saturated (Butler-Kisber 2010). The analytical process will follow the systematic framework outlined in figure 10. However, each categorised projective technique will be analysed and interpreted in isolation and minor adaptations depending on the specific nature of the projective technique. Once all the projected expressions are analysed and the individual discussions are produced, the catalogues from each sub-divided projective technique will be collated into a Metatable enabling further cross-checking highlighting discrepancies or inconsistent expressions. The key themes from the individual discussions will then be added to provide an amalgamated data set. The overall impressions formulated at the beginning of the coarse-grained phase will be revisited. This will be followed by the construction of an overview where the saturated categories are then reassembled into larger more general themes in relation to the aims and objectives of the research. This methodological approach is intended to provide a rigorous process for the analysis and interpretation of projective expressions.

This section focused on the analytical process with particular focus on analysing the findings from the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Furthermore, this section presented the process of analysing data generated via projective techniques. The following section will address issues to consider in qualitative inquiry.

### 3.12 Issues in Qualitative Inquiry

According to Butler-Kisber (2010:13) “*there are six main issues that qualitative researchers face when conducting their work; validity, generalisability, access and consent, reflexivity, voice and transparency*”. The six main issues of qualitative research

can be seen in figure 11 below. In this section, five of the six issues are discussed. The issue of *reflexivity* was discussed in the epistemology section.



**Figure 11: Issues to Consider in Qualitative Research**

(Reproduced from Butler-Kisber 2010:13)

### 3.12.1 Validity

The first issue of validity in qualitative inquiry addresses the impact of the researcher on the research context, setting, values and experiences of the researcher and the degree of trustworthiness of the respondent's account (Butler-Kisber 2010; Silverman 2001:232). Warren and Karner (2005) regarded the issues of validity and reliability are traditionally viewed from a positivistic standpoint and not the interpretivist underpinning of this research study. Nevertheless, from a qualitative perspective the idea of validity does not seek concrete proof or statistical correlation but thick description and assesses whether the account given by the participant is a true representation therefore making the account as valid insight (Warren and Karner 2005). Taylor and Bogdan (1984:7) suggested that validity is an important factor in qualitative research that the researcher must consider at the beginning and throughout the research study as the qualitative researcher will attempt to obtain "*first-hand knowledge*" of the lived world of the participant. There are a number of processes a researcher can adopt to strengthen the validity of the research project and this study has already discussed the premise of rationalising the implementation of the notion; 'cyclical development' proposed by Gillham (2005). This research study followed the steps of 'cyclical development' (Gillham 2005) this included peers and professionals reviewing and critically evaluating

the interview guides, and conducting pilot studies with feedback sessions. Furthermore the researcher employed a rolling interview guide for phase two that provided the researcher with the flexibility of adapting the interview guide based on the previous focus group session and tailored to the following focus group. This in turn increased the possibility of extracting rich accounts of the life worlds of the participants (Krueger 1998; Stewart and Shamdasani 1990).

Butler-Kisber (2010:53) suggested a number of general guidelines based on work of Creswell (2007) and Moustakas (1994) for conducting thematic interpretive inquiry to strengthen the notion of validity. The four points focus on the appropriateness of the philosophical assumptions and methods to the research aims, objectives, research question(s) which can be assessed during the early stages of the cyclical development process in the trialling and piloting (Butler-Kisber 2010; Gillham 2005). Secondly specify the philosophical underpinnings of the study and 'bracket out' personal experiences related to the phenomena of the research followed by constructing open-ended interview questions/topics. Finally, develop the transcripts from the audio-taped interviews and follow the guidelines previously suggested in analysing thematic analysis (Butler-Kisber 2010:53).

According to Warren and Karner (2005:215) there are three specific processes to verify the analytical process and assess the interpretations by firstly evaluating the data and assessing whether the data is appropriate and consistent with the aims, objectives and research question(s). Secondly, goodness of fit namely once the themes/categories have emerged attempt to refute the interpretations and assess whether these interpretations are coherent with the aims and objectives of the research. Thirdly, involves external validation whereby the transcripts are sent to either participants or get the research project supervisor to review the transcripts (Warren and Karner 2005). To add to this,

Silverman (2001:222) suggested there are ten key questions for evaluating not just the validity but the qualitative research as a whole including assessing whether the methods employed are appropriate to the questions/topics being asked. Therefore, a number of academics offer suggestions to evaluate qualitative research but the researcher must remember the quality of the knowledge generated from the interviews may be contaminated by applying ridged and positivist-like evaluative steps.

Finally, Warren and Karner (2005:218) continued with the idea that “*analysis is a multistep and multilayered process*” and involved taking time to ensure the researcher works back and forth to extract the valid perceptions, opinions and beliefs of the participant. The idea of reliability must also be touched upon especially as this term is traditionally a quantitative issue and focuses on the premise if the inquiry was to be repeated by a different researcher under the same conditions the outcome would be the same (Silverman 2001). However, from a qualitative perspective, reliability considers experience of the researcher, initiating pilot studies and validation strategies and the close relationship between the researcher and participant to be of high importance and considers the idea of reliability to be one of how reliable is the account given by the participant and the reliability of the interpretation by the researcher (Flick 1998; Warren and Karner 2005).

### 3.12.2 Generalisability

The second issue proposed by Butler-Kisber (2010) that qualitative researchers face is the issue of generalisability. Warren and Karner (2005:214) argued:

*“Positivist quantitative researchers seek to establish generalisable knowledge, which is knowledge that can be generalised from the people studied to the entire population of similar people. Qualitative do not seek to establish generalisable knowledge...where qualitative researchers have the edge is with validity, the closeness of the relationship between the people studied and the conclusions arrived at”.*

Ultimately, a qualitative researcher does not claim one situation/account can be generalised to another, rather the idea of:

*“particularizability...meaning how a certain study resonates with people in other situations so that they are able to find both confirmation and/or new understandings of experience and phenomena. Thus generalisability as it is defined in terms of positivistic research has no currency in qualitative inquiry” (Butler-Kisber 2010:15).*

Therefore, this research aims to explore the personal world-views of each participant and relationally link all the accounts with common themes and exploratory meaning which may become apparent during the analytical process.

### *3.12.3 Access and Consent*

According to Butler-Kisber (2010) research access and informed consent are on-going research processes that need to be acknowledged and accepted throughout the life of a research study. Before entering the field to conduct the research, this research study submitted a research proposal including the semi-structured interview guide (phase one) and the focus group discussion guide (phase two) to the ‘University of Hull Business School Ethics Committee’ for approval. This was subsequently granted. Before the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted, each respondent was given a brief outline of the research study and contact details of the institution, department and personal details of the researcher. In addition, each respondent was informed that they could end the interview/focus group at any time, and were required to sign an informed consent form at the beginning of the interview/focus group (Gillham 2005). Butler-Kisber (2010:16) argued *“the ethics submission and the consent forms must emphasise the right of participants to be fully informed, to know all the risks and benefits, the right to privacy and confidentiality”*. All participants were given anonymity, offered confidentiality and security in reference to the transcripts and were offered the opportunity to receive a summary of the findings following analysis. Given

the fact that all respondents were over the age of eighteen years of age, this research study was not required to submit additional ethical checks.

#### 3.12.4 Voice

Butler-Kisber (2010) argued that the issue of ‘voice’ is multifaceted and stems from the ‘voice’ of the written thesis. Additionally “*research reports were written in an objective manner that portrayed an authorial, all-knowing voice with no attention to voicing the researcher identity and assumptions brought to and shaped in the work*”. Therefore this thesis does not claim to be an ‘authorial’ ‘all-knowing voice’ of the UK Conservative Party brand. This thesis was written in an ‘objective’ stance in the sense of not ‘voicing the researcher identity’ (Butler-Kisber 2010) yet presented the subjective interpretations of participant’s perspectives of the brand identity and brand image of the UK Conservative Party. Furthermore, the methodology chapter has already presented the ontological and epistemological standpoint of the research and researcher including the acceptance of reflexivity. In addition, ethical considerations have already been established. This research study also accepted the idea of relativism the notion of:

*“learning to recognise that other people’s view of the world is as legitimate to them as yours is to you. Therefore discovering the respondents understanding is as valid as other respondents understanding”* (Rubin and Rubin 1995:21).

Subsequently, this study will present multiple understandings the UK Conservative Party brand from the perspectives of internal and external stakeholders communicated through the interpretations of the researcher.

#### 3.12.5 Transparency

Butler-Kisber (2010:21) alleged qualitative researcher’s need to acknowledge transparency seen as:

*“a way to enhance trustworthiness, as a way to be reflexive in the inquiry process...transparency requires not only a careful and detailed documentation of the entire process of inquiry for subjective use, but also a public transparency that adds trustworthiness and persuasiveness to the work”.*

This idea of transparency is evident in the ‘validation strategy’ (Creswell 2007) and the process of ‘cyclical development’ (Gillham 2005), which can be seen in the interview/focus group guide development section. Transparency is not only restricted to the design phase of the research study but also apparent in the data collection process. Participants are often probed for clarification of terminology, meaning and expressions (Foddy 2001). This is particularly important in attaining clarification in the illustrations generated from the projective techniques employed in the focus group discussions. Day (1989:11) acknowledged this process to be known as “*echoic probing*” where the researcher verbally echoes the illustration to encourage greater elaboration and this process was used throughout the focus group discussions.

Transparency is also apparent in the data analysis stage. As previously stated Wengraf (2001) recommended keeping one copy of each transcript as verbatim and to work with copies of the same transcript, highlighting, numbering and adding memos and associations as the researcher continues to work with the transcript. In addition, participants from phase one of the research study will be asked to take part in an ‘external validation strategy’ (Warren and Karner 2005), which involves sending internal stakeholders copies of their transcribed in-depth interview to ascertain whether the transcription bared a true reflection of the interview. The notion of transparency can also be seen in the two-stage process of thematic inquiry outlined by Butler-Kisber (2010) in analysing the findings from the in-depth interviews and the focus group discussions. This includes the development of a number of ‘concept maps’ (Butler-Kisber 2010), which is the process of presenting broad categories linking in refined themes and ideas. Furthermore, transparency is evident in the systematic framework

designed for analysing and interpreting the subjective expressions of projective techniques adapted from Butler-Kisber (2010), Boddy (2005) and Hofstede *et al.* (2007). Subsequently, this section addressed five of the six issues researchers should acknowledge and address when conducting qualitative research (Butler-Kisber 2010). The following section summarises the key points of the methodology chapter.

### 3.13 Summary

This chapter addressed the research methodology adopted as part of this thesis and discussed the philosophical underpinnings, research approach including the research methods and the approach to analysis. This thesis adopts a subjectivist ontological, interpretive epistemological perspective consistently supporting an inductive approach to the process to knowledge generation, which all points to a qualitative standpoint. The research method for phase one of the research study adopts in-depth semi-structured interviews, while phase two adopts focus group discussions enhanced with projective techniques. The analytical process was also discussed. The methodological approach is appropriate and coherent with the aims, objectives and research questions of the thesis and the similar methodological approaches have been adopted by researchers in similar fields of research. The following chapter presents the findings from phases one and two of the study and will be succeeded by a discussion.



## 4 Findings – Phase One

### 4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the methodological framework of the thesis including the philosophical underpinnings, research approach, research methods, sampling frame and the analytical process for phases one and two of the research study. This chapter presents the findings generated from phase one of the research study that focused on the exploration of the brand identity (Kapferer 2008) of the UK Conservative Party from the perspective of internal Conservative stakeholders.

In total, thirty in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted from 16<sup>th</sup> December 2009 – 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010 prior the 2010 UK General Election, held on the 6<sup>th</sup> May 2010. The internal Conservative participants ranged from Members of Parliament (MPs), Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), Prospective Parliamentary Candidates (PPCs), Members of the House of Lords (Lords), Councillors (Cllr), London Assembly Ministers (LAM) and Prospective Conservative Councillors (PCC). Furthermore, members of the UK Conservative Party sub-groups including; Conservative Future (CF); the youth wing of the UK Conservative Party, and Conservative Christian Fellowship (CCF) were also interviewed. The interviews were transcribed and thematically analysed by the researcher. An example of the nomenclature used for citing verbatim and paraphrasing of the verbatim for the in-depth interviews can be seen in table 9 on p.129.

**Table 9: Example of the Nomenclature used for Citing/Paraphrasing the Verbatim**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Internal Stakeholder</b>
P1	Participant One – Conservative Councillor.
P10	Participant Ten – Conservative Member of Parliament, former Member of the European Parliament, former Minister of State and former Member of the Shadow Cabinet.
P21	Participant Twenty One – Conservative Member of the European Parliament.

The conceptualisation of brand identity (Kapferer 2008) not only served as the grounding for phase one of the research study but also served to structure the findings and evaluate the applicability of the findings to the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008). As previously stated, the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008) is an amalgamation of six identity components including; brand physique, brand personality, brand culture, brand relationship, brand reflection and brand self-image, (de Chernatony 2007; Kapferer 2008). Furthermore the six components along with the key themes generated from the in-depth semi-structured interviews can be seen in figure 12 on p.131.

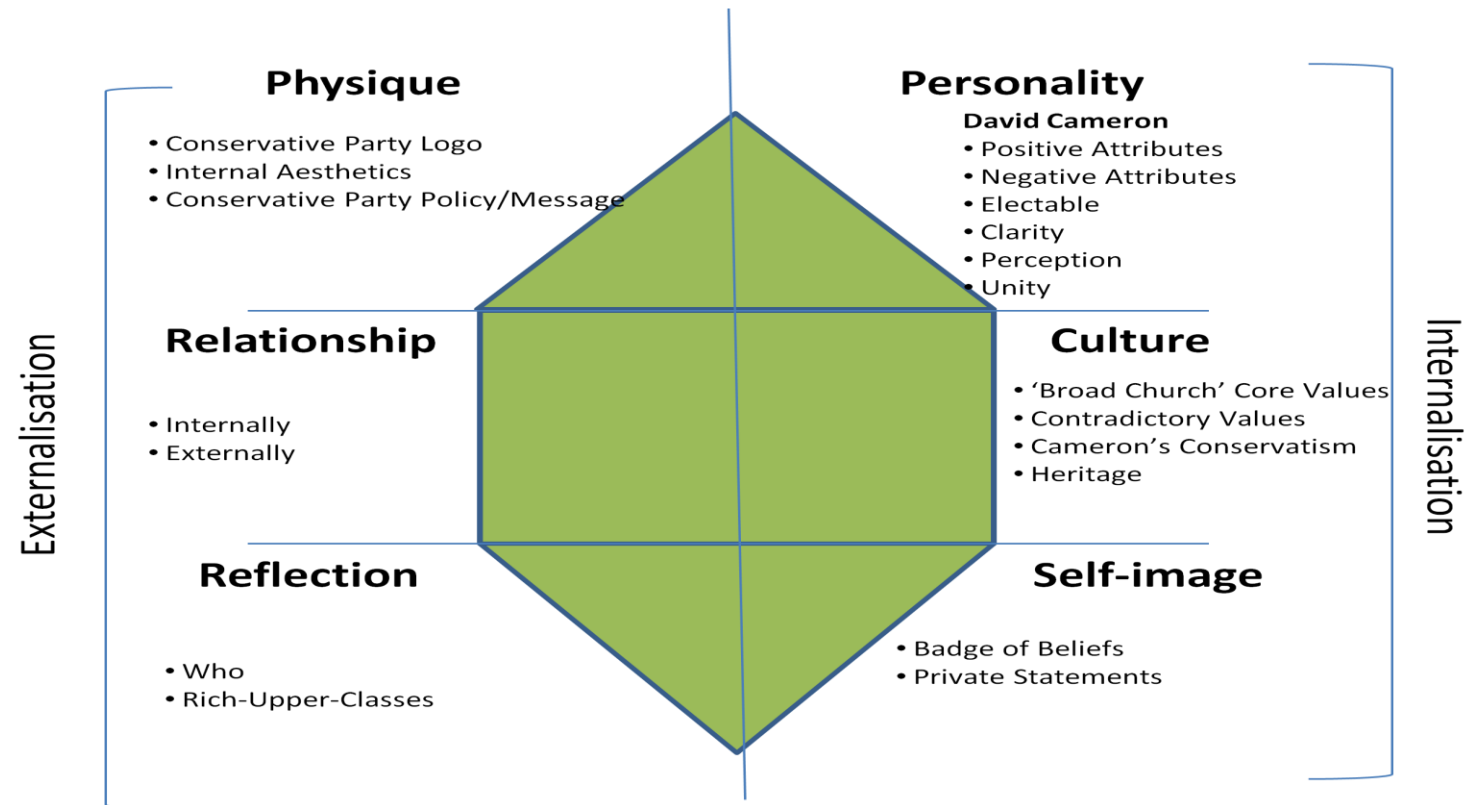


Figure 12: Key Themes Relating to the UK Conservative Party Brand Applied to the Brand Identity Prism

## 4.2 Physique

In the context of this research the physique dimension accommodated findings relating to the UK Conservative Party logo, the physical appearance of the UK Conservative Party, and Conservative Party policy and message.

### *4.2.1 UK Conservative Party Logo*

Internal Conservative stakeholders provided varied responses to the UK Conservative Party replacing the flaming red/blue ‘torch’ logo with the new ‘oak tree’ Conservative Party logo after David Cameron’s leadership victory in 2005. Both of which can be seen in figure 13 on p.132.



Figure 13: UK Conservative Party logos; Torch 2004-2006 and Oak Tree 2006-Present

([www.conservatives.com](http://www.conservatives.com))

Many internal stakeholders revealed a positive response in relation to the 2006 updated ‘oak tree’ Conservative Party logo with one Conservative councillor suggesting it was “*fantastic...time for a change*” (P2). A Conservative PPC from Nottinghamshire argued that the rebranding of the logo was consistent with the long-term strategy of the Conservative Party under David Cameron; “*rephrasing*” party policy and bringing about a “*different emphasis*” to the outlook of the Conservative Party, (P23). This was similar to the sentiment outlined by a Conservative MEP:

*“I thought it was rather good. I thought it was rather cunning you know introduce this element of greenery which symbolised the slightly different thinking...I like this sort of symbolism, it’s a good natural type symbol; roots, upstanding, protection”, (P20).*

A member of the Manchester Conservative Association Executive considered:

*“I liked it from the start...I just think its right for us. It’s an oak tree representing stability, strength and heritage...blue is for the Conservative Party and the green bit is...I don’t think it’s just about the environment it does have to do with it but it also demonstrates growth...renewal...and a certain amount of vitality...so yeah I’m a fan”, (P28).*

In contrast, negative views of the 2006 Conservative Party logo were also projected by an assortment of internal stakeholders. A Conservative Councillor from Yorkshire argued that they “ignore” the new oak tree logo and:

*“Apart from it [sic] goes on the ballot papers, I have completely ignored it. Why? I dislike it, I don’t understand it. I created my own brand...I founded it back in 1983 when I was first elected...and I am not going to throw away a recognised brand...we make the brands in the provinces”, (P1).*

A Conservative Councillor from Lincolnshire; also the campaign manager for a Conservative PPC considered:

*“I thought the torch was more strident...represented Margaret Thatcher...Britain in the world going forward. The tree is an eco; we jumped on the eco-green-bandwagon vote blue go green I don’t agree with it. So the tree logo in my opinion is a very nice green logo but it’s not exactly strong...it doesn’t say anything about us”, (P4).*

Positive support for the former Conservative flaming torch logo was evident amongst internal stakeholders seen as more symbolic and value-laden in comparison to the 2006 oak tree with one Conservative Councillor and PPC declaring “quite liked the torch but was tied to a specific aspect; Mrs T [Thatcher]”, (P2). A Conservative Member of the House of Lords revealed the flaming:

*“Torch was rather nice itself chosen to be different. Conservatives are always discussing whether we needed to change it...like the tried and tested. If people still associate the party with what it was rather than what it’s got to offer then you’ve got a problem”, (P6).*

Revisiting the insight from the Conservative Councillor from Yorkshire who tended to “ignore” the new Conservative Party logo:

*“Regionally we don’t have to buy into it...obviously the tree [logo] was chosen by Dave’s henchmen in central office and if tomorrow they chose to have a venetian clock tower [as their logo] that’s what we have. That’s their choice. In that sense they are the centre...the corporate Conservative Party”, (P1).*

Distinction of regional and central Conservative Party colours is nothing new according to a Conservative councillor from Yorkshire. From the nineteenth century “*red rosettes*” were the adopted colours of Durham Conservatives and not the traditional “*Tory blue*”, (P1). The participant suggested the Durham Conservatives argued for decades that the local electorate “*expected red*” in association with Durham Conservatives and considered no good reason to abandon traditional associations which formed part of their identity.

This idea of regional and central distinction of the physique elements of the Conservative brand was also shared by a Conservative MP; former Cabinet Minister under the previous Conservative Government and former Shadow Cabinet Member, (P10). The Conservative Member of Parliament revealed “*I don’t fly the Tory colours*” in their constituency, considers the updated Conservative oak tree logo as “*dull...boring*”, and instead uses their own colours and established identity, (P10). Furthermore the internal stakeholder stated “*I campaign very much on broadly local issues and on the reputation of being independent minded...in politics what matters is your reputation and you have to establish that from day one*”, (MP: P10). This was the same Conservative Member of Parliament that announced that “*I would not be so vulgar to mention Tory policy*” when campaigning and boasted to have “*never read a Conservative manifesto*” in the thirty years as a Conservative councillor, MEP and MP. A Conservative councillor from Yorkshire considered that their established personal brand identity turns a number of apathetic supporters who would not normally vote Conservative into Conservative supporters resulting in a vote at the ballot box. When the Conservative stakeholder distributed centralised Conservative Party literature the

councillor was informed “*no I don’t think I am going to vote Conservative*”. However when the locally branded literature was distributed citizens have replied “*oh I will definitely vote for you...we get loads of those through the door*” (P1).

A member of the professional sub-group of the Conservative Party; a senior employee at Conservative Campaign Headquarters (CCHQ thereafter) argued that consistency is important when using the Conservative Party logos and that “*this is not always the case*” (P15). This was evident at all levels of the Conservative Party. Additionally the internal stakeholder revealed that there is some “*resistance*” to completely embrace a coherent strategic standpoint in reference to the Conservative Party logo with fear of a loss of “*independence*” (P15). The professional internal stakeholder also attempted to integrate not only the physique elements of a Conservative Party sub-group with the central Conservative Party but also the intangible elements such as the strategic direction and relationships. However, resistance and suspicion was present at the central level of the Conservative Party and by the board of directors of the sub-group (P15).

#### *4.2.2 Internal Aesthetics*

Many internal stakeholders believed that David Cameron’s leadership has fundamentally influenced the internal aesthetics of the UK Conservative Party since becoming party leader in 2005. According to a Conservative MEP:

*“[David] Cameron fundamentally wants the Party to look different ...changed the whole branding you know the tree to some of the issues he talks about...and the [candidate] selection process...he’s changed the party completely. Some of it is very positive and in other ways it is very worrying” (P19).*

These physical changes included the drive to attract more women and ethnic minority candidates to stand for the Conservative Party at the 2010 General Election. This point was shared by a Conservative Member of Parliament “*yeah he promoted more women*

*candidates...more ethnic minority candidates...now appealing to a broad section of society*” (P11). Similar views were expressed by a Conservative MEP:

*“He’s [Cameron] poised a focus on choosing candidates...more women for the gender balance and more people from ethnic minorities and the like. So there’s that change but I mean the core Conservative supporter is still the wrong side of 50 and with certain views and this is another challenge that Cameron has to keep them happy as well as reaching out into the non-political territory”, (P20).*

To a certain degree it was argued that the physical appearance of the Conservative Party appears to have broadened and has attracted not only more women and ethnic minority PPCs but also a *“greater diversity of candidates”* (P24). Particularly, in terms of social class, political outlook and traditionally non-political, outlined by a senior member of the Shadow Cabinet, (P24). Another Conservative MP argued:

*“He [Cameron] attempted to change the party, the so called A-list [sic]. They’re still trying to get ethnic minorities and women and this sort of thing looking beyond the normal catchment area of Parliament to bring in new people in who wouldn’t have thought about going into politics...and now we’re taking people into the Lords [House of] who were not originally political. He talked a great deal about the stereotypes of the party, what the public thought of us and how we needed to get away from that. They thought of us as a white, middle age, Anglo-Saxon, not very interested in public services, not educated by the state...he sought to project himself as somebody different. And I think by and large he’s succeeded in the sense the public thinks he is different but I’m not sure to what extent the public think of the party’s all that different behind him”, (P10).*

Additionally a Conservative Member of the European Parliament conceived:

*“he [Cameron] fundamentally wants the party to look different and we have a lot of candidates who’ve never been Tories...whatever Tories [sic] joined the party recently and even became Tories after being selected as candidates and this is very worrying”, (P19).*

As previously stated many internal Conservative stakeholders revealed contentious issues related to the physical changes David Cameron implemented post 2005 briefly touched upon above and some will be explored in greater detail later in the thesis. Finally a senior member of Conservative Future, the youth wing of the Conservative



Party considered the Conservative Party appears to have physically changed under David Cameron, however it is merely “*all a facade*”, (P22). The internal stakeholder continued:

*“A facade, only because he’s [Cameron] changed the party within one parliament which means the MPs haven’t changed and the only way you change a party is by changing the MPs or MEPs and even the candidates standing now are candidates chosen pre-Cameron [before David Cameron was elected Conservative Party leader]”, (P22).*

#### 4.2.3 Conservative Party Message/Policy

Conservative Party policy was not explicitly articulated by internal stakeholders, however policy was interchangeably expressed as Conservative Party message which tended to relate to Conservative Party culture, heritage and values. Nevertheless, one Conservative councillor claimed not to know what current Conservative Party policy was and did not know what to expect from a Cameron-led administration (P1). A Conservative MP; former Minister of State in the last Conservative Government and former member of the Shadow Cabinet revealed “*never read a Conservative manifesto*”, campaigned on local issues and “*would never be so vulgar to mention Tory policy*”, (P10). This distinction between campaigning regional and national in terms of policy was shared by a number of internal stakeholders including a Conservative MP; also a former Member of the European Parliament (P11). Campaigning on a constituency involved focusing on local issues and was considered a long-term process in establishing and developing the “*brand*” of the Member of Parliament. In contrast “*brand Cameron*” was conceived as a short-term process, important during national-international elections. However the local Conservative “*brand*” was believed to compliment and “*enhance the work Cameron and national Conservative brand*” (P11).

Several internal stakeholders argued that Conservative Party policy has not necessarily changed, it is the “*different emphasis*” (P23). Moreover, it is the perspective of the

leader that has refocused Conservative Party policy, making Conservative Party policy relevant to modern Britain. This was presented by a PPC from the East Midlands:

*“Certainly the logos have changed, the appearance has changed, a lot of the policies we have are the same; some of them have been put to the front. Look at the green policies we have. We’ve always had green policies. Margaret Thatcher put more green policies into place than any other Prime Minister...a lot of stuff already there it’s just being rephrased” (P23).*

A PCC and Parliamentary Assistant to a former Member of the Cabinet in the last Conservative Government and former Shadow Cabinet Member pointed out that David Cameron was a researcher and contributor to the 2005 Conservative General Election Manifesto. The internal stakeholder continued:

*“I don’t think the policies have changed all that much but the policies have changed to be seen to be done [sic]...there’s not much difference...it’s just how it’s phrased and how it’s projected”, (P25).*

Despite participants revealing that Conservative Party policy was not necessarily new policy merely rephrased, reshaped and part of a different perspective under the leadership of David Cameron, many internal stakeholders judged there to be a “communication problem” with the policy or Conservative message (P25). According to a member of the professional element of the Conservative Party and senior member of Conservative Future the “message could be packaged better...core beliefs and who we are...discuss more policy and how we can help people” (P13). A Conservative MP argued that the Conservative Party is not “adequately expressing” a number of core Conservative principles such as decentralisation and the importance of the individual (P14). A senior Conservative MEP revealed that the Conservative Parliamentary Party forbid MEP’s to discuss policy such as immigration “especially during the EU elections [2009 European Elections]” and was informed certain policy was the “job of the central party” (P18). Internal participants also considered that the Conservative message was “confusing...become more centralised” (P22), “not clear enough...needs clarity and a

*positive vision*” and the Conservative brand remains “*fragile*” (P15). However, despite several internal Conservative stakeholders believing this lack of clarity and substance to be strategic (P22) a senior member of the Shadow Cabinet revealed (4<sup>th</sup> March 2010) “*in a few weeks once the General Election Campaign starts (6<sup>th</sup> April 2010) a lot more focus on the details and issues will become clearer*” (P24).

A member of the professional element of the Conservative Party argued the Conservative Party has:

*“overemphasised the DC [David Cameron] brand and not worked enough on the Conservative brand...worked hard on the physical process of rebranding but not enough on the message...not clear enough...what do they stand for”* (P15).

This was shared by several internal stakeholders that revealed too much emphasis had been focused on David Cameron and not enough on the Conservative Party at large. Participants also acknowledged the detailed physical changes to the Conservative Party yet questioned the Conservative Party message. Internal stakeholders also considered the Conservative message was “*confusing....become more centralised*” (P22), “*not clear enough...needs clarity and a positive vision*” (P15) and “*could be packaged better*”, (P13). Several participants believed that the Conservative Party could elaborate on the questionable nature of the Conservative Party message by discussing more policy, explaining what the Conservative Party stands for “*core beliefs and who we are*” (P13), “*adequately expressing*” (P14) Conservative Party key principles.

Despite a member of the professional element of the UK Conservative Party arguing the David Cameron brand had been overemphasised with not enough focus on the UK Conservative Party at large (P15), the participant believed David Cameron had been consistent in projecting three themes. David Cameron wants to “*repair the broken economy, he wants to repair the broken society and wants to repair broken politics*” (P15). The internal stakeholder believed the continuity of projecting the three themes

was one of the reasons why David Cameron's "*brand*" (P15) was "*currently stronger*" (P15) than the Conservative Party as a whole and the party should have "*picked up on those three things and been consistent with them as well*" (P15).

#### 4.3 Personality

The personality dimension reflects the figurehead/spokesperson of a brand (de Chernatony 2006; Kapferer 2001), and can also describe the brand's distinctive style of communication (Gordon 1999). In the context of this dimension, *David Cameron* is the current leader and figurehead of the UK Conservative Party and findings relating to David Cameron are accommodated in this dimension. All Conservative participants agreed in principle that David Cameron has changed the UK Conservative Party in some shape or form since becoming leader in December 2005. However the degree and nature of change is a debatable issue within the ranks of the Conservative Party evident from the in-depth interviews.

##### *4.3.1 Positive Attributes*

Internal stakeholders provided a diverse range of positive attributes in reference to David Cameron as leader of the UK Conservative Party. These attributes were also seen to enhance the Conservative Party as a whole, with many of the attributes interchangeably presented as attributes of the UK Conservative Party not just associated with David Cameron. A Regional Vice-Chairman of Conservative Future suggested:

*"David Cameron was the finishing touch to show the party had changed... [Cameron] different from other leaders...brought new things to the agenda"* (P29).

David Cameron was also regarded as a "*strong determined fellow, done things that were needed*" (P24), "*has a genuine broad appeal...bold...wise*" (P13), the "*very image of the modern Conservative Party*" (P8), "*caring...young...dynamic...trusting...supporter of the NHS*" (P2) and "*positive...competent...charismatic...charming*" (P1). Furthermore

according to one Conservative Councillor; leader of a County Council declared “*David Cameron cleaned up the party, removed the sleaze...strong on people in the expenses scandal*” (P30).

Additional positive attributes outlined by internal stakeholders of all levels of the Conservative Party believed David Cameron has a “*passionate belief in improving the social fabric of the country...believer in localism...straight talking*” (P14), “*very much like Obama, keeps his cool, taken firm steps*” (P16), “*good communicator, nice to look at, groomed, inoffensive*” (P21), “*family man...ready to embrace change...ready to be responsible...passionate*” (P27), has “*energy*” (P30) and “*appeals to the youth...good at speeches*” (P29). One Conservative MP; a former Cabinet Minister under the last Conservative Government pointed out that “*he [Cameron] is basically what he’s turned the Conservative Party into is what he is like [sic]*” (P26).

#### 4.3.2 Negative Attributes

Despite internal stakeholders projecting positive attributes in relation to David Cameron, a number of criticisms were revealed. One senior Conservative MP considered “*in all the expenses business...he’s [Cameron] been hunting with the pack...I know colleagues hauled out and publically guillotined on the basis of an accusation rather than a proven charge...he’s been really ruthless*” rather than “*have a duty of care*” and supporting parliamentary colleagues in the Conservative Party (P10). However, several Conservative stakeholders considered “*Cameron managed the expenses scandal very well...he was very decisive but decisions can be made very quickly*” (P25).

Another Conservative MP claimed that a number of David Cameron’s weaknesses were unavoidable such as the “*southern toff [derogatory aristocratic background] image, hard to overcome...no fault of his own*”, which in turn would make it harder to “*get*

*through to people in the North*” (P14). However, the idea that David Cameron’s background is conceived as a weakness is *“a hurdle he has to overcome...but it’s certainly a weakness for him”* (P14). According to a professional member of the Conservative Party *“there’s no ideology and I’m a bit worried that Cameron doesn’t believe in ideology...don’t know enough about him...just a bit more substance”* (P15). There were suggestions that David Cameron was *“too young and not experienced”* (P17), does not know enough about certain areas such as the European Union and *“refuses to talk”* about unpopular Conservative Party political positioning (P18). Furthermore, David Cameron was also considered *“too much of a PR man...doesn’t seem to be resonating”* (P22).

A Conservative stakeholder in the voluntary element of the party revealed two contrasting interpretations of David Cameron.

*“Actually I found him a bit aloof when I met him at times...I can understand...but I think he could be a bit more personal and give a greater impression of direct empathy. They say a great politician when you speak to them is they make you feel as if you’re the only person in the room and the only one that matters to them is you. I haven’t seen that out of David Cameron...on a macro scale he’s very empathic towards people”* (P28).

It was also argued by professional party member that Cameron *“won’t listen to advice....still having cock-ups [making mistakes]”* (P25) a result of not seeking the advice from a wider group of people, and *“focuses too much on style over substance”* (P29). One Conservative council leader considered that David Cameron has *“too many friends around him. Need people who don’t agree with you”* (P30), with the Shadow Cabinet described as *“too close knit”* (P22). This point was mirrored by a Conservative MEP *“I worry...how much debate is in the inner circle...I wonder if he’s surrounded by yes men...he won’t take anything onboard from outside his inner circle”* (P19).

#### 4.3.3 Electable

A Member of the House of Lords considered “*Cameron has taken Conservative values and made them relevant to present day...Cameron has made the Party not unelectable. Not necessarily electable*” (P6). This point was also shared by a Conservative MEP; former committee member of the Carlton Club that David Cameron “*transformed the standing of the party and people are now prepared to listen but not ready to embrace whole heartedly*” (P20). A Conservative MP; a former Cabinet Minister under the last Conservative Government agreed that “*David Cameron has made the party not unelectable...Cameron modernised the party; renewed emphasis on candidates and policy and technology...hard to get the party to change itself*” (P26).

Ultimately, several internal stakeholders conceived that David Cameron and the Conservative Party had not done enough to convince the public that the Party was electable and thus unlikely to win the 2010 General Election. A Conservative councillor stated “*not done enough to win...still not convinced*” (P4), with one Conservative MEP arguing that David Cameron “*hasn’t made enough of a change*” and more “*substance*” was needed (P20). A Conservative Councillor also a PPC suggested that the Conservative Party may still be “*out of touch...does not know what’s in the mind of the electorate*” (P2), with a Conservative MEP stating that the public “*still can’t relate to him [Cameron] because of his privileged background*” (P19). According to a Conservative MEP “*people trust David [Cameron] and not the party...people don’t understand the party or believe his [Cameron] motivation is genuine...not sure if the message is resonating*” (P21).

#### 4.3.4 Clarity

When probed for greater clarity, a number of internal stakeholders criticised the ambiguity of David Cameron’s message, the need for more substance, and an

unbalanced emphasis on brand Cameron. A member of the professional element of the Conservative Party; PPC in 2005 and elevated into the House of Lords in 2010 argued “*Cameron’s message isn’t clear enough... [the message is] confusing the electorate in terms of policy*” (P7). Similarly a Conservative MP; Minister of State and former Minister in the Shadow Cabinet revealed “*Cameron; don’t know what Cameron’s purpose/central resonation is yet*” (P10). While a senior employee of CCHQ stated that the electorate “*don’t understand David Cameron’s vision for the party...too vague...David Cameron needs to be clearer...people are speculating because of this lack of clarity*” (P15). Additionally, a regional treasurer of Conservative Future declared:

*“Cameron says he is going to be honest but doesn’t actually tell you how he is going to be honest...no substance...we need to know more about Cameron’s values and where he wants the party to go”* (P22).

However, this lack of clarity and ambiguity was considered “*strategic to get to an election without hardly any content*” outlined by one Conservative MEP (P18). A Conservative Peer presented the notion that David Cameron is adopting a long-term strategy rather than a short-term strategy and “*not made too many promises*” (P6). This view was mirrored by another Conservative Member of the House of Lords; a former Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet Minister “*David Cameron strategically did not declare all his policies because it is an advantage in opposition...a folly to make commitments...you have to be flexible*” (P16).

#### *4.3.5 Perception*

Several internal stakeholders consider that David Cameron has merely changed the perception of the Conservative Party and in fact remains the same party in terms of Conservative values and policy. This point was outlined by a Conservative MP; a senior committee member in the influential Conservative backbencher group the 1922 Committee, David Cameron “*softened the image of the Party but I don’t think that*



*necessarily changed it...I wouldn't say we've changed I would just say maybe our image had changed and people's perception of us had changed"* (P14). Many participants shared this idea that David Cameron rephrased party policy and presentation in an attempt to transform the look and feel of the party and remove the negative associations of the past and broaden its appeal.

One Conservative Councillor also the campaign manager for a marginal-PPC in the 2010 General Election stated:

*"Cameron changed the perception of the party [sic] not managed to bring the whole party with him. Some traditional Conservatives are not entirely convinced with this modernism...So Cameron has brought me along, an old traditional Tory but only as I want to win elections, he hasn't changed my views at all",* (P4).

Similar views were projected by a Conservative MP; former Minister of State and member of the Shadow Cabinet *"Cameron changed the perception, but not sure if the public are behind him...people are still not sure about us...Cameron made us electable but not made us loved"* (P10). Another Conservative MP; a Minister of State in the last Conservative Government, Shadow Cabinet Member and Cabinet Member in the 2010 Coalition Government revealed *"all leaders come in and have an impact on the party...changed in terms of candidates, the perception of the party especially in terms of focusing on certain issues like the environment"* (P24). According to a Conservative MEP *"David Cameron...given us a new face, a new lease of life...done this by embracing non-traditionally regarded Conservative policies, reshaped and rephrased our argument"* (P20). Subsequently, this idea that David Cameron has *"transformed the party but not as a whole, only the Westminster Party not in the provinces...just the perception of the Party"* (P1), and redrafted the party-of-the-rich image (P5), was a common theme identified throughout the in-depth interviews.

#### 4.3.6 Unity

Many internal stakeholders conceived that the election of David Cameron brought about a sense of unity within a once divided Conservative Party. Furthermore this sense of unity has continued to strengthen under David Cameron's leadership. One Conservative MEP points out "*Cameron provides a point around which people can unite because the divisions were becoming quite marked before Cameron became leader*" (P21). Additionally a Conservative PCC presented "*Cameron is managing all the diverse views in the party...respecting and trusting their views and accepts people can have different views and remain equal friends*" (P5).

This idea that David Cameron "*unified*" (P2) the Conservative Party was explored in greater detail and it was discovered that this sense of unity was far more complex than to be taken at face value. According to a Conservative Councillor David Cameron has merely "*quietened the dissatisfaction and united around the fact we need to shut up and win*" (P1). This point was shared by a Conservative MEP; David Cameron has "*come to some agreements with some ministers to keep them happy...shut up and win...fed up with being in opposition...we are willing to shut up to get Cameron elected*" (P19). However a member of the professional element of the Conservative Party; PPC in 2005 and elevated into the House of Lords in 2010 considered "*Cameron has united the party...party came to realise time to unite or never get in...I am not sure this was done for the greater good*" (P7).

Subsequently divisions, debate and "*murmuring*" (P18), continues to be "*going on behind closed doors*" (P18), revealed by one Conservative MEP. Further to this one London Assembly Minister (LAM) argued "*a party divided is never elected...not going to vote Cameron down as it's time to keep quiet and get elected*" (P9). Another LAM revealed "*all about winning...can return to issues once in power*" (P8), a sentiment shared by a PCC; also a Parliamentary Aid to a former Minister of State and member of

the Shadow Cabinet “*the big thing is to win*” (P25). Additionally the Parliamentary Aid revealed the former Shadow Cabinet Minister had “*massive issues with him [Cameron]...put up with him to win*” (P25). According to a Regional Vice-Chairman of Conservative Future “*David Cameron hasn’t united the party...still factions but united by the need to win*” (P29), a view shared by another member of Conservative Future “*Cameron hasn’t united the party...quietened the voices...Cameron forced the party to appear tight publically but behind the scenes they resent this that they have to hide issues*” (P22).

#### 4.4 Culture

The culture dimension of the brand identity prism focuses on the core values and heritage of a brand, (Gordon 1999; Kapferer 2001). In the context of this research the culture dimension accommodated themes including conceiving the UK Conservative Party as a ‘broad church’, contradictory core Conservative values, David Cameron’s emphasis of Conservatism and the heritage of the UK Conservative Party.

##### *4.4.1 ‘Broad Church’ Core Values*

The majority of internal stakeholders promoted a consistent, non-contradictory approach when revealing the core values of the UK Conservative Party. Participants proposed that the Conservative Party may be considered a “*broad church*” (P13), or “*coalition*” (P28) of diverse and unique strands and perspectives united by core principles such as *freedom* and the *individual*. This was outlined by one internal Conservative stakeholder “*that’s what Conservatism is; a mixture of different schools of thought. We have the strength of the broad church and at certain times certain policies fit better*” (P13). A point shared by a Conservative MP:

*“It is a broad church and I think there are some uniting defining features in the Conservatives whether they are pro-Europe or much more libertarian in their outlook there’s a round view that we support an individual...and bigger individual society within a bigger state...but there are broad themes that I think unite all those within the parliamentary party and the party at large”, (P27).*

These uniting broad themes were outlined by one Conservative MEP *“freedom, the only key single principle that matters in all this is this issue of individuals”* (P17), and one Conservative Peer argued:

*“It’s a fundamental Conservative belief that people should be free to lead their own lives...they know best. The other thing is stressing responsibility...what links the two is freedom...so you need the individual to be free then the responsibility rests with the individual not with the state...and aspiration related to freedom as well”* (P6).

Subsequently, the Conservative Party may be conceived as a broad church where members can metaphorically sit comfortably under the Conservative banner with members with different beliefs united by common eternal values. These eternal *“evergreen values”* (P20) were consistently presented by Conservative stakeholders; *“freedom, responsibility, respect for traditions”* (P20), *“aspiration, decentralisation”* (P1), *“patriotic, individuality, sovereignty”* (P3), *“small state, nobles oblige, less tax”* (P11), and *“compassionate society”* (P21) and *“strong family”*, (P30). According to one Conservative councillor *“Conservative identity differs from Conservative to Conservative and depends on what the Conservative believes”,* (P1) and *“one can still harbour personal values but united in the core values”* (P3). Along with eternal core values; tolerance and respect were seen as Conservative traits that unite the party in this broad church. *“We all coexist together and can live with division and different points of view. A country with sixty million people you’re going to have different views...coexist with eternal values...tolerance is a strong Tory trait”,* expressed by a Conservative MEP (P21). One Conservative MP suggested it is *“all about the overall philosophy...core philosophy doesn’t change but evolves...depends on the stage you are at in life”* (P14).

Additionally, a Conservative MEP pointed out *“being a Conservative is about beliefs and values rather like being an Englishman...a natural thing and often don’t list the reasons or know the reasons why”* (P20).

#### 4.4.2 Contradictory Decentralisation

Despite participants revealing a consistent approach in relation to the core values of the UK Conservative Party, it was discovered that there is a degree of tension regarding one of the core eternal *“evergreen”* (P20) values; decentralisation. Many internal Conservative stakeholders believed the Parliamentary element of the Conservative Party had increasingly become more centralised under the stewardship of David Cameron despite attempting to position the Party as a supporter of decentralisation. According to one Conservative LAM the *“party has become too centralised...contradictory to the conservatism principle of decentralisation”* (P8). This point was shared by a member of Conservative Future:

*“They [Parliamentary Party] promoted this idea of decentralisation at local government level but not at national level...contradicted by central party. Personal support has diminished because of this issue...party more fragmented internally because of centralisation”* (P22).

This contentious issue of contradictory decentralisation was explored for greater clarity and it was found that many internal stakeholders felt numerous aspects formally decentralised were now imposingly centralised such as the message/policy, power, campaigning, resources and candidate selection. One Conservative MEP considered *“candidate selection...upset a lot of the party...people are being ignored and treated badly...not treating the voluntary group with respect”* (P19). Further to this, the Conservative MEP revealed that *“Cameron’s small clique team in central office...got their favourite candidates”* and these favoured candidates are forced upon local constituencies with no room for debate and if you *“question them, they deny this”*,

(P19). Another Conservative MEP “*regrets the way we are obliged to centralise campaigning and organisation*” (P20), with a Conservative Future member revealing “*people aren’t happy with the centralisation...everything comes from CCHQ...Shadow Cabinet; too centralised and close-knit*” (P22). Another Conservative LAM conceived “*candidates should not be imposed upon local areas...more power to grass-roots in my day...party framework different, all areas had power...Cameron departed from grassroots Conservative opinion*” (P9).

One Conservative Peer believes “*the centre has too much power*” (P6) and the increased centralisation of the Conservative Party has caused bitter resentment, restricts campaigning (P3), caused tension (P6), isolation and upset across the spectrum of the Party (P22). However, one Conservative MEP proposes “*candidate selection is an internal issue...not a big deal...public not interested*” in internal affairs (P21), with another MEP suggesting centralisation has merely come about because “*the world and communication has changed*” (P20). When participants were probed whether they had highlighted their resentment and contention several internal stakeholders revealed it was not time to highlight concerns or tension. This was highlighted by one Conservative MEP “*we could have voted it out [candidate] but had three leaders in five years and we’re not going to vote him [Cameron] down now...keep quiet until after the election*” (P19).

#### *4.4.3 David Cameron’s Emphasis of Conservatism*

Many internal stakeholders provided varied interpretations of David Cameron’s emphasis/perspective of conservatism. A Conservative MEP argued that “*we needed to use our eternal values and apply them with a new emphasis and perspective...needed to find a new voice to articulate these values in contemporary language...David Cameron did this*” (P20). Many internal stakeholders proposed that David Cameron had rephrased

and refreshed the emphasis of certain eternal values and approached Conservative strands from a different perspective. David Cameron was seen as to “*transcend*” (P6) two distinct strands, *Tory and liberal*. One Conservative Peer proposed David Cameron’s perspective focuses on “*traditional Tory values but also liberal values in terms of wealth creation, aspiration, free market. Cameron has redefined the party in relation to people’s needs, [and] aspirations*” (P6). Whereas a Conservative MEP argued Cameron’s emphasis is “*currently One Nation...manifested in a different way emphasising the individual, compassionate society, aspirations, responsibility and the individual*” (P21). This was supported by a member of Conservative Future who maintained that David Cameron had:

*“Reaffirmed One Nation strand...reshaped the strand to personal approach and tailored current thinking...new emphasis not traditionally big on social dependency...free enterprise and pro-business...formally the value of strong national defence and national security but these values have diminished over the years...modernised One Nation because of Cameron’s own background...focuses on social responsibility, devolution of the NHS...tried to reaffirm himself as One Nation and the party with ‘we’re all in this together’”, (P22).*

However, several participants argued that David Cameron had merely become a pragmatic politician moving away from ideological politics focusing on current issues and addressing growing concerns. One PPC from the East Midlands argued David Cameron was not “*ideologically driven but more of an issue based pragmatist...ideology died in the 1990s*”, therefore applying eternal Conservative principles pragmatically (P23), rather than aligning with traditional Conservative strands. Conservative strands or “*stereotypes*” (P16) were also criticised by one Conservative Peer as “*constraining because most people are a mixture and may move their perspective during their parliamentary career*” (P16).

#### 4.4.4 Heritage

There was much debate among internal stakeholders as to who was responsible for the renewed fortunes of the Conservatives Party, with many Conservative participants revealing personal accounts of how the Party has increased in the polls. Many internal stakeholders believed that the supposed restored popularity of the Conservative Party was not solely down to David Cameron but “*all the leaders contributed to the present day standing*” expressed by one Conservative MP (P24). This point was shared by a Conservative PCC that argued past leaders including William Hague, Iain Duncan-Smith and Michael Howard “*all contributed something in the development*” of reconnecting the electorate with the Conservative Party as “*it was going to take time after 1997*” (P5).

Various Conservative participants provided homage to the heritage and legacy of the Conservative Party with explicit references to Margaret Thatcher, Winston Churchill, John Major, Benjamin Disraeli, William Gladstone and Harold Macmillan and to Conservative leaders post-1997. Several internal stakeholders including a Conservative PPC (elected MP 2010) suggested that Margaret Thatcher had influenced the current perspective and emphasis of the Conservative Party:

*“The modern Conservative Party is an incarnation of Thatcher values. Thatcher did the hard work reforming industry. Conservatives are now focusing more on centre ground...social inclusion policies a more user friendly image...Thatcher really set the foundation stones for Britain to become a modern economy”* (P3).

Several participants acknowledged that the Conservative Party in 1997 was disconnected with the electorate and “*everything we seemed to stand for seemed irrelevant*” outlined by one Conservative MEP (P20). Additionally, one Conservative LAM believed “*the reason we weren’t re-elected in 1997 was where we were, rather like the present government*”, the country was tired and wanted a change of government



(P8). Furthermore, in subsequent elections (2001-2005) it was acknowledged that the Conservatives were not seen as a credible alternative electable government and previous Conservative leaders “*made mistakes...talked about the wrong things...didn’t have a single minded proposition...need to have a strong opposition and a weak government*”, (P15). One Conservative MP acknowledged that it was not necessarily the strength of former Conservative leaders that was to blame but it was also their emphasis and focus that were not resonating with the electorate (P26).

A Conservative PPC suggested “*Thatcher...the country was polarised...hard to shake off the bogeyman [fearful] image. Only people who lived through it know the truth and new generation only hearing the negative bogeyman stories*” (P23). One Conservative MEP; also a former MP argued “*historically we’ve been a frumpy party, crusty, [old fashioned] extremely arrogant and pompous people...Cameron changed all that. [Cameron] brought a different kind of language to conservatism. Removed some prejudices*” (P17). Despite David Cameron rephrasing and rearticulating the language and emphasis on the Conservative Party many participants considered the legacy and legendry of former Party leader’s lives on and provide a point of identification. This is especially evident in the expressions of Margaret Thatcher and Benjamin Disraeli “*the soul of the party still Thatcherite but brain One Nation...Thatcher still prominent*” (P1) and “*Cameron [is] a different slant on Thatcherism*”, (P22). Similar views were presented by a Conservative MP “*Cameron can be traced back to Disraeli, Macmillan, Gladstone and Thatcher*” (P10), and a member of the professional element of the party stated Margaret Thatcher and Winston Churchill are the “*only two PMs [Prime Ministers] that you would associate their personality with the way the country is being led*” (P13). Ultimately, numerous internal stakeholders believe the Conservative Party remains “*the national party*” (P6), and the “*party is the backbone of England*” (P30).

#### 4.5 Relationship

The relationship dimension can be surmised as the relationship between the brand and consumer (de Chernatony 2006; Kapferer 2001). Nevertheless in the context of this research the relationship dimension reflects the relationship between internal stakeholders and the UK Conservative Party brand and the perceived relationship between the UK Conservative Party and the electorate. Ultimately the findings have been broadly categorised into internal relationships and external relationships.

##### *4.5.1 Internally*

A number of participants proposed that there was distinction between different elements within the Conservative Party, some considered positive and some conceived as negative in terms of the type of relationship and equality. According to one Conservative Councillor also campaign manager for a PPC *“distinction is nothing new...a provincial Northern seat can only win by showing clearly got a local identity”* (P4). This point was concurred by a Conservative MP who said that their constituency was *“ten years behind the game”* compared with the Conservative Party in the South of the country who are *“less traditional in their outlook”* and focus on *“newer ideas...new themes”*, which will have less resonance in this part of the country (P11). Several internal stakeholders believed that there are differences between regional and national levels of the Conservative Party across the country *“where ever you are”* (P29), which subsequently can be sub-divided further distinctions. This includes distinction in terms of the type of constituency seat for example marginal or safe seats (P29), urban and rural constituencies (P30), campaigning whether or not explicitly focusing on national or local issues (P10), and the region of the country the Conservative Party is in (P1). This point is strengthened by a Conservative MEP *“I would have to say I’ve experienced politics in three parts of the UK...there is a difference between them”*,

difference in the sense of the region and also the prominence of the issues people ascribe (P18).

Despite internal stakeholders promoting a decentralised relationship in terms of tailoring the identity to the local arena, reflecting the wants and needs of the local constituency, tension was revealed by participants at many levels of the Conservative Party. One Conservative MEP proposed resentment and jealousy existed between the London-Brussels relationship “*we’re in an international setting more complex*” and that there is a difference “*domestically and European wide*” in terms of political outlook and the amount of power MEPs possess in comparison to MPs (P17). Another Conservative MEP conceived there to be a inconsistent relationship “*between Westminster and Brussels*” (P18), with limited contact on certain issues such as candidate selection (P19) and a refusal to discuss certain policy agenda such as the newly formed (ECR) European Conservatives and Reformists Group (P18). One Conservative MEP also revealed duplicitous behaviour of fellow Conservative MEPs, specifically “*backroom deals*” between internal stakeholders and ordered to sign a “*blind pledge*” by the central party in London to adhere to the wishes of David Cameron (P18). Further to this another Conservative MEP proposed a “*sense of detachment of what we do here and the work done in London*” (P20), and there are going to be natural tensions between the different elements of the Conservative Party (P21). However, one Conservative MEP felt “*slightly uncomfortable*” (P21) with the unequal balance of privately educated and millionaire Ministers in the Shadow Cabinet as it should represent all parts of society. Nevertheless the Conservative MEP continued:

*“because I know a lot of people involved and because I also know a lot of the Shadow Cabinet and Shadow Ministers who are not from that background I tend to be more relaxed about it because I know what you’re seeing is what’s being projected by the media”* (P21).

A Conservative MEP argued that David Cameron needs to address the class issue in the Shadow Cabinet and make the Shadow Cabinet more representative of the population (P19), with a Conservative councillor believing “*the old Etonian bunch at the top of the party*” (P4) still have influence and control. Similar views were echoed by another Conservative councillor “[*the*] *old toff’s still running the party behind the scenes*” (P1), suggesting senior upper-class members of the party covertly have a certain amount of power.

One participant from the professional element of the party described a “*them and us*” (P15) mentality at many levels of the Conservative Party particularly between some of the sub-groups; groups that are allied with the Conservative Party and CCHQ, which in turn caused “*conflict*” and disconnection (P15). Several participants revealed that CCHQ are “*wary*” (P15; P18) of some sub-groups and that “*the existing relationships were distant and none existent*” and “*not seen as important unless money is a factor...there are some influential sub-groups [within the Conservative Party] and these wealthy influential people have direct access to David Cameron and George Osborne*” (P15). It was also reported that sub-groups may use physical brand identity elements of the Conservative Party; however CCHQ does not share strategic direction or the “*value laden proposition*” with the sub-groups (P15). Subsequently, the internal stakeholder was also “*surprised by the disconnect*” within the UK Conservative Party and the high profile sub-group “*virtually had no relationship*” with Conservative Campaign Headquarters (CCHQ) (P15).

CCHQ was criticised by several internal stakeholders. As previously discussed, tension was revealed by a number of Conservative stakeholders in reference to the increased centralisation of the Conservative Party with more power residing at the centre namely CCHQ (P29). Candidate selection was not the only centralised power that had been

devolved to the centre somewhat *“accelerated under Cameron”* (P8) but also the room to debate, limited access to CCHQ (P2), party policy discussion and campaign literature. According to one PCC; Parliamentary Aide to a former Minister of State *“he’s [Cameron] not running the party internally very well... [Including] candidate selection...this is pissing off loads of members. [Members] they’re just sceptical and hostile towards them [CCHQ]”* (P25). Furthermore *“it’s more of an organisational thing, the message is right I’m convinced of that but the gaffs have been allowed to happen...CCHQ getting it wrong sometimes and I am worried”* (P25).

This sense of wariness and question of trust was also shared by a number of internal stakeholders that felt that the bond of trust had weakened between the central element of the party and the Conservative Party as a whole. One Conservative LAM believed *“we’re putting trust in the electorate and trust in the people who often make the right decisions with a little common sense”*, however this sense of trust is not reciprocated by the central party, resulting in disappointment (P8). Other contentious issues were revealed by internal stakeholders such as David Cameron *“apologising”* for the Conservative Party’s failings of the past when in Government with one Member of the House of Lords stating *“found it difficult to say sorry for what we had achieved in office”* and that the Party had nothing to apologise for (P16). A small number of internal stakeholders also felt *“let down by the EU referendum promise”* (P30) and *“resents the fact Cameron said cast-iron guarantee on the Lisbon Treaty”* (P4), after David Cameron changed the Conservative Party’s stance on the referendum on the Lisbon Treaty. Additionally, several participants were unhappy with the emphasis of Party policy, uncomfortable with the increased focus on brand Cameron and predicted that division and debate would return after the 2010 General Election from both Conservative members and the electorate.

#### 4.5.2 Externally

It was also uncovered that there is an external relationship between the Conservative Party and the electorate on the whole, which needs to be discussed in relation to the Conservative brand identity. All Conservative stakeholders envisaged a decentralised relationship between the electorate and the Conservative Party, with more power residing with the individual and less state intervention. Nevertheless, the external relationship appeared complex.

Internal stakeholders provided contrasting opinion on whether the Conservative Party and David Cameron were resonating with the general public. Some arguing the Conservative Party was in-tune with the electorate ultimately forming a trusted relationship and others proposing that Cameron's Conservatives are not resonating and actually confusing the electorate. A small number of internal stakeholders questioned whether the Conservative Party was resonating with the electorate outside London (P7), one Conservative LAM argued:

*"I think he [Cameron] has a greater appeal to the closer to London you are...But I think not as yet as good the further you go from London...I think people in London and the outer area understand his agenda...I think possibly it hasn't resonated quite as well in some of the other heartlands" (P8).*

Another Conservative LAM considered that there are two types of Conservatives; London and the rest of the Party (P9). David Cameron's Conservatives were resonating in the metropolitan areas nevertheless had limited appeal in the traditional Conservative "heartlands" that have "no option...vote Conservative to win" (P9). This point strengthened the proposition that Conservatives can be considered diverse and distinct to their local area and the emphasis of conservatism in one area may be different and not as appealing to an emphasis of conservatives in another.

Many participants agreed that David Cameron was personally connecting with the “*public at large*” (P18) can resonate “*with the average person*” (P25) and the electorate believe that David Cameron has “*made a change to the party...look more electable*” (P18). However, internal stakeholders argued that there was still more work to be done in reconnecting with the electorate and reinforcing the Conservative message in order to convince the electorate that the Conservative Party under David Cameron was electable. One Conservative MP believed that David Cameron had made the Conservative Party “*not unelectable but not yet electable...people are wary of Cameron*” (P26); with another Conservative MP proposing that “*people are still not sure about Cameron*” suggesting Gordon Brown was “*the Conservative Party’s biggest asset*” (P11). The Conservative MP continued “*to be perfectly honest I’m not convinced how popular Conservatives are. It is how unpopular the Labour Party is*” (P11).

Several internal stakeholders believed that the electorate as a whole, were still not convinced by the Conservative Party, in the same way that they were convinced by New Labour in 1997 (P10). A member of the professional element of the Conservative Party considered the Cameron was confusing the electorate in terms of policy and the Conservative Party message was not clear enough (P7). Another professional member argued not to know enough about what the Conservative Party stands for or enough about David Cameron, which adds to the confusion and fails to convince the electorate of a Conservative administration (P15). This point was shared by a Conservative Councillor in that “*we don’t really know what the central party stands for*”, and there is confusion and a lack of clarity in some of the Conservative Party’s policy agenda (P1). Additionally, the Conservative Councillor revealed not to know a number of Conservative Party policies “*I am not sure what our social security policy is...I don’t even have a clue what our policy is on regional development agencies for example...oppositions sell dreams they don’t sell policies*” (P1).

It was also revealed that electoral voting systems might have an influence on the relationship between the electorate and the Conservative Party. According to one Conservative MEP it is “*very, very difficult*” for Members of the European Parliament to relate and connect with the electorate, the same way Members of the Westminster Parliament and councillors relate to the electorate (P17). Political representatives elected via the first-past-the-post (FPTP) voting system were “*very much more in touch with people on the ground*” (P17). The Conservative MEP continued “*it’s very difficult to do that under this system*” of proportional representation and constituents under this system may run into millions opposed to thousands (P17). Therefore, despite the difficulties faced by MEPs, alternative forms of communication are needed when attempting to build and maintain relationships with the electorate.

#### 4.6 Reflection

The reflection dimension of Kapferer’s brand identity prism provides insight into the envisaged user of the brand and does not necessarily represent the actual targeted user, (Dahlen *et al.* 2010; Gordon 1999; Kapferer 2008). In the context of this research the reflection dimension accommodated themes such as ‘who’ the UK Conservative Party was considered to represent, and ‘perceptions’ relating to social class.

##### *4.6.1 Who*

The majority of internal stakeholders believed that the UK Conservative Party under David Cameron was not designed to appeal to a defined segment of society rather he presented it as an inclusive political party for with something to offer for everyone. According to one Conservative Peer, the Conservative Party is a “*national party...it’s got to transcend all classes*” (P6), with similar views outlined by a Conservative MP, the party “*has to appeal right across society*” (P11), to “*all people from diverse backgrounds*” (P24). Various internal stakeholders believed that the UK Conservative



Party under the leadership of David Cameron has broadened its appeal by offering something to “*everyone in society*” (P29), “*a full package*” (P5) of policies to appeal to everyone. Subsequently, the notion that the Conservative Party is “*the party for everyone*” (P25), “*the many not the few*” (P28), a “*broad church*” (P8) was a consistent theme revealed by internal stakeholders. Nevertheless, a Conservative councillor and campaign manager for a Conservative PPC concurred that the UK Conservative Party was designed to appeal to a broad spectrum of support, (P4). However, continued with “*it won’t of course but that’s what we are trying to do*” (P4), as it is hard to reach certain people with contrasting philosophical outlooks and tribal political leanings (P4; P11).

This proposition of inclusion was explored in greater detail and many internal stakeholders believed the Conservative Party was designed to appeal to a broad spectrum of society dependent on the philosophical outlook of the individual. A Conservative MP suggested it was “*all about philosophy*” and the Conservative Party represents aspiration, opportunity with a focus on the individual (P14). Similarly, a Conservative MEP argued that the Conservative Party is for “*people who aspire to do better for themselves and get on with life. We’re for people who believe in freedom, responsibility, enterprise, law, respecting our history, traditions, defence, fairness and duty of care*” (P20). Many participants at all levels of the Conservative Party proposed the Party stands for believers of “*meritocracy and upward mobility*” rather than wedded to the class-system (P30), for people who want to “*get on with their lives...self-motivation*” (P9), supporters of less-government, decentralisation and the “*eternal verities*” of Conservative thinking (P8). A Conservative MEP considered the Conservatives are “*a middle-class party able to appeal to the aspirant working-class people who want to improve their lives*” (P18). Comparable views were projected by a Conservative MP who argued the Party appeals to the “*professional*

*classes...industrious working-class...middle-class*” which may be seen as a “coalition” of support once targeted and “weaned” by Tony Blair’s New Labour (P10).

#### 4.6.2 Rich, Upper-Class Perceptions

Opinion on social class and its relationship with the Conservative Party was a contrasting theme, with many arguing that philosophical beliefs of the individual were more important than their social class status. The Conservative Party was described by one councillor as “*an aristocratic party run by the middle-classes, supported by the working-classes*” (P1). Several Conservative participants believed that the Conservative Party was previously seen to represent the wealthy members of society and associated with the elite and upper classes. One internal stakeholder proposed that the Conservatives were:

*“Traditionally...for the upper-classes because of the nature of the people who stood as candidates...wealthy people and I think that’s more to do with the fact the party is more business based...I wouldn’t say they’re the party for the upper-classes or the wealthy of society because to an extent they don’t agree with taxing the rich unbelievably but that’s more to do with not hindering enterprise”* (P22).

This point was shared by another Conservative internal stakeholder, the “*Tories are not for the upper-classes anymore...same with [how] Labour doesn’t stand for the working-class anymore...Conservatives have something to offer everyone in society*” (P29). Additionally, it was acknowledged that social class in the UK was quite different in comparison to half a century ago (P20), and the notion of class was described as “*dying off*” by one Conservative PPC (P23). Several internal stakeholders proposed it was the policies and principles of Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s that were “*responsible*” (P23) for increased upward mobility and weakening of the class system in the UK (P16).

Similar views of previously associating the Conservative Party with wealthy individuals were also discussed by several internal stakeholders arguing that the Conservative Party

had “*changed...used to be for the wealthy...big business...all changed*” (P29). However, numerous participants conceived that the Conservative Party was still perceived as the “*party of the rich*” (P15), prioritising policies for the wealthy, run and supported by the wealthy by many members of the electorate. One Conservative MP argued:

*“There’s always this. I’m from Doncaster I know exactly what the perceptions are of the Conservative Party particularly in dominant Labour areas that feel it’s a party only interested in rich people and big business...and I wouldn’t be in it if that’s what I thought...I certainly don’t have that heritage”* (P14).

Despite participants considering the reality of the party was slightly contradictory with some of the perceptions of the Conservative Party, one Conservative MEP agreed that the ‘party of the rich’ mentality to a certain degree was still prevalent but the perceptions were not necessarily negative. It “*depends on where you go. I still meet people who say ‘I’m voting for you because you’re the party of the rich’ and a lot of people say ‘I couldn’t vote for you people because you only look after your own’*” (P18).

#### 4.7 Self-Image

In the context of this research the self-image dimension referred to the inner relationship between the internal stakeholder and the UK Conservative Party brand. The findings were broadly themed ‘badge of beliefs’ and ‘private statements’; ‘badge of beliefs’ because the findings reflected certain characteristics of the individual such as personal narratives and biographical information. Moreover, ‘private statements’ since the findings referred to personal opinion, feelings and symbolic meaning relating to the UK Conservative Party brand.

##### *4.7.1 Badge of Beliefs*

All the internal stakeholders provided personal accounts and insight into their interpretation of what it means to be a Conservative. Additionally, many Conservative participants revealed unique biographical information including family background,

personal beliefs and attitudes and private chronicles of how they came to be members of the Conservative Party. One Conservative Councillor that came from an upper-middle-class background joined after identifying with “*One Nation*” Conservatism and believed the Conservative Party provides the climate for people to “*aspire...achieve...succeed*” (P1). In contrast, a Conservative MP claimed to come from a working-class background, became an MP by “*default*”, starting life as a “*humble*” farm worker and progressing to become a local councillor. Claiming to be more “*right-wing than Cameron*”, he believed in rewarding people who play by the rules and work hard, and supporter of localism (P11). Another participant now a Conservative MEP revealed they come from a working-class ethic background, “*slowly*” became a Conservative after graduating from university, influenced by family members attitudes to socialism and identified with Conservative values; aspiration, the individual and meritocracy (P19). Finally a Conservative Peer from a middle-class background disclosed that family members had been professional politicians in mainstream political parties. However supported the idea of “*wealth creation...One Nation...dislike highly controlled Trade Unions*” (P16), which the participant associated with the Conservative Party.

Several internal stakeholders proposed to have joined the Conservative Party for varied reasons including their dislike for the Labour Party and felt the Conservatives were the “*underdog*” at the time (P25). Furthermore, participants joined the Conservative Party because they personally wanted to make a difference (P8) and was a “*believer in public duty*” (P9). One Conservative councillor argued “*Conservative identity differs from Conservative to Conservative...depends on what the Conservative believes*” (P1), with many internal stakeholders arguing that you have to choose a political party that “*you’re most comfortable with*” (P26). Additionally, participants proposed you “*won’t agree with everything*” (P2), “*don’t agree with every issue but that’s the nature...won’t win*

*every argument*” (P11), *“you’re going to find a party that you disagree with least”* (P19), and *“not a tribal Conservative...no party has got it right”* (P26).

#### 4.7.2 Private Statements

Many internal stakeholders described *aspiration* as a core conservative principle and timeless value that forms part of the culture of the UK Conservative Party. However, one Conservative MEP believes that under the leadership of David Cameron the Conservative Party is no longer the party of aspiration with party policy contradicting social mobility and meritocracy (P19). The MEP argued *“I would like us to go back to being the party of aspiration...when I joined the party we were the party of aspiration...I don’t see that anymore...when Cameron talks about aspiration, I don’t believe him”* (P19). Contradictory policy includes David Cameron’s stance on Grammar Schools and A-list compulsory candidate selection. Further to this the Conservative MEP expressed:

*“I do think we are losing meritocracy in our party through the way our MEP selection for example, where vacancies go to women [sic] not meritocratic...now there are a lot of people who think that you should get a seat because they’re from unrepresented groups and I think that’s a bit worrying...[central Conservative Party]their idea of a black candidate is an African Etonian or Asian candidate is an Asian millionaire...I want us to be back to the party of aspiration”,* (P19).

In 2002 Theresa May MP, infamously stated that the Conservative Party was perceived as ‘the nasty party’ in the minds of the electorate. This point was briefly discussed with several participants with one internal stakeholder proposing that the *“nasty party associations are still there”* and David Cameron and the Conservatives have not done enough to correct these deep-seated perceptions (P15). In contrast, a Conservative MP disputed Theresa May’s interpretation:

*“This idea that we ever were a nasty party was a load of guff [nonsense] anyway...if the difference people point to is that ‘well before you were nasty and now you’re not’. I wouldn’t say we’ve changed I would just say maybe our image had changed and people’s perceptions of us had changed. But I don’t accept that we were a nasty party in the first place” (P14).*

Comparable views were presented by a Conservative councillor *“I don’t agree with Theresa May, we were never the nasty party...I was never nasty” (P30).* However, another internal stakeholder argued that the Conservative Party used to be perceived as tougher and uncaring but David Cameron has softened the image to show the Conservatives *“do care”* by re-emphasising Conservative principles and broadening policy (P29). Nevertheless, the internal stakeholder failed to elaborate on the re-emphasised Conservative policies and principles apart from the *“green issues”* and that policies were now designed to be *“slightly harsher for the upper-classes”* and *“appeal to everyone”* (P29). When asked for clarification the internal stakeholder revealed *“I’ve heard policies will come out during the election campaign. Don’t want Labour to steal them. I hope more policies will be revealed” (P29).* Subsequently, there was a varied response to the nasty party perceptions. Some believed the UK Conservative Party was no longer perceived as nasty, some argued they were never the ‘Nasty Party’ and others considered they were still seen as nasty. Therefore, this varied approach somewhat undermines David Cameron’s and the UK Conservative Party brand’s argument to have dispelled the negative perceptions.

Various participants revealed that David Cameron was not necessarily their first choice in the 2005 Conservative Party leadership election indicating David Davis was their ideal choice of party leader. This was outlined by one Conservative PPC (now MP) *“if I am honest David Davis was more my sort of Conservative” (P3),* in terms of emphasis, ideology and appeal to working-class voters. Similar views were expressed by a professional member of the Conservative Party *“David Davis...big fan...there is some*

*substance...stood up for his convictions...such a good MP, I believe him” (P15), with another professional member stating “I would probably say that I am more politically aligned with David Davis. But that’s the nature of politics. I actually voted for David Cameron primarily because I felt he had the best opportunity to take on Gordon Brown”, (P13). David Davis was seen as “classic-right-wing” (P13), compared with David Cameron’s centre-left position and David Cameron was “completely new...not established” (P13), whereas David Davis already had an established position, opinions and attitudes.*

Subsequently, voting for David Cameron opposed to David Davis was seen as strategic rather than adhering to principle. Furthermore it was argued that *“it was perfectly clear that Cameron was a winner. And that he would have the drive and the personality that would have wider appeal” (P3).* This was coherent with the views of a Conservative LAM *“we believe Cameron can win...And that’s why I voted for Cameron...However I agree with many of the policies of David Davis. [David] Davis represented the old Conservative Party which I am a member but didn’t think he [Davis] could win”, (P8).* Furthermore, a Conservative MP who voted for David Davis in the leadership election conceived David Davis as *“more traditional”* with less emphasis on *“climate change...more robust attitude towards the EU...tougher policies on law and order...his views chime much more with mine”* and would appeal more in the North and to working-class voters (P14). Finally, the Conservative MP continued *“if I had my time again I would still have voted for David Davis in the leadership election” (P14).*

A small number of internal stakeholders raised the premise that the electorate are wary of David Cameron and thus the Conservative Party because of Tony Blair and New Labour. Additionally, it was argued that the electorate have a questionable attitude in relation to Cameron’s Conservative Party as they feel Tony Blair and New Labour

convinced the electorate in 1997 and were duly disappointed by not delivering as promised. Nevertheless despite Tony Blair and New Labour following on to win three General Elections, one Conservative MP suggested:

*“People really bought Tony Blair in 1997 but then they were disappointed with him and it’s the old saying once bitten twice shy. They say Cameron’s a bit like Blair he’s promising a lot and as a young man, lack of experience he may let us down the way Blair let us down so are we certain he’s the right man” (P26).*

Another Conservative internal stakeholder believed that Tony Blair and New Labour “hoodwinked” (P28) the media in 1997 into believing New Labour were genuine and now the media are sceptical of David Cameron and the Conservatives as a result.

*“I think they [media] realised they were hoodwinked into believing Tony Blair and treating him like he was some kind of Messiah...and they’re not determined to make the same mistake again but unfortunately what that means is the Conservative Party got screwed...in 1997 because they thought he was the Messiah and now they’re being screwed in 2010 because they don’t want to create another Messiah” (P28).*

Therefore, it was argued by this respondent that the media and the electorate are wary of David Cameron and the UK Conservative Party to a certain degree because of Tony Blair’s New Labour.

Many internal stakeholders believed that the Conservative Party as a whole had not necessarily changed merely adapting core Conservative principles to “*each new generation’s problems...need to respond to the new agenda*” (P11). A Conservative Peer conceived that David Cameron was focusing on a new perspective within traditional Conservative thinking such as Disraeli’s One Nation, combined with Thatcherism however appropriately tailored to the modern world (P16). Another Conservative Peer proposed that Conservative values “*haven’t changed just the emphasis and how the argument is constructed*” (P6), with one Conservative MEP stating society has changed “*and we have finally caught up with social attitudes*” (P19). Further to this, the



Conservative MEP believed the UK Conservative Party had become more *“economically liberal and socially liberal...I don’t give a damn what people do behind their closed doors...we’ve got rid a lot of our social conservatism”*, and become more tolerant and accepting to alternative lifestyles (P19). Many Conservative participants proposed all leaders have a different perspective which they bring to the party and David Cameron has rephrased and reshaped the political argument resulting in a new emphasis on core Conservative thinking (P20).

Nevertheless, several internal stakeholders considered that the Conservative Party had not done enough to win the 2010 General Election, questioned whether the Party would adhere to proposed pledges (P8) and were also critical of the Conservative Party message. According to a Conservative councillor; PPC Campaign Manager people still *“can’t make the jump to Conservative...I still don’t think the party has done enough to win the next election outright...at this stage in the game we should be streets ahead in the polls...it’s worrying”* (P4). Similarly, a Conservative MP considered that the public are not entirely convinced that the Conservatives have changed the *“public think Cameron’s different but not sure if the public think the party’s all that different”* (P10). Whereas a member of Conservative Future claimed *“I don’t think they’ve done very well in putting their message forward...need to come up with some policies”* (P22).

Internal stakeholders were divided regarding Conservative Party policy and party message. Some argued the Party were resonating with the electorate and were adequately expressing party policy. Nonetheless an internal stakeholder believed *“I do think we could package some of our core beliefs better and try present who we are”* (P13). Moreover a Conservative MP argued:

*“To me the message is fairly clear. Namely we need to change course, we’ve been too state orientated, too target oriented, insufficient encouragement of initiatives for individuals, companies, organisations, public sector organisations...but I think that the problem is we [the party] haven’t put that quite across sort of what’s the alternative...I’m sure the Conservative Party’s not short of ideas but finds it difficult to get those ideas across [sic] so I don’t think people yet bought into that Cameron is right I think they think Cameron maybe” (P26).*

Several members argued that the Conservative message “*needs clarity and a positive vision*” (P15), with a member of Conservative Future proposing the Conservative Party doesn’t “*have any clear values at the moment*” (P29). However, a Conservative councillor suggested that David Cameron had started to articulate the Conservative message strongly but needs to frame the message in everyday language just as Margaret Thatcher had done (P30). It was not just the Conservative message that lacked clarity and seemed confusing (P15), understanding what the central element of the Conservative Party stands for (P1) was another criticism of Cameron’s Conservatives. One Conservative Future member called for “*more distinction...need a clearer distinction*” (P29) between the Conservative Party and political competitors.

#### 4.8 Summary

The aim of this chapter was to present the findings generated from phase one of the thesis. This focused on the exploration of the envisaged and current brand identity of the UK Conservative Party from the perspective of internal Conservative stakeholders. Thirty in-depth interviews were conducted with internal Conservative stakeholders ranging all three elements of the UK Conservative Party prior the 2010 UK General Election. The interviews were transcribed and thematically analysed by the researcher. The conceptualisation of Kapferer’s (2008) brand identity not only served as the grounding for phase one of the study but also served to structure the findings and evaluate the applicability of the findings to the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008).

Whilst Kapferer's (2008) brand identity prism has been applied to consumer research (de Chernatony 1999; Harris and de Chernatony 2001), this is the first time it has been used in political branding research. Many of the themes presented by internal stakeholders overlap the dimensions and thus are interconnected. The six dimensions proposed by Kapferer (2008) were adapted to accommodate the deep insight projected by participants in relation to the envisaged brand identity of the UK Conservative Party. Consequently, the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008) helped to operationalise the brand identity of the UK Conservative Party, which in turn generated a greater understanding of the brand identity of the UK Conservative Party brand. The following chapter will present the findings from phase two of the research study and will be succeeded by analysis and discussion.

## 5 Findings – Phase Two

### 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the findings for phase one of the study that focused on the exploration of the brand identity of the UK Conservative Party from the perspective of internal Conservative stakeholders. This chapter presents the findings generated from phase two of the study that focused on generating a greater understanding of the brand image (Bosch *et al.* 2006) of the UK Conservative Party from the perspective of external stakeholders.

In total, eight focus group discussions containing forty-six participants aged 18-24 years were conducted in three areas across England (North, Midlands and South) during the period of March 2010 to May 2010, with the final focus group discussion taking place four days prior polling day, 6<sup>th</sup> May 2010. Focus group discussions lasted no more than sixty minutes, were enhanced with projective techniques, and audio recordings were transcribed and thematically analysed by the researcher. Moreover, the expressions and illustrations generated from the projective techniques were also thematically analysed with the aid of qualitative content analysis accompanied by a tailored version of the two-staged thematic approach outlined by Butler-Kisber (2010). An example of the nomenclature used for citing verbatim, paraphrasing of the verbatim and referencing the projective technique figures of participants from the focus group discussions can be seen in table 10 on p.172.

**Table 10: Example of the Nomenclature used for Citing/Paraphrasing the Verbatim**

<b>Code</b>	<b>External Stakeholder</b>
P1FG2	Participant one from the second focus group – A Labour supporting A-level student from the city of Nottingham, England.
P3FG5	Participant three from the fifth focus group – A floating voter (PhD student) from Newcastle, England.
P2FG7	Participant two from the seventh focus group – A Conservative supporting A-level student from Maidenhead, England.

Many participants provided biographical data and political party affiliation or support revealing a diverse range of political affiliation including floating voters. The education achievements of participants ranged from no higher education, undergraduate degree level to postgraduate degree level. Participants were from across England. The only determinant factor for taking part in the focus group discussion was that participants were aged 18-24 years. Furthermore, anonymity was given to all participants. A detailed outline of the sample can be seen in appendix F.2.

The conceptualisation of brand image (Bosch *et al.* 2006) not only served as the grounding for phase two of the study but also served to structure the findings and evaluate the applicability of the findings to the brand image framework (Bosch *et al.* 2006). As previously stated, the brand image framework (Bosch *et al.* 2006) is an amalgamation of six variables including strengths, uniqueness, expectations, perceptions and associations, experiences and evaluations (Bosch *et al.* 2006). The key themes generated from the focus group discussions accompanied with the expressions generated from the projective techniques can be seen in figure 14 on p.174.

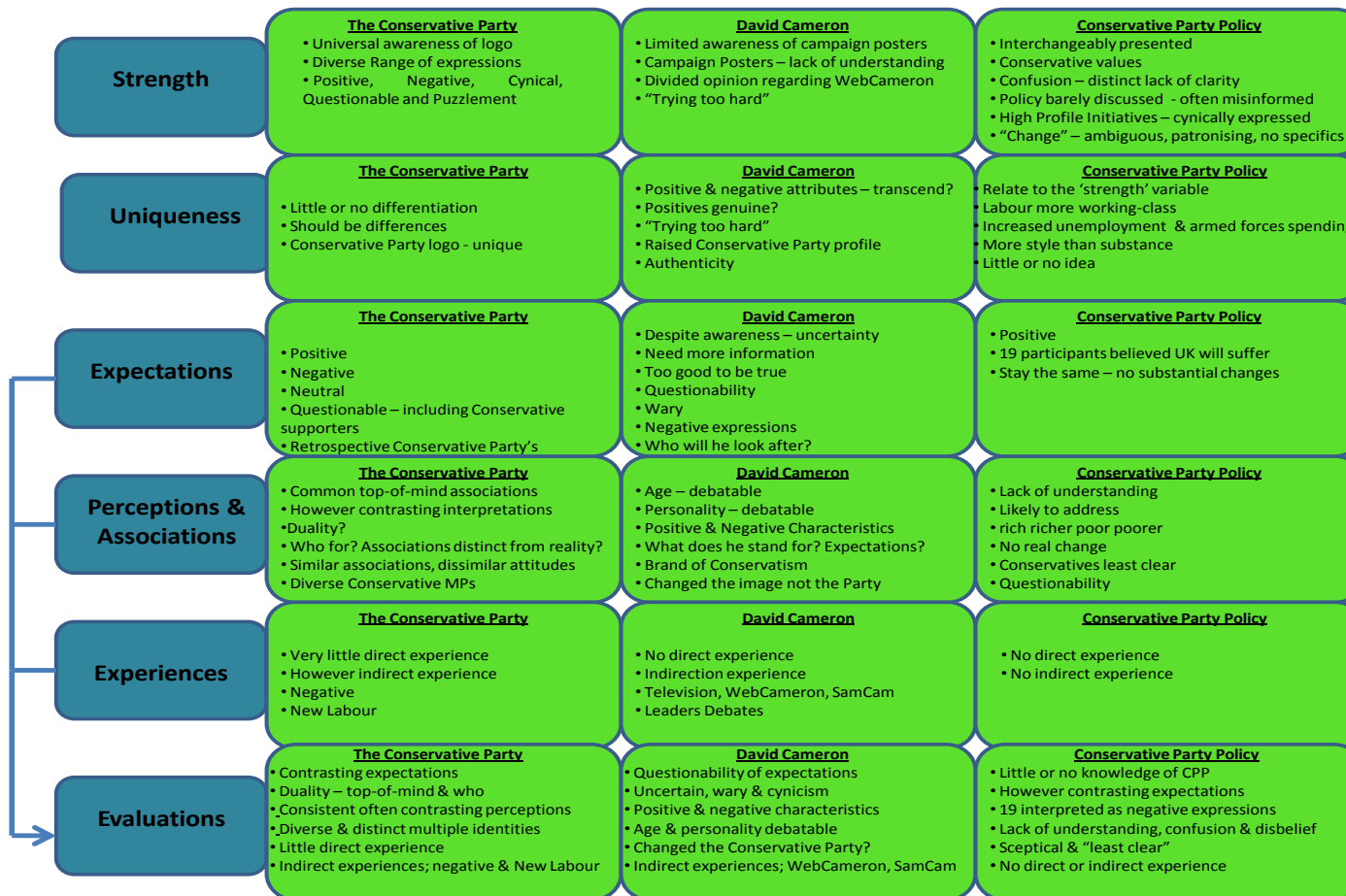


Figure 14: The UK Conservative Party Brand Image mapped onto the Brand Image Framework

## 5.2 Strengths Variable

In the context of this study the *Strengths* variable (Bosch *et al.* 2006) referred the brand identity signals communicated by the UK Conservative Party brand to the external environment. Moreover the findings were subsequently sub-divided into three themes: *the Conservative Party, David Cameron and Conservative Party Policy*.

### *5.2.1 The Conservative Party - Strengths*

A number of the open-ended themes in the focus group discussion guide addressed Conservative Party brand identity signals. Nevertheless, additional findings that relate to the *strengths variable* were revealed by participants and were then probed for greater understanding. After broadly discussing favourite consumer brands, personal political interests and political party logos with the participants, the Conservative Party logo (blue and green oak tree) was assessed for greater elaboration. All the forty-six participants recognised the UK Conservative Party logo as seen in figure 15 below and provided a broad range of opinions, beliefs and feelings.



**Figure 15: UK Conservative Party Logo May 2010**

([www.conservatives.com](http://www.conservatives.com))

Opinion was divided with many participants revealing a positive standpoint highlighting optimistic feelings such as “*it’s all about growth*” (P4FG2), “*change*” (P6FG2), “*future, new beginnings*” (P1FG1), with one participant liking the Conservative Party logo due to its simple qualities (P3FG4). However, there were many participants that did not like the oak tree logo and considered it “*child-like*” (P2FG4), “*bland*” (P1FG4), does not stand for anything (P2FG6; P6FG6), and not exactly clear. Additionally, many

participants including a Conservative supporter considered the logo confusing (P1FG1) believed the logo was meant to emphasise environmental and global warming issues but considered it inconsistent with Conservative Party policy (P5FG1). A number of floating voters were cynical of the new oak tree logo merely a “*shallow branding exercise*” (P3FG5), an attempt to come across as environmentally friendly when in fact not. The logo introduced puzzlement “*we don’t know the link between the Party and the logo...would have thought [sic] more green [political party] but didn’t think that was Tory policy*” (P5FG1), with many stating it should be the logo of an environmentally focused political party and that the UK Conservative Party was not considered an environmentally friendly party. One participant believed there to be not enough blue crayon in the logo. In turn the oak tree appeared to have no symbolism when compared to the former flaming-torch logo (P3FG5), seen as a non-political logo set to appeal to non-politically minded people (P2FG5). Therefore, participants were aware of the Conservative Party logo yet provided contrasting interpretations relating to the Conservative Party logo ranging from positive, negative, questionable and uncertain expressions.

### 5.2.2 David Cameron - Strengths

The signals relating to David Cameron and the Conservative Party were discussed including campaign posters, web-based marketing, manifestoes and television appearances. A limited awareness of the controversial nationwide campaign posters such as ‘Gordon (Brown) stolen your pensions’ and ‘I never voted Conservative before’ was revealed. Nevertheless this was accompanied with confusion “*I don’t understand the posters and what they’re about*” (P3FG3). Similarly, this was the case with David Cameron’s web-based communication tool, ‘WebCameron’, which allowed behind the scenes access into David Cameron’s everyday family life. Several participants considered the personalised interview as a refreshing and innovative communication



tool allowing the electorate access into David Cameron's everyday life, resulting in participants relating to the party leader. Contrastingly 'WebCameron' was also seen as fake, superficial and actually alienated a number of participants.

### 5.2.3 Conservative Party Policy - Strengths

When participants were asked to elaborate on the themes; *Conservative Party values* and *Conservative Party policy*, it was found that these were often interchangeably presented and fundamentally linked. Illustrations of Conservative Party values such as "*broad church, privatisation, marketisation*" (P1FG1), lower taxes (P3FG3; P6GH7), traditionalists (P2FG5), small state (P4FG5), and low public funding (P6FG7) were revealed by several participants of diverse political leanings. Despite this, many participants failed to provide illustrations of Conservative Party values.

It was found that participants were confused and "*didn't really know*" (P3FG2) Conservative Party policy or values with one participant suggesting that the Party did not have any policies (P5FG1). This tended to be the case across the focus groups with a distinct lack of clarity in policy, values and principles. Several participants made reference to a number of policies the Conservative Party would enact if elected such as raising VAT (Value Added Tax) (P4FG8), reduce waste and bureaucracy (P1FG8), axing "*Labour's job tax*" (P4FG8; P6FG8) and reducing the number of 'QUANGOs' (P6FG8). Additionally, when participants presented interpretations of Conservative Party policy several external stakeholders believed a Conservative administration would support the abolition of "*Sure Start*" (P4FG5), lower funding for schools (P2FG6), and the implement the axing of NHS pensions (P3FG1). Nevertheless, Conservative Party policies in the context of signals were barely discussed only to highlight a lack of clarity, understanding and unawareness.

The idea of ‘change’ was a major occurring theme illustrated by participants from all political leaning in reference to Conservative Party policy and values. Many considered ‘change’ to be confusing, ambiguous with a lack of clarity (P3FG5; P4FG5; P3FG7) and often patronising (P5FG8). One participant (P3FG2) claimed not to have heard any Conservative Party policy apart from the idea of change and could not elaborate further only questioning whether change meant not to “*raise taxes but still cut spending...confusing*” (P3FG2). Many argued “*Cameron keeps talking about change but not many people know what he’s going to do. No specifics. Don’t think he’s got a real idea of what he means by change*” (P7FG7). Therefore, the idea of change was widely known but lacked clarity, understanding and believability. Moreover this was similar to another Conservative Party initiative ‘The Big Society’, where participants failed to grasp the understanding, definition and often held their own interpretation of what ‘the Big Society’ equates to (P3FG5; P3FG5; P3FG7; P5FG8).

### 5.3 Uniqueness

The *uniqueness variable* broadly focused on the unique meaningful attributes external stakeholders ascribed to the UK Conservative Party brand, which should also serve as reasons why external stakeholders should adopt the brand (Bosch *et al.* 2006).

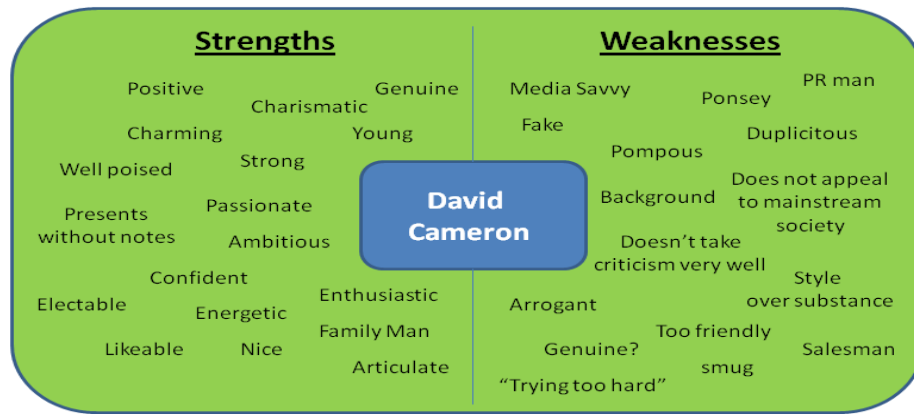
#### *5.3.1 The Conservative Party - Uniqueness*

External stakeholders were presented with the theme ‘differentiation’ in relation to the Conservative Party and political competitors with the aim of eliciting unique attributes. Many participants considered there to be little or no differentiation between political parties especially in comparison to Gordon Brown’s New Labour. One Green supporting postgraduate participant considered “*I don’t see any actual difference, people [politicians] are the same...but they’re supposed to be different*” (P2FG5). In spite of this participants revealed small differences between the main political parties

(Labour and Conservative) such as the Labour Party “*more working-class*” (P4FG4), more of a focus on employment, public and social welfare, higher taxes and bridging the social class divide. In contrast the Conservatives were seen as increasing spending on unemployment and the armed forces (P3FG4), privatisation, focused on the individual, change and cutting the deficit. One floating undergraduate student considered the Conservatives a little superficial focusing more on style than substance and expressed “*when I hear about Labour I hear more about what they’re going to do [sic] whereas Cameron and his silly campaigns*” (P2FG1). This was shared by an A-level student from the City of Nottingham suggesting the Labour Party is “*actually giving an idea what they’re going to do*” (P3FG2). Subsequently, the findings suggested that the uniqueness of the UK Conservative Party brand image can be considered as a weak variable as many participants considered little or no differentiation with Labour, highlighted stereotypical elements such as tax, class, privatisation and expressed confusion. Furthermore participants suggested the UK Conservative Party were less clear than Labour, did not know what to expect from a Conservative government which resulted in uncertainty.

### *5.3.2 David Cameron - Uniqueness*

Despite participants believing there was little or no difference between mainstream political parties, participants did recognise the distinction between political party leaders. UK Conservative Party leader *David Cameron* was seen as a positive and negative unique attribute of brand image. Figure 16 on p.180 presents the key strengths and weaknesses relating to Conservative leader David Cameron.



**Figure 16: Strengths and Weaknesses presented in reference to David Cameron**

Many participants of all political affiliation believed David Cameron to be charismatic, young, ambitious, strong, “*doesn’t pander to the rich*” (P2FG7) enthusiastic, confident, friendly, energetic, articulate and different from previous Conservative party leaders (P2FG7). In addition, several participants proposed that the UK Conservative Party as a whole was still the same, however David Cameron was different. However a number of these qualities actually made several participants question whether these strengths were genuine. Many participants of broad political affiliation including Conservative supporters suggested that David Cameron “*doesn’t appeal to the working-class*” (P4FG4), “*seen as media savvy*” (P5FG8), “*a salesman*” (P1FG1), “*fake*” (P4FG5), “*smug*” (P2FG5), “*pompous*” (P2FG4), does not relate or represent mainstream society (P3FG5; P6FG6) and “*arrogant*” (P7FG7). Moreover it was also argued that many negatives for example ‘media savvy’ could be seen as positives and vice versa (P6FG2; P3FG5; P4FG8; P5FG8).

Another theme relating to David Cameron was the idea he was “*trying too hard*” (P2FG1), and in fact Cameron’s attempts to attract citizens was actually having an opposite effect (P1FG1; P3FG1; P1FG7). This relates to Conservative Party policy, initiatives such as WebCameron and staged yet “*hypocritical*” approaches such as flying to an environmentally friendly conference in a helicopter (P3FG1) or riding a bicycle to the office with his ministerial brief-case following in his ministerial car (P7FG7). This

included one Conservative supporting PhD student that argued Cameron was “*trying too hard*” (P1FG1), and focusing on “*superficial stuff...not focusing on policies that’s his [David Cameron’s] problem*” (P1FG1). However, as one floating voter from London pointed out, despite not knowing much about David Cameron or the Conservative Party, it was believed Cameron was trying too hard. Nevertheless this could be seen as a strength such as creating awareness and raising debate, “*maybe a long-term strength but a short-term weakness*” (P3FG1). A small number of participants including floating voters and Conservative supporters regarded ‘this trying too hard’ attribute as an example of the passion and determination Cameron has in relation to becoming Prime Minister. Therefore awareness of David Cameron was evident but opinion differed in terms of approach and attitude.

It was also found that ‘David Cameron’ was one of the first associations participants expressed in relation to the UK Conservative Party despite participants expressing contrasting attitudinal perspectives. A number of participants of all political affiliation conceived the idea that with David Cameron as leader it made participants more interested (P2FG2), raised the profile of the Conservative Party (P1FG6), “*wouldn’t have considered voting for the Conservatives if it wasn’t for Cameron*” (P5FG6) and “*made me look at the Tories differently*” (P3FG3).

### 5.3.3 Conservative Party Policy - Uniqueness

As previously stated, participants demonstrated a limited awareness of Conservative Party policy, were often confused and participant’s proposed Conservative Party policy lacked clarity and understanding. Nevertheless several participants revealed small distinctions between the Labour Party and the Conservative Party in terms of policy and associations. One floating voter from Nottinghamshire believed the Labour Party was “*more working-class*” (P4FG4), with more of a focus on employment, public and social

welfare, higher taxes and bridging the social class divide. Contrastingly a Conservative supporting participant considered a Conservative administration would increase spending on unemployment and the armed forces (P3FG4), with various external stakeholders associating privatisation, focus on the individual, the idea of change and cutting the deficit were attributes in relation to the Conservative Party. Therefore, the UK Conservative Party was associated with broad attributes rather than detailed specifics. Furthermore the Labour Party was considered more informative than the Conservative Party in terms of policy and direction and it was believed that the Conservative Party focused more on style than substance.

#### 5.4 Expectations

The third variable outlined by Bosch *et al.* (2006:14), *expectations*, referred to how external stakeholders expected the UK Conservative Party brand to perform. These prospective attributes provide insight into the outlook consumers' associate with the political brand.

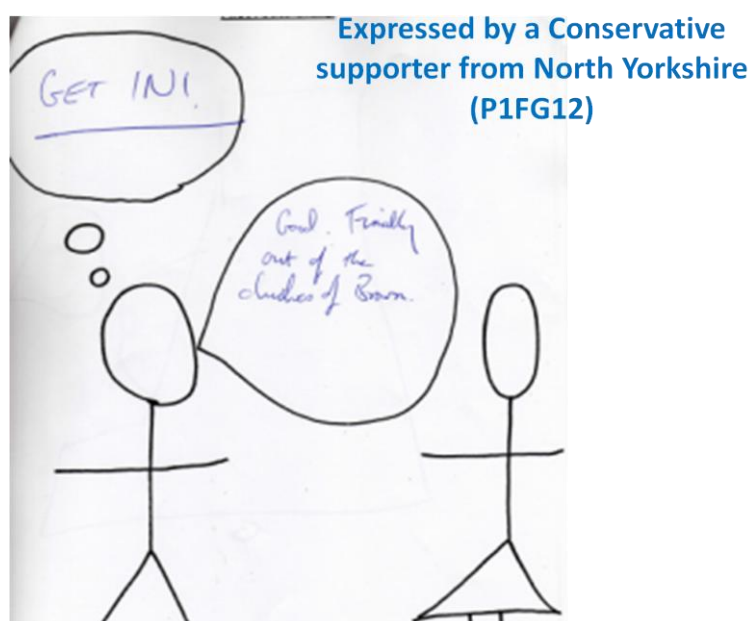
A number of projective techniques were incorporated into the focus group discussions to elicit associations, perceptions and feelings in reference to the brand image of the Conservative Party. The rationale for embracing projective techniques as a research tool has already been established and can be seen in previous chapters. The expressions created from the projective techniques along with the findings from the focus group discussion revealed participants expectations of the UK Conservative Party.

##### *5.4.1 The Conservative Party - Expectations*

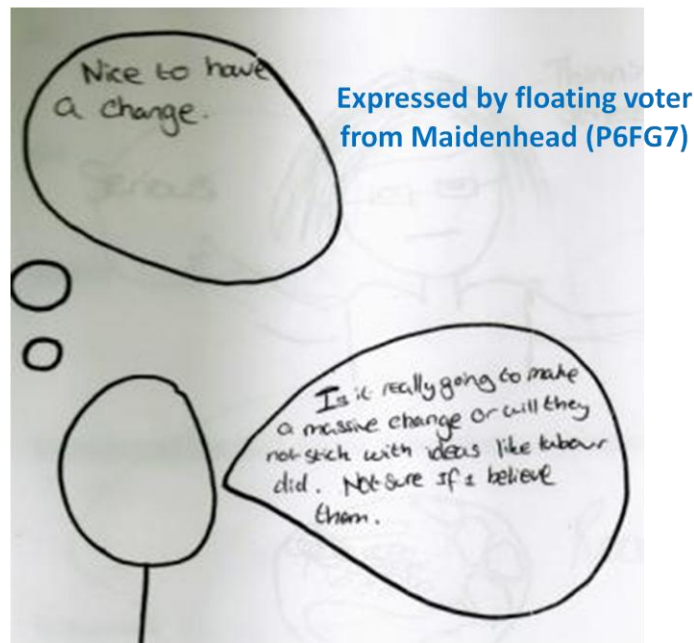
Participants were presented with two stick-figures, with one speech bubble and one thought bubble connected to one of the stick-figures and presented with the statement '*imagine the Conservative Party has just won the 2010 UK General Election*'. The participants were then instructed to express their opinion, belief or feeling on hearing

this news thus revealing a series of expectations. It became apparent that the expectations could be broadly categorised into positive, negative, neutral and questionable attributes in reference to the attitudes participants expressed after hearing the Conservatives had been elected.

A Conservative supporting participant (PhD student) revealed a positive expression at the prospect of an end to the Labour administration led by Gordon Brown replaced by a Conservative government (P1FG1). A floating voter (A-level student) from Maidenhead expressed “*nice to have a change*” (P6FG7), however illustrated scepticism “*is it really going to make a massive change or will they not stick with ideas like Labour did. Not sure if I believe them*” (P6FG7). Both expressions can be seen in figure 17 on p.183 and figure 18 on p.184.



**Figure 17: Projection Expressed by a Conservative supporter from Yorkshire after hearing the UK Conservative Party have won the 2010 UK General Election**



**Figure 18: Illustrated by a floating voter from Maidenhead after hearing the Conservative Party have won the 2010 UK General Election**

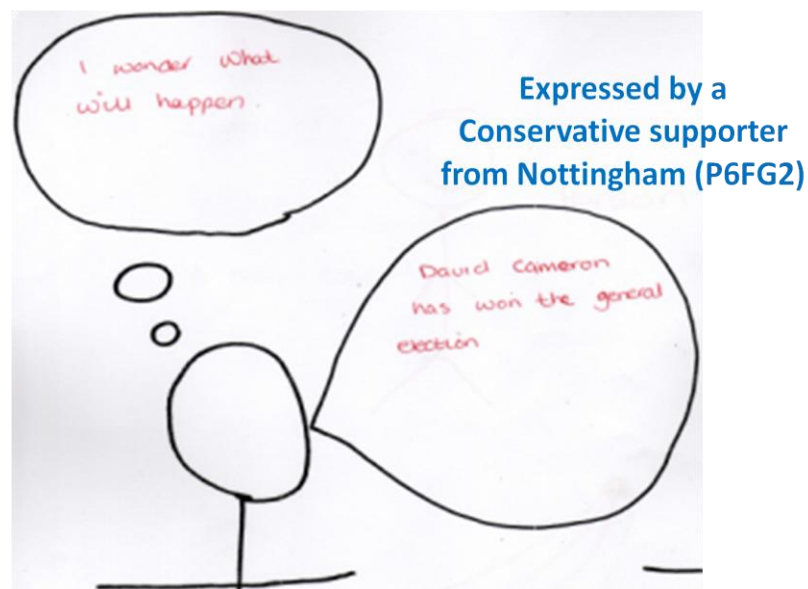
Participants of all political affiliation not including Conservative supporters revealed negative expectations such as a Conservative government reverting to Thatcherite policy, a Conservative administration would not be good for Britain, greater powers for the rich, rich get richer and poor get poorer, no real change only for the wealthy. Additionally a floating voter (PhD student) proposed “*get ready for rising unemployment and increase in social inequality and crime*” (P4FG5), a Labour supporting participant expressed; “*we are in for some lean years, will we have another recession*” (P4FG8), while a floating voter (A-level) believed “*the quality of education and services is going to fall dramatically*” (P5FG7). Therefore many participants of broad political affiliation expected the UK to suffer under a Conservative government.

It was also revealed that participants including Conservative supporters provided a neutral and questionable proposition of a Conservative administration. A *neutral* proposition referred to expressions that were interpreted as uncommitted or possessed neither positive nor negative characteristics. While a *questionable* proposition referred

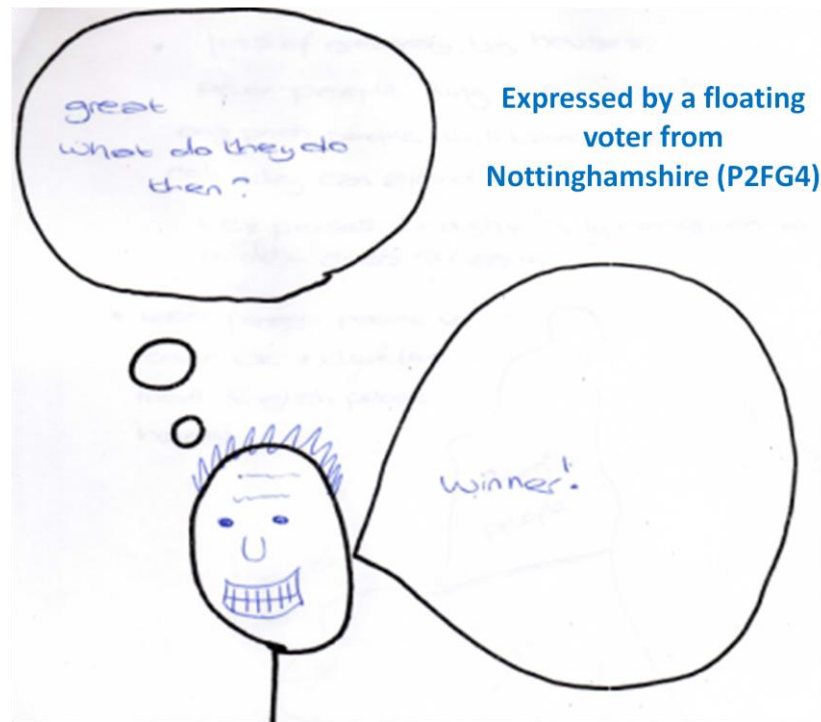


to expressions that raised questions and uncertainties in reference to the UK Conservative Party brand.

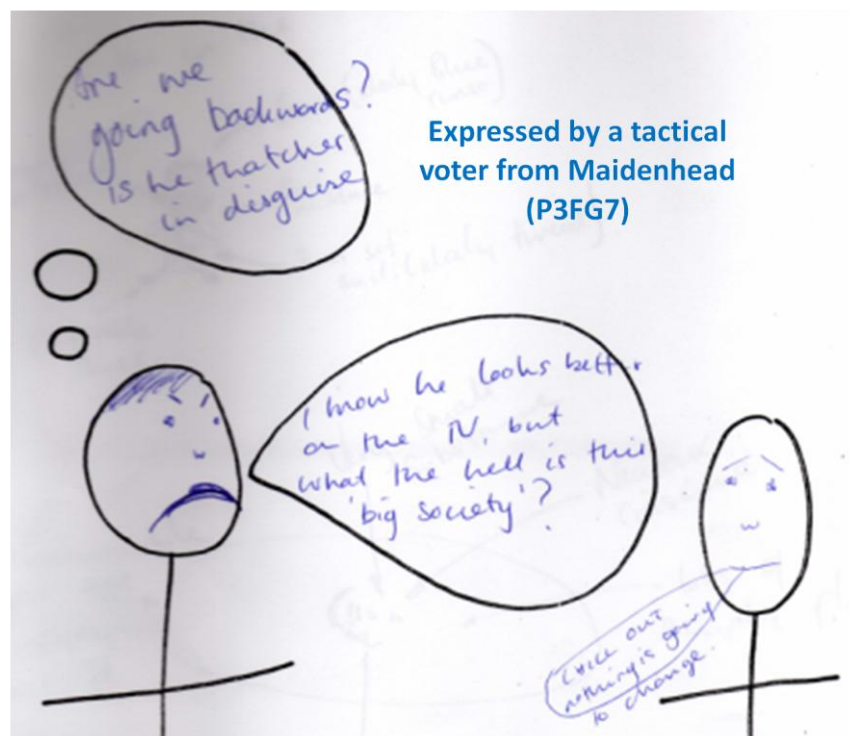
Many participants were indifferent if the Conservatives were to win the 2010 General Election, nevertheless expressions remained optimistic, raised questions of what to expect from a Conservative administration and highlighted confusion and apprehension. A third of participants did not know what to expect from a Conservative government apart from the promise of ‘change’, which again could not be elaborated on. Questions such as *“I wonder what will happen”* (P6FG2) presented by a Conservative supporting A-level student from Nottingham, *“great, what do they do then”* (P2FG4) expressed by a floating voter from Nottinghamshire and *“I know he looks better on TV but what the hell is this Big Society...is he Thatcher in disguise”* (P3FG7), proposed by a tactical voter from Maidenhead. All of which can be seen in figure 19 on p.185, and figures 20 and 21 on p.186.



**Figure 19: Neutral and questionable expressions illustrated by external stakeholders of what to expect from a Conservative victory**



**Figure 20: Neutral and questionable expressions illustrated by external stakeholders of what to expect from a Conservative victory**



**Figure 21: Neutral and questionable expressions illustrated by external stakeholders of what to expect from a Conservative victory**

It was revealed that a small number of participants had nothing to base their expectations on apart from retrospective Conservative Party's, Governments, associations and perceptions. This idea of voting retrospectively was strengthened by

confusion, the unknown and the lack of clarity participants ascribed to the Conservative Party. A Labour supporting teacher from East Riding of Yorkshire argued, “*we’re second guessing*” as David Cameron had failed to propose a clear vision of what the Conservative Party will do if elected (P5FG8). This was followed by another Labour supporting participant in the same focus group namely citizens will “*start guessing what he’s [Cameron] going to do, [sic] so retrospectively*” and because of the lack of substance and clarity, retrospective thinking will be used to determine what to expect from a Conservative government (P4FG8). This idea was also presented by a floating voter from Nottinghamshire whereby “*people with little or no interest in politics only know of Conservatives under Thatcher [Margaret]. These stories are passed down generations*” (P4FG4), therefore a retrospective rather than a prospective outlook.

Subsequently, participants presented fear of the unknown of what to expect from a Cameron administration (P5FG6), and the idea the “*media clouds*” the party message (P3FG6). Moreover a lack of clarity between political parties (P3FG6) only strengthens the idea of voting retrospectively. A Conservative supporting participant with no higher education believed it to be the catch twenty two situation “*if you vote Conservative you don’t know they’re going to do what they say they’re going to do until they get in and then it’s too late*” (P3FG4).

#### 5.4.2 David Cameron - Expectations

Despite Cameron’s increased awareness in the minds of participants, the majority raised a series of questions rather than answers relating to expectations. This was articulated by a floating voter (A-level) from Nottinghamshire “*I think people won’t vote for him because they don’t actually know what will happen under a Conservative government. People aren’t sure if Cameron will go easy on the posh people*” (P5FG6). This lack of clarity was also expressed by a Conservative supporting A-level student from the City

of Nottingham whereby the *“idea of change is coming across but we need more information”* (P2FG2).

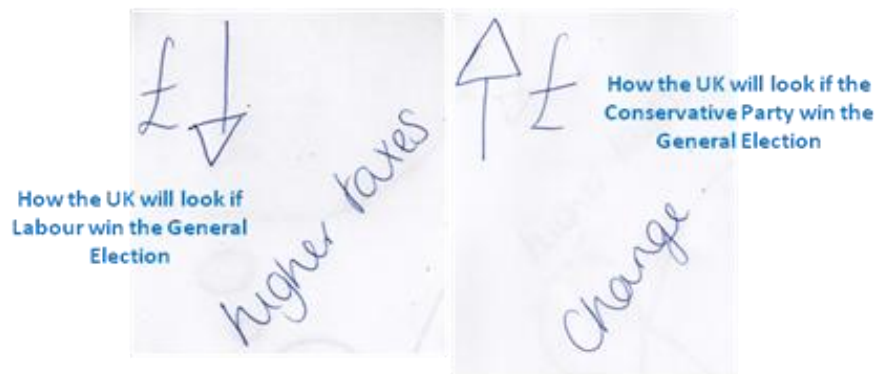
According to a Conservative supporting participant with no higher education from Nottinghamshire *“Cameron seems to be saying all the right things...too good to be true”* (P3FG4), while a sceptical floating voter with no higher education added *“Labour said this five years ago”* (P4FG4). This was mirrored by a PhD student; floating voter from Newcastle *“Cameron’s a professional politician... [Cameron] would say what is necessary to try and further his political career”* (P3FG5).

Participants also expressed negative and uncertain expectations relating to a hypothetical Prime Minister Cameron. A Labour supporting A-level student from Nottingham expected *“David Cameron won’t be a good leader”* (P1FG2), with a Labour supporting teacher from East Riding of Yorkshire negatively considered David Cameron would be tough on immigration and biased towards the wealthy (P5FG8). A floating voter from Nottinghamshire (A-level) *“hope he [Cameron] doesn’t cock it up [make mistakes]”* (P4FG6), with another floating voter from the East Riding of Yorkshire (undergraduate) apprehensive whether David Cameron will stick to and deliver party policy despite not knowing any Conservative Party policy, (P2FG1). Several participants of all political leaning including Conservative supporters projected uncertain expectations of David Cameron *“uncertain of how he is going to make a difference”* (P2FG7), *“you think he’ll [Cameron] care about us...oh no we’re lower class”* (P5FG6), *“I wonder if [sic] they look after us middle-classes”* (P3FG4), and *“oh no!! Let’s see what Cameron can do for the country”* (P3FG2).

#### *5.4.3 Conservative Party Policy - Expectations*

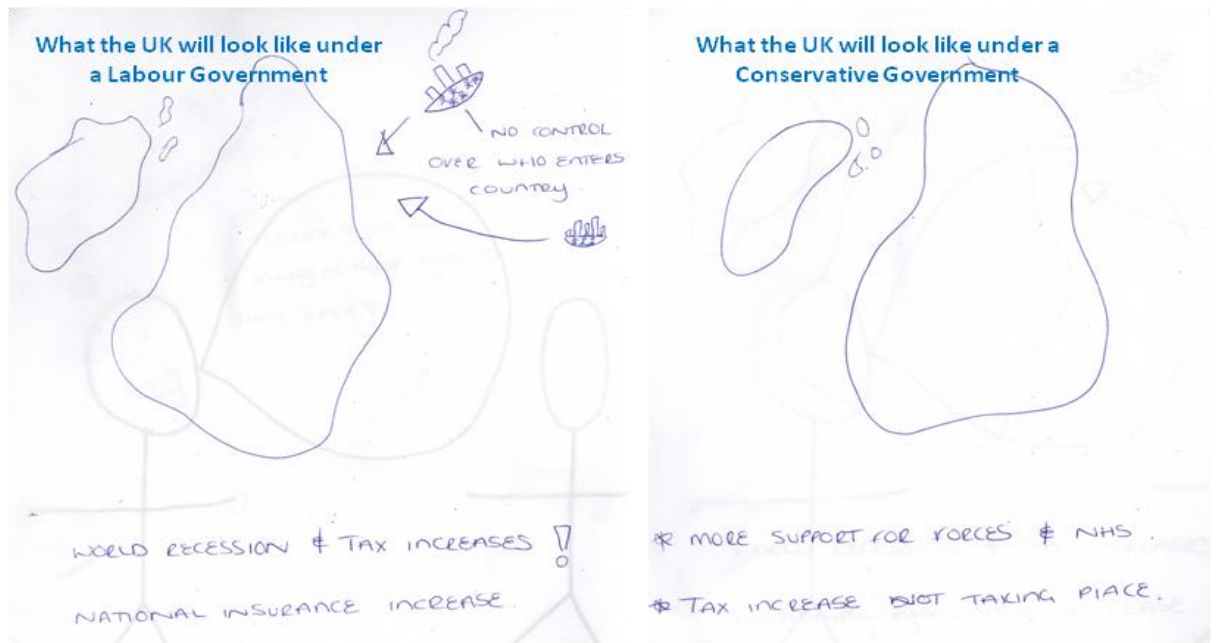
Expectations of Conservative policy were also evident from the expressions generated from the ‘construction’ projective technique which required participants to draw the UK

respectively under a Labour or Conservative government. Five participants (four of which were Conservative supporters) provided positive expectations of what the UK would look like under a Conservative victory. For example a Conservative supporting A-level student from Nottingham crafted a pound sign with an arrow pointing up accompanied with the word “*change*” (P2FG2) as an expression of what the UK would look like under a Conservative administration. In contrast, expectations of a Labour victory at the 2010 General Election was expressed as a pound sign with an arrow pointing down with the annotation “*higher taxes*”(P2FG2), which can be seen along with the Conservative projection in figure 22 below.



**Figure 22: What the UK will look like under a Labour administration and a Conservative administration)**

Another Conservative supporter with no higher education from Nottinghamshire illustrated the UK with the bullet points stating “*more support for forces & NHS*” and “*tax increase not taking place*” as a projection of what the UK would look like under a Conservative government (P3FG4). Contrastingly, an illustration of a Labour victory would equate to bullet points stating “*world recession and tax increases...national insurance increase*” accompanied by the illustration of a boat annotated with “*no control over who enters the country*” (P3FG4). Both projections can be seen in figure 23 on p.190.



**Figure 23: Illustrations of the UK under a Labour and Conservative victory in 2010 GE presented by a Conservative supporter**

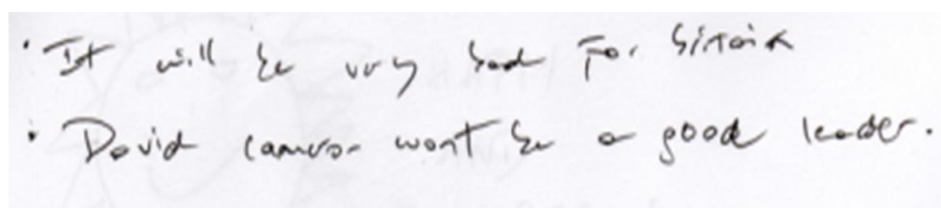
Another Conservative participant from Nottingham projected a positive expectation if the Conservatives were victorious with “*change...reform...a new start*” (P6FG2), while a floating voter with no higher education from Nottinghamshire expressed “*more funds for worthwhile causes*” with “*NHS*” and “*forces*” in brackets (P4FG4).

Despite one floating voter illustrating negative expectations of a Conservative administration with “*lots of greedy, big houses, poor people living in squalor coz [because] posh people will take over coz [because] they can afford extra taxes...middle-class struggling*” (P2FG4), the participant believed a Conservative government would allow “*less foreign people to enter UK and therefore more English people happy*”, (P2FG4). Further to this “*English people*” were seen as the “*majority*” in a Conservative UK with a small section of “*foreign people*” in contrast to “*English-born people the minority*” under a Labour UK (P2FG4). Therefore despite the floating voter with no higher education from Nottinghamshire projecting negative expectations of a Conservative UK, the Conservatives were expected to control immigration in contrast to a Labour administration. This in turn was considered a positive expectation of a

Conservative administration. Subsequently a number of participants projected positive expectations of a Conservative UK with projections suggesting a 'greater economy, change (P2FG2), new start, reform (P6FG2), supporting the NHS, Armed Forces and controlling immigration' (P3FG4; P4FG4).

However, nineteen participants expected the UK to suffer economically and socially under a Conservative government and the divide between rich and poor to increase rather than decrease. This was outlined by a Labour supporting undergraduate from Liverpool that annotated "*recession prolonged...back to old methods*" if the Conservatives were to win the 2010 General Election (P5FG1). This suggested that the participant was still interpreting the UK Conservative Party through their own political party bias. Nevertheless a Labour supporting A-level student from Nottingham arguing a Conservative victory "*will be very bad for Britain...David Cameron won't be a good leader*" in contrast to the illustration of a smiling Sun annotated with "*happy and prosperous*" if Labour were to be re-elected, (P1FG2). Figure 24 can be seen on p.191 and figure 25 can be seen on p.192.

**Expressed by a Labour supporting A-level  
student from Nottingham (P1FG2)**



**Figure 24: An Expression of what the UK will look like under a Conservative Government**

Expressed by a Labour supporting A-level  
student from Nottingham (P1FG2)

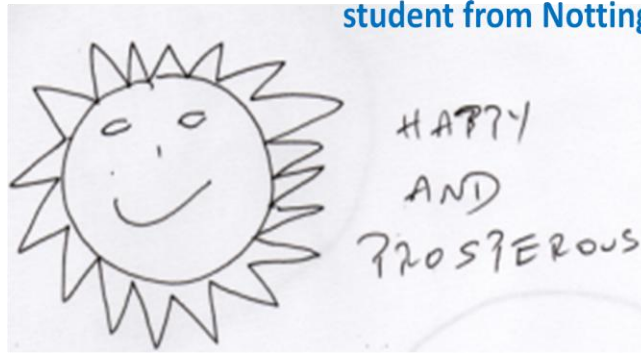
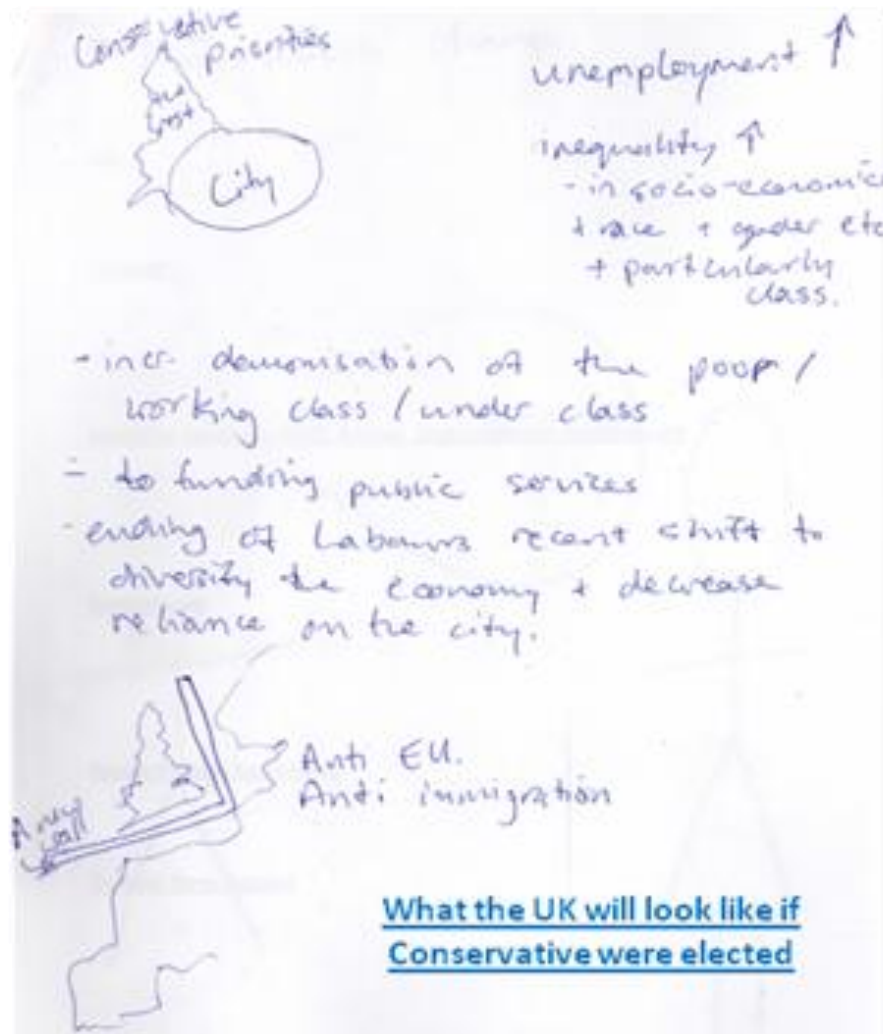


Figure 25: Expressions of what the UK will look like under a Labour Government

A young professional floating voter from East Riding of Yorkshire illustrated a horse in the countryside and listed “*foxhunting, countryside, rural, promoting free enterprise*” (P2FG8), while an A-level student from Nottingham annotated “*Conservatives out of the EU...less tax*” as projections of what to expect from a Conservative administration, (P3FG3). Whereas a floating voter (PhD student) from Sheffield considered a Conservative government would prioritise The City of London opposed to the rest of the country, unemployment and inequality would rise, Conservative policy would “*demonise*” the poor, working-class and under-class, decrease public services. Furthermore a Conservative administration would end “*Labour’s recent shift to diversify the economy and decrease reliance on the City*”, and create a new metaphorical “*Berlin Wall*” separating mainland UK from mainland Europe, which ultimately are considered anti-EU and anti-immigration (P4FG5). Therefore, the Sheffield PhD student believed the UK would suffer under a Conservative government and there would be “*not much change*” if Labour were to be re-elected, evident in figure 26 on p.193.





**Figure 26: An illustration of how the UK will look under a Conservative administration (P4FG5)**

A young professional floating voter from Wakefield expressed a Conservative UK would lead to “*oppressed poor, stagnant economy, spending cuts and class divide*”, in contrast to “*all the same, safe pair of hands – Brown [Gordon] strong future*” (P6FG8), if Labour were re-elected. Whilst a floating voter (PhD student) from Newcastle illustrated a number of depictions of what the UK would look like if the Conservatives were elected one suggesting it would equate to the death of the NHS depicted by a halo, winged ‘NHS’ flying up into the heavens. This can be seen along with the Labour expectations in figures 27 and 28 on p.194 (P3FG5).

Expressed by a floating voter (PhD student) from Newcastle (P3FG5)

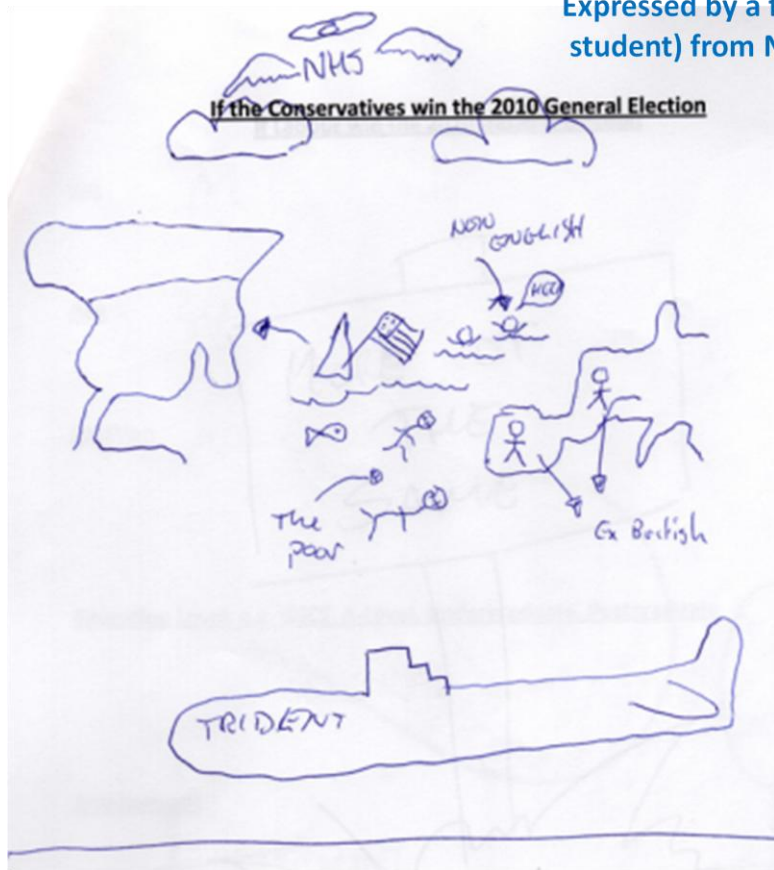
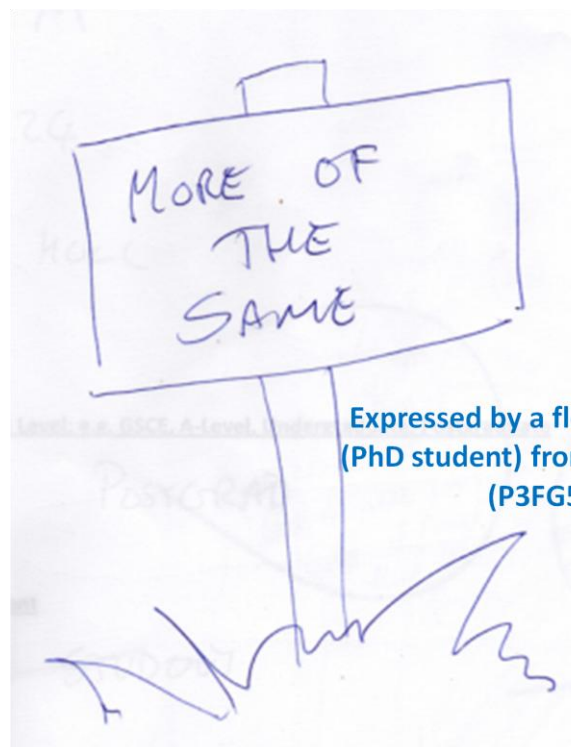


Figure 27: An Expression of what the UK will look like under a Conservative Government



Expressed by a floating voter  
(PhD student) from Newcastle  
(P3FG5)

Figure 28: An illustration of what the UK will look like under if Labour were re-elected

Figure 27 also depicts ‘Trident’ referencing the Conservative Party’s policy to renew the UK’s nuclear deterrent, the UK metaphorically moving closer to the United States of America and further away from the European Union, the poor and foreign nationals suffering and British nationals leaving the UK under a Conservative government (P3FG5). If Labour were re-elected the floating voter neutrally expected “*more of the same*”, which was considered neither a positive or negative expectation (P3FG5). A floating voter from Maidenhead considered the UK would be a “*mess*” (P5FG7), with a Liberal Democrat from Maidenhead projecting “*no rights for anyone but the rich...un-good [negative outcome]*” (P1FG7), and a Labour supporting A-level student from Nottingham annotated “*we love money...yay capitalism*” (P8FG2), all in reference to a Conservative ruled UK. In addition, a Labour supporting A-level student crafted the iconic Gherkin tower in the City of London with a stick figure holding a banner stating “*bankers*” (P7FG7), while an A-level student from Nottingham referenced “*high interest rates...spending cuts...more unemployed*” (P2FG3). Furthermore, a Labour voter from East Riding of Yorkshire depicted a large house with a group of supposed Conservatives cheering “*we’re in the money*” and a David Cameron stick man smiling “*you can’t come in*” to a bus of supposed immigrants (P5FG8).

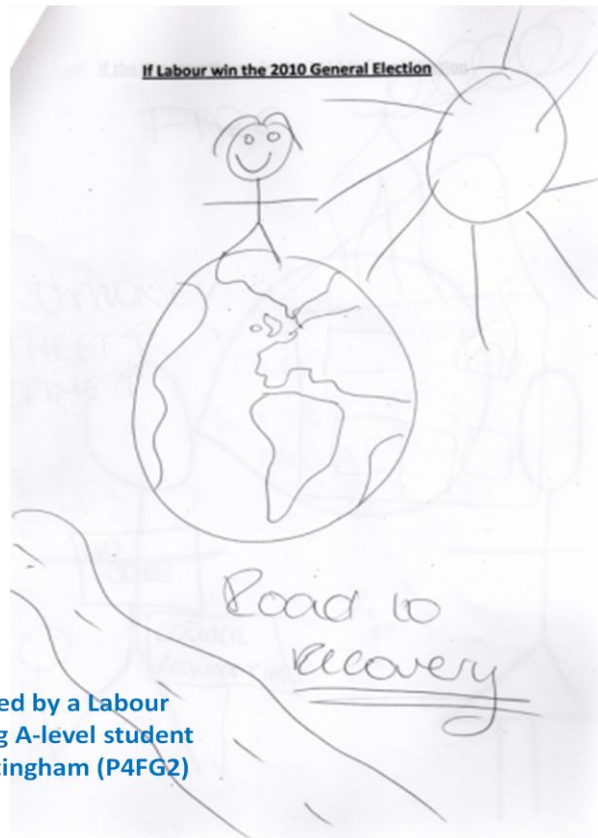
Negative projections were also presented by a Green Party supporting PhD student from Cambridge and listed a multitude of statements of what the UK will look like under a Conservative and Labour government (P2FG5). Under a Conservative administration the UK would be:

*“Less multi-cultural/diversity, more people in jail, more people out of work and on the streets. Richer with nice homes and lots of land and well educated. [Sic] poorer in cramped bad conditions with mediocre health care and education. NHS [National Health Service] to become; even more business-like, less time for appointments and less time in hospital. [The UK would become] less European and more American” (P2FG5).*

Therefore under a Conservative government unemployment would increase, less of a focus on diversity, greater class divide and increase in inequality, rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer at the hands of the wealthy, demise of the NHS, education to suffer and more of an pro-American focused. Whereas the UK under a Labour government the PhD Green argued:

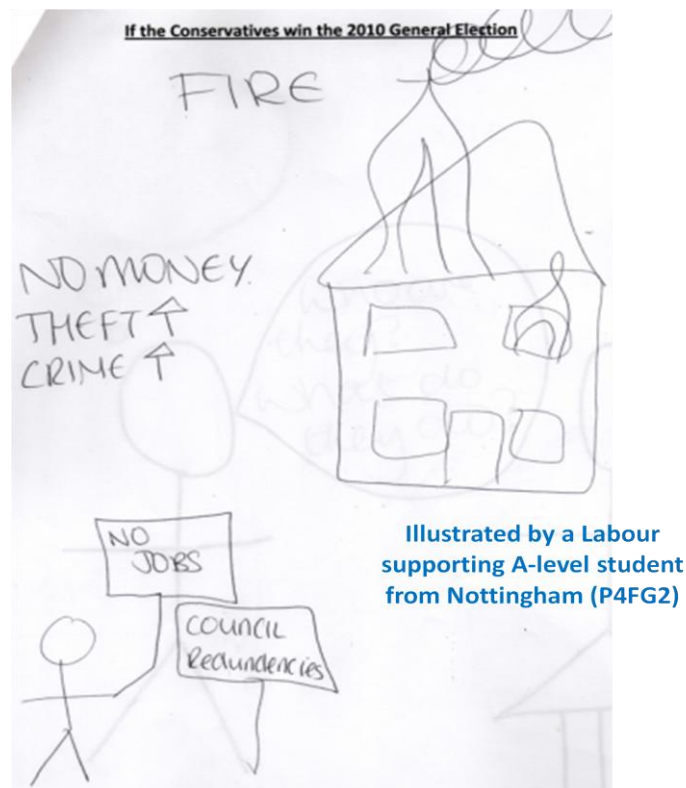
*“Even more nanny state but that lacks understanding and insight into urban/ethnic/minority/working-class communities. Taxes up. [Sic] great proactive policy that’s never implemented. Country will become more Tory anyway” (P2FG5).*

A floating voter from Nottingham considered the social divide in the UK would widen under a Conservative government with *“more jobs and opportunities”* for the exclusive *“stick to themselves”* upper-classes and *“less jobs”* and *“can’t afford bills and living on benefits”* for the *“working-class”* (P7FG2). Additionally a Labour supporting A-level student from Nottingham believed a Conservative-run country would equate to *“no money”*, rise in *“crime”* and *“theft”* with *“no jobs”* and *“council redundancies”*, which can be seen in figures 29 and 30 on p.197 (P4FG2).



Illustrated by a Labour supporting A-level student from Nottingham (P4FG2)

Figure 29: An illustration of the UK under a Labour administration



Illustrated by a Labour supporting A-level student from Nottingham (P4FG2)

Figure 30: An Expression of the UK under a Conservative administration

Therefore a significant number participants projected negative expectations of what the UK would look like under a Conservative government suggesting the country would suffer economically and socially, the divide between rich and poor to increase rather than decrease, and the wealthy benefiting at the expense of the poor.

Nonetheless many participants also considered that the UK would stay the same with no substantial changes. This included two Conservative supporters. One of the two Conservative supporters, a PhD student from North Yorkshire proposed the UK would look the same under a Conservative or Labour administration (P1FG1). Similarly, a Conservative supporting young professional from the East Riding of Yorkshire proposed the UK would look the same with “*no real change*” if the Conservatives were to win the 2010 General Election and annotated “*bored*” if Labour were re-elected (P1FG8). A floating voter (PhD student) from Newcastle annotated “*not much change*” in relation to what the UK would look like under a Conservative government followed by “[*Sic*] I feel the fact I have gotten to twenty four years old and not really felt much need to be interested in politics shows an attitude, there will not be much change” (P4FG1).

A floating voter (undergraduate) from the East Riding of Yorkshire illustrated a “*rocking chair, tweed jacket and pipe*” around the UK in association with what to expect if the Conservative Party wins the 2010 General Election. In contrast, to things would “*carry on*” if Labour were re-elected (P2FG1). Another floating voter (postgraduate) from London conceived “*no change to my everyday life, so UK will not change from my perspective...unless they scrap the NHS pensions*” (P3FG1). Furthermore, a floating voter (young professional) from Cambridgeshire argued that the UK will look “*the same*” under Conservative rule, however stated “[*sic*] but myself and my family may be poorer” (P3FG8) if the Conservatives are elected. Therefore many

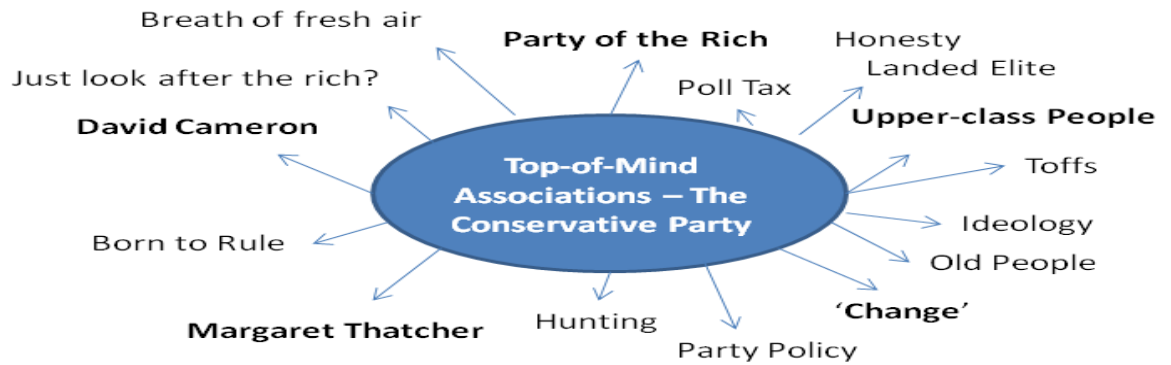
participants including two Conservative supporters considered the UK would pretty much look the same under a Conservative administration. Furthermore a number of sheets were left intentionally blank to represent 'no change' to the UK if the UK Conservative Party was elected or the Labour Party was re-elected as indicated in the focus group discussions. Subsequently, external stakeholders expressed contrasting expectations in relation to the UK under Conservative Party Policy divided into positive, negative expressions and illustrations suggesting that the UK would stay the same under Conservative rule. This included Conservative supporters.

### 5.5 Perceptions & Associations

This variable explored the perceptions and association's external stakeholders ascribed to the UK Conservative Party brand (Bosch et al 2006), which may also highlight brand awareness and a greater understanding of the brand image. Furthermore projective techniques were adopted to compliment the focus group discussion and generate a deeper understanding of the perceptions and associations related to the UK Conservative Party under the leadership of David Cameron.

#### *5.5.1 The Conservative Party – Perceptions & Associations*

In order to elicit the perceptions and associations of the brand image of the Conservative Party, participants were presented with the idea "*what comes to mind when you think of the Conservative Party*". This top-of-mind association procedure, one category of projective techniques, is useful in uncovering brand imagery and helpful in understanding attitudes and feelings (Gordon and Langmaid 2008). Figure 31 on p.200 presents the top-of-mind associations in reference to the UK Conservative Party.



**Figure 31: Common themes identified in association with the UK Conservative Party**

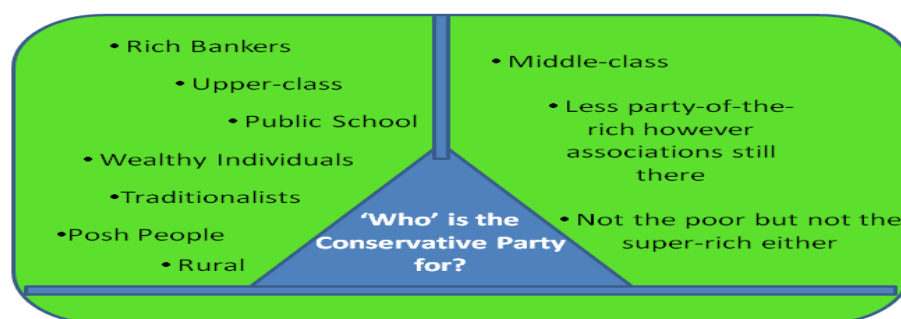
A number of common themes were discovered with the majority of respondents recalling *David Cameron*, *Margaret Thatcher*, *Change*, and *Party of the Rich* and *Upper-class people*. These top-of-mind associations were positively and negatively presented which also revealed personal opinion that lead to deeper perceptions and raised a number of questions. These elaborated perceptions included retrospective references to “*Margaret Thatcher – the whole milk thing, taking the milk off the kids*” (P5FG1), and “*if Thatcher hadn’t done what she did we’d still be having miner’s strikes and have winter of discontent yearly*” (P3FG2). Margaret Thatcher was an occurring theme positively and negatively expressed throughout the focus group discussions. Moreover a Labour supporting undergraduate from Liverpool stated the Conservatives “*still got the shadow of Thatcher over the Party*” (P5FG1). This idea was shared by a floating voter (A-level) from Nottinghamshire “*there’s a problem with the Conservatives too [sic] with the history of Margaret Thatcher*” (P1FG6), and an A-level student from the City of Nottingham stated “[*Sic*] *I see the change they’re [Conservatives] trying to do but back of mind Thatcher*” (P3FG3).

However, the top-of-mind associations revealed genuine support for the Conservative Party “*a breath of fresh air – a positive change*” (P6FG2), and also disclosed ideas of honesty, optimism (P1FG1), support for Conservative Party policy (P4FG3; P5FG3), and ideology (P1FG8). Despite the limited positive top-of-mind associations, many



participants carried on to associate the Conservative Party with the landed elite, hunting (P6FG8), toffs (P4FG8), old people (P3FG7), arrogance of born to rule (P4FG5), Poll Tax (P1FG4) and “*just get the impression they [Conservatives] look after the rich*” (P3FG4). One A-level participant from the City of Nottingham proposed “*[The Conservative] Party trying to move away from being the Party of the rich by employing new issues like the environment and appealing to the masses. [Conservative] Manifestoes to the past appealed to the rich*” (P1FG3). Several participants even questioned their own impressions “*I don’t know why Thatcher – I wasn’t even alive*” (P4FG6), and “*it might not be true but that’s what comes to mind*” (P3FG4).

Participants were also probed for clarity as to ‘who’ the Conservative Party is for which built on the top-of-mind associations and generated further insight. It appears that the perceptions of who the Conservative Party represents can be sub-divided into two areas both of which can be seen in figure 32 below.

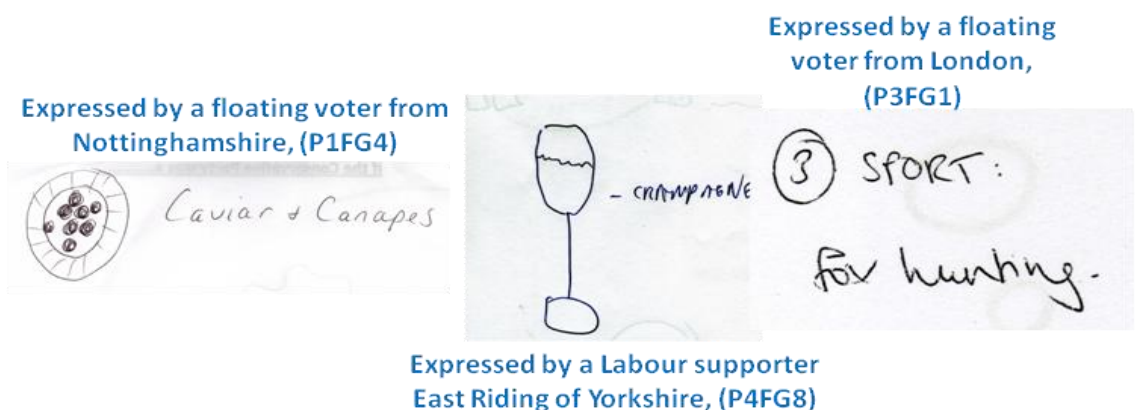


**Figure 32: The perceptions of ‘who’ the Conservative Party represents**

The majority of respondents including Conservative supporters considered the Conservative Party is for upper-class (P5FG1), wealthy individuals (P3FG2), posh people (P4FG4), rich bankers (P3FG5), rural (P2FG5), traditionalists (P3FG5), public school and from the “*playing fields of Eton*” (P7FG7). However several participants including one Conservative supporter from the City of Nottingham proposed the Conservatives are for the middle-classes (P4FG3; P5FG3), and “*they’re less the party of the rich but still have an association with the upper-classes because they used to*

represent them” (P2FG7). A Conservative supporting participant from East Riding of Yorkshire conceives that the Conservatives are “*not the party of the poor but I don’t consider the Conservatives being the party of the super-rich, more for the average middle-classes*” (P1FG8). According to a Conservative supporter from the City of Nottingham “*both Labour and Conservatives can be seen as more middle-class parties nowadays but Labour is more towards lower-middle-class*” (P4FG3). Another Conservative supporter from Maidenhead argued that David Cameron was distinct from the Conservative Party and a different type of Conservative “*doesn’t pander to the rich...the Conservative Party is very much the same but Cameron is different*” (P2FG7).

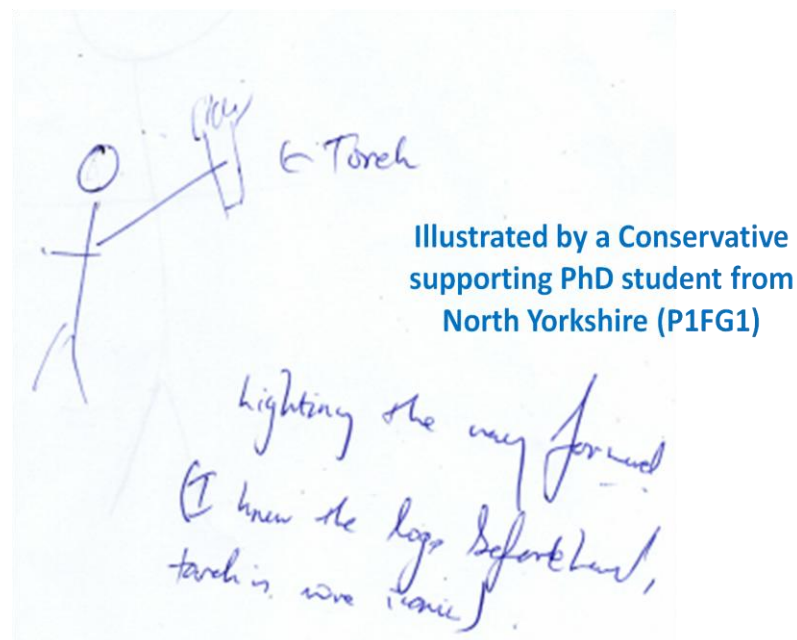
Associations and perceptions of the Conservative Party were also obtained from *expressive* and *completion* projective techniques expressed by the participants. The expressive and completion projective techniques involved metaphorically linking the Conservative Party to an object or stimuli thus depicting expressions in relation to *food, people, drinks, holiday destinations, sports, photographs* and *scenarios*. Figure 33 on p.202 provides an example of a number of expressions projected by young citizens aged 18-24 years in association with the UK Conservative Party.



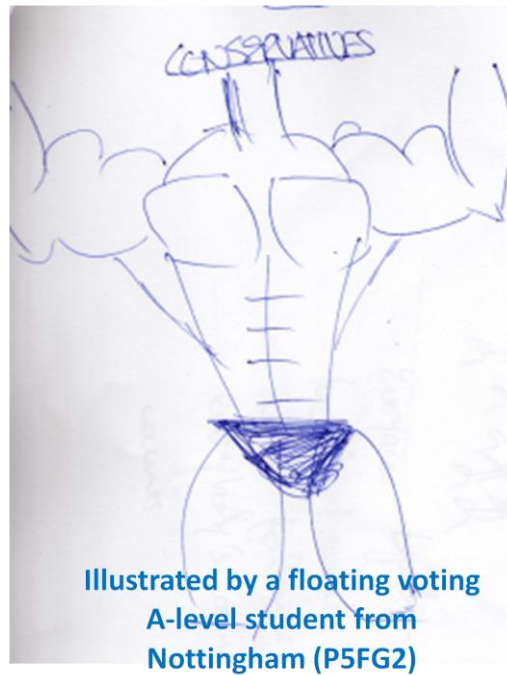
**Figure 33: Projected expressions in association with the UK Conservative Party**

Consequently, each stimulus will be presented independently. Participants were instructed to illustrate ‘the UK Conservative Party if it were a person’. Participants

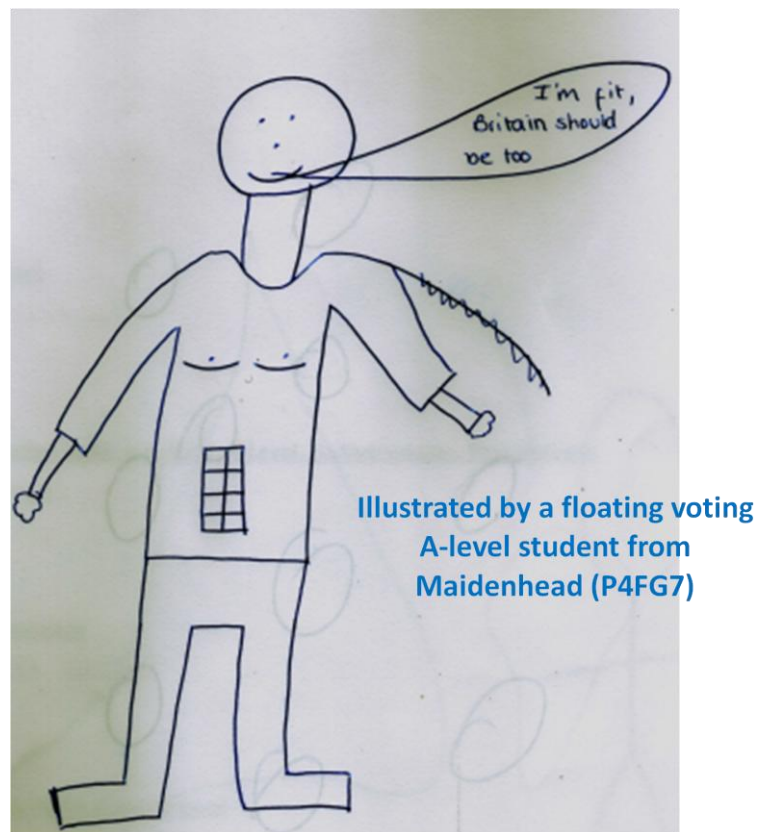
revealed positive, negative, neutral and questionable expressions of the UK Conservative Party. Five participants of broad political affiliation one of which was a Conservative supporting PhD student from North Yorkshire depicted overly positive natured illustrations with suggestions that the Conservative Party will lead the country forward to future prosperity “*lighting the way forward*” (P1FG1). A number of floating voters from across the country believed that the Conservatives were a strong, healthy political party ready to take on the Labour Party and restore Britain’s fortunes. Examples of which can be seen in figure 34 on p.203, and figures 35 and 36 on p.204.



**Figure 34: Positive expressions of the UK Conservative Party if it were a person**



**Figure 35: A Positive Expression of the UK Conservative Party if it were a person**



**Figure 36: A Positive illustration of the UK Conservative Party if it were a person**

Another Conservative supporter from East Riding of Yorkshire proposed the Conservative Party to be a smart, professional, pleasant political party by crafting a smiling figure wearing a pinstriped suit (P1FG8). Therefore, several participants

projected positive expressions of the UK Conservative Party if it were a person. Contrastingly there were some negative expressions uncovered such as the Conservative Party described and depicted as smarmy, sleazy, and pompous, cannot deliver, uncaring, greedy, and materialistic with no compassion. A floating PhD student from Newcastle illustrated a devil figure suggesting the Conservative Party is still the “*nasty party*”, *masked by slick public relations and opportunistic lies*” and society will suffer under a Conservative government (P3FG5). A number of other negative attitudes were revealed whereby the Conservative Party are considered dull, comprising of unhappy people, slightly racist and the party of the landed gentry, older generation, rural and money orientated. This is evident in figure 37 on p.205, and figures 38 and 39 on p.206.

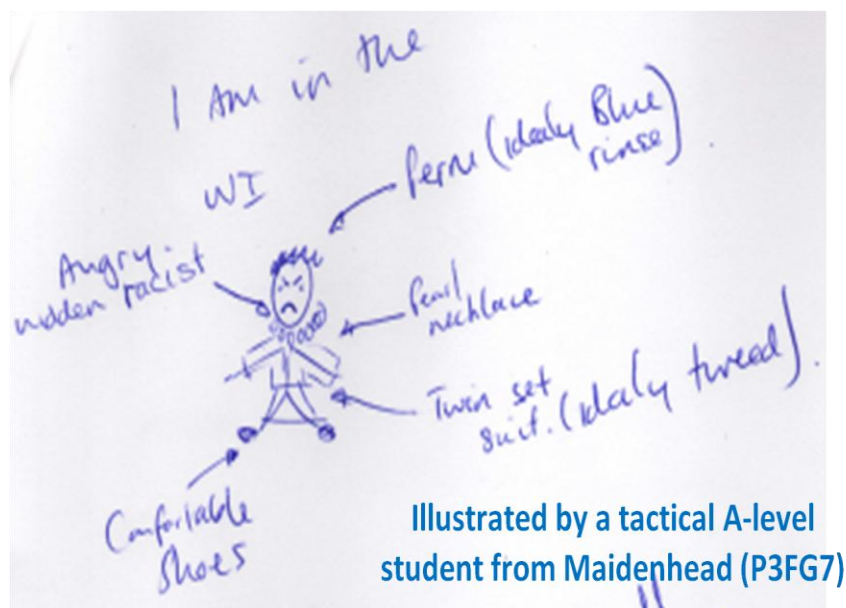
Illustrated by a floating voting  
PhD student from Newcastle  
(P3FG5)



Figure 37: A negative illustration associated with the UK Conservative Party



**Figure 38: A negative illustration associated with the UK Conservative Party**



**Figure 39: A negative expression associated with the UK Conservative Party)**

The projected expressions also revealed a number of sub-themes. Some were interpreted as slightly negative and these slightly negative sub-themes were revealed by participants of all political affiliation including Conservative supporters. These sub-themes include *fat expression*: ideas of greed, gluttony, unhealthy, living the good life, *sad expressions*:

with participants believed the Conservative Party comprises of serious, stressed, unhappy posh people, *attire*: ranging from suits, ties, top hats, pearls, monocle, pocket watches, tweed and canes, attire revealing wealth and elitist connotations. Other sub-themes include the perceptions of snobbery, snooty, upper-class, pompous, the idea that the Conservative Party is seen as out-of-touch, old fashioned, and advocates of inequality, racist, rural, fox hunters with small number of participants negatively illustrating Margaret Thatcher. A major sub-theme was the proposition that the Conservative Party are regarded as money-focused, money-obsessed, party of the higher classes, party of the rich, with the poor, lower classes and society suffering from inequality under a Conservative administration.

Moreover, it was also interesting to note that a number of questions were annotated in the projected expressions. These questions included; what will a Conservative government mean for the country, will the Conservatives care about the lower-classes and also questioned the degree of trust and credibility held by young participants aged 18-24. Additionally, a number of participants did make reference to policy in the 'Conservative person expressions' however the policy was not necessarily Conservative Party policy. Policy references included inheritance tax and the party's stance of the single currency. Furthermore, it is interesting to discuss that a number of Conservative supporters across the country revealed slightly negative feelings and attitudes regarding the Conservative Party such as "*snooty*", fat, old fashioned and money orientated. These were their perceptions of the UK Conservative Party and not how they believed others perceived the UK Conservative Party.

Participants were also instructed to illustrate the UK Conservative Party if it were 'food' and if it were a 'drink'. In total, forty two out of the forty-six participants depicted eighteen different types of food including caviar, scallops, duck, steak and chips,

traditional roast dinner, a la carte, quiche, fruit, soufflé, sushi, lamb chops, short bread, three course meal, cheese, "*posh food*"(P3FG3), muffin, broccoli, fish and a Cadbury's Crème Egg. Moreover thirty-two out of the forty-six participants crafted twelve varieties of drinks including red wine, Champagne, cocktails, tea, Pimms, port, gin & tonic, brandy, whisky, water, Redbull and bitter. Champagne was the most frequently associated 'drink' with the UK Conservative Party expressed by ten young citizens, followed by *red wine* expressed by six participants including one Conservative supporter and subsequently *tea*, illustrated by three participants including one Conservative supporter. Table 11 on p.209 presents 'drinks' in relation to the participants and their political affiliation.



**Table 11: Collation of findings illustrated from the ‘drink’ metaphorical expressions**

<b>Red Wine</b>	<b>Champagne</b>	<b>Cocktail</b>	<b>Tea</b>	<b>Pimms</b>	<b>Brandy</b>	<b>Port</b>	<b>Gin &amp; Tonic</b>	<b>Water</b>	<b>Bitter</b>	<b>Redbull</b>	<b>Whiskey</b>
P2FG2 (C)	P2FG3 (U)	P1FG2 (L)	P3FG3 (U) “Fancy cup of tea”	P3FG4 (C)	P3FG8 (F)	P8FG2 (L)	P1FG5 (F) “Posh”	P6FG2 (C)	P2FG5 (G) “Pint of”	P5FG2 (F)	P6FG8 (F)
P3FG2 (U) (Wine)	P1FG4 (F)	P4FG2 (L)	P4FG3 (C)	P5FG8 (L) “& Lemonade”					P3FG5 (F) “Tetley’s”		P7FG2 (F)
P1FG3 (U)	P2FG4 (F)		P5FG3 (U)								
P1FG6 (LD)	P4FG4 (F)										
P4FG6 (F) “Expensive Wine”	P4FG5 (F)										
P2FG8 (F)	P2FG6 (F)										
	P3FG6 (LD) “Moet”										
	P5FG6 (F)										
	P6FG6 (F)										
	P4FG8 (L)										

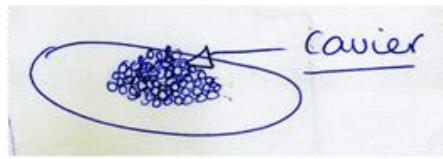
Several external stakeholders annotated their projected expressions to reveal “*expensive*” (P4FG6) superior and “*fancy*” (P3FG3) perceptions in relation to the Conservative Party. One floating voter (A-level student) from Nottinghamshire crafted a glass of wine annotated with “*expensive wine*” (P4FG6), whereas a floating voter from London expressed gin and tonic accompanied with the annotation “*posh*” (P1FG5) in brackets. Additionally, a participant from the City of Nottingham illustrated tea with the annotation “*fancy cup of tea*” (P3FG3), which can be seen along with the two other annotated expressions in figure 40 below.



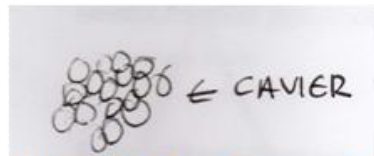
**Figure 40: Annotated ‘drink’ expressions in association with the UK Conservative Party)**

Illustrations of projected ‘food’ expressions in association with the UK Conservative Party can be seen in figure 41 on p.211.

Illustrated by a floating voter  
from Cambridge, (P3FG8)



Illustrated by a Liberal  
Democrat student  
from Maidenhead,  
(P4FG4)



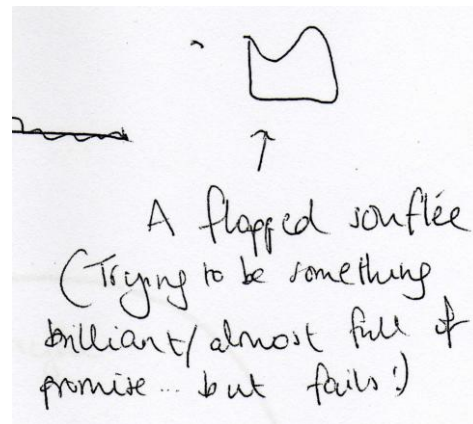
Illustrated by a Conservative  
supporter from Maidenhead,  
(P2FG4)

Figure 41: Food illustrations in association with the UK Conservative Party

Numerous ‘food’ projected expressions were annotated, which reveal greater insight into perceptions, associations and opinion in reference to the UK Conservative Party. A Labour supporting A-level student from Maidenhead illustrated caviar on a large plate with the annotation “*nothing else*” (P7FG7), while a floating voter also an A-level student from Maidenhead illustrated caviar with “*stuffed pig’s trotter*” served on a “*silver plate*” (P8FG7). A floating voter from Newcastle (P3FG5) and a tactical voter from Maidenhead (P3FG7) associated al la carte food with the Conservative Party arguing al la carte is “*1980s food...no substance...high price*” (P3FG5), and “*very small substance...lots of empty plate...was fashionable ages ago...ponsey sauce*” (P3FG7). A Conservative supporting A-level student from Nottingham crafted steak and chips in association with the Conservative Party nevertheless the steak would be fillet and the “*posh block chips*” (P4FG3) are intended to reflect the “*broader appeal*” the Conservative Party is aiming to achieve (P4FG3). Additionally, a floating voter (PhD student) from London illustrated a Cadbury’s Cream Egg in relation to the Conservative Party as “*it looks good on the outside but tastes bad and can give you an immediate heart attack*” (P1FG5). A floating voter (clinical psychologist) from London crafted a

“flopped soufflé” in association with the Conservative Party (P3FG1), which can be seen in figure 42 on p.212.

**Crafted by a floating voter from London, (P3FG1)**



**Figure 42: ‘Flopped soufflé’ in association with the UK Conservative Party**

The participant argued that the UK Conservative Party “*primarily focuses on style*” and is attempting to present an “*optimistic alternative to New Labour*”, “*trying to be something brilliant/almost full of promise*” which ultimately “*fails*” (P3FG1). Therefore, the participant cynically illustrated that the UK Conservative Party (soufflé) will not live up to expectations. Subsequently participants projected a number of consistently themed expressions associating the UK Conservative Party with “*expensive*” (P4FG6), “*fancy*” (P3FG3), “*posh*” (P1FG5), traditional and wealthy related foods and drinks.

The fourth statement presented to participants was “*if the Conservative Party were a sport, what sport would it be*” with the aim of eliciting personal perceptions, attitudes and associations in regards to the UK Conservative Party. All forty-six participants projected ‘sport’ related associations, twelve in total including; *croquet, foxhunting, polo, cricket, tennis, golf, lacrosse, football, fencing, horse racing, clay pigeon shooting and rugby*. Polo was the most frequently expressed ‘sport’ revealed by sixteen participant’s two of which were Conservative supporters, followed by cricket and subsequently croquet. All twelve ‘sports’ alongside participants and their political leaning can be seen in table 12 on p.213.

**Table 12: Collection of metaphorical expressions of the Conservative Party in the context of ‘sport’**

<b>Croquet</b>	<b>Fox Hunting</b>	<b>Polo</b>	<b>Cricket</b>	<b>Tennis</b>	<b>Golf</b>	<b>Lacrosse</b>	<b>Football</b>	<b>Horse Racing</b>	<b>Horse Racing</b>	<b>Clay Pigeon Shooting</b>	<b>Fencing</b>
P2FG1 (F) “Superman”	P3FG1 (F)	P4FG1 (F)	P1FG2 (L)	P2FG2 (C)	P5FG2 (F)	P1FG7(LD) “Blighton Book”	P4FG4 (F)	P1FG6(LD)	P1FG6(LD)	P6FG8 (F)	P3FG7 (T)
P5FG1 (L)	P4FG5 (F)	P4FG2 (L)	P3FG2 (U)	P6FG2 (C)	P1FG3 (U)						
P2FG4 (F) “Also Polo”		P8FG2 (L) “Sarcastic”	P4FG3 (C)	P7FG2 (F)	P3FG3 (U) “Fancy sport”						
P3FG8 (F)		P2FG3 (U)	P2FG5 (G)	P5FG3 (U)							
P1FG1 (C)		P3FG4 (C)	P3FG5 (F)	P1FG5 (F)							
		P2FG6 (F)	P4FG7 (F)	P2FG7 (C)							
		P3FG6(LD)	P5FG7 (F)								
		P4FG6 (F)	P6FG7 (F) “Hats – ladies in hats watching”								
		P5FG6 (F)									
		P6FG6 (F)									
		P7FG7 (L)									
		P8FG7 (F)									
		P1FG8 (C)									
		P2FG8 (F)									
		P4FG8 (L)									
		P5FG8 (L)									

Along with the projected illustrations, several participants provided annotations, which revealed deeper insight and clearer picture of the perceptions and associations with the Conservative Party. For example one floating voter (A-level student) from Maidenhead crafted a cricket bat, ball and hat accompanied with the annotation “*cricket...hats...ladies in hats watching*” (P6FG7). While an A-level student from the City of Nottingham illustrated a golf club accompanied with “*fancy sport*” (P3FG3), and a Liberal Democrat supporting A-level student from Maidenhead associated ‘lacrosse’ annotating “*right out of a Blyton book*” (P1FG7). These examples can be seen in figures 43 and 44 on p.214 and figure 45 on p.215.

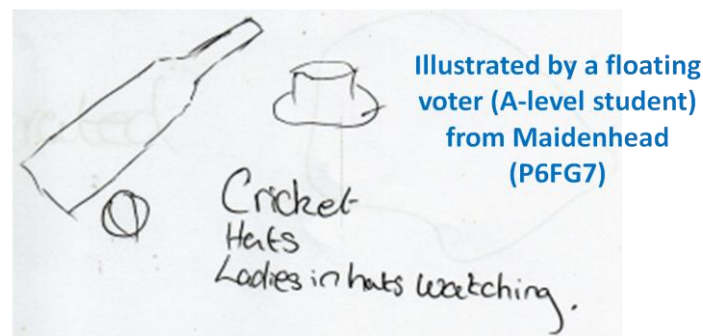
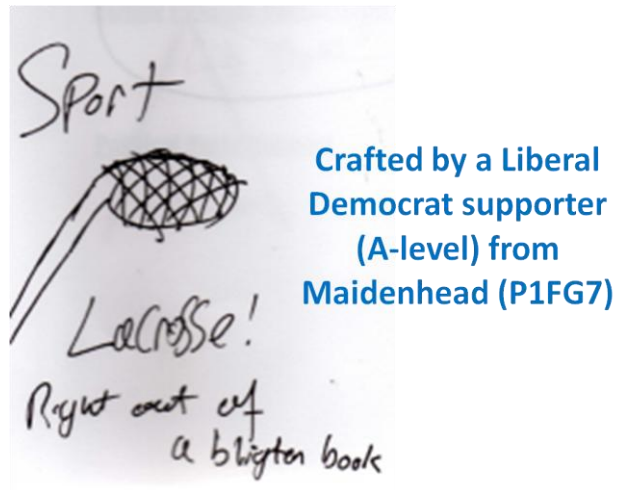


Figure 43: A ‘Sport’ expression with annotations in relation to the UK Conservative Party



Figure 44: A ‘Sport’ illustration with annotations in relation to the UK Conservative Party



**Figure 45: An annotated 'Sport' expression in relation to the UK Conservative Party**

Therefore, the majority of participants associated traditional, high-status sports with the UK Conservative Party with some external stakeholders relating the Conservatives to “fancy” (P3FG3), quaint, old fashioned imagery particularly the reference to British author Enid Blyton’s ‘*Famous Five*’ novels (P1FG7).

Participants were subsequently instructed to express perceptions and associations of the Conservative Party if it were a ‘holiday destination’. Forty one out of the forty six participants in total revealed thirteen different holiday destinations in relation to the UK Conservative Party and can be seen in table 13 on p.216.

**Table 13: Collation of holiday destinations metaphorically expressed as the UK Conservative Party**

[illegible]



Holiday destinations were subsequently categorised into geographic location. Holiday destinations in and around ‘France’ and the ‘United Kingdom’ were common expressions and associations with the Conservative Party. Further to this, several external stakeholders provided annotations, and personal perceptions. Holiday destinations include; *France, UK, cruise, Italy, Caribbean, United States of America, Maldives, Saudi Arabia, Dubai, Spain, a beach holiday, and a tax haven*. One floating voter from Nottinghamshire considered a “*chateaux in South France*” as a holiday destination in association with the Conservative Party (P4FG6). Whereas a floating voter from Newcastle projected an “*English country manor*” (P4FG1), a Labour supporting A-level student from Nottingham illustrated “*countryside...horse*” (P1FG2), and a Labour supporting young professional from East Riding of Yorkshire ascribed “*Mustique*” as holiday destinations in association with the Conservative Party (P4FG8).

Luxurious destinations were also revealed by an A-level student from Nottingham “*Monaco*” (P3FG2), by a floating voter from Maidenhead “*Italian Vineyard*” (P6FG7), and another floating voter from Maidenhead expressed a “*cruise on a luxury liner*”, (P8FG7). A floating voter (A-level) from Nottinghamshire illustrated ‘Saudi Arabia’ with the annotation “*expensive...posh*” (P6FG6), and a Labour supporting teacher from East Riding of Yorkshire expressed a “*private beach – just us then*” (P5FG8), both of which can be seen in figure 46 on p.218.



**Figure 46: ‘Holiday Destinations’ in association with the UK Conservative Party**

Several participants including Conservative supporters associated countryside and coastal holiday destinations with the UK Conservative Party. This included “*Salcombe*” a town in Devon famous for sailing, yachting and recognised as an area of outstanding beauty (P2FG2) and “*Marlow*” in Buckinghamshire another area famous for boating pursuits (P1FG7). Additionally, a self-proclaimed tactical voter from Maidenhead associated “*Padstow*” a town in Cornwall as “*people who go there are hip [fashionable] and do staycations*” (P3FG7) with the Conservative Party. A Green supporting PhD student from Cambridgeshire related the “*Bahamas or Scotland*” with the Conservative Party because “*the land used for holidays of rich rather than for local people*” (P2FG5). While a floating voter (PhD) from Newcastle illustrated “*tax haven*” in association with the Conservative Party (P3FG5). Furthermore, a Conservative supporting A-level student from Maidenhead ascribed “*Benidorm...fake and plastic*” in association with the Conservatives (P2FG7), while a Labour supporter from Nottingham expressed “*Scunthorpe*” (P8FG2), and a floating voter from East Riding of Yorkshire projected “*Butlins – Skegness*” (P2FG1). Subsequently, participants including Conservative supporters projected a range of wealthy, highly valued, luxurious holiday destinations with the Conservative Party along with traditional, countryside-coastal destinations

based in the UK. Furthermore, it appears several participants’ projected personal opinion and attitudes in the form of annotations in relation to the Conservative Party including “*tax haven[s]*”, exclusive private beaches, no consideration to the local population and possibly juxtaposed holiday destinations.

The aim of adopting the picture association projective technique was to generate a deeper understanding of the associations and perceptions the participants ascribe to the UK Conservative Party. Participants were presented with fifty five diverse pictures ranging from *flags, scenery, television personalities, television programmes, films, buildings, people, sports, animals and businesses* and asked to selected pictures they associate with the UK Conservative Party. A selection of the pictures used as part of the picture association projective technique can be seen below in figure 47.



**Figure 47: A selection of the pictures used in the picture association projective technique**

Twenty nine out of the fifty five pictures were selected in association with the UK Conservative Party. Furthermore the same pictures or similar associations and

perceptions were revealed across focus group discussions. The six most frequently associated pictures in reference to the Conservative Party included; *the countryside, the church, Champagne, cricket, foxhunting and money*. After participants had selected their pictures in association with the Conservative Party, they were then asked to reveal the pictures they had chosen and permitted to elaborate on their associations. The pictures and key reasons expressed by participants along with their political affiliation can be seen in table 14 on p.221.

**Table 14: ‘Pictures’ in association with the UK Conservative Party**

<b>Picture</b>	<b>Participant</b>	<b>Key Reasons</b>
Post Office, NHS, Old People, Upper-Class	P1FG5(F)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post Office – symbolises whole privatisation</li> <li>• NHS – their views on it and what they plan to do</li> <li>• Old People – take care of them</li> <li>• Upper-class – take care of them</li> </ul>
Queen, Hunting, Cricket and Marks & Spencer’s	P2FG5(G)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Queen – Imperial, head of church, very old England glory days</li> <li>• Hunting –</li> <li>• Marks &amp; Spencer – rich people shop there regularly</li> <li>• Cricket – very English, old traditional sport, public school boys</li> </ul>
Pound, Champagne, Union Flag, Bulldog	P3FG5(F)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pound – Save the pound</li> <li>• Champagne – Thatcher’s roaring 80s</li> <li>• Union Flag – symbolic</li> <li>• Bulldog – symbols of Englishness, Churchill, icons</li> </ul>
English Flag, Old Church, US Flag, Countryside, City of London	P4FG5(F)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English Flag – patriotic</li> <li>• Old Church – English national values, Christian values, family values</li> <li>• US Flag – pro-American anti-Europe relationship</li> <li>• City of London – pro-City, big business, less industry focused</li> <li>• Countryside – Core Tory vote, second homes</li> </ul>
Sainsbury’s, Wine Glass, BBC	P1FG7(LD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sainsbury’s – donated lots of money to Conservatives</li> <li>• Wine Glass – posh, Conservative Party is posh</li> <li>• BBC – an age old British institution like the Conservatives – traditional</li> </ul>
Foxhunting, Champagne, John Lewis	P2FG7 (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foxhunting –</li> <li>• Champagne –</li> <li>• John Lewis – upper-class and things not everyone has</li> </ul>
HM Queen, Cricket, WI	P3FG7 (T)	
NHS, Marks & Spencer, The City of London	P4FG7 (F)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NHS – Tories saving the country – play on words</li> <li>• Marks &amp; Spencer – wearing suits, not that much upper-class shop</li> <li>• City of London – Thatcher and City boys not sure Cameron will change it</li> </ul>
Cup of Tea, Countryside, US Flag,	P5FG7 (F)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tea – really British and all drink tea and not do anything</li> <li>• Countryside – British</li> <li>• American Flag – we’re becoming more Americanised – more party leader</li> </ul>
Bulldog, Traditional English Village, Army	P6FG7 (F)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bulldog – English symbol, tradition, different classes</li> <li>• Army – war effort, part of your country, patriotic, fighting for Queen</li> <li>• Traditional English Village – lifestyle, quaint, communities</li> </ul>
Money, Old People, Church	P7FG7 (L)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Money – Party of the rich</li> <li>• Old People – core voters</li> <li>• Church – evil organisation, out of touch, follow old traditions</li> </ul>
Union Flag, EU, Emmerdale, Countryside	P1FG8 (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Union Flag – British, staying in Britain</li> <li>• EU – Europe policy</li> <li>• Emmerdale – countryside</li> <li>• Countryside – not cash thing more countryside</li> </ul>
Red Wine, Cricket, Cakes Village Fair	P2FG8 (F)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cakes Village Fair – villagey and countryside</li> <li>• Cricket – seems very British</li> <li>• Red Wine – posh and refined – nice drink</li> </ul>
Money, Tea, John Lewis	P3FG8 (F)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Money – more leaning towards the wealthy</li> <li>• John Lewis – more top end of the market rather than mainstream people</li> <li>• Tea – traditional rather than modern. Conservatives no real change.</li> </ul>
EU, Champagne, Church	P4FG8 (L)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU Flag – perceive most anti-Europe party</li> <li>• Champagne – high end</li> <li>• Church – majority of support being in rural areas opposed to cities</li> </ul>
Countryside, Foxhunting, Money	P5FG8 (L)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Countryside – rural, big house in the country</li> <li>• Foxhunting – again very Tory</li> <li>• Money – See them having more money</li> </ul>
University, City of London, St George Flag	P6FG8 (F)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University – it was considered elitist</li> <li>• City of London – Conservatives all about promoting business</li> <li>• St George – British, protectionist party</li> </ul>

The ‘key reasons’ in table 14 were provided by participants. One Labour supporting teacher from East Riding of Yorkshire associated the ‘countryside’ with the

Conservative Party “*because again being quite rural, quite big house in the country*” (P5FG8). Similarly a floating voter (PhD student) from Sheffield chose the ‘countryside’ “*because that’s where I see a lot of the Tory voters coming from, a lot of Tory voters living or having their second homes there while working in the city*” (P4FG5). In contrast despite a Conservative supporting young professional from the East Riding of Yorkshire also selecting the ‘countryside’ in association with the Party it was argued “*these are my actual perceptions of Tories, more countryside than everyone else’s policies. I don’t personally perceive it as a cash thing I see it more as an urban countryside*” (P1FG8). A floating voter (A-level) from Maidenhead associated the ‘countryside’ because it was typically “*British*”, (P5FG7). Participants in all three focus group discussions also selected ‘rural themed’ pictures such as foxhunting, cricket, ‘traditional English village’ and the Yorkshire based serial drama ‘Emmerdale’. Several participants perceived the Conservative Party as “*traditional English village lifestyle...quaint...communities*” (P6FG7), cakes and village fairs (P2FG8), foxhunting “*very Tory*” (P5FG8), cricket “*very English...old...traditional...public school boys*” (P2FG5), cricket “*seems very British*” (P2FG8). Furthermore, several participants considering rural communities and ‘old people’ constitute as the core Conservative vote, (P4FG5; P7FG7; P4FG8), and the Conservative Party was perceived to “*take care*” of old people and “*posher-upper-class people*” (P1FG5).

Participants also associated money related imagery such as Champagne, the City of London, Sterling and affluent lifestyles with the Conservative Party. One Labour supporting young professional from Easting Riding of Yorkshire considered Champagne as “*high end*” (P4FG8), while a floating voter (PhD) from Newcastle associated Champagne “*based on Thatcher’s roaring 80s, you know the rich getting rich drinking Champagne when their stocks went through the roof*” (P3FG5). Nevertheless the Conservative supporting A-level student from Maidenhead also

selected Champagne in association with the Conservative Party however failed to elaborate on this association (P2FG7). A floating voter from Wakefield associated the City of London with the Conservatives as *“the Conservatives are all about promoting business which is actually a good thing”* (P6FG8), while a floating voter from Maidenhead related the Party to the City of London *“under Margaret Thatcher city boys were getting millions of pounds and I’m not sure David Cameron will change it”* (P4FG7). Additionally a floating voter from Sheffield associated:

*“[Sic] very pro-city, pro-deregulating financial markets and the economy and letting big business do what it likes and investing and gearing the UK economy towards the city of London making it deregulated and making it an international centre as opposed to trying to develop, helping industry and the economy in the rest of the country to develop”* (P4FG5).

Money was another common association with the Conservative Party. One Labour supporting teacher from East Riding of Yorkshire associated ‘money’ *“because I do see them [Conservatives] having more money”* (P5FG8), while a floating voter from the same focus group considered *“I perceive them as being more leaning towards the wealthy of the country”* (P3FG8). Whereas a Labour supporting A-level student from Maidenhead associated money *“because [Conservatives are] party of the rich”* (P7FG7).

Participants also associated *“old British institutions”* (P1FG7) such as the BBC, the Monarchy, and the church in association with the Conservative Party. A Green supporting PhD student from Cambridge related Her Majesty the Queen with the Conservative Party accompanied with *“imperial kind of sign, head of church and stuff and very old England glory days”* (P2FG5). A Liberal Democrat supporting A-level student from Maidenhead associated the BBC with the Conservatives *“because it’s an age old institution like the Conservatives. Yeah it’s an old British institution, still very traditionalist”* (P1FG7). Whereas a Labour supporting A-level student from

Maidenhead connected the Party with the ‘church’ *“another organisation that’s evil...they’re really tough on people and judge people and follow age old traditions and are out of touch”* (P7FG7).



**Figure 48: An example of a selection of pictures selected in association with the UK Conservative Party**

Premium imagery in association includes premium or *“top-end”* (P3FG8) department stores like John Lewis and Marks & Spencer, supermarket Sainsbury’s, red wine and *“elitist”* (P6FG8) universities like Oxford and Cambridge. National identity associations consist of the Union flag, St George’s Flag, and cups of tea, the sense of tradition, bulldogs and the Women’s Institute. One floating voter from Wakefield associated St George’s flag with the Conservatives *“I think they’re more of a protectionist party”*, (P6FG8), whereas ‘tea’ was chosen as it was perceived as *“quite traditional”* (P3FG8), and a ‘bulldog’ was linked as it was perceived as *“an English symbol...the idea of having different classes”* (P6FG7) and *“Churchill...English symbols”* Conservatives like to *“preserve”* (P3FG5).

Finally, Conservative Party policy themed pictures include *St George’s flag, USA flag, European Union, NHS, the pound and the Post Office*. One Labour supporter from East Riding of Yorkshire associated the Conservative Party with the European Union flag *“I perceive them to be the most anti-European of all the parties”* (P4FG8). While an American flag was chosen to represent the Americanisation of British politics especially



the increased focus on the party leader opposed to party policies (P5FG7). Furthermore, a floating voter from Maidenhead associated the picture of the NHS as it represented:

*“it’s like a play on words really like the Conservatives are all about saving the country from the mess Labour has created, so it’s just like using the idea like the country being in hospital and the Conservatives are trying to bring it out from the mess Labour has done to it” (P4FG7).*

Subsequently, the picture association projective technique highlighted the imagery and perceptions in relation to the UK Conservative Party projected by young citizens aged 18-24 years. Common imagery was chosen in association with the Conservative Party however the perceptions and reasoning was often contrasting yet provided deep insight and greater understanding of the brand image of the Conservative Party.

Conservative Party members including Conservative Members of Parliament and Conservative supporters were rarely discussed by participants. However, participants in the pilot focus group discussion were instructed to illustrate a Conservative Party ‘supporter’, which may be seen as an *expressive* projective technique. A Conservative supporting PhD chemistry student from North Yorkshire illustrated a stick-man with the annotation “*normal person*” in reference to depicting a Conservative supporter (P1FG1). In contrast a Labour supporting undergraduate history student from Liverpool projected a negative view of the Conservative Party throughout the projected expressions and suggested “*David Horton*” a prominent Conservative character from the BBC comedy sitcom “*The Vicar of Dibley*” was an illustration of a Conservative supporter (P5FG1). The three floating voters in the pilot focus group; one undergraduate from East Riding of Yorkshire, a postgraduate from Newcastle and a PhD student from London depicted similar expressions but tended to hold a neutral attitudinal perspective of the UK Conservative Party. The similar expressions included tweed, top-hats, bow tie, polo sticks, croquet, moustaches and annotations such as “*middle-class*” (P3FG1)

“money” and “wealthy cider person” (P4FG1). In reflection, it may have been appropriate to roll out this projective technique across all focus group discussions to generate a deeper understanding of the distinction between a Conservative supporter and Conservative member.

Despite that participants mainly discussed the associations and perceptions of the UK Conservative Party as a whole, several participants highlighted distinction within the UK Conservative Party between Conservative Members of Parliament. It was also revealed by a small number of participants that there are different types of Conservative MPs, with some more approachable and honest (P1FG8; P4FG8; P5FG8). One Conservative supporter from East Riding of Yorkshire argued “*Cameron sometimes a bit shifty*” (P1FG8), and at times found it hard to relate or trust David Cameron. However, the participant revealed that William Hague (former Conservative Party leader 1997-2001) was more trustworthy, approachable and could relate too because “*he’s more North Yorkshire*” and suggested it could be a North/South divide issue and “*maybe because Hague is local MP*” (P1FG8). A Labour supporting young professional also from East Riding of Yorkshire conceived Ken Clarke MP (Rushcliffe-Nottinghamshire) “*who is clearly wealthy (but) comes across as approachable*” (P4FG8). Additionally, a Labour supporting teacher considered William Hague was honest about his privileged background nevertheless believed David Cameron was trying to “*hide his wealth*” (P5FG8), and thus William Hague was respected and trusted more than Cameron for his honesty regarding background.

This point of distinction for local Members of Parliament was also raised in the same focus group. Two Labour supporting participants living in Brough, East Riding of Yorkshire suggested that if they lived in Beverley, a market-town in the same region may consider voting Conservative because of the local *Conservative MP Graham*

*Stuart*, despite identifying themselves as long-term Labour voters (P4FG8; P5FG8). “*I’m not a Tory but when I lived in Beverley had the best MP, [sic] know where he is and if I lived in Beverley I would vote for him*” (P5FG8). Additionally, “*local MP’s make a huge difference and are passionate about their area. By personally trusting and contacting local MP can actually resonate with him*” (P4FG8), despite being a Labour voter. Subsequently, certain local Conservative MPs may have a stronger regional brand image than national brand image of the UK Conservative Party.

#### *5.5.2 David Cameron – Perceptions & Associations*

One undergraduate floating voter from East Riding of Yorkshire conceived “*don’t know what he stands for – don’t know any of his policies, maybe should tell me some of his policies instead of telling me to hug a hoodie*” (P2FG1). Interestingly it was the media that “*coined the mocking phrase*” (Snowdon 2010:238) ‘hug a hoodie’ from a speech delivered by David Cameron and the phrase has become associated with David Cameron. Nevertheless many participants not knowing what David Cameron stands for and projecting negative associations of the Conservative Party, the majority of participants provided positive perceptions of the Conservative Party leader. To some participants age was an important factor in association with David Cameron with the expectation that the Prime Minister should be young, energetic and enthusiastic (P4FG3) and that a younger party leader would make participants relate to David Cameron more and vice versa (P5FG3). However, other participants argued that the Prime Minister should be older and thus with greater experience especially in times of crises (P2FG4). David Cameron was also said to hold more of a personality than the other political party leaders and was said to be friendly, with excellent communication skills, family orientated, approachable, amusing, talkative, likeable, passionate, a strong leader and charismatic.

Despite personality considered one of David Cameron's strengths, a small number of participants revealed that personality was irrelevant to them when voting and the fact David Cameron had a strong personality compared to rivals was of no interest to participants. It is also interesting to point out that in spite a floating voter from London perceiving David Cameron as friendly it was followed with "*but don't have much respect for him...[sic] he's not scary like a teacher situation...walk all over him but not good in a political situation*" (P3FG1). David Cameron was also described as fake, smug, arrogant, pompous, ponsey, "*polished performer*" (P4FG5), does not appeal to the working-class, style over substance, media savvy and trying too hard. One floating voter (A-level) from Maidenhead considered the electorate "*won't vote for him [Cameron] because they don't actually know what will happen under a Conservative government*". A floating voter from East Riding of Yorkshire perceived David Cameron to be un-cool and "*looks like a geography teacher*" or boring tour-guide (P2FG1). Another floating voter from London (PhD student) argued "*Cameron is the brand of Conservatism trying to put on a front and not what he is...fake*" (P1FG5).

It was also proposed by a floating voter from East Riding of Yorkshire that David Cameron is the "*new face to an old party*" (P2FG1). A Conservative supporting PhD student from North Yorkshire argued "*Cameron has rejuvenated the oldest party in the UK and trying to appeal to a wider audience*" (P1FG1). Another Conservative supporter, an A-level student from the City of Nottingham believed David Cameron has united the Party and provided much needed stability (P6FG2). However, not all participants agreed that the Conservative Party has changed merely the image with the "*old Tories pulling the strings*" (P3FG5). This was shared by a floating voter (PhD student) from London "*Cameron is just the face of the party but same people in the background*" (P1FG5), and "*on the surface they appear to have changed because of the leader*" (P2FG7) expressed by a Maidenhead Conservative supporter.

A floating voter from Newcastle (PhD) argued “*change is all superficial, cynical what they’re trying to do...just changed the image not the party...policies the same*” (P3FG5). Subsequently, many participants believed Cameron had changed the perception of the Party rather than the actual party in terms of members, policies and values. A floating voter from Maidenhead (A-level) proposed:

*“Cameron changed the perception so when they get into office they can show people they’ve changed...Cameron realised since becoming leader traditional supporters are not the mass population and got to appeal to a broader support base with broader issues that appeal to the masses”* (P6FG7).

### 5.5.3 Conservative Party Policy – Perceptions & Associations

A number of techniques were employed to generate a deeper understanding of the associations and perceptions of the UK Conservative Party policy. These techniques include expressive and completion projective techniques amalgamated into the focus group discussion schedule.

As previously stated, many participants of all political affiliation failed to provide insight into Conservative Party policy revealing a lack of understanding, confusion and general disbelief that the Conservative Party actually had any policies. This included a number of Conservative Party supporters that failed to elaborate on party policy. A Conservative supporting A-level student from the City of Nottingham considered that this lack of clarity and honesty, which in turn increased confusion, was because the Conservative Party were scared to reveal actual policy due to the negative reception it was believed it would receive (P6FG2).

Positive associations of Conservative Party policy were revealed by a small number of participants mainly Conservative supporters who believed that Conservative policy would offer a “*breath of fresh air, positive change*” (P6FG2), and “*the Tories are more likely to address*” (P1FG8) inequality and social mobility (P6FG2; P1FG8). However,

these positive associations were not shared by the majority of respondents as many believed that Conservative Party policy would make the rich richer and the poor poorer, deliver greater powers for the wealthy in society, increase in inequality, crime, unemployment and the UK at large would suffer under a Conservative administration. This was evident from the projected expression of what the UK would look like under a Conservative government outlined by a floating voter (PhD) from Sheffield “*ending of Labours recent shift to diversify the economy and decrease reliance on the city...anti-immigration and anti EU*” (P4FG5). Additionally, participants of all political leaning excluding Conservative supporters perceived that the economic recovery could be put in jeopardy, deep spending cuts, and further deregulation of the banking sector and a repeal of the 2004 Hunting Act if Conservative Party policy was implemented.

Despite the positive and negative associations of Conservative Party policy, many participants including Conservative supporters projected neutral and questionable perspectives in reference to party policy. Several participants believed that Conservative Party policy would not bring about any real change to the UK and participants were often confused with party policy and questioned whether the Conservative Party would adhere to party pledges. One floating voter from Maidenhead (A-level) argued “*out of all the different parties the Conservatives are least clear about what they want and how can I support a party that I don’t know what they stand for*” (P6FG7). Many participants felt uncertain, anxious and questioned whether Conservative Party policy will affect their lives. This was evident as in participant’s expressions as they often asked more questions than answers of what to expect from Conservative Party policy.

A tactical voter from Maidenhead (teaching assistant) conceived “*it’s as if the Conservative identity is a fuzzy indecisive identity... [the Conservative Party] don’t know which way to go*” (P3FG7). It was also revealed that many participants considered

that the limited policy that was known was superficial and the populist style was masking the lack of substance in terms of party policy. For example this style over substance focused on the push for A-list women and ethnic candidates, refocusing on party policies and “*trying to look more like New Labour in 1997*” (P3FG7). One floating voter from Maidenhead (A-level) argued that “*the Conservatives have lost their identity slightly*” and this was down to the lack of clear policies (P5FG7). A floating voter with no higher education from Nottinghamshire suggested that the Conservatives were just trying to gain votes and say things that appeal to the masses (P4FG4), thus “*try anything to win*” the election (P1FG8). The tactical voter from Maidenhead considered “*all about winning...it’s not about whose best anymore it’s about whose least worse*” (P3FG7).

## 5.6 Experiences

The *experiences* variable referred to the direct or indirect contact the external stakeholder had with the UK Conservative Party brand. Thus *direct experience* focused on the external stakeholder’s own experience and contact whereas *indirect experience* referred to external sources of information for example word of mouth, advertising or general communication (Bosch *et al.* 2006; Keller 2003).

### *5.6.1 The Conservative Party - Experiences*

It was found that participants had very little *direct experience* with the UK Conservative Party. However, as discussed in the associations & perceptions section two Labour supporting young professionals had some direct experience with the Beverley & Holderness Conservative MP; Graham Stuart. Despite revealing negative associations and perceptions of the Conservative Party, the Labour supporters held positive attitudes towards the local Member of Parliament Graham Stuart due to their direct experience (P4FG8; P5FG8).

Several participants of all political affiliation including Conservative supporters revealed indirect experience with the UK Conservative Party. A Conservative supporting A-level student from the City of Nottingham; a first time voter in the 2010 General Election conceived that *“I didn’t really have opinion on them [Conservatives] before...I wasn’t eighteen so I wasn’t really old enough to vote”* (P2FG2). The participant continued *“now the election is coming and it’s all on the news I am thinking about the election and forming my opinions...my family have always voted Conservative and my nana sits us all down at the table and says vote David Cameron”* (P2FG2).

In contrast, participants revealed negative indirect experience from family members who were involved in the 1984 miner’s strikes, negative views of the 1980 Right to Buy Scheme, privatisation and stories of high unemployment (P8FG2). These views were shared by a floating voter with no higher education from a former mining village in Nottinghamshire *“my granddad and dad always voted Labour because the Conservatives shut all the pits [sic] and all the jobs lost”* (P4FG4). Additionally indirect experience was revealed by another floating voter in the same focus group *“my mum went on the Poll Tax march...if Thatcher is mentioned in my house all hell breaks loose”* (P1FG4). However, these negative indirect experiences revealed by participants were often challenged by participants with an A-level student from Nottingham stating *“she [Thatcher] solved a lot of problems that existed...if Thatcher hadn’t done what she did we’d still be having miners strikes and have winter of discontent yearly”* (P3FG2).

Another indirect experience revealed by a number of participants including Conservative supporters namely scepticism of the Conservative Party because of the associations and perceptions of Tony Blair’s New Labour. Several participants revealed scepticism of repackaging political parties as *“Blair was the same with New Labour...focused on these big words...making it sellable”* highlighted by a floating voter



(PhD) from Newcastle. This idea was shared by an A-level student (floating) from Maidenhead “*I feel when they [Conservatives] come to power they’ll do what New Labour did and didn’t actually stick to their word*” (P6FG7). A teacher from East Riding of Yorkshire identified as a Labour supporter considered “*Labour changed to New Labour and the Conservatives say [sic] we don’t conform to the old stereotypes of Conservative but secretly deep down we do...let’s call ourselves New Conservatives, remodel and rebuild ourselves but we’re still the same*” (P5FG8). Furthermore a Labour supporting young professional from East Riding of Yorkshire suggested “*[Tony] Blair was exactly the same...no one was before Blair...no one was aware of Blair before. Now they know Blair and compare Cameron with Blair and therefore don’t believe Cameron because of Blair*” (P4FG8).

#### 5.6.2 David Cameron - Experiences

Unsurprisingly participants revealed that none of them had had a *direct experience* with David Cameron and with several highlighting a number of indirect experiences such as appearances on the morning television programme GMTV and the infamous Leaders Debates broadcast during the 2010 General Election Campaign. One Conservative supporting PhD student from North Yorkshire presented a positive expression of David Cameron’s honesty during one of his ‘Cameron Direct’ town-hall style speeches, however went on to describe David Cameron as “*smarmy*” (P1FG1). A positive response was also revealed by a number of participants in reference to the ‘WebCameron’ podcasts released online. ‘WebCameron’ gave participants the chance of gaining an insight into the life of the party leader, “*attempting to normalise himself*” (P5FG6), attempt to shed Cameron’s “*posh image*” (P1FG6), which in turn allowed one Conservative A-level student to “*relate to him*”, (P2FG2). However, the ‘WebCameron’ podcast also “*seems fake and makes him look arrogant*” (P6FG6), “*trying too*

*hard...puts people off*” (P5FG7), and *“trying to reach out to young people but kind of messing it up* (P2FG1).

There was also debate regarding Samantha Cameron’s (David Cameron’s wife) version of WebCameron, ‘SamCam’, with many participants presenting a positive and negative view of the inner world and daily life of the opposition leader’s wife. One Labour supporting A-level student from the City of Nottingham stated *“it’s all about SamCam...David got her pregnant on purpose...shouldn’t get her involved”* (P8FG2), with one Conservative supporting A-level student conceiving British politics has become *“Americanised in terms of using wives of politicians as marketing tools, just like Michelle Obama”* (P6FG2). A floating voter (A-level) from Maidenhead believed Samantha Cameron’s approach in the podcasts of *“supporting her husband”* (P5FG7) was old fashioned and out of touch with modern women and actually put people off (P6FG7; P5FG7). Despite this several participants voiced positive opinions of the SamCam podcasts with one Labour supporting A-level student from Nottingham stating *“I know more about Samantha Cameron than I do about David...she’s nice”* (P4FG2). This was a common theme among participants at times revealing more information about Samantha Cameron than David Cameron.

Participants also came into indirect contact with David Cameron via television programmes such as GMTV and TONIGHT. These programmes tended to reveal personal characteristics of David Cameron rather than focusing on politics and this interested participants who were not necessarily interested in the Conservative Party or politics at large. Two floating voters with no higher education from Nottinghamshire discussed *“David Cameron, his son died and that’s all I know”* (P1FG4), *“he seems quite nice; he was on TV last night”* (P4FG4), *“the one whose wife is pregnant?”* (P2FG4), *“yeah saw him on GMTV seems really nice”* (P1FG4).

The Leaders Debates broadcast during the 2010 General Election Campaign were also considered indirect experience with David Cameron and provided participants the chance to evaluate David Cameron and the Conservative Party in terms of comparison with political competitors, party policy and personal character. These televised debates not only provided debate among participants nevertheless allowed one young professional floating/Conservative supporter from Cambridgeshire to re-evaluate their political leaning in support of the Liberal Democrats (P3FG8). The former Conservative supporter watched the televised debates, compared party policies and realised that they identified more with Liberal Democrat policies than Conservative policies thus the indirect experience actually alienated rather than attracted the self-proclaimed floating voter.

#### *5.6.3 Conservative Party Policy - Experiences*

Participants had no direct or indirect contact with Conservative Party policy and this maybe down to the fact the Conservative Party had been in opposition for thirteen years since 1997. However, there are exceptions such as the London Assembly and local/regional government which may have been under Conservative control during 1997-2010 but it was not the intention of this research to address these issues.

### 5.7 Evaluations

The final brand image variable proposed by Bosch *et al.* (2006), *evaluations* is determined by the expectations, perceptions and associations and experiences of the UK Conservative Party brand.

#### *5.7.1 The Conservative Party - Evaluations*

External stakeholders revealed contrasting expressions of what to expect from a Conservative Government subsequently divided into positive, negative, neutral and questionable illustrations. Many participants including Conservative supporters and

floating voters provided questionable expressions, and were often uncertain, inquisitive and apprehensive of what a Conservative administration would mean for them. Furthermore, several participants had little or no expectations and were thinking retrospectively of previous Conservative Governments, second-guessing in an attempt to address this lack of understanding.

Top-of-mind associations linked to the UK Conservative Party included; David Cameron, Margaret Thatcher, the idea of Change, Party of the rich and upper-classes. However “*the shadow of Thatcher*” (P5FG1), remains a much debated association. The top-of-mind associations also revealed positive and negative perceptions relating to the Conservative ‘brand’, accompanied with traditional and retrospective associations and current imagery. Participants also expressed divided perceptions of *who* the Conservative Party was considered to represent with many associating the Conservative Party with the upper-classes, rural and wealthy individuals and also with less party-of-the-rich and middle-class associations. Moreover, many perceived the party-of-the-rich associations still there yet were not considered the reality of the party. Despite that there was divided opinion regarding upper and middle-class perceptions there was a consistent perception that the Conservative Party did not necessarily represent the poor or working-classes.

Associations and perceptions of the UK Conservative Party brand were also obtained from *expressive* and *completion* projective techniques expressed by the participants. The expressive and completion projective techniques involved metaphorically linking the Conservative Party to an object or stimuli thus depicting expressions in relation to *food, people, drinks, holiday destinations, sports, photographs* and *scenarios*. Many of the projected expressions associated the UK Conservative Party with wealth, class related, posh imagery and traditional, patriotic, luxurious perceptions. Furthermore, participants

expressed fancy, style over substance, old fashioned, often nasty, money-focused, anti-EU, pro-American and rural associations with the UK Conservative Party. Despite these common associations it was the personal attitudinal perspectives of the Conservative Party that was the differentiating factor and these attitudinal perspectives were subsequently grouped into positive, negative, neutral and questionable. Therefore, the perceptions and associations of the UK Conservative Party brand image can be considered consistent yet contrasting.

Despite the majority of participant's projecting consistent associations of the UK Conservative Party, several external stakeholders suggested that a number of Conservative Members of Parliament are diverse and distinct. These diverse and distinct perceptions relate to William Hague MP (P1FG8), Kenneth Clarke MP (P4FG8) and Graham Stuart MP (P5FG8). Therefore, this suggested that the local identities may be stronger and more significant than the national identity of the Conservative Party and a local identity may appeal to a broader range of the electorate than the national identity. Furthermore, it may be surmised that the Conservative Party is an amalgamation of multiple identities which may be more appealing locally than nationally.

Participants illustrated very little direct experience with the UK Conservative Party. However, two Labour supporters expressed positive direct experience with Beverley and Holderness MP; Graham Stuart despite revealing negative expectations, associations and perceptions relating to the UK Conservative Party. Participants did illustrate a number of indirect experiences with the Conservative Party. These ranged from family discussions, the 2010 General Election Campaign, negative accounts of retrospective Conservative governments which were directly and indirectly experienced by family members. Additionally the direct experience of New Labour was considered

an indirect experience which made several participants sceptical of the UK Conservative Party.

#### *5.7.2 David Cameron - Evaluations*

Despite participants exhibiting an *awareness* of David Cameron as Conservative leader, many external stakeholders were uncertain what to expect from David Cameron and expressed apprehensive and sceptical illustrations. This lack of clarity and scepticism was expressed by external stakeholders of all political standing including Conservative supporters and floating voters. Participants also provided negative expectations of a hypothetical Prime Minister Cameron including evaluating Cameron's leadership, apprehensive whether David Cameron will stick to party pledges, too tough on immigration and biased towards to the wealthy. However, external stakeholders including Conservative supporters also illustrated questionable expectations of David Cameron. Many were unsure whether a Cameron-led Conservative government can make a difference to the country and several other participants were uncertain which segment of society would benefit from a Conservative administration.

Positive and negative associations were expressed in reference to David Cameron. David Cameron was seen as different from previous Conservative leaders and was considered young, charismatic, energetic, passionate, articulate, friendly and approachable. However, many of the positive perceptions could also be seen as negative associations and vice versa. Cameron was also considered fake, trying too hard, superficial, smug, pompous and focusing on style rather than substance. Several participants considered Cameron had changed the perception of the Conservative Party, raised awareness and made participants to look again and consider the Conservatives as a credible political party. However, a number of participants considered David Cameron

was masking the true identity of the party and Cameron was merely the new face with the old party still in control behind the scenes.

Many participants illustrated indirect experiences of David Cameron however projected debatable attitudes and opinion in regards to a number of the indirect experiences such as television appearances and web-based communication tools WebCameron and SamCam. It was suggested that several participants knew more about the Conservative leader's wife than David Cameron and many of the indirect experiences highlighted personal characteristics of the party leader rather than values or policies. The idea that there is a duality of the brand image of the Conservative Party was strengthened as favourable characteristics of David Cameron were projected by participants that had previously illustrated negative indirect experiences of the Conservative Party.

#### *5.7.3 Conservative Party Policy - Evaluations*

Regardless of external stakeholders proposing to know little or no Conservative Party policy, limited policy per se was revealed throughout the focus group discussion enhanced by projective techniques. This is not to say the limited reference to policy that was presented was actual party policy. External stakeholders revealed contrasting expectations of Conservative Party policy and what the UK would look like under a Conservative government. Several participants projected positive expectations. In contrast nineteen participants projected negative expectations. However, numerous participants including two Conservative supporters expected the UK to stay the same with no substantial changes under a Conservative administration.

Many participants of all political leaning expressed a lack of understanding, confusion and general disbelief that the Conservative Party actually had policies and questioned whether the party would adhere to party policy. This included a number of Conservative supporting participants that failed to elaborate on party policy. When Conservative

Party policy was referenced, participants projected contrasting associations and perceptions. Nevertheless, regardless of positive and negative associations of Conservative Party policy numerous participants including Conservative supporters expressed neutral and questionable perceptions in reference to party policy. Several participants were sceptical of the Conservative Party achieving real actual change conceiving that things will pretty much stay the same. Finally, the Conservatives were considered the “*least clear*” (P6FG7) in comparison with political competitors, participants often questioned what the Party stood for and many participants were also uncertain, confused and indifferent in regards to Conservative Party policy. Furthermore, participants expressed no direct or indirect experience with Conservative Party policy.

### 5.8 Summary

The aim of this chapter was to present the findings generated in reference to phase two of the thesis. This focused on generating a deeper understanding of the brand image of the UK Conservative Party from the perspective of external stakeholders aged 18-24 years. Eight focus group discussions (forty-six participants) complimented with projective techniques were conducted prior the 2010 UK General Election. The conceptualisation of brand image (Bosch *et al.* 2006) not only served as the grounding for phase two of the research study but also served to structure the findings and evaluate the applicability of the findings to the brand image framework (Bosch *et al.* 2006).

This is the first occasion the six variables outlined by Bosch *et al.* (2006) have been used in political brand image research and only the second occasion the framework has been adopted in brand image research. Many of the findings presented by external stakeholders overlap the variables and thus are interconnected. The six variables of brand image (Bosch *et al.* 2006) were adapted to accommodate the deep insight



expressed by participants in relation to the brand image of the UK Conservative Party. Consequently the six variables outlined by Bosch *et al.* (2006) operationalised the brand image of the UK Conservative Party, which in turn generated a deeper understanding of the UK Conservative Party brand from the perspective of citizens 18-24 years. The following chapter will discuss the implications of the findings generated from phases one and two of the study and relate them to the existing literature and highlight contributions to the body of knowledge.

## 6 Discussion

### 6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the findings obtained from phase one and phase two of the thesis. Phase one focused on the exploration of the current and envisaged brand identity of the UK Conservative Party from the perspective of internal Conservative stakeholders. While phase two focused on generating a deeper understanding of the brand image of the UK Conservative Party from the perspective of external stakeholders aged 18-24 years. This chapter focuses on the implications of these findings relating to the conceptual frameworks (Kapferer 2008; Bosch *et al.* 2006).

The literature review highlighted a distinct gap in the body of knowledge which showed that there were no in-depth qualitative explorations of a political brand (Peng and Hackley 2009) that could illustrate the complex and multifaceted nature of political brands (Schneider 2004). Furthermore, this thesis was the first to comparably explore the UK Conservative Party brand from an internal (Needham 2006; Needham 2005) and external orientation (Guzman and Sierra 2009; French and Smith 2010; Phipps *et al.* 2010; Reeves *et al.* 2006; Schneider 2004; Smith 2009). This was achieved by critically assessing the applicability and “*transfer potential*” (Schneider 2004:60) of the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008) and the six variables of brand image (Bosch *et al.* 2006) to a political brand.

### 6.2 Political Brand Identity

This research demonstrated that findings related to the exploration of the brand identity of the UK Conservative Party can be applied to the six dimensions of the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008). The model helped to structure the findings but there was a disparity in terms of fit so the brand identity dimensions such as relationship, reflection

and self-image needed adaptation. Nevertheless there was little or no difficulty in applying the findings to the other dimensions (physique, culture, personality).

The *physique dimension* can accommodate tangible qualities of the UK Conservative Party brand and go beyond the brand's logo and colours (Dahlen *et al.* 2010; de Chernatony 2007; Gordon 1999; Kapferer 2008). However it was found that the UK Conservative Party does not portray a clear brand message, with a series of inconsistencies and tensions highlighted. This concurs with the findings of Norris *et al.* (1999) in that the UK Conservative Party, prior to the 1997 UK General Election, failed to communicate a coherent and consistent political brand message. Furthermore this study is contradictory to the generic branding literature on successful brands (Hatch and Schultz 2001; Hatch and Schultz 1997; Healey 2010; Klink 2003; Lilleker *et al.* 2006; Nilson and Surrey 1998; Petromilli and Michalczyk 1999). Several internal stakeholders emphasised local, personalised, and 'established' (P1) political brands which were often detached from the corporate or national UK Conservative Party brand. There was also some uncertainty as to whether the UK Conservative Party had physically changed in terms of representation and candidate selection. This often contentious issue was described as a "*facade*" (P22) as many PPCs and MPs were selected/elected prior David Cameron's election as leader in December 2005.

Davies (2010) argued that the entire organisation is directly and indirectly responsible for the development and success of the brand. Ultimately the findings highlighted that a number of internal stakeholders failed to take collective responsibility for the development and success of the UK Conservative Party brand. Hence the Conservative Party brand development was inconsistent with the findings from the extant literature on successful brands (Johns and Glymothy 2008; Fournier 1998; Gylling and Lindberg-Repo 2005; Klink 2003; Lilleker *et al.* 2006; Nilson and Surrey 1998). Moreover, there

were suggestions that there were superficial elements to the physique dimension of the UK Conservative Party. Therefore the physique dimension of the UK Conservative Party seemed to be incoherent and contentious. Furthermore it can be argued that the UK Conservative Party brand was not a successful political brand as successful political brands should ensure a degree of consistency especially with their communicated political message (Gurau and Ayadi 2011). Political brands that fail to communicate a consistent and understandable message can become ambiguous, lose credibility and can lack authenticity (Gurau and Ayadi 2011; Smith and French 2009; Smith and Saunders 1990). Additionally, this research demonstrates that the physique dimension of the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008) can accommodate physical elements related to the brand identity of a political brand.

Kapferer (2001) argued that the *personality dimension* can equate to the figurehead or spokesperson of a brand, yet Kapferer (2001) also proposed that the personality dimension can be considered broader than just the figurehead of a brand and discussed the humanistic qualities of a brand (Kapferer 2001). If anything this broadened rather than defined the conceptualisation of personality. This raised two points. Firstly, the personality dimension required greater clarity and secondly, the personality dimension could accommodate findings other than just the figurehead of a brand.

The applicability of the findings to the personality dimension highlighted a number of inconsistencies with the existing literature. Ultimately, the findings suggested that many internal stakeholders failed to accept responsibility to guard, promote, develop (Nilson and Surrey 1998) and believe in the UK Conservative Party brand, which has the ability to hinder the potential success of the brand (Ackerman 2000; Chon 2007). In addition, the findings in part are inconsistent with the existing literature on successful brands as successful brands offer a long-term, consistent and unified message; projected by every

stakeholder and communication device (Boyle 2007; Gylling and Lindberg-Repo 2005; Petromilli and Michalczyk 1999; Robinson 2004). Furthermore successful brands leave no room for misperceptions and ambiguity (Petromilli and Michalczyk 1999), something that cannot be associated with the UK Conservative Party brand.

However, the findings relating to David Cameron's vagueness and lack of clarity in terms of direction, policy and message, despite being seen as 'strategic' by several internal stakeholders, can be considered consistent with the findings of White and de Chernatony (2002). White and de Chernatony (2002) argued the success of the New Labour brand in part was because of its ambiguity; situated in the centre-ground, projecting broad appealing policies and values - something practiced by David Cameron and George Osborne during the 2005 Conservative leadership election (Bale 2011).

The personality dimension also highlighted a degree of overlap with some of the themes relating to UK Conservative Party leader David Cameron. This is discussed in the *culture dimension*. Furthermore, the findings put forward the case that the personality dimension could be further sub-divided into individual candidates or politicians, as each entity can be considered a figurehead of their own individual political brand in their own right. de Chernatony (1999) and Harris and de Chernatony (2001) argued that brand personality traits are developed through associations with not only the brand's figurehead but also internal stakeholders. This strengthens the argument for the exploration of the personality dimension on an individual level and highlights the multifaceted nature of the personality dimension. Future studies should consider this. Ultimately the findings relating to the UK Conservative Party figurehead David Cameron were applied to the personality dimension of the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008) with little difficulty after clarifying the conceptualisation of the personality dimension. Consequently, this section demonstrated that themes related to

the political brand's figurehead can be applied to the personality dimension of the brand identity prism with greater clarification and little adaptation. Furthermore, the personality dimension revealed contentious attributes in reference to David Cameron and in part inconsistencies with the existing literature.

The *culture dimension* accommodated 'broad church' core values and themes relating to the heritage of the UK Conservative Party. Internal stakeholders presented core Conservative values (Budge *et al.* 2001; Hickson 2005; Kavanagh 2000; Norton 1996) as personal Conservative values and vice versa and it was often difficult to distinguish between the two. Nonetheless the conceptualisation outlined by Kapferer (2008) does not discuss the cultural values of individual stakeholders or make a distinction between cultural values of the brand and internal stakeholders and merely focuses on the cultural values and heritage of the brand. Harris and de Chernatony (2001) make reference to this distinction. Perhaps the 'self-image dimension' that refers to the inner-relationship between the internal stakeholder and UK Conservative Party brand may be seen as more appropriate to accommodate personal core values for future research. This will be discussed later. Again, this highlights the overlapping nature of the brand identity model. Key Conservative values often overlapped the two broad factions of the UK Conservative Party (Norton 1996); nevertheless the factions and subsequently strands of Conservative thought (Coleman 1988; Hickson 2005; Norton 1996) were not overtly discussed. Subsequently this idea of a 'broad church' UK Conservative Party can be seen as something of a paradox; a coalition of often conflicting sub-cultures (de Chernatony 1999), each unique to the individual nevertheless united by core yet broad principles of the UK Conservative Party organisation (Kapferer 2008).

The culture dimension also revealed tensions relating to a core Conservative value; *decentralisation*. The contradictory nature of one of the Conservative Party's key values

undermines (Baines *et al.* 1999; Gylling and Lindberg-Repo 2005) the UK Conservative Party and potentially weakens the political brand in the mind of external audiences (Van Riel and Fombrun 2007). Additionally successful political brands should ensure all internal stakeholders consistently communicate their brand principles (Chong 2007; Smith and French 2009; Smith and Saunders 1990) and believe in their brand values in order to be deemed credible (Van Riel and Fombrun 2007) and authentic (Smith and French 2009; Smith and Saunders 1990). This was not necessarily the case with the UK Conservative Party brand.

Internal stakeholder's interpretation of David Cameron's emphasis of Conservatism was also applied to the culture dimension, nevertheless this theme could easily be applied to the personality dimension, which accommodated attributes ascribed to the figurehead of the UK Conservative Party brand. This too highlights the overlap of the brand identity prism dimensions and the appropriate dimension will ultimately reside at the discretion of the researcher. Nonetheless Ackerman (2000) cited in Chong (2007) argued internal stakeholders need to understand and believe in their brand values to consistently and appropriately communicate their values to all stakeholders. The majority of internal stakeholders communicated their own Conservative values, which are related to the core values of the UK Conservative Party that unite the various strands, nevertheless varied and often contrasting interpretations of David Cameron's emphasis of Conservatism were revealed. Lee and Beech (2009) described David Cameron's ideology or emphasis as a 'mixed bag' of Conservative thinking situated in the centre-ground; broadly embodying elements of centre-left and centre-right on the ideological continuum. This broadened appeal often termed 'compassionate conservatism' or 'Liberal Conservatism' (Jones 2008) was not understood and presented by all internal stakeholders (Ackerman 2000; Chong 2007). Therefore the congruency (Harris and de Chernatony 2001:3) of David Cameron's conservatism, which emerges as the 'UK Conservative Party brand',

was not universally communicated by internal stakeholders. Furthermore successful political brands depend on consistency, professionalism and staying 'on message' (Norris *et al.* 1999), which contradicts the findings of this study. Ultimately this has implications for the identity of the UK Conservative party brand.

David Cameron may have attempted to rearticulate Conservative thinking (Ashcroft 2010; Denham and O'Hara 2007) and provide a rephrased emphasis (Campbell 2008), yet the heritage of the UK Conservative Party remains an important aspect of the culture of the party because in parts the heritage is still very much part of the present. Furthermore this thesis concurs with Smith and French (2009) who found that despite New Labour under Tony Blair and the UK Conservative Party under David Cameron had repositioned their parties, the parties' core brand values were largely unchanged (Smith and French 2009) particularly in the mind of internal stakeholders. Subsequently the culture dimension of the UK Conservative Party remains contentious and complex (Norton 1996).

The *relationship dimension* was far more complicated and not as straightforward as the previous dimensions. As it stands, the brand identity prism proposed by (Kapferer 2008) failed to address the internal relationship between the brand and internal stakeholder and the multiple internal and external relationships to the brand. de Chernatony (2007) proposed brands succeed through relationships formed with consumers, while Gordon (1999) argued consumers have relationships with brands, and like relationships between human beings, some are more equal than others such as a parent-child relationship or teacher-student relationship. Not only is there a relationship between external stakeholders and the brand but to a certain extent internal stakeholders may be considered consumers too, suggesting the relationship dimension may be more complex. However the relationship between the internal stakeholder and brand relating to the



brand identity prism is rarely discussed (de Chernatony 1999; Harris and de Chernatony 2001). The majority of existing literature that focuses on the brand identity prism fails to acknowledge the complexities of the relationship dimension and the internal relationship between internal stakeholders and brands. This research adapted the relationship dimension to accommodate the findings related to the internal Conservative Party brand relationship and the internal stakeholder's interpretation of the relationship between the electorate and the UK Conservative Party.

The relationship dimension draws attention to the challenging themes related to the brand-consumer relationship of the brand identity of the UK Conservative Party. The findings highlighted that the relationship between the Conservative Party and internal stakeholder's requires some attention (Chapleo 2004; de Chernatony 2007; Sartain 2005). Despite many internal stakeholders consistently revealing a 'distinct' relationship between internal stakeholders and the Conservative Party brand; consistent with the 'broad church' approach expressed in the culture dimension, this was undermined by several participants expressing tension, disconnect and resentment.

This contention was found at various levels of the UK Conservative Party including prospective parliamentary candidates, Members of the European Parliament, members of sub-groups allied to the party and a member of the House of Lords. Furthermore this contention was often downplayed by internal stakeholders who felt it was not the 'right time' to voice their concerns so close to a General Election and the Conservative Party had to appear united and harmonised in order to win. Otherwise these tensions may awaken the perceptions of division within the mind of the electorate and ultimately undermine the attempts to dispel this perception of division and tension (Cameron 2010; Campbell 2008; Jones 2008; Smith 2009). Furthermore, these 'tensions' which have the potential to have a negative impact on the UK Conservative Party brand (Chapleo 2004;

Sartain 2005) in part revealed unity of disunity in a desire to win the 2010 UK General Election. Nevertheless Smith and French (2009:213) argued when “*the perceived cohesion of the party breaks down, its credibility is lost – and voters are notoriously disinclined to support a disunited party*”. Therefore this contention within the UK Conservative Party brand requires some attention. In addition, this disunity and undermined nature within the UK Conservative Party brand suggests that there is a potential positioning problem with the political brand (Baines *et al.* 1999). Therefore the UK Conservative Party should address this potential positioning problem in order to become a successful, internally supported and coherent political brand (Baines *et al.* 1999).

Internal stakeholders also envisaged a ‘decentralised relationship’ between the Conservative Party and external members (citizens), consistent with one of their key cultural values; decentralisation. A ‘decentralised relationship’ equated to returning power to the individual and less state intervention. Despite this, the findings suggested that there was an element of uncertainty and doubt whether the UK Conservative Party brand was resonating with and convincing the electorate, especially outside the London area. Therefore in part it was believed that there was no ‘reciprocal relationship’ (Harris and de Chernatony 2001) between the UK Conservative Party brand and the electorate which can be shaped by internal stakeholders (Harris and de Chernatony 2001). The internal stakeholders failed to understand and accept that they have a role to play in building a relationship between the UK Conservative Party brand and the electorate (Harris and de Chernatony 2001; Nilson and Surrey 1998). It was also argued that there are different kinds of relationships; some more difficult than others, at different levels of the Conservative Party between the Conservative Party and the electorate depending on the electoral voting system. Therefore the electoral voting system can affect the relationship between the political brand and the electorate in terms of development,

communication strategy and relevance and is another element to consider along with internal stakeholders in the relationship dimension.

Accordingly, it can be argued that the relationship dimension is complex and can be approached from an internal-brand perspective (de Chernatony 1999; Harris and de Chernatony 2001) and also external-brand perspective (Kapferer 2008). In addition it is proposed that there are multiple relationships connected to the UK Conservative Party brand. The findings could only be applied to the relationship dimension once it had been rearticulated and operationalised; which it lacked in the Kapferer (2001) conceptualisation.

The *reflection dimension* focused on the expected supporter of the UK Conservative Party brand from the perspective of internal stakeholders and not the target market. Dahlen *et al.* (2010:215) argued “*the brand should be a reflection of who consumers would like to be not who they actually are*”, suggesting the reflection is envisaged and not necessarily reality. Kapferer (2008:186) proposed the terms ‘reflection’ and ‘targeting’ are often confused, however all brands must control their reflection and recognise the difference between targeting. Future reflection dimensions within the brand identity prism could include the ‘reflection’ and ‘targeting’ distinction to avoid confusion, provide clarity and highlight both contradictions and consistencies between the two concepts.

The majority of internal stakeholders revealed a consistent reflection in that the UK Conservative Party was not designed to appeal to a defined segment of society. However, this inclusive proposition with something to offer everyone was undermined by the 2010 General Election targeting strategy employed by the UK Conservative Party (Ashcroft 2010), by several internal stakeholders including Conservative MPs and MEPs and contradicted by appealing to the middle-ground on the ideological continuum

(Beech and Lee 2008). Opinion on social class and its relationship with the UK Conservative Party was another contrasting theme. It was argued the UK Conservative Party no longer wholly represented the rich and privileged in society, while it was also proposed that it was the perception that the party cared most about the privileged few still remained, in contrast to one Conservative MEP that argued the party-of-the-rich associations were not necessarily negative.

Consequently, this study demonstrates that findings generated in reference to a political brand from the perspective of internal stakeholders can be applied to the reflection dimension of the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008) with little difficulty. Furthermore the reflection dimension of the UK Conservative Party's brand identity is unclear and inconsistent. The relationship between the *reflection*, *relationship* and *physique* dimensions; all social, outward facing dimensions (Dahlen *et al.* 2010; Kapferer 2008) are discussed following the self-image dimension application and applicability discussion.

The *self-image dimension* was another element of the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008) that appeared more complicated than some of the previous dimensions. In addition there was confusion in the articulation of the self-image dimension. de Chernatony (2006:212) argued that the self-image dimension of Kapferer's identity prism refers "*to the way a brand enables users to make a private statement back to themselves*" and ultimately relates to the inner relationship between the consumer and brand (Kapferer 2001). Nevertheless, going back to the 'relationship dimension', it seemed to address the external relationship between the consumer and brand. Gordon (1999) suggested brands can be seen as badges that reflect certain characteristics of the individual and the self-image dimension provides insight into the symbolic meaning, personal opinion and beliefs not just about themselves but also brands. The self-image

dimension along with the culture and personality dimensions form part of a brand's inward (internal) expressions (Dahlen *et al.* 2010; Kapferer 2008), yet along with the reflection dimension defines the external stakeholder (receiver) who builds and belongs to the brand's identity (Kapferer 2001). Therefore there seemed to be some confusion about the self-image dimension, requiring greater clarification and understanding.

Keeping in mind brand identity "*is on the sender's side*" (Kapferer 2001:94) with envisaged associations (Bosch *et al.* 2006), defining the organisation's reality (Nandan 2005), it can be proposed that brand identity is the desired identity of a brand developed and promoted by internal stakeholders. Subsequently, the self-image dimension in this study referred to the inner relationship (Kapferer 2001) between the internal stakeholder and the UK Conservative Party brand. This is consistent with the conceptualisation of brand identity; internally created and projected to the external audience. Again, the overlapping nature of the dimensions was present in the self-image facet of the brand identity prism. However the 'badge of beliefs' and 'private statements' in the adapted self-image dimension reflected the personal opinion, beliefs and attitudes of individual participants and could have been applied in various dimensions including physique, personality and culture.

The findings were categorised into 'badge of beliefs' and 'private statements' (de Chernatony 2006; Gordon 1999) and applied to the 'adapted' self-image dimension. All internal stakeholders revealed personal accounts, unique biographical information and private narratives (de Chernatony 2006; Gordon 1999; Kapferer 2001) of how they became members of the UK Conservative Party. Therefore the findings suggested that there are 'multiple brand identities' within the UK Conservative Party connected by 'broad church' core values consistent with the values revealed in the culture dimension. These multiple brand identities serve as a basis for a "*community of thought*" (Kapferer

2008:187) which enables users of the brand to form relationships with other users yet retain their own personal badge of beliefs (de Chernatony 2006; Gordon 1999; Kapferer 2001). This further highlights the complexity of political brands.

Nevertheless the self-image dimension also revealed a diversity of opinions and ‘private statements’ about the UK Conservative Party. Therefore a supportive message was not consistently presented by all internal stakeholders. Additionally several internal stakeholders failed to believe in the UK Conservative Party brand, raised doubts and argued that David Cameron was not their preferred candidate in the leadership election in 2005; nevertheless voting strategically with the aim to win the 2010 UK General Election. Moreover the findings are consistent with the existing literature as the internal stakeholders often held contrasting perceptions and understanding of the UK Conservative Party’s core identity (Mahnert and Torres 2007; Van Riel and Fombrun 2007; Veloutsou 2008). Subsequently the self-image dimension highlights the complexities of the identity of the UK Conservative Party brand, which is constructed from multiple brand identities which may have the ability to enhance or hinder the corporate or national UK Conservative Party brand. Finally this demonstrates that the findings related to the brand identity of a political brand can be applied to the adapted self-image dimension.

Just as Norton (1996) suggested that the UK Conservative Party is complex, this research demonstrates that the brand identity is equally complex. The internal aspects of the Conservative Party brand are also multilayered and this has implications for the Conservative Party brand as a whole. The brand identity prism revealed coherent and supportive elements but also contradictions and tensions. Furthermore the brand identity prism also highlighted that the UK Conservative Party brand was often inconsistent, incoherent and ‘off-message’ (Norris *et al.* 1999). The internal

stakeholders demonstrated a limited understanding of the electorate and also internal aspects of the UK Conservative Party brand identity. There was also a lack of collective responsibility in the development and communication of the UK Conservative Party brand evident in several dimensions; physique, personality and relationship (Davies 2010; Nilson and Surrey 1998). An integrated brand calls for each of the six dimensions to reinforce and echo the other (de Chernatony 2006). Moreover the brand identity of the UK Conservative Party was not coherent as the six dimensions were not integrated (Dahlen *et al.* 2010; Kapferer 2008).

The brand identity prism also highlighted the profound nature of the brand identity of the UK Conservative Party and the presence of multiple brand identities, unique to each internal stakeholder which is consistent with the ‘broad church’ argument. This in turn suggests that the UK Conservative Party brand is an amalgamation of multiple brand identities paradoxically united by core ‘broad church’ values.

Finally, it can be argued that the UK Conservative Party brand in part is not a successful political brand due to the inconsistencies and incoherencies (Gurau and Ayadi 2011; Smith and French 2009; Smith and Saunders 1990) found within the UK Conservative Party’s brand identity. Nevertheless the findings indicated that it is problematic when applying a political brand to Kapferer’s (2008) brand identity prism. Moreover this research demonstrated that a political brand in part can be applied to the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008). However, a number of dimensions of the brand identity prism had to be adapted (relationship, reflection, self-image) and required greater consideration in terms of applicability. While there were little or no difficulties in applying the findings to the physique, culture, and personality dimensions. Furthermore, this section suggested that a simplified brand identity prism that operationalised the

political brand identity enabled a greater understanding of the issues relating to the UK Conservative Party brand.

### 6.3 Political Brand Image

This study examined the brand image of the UK Conservative Party using the brand image framework (Bosch *et al.* 2006). Three variables namely the *uniqueness variable*, *expectations variable* and *perceptions and associations variable* had significant transfer potential. However, the *strengths variable*, *experiences variable* and *evaluations variable* could not be applied to the political brand as they stood so required some adaptation.

The *uniqueness variable* broadly focused on the unique meaningful attributes of external stakeholders that defined the UK Conservative Party brand. The findings indicated that the UK Conservative Party brand failed to communicate unique attributes to differentiate itself from political competitors in the mind of external stakeholders (Einstein 2008; Morgan *et al.* 2002; Needham 2005; Panwar 2004; Smith 2005). In addition, the UK Conservative Party failed to communicate clear points of difference combined with clear points of parity with political competitors, which ultimately forms part of the political brand's positioning (Smith 2005). Successful brands are identifiable (Caldwell and Freire 2004), and the findings suggested that this was not necessarily the case for the UK Conservative Party brand. Nevertheless several participants held the stereotypical view of the Conservative Party as the party of the rich, associated with business and low taxes. This mirrors the work of Smith and French (2009). Some respondents with varying political viewpoints shared confusion over what the UK Conservative brand stood for under David Cameron. Other respondents who demonstrated awareness of policy initiatives outlined before the election were cynical of their implementation. Furthermore several external stakeholders expressed misinformed



party policy, which would have a negative impact on the UK if the Conservatives won the General Election. Furthermore participants including Conservative supporters proposed the UK Conservative Party were not as clear as the Labour Party, focussing on style over substance, with less appeal to working-class voters. Several participants also called for greater distinction between mainstream political parties (Dermody *et al.* 2010).

However, external stakeholders did have an understanding of the uniqueness of the Conservative Party leader David Cameron. Cameron was seen as a charismatic, strong leader but also fake, arrogant and media savvy, hence affecting the authenticity of the Cameron brand. Therefore to a certain degree David Cameron was differentiated, possessing unique attributes (Caldwell and Freire 2004; Einstein 2008; Morgan *et al.* 2002; Needham 2005) in sharp contrast to the UK Conservative Party and Conservative Party policy.

Uniqueness is of course an important variable as successful brands must be clearly distinguished from their competitors (Einstein 2008; Morgan *et al.* 2002; Needham 2005). However, within the Bosch *et al.* (2006) model it is more complex as uniqueness will emerge through the variables such as strengths, expectations, perceptions and associations and experiences.

The *expectations variable* referred to how external stakeholders expected the UK Conservative Party to perform if the party were successful at the 2010 UK General Election. External stakeholders provided often contrasting interpretations of what to expect from the UK Conservative Party brand as many did not expect it to deliver (Bosch *et al.* 2006; Nilson and Surrey 1998). This resulted in retrospective thinking (Lees-Marshment 2009; Lock and Harris 1996) and participants, especially floating

voters, not changing their perceptions (Phipps *et al.* 2010) of the UK Conservative Party.

The expectations variable (Bosch *et al.* 2006) may be seen as problematic for opposition political brands (Smith 2005) as there is no evidence of performance in government to base their expectations on. Nevertheless there was a new leader and new focus on policies. Furthermore, political brands that fail to provide a clear understandable and consistent message can become ambiguous and ultimately lack authenticity and credibility (Gurau and Ayadi 2011; Smith and French 2009; Smith and Saunders 1990). Therefore this research indicated that the UK Conservative brand expectations were unclear and lacked authenticity, which further undermined the development of the political brand.

The perceptions and associations variable (Bosch *et al.* 2006) should be considered an important dimension of brand image as it is defined as a set of perceptions about a brand reflected by brand associations (Bosch *et al.* 2006; Chen 2010). In addition, brand image is consumer-centric, created in the mind of the consumer (Nandan 2005), with a set of mental representations ascribed to a brand (Mengxia 2007).

The top-of-mind associations suggested that David Cameron and the UK Conservative Party had come some way in refocusing the image of the Party and how the party was perceived; a key problem recognised by David Cameron in 2005 (Smith 2009). However the top-of-mind associations highlighted traditionally held perceptions (French and Smith 2010; Norris *et al.* 1999 Smith and French 2009) but also the newer Cameron inspired values. The findings were similar to the associations and images generated from the mind maps in French and Smith's (2010) research, nevertheless this study seems to build on the work of French and Smith (2010) by providing richer perceptions and deeper associations generated from focus group discussions.

Although there appeared to be some movement from traditional to modern Conservative associations in terms of what the party stands for, there was little movement of associations in terms of who the party stands for. Bale (2008) argued brand perceptions are sticky and this research suggested that the UK Conservative Party had not managed to completely dispel the perceptions and associations of the party as that of the rich and privileged (Ashcroft 2010; Helm 2010). Moreover David Cameron and the UK Conservative Party failed to demonstrate an inclusive image. This was evident amongst both Conservative supporters and floating voters. This was also evident in the findings generated from the expressive projective techniques. The majority of respondents were not convinced that the UK Conservative Party was an inclusive political party for everyone as suggested by Ashcroft (2010), Bale (2011), and Jones (2010).

In terms of leadership, this research confirmed the findings in the extant literature as David Cameron was seen as different from previous Conservative leaders (Campbell 2008; Smith 2009). David Cameron was seen as dynamic (Smith 2009) and associated in part with new non-Conservative policy areas or un-Tory themes (Ashcroft 2010) and perceptions, particularly in the minds of young floating voters. However, many questioned what David Cameron stood for in terms of the beliefs, values and direction of the UK Conservative Party and called for greater clarity. Furthermore, the lack of clarity undermined David Cameron's drive to modernise (Denham and O'Hara 2007) and illustrate a dynamic and distinct political brand (Rawson 2007; Smith 2009). Respondents including both Conservative supporters and floating voters did not necessarily believe that the UK Conservative Party had changed under David Cameron's leadership, (Smith 2009).

Conservative Party policy, was barely discussed with little or no interest or understanding. Although there was no clear 'perception' of Conservative Party policy

for many respondents there was a general disbelief that the party actually had ‘policies’. For some, including floating voters, the Conservative Party had renewed its reputation for economic competence; something damaged after ‘Black Wednesday’ (Budge *et al.* 2001), and was perceived as tough on immigration and law and order. These were traditional ‘Tory’ values (Ashcroft 2010; Smith and French 2009). This study shows that the variables in the Bosch *et al.* (2006) framework do overlap, for instance some of the findings in the perceptions and associations variable under the party theme could easily fit into the *expectations variable*.

The original conceptualisation of the *strengths variable* proposed by Bosch *et al.* (2006) provided limited elaboration into the ‘extent’ and ‘complexity’ and therefore lacked clarity. Ultimately the strengths variable explored the internally-projected brand identity signals, discussed participants awareness and generated a deeper understanding of external stakeholders opinions of UK Conservative Party signals. These brand identity signals included the Conservative Party logo, communications tools such as WebCameron and a discussion on Conservative Party policy and values.

The findings revealed that many external stakeholders to some extent were *aware* of Conservative Party signals, however often projected conflicting opinions and indicated some confusion, as respondents did not know what the signals meant (Bosch *et al.* 2006). Moreover brand identity signals including WebCameron and the nationwide poster campaign in part alienated rather than attracted participants to the UK Conservative Party. Conservative Party ‘values’ and ‘policy’ were often interchangeably presented. Nevertheless the idea of ‘change’ was a major occurring theme illustrated by participant’s yet it lacked specifics, understanding and believability, argued to be ‘patronising’ by one participant. Therefore the brand identity signals of the UK Conservative Party, which have the ability to play a role in brand image creation

(Bosch et al. 2006; Nandan 2005; Petromilli and Michalczyk 1999), were often different from the intended projection (de Chernatony 2007; Rekom *et al.* 2006).

The strengths variable provides a deeper understanding of the brand identity signals and presents the opportunity to utilise the findings with the existing ‘extent’ and ‘complexity’ definition of the strengths variable outlined by Bosch *et al.* (2006). This in turn provides greater clarification of the strengths variable for future studies. Therefore, this section demonstrated that the findings generated in reference to a political brand can be applied to the strengths variable outlined by Bosch *et al.* (2006) only after the strengths variable had been clarified. It would be difficult to apply findings to the strengths variable in its original form (Bosch *et al.* 2006).

The application of *experience variable* outlined by Bosch *et al.* (2006:14) was difficult as the concept was vague. Therefore in order to gain greater clarity the variable was sub-divided into two areas; direct experiences and indirect experiences (Keller 2003; Nilson and Surrey 1998), which in turn provided greater elaboration yet allowed flexibility with applicability.

The findings indicated that there is some scope for political brands to utilise direct and indirect experiences to connect (or reconnect) with the electorate and develop the image of their political brand. However, the findings also highlighted that direct and indirect experiences were often independent of the UK Conservative Party brand’s control, which in turn could be problematic for political brands. Nonetheless it was found that there was a dual nature to the UK Conservative Party brand such as the corporate and individual political brand, reflected in the work of Phipps *et al.* (2010). This suggested that genuine direct experience may have the ability to attract a broader support base which goes beyond party politics. Existing research argued that the brand image of individual political brands is influenced by the ‘corporate’ political brand of the political

party (Phipps *et al.* 2010). Therefore ‘corporate’ political brands of political parties have the ability to hinder local politicians’ reputation and in the case of this study, the positive brand image of the local Member of Parliament outweighed the negative brand image of the UK Conservative Party.

This builds on a theme accommodated under the *perceptions and associations variable* (Bosch *et al.* 2006). It was argued that local brand images of Conservative Members of Parliament in some cases were stronger and more appealing than the national brand image of the UK Conservative Party. Furthermore this strengthens the idea that the UK Conservative Party is an amalgamation of ‘multiple localised brand images’ which have the potential to be more appealing locally than nationally. This study also built on the work of Guzman and Sierra (2009) and provided a deeper understanding i.e. how the electorate viewed individual candidates and politicians as brands. Moreover this highlights the complexity of exploring political brand image when building an understanding of the image of a political brand. Finally, the UK Conservative Party may find scope in a localised approach aided by the application of branding theory to the political arena, which has the ability to assist the electorate in understanding the distinctions between candidates and parties (Rawson 2006).

The applied findings also highlighted a degree of overlap as the *experiences variable* and the *perceptions and associations variable* show a contrast between positive local/individual brand image and the corporate brand image of the UK Conservative Party.

The conceptualisation of the *evaluations variable* was determined by the expectations, perceptions and associations and experiences variables, and referred to how external stakeholders (citizens 18-24 years) evaluated the UK Conservative Party brand (Bosch *et al.* 2006). This suggested that the evaluations variable was merely an overview or

replication of the previous applied findings, 'reapplied'. Nevertheless, Bosch *et al.* (2006) seemed to ignore the strengths and uniqueness variables in defining the evaluations variable. Bosch *et al.* (2006:14) proposed the evaluations variable referred to how brand users interpret and evaluate the brand in question and “*related marketing information*”, which broadly implied a reference to the strengths variable without explicitly acknowledging said variable. Further to this, the uniqueness variable was neither explicitly implied nor implicitly referenced within the conceptualisation of the evaluations variable (Bosch *et al.* 2006). Ultimately, the conceptualisation of the evaluations variable (Bosch *et al.* 2006) lacked clarity and appeared confusing, therefore required elaboration.

To ignore the strengths and uniqueness variables in the evaluation variable of the brand image of the UK Conservative Party questioned their relevance in the framework (Bosch *et al.* 2006). Moreover to disregard the strengths and uniqueness variables had the potential to overlook findings which ultimately would have provided only a partial understanding of the brand image of the UK Conservative Party. Therefore future studies should consider all five variables when determining the evaluations variable of brand image.

Consequently the brand image of the UK Conservative Party under the leadership of David Cameron was inconsistent with the existing literature on successful political brands (Gurau and Ayadi 2011; Needham 2006; Needham 2005; Norris *et al.* 1999; Smith and French 2009; Smith and Saunder 1990). Furthermore, the UK Conservative Party to a certain extent failed to communicate a coherent, consistent and understandable political brand to external stakeholders aged 18-24 years. Nevertheless the six variables of brand image (Bosch *et al.* 2006) highlight that the UK Conservative

Party had come some way in refocusing the image of their political brand, especially in the minds of floating voters.

Nonetheless, this research suggests that the UK Conservative Party had not managed to completely dispel perceptions of the party as that of the rich and privileged perceptions, traditionally held associations (Ashcroft 2010; Bale 2011; Burgmann 2005; French and Smith 2010; Helm 2010; Jones 2008; Snowdon 2010). Furthermore the UK Conservative Party failed to convince the electorate especially floating voters, of their desired inclusive image. Moreover this thesis argues that the UK Conservative Party brand did not necessarily meet expectations. Despite that a degree of ambiguity combined with specific pledges worked for New Labour in 1997 (Norris *et al.* 1999; White and de Chernatony 2002), the same cannot necessarily be said for the UK Conservative Party. David Cameron's Conservative Party often lacked clarity, especially the failure to provide clear differentiation compared with political competitors, which was ultimately problematic for the UK Conservative Party brand (Wring 2002). Therefore the brand image of the UK Conservative Party was also considered ambiguous and not necessarily credible. Furthermore, this thesis proposes that the UK Conservative Party brand in part continues to face a political positioning dilemma, similar to the dilemma the party faced during the 2005 UK General Election (Smith 2005). In addition, the UK Conservative Party under the leadership of David Cameron continues in part to be positioned by their past (Smith 2005). Subsequently the brand image of the UK Conservative Party was different from its intended projection (de Chernatony 2007; Rekom *et al.* 2006).

The six variables of brand image also highlighted much scope for political brands in connecting with the electorate and generating greater distinction between 'corporate' political brands and individual political brands. Additionally, the findings revealed that



elements within the six variables of brand image can be problematic for political brands. More specifically this thesis demonstrated that a political brand can be applied to the brand image framework (Bosch *et al.* 2006). The findings generated from the focus group discussions and projective techniques were applied to the *uniqueness variable*, *expectations variable* and *perceptions and associations variable* (Bosch *et al.* 2006) without difficulty. Nonetheless the applicability of the findings to the *strengths variable*, *experiences variable* and *evaluations variable* demonstrated that these variables required greater clarification. The applicability of the findings to the six variables also highlighted the overlapping nature of some of the brand image variables evident in the uniqueness variable, perceptions and associations variable and experiences variable. Furthermore this research provided an operational approach to the exploration of the UK Conservative Party brand image.

Finally, this thesis will go some way in addressing the limited research of the exploration of the brand image of political brands, particularly the identification of the positioning of a political brand in the mind of the external stakeholder (Baines 1999; Baines *et al.* 1999; Newman 1999; Smith 2005). Furthermore this identification and in-depth understanding will ultimately inform the positioning strategy and communication process of the UK Conservative Party brand in future campaigns and provide a basis for political positioning (Baines 1999; Baines *et al.* 1999; Gurau and Ayadi 2011; Johnson 1971; Newman 1999; O'Shaughnessy and Baines 2009; Smith 2005).

#### 6.4 Political Brand Identity-Image Gaps

The previous sections of the discussion chapter focused on objective one and objective two of this thesis. Objective one explored the envisaged and current brand identity of the UK Conservative Party from the perspective of internal stakeholders with the aid of Kapferer's (2008) brand identity prism. Objective two generated a deeper understanding

of the brand image of the UK Conservative Party from an external perspective (citizens aged 18-24 years) and the findings generated from the focus group discussions were related to the existing literature. This section focused on objective three of the study. Objective three examined the consistency and coherency of the brand identity and brand image of the UK Conservative Party by amalgamating the applied frameworks outlined by Kapferer (2008) and Bosch *et al.* (2006) into one model.

The applied brand identity prism was used as a broad structure to centre the examination process. The findings applied to the six brand image variables (Bosch *et al.* 2006) were reapplied to the appropriate dimensions of the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008). The amalgamated model highlighted that there were consistencies and inconsistencies between the brand identity and brand image of the UK Conservative Party. The amalgamated model can be seen in figure 49 on p.267.

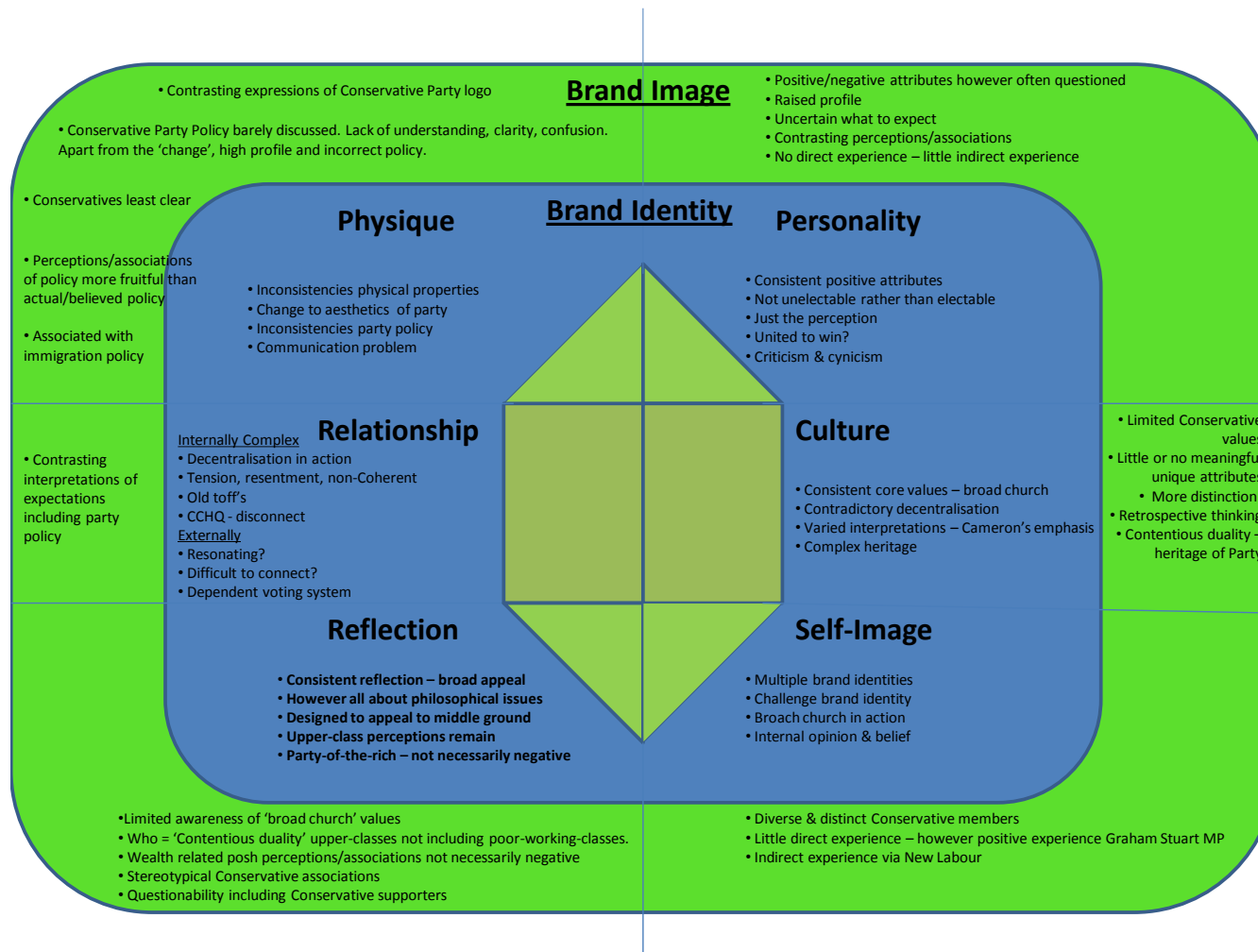


Figure 49: The inconsistencies and consistencies between the brand identity and brand image of the UK Conservative Party

The research indicated that there were a number of inconsistencies between elements of the physique dimension (Kapferer 2006) and strengths variable (Bosch *et al.* 2006). The internal physique dimension and the external strengths variable were compared because of their similar roles in accommodating the physical elements of the UK Conservative Party brand. Moreover there were inconsistencies between elements of the culture dimension (Kapferer 2008) and a number of variables outlined by Bosch *et al.* (2006) including uniqueness, expectations and perceptions and associations. The internal culture dimension and the external uniqueness, expectations and perceptions and associations variables compared themes relating to the core values and heritage of the UK Conservative Party brand. The research also suggested that there were inconsistencies between the relationship dimension (Kapferer 2008), and the experience and expectation variables (Bosch *et al.* 2006). The internal relationship dimension and the external experience and expectation variables were compared as they focused on the relationship between stakeholders and the UK Conservative Party brand. In addition this research indicated that there were inconsistencies between the reflection dimension (Kapferer 2008) and the perceptions & associations variable (Bosch *et al.* 2006). The internal reflection dimension and external perceptions & associations variable were compared as both referred to themes relating to ‘who’ the UK Conservative Party brand was believed to represent.

In addition the research indicated that there were consistencies between elements of the personality dimension (Kapferer 2008) and elements of the brand image framework including the uniqueness variable, expectations variable, experiences variable and perceptions and associations variable (Bosch *et al.* 2006). The internal personality dimension was compared with elements of the external uniqueness, expectations, experiences and perceptions and associations variables as they focused on the UK Conservative Party brand figurehead; David Cameron. Furthermore the study also

highlighted a number of consistencies between the self-image dimension (Kapferer 2008), and the experience, and perceptions and associations variables (Bosch *et al.* 2006). The internal self-image dimension and external experience, and perceptions and associations variables were compared as they referred to the 'multiple political brands' and the personal opinion of internal and external stakeholders.

The research highlighted that the amalgamated model is dominated by Kapferer's brand identity prism. Further to this Bosch's *et al.* (2006) brand image framework can be seen as an unequal partner in the comparable process. Moreover the six variables of brand image (Bosch *et al.* 2006) are not integrated or as clear as the dimensions of the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008). Therefore the amalgamated framework required greater simplification and the relationship between brand identity and brand image needs to be rebalanced.

Nevertheless, this study demonstrated the transfer potential (Schneider 2004) and applicability of the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008) and the six variables of brand image (Bosch *et al.* 2006) albeit with adaptations for the political brand. Additionally, this study examined the consistency and coherency of the internal brand identity and external brand image of the UK Conservative Party by amalgamating the applied frameworks (Kapferer 2008; Bosch *et al.* 2006) into one model. Furthermore the brand identity and brand image of the UK Conservative Party was comparably explored from a qualitative standpoint disputing the claim proposed by Davies and Chun (2002) that it is virtually impossible to qualitatively compare brand identity and brand image. Further to this the identified inconsistencies should be of concern (Davies and Chun 2002; Dinnie 2008) to the UK Conservative Party, and the identity-image gaps should be narrowed (Davies and Chun 2002; Harris and de Chernatony 2001) to have a positive effect on the political brand (Nandan 2005).

### 6.5 The 'Brand Identity-Image Network'

The previous section demonstrated that the concepts of brand identity and brand image of the UK Conservative Party can be comparably explored from a qualitative standpoint (Davies and Chun 2002) achieved by amalgamating the applied frameworks (Kapferer 2008; Bosch *et al.* 2006) into one model. Nevertheless the amalgamated model required greater simplification. Moreover the development of this framework needed to consider the applicability of the findings to the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008) and the six brand image variables (Bosch *et al.* 2006), presented earlier in the discussion chapter. This section proposes a comparable framework that builds on the work of Kapferer (2008) and Bosch *et al.* (2006). The '*brand identity-image network*' has the potential to qualitatively explore and compare internal brand identity and external brand image with greater clarification.

The '*brand identity-image network*' focuses on the exploration of a brand from an internal brand identity perspective and an external brand image perspective. In addition, the '*brand identity-image network*' can be adopted to achieve a number of aims. It can be used to generate a deeper understanding of internal brand identity, employed to explore external brand image or adopted to understand internal brand identity and external brand image comparably. Therefore, the '*brand identity-image network*' articulates the relational yet distinct nature of the concepts of brand identity and brand image (Dinnie 2008; Nandan 2005) and demonstrates how they can be brought together under a single framework. The '*brand identity-image network*' (figure 50) can be seen on p.271 and summarised in table 15 on p.272. Furthermore table 15 briefly presents the 'applicability' of the brand identity-image dimensions to political marketing research and this transfer potential is discussed later in the chapter.

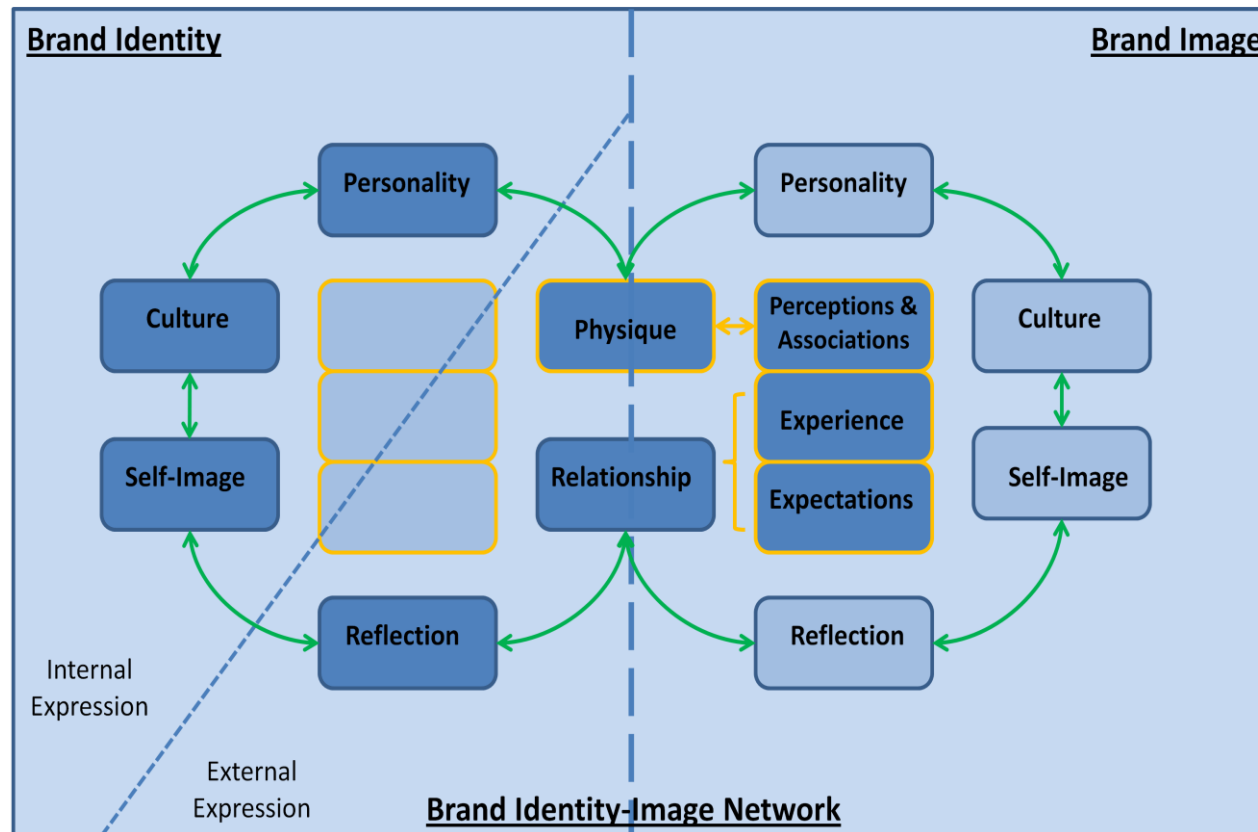


Figure 50: The Brand Identity-Image Network

**Table 15: The Applicability of the Brand Identity Dimensions and Brand Image Variables to Political Branding Research**

Dimension	Perspective	Transfer Potential	‘Brand Identity-Image Network’ Key Points
<b>Personality</b>	Internal Identity	Required Clarification	Refers to the political brand’s figurehead or spokesperson. The figurehead can be the political party leader or the politician/candidate depending on the political brand in question; i.e. National political brand or local political brand.
<b>Culture</b>	Internal Identity	Applicable	Refers to the heritage and core values of the political brand.
<b>Self-Image</b>	Internal Identity	Adapted	Refers to the inner relationship between the internal stakeholder and political brand. Self-image along with culture and personality dimensions form the inward expression.
<b>Reflection</b>	Internal Identity	Applicable	Refers to the internal stakeholders perception of ‘who’ identifies with the political brand. Reflection along with relationship and physique dimensions form the outward expression. This can be seen as the envisaged identity used to connect with the electorate.
<b>Relationship</b>	Internal Identity	Required Clarification	Refers to the internal relationship between the internal stakeholder and the political brand. Additionally the perceived relationship between the political brand and external stakeholders from an internal stakeholder perspective.
<b>Physique</b>	Internal Identity	Applicable	Refers to the physical properties of the political brand.
<b>Physique (Formally Strengths)</b>	External Image	Adapted	Formally known as the ‘strengths’ variable refers to the external understanding of the brand identity signals.
<b>Uniqueness</b>	External Image	Eliminated	Part of the original Bosch et al. (2006) model; uniqueness was eliminated from the brand identity-image network.
<b>Perceptions and Associations</b>	External Image	Applicable	Refers to the attitudes, beliefs, feelings, awareness and associated imagery.
<b>Experience</b>	External Image	Required Clarification	Refers to the direct and indirect experiences between the external stakeholder and political brand.
<b>Expectations</b>	External Image	Applicable	Refers to how the external stakeholders expect the political brand to perform.
<b>Evaluations</b>	External Image	Eliminated	Part of the original Bosch et al. (2006) model; the evaluations variable was eliminated from the new brand identity-image framework due to repeatable nature of the variable.



The 'brand identity-image network' retains the six dimensions of the original brand identity prism: *physique, personality, culture, relationship, reflection and self-image* (Kapferer 2008). However the critical assessment of the applicability of the findings to the brand identity prism indicated that certain dimensions required greater clarification.

The physique dimension accommodates tangible qualities of the political brand that go beyond the brand's logo and colours (Dahlen *et al.* 2010; de Chernatony 2007; Gordon 1999; Kapferer 2008). This study demonstrated the significant applicability of the physique dimension to political branding research thus the physique dimension required no adaptation. The personality dimension refers to the figurehead or spokesperson (Kapferer 2001) of the political brand and embodies characteristics and attributes associated with the figurehead. However, this study has shown that depending on the focus of the research study, the personality dimension can equate to the figurehead of individual political brands such as candidates and politicians. This in turn argues that the brand identity element of the 'brand identity-image network' can be applied equally to individual political brands as it can to political parties. Consequently, this study has highlighted the multifaceted nature of the personality dimension. Furthermore this research has provided an operational approach to the applicability of the personality dimension, providing greater clarity and understanding with regard to the conceptualisation of the personality dimension.

The culture dimension accommodates themes relating to the core values and heritage of the political brand, and guides the brand in its outward expression (Kapferer 2001). This research demonstrated the significant transfer potential of the culture dimension to political brand identity research and the conceptualisation required no adaptation. The relationship dimension of the new 'brand identity-image network' reflects the relationship between internal stakeholders and the political brand and the perceived

relationship between the political brand and the electorate in the mind of the internal stakeholder. Additionally, the relationship dimension should consider the wider elements that have an impact on the relationship between the political brand and stakeholder in terms of political brand development, communication strategy and relevance. The original conceptualisation of the relationship dimension (Kapferer 2008) provided little articulation and understanding beyond referring to the relationship between the brand and consumer. Further to this the original conceptualisation failed to acknowledge the complexities and presence of multiple relationships relating to the political brand. Therefore this research provided an operational approach to the application of the relationship dimension to political brand identity research and provided greater clarification with regard to the conceptualisation of the relationship dimension.

The reflection dimension refers to the envisaged identifier of the political brand from the perspective of internal stakeholders and does not equate to the target market. The reflection dimension could include the 'reflection' and 'targeting' distinction to provide clarity. However, the 'brand identity-image network' does not stipulate 'targeting' must be a part of the 'reflection' dimension despite their similarities and comparability possibilities. This research demonstrated the significant transfer potential of the reflection dimension to political brand identity research and required no adaptation.

The original conceptualisation of the self-image dimension was considered confusing and appeared more complicated than some of the previous dimensions. Moreover the self-image dimension broadly equated to the inner-relationship between the consumer and the brand (Kapferer 2001). As phase one of the study focused on the internal brand identity of the UK Conservative Party from an internal perspective, the self-image dimension required clarification. Therefore the self-image dimension of the 'brand

identity-image network' refers to the inner relationship (Kapferer 2001) between the internal stakeholder and the political brand. This includes 'badge of beliefs' and 'private statements' (de Chernatony 1999; Gordon 1999) that reflect the personal opinion, beliefs and attitudes of individual participants in reference to the political brand. Furthermore, if the brand identity element of the 'brand identity-image network' is used to explore the political brand of a political party then the self-image dimension can also include the *individual* core values of the individual political brand. Ultimately, this study provides an operational approach and much needed clarity with regard to the conceptualisation of the self-image dimension.

The 'brand identity-image network' shows that the brand identity element solely focuses on the internal stakeholder and in part mirrors the work of de Chernatony (1999) and Harris and de Chernatony (2001). Moreover the existing literature highlighted that it was unclear whether the brand identity prism could be used to explore an exclusively internal perspective or used to explore an internal and external perspective (Dahlen *et al.* 2010; Fill 2006; Kapferer 2008; de Chernatony 2007). Ultimately this research has addressed this point. The *personality*, *culture* and *self-image* dimensions of the new 'brand identity-image network' continue to form a brand's (internal) inward expression and the *physique*, *relationship* and *reflection* dimensions continue to be seen as social, outward, visual (external) expressions, nevertheless all from the perspective of the internal stakeholder. As Dahlen *et al.* (2010) proposed, Kapferer's brand identity prism comprises of outward and inward expressions; desired identity and internal current identity. Again this study provides detailed clarification of the divisions within the brand identity prism; something not acknowledged or explained by some authors (Azoulay and Kapferer 2003; Dahlen *et al.* 2010; de Chernatony 2007; Harris and de Chernatony 2001). Therefore, as the concept of brand identity explores the current and envisaged identity of a brand from an internal standpoint, the concept of

brand identity is consistent with the perspective and approach of the brand identity element of the 'brand identity-image network'.

The 'brand identity-image network' (figure 50) clearly positions the 'physique dimension' and 'relationship dimension' at the centre of developed framework, where both dimensions are applicable within the concept of brand identity but also brand image. This will be elaborated on later. The 'brand identity-image network' retains the proposition that the six dimensions assess the competitive differentiation and coherency of a brand and each of the six dimensions should reinforce the other to form a well-structured integrated entity (de Chernatony 2006; Kapferer 2008). Nevertheless, the 'brand identity-image network' clearly operationalises the identity of a brand; distinguishing each of the six dimensions yet retaining their reflective capabilities. Therefore the 'brand identity-image network' retains many of the features of the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008), however provides greater clarity and simplification. Furthermore, the brand identity element of the 'brand identity-image network' can be adopted to explore political party brands or individual political brands (politicians/candidates) thus may require minor adaptations to accommodate the unique qualities of the political brand.

Turning to the brand image element of the 'brand identity-image network' (figure 50), it can be seen that three of the original six variables outlined by Bosch *et al.* (2006) remain; experience, perceptions and associations and expectations. The strengths variable was replaced while the uniqueness and expectations variables were eliminated in the new brand identity-image network. Nevertheless, the critical assessment of the application of the findings to the brand image variables (Bosch *et al.* 2006) indicated that certain variables required clarification.

The perceptions and associations variable focuses on the awareness and associated imagery external stakeholders ascribe to a political brand, which will also highlight a greater understanding of a core element of brand image. In addition the perceptions and associations variable (Bosch *et al.* 2006) can be considered an important if not the most important dimension of brand image; a set of perceptions about a brand reflected by brand associations (Bosch *et al.* 2006; Chen 2010). Therefore, the perceptions and associations variable should be the core dimension of future studies on brand image and the flexibility of the variable allows for greater applicability. Moreover, this research demonstrated the significant transfer potential of the perceptions and associations variable to political brand image research; thus the perceptions and associations variable required no adaptation.

This was the case with the expectations variable and its applicability to political brand image research demonstrated that no adaptations were required. The expectations variable refers to how external stakeholders expect the political brand to perform. Nevertheless this may be problematic for political brands, especially opposition political brands in terms of communicating and demonstrating what the electorate can expect from a political brand. The original conceptualisation of the experiences variable referred to the contact the consumer had with the brand and this study considered this definition vague, therefore requiring greater elaboration. Consequently the experiences variable refers to the direct or indirect experience the external stakeholder encounters with the political brand. Thus *direct experience* focuses on the consumer's own experience and contact whereas *indirect experience* refers to external sources of information for example word of mouth, advertising or general communication (Bosch *et al.* 2006; Keller 2003). Subsequently this research provided an operational approach to the application of the expectations variable to political brand image research, providing a clearer conceptualisation of the expectations variable.

The former 'strengths variable' (Bosch *et al.* 2006) was replaced and the brand identity signals are now incorporated into the centred 'physique dimension' due to their similarity. Furthermore the original conceptualisation proposed by Bosch *et al.* (2006) provided limited elaboration and ultimately lacked clarity. Therefore, the new external image physique dimension refers to the tangible qualities of the political brand and thus the brand identity signals. Further to this, the removal of the 'strengths' variable provides simplification of the brand identity signals, which are important elements of both brand identity and brand image.

The uniqueness variable (Bosch *et al.* 2006) focused on the meaningful attributes external stakeholders ascribed to the political brand; nevertheless this variable was also eliminated. Although uniqueness is an important variable, it emerges from the outcome of other variables such as physique, expectations, perceptions and associations and experiences.

The evaluations variable was also eliminated from the 'brand identity-image network'. For Bosch *et al.* (2006) the evaluations variable was the outcome of the expectations, perceptions and associations and experiences variables, however the Bosch *et al.* (2006) model failed to acknowledge the strengths and uniqueness variables. This suggested that the strengths and uniqueness variables were disconnected from the evaluations variable, which overlooked important elements of the image of a political brand. Therefore it was argued that future studies should include all five variables in determining the evaluations of brand image and variables that were included in the conceptualisation should not be isolated from the main evaluation. Nonetheless, the rationale for excluding the evaluations variable was merely an overview of the three brand image variables.

Revisiting the 'relationship dimension', in the 'brand identity-image network', Kapferer (2008) argued the relationship dimension of brand identity represented the relationship between the consumer and the brand. However, this thesis has argued that there are multiple relationships connected to a brand. The 'brand identity-image network' (figure 50) connects the 'expectations' and 'experiences' variables to the relationship dimension. This in turn provides greater clarity when evaluating the identity and image of a political brand.

While this study considers internal brand identity and external brand image it does not consider internal brand image and external brand identity. It must be remembered that the existing literature highlighted a distinct gap in the body of knowledge in that there was no in-depth qualitative exploration of a political brand from an internal and external orientation (French and Smith 2010; Peng and Hackley 2009; Schneider 2004). Therefore the concepts of brand identity and brand image (Bosch *et al.* 2006; Kapferer 2008) were considered appropriate and useful approaches in generating a deeper insight into the UK Conservative Party brand from two standpoints. Furthermore it is worth noting that the concept of brand identity was defined as the current and envisaged vision of a brand which is internally created and communicated (Dahlen *et al.* 2010; Kapferer 2007). Whereas the concept of brand image was defined as the external set of mental representations and associations external stakeholders ascribe to brands (Aaker and Joachimsthaler 2002; Chen 2010; Mengxia 2007). Furthermore, this study concurs with the existing literature and distinguishes brand identity as an internal approach and brand image as an external approach (Bosch *et al.* 2006; Davies and Chun 2002; de Chernatony 1999; Dinnie 2008; Harris and de Chernatony 2001; Nandan 2005; Roy and Banerjee 2007). Therefore, 'internal brand image' and 'external brand identity' may seem contradictory when you consider the conceptualisations of brand identity and brand image. Nevertheless, it may be advantageous to consider internal brand

image/external brand identity in future brand-identity-brand-image studies as this could generate an even greater understanding of political brands from internal and external orientations and may improve identity-image comparability.

Considering this point the 'brand identity-image network' could be used not only to explore internal brand identity and external brand image but also internal brand image and external brand identity. This can be seen in figure 54. The key elements of the brand image element of the 'brand identity-image network'; perceptions and associations, expectations, experiences are 'mirrored' (highlighted in gold) within the brand identity element of the 'brand identity-image network'. This will generate an understanding of the envisaged perceptions and associations, expectations, and experiences (including physique) of a political brand from an internal perspective and assess the consistency with the externally expressed perceptions and associations, expectations, and experiences. This can also be seen in the 'mirrored' brand identity dimensions; personality, culture, self-image and reflection (including physique and relationship) within the brand image element of the 'brand identity-image network'. This would allow political brands to explore whether specific dimensions relating to the current and envisaged identity of the brand are consistent in the minds of external stakeholders. Therefore the 'brand identity-image network' has the potential to explore and assess both internal-identity-external-image and internal-image-external-identity.

Ultimately, the brand image element of the 'brand identity-image network' retains many of the features of the brand image variables outlined by Bosch *et al.* (2006), however provides greater simplicity. Furthermore, the brand image element of the 'brand identity-image network' can be adopted to explore the image of a brand using the key distinct variables; physique, perceptions and associations, experiences and expectations,



or extended to include ‘mirrored’ dimensions from the former brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008).

Consequently, the ‘brand identity-image network’ allows researchers to explore the internal brand identity and external brand image comparably with greater clarity, without undermining the related yet distinct nature of brand identity and brand image. Further to this, the ‘brand identity-image network’ has the potential to not only explore internal-identity-external-image but also internal-image-external-identity. Nonetheless, the concepts of brand identity and brand image are equal partners in the ‘brand identity-image network’ and enable an operational approach to explore both brand identity and brand image. Moreover, it demonstrates the need for integration between the two concepts in order to identify the components of a successful political brand. This research has demonstrated that there is significant transfer potential of internal brand identity dimensions and external brand image variables to political marketing research. Nevertheless this research also demonstrated that the applicability of some the dimensions/variables often required clarification. Furthermore, this section presented the ‘brand identity-image network’; a simplified model albeit with detailed elaboration created from an operational approach. Finally, this thesis addressed the call for more empirical research devoted to the concepts of brand identity and brand image (Alsem and Kosteljik 2008; Chen 2010; Cretu and Brodie 2007; Davies and Chun 2002; de Chernatony 2007; Guzman and Sierra 2009; Henrik and Fredrik 2006; Johns and Glymothy 2008; Kapferer 2008; Knox and Freeman 2006; Poiesz 1989). The following section discusses the limitations of the research and will be succeeded by the conclusions of the study.

## 7 Limitations

This research generated a deeper understanding of the political brand identity and brand image of the UK Conservative Party from the perspectives of internal Conservative stakeholders and external stakeholders (citizens 18-24 years). This raises the limitation of poor representativeness (Graziano and Raulin 2004). Nevertheless, this is a qualitative study and this thesis accepts that the findings are not generalisable to the wider population. The nature of qualitative research does not provide representative samples of the target population, whereas quantitative research would address this limitation. Therefore this research documented the world view of internal and external stakeholders regarding the UK Conservative Party brand, with an increased emphasis on intimate knowledge and depth rather than breadth (Ambert *et al.* 1995; Bryman *et al.* 1999).

This thesis adopted a purposive sampling technique for phase one of the study. A purposive sampling approach is a sample based on the researcher's own judgement, with a focus on "*some appropriate characteristic required of the sampling members*" (Zikmund 2003:382) to address the research purpose. Phase one of the thesis explored the current and envisaged brand identity from the perspective of internal Conservative stakeholders. As previously stated, the UK Conservative Party can be divided into three elements, *parliamentary, professionally and voluntary*. A detailed outline of the sample can be seen in appendices F.1. The three elements can be considered broad categories and participants often overlapped the parliamentary, professionally and voluntary elements. Many varied stakeholders make up the UK Conservative Party therefore it was difficult and unmanageable to interview every broad stakeholder group such as constituency chairmen, certain activists and grassroots members. Further to this, more parliamentary members were interviewed compared to professional and voluntary members due to convenience and access. This may represent a limitation to this study.

Nevertheless this study did interview internal stakeholders from all three elements of the UK Conservative Party. Further to this, all participants were appropriately selected due to convenience and the fact that they were broadly internal ‘Conservative’ stakeholders adhering to the appropriate characteristic of the purposive sampling framework. This may be seen as a limitation. However this thesis accepts that it is not representative to the total population of internal Conservative stakeholders.

A number of weaknesses of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were highlighted in the methodology chapter and were not found to be problematic in this study. However, it is important to note that the researcher’s limited experience of conducting focus group discussions combined with projective techniques (Daymon and Holloway 2011; Pettigrew and Charters 2008) can be considered a limitation of the study. Nevertheless the researcher did attend professional ‘effective depth interviewing’ training delivered by the ‘Marketing Research Society’ before conducting the in-depth interviews. Therefore, despite that the researcher received no formal or professional training before conducting the focus group discussions apart from independent learning, many of the skills and abilities acquired at the ‘effective depth interviewing’ seminar were transferable to conduct focus group discussions. Ultimately, this goes some way in addressing this limitation. The researcher also had limited experience of analysing the data obtained from the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions and this may be seen as a limitation. However, the analytical process was considered from the very beginning of the study (Butler-Kisber 2010; Krueger 1998) combined with unremitting reflection particularly the continuous consideration of the thesis aim, objectives and research questions. Furthermore, this thesis followed a number of analytical frameworks (Bird *et al.* 2009; Boyatzis 1998; Butler-Kisber 2010; Warren and Karner 2005) and recommendations (Krueger 1998; Wengraf 2001) grounded in the appropriate philosophical and methodological assumptions. Subsequently, this thesis followed and

developed a pragmatic analytical process when analysing the collected data from phases one and two of the study. Again, this goes some way in addressing a limitation of this study and ameliorates the analytical process.

The interpretive process can also be considered a limitation of qualitative inquiry (Gorman and Clayton 2005; Peng and Hackley 2007). According to Graziano and Raulin (2004) interpreter bias can be divided into two points, *experimenter reactivity* and *experimenter bias*. Experimenter reactivity focuses on the actions of the researcher that can influence the response of participants whereas experimenter bias focuses on the effect that the researcher's expectations might have on the observations and ultimately the response of participants (Graziano and Raulin 2004). Similarly Daymon and Holloway (2011:239) called this the 'interviewer effect'. The interviewer (researcher) must be aware and acknowledge their own effect on the interview process including facial expressions, gestures, style and composure, which in turn can contribute to interpreter bias (Daymon and Holloway 2011). Nevertheless, interpreter bias was ameliorated in this research by acknowledging and accepting the process of reflexivity (May 1998), which is discussed in the methodology chapter. The practice of on-going reflection (Daymon and Holloway 2011) was employed throughout the study.

Moreover, Mason (2005) proposed a reflexive researcher is less concerned with validity and more interested with the principles of knowledge generation. Ambert *et al.* (1995) argued the issues of reliability and validity are not equally important in qualitative research, which are imperative in quantitative research. Nevertheless, this research does not discard the issues of reliability and validity entirely. These points were addressed in the methodology chapter, which focused on six main issues that qualitative researcher's face namely validity, generalisability, reflexivity, access and consent, voice and

transparency (Butler-Kisber 2010). Therefore reliability and validity were not found to be challenging limitations in this research.

Projective techniques were adopted to enhance the focus group discussions to reveal deeper insight into the external stakeholder's attitudes, associations and perceptions. Moreover this thesis adopted a "*pedestrian and pragmatic*" (Boddy 2005:241) approach to using projective techniques, an approach often used in qualitative marketing research which make projective techniques easy to administer (Hammer 1958; Langford and McDonagh 2003) and do not require in-depth training. Projective techniques can be subdivided into five categories: *association, completion, construction, choice ordering and expressive* (Bond and Ramsey 2010; Hofstede *et al.* 2007). This thesis used elements of all five categories in the focus group discussions.

Nevertheless, two projective techniques were not used in all eight focus group discussions and this could be seen as a limitation. Participants in the first focus group discussion were instructed to illustrate a 'Conservative Party supporter'. This expressive projective technique was not applied into proceeding focus groups as it was similar to the construction projective technique of expressing the 'UK Conservative Party if it were a person'. Additionally, it was believed that the illustrations would not reveal any new insights and would only be a replication of the other expressive projective technique. Nonetheless, it would have been interesting to compare the illustrations of a 'Conservative supporter' and the UK Conservative Party 'if it were a person', which ultimately may have revealed deeper insight. The picture association projective technique was only applied to three of the eight focus group discussions as the technique was introduced near the end of the data collection process. It was believed that the picture association technique would enhance the focus group discussions by generating a deeper understanding of the imagery associated with the UK Conservative

Party brand. Despite the ad hoc implementation of some of the projective techniques which may be presented as a limitation, the projective techniques by large provided great insight into the under-lying feelings, attitudes and associations related to the UK Conservative Party brand image. This thesis disputes many of the weaknesses of adopting projective techniques outlined in the methodology chapter and were not found to be problematic in this study. Moreover this research has highlighted that the researcher can draw meaningful conclusions from projective techniques (Pettigre 2008) and by following a systematic analytical framework projective techniques will not reveal the inner world of the researcher but rather the perceptions and associations from the world view of the participant (Bell 1948; Boddy 2005; Ramsey et al. 2006).

However, several limitations became apparent especially in the interpretation of the projected expressions. A number of participants revealed a number of non-standardised themes that could not be as easily categorised or interpreted as the metaphorical themes that at first appeared meaningless to the researcher and only acquired significance once the practice of cross-checking was employed (Boddy 2005). Cross-checking involved looking at all the projective expressions illustrated by participant, reviewing the demographic data obtained at the beginning of the focus group and analysing the transcripts from the focus groups, where even more data linking to the projective expressions were uncovered. This in turn strengthened the validity of the projective expressions and insight which may have been overlooked if cross-checking was not adopted. However, cross-checking could not answer all the researcher's questions as some expressions were either lacking annotation or were so obscure that a false reality would be created. For example a number of 'ironic' depictions were revealed and when cross-checked provided contradictory insight to expressions highlighted in previous depictions raising further unanswerable questions. Therefore, cross-checking failed to

provide elaboration in all cases and some projections remained un-interpretable raising more questions than answers.

The ‘Metatable’ (part of the two-stage analytical process) also failed to provide elaboration in all cases however highlighted inconsistencies between individual participants’ projected illustrations. A series of other expressions that were impossible to interpret raised even more questions such as the possibility of participants deliberately disrupting their expressions to distort the interpretive process, with several participants leaving a blank page intentionally to express a specific point. Notwithstanding the limitations of projective techniques this thesis developed a pragmatic systematic framework for the analysis and interpretation of projected expressions from a qualitative perspective in the context of political branding. Furthermore, this adds to the under-researched and undefined practice of analysing and interpreting projective techniques. Additionally, this answers not only the call for research in the analysis and interpretation but also the call for a greater understanding of the general adoption of projective techniques in qualitative research (Boddy 2005; Ramsey *et al.* 2006; Valentine 1996).

Graziano and Raulin (2004) argued that the poor replicability of qualitative inquiry can be considered a limitation that needs to be acknowledged. Nevertheless this study accepts that poor replicability thus flexibility can be seen as a strength of qualitative inquiry. This research accepts that different researcher’s exploring the same phenomenon through qualitative inquiry may witness different observations and different inferences (Graziano and Raulin 2004). Moreover, Graziano and Raulin (2004:141) suggested that “*replication is possible only if researchers clearly state the details of their procedures*”. Therefore, procedural replication of this study is possible. This study followed and developed a number of processors and frameworks in terms of

the ‘cyclical development’ of the interview/focus group guide, the validation strategy, the analytical process and the conceptual framework subsequently the brand identity-image network. Ultimately, this ‘transparency’ also discussed in the methodology chapter can strengthen the validity and trustworthiness of the study (Butler-Kisber 2010). Nevertheless, this research accepts that a qualitative researcher will inevitably find different inferences due to the very nature of qualitative inquiry (Graziano and Raulin 2004). Therefore, the procedural replication of this study cannot be seen as a limitation however the replication of the actual findings is an accepted limitation of this research.

A further limitation of this research relates specifically to the ‘external validation strategy’ (Warren and Karner 2005) part of the analytical process of phase two of the study. Participants from phase one externally validated transcripts from the in-depth interviews thus confirming that the transcription bared a true reflection of the interview. However, this could not be extended to participants of the focus group discussions (phase two) due to the group dynamics and complex nature of focus group transcripts. Nevertheless, external stakeholders were given the opportunity to contact the researcher to gain an understanding of the outcome of the study. Therefore, this may represent a limitation to this research.

As previously stated this thesis explored the internal brand identity (Conservative stakeholders) and the external brand image (citizens aged 18-24 years) of the UK Conservative Party. However, this thesis did not explore the ‘internal brand image’ and ‘external brand identity’ and this could be considered a limitation. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the study would not be as defined had it explored the UK Conservative Party’s internal brand identity, the external brand image, along with the internal brand image and external brand identity. Furthermore, this would have weakened the



argument of generating a deeper understanding of internal brand identity and external brand image as brand identity is an ‘internal’ concept and brand image is an ‘external’ concept (Dinnie 2008; Nandan 2005). This thesis concurs with the idea that brand identity and brand image are relational nevertheless distinct concepts (Dinnie 2008; Nandan 2005) and has answered the calls for more empirical research. Subsequently, this section highlighted and addressed the limitations of the research study. The final chapter will discuss the main conclusions of the thesis and highlight possible areas for future research.

## 8 Conclusions

The previous chapter addressed the limitations of the research. This chapter brings the thesis to a close by presenting the conclusions in relation to the research objectives. Furthermore, it highlights the contributions to the body of knowledge and presents suggestions for further research. The aim of the research study was understand the UK Conservative Party brand from both an internal and external perspective, under the leadership of David Cameron. From this, three research objectives were developed.

The first objective explored the envisaged and current brand identity of the UK Conservative Party from the perspective of internal stakeholders, with the aid of Kapferer's (2008) brand identity prism. The six dimensioned conceptualisation of brand identity (Kapferer 2008) captured the key dimensions of the UK Conservative Party's brands identity (Azoulay and Kapferer 2003), examined the competitive differentiation and assessed the coherency of the political brand (de Chernatony 2007). An integrated brand required the six dimensions to reinforce the other (de Chernatony 2006), and has the ability to form a well-structured entity as long as each dimension consistently echoes the other (Kapferer 2008).

The brand identity of the UK Conservative Party can be considered complex and multilayered. The brand identity prism revealed coherent and supportive elements but also contradictions and tensions. The internal stakeholders demonstrated a limited understanding of the electorate and also of the internal aspects of the UK Conservative Party brand identity. Additionally, the findings suggest that there was also a lack of collective responsibility in the communication and development of the UK Conservative Party brand. This is evident in the following dimensions; physique, personality and relationship (Davies 2010; Nilson and Surrey 1998). Therefore, the brand identity of the UK Conservative Party appeared incoherent when all the six dimensions were considered in unison (Dahlen *et al.* 2010; Kapferer 2008). This in turn strengthens the

argument that UK Conservative Party brand in part was not a successful brand (Dahlen *et al.* 2010) and does not form a well-structured entity (Kapferer 2008). In addition, this thesis highlighted some disunity and an undermined nature within the UK Conservative Party brand. This suggests that there was a positioning problem with the political brand (Baines *et al.* 1999). Ultimately, then the UK Conservative Party should address this positioning problem in order to become a successful, internally supported and coherent political brand (Baines *et al.* 1999).

Contrary to the existing literature (Fournier 1998; Gylling and Lindberg-Repo 2005; Johns and Glymothy 2008; Klink 2003; Lilleker *et al.* 2006; Nilson and Surrey 1998), the UK Conservative Party brand in part failed to communicate a coherent message. Furthermore, the political brand was frequently 'off-message' (Norris *et al.* 1999) and internal stakeholders often failed to demonstrate a consistent approach in promoting the political brand. It can be argued therefore that the UK Conservative Party brand was not a successful political brand due to the inconsistencies and incoherencies (Gurau and Ayadi 2011; Smith and French 2009; Smith and Saunders 1990) found within the Party's brand identity. Further to this, successful brands leave no room for misperceptions and ambiguity (Petromilli and Michalczyk 1999) something that cannot be said with the UK Conservative Party brand. This may be problematic for political brands, however the findings are consistent with the existing literature confirming internal stakeholders often held contrasting perceptions and understanding of the UK Conservative Party's core identity (Mahnert and Torres 2007; Van Riel and Fombrun 2007; Veloutsou 2008).

The brand identity prism also highlighted the profound nature of the UK Conservative Party's brand identity by revealing numerous and often contentious sub-cultures (de Chernatony 1999) together with the presence of multiple brand identities; each unique

to the individual. This is consistent with the 'broad church' argument which suggests that the UK Conservative Party brand is an amalgamation of multiple brand identities, paradoxically united by core 'broad church' values. The UK Conservative Party has the ability to use elements revealed in the six dimensions as competitive differentiation tools. Nevertheless, these potential competitive differentiation tools were often undermined by contradictions within the desired and current identity of the UK Conservative Party.

Finally, the findings indicate that applying a political brand to Kapferer's (2008) brand identity prism is problematic. Moreover, although the findings demonstrate that a political brand can be applied to the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008), a number of dimensions of the brand identity prism had to be adapted (relationship; reflection; self-image) and required greater consideration in terms of applicability. There were little or no difficulties in applying the findings to the physique, culture, and personality dimensions. However, in addition to this the applicability of the findings to the six dimensions raised a number of key points. The personality dimension has the potential and ability to accommodate findings other than relating to the 'figurehead'. More specifically the personality dimension has the potential to approach individual candidates and politicians as 'figureheads' of their own political brand. The relationship and self-image dimensions were more complicated as they lacked clarity. In addition, the six dimensions highlighted the interchangeable nature of the brand identity prism. Furthermore, this research avoided contradiction by focusing on brand identity and simplified the brand identity prism. This provided an operational approach to the exploration of the UK Conservative Party brand identity.

The second objective of this study generated a deeper understanding of the brand image of the UK Conservative Party from the perspective of external stakeholders, aged

eighteen to twenty-four years, with the aid of the six variables outlined by Bosch *et al.* (2006). The brand image of the UK Conservative Party, under the leadership of David Cameron, was inconsistent with the existing literature on successful political brands (Gurau and Ayadi 2011; Needham 2006; Needham 2005; Norris *et al.* 1999; Smith and French 2009; Smith and Saunder 1990). Furthermore, the UK Conservative Party failed, to a certain extent, to communicate a coherent, consistent and understandable political brand to external stakeholders aged eighteen to twenty-four years. Nevertheless, the six variables of brand image (Bosch *et al.* 2006) highlighted that the UK Conservative Party had come some way in refocusing the image of their political brand; a key issue acknowledged by David Cameron in December 2005 (Smith 2009).

This research indicates that the UK Conservative Party had not managed to completely dispel the traditionally held perceptions including that it was the party of the rich and privileged (Ashcroft 2010; Bale 2011; Burgmann 2005; French and Smith 2010; Helm 2010; Jones 2008; Snowdon 2010), particularly in the minds of many Conservative supporters and floating voters. Furthermore the UK Conservative Party failed to convince the electorate, including floating voters, of their intended inclusive image. This thesis argues therefore that the UK Conservative Party brand did not necessarily deliver up to its expectations resulting frequently in retrospective thinking. Nevertheless this may be problematic for all political brands, particularly opposition political brands. Despite the fact that a degree of ambiguity, combined with specific pledges, worked for New Labour in 1997 (Norris *et al.* 1999; White and de Chernatony 2002), the same cannot necessarily be said for the UK Conservative Party. David Cameron's Conservative Party often lacked clarity, especially in relation to providing clear differentiation when compared with political competitors. This was ultimately problematic for the UK Conservative Party brand (Wring 2002). The brand image of the UK Conservative Party was therefore also considered ambiguous, confusing and not

necessarily credible. Furthermore, this thesis proposes that the UK Conservative Party brand, in part, continues to face a political positioning dilemma, similar to the dilemma the party faced during the 2005 UK General Election (Smith 2005). In addition, the UK Conservative Party, under the leadership of David Cameron, continues to be positioned by their past (Smith 2005). Therefore, the brand image of the UK Conservative Party was different from its intended projection (de Chernatony 2007; Rekom *et al.* 2006).

The six variables of brand image also highlighted much scope for political brands in connecting with the electorate and in generating greater distinction between ‘corporate’ political brands and individual political brands. It was found that there was a duality to political brands (Phipps *et al.* 2010) and the distinct ‘multiple individual political brands which has the potential to broaden the support base. Subsequently, this thesis argued that David Cameron and the UK Conservative Party had come some way in decontaminating the ‘Tory brand’. David Cameron, as Conservative Party leader, raised awareness and made participants take note of the UK Conservative Party. Nevertheless many questions and uncertainties remained.

This research also demonstrated that a political brand can be applied to the brand image framework (Bosch *et al.* 2006). The findings, generated from the focus group discussions and projective techniques, were applied to the uniqueness variable, expectations variable and perceptions and associations variable (Bosch *et al.* 2006) without difficulty. Nonetheless, the applicability of the findings to the strengths variable, the experiences variable and the evaluations variable demonstrated that these variables required greater clarification. The applicability of the findings to the six variables also highlighted the overlapping nature of some of the brand image variables. This is evident in the uniqueness variable, the perceptions and association’s variable and

the experiences variable. Furthermore the research provided an operational approach to the exploration of the UK Conservative Party brand image.

Consequently, this study demonstrated the transfer potential (Schneider 2004) and applicability of the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008) and the brand image framework (Bosch *et al.* 2006) to a political branding context. This in turn aided the exploration of the brand identity and brand image of the UK Conservative Party under the leadership of David Cameron.

The third objective examined the consistency and coherency between the envisaged brand identity (Kapferer 2008), from the perspective of internal stakeholders, and the brand image (Bosch *et al.* 2006), from the perspective of external stakeholders, in regards to the UK Conservative Party. The concepts of brand identity and brand image were considered relational but distinct (Dinnie 2008; Nandan 2005), and were adopted to explore whether communication gaps existed between the two concepts. It was argued that the amalgamated frameworks (Kapferer 2008; Bosch *et al.* 2006) indicated a number of inconsistencies and consistencies between the brand identity and brand image of the UK Conservative Party.

Discrepancy gaps (inconsistencies) included; physical properties such as the Conservative Party logo, Conservative Party policy, the core 'broad church' values and heritage of the UK Conservative Party and direction/expectations linked to the party. The findings also suggested there were inconsistencies in the envisaged and actual relationships of the UK Conservative Party, and the reflection of 'who' the UK Conservative Party was perceived to represent.

Nevertheless, the findings also revealed a number of consistencies between the brand identity and brand image, for example the positive attributes and characteristics associated with David Cameron. Their authenticity was often questioned however.

David Cameron's positive attributes were therefore not believed by internal and external stakeholders. Furthermore, it was argued that there were consistencies between the prospects of there being 'multiple brand identities' that constitute the UK Conservative Party. This was supported by external stakeholders who argued that there are a number of diverse, distinct and approachable Conservative Members of Parliament each with their own unique identity. Finally, a number of internal stakeholders questioned the Conservative Party message in terms of support, communication, and clarity, which will ultimately have an impact on the coherency of the brand identity of the UK Conservative Party. This inconsistency within the brand identity, revealed by internal stakeholders, can be considered consistent with the uncertainty, lack of clarity and understanding presented by external stakeholders.

Subsequently the identified discrepancy gaps (inconsistencies) should be of concern (Davies and Chun 2002; Dinnie 2008) to the UK Conservative Party and the identity-image gaps should be narrowed (Davies and Chun 2002; Harris and de Chernatony 2001), in order to have a positive effect (Nandan 2005) on the UK Conservative Party brand. Nonetheless the brand identity and brand image of the UK Conservative Party was comparably explored from a qualitative standpoint, which disputes the claim proposed by Davies and Chun (2002), that it is virtually impossible to qualitatively compare brand identity and brand image.

Despite the third objective demonstrating that the concepts of brand identity and brand image can be comparably explored from a qualitative standpoint, the research indicated that there were areas of improvement for the amalgamated framework. The amalgamated framework was developed into the '*brand identity-image network*' by building on the work of Kapferer (2008) and Bosch *et al.* (2006) and considering the applicability of the findings to the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008) and the brand



image framework (Bosch *et al.* 2006). In addition, the ‘brand identity-image network’ can be adopted to achieve a number of aims. It can be used, partially, to generate a deeper understanding of internal brand identity, it can be employed to explore external brand image and it can be adopted to understand internal brand identity and external brand image comparably. Furthermore, the ‘brand identity-image network’ accepts the relational yet distinct nature of brand identity and brand image thus the the two concepts are brought together in a single framework.

The ‘brand identity-image network’ retains many of the features of the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008) and a number of the brand image variables (Bosch *et al.* 2006), whilst providing simplification. Further to this, the concepts of brand identity and brand image are equal partners in the brand identity-image network. The brand identity-image network demonstrates an operational approach to explore the brand identity and brand image of a political brand. This research accepts that the two concepts need to be integrated in order for a brand to be considered successful.

## 8.1 Contributions

### *8.1.1 Theoretical*

This thesis adopted a brand management standpoint (Smith and French 2009) to explore the UK Conservative Party brand. More specifically a brand management standpoint focuses on the application of branding theories and frameworks to the exploration of political brands (Smith and French 2009). This thesis was the first to combine the concepts of brand identity (Kapferer 2008) and brand image (Bosch *et al.* 2008) and apply it to the context of political marketing. Moreover this thesis demonstrates the transfer potential of the brand identity prism and brand image framework to political branding research.

The second theoretical contribution made by this research was the development of the amalgamated framework into the '*brand identity-image network*'. The 'brand identity-image framework' built on the work of Kapferer (2008) and Bosch *et al.* (2006) and considered the applicability of the findings to the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008) and the six variables of brand image (Bosch *et al.* 2006). In addition, the 'brand identity-image network' can be adopted to achieve a number of aims. It can be used to generate a deeper understanding of internal brand identity, it can be employed to explore external brand image and it can be adopted to understand internal brand identity and external brand image comparably. Furthermore, the 'brand identity-image network' recognises the relational yet distinct nature of the concepts of brand identity and brand image. Therefore the 'brand identity-image network' provides an operational approach for exploring the internal and external orientations of a political brand.

#### *8.1.2 Methodological*

This thesis also contributed to the methodological body of knowledge in that there were no in-depth explorations of a political brand from both an internal and external perspective (Schneider 2004). The majority of research in this area tended to adopt a measurable, singular and quantitative approach (French and Smith 2010).

The research made a second methodological contribution. This thesis developed a systematic framework for interpreting the subjective expressions generated from the projective techniques. This was achieved by building on Butler-Kisber's (2010) thematic two-stage analytical process. The systematic framework provides a rigorous process for the analysis and interpretation of projective expressions and adds to the under-researched and undefined practice of analysing and interpreting projective techniques. Furthermore, it went some way in answering calls for a rigorous approach to

the analysis and a greater understanding of the general adoption of projective techniques in academic and marketing research.

### *8.1.3 Managerial*

This thesis also made a managerial contribution to knowledge. The ‘brand identity-image network’ can be used by political parties, politicians and candidates to understand the way in which the brand is presented to the electorate and how it is understood by them. The ‘brand identity-image network’ serves as a useful mechanism to identify consistency between the brand identity and brand image. An authentic brand integrates both components.

### 8.2 Future Research

This thesis was the first to qualitatively explore a political brand, in-depth, from both an internal and external perspective. Further research should focus on other political brands both internally and externally as it would generate a deeper understanding of political brands from multiple perspectives. Furthermore, it would be advantageous to explore consistencies and inconsistencies between the internal and external elements of other political brands. Ultimately future research should adopt the ‘*brand identity-image network*’; which built on the work of Kapferer (2006) and Bosch *et al.* (2006), and considered the critical assessment of the conceptual frameworks. This would assess the comparability and pragmatic qualities of the ‘brand identity-image network’, generate a greater understanding of political brand identity and image and reveal discrepancies and consistencies between the two concepts.

The exploration of political brand identity and political brand image at a local, regional level also requires attention. It may be useful to generate a deeper understanding of political brands at this level with the aid of the ‘brand identity-image network’. This research study highlighted the presence of ‘sub-cultures’ and multiple brand identities

and images often more popular, approachable and appealing than the national/central/corporate UK Conservative Party brand. These 'sub-cultures' and multiple identities therefore require some attention. For example, is this restricted to the UK Conservative Party brand? Are all political parties' amalgamations of multiple identities and sub-cultures united by core 'broad church' values? Additionally, future research could explore the controllability and responsibility of political brands in terms of establishment, development and ownership.

This thesis goes some way in addressing the limited understanding of political brands, particularly the identification of the positioning of a political brand in the mind of the internal and external stakeholders. Furthermore this identification and in-depth understanding will ultimately inform the positioning strategy and communication process of the UK Conservative Party brand in future campaigns. It also provides a basis for political positioning research (Baines 1999; Baines *et al.* 1999; Gurau and Ayadi 2011; Johnson 1971; Newman 1999; O'Shaughnessy and Baines 2009; Smith 2005). With this in mind future research could investigate the strategically natured positioning and communication process of the UK Conservative Party brand. This could be achieved by utilising the identified internal and external position of the political brand, which will ultimately assess and inform future political positioning strategies and communication processes.

Further research could continue to explore the UK Conservative Party brand in a longitudinal study; assessing whether the discrepancies and consistencies remain and whether the in-depth findings generated in the case of this research study continue to be the case. Equally the 'brand identity-image network' could be further developed to investigate the internal brand identity and external brand image of a political brand from a quantitative perspective. In consideration with the key findings applied to the

conceptualisations of the research study, an adapted quantitative ‘brand identity-image network’ could measure or test the discrepancies and consistencies between political brand identity and political brand image. Subsequently, there continues to be wide scope for future research in the area of political branding and political marketing.

### Summary

This thesis was started in November 2008, prior the 2010 UK General Election, and was concluded in December 2011. Ultimately, David Cameron and the UK Conservative Party failed to secure an overall majority at the 2010 UK General Election, attaining 306 seats. After entering into a coalition agreement with Nick Clegg and the Liberal Democrats, the UK Conservative Party entered Government. Since then, many commentators from the world of academia, politics and media have attempted to explore why the UK Conservative Party failed to secure an overall majority and what the future holds for the UK Conservative Party. Furthermore, many discussed this in relation to the UK Conservative Party ‘brand’. Therefore the UK Conservative Party ‘brand’ remains a topical, often misunderstood, expression.

The UK Conservative Party brand needs to become an integrated, well-structured entity and a successful political brand to win the next UK General Election. The UK Conservative Party brand identity requires close attention, with particular emphasis on the lack of internal coherency. The UK Conservative Party brand image is ambiguous and remains associated with previously held perceptions and imagery. In addition, the discrepancy gaps between the concepts of brand identity and brand image also require attention. This study has provided deep insight into the brand identity and brand image of the UK Conservative Party and highlighted some detoxification of the ‘Tory brand’. Furthermore this study has uncovered a small number of consistencies between the

brand identity and brand image of the UK Conservative Party. There is therefore hope for the UK Conservative Party brand.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A: Copy of the In-depth Interview Guide**

#### **A.1 Interview Guide – Phase One - Internal Stakeholders**

##### **Opening – Introduction**

- Research outline – Confidentiality - Audio Tape

##### **Biographical Information**

- How long in politics – how – background – University – other roles/jobs – Conservative supporter

##### **Conservative Party - envisaged**

- Current Identity
- Envisaged identity
- Values
- Who for
- Compare/differ
- More personality than ideology
- Clear united direction
- Resonating
- Young citizens
- Regional/Central Conservative Party values
- Distinction between Tory and Conservative

##### **History**

- Helped/hindered
- Old perceptions – Nasty Party
- **Class**
- How – modifications/adaptations

## **David Cameron**

- Attempted to change Party
- Influenced
- Internal relations
- Divided
- Made a difference
- Other conservative leaders
- Cameron's Conservatives

## **Personal Perceptions**

- How would you describe what it means to be a Conservative
- Feelings
- Changed
- Similar values
- Perceptions
- Citizens see the party
- Replacement of old logo
- United
- Relationships with other members
- Europe – Change – Society
- Social Responsibility
- Personal Beliefs/different

## **Personal Perceptions – David Cameron**

- Changed
- Support/Dislike
- Further change
- Desires
- Adaptations

## **Closure**

- Questions for me
- Summarise Findings
- Ethical Procedures
- Contact Information

## Appendix B: Copy of the Focus Group Discussion Interview Guide

### B.1 Focus Group Interview Guide – Phase Two – External Stakeholders

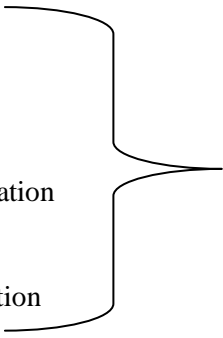
#### **Opening – Introduction**

- My background research, aims, objectives, ethical procedures

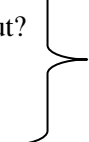
#### **Ice-breakers-Projective Techniques**

- Favourite brands
- Political logos – “**Spot the Logo**”
- Elected PM tomorrow what 3 things would you do?

#### **Conservative Party**

- When I think of....I think of?
  - Stand for?
  - Who for?                      Include Personal Demographics – class, political family background etc
  - Values/policies?
  - Difference between other parties?
  - Feel if win election? – bubble drawings
  - Person
  - Food
  - Drink
  - Sport
  - Holiday Destination
  - Draw the party
  - **Picture Association Exercise**
- 
- Association: Metaphor

#### **History**

- Conservative Leaders – odd one out?
  - Party changed?
- 
- Picture Response – Chronological



### Political Leaders

- Pint with
- Holiday with  
based/personification
- Buy a second hand car from
- Coffee with
- Trustworthy
- Genuine
- Strong
- Likeable
- Salesman

Association: Metaphor

Some of the themes from interviews

### David Cameron

- What comes to mind
- Characteristics  
based/personification
- Picture association
- Word association
- What does this picture show
- Changed the party
- Strengths/weaknesses

Association: Metaphor

### Draw the UK

- If Conservatives win
- If Labour win  
Drawing/story telling
- Feel if Conservatives win election? 2<sup>nd</sup> bubble drawing

Expressive:

### Closure

- Summarise
- Questions for me
- Ethical procedures
- Contact information

## Appendix C: Examples of the Transcribed In-depth Interviews

### C.1 Interview with a Conservative MP (Member of Parliament) P11 – Participant 11

Conducted 19<sup>th</sup> January 2010

<b>Interviewer</b>	Thank you very much [name omitted] for agreeing to meet me today. Can we begin by exploring your background in terms of politics, how you became interested in politics and your road to Westminster.
<b>P11</b>	Well I was brought up in a family who were, my mother was always the treasurer or the secretary of the local Conservative branch in a very Conservative area in North Yorkshire. And it was almost default mode being in the Conservative Party – I suspect my mother paid my subscription for me before I consciously thought about it. Then when I went to University in Newcastle to study agriculture just towards the end of the Callaghan government (Labour 1976-1979) I was active in student politics there. I was a member of the student's union council there as a Conservative and actually sat my finals around the 1979 election [Thatcher] when Mrs Thatcher got elected as Prime Minister. I was a little bit in the campaign there but the pressure of exams and really I wouldn't have gone into politics other than maybe to be a borough councillor or a district councillor had it not been for one thing that happened which was a by-election in Ryedale in 1986 when a massive Conservative majority overturned by the Liberal Democrats and the local association identified one reason they didn't win was because their candidate was perceived as an outsider – a guy called Neil Boulfour a merchant banker, the woman who won the election, Elizabeth Shields from the Lib Dems. And they [local association] asked people, they threw open the selection in a blaze of publicity saying they wanted a local candidate to win it back. I applied with another 200 people and got into the final 3. John Greenway was actually elected and is still the MP for Ryedale – standing down at the next election. And alarm bells started to ring at central office when I got into the final 3 because they didn't know anything about me. If the party were to select me as candidate we did win the seat 13 months after the by-election, they would have had somebody with a file was a blank sheet of paper. So I went to see Sir Tom Arnold who was the Vice-Chairman of Candidates at the time who said basically at the time on the basis on a 10 minute conversation in Manchester if you are selected then we will accept you as the candidate. But if you're not selected please put your name forward for the candidates list because you're just the sort of person we're looking for. You're a working farmer, businessman, good communicator in order to do so well in the selection. And that is how the standing started. I really had no selection meetings so anyway I applied to go on the candidates list after the 1987 election, got on the candidates list. In those days it was always said that you had to fight a Labour seat first to cut your teeth so I applied and was selected for Redcar and stood in the 1992 General Election – didn't win of course. I then stood in the same area in Cleveland & North Yorkshire in the 1994 European Election after a couple of very near misses in a couple of other elections in Lincolnshire and was finally selected to be the candidate in North West Leicestershire which had been a Tory seat – the sitting MP had left under a cloud but of course in the 1997 election didn't get in. I then stood in 1998 in the last European by-election in England in South Yorkshire – came 3rd. And was elected to the European Parliament in 1999 so that was the 3 <sup>rd</sup> time I had stood for the European Parliament – I served 5 years in the European Parliament – I was the Environment Spokesperson, I was the Deputy Coordinator for the EPP on the environment committee and at the end of the term I was actually the Deputy Leader of the MEPs. About 6 months before the elections I was selected as a candidate for [constituency omitted] so I didn't stand for the European elections again and basically had a period of 12 months where I was campaigning almost full time in [constituency omitted] – Labour took the seat in 1997 – held onto it in 2001 and we took the seat in 2005.
<b>Interviewer</b>	It seems to me that you have had a jam packed political life. Before you were elected to the European Parliament were you a councillor at the same time?
<b>P11</b>	No I was a Parish Councillor but that doesn't really count – being a candidate is actually like a full time job. I reckon when I stood as a candidate in [constituency omitted] it probably cost me £20,000 of my own money what with putting a car on the road for 2 years which I needed as it was a 2 hour drive away, paying overtime for my staff when I couldn't be there. It was quite a frustrating time. I don't think the associations realise how demanding being the candidate can be in some of these circumstances.
<b>Interviewer</b>	If we now move on and look at some of the values of the Conservative Party especially under David Cameron – could we explore some of these values the Party is trying to project out to the public?
<b>P11</b>	I think the Conservative Party has always been the party that seeks to reward the person who works hard, tries to reduce the size of the state, and tries to get the value for money in the public services. I think there is a view our opponents try to promote that we are against public education that we are against the NHS – that's not true at all. But we do try and get value for money. And I think in the present economic environment the concept of sound money – living within one's means, providing incentives to people and traditions which Conservatives are traditional. But I

	think each generation this sort of natural conservatism has to be TEMPERED with the need to respond to the new agenda. So the idea that Mrs. Thatcher was coming to power now that she would have the same policies that she had in 1979 is completely bumcum. There's people trying to accuse Cameron of the party's never been a green party – if we'd have had global warming in 1979, if we'd have had all the problems with energy security in 1979 I believe the conservatives then would be addressing those problems. So you need to fight basic conservative principles to each new generation's problems.
<b>Interviewer</b>	As I said before I am from a non-political background so my research I recently discovered the many factions of the Party dating back to the sixteen hundreds, Disraeli so it is fascinating to see like you said a broad church where you can have your own views but you may differ in certain stances.
<b>P11</b>	The nature of the electoral system in the United Kingdom means that we are a two party system. If we were in another European Union country; Italy for example it's perfectly possible to have 6 political parties each representing different streams of political views from left-right. Communist to fascist and all the places in between. There's also a place for regional parties in some of these other countries whereas in the United Kingdom the system of first past the post which I think is the best system means that basically one needs to join a team to be either in the Labour Party or the Conservative Party and possibly the Liberal Democrats and then have to get used to the fact that you don't win every single battle within the party but you by and large have to work with the agreed position.
<b>Interviewer</b>	I know people always speculate who the party is for. Some people suggest the party is for a certain segment in society and others say it is for a class-less equal society, what are your thoughts on this point?
<b>P11</b>	I think in order to get elected; the Conservative party has to appeal right across society. I suspect the most difficult people to reach are those who are on benefits and who are content to remain on benefits. I would find it very hard for the message of the day of the Conservative Party to appeal to those people. However people on benefits who want to work or people on benefits who want to get off benefits completely then absolutely we can target them. It's interesting if you look at the Swedish how traditionally Swedish politics has worked they've had a very left-wing slant to their politics because of the large number of people on the state whether they work in public services or the very generous benefits system. And I think Britain was in danger of slipping into that particular lull where the state was responsible for loads and loads of people's salaries in education, health, mass explosion of quango's and what many people would describe as non-jobs and we're in danger of getting into that situation. And it's only the fact that our budget deficit has just exploded that has meant that particular situation which would have potentially delivered Labour Government on Labour Government because of the concern people were paying large levels of tax because they had brilliant health services, brilliant education brilliant benefits if you like if you lost your job. It was as socialism was the agreed natural way of things to be. I think there was a point when that started to look like it in the UK but even Labour now are having to admit that they cannot go on paying in for this massively overly obese state.
<b>Interviewer</b>	In terms of your own constituents and the Conservative Party in [county omitted] how does that differ from the Conservative Party in central office? Is there a difference between the values you project and CCHQ [Conservative Campaign Head Quarters] projects?
<b>P11</b>	I guess we're 10 years behind the game in that in the South of England my impression is that they're less traditional in their outlook. And newer ideas are receiving less support maybe. But I think it may be a town and country thing – [town omitted] itself is fairly rural by large. So maybe some of the new themes the Conservative Party are campaigning on have less resonance in rural [county omitted] than maybe in the Home Counties or Surrey – I may be wrong. You know [county omitted] its traditional and I think also the political landscape is still quite polarised between the traditional Labour supporters and the traditional Conservative supporters. We don't have that same degree of mondeo man who was the middle-class swing voter we still have an awful lot of people who consider themselves Conservative. They maybe didn't turn out and vote in 1997 and 2001 but they've not necessarily changed their views they've just not been prepared to cast their vote. If they didn't consider we were worthy of their support.
<b>Interviewer</b>	I know you said you might not be able to answer this but in terms of the values you put at the forefront to your constituents or area, could you explain some of these values?
<b>P11</b>	I think it's rewarding people who work hard. It's as simple as that. Allowing them to keep a big share of the fruits of their labour and giving them the incentive to do that little bit more. That incentive to do that over time. The incentive to keep the shop open more hours or open up on a Sunday. One of the worries is under the present government those incentives are starting to go. You may recall David Cameron pointing out in one particular case that a single mother who was on benefits if she got work for every pound she earned she lost 96p in benefits. Well that is just not the way the benefit system should work in thing country. We should people real incentive to work and not have this ridiculous situation in Scarborough couple of years ago one of our restaurateurs was telling me that he could not find girls to wait tables and wash up so he hired some polish girls. He had to provide some accommodation and he hired some polish girls. What does that say about the benefit system? People languishing on benefits that don't pay them and stays in bed in the morning. That is something that we have to reverse.

<b>Interviewer</b>	When you campaign in [constituency omitted] do you tend to focus more on local issues then party politics or is it more of amalgamation of the two?
<b>P11</b>	We certainly don't attack our opponents. I think people are turned off from personal and party political attacks on one's opponents. As a sitting Member of Parliament you are in a wonderful situation in that you don't have to do party politics so for example you can go to a school that has just got a good Ofsted report, you can see the performance the kids have put on. You can say a few words how well the kids are doing and how proud you are of them. It doesn't involve party politics they just need to know they can rely on you, relate to you, and connect with their Member of Parliament. We do get in terms of constituency casework where people come with problems of the benefit system, child support agency to a lesser degree asylum and immigration, housing benefits all, getting access to drugs on the health service – in affect we work as another branch of the citizens advice bureau and that's another good way being a sitting member of parliament you can build your support because if somebody who is traditionally a Labour voter or a person who doesn't vote at all and you can get them a refund from British gas because they read the meter wrong – may vote Conservative in the future because of the service given during a dispute. Conversely we've had the whole expenses thing well I've not been fingered by the Telegraph for my expenses but there is this degree that if you've got MP after your name they're all the same. So it will be an interesting election in terms of voter turnout and votes. With the opinion polls how they are at the moment it might not affect any sitting Conservative members but may remove some sitting Labour MPs who otherwise would have survived.
<b>Interviewer</b>	If we briefly again look at your constituency – how do your constituents perceive you? Is it more [participant's name] or a Conservative MP?
<b>P11</b>	Well all the work we do is brand [MP name omitted]. We are very lucky we have a newspaper that comes out 6 nights per week – [newspaper omitted] – if you go on the website and do a search for my name you will see that I'm in the paper 2, 3, 4 nights per week. I get a photograph in the paper usually once a week we arrange to do something on a Friday that includes a photograph. Now this isn't particularly party politics. This is the fact I am a sitting Member of Parliament and the newspaper ring you up and ask for a quick comment on a particular issue.
<b>Interviewer</b>	So would you say that it is "brand [MP name omitted]" first and then allegiance to the Conservative Party second?
<b>P11</b>	In terms of my efforts it's brand [MP name omitted] but at a general election I'm under no delusions that people will be voting for David Cameron to be Prime Minister. So I'm hoping to top that up by my endeavours in the constituency and for example I'm the only MP that I'm aware of who prints his mobile phone number in the local paper. So if any one of my constituents needs me anytime can call me. We also have a 24 hour helpline all these things I would hope would improve people's perceptions of me as somebody who is working quite hard. Most weeks I work an 80 hour week – and I'm hoping over a 5 year period will have filtered through to most of my constituents that I am doing my job.
<b>Interviewer</b>	Do you find there are any negative perceptions out there about you or the Conservative Party in your region?
<b>P11</b>	Well certainly the traditional diehard Labour supporters see the Conservative Party as the party for the rich, they're seen as toff's – the fact that Mr Osbourne and Mr Cameron went to Eton gives them fuel to sort of try and promote that. But I don't know how many of those are perceptions officially promoted by the Labour Party in terms of their campaigning activity and how people would see it. I hope someone with a normal job that sends their kids to the local comprehensive school that generally – I used to drive a lorry for a living – I am hoping my own particular circumstances would mitigate this perception of the Conservative Party as being elitist. It was interesting in the Crewe & Nantwich by-election where they tried to make out our candidate [Timpson] was a toff – it turned people off [from politics] they accused him of having a Bentley which isn't true – Edward's father has a Bentley but they make Bentley's in Crewe. If you are going to accuse someone of owning a Bentley when 800 people live in the constituency work in the factory that is very short-sighted. In terms of Edwards family it's his parents had a wonderful track record of fostering underprivileged kids, dozens and dozens of kids through their home because they really felt passionately about this fostering thing. So I don't think – it's all that Labour has got left isn't it really. Throwing this toff thing at us, that we're out of touch because we've all been born with silver spoons in our mouths, posh public schools, none of our children go to schools that all the other children go to, if we need health care we all have it done privately they're trying to promote that. Fortunately I'm a farmer from [county omitted]; I'm not a merchant banker who's been to Eton.
<b>Interviewer</b>	If we briefly focus on David Cameron now. Could we explore the values of Cameron which he tries to project to the public? Are the values of Cameron different in any way to the values of the Party?
<b>P11</b>	I think David Cameron is being perceived at the more modern end of the Conservative Party. So for example green issues, which I suggest many of our members would put low down on the list, are much more prominent in David's list. Our members – the thing is you have to make a differentiation between members of the Conservative party and the people likely to vote conservative. And I think it's quite likely that the membership are much more interested in immigration and Europe and possibly things like pensions because they're all quite old. Whereas

	the mainstream people we want to attract vote conservative are concerned with global warming, about over sea's aid, I think the more modern type of issues. So I think David Cameron probably got it right in that he's going for the people who voted Labour last time and they are concerned with those issues. So when some of our crusty cornels criticise David for not making Europe the centre of our campaign I can see where they're coming from but I think David's got it right.
<b>Interviewer</b>	When David became leader in 2005 you said he modernised the party – did he change the party in other ways?
<b>P11</b>	Yeah he promoted more women candidates, more ethnic minority candidates, no I think there has been one or two – the way we came out against the 3 <sup>rd</sup> runway at Heathrow – I mean I can't imagine the old Conservative Party being coming out against that, it would have been capitalism at all costs. We had to demonstrate we meant it – it's about the environment. The big issue at the next general election will be the economy and I think that goes right across from the traditional Tory supporters who were member's right through to the floating voters. It maybe doesn't reach to the people out in the real economy because they're completely dependent on the state on benefits and are quite content to stay that way. I think there's that little section of people there that would be very hard for us to reach with our message because basically they don't want to, they're not worried about the level of taxation and the level of debt because they don't pay tax. And the debt is somebody else debt to pay off. But apart from that small section who I suspect have always been and always will be prepared to vote for the party that promises them the biggest level off benefits. We are actually appealing to a very broad section of society and the other aspect at the general election which maybe more important than ever – if you look back 4 or 5 years ago or 9 years to previous elections things have come up which were not mentioned in the election manifestos. So we had Iraq, we had Afghanistan – the 1997 election Tony Blair did not campaign that we were going to invade Iraq. And I think that you get things coming up like swine flu, the winter weather and who knows what's going to happen – the banks crisis is a classic example. So people I think who they will trust to make the right decisions when those unexpected things happen. And I think that Gordon Brown does not appeal to people, they don't connect with him, they don't really trust his judgement because he's been shown to have messed up the economy, to have been supporting Blair on Iraq which is now immersing as a complete con, concerned with the evidence the decision to go to war was based on. So I think probably although we talk about policy and whether we make clampers on private land, whether we have an 80 MPH speed limit on the motorways, whatever all these sort of policies are shopping lists whether we give grandparents the rights to see their grandchildren all these things actually what will become central to it I think whether people will trust David Cameron, whether they can relate to David Cameron and that's why I think the Tories will probably win the election because when we have those 3 debates on prime time TV I just think people will, it will just reinforce people's view that they don't like Gordon Brown, they don't trust Gordon Brown – you know what I have never even had a conversation with Gordon Brown – I know most of the Cabinet, had a nodding acquaintance and some of them I know quite well but Gordon Brown is just such a difficult sort of person and the more that emerges from the battles between Blair and Brown, the way he loses his temper, throws things around I just think people don't like him. The other funny thing is, I don't know if you agree that you always got the impression that Tony Blair was enjoying being Prime Minister and I think if you are going to be the honour of being Prime Minister they should at least look like they're enjoying the job. He [Brown] looks like he hates every moment - well let's put him out of his misery and that's it. I didn't agree with Blair but I never felt ashamed that he was our Prime Minister going out on the world stage but I think now why do we have this dreadful bloke as our Prime Minister. If Alan Johnson was the Prime Minister or Hilary Benn I would not have that same sort of feeling – I think that God they have not dumped Gordon Brown because I think Gordon Brown is the Conservative's biggest asset at the next election. And a lot of people are not sure whether to give Cameron the benefit of the doubt yet but I think the clincher will be the fact they've made up their mind about actually I told Mr Cameron this last week that they weren't really sure yet about him – until the race horse is running a race, you don't know whether it's fact or not. Until David Cameron becomes Prime Minister we don't know whether he cuts the mustard I suspect that I'm pretty confident that when Cameron becomes Prime Minister he'll actually make a very good job of it and he'll be a good Prime Minister. He will be tough and make those difficult decisions and he'll weather the storm – there'll be a storm for the first couple of years of the Conservative Government but he will take the people with him and convince them that this is the only way we can sort out the economy of our country.
<b>Interviewer</b>	Going back to what you said about there'll be a storm for the first couple of years, could you explain this point a little further?
<b>P11</b>	I think a storm from members and the public – a bit of both. You may remember when Mrs Thatcher became Prime Minister – there was that famous letter in the Times signed by 100 economists that she was going the wrong thing. I think he's got to be tough because there'll always be people, politically motivated people who would always criticise us or other people not sure we're doing the right thing. But I think that if we go on the way – it's our slogan, we can't go on like this.
<b>Interviewer</b>	Just a couple more points. Do you feel that Cameron has united the party?
<b>P11</b>	Yes like never before – certainly all MPs. I have never known the situation we've been so

	committed to him as our leader. The newspapers, the BBC used to ring around us trying to get odd message comments. I think they have stopped ringing round now because we are so determined to win. Now whether we go through some stormy waters some of the traditionalists may start to break ranks again and be critical, I don't know. The other interesting thing will be is some of our new MPs haven't really been through the party mill you know we've gone out and tried to get new people in. Famously our candidate in Loch Ness, a GP has said I'll come to Parliament two days per week and work in the constituency the rest of the time – if we have a slim majority that will not be the case. They will have to tow the line and realise politics is a team game. But I think we'll be fine.
<b>Interviewer</b>	How does Cameron compare to other leaders such as Hague, Duncan-Smith and Howard?
<b>P11</b>	Hague was a man before his time and a lot of people have a lot of respect with William Hague, he took on Blair at his strongest. Iain Duncan-Smith was a disaster, I'm prepared to go on the record and say that.
<b>Interviewer</b>	What do you mean by "disaster"?
<b>P11</b>	Just could not communicate with people, could not connect with people. And Michael Howard did a pretty good job despite the circumstances. But Blair was soaring ahead in the polls but I got in the 2005 elections with Michael Howard as leader so I've got a lot to be thankful for Michael Howard for the campaign they ran was targeted on the people we could get to come across to us. And in any campaign you need to decide where the front line is – the polls at the moment my constituency is not on the frontline, we're not expending the resources that they are in some of the marginal seats. But now I don't know where the decisions are being made – the polls indicate that Labour seats with a majority of 6000 are under threat, we throw the money at the seats between 5000, 7000 and even 8000. If the polls were to come back again and show we only had a 4 point lead over Labour we would have to...I think Michael Howard was correct in identifying where we would have to put in our efforts which was on the seats like mine where 3,500 Labour – I won mine against the odds. The BBC exit poll predicted that I would not win and I think the reason that we won was the reason that I spent quite a lot of money on a real personal campaign – The only message I put across in my constituency "Robert Goodwill is your candidate, he is a farmer", he didn't big up Michael Howard – there was a picture of me and Michael Howard in the leaflets but we're going to big up Cameron because we know he's a real asset. And people will think, yeah we want David Cameron to be our Prime Minister. If we have to go through a tough time let's go through a tough time with someone we can trust – time for change – we can't go on like this – all the things we're going to say at the election.
<b>Interviewer</b>	And finally if we had to look at the strengths and weaknesses of David Cameron, I know you have mentioned some of the strengths throughout the interview – what are your thoughts on this?
<b>P11</b>	Well one of the areas we need to address is the fact that very few members of the new government will have been ministers before – what we need to make sure is that we can actually implement our programme that we're not blocked by the civil service, we're not blocked by people – a political campaign against us. David Cameron isn't a Prime Minister yet so we'll need to – I am very confident he'll make a good Prime Minister. You know he's been in Number 10, he's been in the Treasury, been special advisors so he does know how things work and we do have a lot of people like Ken Clarke who have been there and who will be able to help us to make sure we do that. But it's like you recruit a new person into any job until they actually do the job we don't know how they're going to perform. But I think Cameron will be good.
<b>Interviewer</b>	This is the final point, if you were elected leader of the Party tomorrow what would you change about the Party, which stance would you focus on?
<b>P11</b>	Well as more of a traditionalist I would probably actually do the wrong thing and re-trench back a little bit from the more modernising part but that would be wrong for the party and that is why they wouldn't let me lead it. On this sort of left-right spectrum I am pretty much right which is fine I am comfortable with the fact that the centre of gravity that the party is nearer the centre and that is the place to be. In terms of winning the election and carrying people with us. Maybe with [county omitted] being a bit more traditional, maybe a generation was more Thatcherite than modernist – yeah If I became leader I suspect I would make the big mistake of swinging the centre of gravity of the party back towards the right which is not actually what the people want of us. The Conservative Party is a very broad church and maybe the reason Blair was elected was because he made the Labour Party a broad church under the New Labour flag and I very much hope if Labour go into opposition that then they re-trench to their left-wing roots as Michael Foot took them in that direction in the 1979 defeat. If they elect a new leader of the left, it will be interesting to see how the Labour Party manages to address that point it maybe that their gut reaction will be that the reason we lost was because we were too right wing, let's go back to our traditional roots. And a lot of their left wing roots have deserted them so they're going to be selecting candidates of the left there going back to the days of nationalisation and all the rest of it. The majority of my members are not that political they enjoy the being on a team, enjoy being in the Conservative Party but I rarely get my members bending my ear on political issues they just like to be part of the family. We're a big family – in my constituency, we have lots of social events, fund raising events, We take the view that if we want to distribute a leaflet we have been doing more because of the election, we will have a fund raising dinner and raise £5000 then we will print and distribute leaflets with that money.

<b>Interviewer</b>	Thank you very much for your time, if you have any questions or queries please don't hesitate to contact me. Good luck with the election.
	<b>End of interview with P11 (Participant 11) Conservative MP</b>

C.2 Interview with a Conservative MEP (Member of the European Parliament) P19 –  
Participant 19 Conducted on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2010

<b>Interviewer</b>	Thank you [P19 – name omitted] for agreeing to be interviewed today - can we just start by exploring your background in terms of how you became interested in politics, how you became a Conservative MEP that bring me up to date to where we are now?
<b>P19</b>	Well I have always been interested in politics my father was very interested in politics. I used to watch lots of political programs. My grandfather stood for election in the old British Guiana in the 50s. So that's why I always suspect that I was interested in politics. And as I went on to University I got involved, I was always form captain, on the school council always interested in representing fellow students and when I got to university I represented my department – the department of engineering – and I just found myself, that's when I went through a transition. I thought I was a socialist the sort of background I came from and I found myself voting more and more with the Conservatives on the student council. And one day sat down with the undergraduate conservatives and she said to me <i>“look what I suspect you believe is probably more honest to conservatives”</i> and it made a lot of sense. So I joined the party as a student in 87 and I joined my first association properly in 1991 and I just went from there. Stood for London Council twice, stood for the London Assembly once, stood for Westminster once and stood for the European Parliament in 2004 and came in 2005.
<b>Interviewer</b>	You mentioned that your parents were political but not conservative and you then became a conservative supporter at university. Were your parents supporting in terms of your political beliefs?
<b>P19</b>	I'm just trying to think about it actually. I think my father probably wished I was a Labour supporter at the time but he understood the Labour Party...he was very critical of the Labour Party of socialism generally we were all frustrated by the patronised attitude towards ethnic minorities for example and how they took ethnic minorities for granted. We also got very fed up with...it came to a stage with the left of the spectrum had a special interest in keeping people poor. You know my father came to Britain in the 50s, he was a bus driver, worked on the railways and on the buses so I came from a working-class background and what came across a lot in politics is how they came across the class warfare and also they didn't like aspiration. My father said to me <i>“look I don't want you to become a bus driver like I am I want you to do better and I will work for you to do that”</i> whereas what frustrated him about the Labour Party tried to keep working-class families back whether that was grammar schools, whether that was criticising schemes – it wasn't really interested in social mobility. It is interesting given the debate we have now.
<b>Interviewer</b>	Do you feel that is still a major fault of Labour – they're harking on about this class-warfare do you feel it is very much the same as your childhood?
<b>P19</b>	I think to be fair to the Labour Party there are a number of Labour politicians want to move away from the class warfare, I know there's debate in the party. But I think there is debate in our party to be honest. I think one of the things in the Labour Party is there is clearly a bunch of people who are interested in social mobility and want to know why social mobility has declined under a Labour Government and I think they are genuinely interested and want to find a solution. I think at the same time we've got to look at the class issue in our party because if you look at the Cameron and his closest adonises if you look at the fact given all his supposed discussion about diversity and the party is still setting old Etonians as candidates and even when it comes to ethnic minority candidates there are two favourite ethnic minority candidates they've been pushing; one's an African Etonian and one's an Asian millionaire. So it worries me that they have a very narrow focus and it's quite frustrating for someone like me who joined the Tory Party as the party of aspiration. Margaret Thatcher was the daughter of a grocer, Cecil Parkinson was the son of a railway man my local MP was the son of a brick layer, Norman Tebbit came from the same area I come from; North London. And that's why I joined the Tory party because it's the party of aspiration and social mobility. It's a bit worrying that we seem to be going back to a paternalistic era.
<b>Interviewer</b>	Do you feel that the public still see the conservative party as the party of the rich and the upper classes or do you feel that perception has started to fade?
<b>P19</b>	I think it depends on where you go. I still meet people who say <i>“I'm voting for you because you're the party of the rich”</i> and a lot of people say <i>“I couldn't vote for you people because you only look after your own”</i> . So I think those views are still present whether or not they vote for us those perceptions are still prevalent.
<b>Interviewer</b>	If we look at some of the values of the Conservative Party, I know you mentioned aspiration could we discuss other areas of Conservative value?
<b>P19</b>	I think there are a couple of dividing lines that still exist. One is when it actually comes to taxation.

	I think the left have a general view that any money you owe they have the first right to through taxation and they have a right to decide what you will have left in your pocket and they know best how to spend your money. I think the Conservative side generally our belief is trust you the individual, the family to make decisions best for your lives. We don't want lower taxation for the sake of lower taxation we want lower taxation because we believe that you are in the best position to make decisions about your life. And you should keep as much money as you own and make the most of the situation. I think the other thing is idea of aspiration I still think the left want to keep people poor and think they're very worried if people became richer they'd stop voting Labour. I think Tony Blair tried to tackle that whereas the Tories have always been about being like the American Dream that you can do anything you want to do as long as you work hard enough. I think we have been more of a meritocratic party in that way. I do think we are losing meritocracy in our party though the way our MEP selection for example where the first vacancies go to woman not meritocratic. If you look at some of our parliamentary selections I think we have destroyed the principle of meritocracy. I came through the old system, I didn't call ahead and say I'm an ethnic minority therefore you should give me a seat. Whereas now there are a lot of people who think that you should get a seat because they're from unrepresented groups and I think that's a bit worrying. People are not being chosen by merit now good candidates are being kept out. I do think those two points, one is the individuals knows best and the other one is you can work as hard as you want that's the aspirational difference. Also do you look at an individual or do you look at an individual as a group so you're part of that pigeon hole and they still do that. They're still pigeon holing you your an ethnic minority or white working class now – we see everybody as individuals.
<b>Interviewer</b>	Do you feel that is contradictory when women candidates are now being told that this seat is for women only or someone from an ethnic minority in terms of the associations?
<b>P19</b>	I agree – I am very much against it because I don't like discrimination whichever way and I think positive discrimination is still discrimination and personally I feel very uncomfortable with what they're doing. I think I understand the issue of underrepresentation but there are other ways of doing it. One of the big things I used to run before I was elected was a diversity recruitment company and I used to say to the businesses look which group is under represented and then I would organise a seminar aimed at people from that group where the company could come along and present to them and say we need people like you. You may think we don't employ people like you please apply and you get applications. We could do that with women candidates for example, hand pick 10 or 20 candidates, thought they had the ability, train them, introduce them and then put them in with the men and let them win it because they deserve to win it.
<b>Interviewer</b>	Has there been much discussion about MPs and MEPs about this issue? You say it is close to your heart – has there been a movement to try and correct this issue?
<b>P19</b>	No this is run by a very small creak Cameron's small team in central office our party's in ruthless mode been in ruthless mode since 1997 CCHQ central office have got their favourite candidates and they are pushing them and there is no debate. If you go and question it they deny it.
<b>Interviewer</b>	Maybe after the election do you think people will then raise their concerns?
<b>P19</b>	I am worried it might continue I'm worried they might just have we'll be like the Labour Party for example and repeat the election and insist on candidate number one or number two so it might even get worse than that.
<b>Interviewer</b>	It must be quite worrying
<b>P19</b>	Frustrating
<b>Interviewer</b>	If we now look at the relationship of the Conservative MEPs and Westminster MPs – what's the relationship like?
<b>P19</b>	It's very much depends on the individual. We've got a chap here called Malcolm Harbour who deals with internal marketing and business issues he kind of forces himself on issues over there but he's very persistent and tells them " <i>I must tell you what's going on in the EU</i> " and goes to Shadow business meetings and everything. Others they are I work in finance and there is an exchange of emails but it depends on the different teams. My experience working in broadcasting in the last few years, technology issues and I think they pay lip service to us. So I engage with them as much as I need to but I don't go running to them for advice and I think that there's not the understanding in Westminster yet to how much power we actually have. There are some MEPs here that will say we should let them know well I think frankly I will tell them but if they don't want to listen I will inform them to what's going on and deal with it on a case by case basis but I'm not going to go out of my way to " <i>why don't you listen to me</i> " " <i>do you know how important we are</i> ". Because we've got our own battles here
<b>Interviewer</b>	Exactly so if you have your battles here and battles there and your region too
<b>P19</b>	True, if they want to give me input to be constructive, that's fine. But some of my colleagues get very frustrated but I just tell them what's going on and it's up to them if they engage with me or not.
<b>Interviewer</b>	If we look at the European Conservative Reformists Group – could we just explore this group and how you came into this new group?
<b>P19</b>	The thing is this when you're talk to people in Britain and you say what's your views on Europe I'm not saying Europe is the number one issue and we don't believe in further European integration and people say why do we sit with this people's party or whatever it is. The European People's



	<p>Party is the most federalist party, they believe in the project. I'll give you an example I came in here May 2004 that's when the French and the Dutch voted NO in a EU referendum. I came to parliament as we debated it and in our first group meeting the EPP meeting, the group leader who went on to become the President of the Parliament said "<i>nothing must be allowed to get in the way of the European Project</i>" nothing must be allowed to get in the way of European integration, and he was quite clear that the EPP stood for further integration and when I talked to colleagues about it at the time from the EPP they don't understand why we're not in favour of further integration, a federal Europe. We could not say in London or in all the constituencies on the doorsteps we don't support further European integration and we sat in a group that fundamentally believes in further European integration it was hypocritical. And that's we had to make the break. It was a battle to be honest some of our MEPs probably are in favour of more European integration so I feel very sorry for them but if you're conservative and you do believe in European integration it's quite difficult given where the party's gone to. So I think it was a quite strong message and we made it clear to David Cameron that we would like to see some sort of pledge that we will leave the EPP. And that's what's happened.</p>
<b>Interviewer</b>	So basically he listened to you
<b>P19</b>	<p>Yeah he did, he pledged it in his leadership campaign and he did it. Edward [McMillan-Scott] and I have had honest discussions about this and have a difference of opinion. Edward is more of a believer of the project; Edward doesn't see a threat or welcomes it. I have been at meetings with Edward when he's said why should we only be looking after British interests and not European interests? I have a totally different view. I am totally frustrated by the way he manifests himself and attacks other members of the group.</p>
<b>Interviewer</b>	If we now look at the values of you and your region [region omitted] as an MEP and compare these with the values of the central party, are there any distinctions between the two?
<b>P19</b>	<p>I think it comes down to individuals. We have 3 MEPs in [region omitted] and we are all on different parts on the spectrum on Europe and other issues. I am very much a classical liberal and I suspect over 100 years ago I would have been a Liberal rather than a Tory. I believe in less government interference, free markets, not no state but a much reduced state as Labour says enables rather than other way round. So I am very much a classical liberal Tory sometimes that is in line with Tory thinking and sometimes it's contradictory to what Cameron says. But I think we all have that, whatever your view. I think when I give advice to people about politics and they say what party shall I join I say what are your values and you're not going to find a party that perfectly aligns your values, you're going to find a party that you disagree with least. And the things that I don't and the Tory party disagree with but there are a lot more I do agree with.</p>
<b>Interviewer</b>	The Conservative Party has been described as a broad church where individuals can have their own views but still be under the Conservative Party banner – so when you were campaigning in the 2009 European elections were you campaigning for local issues, personal values you believed in or Conservative party values?
<b>P19</b>	<p>I think the 2009 elections were very different. We did not as a party campaign on Europe it was very much a dry run for London this year's [2010] General election but also the local elections. And we were saying to the associations use it as practice to get out there, get your pledges, test your electoral machine. I know people don't get inspired...people who vote in European elections either love Europe or hate Europe and a few are party loyalists. So we didn't really campaign very much on Europe, we paid more attention to national issues.</p>
<b>Interviewer</b>	And if we look at the party as a whole – I know we talked about the party is still seen as the party for the rich but do you feel that the party is resonating in other areas with other issues coming up?
<b>P19</b>	<p>If you look from where the Tory support is coming from and I've seen presentations on this a lot of our support is coming from Lib Dems who are coming across to the Tory's and there are two things that resonate with them; one is our message on the environment – what everyone thinks of our message on the environment and it is very interesting to see what's going on at the IPPC you know the glaciers and some other claim that they've made for years that natural disasters were caused by climate change but I do think it's our environmentalism and green – a lot of Tories recycle, compost, try not to throw things away protect the countryside. The green issue and civil liberties. These two things are what's attracting Lib Dems across to the Tories</p>
<b>Interviewer</b>	Are there any other areas which are appealing to people such as when Cameron became leader he started focusing more on social responsibility which could be seen as a change from leaders. What are your thoughts?
<b>P19</b>	<p>I'm not entirely sure – I mean I like the focus on poverty and what's very interesting. One of the reasons I am a classical liberal free market. I believe the state doesn't always have the best solutions in tackling poverty. If you look at what the Centre for Social Justice has been doing it's been fantastic showing maybe community groups are best to tackle poverty and not the state. And it's very clever for people who don't necessarily see themselves as Tories and I also think people are fed up of the taxes they're paying and I think people are paying the taxes and not getting enough for it. It was interesting when Labour when we started to talk about cuts Labour tried to portray us as the Party of cuts and then they responded by saying they also have to make cuts and why did they do that? It's quite clearly they must have done focus groups which showed the deficit had to be cut. I am sure that's what their focus groups told them.</p>

<b>Interviewer</b>	If we look at David Cameron, came to power in 2005 has he changed the party from Michael Howard's day?
<b>P19</b>	Undoubtedly I think the whole branding, you know the tree, some of the issues he talks about, the policy working groups and the selection process what everyone thinks about it. He fundamentally wants the party to look different and we have a lot of candidates who've never been Tories – whatever Tories joined the party recently and even became Tories after being selected as candidates and that is very worrying. So he's changed the party completely. Some of it is very positive and in other ways it is very worrying in terms of some of his candidates. I'm not sure when things get tough they will stay the course.
<b>Interviewer</b>	Are there any other issues or areas which worry you?
<b>P19</b>	I think the whole selection process and I'm not saying that you have to be a member for the party for 20 years to become the best MP or whatever but I do think there are people who've given their life to the party and are being completely ignored. And I know we have to reach out but do we have to reach out and upset our basis in such a crass way? You know these people give their lives and some of them don't even want to be elected themselves. I get elected because a lot of people give up a few hours of their day to help me and they don't want to get elected themselves and we just turn around and tread on them. I just think there's no understanding not of the core vote but that voluntary workers group and when we start getting unpopular a lot of these people that are saying they're Tories will start to flake away and some of our candidates who are...I'll give you an example I know a guy who was an agent to an MP in 1981 and after the budget they were literally getting faeces sent to them in the post. Now if you think about some of these people that got selected that aren't quite sure of what they believe in – the Tories sound like a nice brand and want to be part of that when things get tough for us and start getting faeces in their post and start getting the local trade union branch lobbying their constituency office and start getting tons and tons of emails I wonder how many of them will say no I understand why you're upset but we've got to make some tough decisions and unfortunately to save this country we've got to make those tough decisions or they buckle or defect.
<b>Interviewer</b>	Do you feel that is the same with party support at the moment, people are pledging their support because of the increased popularity not just voters but businesses, organisations, celebrity personalities?
<b>P19</b>	Oh yeah politics is like that anyway. You could argue on the other side of that we've got to actually attract these people because we need to attract the floating voter but a lot of politics is I remember standing in 1995 in [city omitted] and my candidate looked like Tory Boy from the 80s but he was a New Labour candidate and I was at a conference a few years ago and this New Labour girl came up to me and she said to me "you must be the Tory's but to me you look like New Labour" 20 years ago she would have been conservative, 20 years later New Labour and now it's come back to us. But I know when things go wrong those swinging voters will go, I know activists that have joined parties and they've clearly joined to become an MP when it's quite clear they won't become an MP they leave the party. And we get a lot of people like that – it is off-putting.
<b>Interviewer</b>	If we now look at David Cameron compared to previous leaders from William Hague, Iain Duncan-Smith and Michael Howard can you tell me if there are any distinctions between them?
<b>P19</b>	I will tell you what to me what the most important thing in every election ballot in the last few years since Major left I would ask my friends who weren't Tories and we'd go through which candidates are your favourites. So in 1997 they quite liked Clarke [Ken] then IDS after 2001 and IDS became leader and I asked my friends and they weren't keen on...each time I asked my friends we selected the candidate that they thought was the least attractive and what was very interesting we voted for the candidate that was least attractive. Cameron was the only candidate that my friends said I'm not a Tory but I would think about voting Tory if Cameron was elected as your leader. And I think that's the fundamental difference I think Cameron's come in to try and reposition the party, to restore some of that ruthlessness.
<b>Interviewer</b>	Do you feel that's more to do with Cameron's seen as more electable rather like somebody like David Davis – I know a lot of people have said to me that this person is more my type of Tory but we can see something in Cameron that's different and he's got what it takes to win?
<b>P19</b>	Yeah I think it's an element that he clearly repositioned himself as a 'Tory Blair' and that's it. He's said look what Blair did to the Labour Party; I'll do that to the Tory Party. We've been in the wilderness I'll get us out of the wilderness. It's been well documents that they've modelled the whole approach on Tony Blair approach.
<b>Interviewer</b>	It has been said that Cameron has brought different strands of the party together people who are pro-European or anti-European all the different strands out there
<b>P19</b>	He's tried to shut the debate on Europe, tried to be quite Euro-sceptic tried to shut the debate on Europe. I think he's done that. If he wants to talk about Europe it is very hard for him to deal with the ECR issue but he has to deal with it. He's tried to shut it down. I think he's come to an agreement with Ken Clarke yeah the thing is we are desperate to win now. We are in a position Labour were in 1997, we're fed up of being in opposition so it's all very well being purest and theoretical about it but we want to win. We are all willing to shut up to get Cameron elected.
<b>Interviewer</b>	What do feel about the present state of the Conservative Party in terms of its identity?
<b>P19</b>	This is purely a personal view I would like us to go back to being the party of aspiration. I think when I joined the party we were the party of aspiration as I said my father was a bus driver,

	<p>someone like me could look up my local MP, look at the party chairman could look at Margaret Thatcher and say if they can do it so can I. It's a great positive message. I don't see that anymore. I see Cameron and his small circle of friends a lot of them are Etonians themselves and the candidates they're selecting – their idea of a good black candidate is an African Etonian or Asian candidate is an Asian Millionaire I am worried personally that I want us to go back to the party of aspiration. I don't see anywhere in the Cabinet a working-class Tory. [Eric] Pickles is probably the only one but Pickles is caught in the headlights and the inner circle gossip about Pickles being caught in the headlights of the toffs you know he'll do anything they say because he went to Leeds Polytechnic or somewhere and he's kind of very aware that their all old Etonian and Oxbridge people and he's not. David Davis would have been great as a member of the Cabinet not necessarily as leader we don't have these kind of people. Someone like me, people today look up to the Tory party and say with people like me in there it is the party of aspiration – it doesn't matter where you come from, whether you're from a working background or from a rich background if you work hard and believe in yourself we're the Party for you. But we don't have that anymore and that's what I'd like us see return to.</p>
<b>Interviewer</b>	<p>I know the Shadow Cabinet have mentioned the word “aspiration” in speeches and things but you say it's not actually there.</p>
<b>P19</b>	<p>When Cameron talks about aspiration, I don't believe him. He can't talk about aspiration on the one hand and slag off grammar schools in the other hand. Grammar schools for many working-class kids are a way out of poverty you know assisted placement schemes is a marvellous way of getting smart, bright, young poor people out of poverty. And it's frustrating that they're not talking about that anymore. It's one thing that drives social mobility and I don't see that with the Tory party.</p>
<b>Interviewer</b>	<p>I know one point that was raised was David Davis was “Northern” and may connect and relate to him more in the North because of his background than they would Cameron but then again you probably have the same with the south then and they'd say we don't related to the guy in the North.</p>
<b>P19</b>	<p>What about William Hague, I don't know if it's true personally but apparently William Hague was more popular in the north than he was in the south. I've got no idea, he's a Yorkshire lad. I was thinking about the polls, Gordon Brown is unpopular which accounts for most of the Tory lead any Tory lead is a lead at the moment – don't just put it down to Cameron. Brown is very unpopular and some people say only Cameron has brought us here and I don't necessarily agree with that.</p>
<b>Interviewer</b>	<p>Before I started my research I just thought it was down to the “Cameron effect” but from my research a lot of people have said it has been a gradual thing since 1997 and it was Michael Howard reduced the majority to 66 – but then somebody new comes in, fresh faced has helped. Like you said the unpopularity of Brown and this is somewhat mirrored to the unpopularity of the Conservatives in 1997 and New Labour.</p>
<b>P19</b>	<p>Labour were far more a head in 1997, 30 points ahead we're only 6 or so points ahead despite Brown so we've got to ask questions. I think I can tell you where it comes down to partly when I talk to my friends who aren't Tories they say we're all suffering at the moment and none of us believe what suffering is and he's had everything handed to him. You read these stories about he got turned down for a job at central office and his uncle called up and got him a job, I think his uncle worked at Buckingham Palace and called up CCHQ and said can you give David Cameron a job and the same happened in Carlton TV so he's always had these family connections. I don't know if this is just stirring but he hasn't denied these stories. When you're struggling and come from a background where you struggle I remember when my father could afford to pay bills and things like that you can't relate to Cameron. At least Brown struggled he's had troubles to overcome and I think that's why he's not so far ahead [polls].</p>
<b>Interviewer</b>	<p>You don't have to answer this but what makes you still consider yourself loyal to David Cameron and the Party when you've got these underlining issues?</p>
<b>P19</b>	<p>Because to be honest he's the man I disagree with the least, secondly because I don't think I would be here without the Conservative Party so I owe the Conservative Party something and it's not far to all these activists that have given up their time and gone on the street, knocked on doors and served the Tories whatever. I agree more with David Cameron than I disagree with him. I like the fact he can have a change of heart and I like the idea he is electable I like the way he's made...we've got rid of a lot of our social conservatism you know I am a economically liberal and socially liberal I don't give a damn what people do behind there closed door. I don't care if someone's straight, gay whatever because it doesn't bother me. We hadn't moved on for a long time and it's interesting that how many candidates are now coming out as gay</p>
<b>Interviewer</b>	<p>Since Cameron became leader?</p>
<b>P19</b>	<p>No over the last few years they've just felt comfortable and saying that they're gay. We finally caught up with social attitudes.</p>
<b>Interviewer</b>	<p>Do you feel the Conservatives were stuck in the past?</p>
<b>P19</b>	<p>I'm not sure. London is very different to the rest of the country and London is a very liberal place. During the leadership election for Iain Duncan-Smith, Ken Clarke and Michael Portillo a friend of mine from Bolton said I would vote for Portillo because he's a puff and I thought that's interesting I just assumed that everyone had moved on and said we were very different. We're [Bolton] far more traditional but I can't tell you whether that's the truth or not but it's very interesting, I was quite shocked by that so it shows it's very different. But I do think that I am very pleased in the</p>

	way he has changed the way we are portrayed, I don't agree with everything he says but I think at the moment he's the best person to get us re-elected in government.
<b>Interviewer</b>	I think that point there is true that the Conservative brand is localised to a certain degree like you say people in the North might not like this issue or this candidate for some reason and different parts of the country are different so the brand itself is bigger than something you write down on a piece of paper and bullet points – it's very much localised but as long as it keeps under the Conservative umbrella's 3 main points; decentralisation, freedom and democracy.
<b>P19</b>	Yeah that's right
<b>Interviewer</b>	Just a couple more points; could you list some of the strengths and weaknesses of Cameron. I know we've kind of covered some of them already.
<b>P19</b>	Yeah I think his strengths are that he knew the party had to change, I think there's a sort of ruthlessness and determination about him and what he wants to achieve. And I think he understands the political climate. Weaknesses; I worry that how much debate there is in the inner circle, I wonder if he's surrounded by YES men and he doesn't agree when you bring him to task on something he just dismisses it and because he's so focused he won't listen to anyone apart from his close advisers. He won't take anything on boards from outside his inner circle. I think they're probably his weaknesses and therefore I don't think he recognises some of the issues he needs to address.
<b>Interviewer</b>	That's interesting that Cameron is attempting to project the idea of a decentralised a key conservative theme but then the central brand is centralised.
<b>P19</b>	Exactly
<b>Interviewer</b>	Which goes against the idea of Cameron's conservatism
<b>P19</b>	I agree
<b>Interviewer</b>	And finally if you were elected leader of the Conservative Party tomorrow what would you change or focus on?
<b>P19</b>	I think there are a number of things I'd like to look at. I would look at the whole system of financial regulation, I would look at the banking sector and maybe move us back to where people had the choice to put their money into 100% deposits, mainly not getting any interest but that money would be there the bank would guarantee that money or actually if people want that interest they may have to put a higher percentage down. You have to understand you the higher risk the higher rate on return and vice versa. I would also like to see the taxation system simplified. At the moment you've got taxation and credits and lots of paper shufflers in between. For example even me I pay tax that get's processed two paper shufflers then say I get so much back in tax credits. Why not simplify it in the first place and make it easier. I would like to see tax cuts for the very poorest. I'd like to see people under £10,000 have tax cuts. The 50% thing we have to deal with when the economy gets better. But our focus should be taking people out of poverty altogether. You can have tax cuts for all just in different ways. So if you're earning below £10,000 you pay no tax at all and I'd also like to see more one stop shops for example say you were a working-class kid and said you wanted to be a spaceman it doesn't matter what it is you can walk in somewhere and someone will tell you what you want to achieve, what you have to do and how to get there. Really what they are, are a network and ill pass you onto the relevant person.
<b>Interviewer</b>	And this is the final point. The Conservative Party in the European Parliament is now in the ECR Group – could you just tell me the values of the ECR group? And are they in line with conservative central party values?
<b>P19</b>	I mean the reason they're in line is because we drew up the ECR statement and CCHQ had an input. Basically it's about being a Europe of nation states, about being Atlantisists, believe in free markets, freedom of the individual – values can be found on the ECR website. Sovereignty of every state, effectively controlled immigration, efficient public services and respect and equality for all EU countries.
<b>Interviewer</b>	How do those values differ from the EPP?
<b>P19</b>	The EPP believe in a social Europe, pretty much a social model Europe. The EPP does not believe in Sovereignty of nation states it fundamentally believes in further European integration and want to see a stronger Europe. They're not that strong on EU waste, bureaucracy and EU funds. And not necessarily strong on treating EU countries equal very much a Franco-German thing.
<b>Interviewer</b>	Thank you for your time
	<b>End of Interview with a Conservative MEP P19 (Participant 19)</b>

## Appendix D: Examples of the Transcribed Focus Group Discussions

### D.1 Focus Group Discussion Five (FG5) - Postgraduates studying at the University of Hull

Conducted on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2010

<b>Moderator</b>	Thank you all for agreeing to take part in my research – I hope the session will be interesting as I know politics isn't the most thrilling subjects. I would like you all to relax, help yourself to nibbles and muffins and be open and honest. My research has been looking at the UK Conservative Party from a consumer branding perspective. What that means is that I have focused on two key concepts in consumer branding theory – brand identity and brand image. Brand identity can be seen as the current and envisaged identity desired by a brand whereas the brand image is seen as the personal perceptions, opinions and beliefs of a brand in the mind of the consumer. These two concepts are distinct yet related and I have already been exploring the Conservative desired identity – how Conservative members think they see themselves and desire to be perceived in the minds of the electorate. The brand image of the Conservative Party is where you guys come in – I want to gain an understanding of your thoughts, feelings and perceptions of the Conservative Party and to assess whether it is linked to the desired message projected by the Conservative Party – whether it is resonating with you guys, if there is a gap between the two concepts and finally apply my findings to a consumer branding theory model. Plus it can be said that consumer branding theory has diversified and can be applied to places, countries, cities, products, services, people and political parties – a whole host of entities so I'd like to get the ball rolling by discussing brands in general and whether you have a favourite brand, do you embrace particular fashion brands, sports brands that type of thing?
<b>P3FG5</b>	To a certain extent I'm influenced by brands; the logo, the effort that goes into creating the aura of the organisation, it's quite important to me. Looking at the slide I like Apple and Orange but I think that's because of the imagery and design of their logo but in terms of purchasing things I don't think I'm overly swayed by brands of how they have an effect on me. I can understand it as a piece of design but I'm not sure to what extent it personally sways me in terms of adhering to that brand.
<b>Moderator</b>	Excellent – anybody else.
<b>P2FG5</b>	I think a particular brand like if it's well known and stands for a certain ideal then I'd be attracted to something that they have like a particular method like Fair Trade is a brand and people kind of aspire to live in a fairer world where people are equal and get rid of the class system and that and all that kind of stuff and make it a fairer economy. So maybe buying fair trade someone might be looking for that particular brand in the food shop for that purpose, now that doesn't necessarily mean that's what they'll necessarily achieve by buying Fair Trade...
<b>P3FG5</b>	I think these days I seem to get frustrated by brands – attempts at branding because I think that it's become such an industry in itself some organisations tried to white-wash their image by applying a brand just like BP and their flower – it's like rebranding yourself environmentally friendly but you're an oil company so there's only so far the brand will go to masking the reality and what you actually stand for.
<b>P2FG5</b>	Even like non designer clothing like outlets like H & M for instance they're not designer but the types of clothes are more...I don't know they have their ethical clothing line don't they with their organic stuff that's not really...but they still have their sweat-shops – do you know what I mean?
<b>Moderator</b>	What about the point Tom just made about everything can be considered branded – an industry in itself – whether it be people, places, organisations, charities,
<b>P1FG5</b>	I think they're trying to make it a kind of monopolising thing in terms of – they're using brands to get more money for certain items when in fact they're just the same items but with a brand so they're just trying to use branding to increase prices of things especially in terms of clothing. Whereas you'd pay for normal cotton clothes you're going to pay more for organic cotton clothes so that's what they're branded as.
<b>Moderator</b>	Interesting – does anyone recognise this logo?
<b>P3FG5</b>	It's the Obama brand isn't it?
<b>Moderator</b>	Yes well done – you're the first person to recognise this logo. Does the Obama logo say anything to you?
<b>P3FG5</b>	Do you like Pepsi [laughter]
<b>Moderator</b>	What about the shape or the colours?
<b>P2FG5</b>	Well it's using the American colours isn't it – reworking of the flag
<b>Dave</b>	Maybe piggy backing on other brands
<b>P2FG5</b>	Yeah
<b>Moderator</b>	Actually this leads us onto the next slide – we're now going to look at some political logos. Do you recognise any of these political logos? Some of them are self explanatory.
<b>P1FG5</b>	Well isn't the one with the Tree the Conservatives
<b>P3FG5</b>	I think it goes back to what Dave said about the rebrand piggy backing – so you try and tie in

	your logo with some sort of ideal but to what extent that works is arguable.
<b>P2FG5</b>	The rose if Labour
<b>P4FG5</b>	The Green Party
	SNP
<b>Moderator</b>	P4FG5; you're the first person to get the SNP. Is there a political logo that jumps out at you? You like or dislike?
<b>P2FG5</b>	The Monster Raving Loony Party [laughter] it looks like it should be in some 18 <sup>th</sup> century magazine you know where they used to really lampoon each other
<b>P3FG5</b>	I like the Green Party one – it looks nice
<b>P4FG5</b>	I think for a political party with a picture of a globe in their logo is quite refreshing
<b>P3FG5</b>	Yeah
<b>P4FG5</b>	...so their outlook is not just focused on the national interest whereas the other ones seem to do that.
<b>Moderator</b>	What do you think of the Conservative logo – the mighty oak tree?
<b>P2FG5</b>	It looks like a 5 year old drew it
<b>P4FG5</b>	I quite like it as a picture but I'm not swayed by it as a brand [laughter] I'm quite cynical about what they're trying to do with it.
<b>P3FG5</b>	Yeah
<b>P2FG5</b>	
<b>P4FG5</b>	Trying to say we're green, we're trying to say with a picture of a tree that we're soft and friendly and not so harsh as we used to be. I think that's all complete nonsense.
<b>P3FG5</b>	It's like they're trying to jump on a populist bandwagon – it's like you're going to change the image of your brand then rebrand yourself but don't go sitting there saying suddenly we're the party of the environment when the environment is so far down their agenda.
<b>Moderator</b>	Am I right in thinking you're quite sceptical of the rebrand of the Conservative Party logo?
<b>P3FG5</b>	Oh yes – it's all bullshit!
<b>Moderator</b>	You don't believe it?
<b>P3FG5</b>	No
<b>P4FG5</b>	No – I think what they trying to say with that rebranding is that they believe what they're conveying that and if that's true they wouldn't be in that party
<b>P2FG5</b>	Yeah
<b>P3FG5</b>	The Tory one used to be a torch right? It could have been a perfectly good logo but now "we're green now" it's all bullshit!
<b>Moderator</b>	What about the torch – did you like the Conservative flaming torch?
<b>P3FG5</b>	I thought it was a symbol, something you could work with, you could have got creative with it but I don't understand why they've gone from the torch to this tree – It seems a very shallow rebranding exercise. You can imagine them in a room "oh yeah we want to come across as green and friendly and environmental so let's go for this tree" – I bet they didn't say "this is what we stand for, this is what we symbolise and this is what we want to be".
<b>P4FG5</b>	It doesn't look political [Conservative logo] it doesn't look like its associated with a political party
<b>P3FG5</b>	A five year olds picture [laughter]
<b>P4FG5</b>	All the others are basically stencils where as that is more...
<b>P2FG5</b>	Maybe it's designed to look more personal I don't know
<b>P3FG5</b>	We don't care about branding [laughter]
<b>Moderator</b>	Excellent – we're going to move on now. If you were made Prime Minister tomorrow what one thing would you do, change, see – it doesn't have to be serious.
<b>P2FG5</b>	I wouldn't know where to begin
<b>Moderator</b>	You don't need to launch the manifesto today merely one thing you would do or change?
<b>P2FG5</b>	I couldn't say one
<b>P3FG5</b>	Scrap Trident [Nuclear Deterrent]
<b>P2FG5</b>	You would? Fool! I'm not voting Lib Dem [laughter]
<b>P4FG5</b>	I think re-nationalising the railways would be a great idea and I would look at immigration and asylum seeker policy.
<b>P1FG5</b>	I would look into the tax system and what's been spent – I'd look into the health service or the education system and bands of taxing and how much people are taxed because I think it's a bit wishy-washy at the moment and I don't think they know – if you earn over £50,000 would you be charged accordingly.
<b>Moderator</b>	Excellent – will you all be voting in the General Election?
<b>P3FG5</b>	Yeah

<b>P2FG5</b> <b>P4FG5</b>	
<b>P1FG5</b>	I'll try [laughter]
<b>Moderator</b>	Excellent – what comes to mind when you think of the UK Conservative Party?
<b>P1FG5</b>	Margaret Thatcher
<b>P3FG5</b>	Blue slime [laughter]
<b>P4FG5</b>	When I get past the expletives [laughter] cynicism – their desire to rule without...just because they think they should rule and to say anything to get elected and give tax breaks which don't really benefit society
<b>Moderator</b>	Interesting. Who would you say the Conservative Party is for?
<b>P3FG5</b>	Rich bankers
<b>P4FG5</b>	Yeah
<b>P3FG5</b>	I'd say rich bankers and like naive people who don't know they're getting shafted by the bankers
<b>P4FG5</b>	Yeah I think they're rural as well
<b>P2FG5</b>	Yeah
<b>P3FG5</b>	Old...traditionalists
<b>Moderator</b>	Interesting...P1FG5, you said Thatcher came to find
<b>P1FG5</b>	Yeah I just remember everything proves they've been, done or said...but I had no opinion of them now for example because I don't really follow them as a party.
<b>Moderator</b>	Would you agree with these guys that the Conservatives are seen as Party of the rich, bankers, rural, traditionalists?
<b>P1FG5</b>	Probably yeah
<b>Moderator</b>	Can anyone name any Conservative policies or any of their values?
<b>P3FG5</b>	Immigration caps,
<b>P4FG5</b>	Get rid of "Sure Starts"
<b>P2FG5</b>	A deadline to stop building traveller sites and put more and more families on the streets
<b>P3FG5</b>	Withdraw from Europe
<b>P4FG5</b>	Repeal the 50p income tax rate
<b>Moderator</b>	You actually know quite a lot of their policies – I'm impressed [laughter].
<b>P2FG5</b>	More privatisation
<b>P3FG5</b>	And isolation
<b>Moderator</b>	Can anyone tell me any of the Conservative Party's ideological values? I know we have touched upon a couple of policy areas.
<b>P2FG5</b>	Traditional
<b>P3FG5</b>	Make the rich richer and the poor poorer!
<b>P2FG5</b>	Really type of traditional conservative views
<b>P4FG5</b>	A smaller state, getting charities doing what they state should be doing
<b>Moderator</b>	Have any of the Conservative Party policies made you look at them differently? Or made you take a second look at the party?
<b>P3FG5</b>	I think their recent ones have sort of solidified my thoughts on what they stand for – I mean their policies this time around are...there's a lot of shallow talk and they haven't backed anything up...they haven't changed any of their stances and they've softened the rhetoric a bit and that's about it.
<b>P4FG5</b>	I think they're starting to reveal their true selves to the extent they have tried to say you know "we're pro-equality" the policies they're suggesting are going to do the opposite to that.
<b>P2FG5</b>	Yeah
<b>P3FG5</b>	I think this "big society" thing to me smacks me that they're just continuing their traditional way of putting as many buffers between the state, between government and their policies and trying to withdraw so "it wasn't us, it was them" – they want to be in power but don't want any of the work
<b>P4FG5</b>	I think their ideas of a big society is engaging people to take part, take control of their communities and come out and do charity work and volunteer work instead of the state is basically, it's just a general stit of old feudal ideas of the upper classes – if the poor don't clean their streets then they're undeservingly poor you know [laughter] and this...the idea that we need a new social security with things like this...well we should scale it back and that will encourage people to take control of their own lives is just nonsense. You know we've had that for hundreds of years and it didn't work that's why we had the welfare state
<b>P3FG5</b>	Yeah they still seem to be like "this is the problem, we'll give this solution" they don't look at the causes of these problems...
<b>P2FG5</b>	Yeah

<b>P3FG5</b>	...they don't delve any deeper than the surface than this is the problem, we'll tax it and let them deal with it and if they don't deal with it then it's their own fault not the state instead of saying why is this a problem in the first place.
<b>P4FG5</b>	Yeah it's like why are kids committing crime? Does someone need to go to prison because they've broken a bus stop window?
<b>P3FG5</b>	It's just shallow
<b>Moderator</b>	Just going back to what you said at the beginning P3FG5, about you being sceptical of repackaging their policies that they're bringing out now – would you say that's just the Conservatives or would it be all politicians or all political parties? Or is it just the Conservatives?
<b>P3FG5</b>	I'd say that within politics certainly over the last...probably from the Blair...I don't think Blair was much different in the fact they very much focus now on these big words I mean the one that has stuck out to me is the Conservatives idea of "big society" because it's clearly some people sat around and they've thought out some words and I think all the parties are doing this. But from the experience of Conservatives and my understanding of the Conservatives before if you look at it the reality of it hasn't changed its branding them sitting there "right how can we rebrand a 60 year old tradition of making the state, making the government as small as possible and leaving the people to deal with problems themselves as much as possible friendly to the voter". It hasn't changed!
<b>Moderator</b>	What about you P1FG5, are you sceptical of politicians or sceptical of a political party?
<b>P1FG5</b>	In terms of an example in terms of solutions, policies whatever what I've noticed that someone who doesn't pay attention to politics is that between the Conservative Party and the Labour Party they argue quite a lot of course and you've got the Labour Party with one statement and the Conservatives will conflict it and come up with a solution but with the solutions they come up with I don't see them solving the problem if you understand what I mean. They come out that the Labour Party is wrong in their policies but they [Conservatives] don't come up with a solution for what they're saying is wrong. They're not thinking of a way to solve the problem they're just saying its wrong. Basically I'd like them to think of a solution – if they think its wrong what do they think to solve it.
<b>P3FG5</b>	I think even worse that the Conservatives this time around to me I feel like they're heavily trying to rebrand them so make it a slick image and Cameron's part in it he's young, for a politician relatively easier on the eye than Gordon Brown [laughter] whereas Gordon Brown and the Labour Party this time round seems to be taking...it doesn't seem as slick but they're sitting there and relying on...policies more. However if you go back to Blair – Blair was like how the Tories are now it was all about 'brand new Labour'.
<b>Moderator</b>	Do you feel there was substance behind Blair and New Labour? And how does that compare to Cameron and the Conservatives?
<b>P3FG5</b>	I think it was quite easy for Blair in terms of how much the Conservatives screwed up the UK prior to him [Blair] coming to power...
<b>P2FG5</b>	Um
<b>P3FG5</b>	...it didn't take much substance beneath that to wash them [Conservatives] away.
<b>Moderator</b>	Interesting – and before we move onto the next point could anyone tell me the broad distinctions between Labour and the Conservatives?
<b>P2FG5</b>	Do you mean actual differences or supposed differences?
<b>Moderator</b>	Well both really – actual and supposed differences.
<b>P2FG5</b>	Well I personally don't see they do [actual differences] when you actually look at what they do and what they say and the kind of people in the party I don't think they're that different. But they're supposed to be different; they're supposed to stand for very different things. I mean Labour are supposed to be very public and social welfare and everything for everyone and equality, bridging the gap between the working-class and the middle-class and all that. But what they did was make university more expensive than before, they've made bus services and the railways more privatised which are all Conservative ideals to have more of a private state and everybody's independent and very individual to take care of yourself and buy your own property and blar di blar di blar! We haven't really seen Labour in the last 13 years – we haven't seen them for all their talk at the time that things were going to get better or whatever it was in the 90s and look at how they jacked up the country – we haven't seen them correct that stuff – they've kind of continued it and taken it to a new level. As you [P3FG5] say they tried to brand it a socialist thing and that's my perception.
<b>P4FG5</b>	I think Labour are a lot more right-wing than they used to be. Things like the railways, problems with the banks but I think they've done that to try and keep the Tory voters they won in 1997 which is disappointing. But I do think that there are some differences you know they invested in the 50p tax going back to support Labour's policy trying to get people to get the support the Tories have got and schemes such as Sure Start or the Child Trust Fund that the Tories all oppose. While inequality has increased in income taxes have been used in my view to try to counteract that which is good which the Tories wouldn't do so I guess in a way Labour's kind of like Tory rights at the moment and the Tories are trying to say that they're going to be like...Cameron's trying to say that he's going to be Blair – after Iraq it seems a bit of a stupid thing to try and say [laughter]. But I don't know I think there are certain things that Labour's done which has shifted



	you know British politics it's been the same with ring fence NHS funding and they're not going to change from the Department of International Development which I think would have been unheard of 13 years ago maybe. And these are things that are significant and important and successance. I also think the fact that the recessions this time round has hit all the country and not just the north whereas in the 80s you had boom in the city and bust everywhere else – you know bust everywhere else. You know Thatcher putting soldiers in police uniforms in Sheffield to fight the miners and receiving food parcels from the soviet union you know society has changed somewhat and I think Labour has had some success.
<b>P2FG5</b>	But have they had a success? Because they're so conflicted between like you say they're trying to keep Tory voters by being slightly right-wing and on the other hand they're trying to dress themselves up as left-wing that they're never getting anything done. Like for instance they wanted to cut child poverty...
<b>P4FG5</b>	Yeah
<b>P2FG5</b>	...they wanted to make it that by 2012 I think it is that child poverty would be eradicated in the UK but they're so below their aims...
<b>P4FG5</b>	...It did do down in 2008
<b>P2FG5</b>	...well they're never going to reach it because they're – on one hand they're taking away benefits of two parent families and giving more benefits to single parent families but also advocating family values...traditional values you know in all their branding and stuff and by saying yeah you know it's better if you go to university and you do this and this and this and you wait and then you marry and so on that they're not...but when you do that there's no real support for them for the family unit and also there's lots of provisions for children and there are lots of provisions for the elderly but there's nothing for adults like you and me in the mean time – really....
<b>P4FG5</b>	Yeah
<b>P2FG5</b>	...when you look at their policies so their political aims are never going to be achieved because they're just trying to do two things at once that will never work...
<b>P4FG5</b>	I agree with you there I do think it's...we shouldn't overlook the fact that they've done things that no one has ever done before...
<b>P2FG5</b>	What good is it saying we would like to do this if you can't do it or if you're not going to...
<b>P3FG5</b>	It's the same for me...I mean implementing these sorts of changes there's certainly something that you couldn't implement over night. You can't just sit there and say this is you know we're breaking away from the past the shock waves have been very problematic and you don't potentially know what the outcome of these changes are going to be...
<b>P2FG5</b>	No
<b>P3FG5</b>	...but I agree that Labour's come so much closer to the centre but then so has the Tories and there's a little bit of difference – it's difficult to find a difference between the two of them. But in relation – at least I feel confident with something like Labour Party they still do agree with this sort of safety net...
<b>P4FG5</b> <b>P2FG5</b>	Um [In agreement]
<b>P3FG5</b>	...for society, however low it is or however porous it is I believe that there will be one there, where the Tories they've demonstrated in the past that there wouldn't be anything and with their policies this time round it sounds like anything there would be gone.
<b>P4FG5</b>	I think with the tiny state it opens it up
<b>P3FG5</b>	Yeah and makes it less accountable
<b>P2FG5</b>	Um [Agreement]
<b>P4FG5</b>	Whereas if you don't have the targets the government's going to miss it and get away with it.
<b>P3FG5</b>	I think they started well in achieving their goals [Labour] and it got worse and I think they got sidetracked by stupidity with Iraq and Afghanistan and things like that. And you know I'm pretty happy with how they've dealt with the economic crisis
<b>P4FG5</b>	I don't like their civil liberties and all the ASBOs – I think they're over used and increasing the prison population. Crimes not really increasing...
<b>P3FG5</b>	Prisons have never really demonstrated that...
<b>Moderator</b>	Do you feel the Conservative Party has changed since Cameron came to power – I know you said he's focused on different issues or policies or attempting to. Has he changed the party or is it still the same?
<b>P3FG5</b>	There's still the old Tories pulling the strings
<b>P4FG5</b>	It's pretty much the same its just Cameron's cliché is the one making the most noise at the minute
<b>P3FG5</b>	You've still got Hague [William] in there who's like a proper little shit [laughter]
<b>P1FG5</b>	Maybe that was their aim – they've got Cameron as the image but still got the same people in the background...
<b>P4FG5</b>	Yeah
<b>P1FG5</b>	...but Cameron's the face of it – if you got behind Cameron you'd see all these people that used to be there

<b>P4FG5</b>	If the Tory Party had changed I don't know who said it – Hannan was it? [Daniel Hannan MEP] Yeah Daniel Hannan would still be in the Party. You know they've gone and reformed their alliances with the unionist party in Northern Ireland so they've got their old name back so they're the unionist party.
<b>P3FG5</b>	The people they've aligned themselves with in Europe is bloody gone...why don't you just line up with the BNP.
<b>Moderator</b>	Excellent. Now imagine I've just told you the Conservative Party has just won the 2010 General Election and David Cameron is your Prime Minister for the next five years...
<b>P2FG5</b>	I'm emigrating now [laughter]
<b>P3FG5</b>	Got my passport [laughter]
<b>Moderator</b>	With the excellent drawing provided I want you to imagine you're telling a friend what you think of this news or what you are thinking and write it down in the speech/thought bubbles.
<b>P4FG5</b>	I'm trying to think of something more articulate than "Oh we're all fucked" [laughter]
<b>Moderator</b>	After that – on the second piece of paper I would like you to draw me what you think the Conservative Party would look like if it was a person, what would that person look like? The second drawing; if the Conservative Party was food or a plate of food – what kind of food would it be?
<b>P3FG5</b>	Something bitter and lean [laughter]
<b>Moderator</b>	If the Conservative Party was a drink – what kind of drink would the Conservative Party be? The next one; if the Conservative Party was a sport which sport would it be? You can annotate drawings. And the final drawing; well you don't have to draw this merely write it – if the Conservative Party was a holiday destination – what would it be?
<b>P3FG5</b>	Where's Ashcroft gone? Dominique?
<b>Moderator</b>	Belarus?  The next part of the focus group is called the picture association round and I have a selection of photographs of broad subject areas and I want you to pick pictures you associate with the Conservative Party ranging from people to places to cityscapes, landscapes, institutions, TV shows – maybe choose around 3 or 4 photos which you associate with the Conservative Party. Which ones have you chosen P3FG5?
<b>P3FG5</b>	This one is a picture of old people eating tea and cake – the women's institute
<b>Moderator</b>	Yeah if you choose four and quickly tell me which ones you have chosen and maybe reasons for that. P2FG5 could you start?
<b>P2FG5</b>	I've chosen the Queen, Hunting, Cricket and Marks & Spencer. Well Marks & Spencer's because rich people shop for food there on a regular basis, and rich people tend to vote Tory. Cricket – I don't know why cricket, it's very English, kind of old traditional sport and I think you get a lot of kind of public schoolboys still playing cricket and taking it very seriously or at least the kids that I went to primary school with that ended up going onto public school they were always playing cricket. So that kind of thing. Hunting – do I need to say anything? The Queen – need I say more. Imperial kind of sign, head of the church and stuff and very old England glory days.
<b>Moderator</b>	Excellent – P1FG5
<b>P1FG5</b>	The Post Office and NHS hospital – reason for those – the Post Office kind of symbolises the whole privatisation and there aren't any pictures of anything else [privatisation], NHS hospital; their views on it and what they plan to do – not much. Old People and...
<b>Moderator</b>	Sorry to interrupt but you association the Conservatives with the NHS?
<b>P1FG5</b>	You said pick photos I associate with the Conservatives – it could be seen as they are lacking to do [NHS] as well. And the Old People; the same reason that they take care of them and the Posher-Upper-Class people.
<b>P4FG5</b>	I've gone for the English Flag; because they're all very you know Boris Johnson's given more money to celebrate St Georges day more than celebrating Black History Month in London, very much we should celebrate our national identity, we should be proud English people and none of this political correctness gone mad nonsense – they forget St George was Turkish. Old Church because they like to again the idea of English values, Christian values, family values and as part of our national identity. A US Flag because of a pro-American and anti-Europe special relationship idea, the City of London; very pro-the-city, pro-deregulating financial markets and the economy and letting big business do what it likes and investing and gearing the UK economy towards the city of London making it deregulated and making it an international centre as opposed to trying to develop, helping industry and the economy in the rest of the country develop. And the Countryside because that's where I see a lot of the Tory voters coming from, a lot of Tory voters living or having their second homes there while working in the city.
<b>P3FG5</b>	I chose the Pound, because it is something the Tories really want to hold on to and they think it's the foundation of our identity and if that's gone then the whole British identity, English identity disappears with it. Champaign; you know the – based on Thatcher's roaring 80s, you know the rich getting rich drinking Champaign when their stocks went through the roof and the two go together pretty much for me. The Union Jack is a symbol a lot of political parties like to wheel out when they need to declare war on somebody or rally all the people around this flag and the

	idea of the Bulldog; very much tied to these symbols of Englishness and stuff from the 1800's – the bulldog – grwww! Churchill – you know. All four of them together I think are things that are icons that the Tory Party like to bring out to preserve this idea of Englishness or Britishness whichever one suits them better at the time.
<b>Moderator</b>	Excellent – on the screen behind me is a selection of political party leaders, all but one of them have been at some point in history been leader of the Conservative Party. Could you put them in chronological order starting with the most recent and also tell me which person has never been the leader of the Conservative Party.
<b>P3FG5</b>	Kinnock [Neil] number 3! A proper red [laughter]
<b>Moderator</b>	Excellent – can you now put the Conservative leaders in chronological order?
<b>P2FG5</b>	Cameron, then is it number 2 [Iain Duncan-Smith]?
<b>Moderator</b>	No
<b>P4FG5</b>	Number 6 [Michael Howard] then 2, then 4 then 7 then 5.
<b>Moderator</b>	Wow that was fast – do you know all their names?
<b>P4FG5</b>	Yeah Cameron, Howard, IDS, Hague, Major then Thatcher [slime noise]
<b>Moderator</b>	Excellent – is there any one photo that jumps out to you? Or says something to you?
<b>P3FG5</b>	Picture number 5 [Margaret Thatcher] – she's a vile human being, self absorbed, naive, power hungry being and destroyed people.
<b>P2FG5</b>	I think it's the John Major one for me – he's got this really cheesy, Colgate almost American grin on his face like "vote me" – did he just take over from her [Thatcher]?
<b>P3FG5</b>	Yeah – how he won an election amazes me – he's the greyest man ever [laughter].
<b>P4FG5</b>	Thatcher just looks serious and like she's thinking but I don't like the woman. Major looks like he's having a school photo taken or he's at the cricket and then Cameron and I guess Hague and Howard especially all seem to have a bit of a smirk going on and that just isn't trustworthy to me perhaps it's because I know their policies...
<b>P3FG5</b>	And Hague's tabs really stick out [laughter]
<b>Moderator</b>	Is there a photo that stands out to you P1FG5?
<b>P1FG5</b>	No but I can class them into groups – 4, 3 and 6 [Hague, Kinnock and Howard] all look like school photos – 4 has the background that you'd normally sit in front but number 1 and 2 [Cameron & Duncan-Smith] it's kind of more personal because he's got the books behind him and David Cameron's got some something in the corner, some curtains – it's not as formal as the rest are.
<b>P3FG5</b>	Admittedly Kinnock clearly hasn't had the same sort of fashion advice with that pale blue shirt and tie [laughter]. But then again he probably came fresh from a pit [laughter]. And number 5's a woman [laughter].
<b>P2FG5</b>	Wearing her pearls – it's so colonial.
<b>Moderator</b>	Ok – political leaders. If you had to go for a pint with one of the three main party leaders – who would you go with?
<b>P2FG5</b>	The one on the right! [Clegg]
<b>Moderator</b>	Can you tell me his name?
<b>P2FG5</b>	I don't know
<b>P3FG5</b>	Nick Clegg
<b>P2FG5</b>	[Laughter] just because he looks more laid back.
<b>Moderator</b>	Do you know all these leaders P1FG5?
<b>P1FG5</b>	Yeah – who's the last one?
<b>Moderator</b>	Nick Clegg
<b>P2FG5</b>	He's the Lib Dem leader
<b>Moderator</b>	Actually before we go on what are your thoughts in the recent surge in opinion polls for the Liberal Democrats? Yeah what are your thoughts on the Liberal Democrats?
<b>P3FG5</b>	I think it's really interesting, I think one of the reasons why it might surge though because like there's so many people that don't read anything about the elections and they'll probably vote on a who their parents voted for "if they voted Conservative I'll vote Conservative" and all they'll know about Conservatives is that they'll stop our taxes being taken away from us whereas Labour will tax us and who the hell are the Lib Dems? And I think for the Lib Dems this has been amazing opportunity for them and they've totally took advantage of it.
<b>P1FG5</b>	I agree with that you always hear about the Conservatives you always hear about Labour but you rarely hear about the Lib Dems so.
<b>Moderator</b>	What are your thoughts on Nick Clegg? I know this research is focusing on Cameron but the recent surge has made it a hot topic at the moment. What are your thoughts?
<b>P3FG5</b>	Just based on the TV thing [Sky Leaders Debate] despite coming from a similar background to Cameron he came across less of a smug git, more real.
<b>P4FG5</b>	Yeah when he first came on I thought he was pretty much right-wing but he's winning me over a

	bit. I think yeah he did well and I think I prefer to see him not try to match the other two parties as much and he doesn't in his policies in the debate.
<b>Moderator</b>	Interesting – so if you had to go for a pint with one of them – which one would it be?
<b>P4FG5</b>	Nick Clegg
<b>P3FG5</b>	I'd be torn between Clegg and Brown. Brown's from Scotland so he probably likes a good pint [laughter], Clegg alright but I couldn't spend 10 minutes with Cameron.
<b>P2FG5</b>	He's [Cameron] would probably just come out with lots of smarmy remarks just enhancing his own ego and he's get annoyed when I'd pour a pint over him [laughter].
<b>P3FG5</b>	Then he'd try and drink 20 pints with you my old mucca – just like Hague did
<b>P2FG5</b>	“I want to take a picture with the normal people” [laughter]
<b>P3FG5</b>	Then shoot off straight afterwards [laughter]
<b>Moderator</b>	What about you Dave – who would you, go for a pint with?
<b>P4FG5</b>	Probably Nick Clegg, definitely not Cameron. Cameron I just don't like, I don't trust him. I think he's try and make conversation but I think it would be very boring conversation unless he knew the cameras where there. Brown I think it would be an awkward conversation.
<b>P3FG5</b>	You'd probably see Cameron buying pints at the start when the cameras are there and as soon as they're away he'd be like I'm not buying anymore [laughter].
<b>P4FG5</b>	I just think Nick would be more relaxed than the other two.
<b>P1FG5</b>	Any of them but if I had to say one I'd say Nick – because the others...I don't really like Gordon Brown for what he's done in the past and the couple of years he's been in power but then again I don't really know much about David Cameron so I'd have to choose between Cameron and Clegg but I know even less about Clegg so it would be nice to see what he has to say.
<b>Moderator</b>	Who would you go on holiday with?
<b>P2FG5</b>	Well if you can't stand to have a drink with two of them then you obviously can't on holiday with them either [laughter]
<b>P3FG5</b>	I'd say the same
<b>P4FG5</b>	Yeah
<b>Moderator</b>	Who would you buy a second hand car from?
<b>P2FG5</b>	Brown
<b>P3FG5</b>	Brown
<b>P2FG5</b>	Brown looks like your Dad doesn't he you know he's not going to shaft you not if he can help it.
<b>P3FG5</b>	I think he comes across to me as like...he's had a hard press buy I think he would try and screw you over as much as Cameron and I probably couldn't afford Nick Clegg's car [laughter]
<b>Moderator</b>	Would you say any of the three leaders trustworthy?
<b>P2FG5</b>	They're politicians of course they're not trustworthy [laughter].
<b>P1FG5</b>	I agree they're politicians and therefore aren't trustworthy.
<b>P2FG5</b>	It's the dirty-hands theory – you can't be in power unless you're willing to break the rules or manipulate or kind of jeopardise your integrity in some way because we're the type of people that would never do that.
<b>P3FG5</b>	If I was to rank them I agree with P2FG5 politicians are fairly filthy beasts but I see Brown as being a bit old school of Labour and I don't see him much of a – I think he's a pretty honest guy as far as politicians go. I don't see him trying to...that might go to his disadvantage in some respect but I think he's...Clegg is a bit of an unknown quantity and Cameron; he's a Tory.
<b>P4FG5</b>	I think...I don't know this for sure but I've heard that Nick Clegg had an expenses thing for his website for the past ten years which kind of suggests that he's honest and open. Brown; I think he's fairly honest, Cameron; I don't believe what he says except when the cameras are in the room and that's what he doesn't want people to hear so I'd put Cameron last to be honest with you.
<b>Moderator</b>	Would you say any of them are strong leaders?
<b>P3FG5</b>	There's been stronger
<b>P2FG5</b>	I think that Brown has done fairly well considering these aren't his problems he inherited them and he just you know it's like Blair handed him a big plate of poo and said “here you go mate I'm off” you know [laughter]. And he's done his best to hold everything together.
<b>P1FG5</b>	I do feel sorry for him for that fact as well.
<b>P2FG5</b>	I think...
<b>P3FG5</b>	He has stuck to his guns on...he's like this is what I thinks' best for the economy
<b>P2FG5</b>	Yeah even if it's been controversial
<b>P3FG5</b>	Yeah – and it's his economic policy that's holding us steady and building for a future
<b>P1FG5</b>	Yeah I think it's a bit unfair people are looking at Brown as the cause or the fact they're taking out everything that's happened now on him but it's not actually his fault in a way.
<b>P2FG5</b>	I don't like that he recently said in the Iraq Inquiry thing that he would repeat the whole Iraq thing that's the thing that held me back from voting for him because there's just no need

<b>P4FG5</b> <b>P3FG5</b>	Yeah
<b>P4FG5</b>	I don't think he was ever really that for it – I think it's like he just went along with it, you know he had a perfectly good opportunity to say that but he didn't and I think that's why there's people in the Labour Party that are still very much Blairite people.
<b>P3FG5</b>	I also think these days if you criticise the conflict you're automatically seen as criticising the soldiers and any criticism against soldiers is something that is not really allowed and it's not a criticism of the invasion, it's not a criticism of the work of the soldiers...
<b>P2FG5</b>	And he's not in a position to criticise the administration either – I mean he is a Labour candidate and it was a Labour administration that went to war so...
<b>P3FG5</b>	You've got to have a bit of party solidarity...
<b>P2FG5</b>	But if he was a strong leader he would have grown some balls and said "not me" [laughter]
<b>Moderator</b>	Finally, are any of these leaders likeable?
<b>P3FG5</b>	If you're asking about Cameron then no! For me and this irritates me and it's prevalent in the states that it's a presidential election, it's about the President and the president's character that seems to be something crucial. This isn't a presidential election and to be honest I don't care – the Prime Minister can be an arsehole. If he does his job properly then fine if Brown is a bit of a ball breaker and a grumpy bugger then if he gets the job done I don't care if he's not the most friendly chap to have a pint with. I'm voting for the party not the leader.
<b>P4FG5</b>	When he's cross you would expect him to shout at people
<b>P2FG5</b>	I don't know
<b>P3FG5</b>	Especially if someone fucks up
<b>P2FG5</b>	But don't you think we are kind of growing a bit more American in that, that there is a lot more focus on the leader rather than the party
<b>P3FG5</b>	...yeah and this worries me, which I don't like. Because that means we're going to have pretty boy leaders rather than leaders that bang heads together or take controversial decisions ... Just look at Vince Cable who was asked if he's like to be Prime Minister I mean run for the thing and he said "the first thing they'd have a go at me about is not my policies but my age. It's like you're automatically saying that if you get to a certain age or something you'd be like Gordon Brown – he's not a handsome chap but that shouldn't be a factor in deciding who the prime minister is – I'm sorry who the party leader is.
<b>P4FG5</b>	Yeah I think there's too much focus on the politicians – like with Labour and the Iraq war, the election after that there's a lot of Labour MPs that voted against the Iraq war who lost their seats because of the Iraq war and they looked at the Party leader and said argh Labour took us to war I'm going to vote this person out and you know we only went to war because Parliament said so and always supported the Labour leadership. Maybe it's down to people not engaging.
<b>Moderator</b>	Excellent – we are nearly finished now. What comes to mind when you see this guy? David Cameron?
<b>P2FG5</b>	One of the guys I used to throw stuff at, at school – just one of these ponsey, son-of-a-Tory, already bought a place at Oxford, toff, you know that doesn't really give a crap about anybody other than people who look just like him.
<b>P3FG5</b>	He strikes me he's a professional politician. He doesn't give a damn about...I reckon he's the type of person who would do or say what's necessary to try and further his political career and after that business career – he's a slimy git.
<b>P4FG5</b>	He's a polished performer! He's a public relations expert, advertising expert, he's image you know that's what he is...
<b>P3FG5</b>	Marketing and PR don't give a shit about politics
<b>P1FG5</b>	Similar to what he said – the image – he himself he is kind of the brand of Conservatism basically he's trying to put on a front rather than what he is.
<b>Moderator</b>	I know we've heard a lot of negatives of Cameron today – do you think he has any strengths?
<b>P2FG5</b>	His tie is nice! [Laughter]
<b>P1FG5</b>	I guess you could make all the negatives positive examples because it would come in handy to be really good at speeches at conferences and that could play to your advantage. At the end of the day it's not really a nice thing...
<b>P2FG5</b>	There are a lot of people that aren't going to go away and read the policies they'll just watch the TV and listen to the interviews and if he can work all the charm what kind of and say whatever it is that can convince a group of people this can confuse a lot of people...
<b>P3FG5</b>	Specifically he's been chosen as the Tory Prime Ministerial candidate to lead the party and e has been chosen for his style over substance and that's a pretty damning indictment of the Tory Party and probably of politics as well. As they feel as a whole that they need a young, youthful, PR driven image somebody who's sitting there saying these are the policies, this is how the party should go.
<b>P4FG5</b>	I think that he's polished performer are his strengths and that's why he is the way he is because he can talk at the party conference without a script.
<b>Moderator</b>	Are there any values which you associate with him?

<b>P3FG5</b>	He's old school Tory
<b>P4FG5</b>	He says what people want to hear so he writes one thing in the guardian and another thing in the telegraph and then writes the same thing with simpler language in the Mail [laughter] or just pictures [laughter]. He's "hug a hoodie" for the guardian, he's anti-prison for the Mail and he's anti-Europe for the telegraph.
<b>Moderator</b>	Excellent – I am going to show you a couple of pictures of David Cameron and I want you to say what comes to mind when you see them?
<b>P2FG5</b>	[Picture 1] Slime
<b>P3FG5</b>	[Picture 2] he's out with his little Eton mates having a drink
<b>P4FG5</b>	I like the way he's got that bit of parting in his hair
<b>P3FG5</b>	[Picture 4] He looks a bit like Nick Griffin [BNP] there
<b>P4FG5</b>	[Picture 4] It's Cameron the hard worker, Cameron the friendly person, Cameron the good politician.
<b>P4FG5</b>	[Picture 5] Cameron the statesman
<b>P3FG5</b>	[Picture 6] Bad-ass
<b>P2FG5</b>	[Picture 6] He's going to get the job done [sarcastic manner]
<b>P3FG5</b>	[Picture 6] ...or his auto cue's stopped and he's thinking crap!
<b>Moderator</b>	Excellent – we're on the final part now. Please pick up your sheets of paper and I would like you to draw me the how the UK will look if the Conservatives win the General Election and the second one is how will the UK look if Labour win the General Election. Whatever comes into your mind?
<b>P2FG5</b>	Can I just write what comes into my mind?
<b>Moderator</b>	Yeah no problem. Thank you for taking part today and if you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.
	<b>End of focus group</b>

## D.2 Focus Group Discussion Seven (FG7) – A-level Students from Maidenhead

Conducted on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2010

<b>Moderator</b>	Excellent – I know I've already gone through this with you but today I want to explore your opinions, perceptions and beliefs of the UK Conservative Party, your personal associations and thoughts commonly known as in marketing theory as the brand image. But before we start, I want to discuss branding; and it has been said that consumer branding theory can be applied to anything these days ranging from products, services, companies, religion, people, cities, countries and even political parties. Plus we come into contact with innumerable brands on a daily basis so I'd like to discuss your favourite brands, what you feel for that particular brand. Or you might hate the idea of branding and that sort of thing.
<b>P1FG7</b>	I like Renault [laughter]
<b>Moderator</b>	Do you have a Renault car?
<b>P1FG7</b>	I did [laughter]
<b>P3FG7</b>	I like Nike stuff
<b>P1FG7</b>	I like Addidas – all my football boots are Addidas
<b>Moderator</b>	Is there a reason why all your football boots are Addidas?
<b>P1FG7</b>	...because they look cool and they've got a good range
<b>P6FG7</b>	I think O2 gives them a good brand because they're like – I know they're reliable and they seem like very...they're going into the future and that sort of thing. I think they're quite clever in how they market and that sort of thing – I think they're pretty good.
<b>P5FG7</b>	I like Cadbury's because you know it's good chocolate – it means quality chocolate [laughter] It's reliable it's been going for years like if you were going to choose between like a homemade product and then Cadbury's you'd go for Cadbury's because you know what you're going to get.
<b>P3FG7</b>	Apple stuff is also cool as well...
<b>P5FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>P3FG7</b>	Don't you think it looks cool...don't you think MACs look cool and notebooks
<b>P7FG7</b>	I think they look a bit silly
<b>P3FG7</b>	Really?
<b>P7FG7</b>	I have good taste [laughter]
<b>P4FG7</b>	Coca Cola's good – I like it. I like the Christmas adverts. I like the taste and also the brand but I don't like Diet Coke very much
<b>Moderator</b>	You say you like the Coca Cola Christmas adverts?
<b>P2FG7</b>	Yeah they're great – they're very childhood memory
<b>P6FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>P4FG7</b>	They're just quality – gives me a happy memory
<b>P2FG7</b>	You know it's Christmas coming when you see the Coca Cola advert
<b>P6FG7</b>	I think Vogue is very sort of like...they almost create a group of people it's like if you read Vogue, you're that sort of person, you're in that sort of industry and that sort of thing...it's not necessarily a good thing to label yourself if you read a certain magazine
<b>Moderator</b>	What kind of group of people would Vogue be then?
<b>P6FG7</b>	Maybe fashion conscious, young-professional women living in a major city that sort of thing – like I say it's not necessarily a good thing to label people and generalise but that's what I think of Vogue – it's a good magazine. [laughter]
<b>Moderator</b>	Excellent – well we're going to move on now and look at some political logos. Could anyone tell me which party this logo belongs to?
<b>P7FG7</b>	The Green Party!
<b>Moderator</b>	This one?
<b>P2FG7</b>	Conservative
<b>Moderator</b>	This one in the corner
<b>All</b>	Labour
<b>Moderator</b>	This one?
<b>P4FG7</b>	Lib Dem
<b>P6FG7</b>	The Scottish...National Party?
<b>Moderator</b>	Out of all the logos on the screen – is there one logo that stands out to you?
<b>P5FG7</b>	Monster Raving Loony Party [laughter] just because it's comical rather than the others. It's more memorable...
<b>P1FG7</b>	I like the top right one [Labour] it looks like England Rugby
<b>P6FG7</b>	Yeah

<b>P2FG7</b>	
<b>P5FG7</b>	Yeah you almost think immediately that it's got something to do with England because of the rose
<b>P1FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>P6FG7</b>	I like the Green Party one and the Lib Dem one.
<b>Moderator</b>	What does the Conservative Party logo say to you?
<b>All</b>	Childish [laughter]
<b>P1FG7</b>	Crayons
<b>P7FG7</b>	Well it's not exactly clear
<b>P2FG7</b>	It hasn't got enough blue in it
<b>P3FG7</b>	I bet they did that deliberately though?
<b>Moderator</b>	Yeah you're right, the Party wanted to be perceived as supporting the environment "Vote Blue Go Green" slogan and I think £6 million was spent on that logo.
<b>P7FG7</b>	I really think the lib Dem would be the most recognisable because with the Labour one it's a rose and that's used quite a lot in imaging as well not just for the Labour Party and the Conservative one is the tree.
<b>Moderator</b>	Excellent – if you were elected Prime Minister tomorrow what one thing would you do? What kind of law would you bring in or what would you change? It doesn't have to be serious it can be funny.
<b>P1FG7</b>	Buy an Aston Martin [laughter]
<b>Moderator</b>	What about your loyalty to the Renault brand?
<b>P1FG7</b>	I don't have enough money to buy an Aston Martin hence the Renault [laughter]
<b>P2FG7</b>	I'd scrap uni fees or make them not as high.
<b>P4FG7</b>	I'd replace all exams with coursework – just have coursework maybe just have internal exams to see how you're getting along in your course but no exams to determine your grade.
<b>P3FG7</b>	Maybe have less exams
<b>P7FG7</b>	Maybe harder tests
<b>P6FG7</b>	Yeah because tests don't say what your overall ability is, it's just how you do in the day
<b>P2FG7</b>	Yeah some people completely mess up on the day with all the pressure on tests and coursework and the pressure.
<b>P5FG7</b>	I think I'd change how we were talking in politics about how schools these days is all about passing a test it's not actually about what you actually know it's like how the questions are phrased and how you answer that phrased question and I just hate how the fact it's become like that – it's not what you know it's how you write it down on a bit of paper. That's not what you're going to use in real life I think you need to focus on life skills
<b>P3FG7</b>	That's what I mean with tests you need something to measure your ability
<b>P4FG7</b>	I'd also change PSE to politics
<b>P2FG7</b>	Yeah, that would be a good idea
<b>P6FG7</b>	
<b>P5FG7</b>	
<b>P4FG7</b>	It's like political and social environment – but no one ever pays attention [laughter]
<b>Moderator</b>	Excellent – well when you think of the Conservative Party, what comes to mind?
<b>P1FG7</b>	David Cameron
<b>P5FG7</b>	David Cameron
<b>P2FG7</b>	David Cameron
<b>P6FG7</b>	Traditionalists
<b>P3FG7</b>	Margaret Thatcher and old people [laughter]
<b>P7FG7</b>	General shiftiness
<b>P3FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>P1FG7</b>	Not looking after poor people
<b>P2FG7</b>	Not wanting change, not looking forward. Stick up for themselves rather than everyone else.
<b>P7FG7</b>	Yeah. Old people! Everyone over a certain age votes Conservative.
<b>Moderator</b>	Do you know any Conservative Party values? Or policies?
<b>P5FG7</b>	Vote for Change!
<b>P7FG7</b>	Very pro-rich
<b>P6FG7</b>	Low public funding



<b>P2FG7</b>	Low taxes
<b>P4FG7</b>	I think like with the Lib Dems they're trying to appeal to everyone but I just don't think as a party they do.
<b>Moderator</b>	So you're saying you don't believe them.
<b>P4FG7</b>	No – I don't believe David Cameron
<b>P5FG7</b>	Yeah there's been too much focus on David Cameron's private life and what comes with it and it's the party we're voting for and not him. And recently there's been so many programmes...I think it's a good thing to know who the Prime Minister is but there's obviously going to be some sort of...he's going to change the way he is when he's not in front of the camera's because he's being filmed so you're not going to say what you actually think.
<b>Moderator</b>	Interesting. What do the rest of you think about the increased focus on the leader? Some say the Americanisation of politics?
<b>P2FG7</b>	I actually did an essay on this the other day [laughter]
<b>P1FG7</b>	It probably brings him more to the public eye but it's not actually that good for it – I watched the election debate and everything. I would have probably watched it if it had just been my local constituent MPs but I probably wouldn't have watched it.
<b>P6FG7</b>	I think for those who don't know much about politics tend just to be like influenced by the media and that just being focused on the party leader – I don't know if I wasn't interested I may just vote for the one's that cool, is nice and offers nice policies.
<b>P4FG7</b>	I don't think the result of the election should be changed by the TV debate but it will be.
<b>All</b>	Yeah definitely
<b>P6FG7</b>	But I do think the whole TV debate has increased interest and got everyone talking about it and I think the media's sort of when they say it's all about the leader's now I also think that's a bit...I think more people than we think actually want to know about the manifesto, want to know their policies and stuff like that and they're assuming people don't want to know about policies and issues because our society...I think it's wrong to assume that. I think more people than we think actually...you know at the end of the day whoever gets in will affect our lives so I think more people than we think are actually interested. So I think it's good that it's about leadership but I don't think it's an issue really.
<b>Moderator</b>	Did you all watch the last leader's debate? What did you think of the performance of the three leaders?
<b>P4FG7</b>	Nick Clegg just let the other too argue it out
<b>P5FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>P4FG7</b>	Yeah he'd just be standing there letting them argue and making themselves look immature
<b>P5FG7</b>	I thought Nick Clegg was cool and stuff until he left his note pad with his policies on in the back of a taxi [laughter] he was given it back when walking out of 10 Downing Street and he was like "here you're mate" and he was like where the hell did I leave that. [laughter]
<b>P7FG7</b>	I think Cameron generalised a lot whereas with Brown and Nick Clegg specifically mentioned policies but Cameron was more about just generalising about 'change' and what his party would do but not specifically giving examples.
<b>Moderator</b>	A couple of you mentioned 'change' – this is the message Cameron is trying to send out to the public but does anyone actually know what this change is?
<b>P3FG7</b>	[Laughter] that's the problem they're slagging off Labour but have nothing to say
<b>P4FG7</b>	Is it something about jobs? Giving jobs to UK citizens rather than people just brought into the country
<b>P3FG7</b>	It's interesting how they've gone quiet about cutting the deficit because in the build up to the election everything was like "cutting the deficit" "harsh decisions" you know "we're the people you can trust to turn the deficit around" and now nothing about the deficit because it means people are going to lose their jobs, people are going to have to pay more taxes.
<b>Moderator</b>	Excellent – in front of you, you have an excellent drawing if I do say so myself [laughter] and imagine I've just told you that the Conservative Party has just won the General Election and David Cameron is going to be your Prime Minister for the next 5 years and you're either telling a friend what you think or you're thinking about what I've just told you in your head.  I know earlier someone mentioned that they considered the Conservative Party as Party of the rich – what do the rest of think? Who is the Conservative Party actually for?
<b>P2FG7</b>	They're less of the party of the rich now but they still do have an association with the upper-classes and stuff just because who they used to represent.
<b>P4FG7</b>	They're for this type of rich boy we see around school – he comes in with his Audi car showing off [laughter]
<b>P7FG7</b>	I actually think Brown's comment about them looking like "Public school boys on the playing fields of Eton". I think that's kind of quite true because at the front of the Conservative Party in Parliament [front-benches] they just look like his cronies [laughter]
<b>P6FG7</b>	But then you wouldn't want somebody that has no idea what they're talking about to be running your country. Like if they've had a good up-bringing and it's not like David Cameron hasn't been

	through stuff...as to his education you're going to want someone like that who may not be representative for some constituencies and some groups of people would like but obviously you want someone who you can relate to and rely on and trust rather than someone who's going to do things and not think about it.
<b>Moderator</b>	Just going back to what you said Hayley, you said it wasn't David Cameron that changed the party [from less upper-class connotations] how has it changed?
<b>P2FG7</b>	When I think of David Cameron I don't think he's tried to pander to the rich I think Margaret Thatcher and all that kind of think was the sort of era and as I've started to get to know more about politics and stuff I don't find David Cameron sort of pandering to them because of all this sort of stuff he's trying to be like Brown did like appeal to...like he goes and does things like with the media and visits people and does all sorts to try and make like he doesn't so I don't associate him with that at all. But the Conservative Party itself yeah and the makeup of the Conservative Party is very much the same.
<b>P6FG7</b>	I think since Cameron's become leader I think he's sort of woken up and realised that the traditional supporters of the Conservative Party they're not the mass population of the country and I think he's realised that if the Conservatives are going to have popularity he's...they've got to appeal to broader support and I think he does move it in we were talking about it – big tent politics...and since the economy and everything they've started branding out again. When I think of David Cameron I don't think of Thatcher, you know I think he's different to Margaret Thatcher in how he works...
<b>P2FG7</b>	That's just him though the leader but still with the Conservatives as a group you still think of the old stuff so it's with the leader, on the surface that they appear to have changed
<b>P6FG7</b>	Yeah he's started to change the perception and when they get into office they'll be able to show they've changed so it's better to start educating people now and that kind of thing
<b>P1FG7</b>	I find him a bit fake though
<b>P2FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>P7FG7</b>	I don't think it helped with the whole Ashcroft [Lord] thing. I think because it almost seems like they're having backdoor donations that they're trying to look like they're not towards the rich and when they're doing these sneaky deals and things like that it makes them disingenuous.
<b>P4FG7</b>	Wasn't Nick Clegg found for having that as well though?
<b>P6FG7</b>	Yeah something in the papers this morning!
<b>Moderator</b>	Are we not all rich now though? Is there still a working-class? Is the class system still relevant?
<b>P4FG7</b>	There is still a working-class not necessarily...
<b>P2FG7</b>	A different kind of working-class
<b>P4FG7</b>	Yeah...obviously there's a class...a middle-class and a working-class very close together – yeah I still think there's a working class.
<b>Moderator</b>	Is class still an issue in UK politics in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century?
<b>P1FG7</b>	Yeah, education is still the biggest determining factor in class – in social class.
<b>P2FG7</b>	Primary industry is so low in the country now because we've got machines to do it all for us but like working-class have moved to a different spectrum...
<b>P6FG7</b>	Yeah we've still got the different classes it's just different from what it used to be
<b>P4FG7</b>	It's like low-skilled office workers are working-class
<b>P6FG7</b>	Yeah it like goes on your salary
<b>P4FG7</b>	It doesn't mean you're working-class if you're in an office it's more of a social thing than their jobs
<b>P2FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>P4FG7</b>	...I think you can base it on that because votes for the Labour Party still come from inner-cities generally and Conservative Parties still generally come from the country so that kind of proves that the working-class or would have been the working-class still vote Labour and still traditionally have these working-class values
<b>P5FG7</b>	I think that's the older generation
<b>P6FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>P5FG7</b>	Because I wouldn't associate myself with being with a party just due to class
<b>P4FG7</b>	...but that's because you're educated in politics – I'm saying the people not educated in politics will vote in a traditional way maybe the way their families have always voted.
<b>Moderator</b>	Have you been influenced by your family and friends in terms of politics and political allegiance?
<b>P5FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>P2FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>P7FG7</b>	Not really
<b>P1FG7</b>	Definitely
<b>P6FG7</b>	No, my parents won't even tell me who they vote for
<b>P1FG7</b>	Really

<b>P6FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>P3FG7</b>	Actually no because my parents don't vote so I can really say no and mean it [laughter]
<b>Moderator</b>	Just going back to the point of the leader; if someone from a working-class background was the leader of the Conservative Party – would that make a difference?
<b>P5FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>P1FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>P3FG7</b>	Yeah more of an achievement
<b>P7FG7</b>	Yeah –but I doubt that would ever happen [laughter]
<b>P4FG7</b>	But that would make them [Conservatives] feel so fake
<b>P5FG7</b>	Yeah but what's genuine?
<b>P4FG7</b>	Well someone who represents the values of their party by being like showing their values throughout their whole life
<b>P5FG7</b>	But how will they get the chance to do it if they're not in power? You just don't know until some actions actually taken – you've got to take a risk I suppose
<b>Moderator</b>	So do you consider this like a catch 22 situation; if someone from a working-class background worked his/her way up to become leader it would be perceived as fake...
<b>P5FG7</b>	There's always somebody who will say against everything
<b>P2FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>P5FG7</b>	...so you're never going to
<b>P6FG7</b>	I think there's still the rest of the party you know at the end of the day the leader's is nothing without the rest of the party and there's still a lot in the Conservative Party that are traditional Conservatives. So if the leader's like working-class then there would be friction in the party and that would affect policy ideas and then it would become a weak party and you know that wouldn't work either. You know it's such a bad thing we have these different ideologies going on – should the Conservative Party really move away from their ideology at the end of the day that's what some people want and those people deserve to be represented.
<b>Moderator</b>	Excellent – what we're going to do now is have a picture association around and I've been cutting and pasting a bag full of different pictures and I want you to look through them all and pick maybe 3 pictures. I want you to choose 3 pictures you associate with the Conservative Party
<b>P3FG7</b>	I think that I've got the best [laughter]
<b>Moderator</b>	And after you've chosen your 3 pictures – just tell me the 3 you've chosen and why.
<b>P3FG7</b>	I've got cricket, the Queen and the WI [Women's Institute] 24.48 The BBC would be a good one, an institution – oh Sainsbury's; they gave them [Conservatives] lots of money...there's a young Asian woman that can be Baroness Warsi
<b>Moderator</b>	Velma, which 3 did you choose?
<b>P6FG7</b>	Well Conservatives are really traditional and <b>BULLDOGS</b> are like an English symbol and come part of tradition and the idea of having different classes
<b>P3FG7</b>	Is it not a working-class English symbol that rather scrappy brute
<b>P6FG7</b>	It is but the IDEA of having different classes you know what I mean. Then the <b>ARMY</b> ; the war effort and everything you know that sort of being part of your country and fighting for Queen and Country and then a <b>TRADITIONAL ENGLISH VILLAGE</b> ; it should be kept, that sort of lifestyle and you know people should be allowed to grow old in communities, quaint, neighbourhood watch and that sort of thing.
<b>P2FG7</b>	I've got <b>FOXHUNTING</b> , <b>CHAMPAIGN</b> AND <b>JOHN LEWIS</b> . Because they're kind of upper-class and things that not everyone has.
<b>P7FG7</b>	Well not really apart from foxhunting.
<b>P7FG7</b>	I've got <b>MONEY</b> ; because [Conservatives] party of the rich, <b>OLD PEOPLE</b> ; probably their primary voters also I don't like the look of them and the <b>CHURCH</b> ; another organisation that's evil.
<b>Moderator</b>	Would you say your pictures reflect the Conservative Party more than the other political parties?
<b>P7FG7</b>	Yeah they've got the same sort of scary image [laughter].
<b>Moderator</b>	What do you mean by scary image?
<b>P7FG7</b>	I mean they're really tough on people and judge people and follow age old traditions and are out of touch.
<b>P5FG7</b>	I've chosen a <b>CUP OF TEA</b> ; because it's [Conservative Party] really British and I also think the Conservatives are sitting around drinking cups of tea and not doing anything at the moment anyway. <b>BRITISH COUNTRYSIDE</b> ; same reason and an <b>AMERICAN FLAG</b> ; just as we said earlier we're becoming more Americanised in terms of the way people know less about politics perceiving party leaders and how they're being influenced by voting for the party leaders rather than the manifesto and policies they're promising to do.
<b>P1FG7</b>	I've got <b>SAINSBURY'S</b> because they've given them [Conservatives] lots of money [laughter], got a <b>WINE GLASS</b> because its posh – because the Conservative Party is posh and the <b>BBC</b> because it's an age old institution like the Conservatives. Yeah it's an old British institution, still

	very traditionalist, I suppose the <b>BBC</b> stands for something for everyone, everyone contributes and everyone gets the same thing back so it might not be very Conservative with a small [C] but yeah.
<b>P4FG7</b>	I've got the <b>NHS</b> ; it's like a play on words really like the Conservatives are all about saving the country from the mess Labour has created so it's just like using the idea like the country being in hospital and the Conservatives are trying to bring it out from the mess Labour has done to it. I've also gone for <b>MARKS &amp; SPENCER'S</b> because I kind of think of them wearing Marks & Spencer's suits in the Conservative Party [laughter] and also it's quite an...Not that much an upper-class shop and then <b>THE CITY</b> because under Margaret Thatcher city boys were getting millions of pounds and I'm not sure David Cameron will change it.
<b>Moderator</b>	If I'd of asked you to choose your pictures on the basis you associated with the Conservative Party before David Cameron became leader do you think you would have chosen different pictures or exactly the same?
<b>P4FG7</b> <b>P1FG7</b>	Probably the same
<b>P5FG7</b>	If I really thought about it and what he's [Cameron] trying to do then maybe but no.
<b>P3FG7</b>	I think a lot of the stuff he's [Cameron] trying to do is a lot pseudo isn't it, it's quite on the surface...
<b>P2FG7</b>	...he hasn't been able to it yet because he's not in power....
<b>P3FG7</b>	... with his A-List of women you know the play he makes about Baroness Warsi about her in the House of Lords; about the first Asian Muslim woman...but I think it's all quite pseudo, it's as if he's trying to deliberately change the message of the Conservative Party and that makes people suspicious and makes people think
<b>P5FG7</b>	...he's just trying to get votes
<b>P3FG7</b>	...if you're not proud of who you are then why are you trying to...why are you trying to look more like the Labour Party from 97
<b>P1FG7</b>	...I just think he wants to be Prime Minister
<b>P3FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>P5FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>P7FG7</b>	I think what he's doing is he's talking about <b>CHANGE</b> but not many people know what he's going to do...he's not saying what, how he's going to change it
<b>P2FG7</b>	No specifics
<b>P7FG7</b>	Yeah...I don't think he's got no real idea what he means by change. Obviously he means political change again knowing what this change is.
<b>P1FG7</b>	...Yeah he just wants to be Prime Minister.
<b>P3FG7</b>	I think it would have served him better not to have touched the Conservative Party. I don't think there's anything wrong with these pictures, I don't think there's nothing wrong with being all these different things...I think we should be proud of some of these things. But I don't know...I think he might of done better if he was clearer. "Look this is what we are, this is what we stand for", you know...
<b>P5FG7</b>	...and stuck to it and keep trying to distort everything...
<b>P3FG7</b>	Yeah "look at us, look what we've got, we've got an Asian woman in the House of Lords, look at us we're just like you guys"
<b>P1FG7</b>	It's as if he's trying too hard
<b>P3FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>P5FG7</b>	Yeah. You'd be more proud of a party that sticks to their guns and stays with it and has some really strict policies and doesn't lose their identity and I think the Conservatives have lost their identity slightly because in the big tent
<b>P4FG7</b>	...but if they stuck with their old identity, stuck to their old values they wouldn't get voted in...that's the thing...do you want to win.
<b>P1FG7</b>	I think it's more about winning
<b>P3FG7</b>	I don't think it's about whose best anymore in terms of Labour or Conservatives, I think it's whose least worst?
<b>P5FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>Moderator</b>	Just going back to you P1FG7, you said Cameron just wants to win and he'll try anything and say anything
<b>P1FG7</b>	Yeah, he'll try anything to win. Obviously he does care but he'll do anything that he can you know change parts of his ideas, logo's and everything that he can just to win the election
<b>P5FG7</b>	I suppose that shows how much he does want to be Prime Minister and how much he does...
<b>P1FG7</b>	Yeah but I don't think he's got a good reason to become it. He just seems he wants to become Prime Minister.
<b>P2FG7</b>	It's not just him it's the rest of the Conservatives too.
<b>P6FG7</b>	I don't feel like there's a clear...I mean when I think of all the different parties I think the

	Conservatives are the least clear about what they want and it's sort of like how can I support a party that I've really not got much idea about what they stand for and by them not having a clear you know saying what they want, I don't feel like...as soon as they come into power they'll do almost what Labour did they don't actually stick with their manifesto, they'll change with the times and that sort of thing. I don't think they'll stick with it, which I don't really want, you know I want a firm understanding what's going to happen.
<b>Moderator</b>	Is that distrust just for the Conservatives or distrust for all politicians?
<b>P6FG7</b>	I think it's the same...Labour did it as well...
<b>P2FG7</b>	Labour did it better than the Conservatives are doing...
<b>P6FG7</b>	I think right now Conservatives for people to have confidence in them they need to make themselves clearer otherwise they'll think it'll just be like another Labour and there's not going to be...Cameron's like we need to change the country...well you're not going to if you haven't got this clear vision of where they're going to go.
<b>P2FG7</b>	Yeah Blair [Tony] knew what he wanted to do and what he needed to do to do it but Cameron hasn't.
<b>Moderator</b>	So with less than 2 weeks until the election, you're still not sure about this change or vision the Conservatives have.
<b>P4FG7</b>	I'm still not sure what we're changing from though!
<b>P3FG7</b>	Yeah or what to!
<b>P4FG7</b>	Yeah, I mean like it's obviously not perfect but it's not "Broken Britain"...I just think he's focusing on something that isn't necessarily important. Just keep it run well and change it...
<b>P5FG7</b>	...It's because it's been a bad year
<b>P2FG7</b>	Yeah with all the bad things that's been going on
<b>P1FG7</b>	I think because Obama won through CHANGE
<b>P2FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>P5FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>P1FG7</b>	He's using that as well
<b>P7FG7</b>	Don't you think it's ironic the Conservative Party are voting for change.
<b>P3FG7</b> <b>P5FG7</b> <b>P2FG7</b>	[Laughter] Yeah, yeah
<b>P5FG7</b>	But voting for change is so like cliché [laughter]
<b>P1FG7</b>	Then they're completely contradicting their own party
<b>Moderator</b>	Excellent – well if you turn to sheet 2 in your handouts – if the Conservative Party was a person, could you draw what that person would look like? Please feel free to annotate your drawings.
<b>P3FG7</b>	I've always envisaged Conservative people as unhappy people [laughter]
<b>P6FG7</b>	Or like happy on the outside but really unhappy on the inside
<b>P3FG7</b>	Yeah angry...
<b>Moderator</b>	If the Conservative Party was food, what kind of food would it be?
<b>P6FG7</b>	Definitely a roast [laughter]
<b>P2FG7</b>	Caviar
<b>P1FG7</b>	What does caviar look like?
<b>P2FG7</b>	Fish eggs!
<b>P1FG7</b>	What do fish eggs look like [laughter].
<b>P2FG7</b>	It looks like little balls.
<b>P1FG7</b>	I've drawn a silver plate with caviar stuffed with something [laughter]
<b>Moderator</b>	The next one is if the Conservative Party was a sport – which sport would it be?
<b>P1FG7</b>	Lacrosse
<b>P3FG7</b> <b>P6FG7</b>	Polo
<b>P7FG7</b>	Lacrosse, polo or foxhunting!
<b>P6FG7</b>	Or cricket actually...cricket on the green with some wine. With all the ladies sitting round in their hats.
<b>P3FG7</b>	I think my food one I'm particularly proud of – I've done a little novo cuisine on a massive empty plate with just a small bit of food in the middle. Very small substance, lots of empty plate and was fashionable ages ago and now nobody likes it [laughter]. Some kind of ponsey sauce and small blocks of meat or something.
<b>Moderator</b>	You don't have to draw the next one - if the Conservative Party was a holiday destination, what holiday destination would it be?

<b>P6FG7</b>	Benidorm [laughter]
<b>P3FG7</b>	[Laughter] what fake and plastic?
<b>P6FG7</b>	Yeah [laughter] all fake tan
<b>P2FG7</b>	I don't know...Scotland I'm thinking. Hunting in the highlands [laughter]
<b>P5FG7</b>	The Maldives
<b>P6FG7</b>	Yeah like a vineyard in Italy
<b>Moderator</b>	Excellent – I hope you enjoyed your mini art lesson. Now we are going to look at the leaders. On the screen you will see current and former Conservative Party leaders, could you put them in chronological order for me from the most recent and could you also tell me which one has never been leader of the Conservative Party and could you tell me who it is?
<b>P6FG7</b>	I'm not sure
<b>P1FG7</b>	I don't know
<b>P4FG7</b>	Can I say it out loud? Number 3 [Neil Kinnock]
<b>Moderator</b>	Yes
<b>P4FG7</b>	I don't know who he is though – is it Neil Kinnock?
<b>Moderator</b>	Yes, Neil Kinnock former leader of the Labour Party in the 80s/90s.  Everyone knows David Cameron the current leader of the Conservative Party – who was before Cameron?
<b>P6FG7</b> <b>P7FG7</b>	William Hague
<b>Moderator</b>	No, Michael Howard number 6!
<b>P6FG7</b>	Oh
<b>Moderator</b>	Before Howard?
<b>P1FG7</b>	Number 4? [William Hague]
<b>P5FG7</b>	4 yeah!
<b>P2FG7</b>	No 2 [Iain Duncan-Smith]
<b>Moderator</b>	That's right number 2 Iain Duncan-Smith
<b>P7FG7</b>	Then Hague, Major and Thatcher!
<b>Moderator</b>	That's right. Are any of those leaders prominent to you? Do any of them jump out to you?
<b>P4FG7</b>	Michael Howard because as I've grown up...well when I first knew about politics he was...I don't know why I remember him
<b>P6FG7</b>	Whose number 4? [William Hague]
<b>P3FG7</b>	He's in the Shadow Cabinet now
<b>P6FG7</b>	Yeah didn't he do something controversial? Did he do something or get kicked out or something?
<b>P3FG7</b>	The only thing I remember about him [Hague] was he tried to pretend he was really cool, one of the lads. Drinking 14 pints of bitter!
<b>P5FG7</b>	Obviously Margaret Thatcher the most – the most prominent and then Michael Howard. Actually. I don't know why.
<b>P6FG7</b>	John Major's like...he was like one of the weakest one's. You know Margaret Thatcher and some of them were strong government and he wasn't.
<b>P7FG7</b>	Weak in what way? Because he did win an election!
<b>P6FG7</b>	Yeah but he was all like you know he wasn't an autocratic leader.
<b>Moderator</b>	Do you like or admire any of those leaders?
<b>P7FG7</b>	No
<b>P5FG7</b>	I don't mind Michael Howard and I admire Margaret Thatcher now. Actually I saw her the other day in the farm shop in Windsor can you actually believe it.
<b>P6FG7</b>	I don't necessarily agree with what Margaret Thatcher did but I sort of admire her will power and the fact that she achieved what she wanted to achieve and that sort of thing and that's why I admire her in that perspective.
<b>Moderator</b>	Anybody else?
<b>P3FG7</b>	I've got quite a lot of time for Kinnock. I thought he was quite brave when he was leader of the Labour Party – I know we're talking about the Conservatives but still. It was a big step wasn't it taking the Labour Party further into the middle and Blair gets all the credit but it was him that started it off.
<b>Moderator</b>	Do you think that Margaret Thatcher still has influence in the party?
<b>P5FG7</b> <b>P6FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>P3FG7</b>	Definitely

<b>P2FG7</b>	She's the one that was the big Conservative that everyone knows
<b>P4FG7</b>	Cameron has said he's not a Thatcherite but he admires her or something.
<b>P3FG7</b>	Cameron's a fan of Thatcher but not a Thatcherite.
<b>P5FG7</b>	He's been calling himself "Dave" recently
<b>Moderator</b>	What do you think of that?
<b>P5FG7</b>	It should be formal – he's the Prime Minister
<b>P3FG7</b>	Well he's not – not yet anyway
<b>Moderator</b>	Behind me are the three main leaders of the three main parties – if you had to go for a pint with one of them – who would you go with?
<b>P6FG7</b>	Clegg!
<b>P4FG7</b>	I think Brown would stomach them though [laughter]
<b>P2FG7</b>	I think I'd choose Brown – he's a good politician he's just rubbish in the media so he's really good but he's...
<b>P1FG7</b>	Cameron's younger though
<b>P7FG7</b>	Which doesn't mean he'd be more fun [laughter]
<b>P5FG7</b>	Clegg or Brown – don't know much about them.
<b>P1FG7</b>	Dave would be cooler than Brown
<b>P3FG7</b>	Actually I'd much rather go for a pint with Gordon Brown – I reckon he'd be the most fun after 4 or 5 pints [laughter]. I think once you break down that exterior
<b>P5FG7</b>	I could imagine Brown telling a few jokes after a few pints
<b>P6FG7</b>	Cameron would be like...even after a few pints he'd still be really serious
<b>Moderator</b>	Who would you say is more honest?
<b>P5FG7</b>	Brown
<b>P3FG7</b>	Clegg looks more deceitful like if he gets in he's going to change everything and go nuts [laughter]
<b>P6FG7</b>	I don't think any of them are honest
<b>P1FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>P3FG7</b>	I reckon Brown is the most honest - I think he's got that sort of look that "I'm a bit of an idiot but I'm honest".
<b>P7FG7</b>	I remember in the Iraq War debate he made a mistake about something then the media was like "he's purposefully lying" I really do think that was a mistake
<b>P3FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>P5FG7</b>	Yeah I think he is a big cuddly bear and he's actually quite nice and good at what he does – he's just a bit of a plonker [laughter]
<b>Moderator</b>	Who would you go on holiday with?
<b>P6FG7</b>	Gordon
<b>P5FG7</b>	
<b>P2FG7</b>	I'd go with Cameron to an Italian vineyard
<b>P3FG7</b>	I think if you went on holiday with the Prime Minister I'd reckon you'd get loads of freebees [laughter]. Gordon's been in the cabinet for at least 10 years he'd have so many stories
<b>P4FG7</b>	I'd have Cameron so he could pay for everything [laughter] and we might meet extremely rich people who'd give me stuff whereas if it was Brown it would be a holiday to somewhere like Scotland
<b>P2FG7</b>	I'd go with Cameron because I've watched all these programmes and all his talking and enthusiasm and that's why...
<b>P6FG7</b>	Yeah I like his enthusiasm and he did that speech without any notes and that was quite impressive to stand in front of all those people and not have any prompts or notes. Obviously he practiced it over and over again but that was pretty impressive.
<b>P5FG7</b>	But I think that's all for show still and it's to show he is amazing at giving speeches and I can't work out whether he's [Cameron] genuine or not because I think some of it is, I do personally.
<b>P1FG7</b>	They've all got a bit of fake to them
<b>P5FG7</b>	Yeah they're politicians [laughter]
<b>Moderator</b>	What do you think isn't fake about David Cameron?
<b>P5FG7</b>	Some of the intense interviews he's had he's obviously going to watch what he's saying but you just know when someone's telling you...being genuine but I wouldn't necessarily say the things he does are genuine. And when he's put on the spot that's genuine! But the live debate he did look a bit like a nummy.
<b>P6FG7</b>	He's just very...he just tries to make his party look good and himself
<b>Moderator</b>	Who would you buy a second hand car from?
<b>P5FG7</b>	Brown because it'd be reliable

<b>P1FG7</b>	Brown actually looks like someone who'd sell a second hand car [laughter]
<b>P4FG7</b>	David Cameron because he looks like he'd own quite a nice car
<b>P5FG7</b>	I think he'd [Cameron] sell you one that looks good on the outside then it would breakdown as soon as you're round the corner [laughter]
<b>Moderator</b>	We've kind of picked up on the honesty of the leaders and you said you don't really trust any of them!
<b>P5FG7</b>	None of them are really trustworthy
<b>P6FG7</b>	Well we don't actually know...you wouldn't know unless you met the person and see what they're like with everyone
<b>P2FG7</b>	We only know them through the media so you can't
<b>P1FG7</b>	We need some secret footage [laughter]
<b>P2FG7</b>	You need to talk to family members as we're never going to know even though he's on the web with his family
<b>P1FG7</b>	Oh yeah the webcameron and all that [negative]
<b>Moderator</b>	Do all the webcamerons and samcam put you off then is that what you're saying?
<b>P5FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>P1FG7</b>	Yeah SamCam – the screaming kids – he probably just hits them when the camera is switched off [laughter]
<b>P6FG7</b>	I like how...I know this doesn't really have anything to do with the party the fact that Sarah Brown is more sort of...I don't know she's not just walking around holding her husband's hand she actually does stuff...
<b>P2FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>P6FG7</b>	...whereas I think David Cameron's wife is like "I must support my husband" it's not like
<b>P5FG7</b>	Independent
<b>P4FG7</b>	Wasn't there a debate about this?
<b>P3FG7</b>	Yeah when asked [David Cameron] who his ideal voter was he said his wife [laughter] you know who she'd vote for.
<b>Moderator</b>	Would you say any of them are strong leaders?
<b>P2FG7</b>	I think if we weren't in the media age then I would say Brown would be the strongest but because the other two are really media focused and then
<b>P1FG7</b>	...he's [Brown] got the experience too
<b>P2FG7</b>	Yeah and...
<b>P4FG7</b>	...I don't think he is [experienced] because I think he might be intelligent but he did sell all that gold but he...I don't think he is a particularly strong Prime Minister
<b>P6FG7</b>	Who was it...there were two ministers going against him and stuff...
<b>P3FG7</b>	Isn't the problem he's [Brown] too strong? With all the bullying, did he stamp his feet? The bit about Stalin and he didn't listen to anyone which has set up all the Labour Blair supporters.
<b>P6FG7</b>	When watching them on TV their body language especially the leaders debate and they were doing slow motion clips and everything and Gordon Brown's very much chopping hand movements and he's like stabbing the table and he's really aggressive and assertive like Steve said maybe he's too aggressive – I don't know.
<b>Moderator</b>	Ok, we will now move onto David Cameron – I'm going to show you some pictures now and I want you to say the first word that comes into your head.
<b>P3FG7</b>	[Picture 1] Serious
<b>P2FG7</b>	Camera
<b>P6FG7</b>	Posing
<b>P1FG7</b>	Yeah he proper looks like he's a poser [Picture 1]
<b>P7FG7</b>	He's highway between serious and happy [picture 1]
<b>P4FG7</b>	He looks exactly the same as he does in all his photos [picture 1]
<b>P3FG7</b>	"I'm working hard here" [laughter-picture 1]
<b>P6FG7</b>	He's also trying to look very relaxed [picture 1] in his environment
<b>P2FG7</b>	Yeah trying to look comfortable
<b>P4FG7</b>	Actually he looks quite angry
<b>P3FG7</b>	Yeah "this is my war face" [picture 1-laughter] "If I was going to war this is the face I'd put on".
<b>Moderator</b>	Picture 2?
<b>P3FG7</b>	[Laughter] "I'm one of you guys"
<b>P5FG7</b>	A womble [laughter-picture 2]
<b>P4FG7</b>	He looks like he's been grabbed somewhere uncomfortable [laughter]
<b>P2FG7</b>	He looks scared [picture 2]



<b>P3FG7</b>	Oh dear [picture 3] that's unfortunate
<b>All</b>	Laughter [picture 3]
<b>P4FG7</b>	If you put a wand in his hand [picture 3] he'd look like he's saying a spell or something [laughter]
<b>P3FG7</b>	I guess he's making a point politician [picture 3]
<b>P5FG7</b>	I can actually imagine him there making his "change" speech
<b>P4FG7</b>	[picture 3] That one he's obviously not trying to put up a front
<b>P5FG7</b>	Yeah he's in the middle of a speech
<b>All</b>	[picture 4] laughter
<b>P5FG7</b>	[Laughter] Praise the lord
<b>P3FG7</b>	Victory, victory [picture 4]
<b>P1FG7</b>	"Taxi" [picture 4]
<b>P6FG7</b>	Yeah smug [picture 4]
<b>P3FG7</b>	[Picture 4] It's like when your dad tries to be cool and he's obviously not [laughter]
<b>P2FG7</b>	[Picture 5] confused!
<b>P4FG7</b>	[Picture 5] If he gets picked to become Prime Minister that's the picture they'd print [laughter].
<b>P6FG7</b>	Yeah confusion [picture 5]
<b>P5FG7</b>	[Picture 5] "Where do I go"
<b>P3FG7</b>	I do feel sorry for him because there's so many photos of him taken on a daily basis that you can manipulate
<b>P7FG7</b>	Yeah have you seen that FACEBOOK group devoted to alter pictures of David Cameron – they're hilarious
<b>P4FG7</b>	Was that picture taken from a newspaper interview when he was quizzed about gay people and then he asked for the camera to be turned off?
<b>Moderator</b>	No, I don't think it comes from that interview – I know which one you mean – I've just been scanning google image for pictures of David Cameron
<b>P3FG7</b>	[Picture 6] "Backlit...power stance"
<b>P5FG7</b>	I actually feel a bit sorry for him on that one [picture 6] really, he looks worried – I want to give him a hug [laughter]
<b>P4FG7</b>	[Picture 6] It looks like he's going to be in a poster "We need you"
<b>P3FG7</b>	"I'm the leader, I'm in charge"
<b>Moderator</b>	Are there any of those pictures that you like or dislike or that you're drawn to or personifies David Cameron?
<b>P1FG7</b>	Bottom left [picture 2] because there's a short clip when this nutty fan came up to him in the street to talk to him about how he was going to vote for him and Cameron really panicked and he didn't know what to do "Cheers" and that looks like what he's doing there.
<b>P4FG7</b>	I like the middle 2 [picture 3 & 4] because they don't look fake
<b>P5FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>P3FG7</b>	Yeah they're the pictures [picture 3 & 4] that remind me most of him
<b>P4FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>P6FG7</b>	Especially the top one [picture 3] and that's how we should see him I think
<b>P2FG7</b>	Plus the one in the top left [picture 1] because that what he's there to do – we don't really want to see him like interviews or like the top right one [picture 5]
<b>Moderator</b>	Excellent. What could David Cameron now between now and the election to reposition his party and try and connect with people because a lot of you said he is coming across as fake, unclear and that sort of thing? Not coming across as genuine – could he do anything 2 weeks before the election?
<b>P5FG7</b>	No
<b>P6FG7</b>	I don't know be more confident
<b>P2FG7</b>	More clarification
<b>P4FG7</b>	He'd have to do something radical
<b>P3FG7</b>	I don't know the very nature of politics you kind of appeal to everyone all the time and in doing that you lose a lot of yourself
<b>P1FG7</b>	Maybe he should tell us what he's going to do rather than slag down the other parties
<b>P5FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>P4FG7</b>	
<b>P6FG7</b>	
<b>P2FG7</b>	Yeah rather what he's doing and not what they're doing
<b>Moderator</b>	Excellent. If you turn to the next sheet of paper "If the Conservatives win the General Election" can you draw what the UK will look like if the Conservatives come to power and on the second

	page what will the UK look like if Labour win the General Election. Again you can annotate your drawings.
<b>P5FG7</b>	Exactly the same nothing will change...I can't even draw the UK
<b>P3FG7</b>	I don't think that victory for the Conservatives you'd get that kind of vibe that the Americans got by electing someone like Obama. It's almost a step...I mean Obama's been really clear, I'm going to change this, I'm going to reform healthcare, I'm going to close Guantamino Bay. I'm going to do all these things...
<b>P2FG7</b>	...and you can see him [Obama] trying to do them.
<b>P3FG7</b>	...This is what I'm going to do and this is how I'm going to do it.
<b>P7FG7</b>	Yeah all the Americans were like "yeah free healthcare" and then Obama says how he's going to do it and the Americans all shout "no"
<b>P3FG7</b>	But he's put it through though
<b>P2FG7</b>	It's not what he wanted though, he's had to change it so much
<b>P3FG7</b>	So no I don't think the UK will look any different
<b>P5FG7</b>	We need a new party
<b>P1FG7</b>	We need a British Obama who's going to tell us exactly what he's going to do...
<b>P3FG7</b>	I don't think David Cameron's got that charisma
<b>P5FG7</b>	He's got that fake charisma but you can tell it's fake
<b>P3FG7</b>	Yeah in order to win I have to be charismatic
<b>P5FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>P3FG7</b>	"Here's my charisma" [laughter]
<b>P1FG7</b>	Obama's got that quality voice as well...his voice is sick
<b>P5FG7</b>	Yeah exactly
<b>P3FG7</b>	[but Cameron] hasn't got that style or substance Obama has
<b>P4FG7</b>	Obama was walking around as if you knew he was going to win
<b>P5FG7</b>	Obama had complete confidence
<b>P6FG7</b>	I think Obama could relate to people more and people believed him more
<b>Moderator</b>	So are you saying it is David Cameron's personality or character that's putting people off?
<b>P3FG7</b>	I don't think it's his character
<b>P6FG7</b>	I don't think it's putting people off if anything I think it's making people like him
<b>P3FG7</b>	I think the American's were lucky...they went from being really, really, Conservative and really on the right on the political spectrum and the thing with offering change was something on the left and it was more helping everyone and more for a better society whereas I don't really get Cameron's idea of a "big society". I guess that means we're just withdrawing state support and letting charities do it and that's what happens.
<b>Moderator</b>	What do you think about this "Broken Britain" Cameron keeps talking about?
<b>P3FG7</b>	It's not broken
<b>P5FG7</b>	There's the same problems there's always been and the media has just intensified the problems by because they're in your face every single day and it just seems like it's a lot worse
<b>P4FG7</b>	They're using it as an excuse...quite ironically last time there was a broken Britain which was under Thatcher and the Conservatives
<b>P2FG7</b>	Some people consider the miners strikes and the winter of discontent that was true broken Britain
<b>P5FG7</b>	Yeah that's why it isn't a true broken Britain...we'll see in two weeks time. There's not really anything major that's going to get people to vote so we'll see if all this "change" is true or not.
<b>Moderator</b>	Just the final point really – could you give me some strengths and weaknesses of David Cameron and then the Conservative Party?
<b>P1FG7</b>	He's [Cameron] fake, he's trying to hard
<b>P5FG7</b>	He appeals to people who don't know much about politics so say if they're just judging it on like the leader then he could appeal to people
<b>P6FG7</b>	He's quite likeable
<b>P4FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>P1FG7</b>	He's undermining the Conservative Party
<b>P3FG7</b>	Yeah I think one of the biggest weaknesses of him is the party he leads isn't it...
<b>P5FG7</b>	Yeah
<b>P6FG7</b>	...it's not right for him...
<b>P3FG7</b>	He's almost...he's electable but he's in charge of this massive, <i>[party that doesn't want him – P5FG7]</i> bloated party that's trying to change and going away from its principles a little bit
<b>P6FG7</b>	I think David Cameron with the Conservative Party is quite weak because like Steve was saying

	it's a large different group of ideas within the Conservative Party, it's not like a united front which people can believe in and I think if they get into power then they'd be so much...so many different ideas coming it'd be like ideas coming from everywhere and it wouldn't be strong – I don't think.
<b>Moderator</b>	Excellent thank you very much for taking part today. I hope you enjoyed it.
	<b>End of Focus Group Discussion</b>

## Appendix E: Examples of Coding Reports

### E.1 Coding Report (Mind Map) of an In-depth Interview with an Internal Conservative Stakeholder

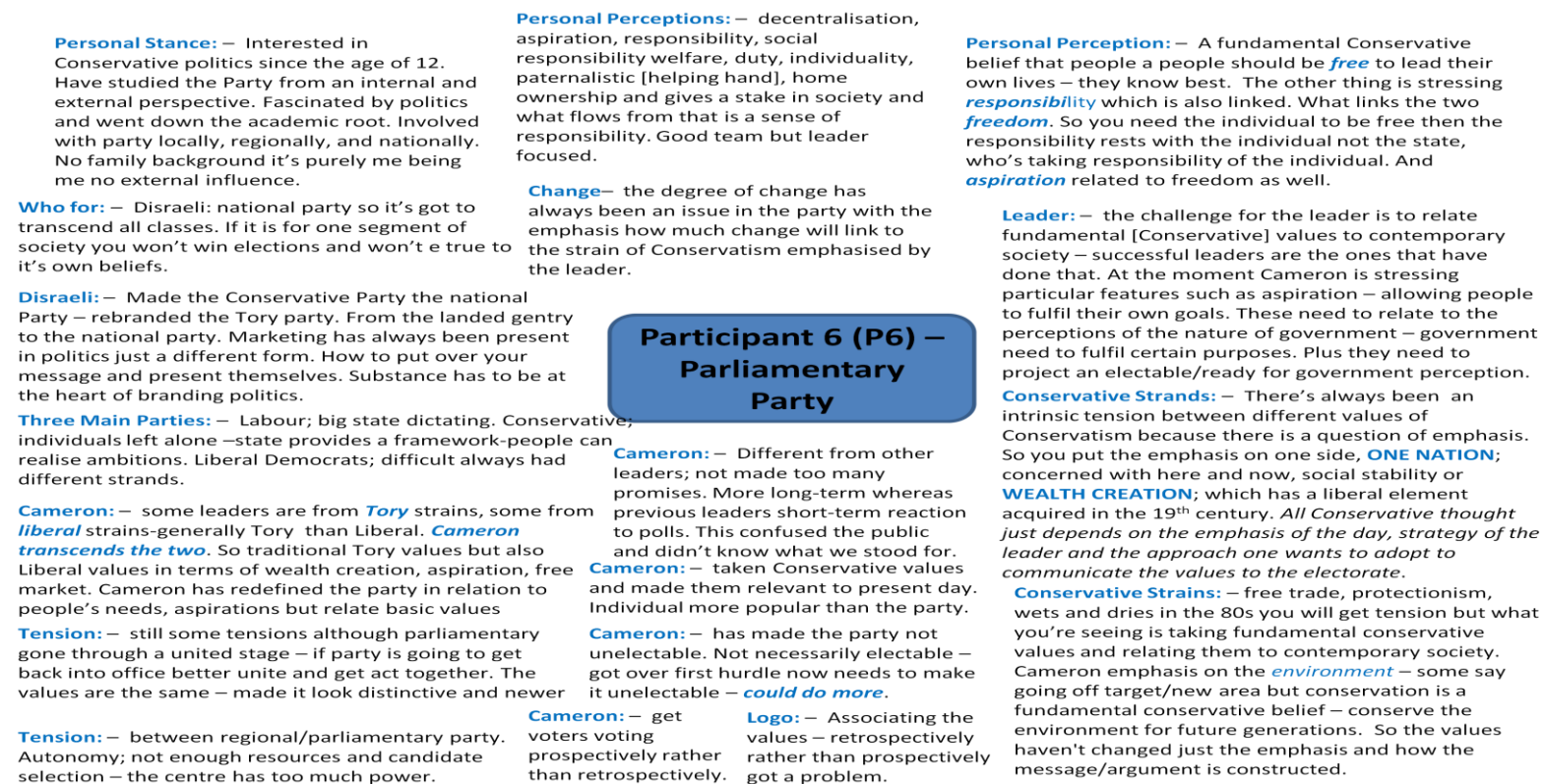


Figure E.1.1: Coding Report (Mind Map) of an In-depth Interview with an Internal Conservative Stakeholder

# P6 Interview - Key Points

- **Conservatism** is evolutionary it's not static so it believes there can be change – can brands continue to do this?
- Values are the same just message is different with a different transcending emphasis
- **Cameron:** – has made the party not unelectable. Not necessarily electable – got over first hurdle now needs to make it unelectable – *still a way to go* – *got to work at it*. In 2005 people didn't like Labour but weren't prepared to vote Conservative – people become more prepared. No alternative government in 2005. Now there is an alternative.
- **Cameron:** – get voters voting prospectively rather than retrospectively. The logos/symbols had to be changed. Delivery of the message – more still could be done
- **Logo:** – Associating the values – retrospectively rather than prospectively got a problem. *Are the values of the past still present for the new brand Cameron?*

Figure E.1.2: Key Points from the Coding Report (Mind Map) of an In-depth Interview with an Internal Conservative Stakeholder

## E.2 Coding Report (Mind Map) of an In-depth Interview with an Internal Conservative Stakeholder



Figure E.2.1: Coding Report (Mind Map) of an In-depth Interview with an Internal Conservative Stakeholder

**Policies:** Up until a couple of weeks ago they didn't really have any policies – heard policies will come out during the election campaign. Don't want Labour to steal them. Hope more policies will be revealed.

**Brigg & Goole:** Differs a lot from the central party different job to do. Central party deals with the business of the party, image, policy whereas the local parties do the ground work/hard work – different approach.

**Cameron's Conservatives:**  
Honest, approachable, family man, normal guy – although not everyone believes it.

Participant 29 (P29)  
Voluntary Element  
UK Conservative Party  
Party 2

**Cameronite:** Slightly more centred, slightly laid back, a little more modern, looks forward than looking back – tends to be younger.

**Distinction:** Difference where ever you are – more Conservative associations in working-class areas now. Associations are run differently and tend to have different views – difference between marginal seats and safe seats. Marginal seats are harder to work.

Figure E.2.2: Coding Report (Mind Map) of an In-depth Interview with an Internal Conservative Stakeholder

## P29 Interview – Key Points

- **Conservatives 2006:** What drew me to the Conservatives was how bad Labour was and what they'd done – I think that's what pushed me towards rather than what the Conservatives had done right.
- **Core Values:** They do have core values but not being put forward at the minute.
- **Catch 22:** Have to prove it to people that the Conservatives can be trusted then they will be believed. Message not believed and can only be believed if the Conservatives put their policies into action and they can only do that if they're elected.
- **No differentiation:** Political landscape has changed – more fringe parties – the mainstream parties have converged in the centre – no real choice – not a good thing – need more distinction.
- **Hague:** Prefer Hague to Cameron. Has more substance than Cameron, more experience.
- **Changed:** DC was the finishing touch to show the party had changed. Cameron as leader changed the image to the greater general public.

Figure E.2.3: Key Points from the Coding Report (Mind Map) of an In-depth Interview with an Internal Conservative Stakeholder



### E.3 Coding Report (Mind Map) of a Focus Group Discussion with External Stakeholders Aged 18-24

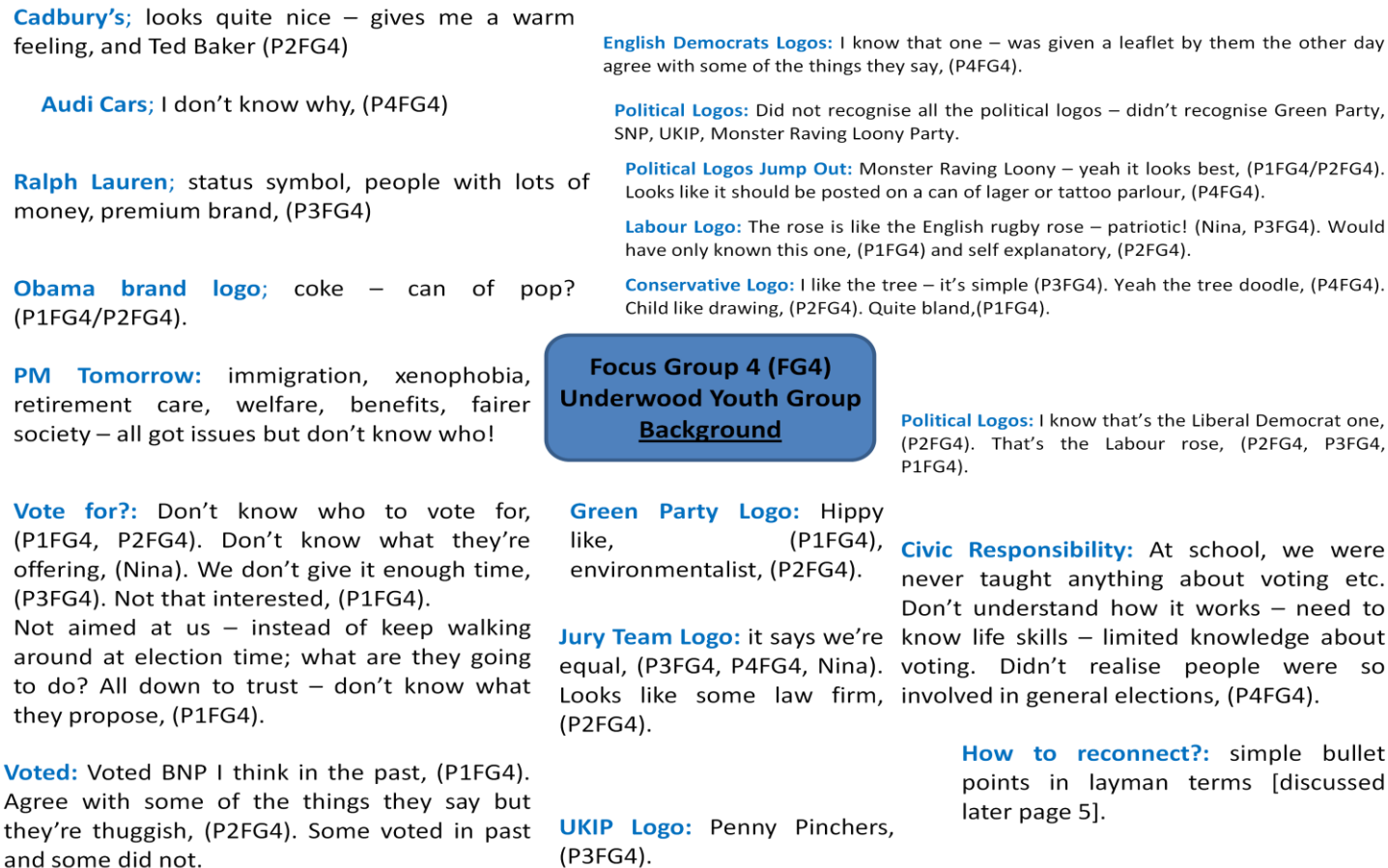


Figure E.3.1: Coding Report (Mind Map) from a Focus Group Discussion

**Comes to mind:** Upper-class people (P3FG4, P1FG4). Upper class people voting Conservative and Conservatives looking after their own – might not be true but that’s what comes to mind, (P3FG4). Don’t come across as relating to working-class people, (P4FG4).

**Comes to mind:** Thatcher and the poll tax. My mum went on the poll tax march, (P1FG4). The upper-classes would be the only ones not to be affected by the poll tax, (P1FG4, P3FG4). Just get the impression look after the rich and if things go up the rich will be ok, (P3FG4).

**Focus Group 4 (FG4)**  
**Underwood Youth Group**  
**Conservative Party**

**Class:** Not as relevant as it was – doesn’t personally effect us, (All).

**Conservative Policies:** No, (All). It’s not we don’t read/follow politics or understand politics it is just it’s boring and long-winded, (P3FG4, P2FG4). However if political parties gave me simple bullet points on what they’re going to do (P2FG4, P3FG4:5) and put in layman’s terms [articulate it in a way for us, (P1FG4, P3FG4).

**Comes to mind:** Granddad and dad always voted Labour because the Conservatives shut all the pits and all the jobs lost, (P4FG4). If Thatcher is mentioned in my house all hell breaks loose, redundancies and Falklands (P1FG4:3).

**Comes to mind:** People with little or no interest in politics only know of Conservatives under Thatcher. These stories are passed down generations. Therefore retrospectively rather than perspective.

**David Cameron:** Son died and that’s all I know, (P1FG4). He seems quite nice, he was on TV late night [ITV TONIGHT], (P4FG4). The one whose wife is pregnant, (P3FG4, P1FG4). Saw him on GMTV seems really nice, (P1FG4). Although seems a bit smug (P4FG4). I don’t think so, (P1FG4).

**Conservative Leaders:** Margaret Thatcher (P1FG4), John Major (P2FG4), David Cameron, (P4FG4). Michael Howard was confused was a TV character from “Frasier” or a news reader. *All have heard of the leaders names but could not name them all only the “famous” leaders.* However “and he’s [Cameron] part of the Conservatives?” (P4FG4).

**Figure E.3.2: Coding Report (Mind Map) from a Focus Group Discussion**

**3 Party Leaders:** Know Gordon Brown, (P3FG4, P4FG4). "...And he's the PM"? (P2FG4). "...And David Cameron is the leader of the Conservatives"? (P3FG4). "Is he [Clegg] something to do with the Lib Dems"? (P4FG4). Did not know Clegg's name! I've heard of him (P1FG4) I haven't heard of him, (P3FG4). Don't know much about the Lib Dems, (P4FG4, P2FG4, P3FG4).

**Voting:** If you don't vote you can't say a say in how the country is bring run, (P1FG4).

**Generational Thing:** When you're younger you don't see the importance and the influence politics has on your life, (P1FG4:9). Yeah when you're earning you know what's going up and what's going down and what the government are changing, (P3FG4). Politics wasn't relevant for us at the last election, (P1FG4). Relevant now plus 13% going on my cider, (P2FG4).

**Political Stories:** All the polish have all the jobs (P1FG4) and someone told family member was not priority at a job centre visit (P4FG4). We all come from families that work and it just seems odd! Distinction between under-class [benefit/cheat work shy & working-middle class

**Differences:** Haven't got a clue (P1FG4). Labour more working-class (P4FG4). Labour focus more on employment and jobs – stuff like that? (P4FG4) Is that not Conservatives putting more money into jobs and armed forces? (P3FG4).

#### Focus Group 4 (FG4) Underwood Youth Group Political Party Leaders

**Labour:** It's not Labour's fault we've had a recession – the whole world's had one (P2FG4). Yeah but there were things Labour could have done, made things worse, (P4FG4, P3FG4).

**Downs Rational Voter:** My vote wont make a difference if I vote for an outsider (P2FG4). Why don't they all work together, (P1FG4).

**Trustworthy:** No (P4FG4, P1FG4). **Genuine:** No (P1FG4). All scripted, (P4FG4).

**Pint:** Brown (P2FG4) I can relate to him more (P4FG4). I think because Brown's Labour he can relate to you more, (P3FG4). Lib Dem guy because I don't know much about him (P2FG4).

**Holiday:** Cameron – don't know why (P2FG4). Brown – I'd quiz him about the decisions he's made, (P4FG4). Brown hasn't caused the economic crisis? (P2FG4).

**Second hand car:** Cameron; Gordon no because the situation we're in now and Gordon probably sell me a shed, (P3FG4). Brown looks more trustworthy and older, (P2FG4). Cameron; feel sorry for him because his baby died, (P1FG4). If Cameron sticks to his word I'd buy one from him if he puts money into the NHS and gives to the forces, (P3FG4).

**Political Parties:** Should keep to their word and shouldn't break their pledges. Maybe have a contract or if not achieved by certain amount of time.

**Age:** I quite like Blair don't know why, (P1FG4). Prefer experience and age – they know what happened in the past, (All). Brown lived through it, they're wiser in years (All).

**We need:** A distinction between national and local candidates parties, (P4FG4). Although nothing changes locally so why bother voting, (P2FG4). We only hear from them during election time – we need constant communication over the 5 years, (P4FG4).

**Catch 22:** If you vote Conservative you don't know they're going to do what they say they're going to do until they get in and then it's too late, (P3FG4). Why don't they just all work together, (P1FG4).

Figure E.3.3: Coding Report (Mind Map) from a Focus Group Discussion

**Strong Leader?:** Cameron, (P4FG4). Cameron's passionate (P3FG4). Cameron knows his stuff (P2FG4) and passionate about what he's saying, (P3FG4). Not sure about Brown (P4FG4), Brown looks tired and Clegg looks weedy, (P3FG4). Brown looks like a big teddy bear, (P1FG4).

**Cameron's Conservatives:** It all seems to be about the Conservatives. Cameron seems to be saying all the right things – too good to be true, (P3FG4). Labour said this 5 years ago, (P4FG4). Exactly this is why I question this now, (P3FG4). Same with any election (P1FG4, P2FG4). We've only ever heard these stories from our families as we've not lived under a Conservative government and we believe our parents, (P1FG4).

Focus Group 4 (FG4)  
Underwood Youth Group  
David Cameron

**Likable:** Lovely family man, (P1FG4, P4FG4). He seems nice when I see him on TV, (P1FG4). But I don't trust him, (P4FG4) I've not seen enough of him (P3FG4). Like to know more about Clegg (P4FG4).

**Cameron:** Pompous git – could be a player (a bit of a rough) he'll say things on the surface but got an underlining plan (P2FG4). Family man (P1FG4). He comes across as a strong leader but I'm weary and don't fully trust him (P4FG4:13). Cameron made all participants look more at the Conservatives – more of it about, (P4FG4).

**DC Pictures:** Lawyer, goon, passionate, forgotten, stressed, arrogance, passionate, debating. I still don't really like Cameron, (P4FG4). I do, (P1FG4).

**Draw UK:** I don't think they'll be any change, (P1FG4).

Figure E.3.4: Coding Report (Mind Map) from a Focus Group Discussion

## Key Points from Focus Group 4 (FG4)

- **Labour Logo:** The rose is like the English rugby rose – patriotic! (P1FG4, P3FG4).
- **Vote for?:** Don't know who to vote for, (P1FG4, P2FG4). Don't know what they're offering, (P1FG4). We don't give it enough time, (P3FG4). Not that interested, (P1FG4). Not aimed at us – instead of keep walking around at election time; what are they going to do? All down to trust – don't know what they propose, (P1FG4).
- **Civic Responsibility:** At school, we were never taught anything about voting etc. Don't understand how it works – need to know life skills – limited knowledge about voting.
- **Comes to mind:** People with little or no interest in politics only know of Conservatives under Thatcher. These stories are passed down generations. Therefore retrospectively rather than perspective.
- **Recognised Conservative Leaders:** Margaret Thatcher (P1FG4), John Major (P2FG4), David Cameron, (P4FG4). Michael Howard was confused was a TV character from "Frasier" or a news reader. All have heard of the leaders names but could not name them all only the "famous" leaders. However "and he's [Cameron] part of the Conservatives?" (P2FG4).
- **Generational Thing:** When you're younger you don't see the importance and the influence politics has on your life, (P1FG4). Yeah when you're earning you know what's going up and what's going down and what the government are changing, (P3FG4).
- **Political Stories:** All the polish have all the jobs (P1FG4) and someone told family member was not priority at a job centre visit (P4FG4).
- **Age:** I quite like Blair don't know why, (P1FG4). Prefer experience and age – they know what happened in the past, (All). Brown lived through it, they're wiser in years (All).
- **We need:** A distinction between national and local candidates parties, (P4FG4).

Figure E.3.5: Key Points from the Coding Report (Mind Map) of a Focus Group Discussion with External Stakeholders

#### E.4 Political Affiliation of External Stakeholders Aged 18-24

**Table E.4.1: Political Affiliation of External Stakeholders from the Focus Group Discussions**

<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Floating/ Undecided</b>	<b>Tactical</b>	<b>Researcher Unsure</b>
P1 FG8	P4 FG8	P1 FG7	P2 FG5	P2 FG8	P3 FG7	P1 FG3
P2 FG7	P7 FG7	P1 FG6		P3 FG8		P2 FG3
P3 FG4	P1 FG2	P3 FG6		P6 FG8		P3 FG3
P4 FG3 (?)	P4 FG2			P4 FG7		P5 FG3
P6 FG2	P8 FG2			P5 FG7		P3 FG2
P2 FG2	P5 FG1			P6 FG7		
P1 FG1				P8 FG7		
				P2 FG6		
				P4 FG6		
				P5 FG6		
				P6 FG6		
				P1 FG5		
				P3 FG5		
				P4 FG5		
				P1 FG4		
				P2 FG4		
				P4 FG4		
				P5 FG2		
				P7 FG2		
				P2 FG1		
				P3 FG1		
				P4 FG1		
<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>
						<b>Total 45</b>

# E.5 Four Categories of Construction Projective Techniques from Focus Group Discussions

**Table E.5.1: Four Broad Categories of Construction Projective Techniques**

Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrat	Green	Floating/ Undecided	Tactical	Researcher Unsure
P1 FG8	P4 FG8	P1 FG7	P2 FG5	P2 FG8	P3 FG7	P1 FG3
P2 FG7	P7 FG7	P1 FG6		P3 FG8		P2 FG3
P3 FG4	P1 FG2	P3 FG6		P6 FG8		P3 FG3
P4 FG3 (?)	P4 FG2			P4 FG7		P5 FG3
P6 FG2	P8 FG2			P5 FG7		P3 FG2
P2 FG2	P5 FG1			P6 FG7		
P1 FG1				P8 FG7		
				P2 FG6		
				P4 FG6		
				P5 FG6		
				P6 FG6		
				P1 FG5		
				P3 FG5		
				P4 FG5		
				P1 FG4		
				P2 FG4		
				P4 FG4		
				P5 FG2		
				P7 FG2		
				P2 FG1		
				P3 FG1		
				P4 FG1		
7	6	3	1	22	1	5
						<b>Total 45</b>
Negative Interpretation						
Positive Interpretation						
Neutral						
Questioned						

E.6 Negative Illustrations Generated from the Construction Projective Techniques used in the Focus  
Group Discussions

**Table E.6.1: Negative Illustrations Generated from the Construction Projective Technique**

Participant/ Group	Political Leaning	Speech Bubble	Thought Bubble	Extras
P5 FG1	<b>Labour</b>	“Doomed, back to Thatcherism, Upper-class get richer, working-class poorer”.	-	
P1 FG2	<b>Labour</b>	“The Conservatives won’t be good for Britain”.	-	
P8 FG2	<b>Labour</b>	“DAMN IT!”	“I knew I should have voted”!!	
P1 FG3	<b>Unsure</b>	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change</li> <li>• A greater power to the rich</li> <li>• Conflict with society</li> </ul>	<b>Mentioned “Change”.</b>
P2 FG3	<b>Unsure</b>	-	“Oh great George Osborne is the new Chancellor”.	<b>Sad face</b>
P3 FG3	<b>Unsure</b>	“The Conservatives will probably win. Older generation will be happy”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change</li> <li>• Probably low tax for the rich</li> <li>• Middle-class will suffer</li> <li>• The rich will be smiling.</li> </ul>	
P1 FG5	<b>Float</b>	“Can you believe the Conservatives actually won? After so long of trying and failing, will they make more of a difference than Labour?”	“Nothing will change with Conservatives. At least we knew what to expect with Labour but how bad will things get with the Conservatives?”	<b>Despite negative overall – a couple of questions are asked!</b>
P2 FG5	<b>Green</b>	“I’m leaving the UK!” “Me too!”	-	
P3 FG5	<b>Float</b>	“The Conservatives have won! The slimy face of David was what did it and their lies”.	“I’m out of here! Where shall I move?”	
P4 FG5	<b>Float</b>	“Oh dear – life in this country is going to get worse”.	“Get ready for rising unemployment and increase in social inequality and crime”.	
P2 FG6	<b>Float</b>	-	Pffttt as if we have a toff with a bike running the country.	
P3 FG6	<b>Lib Dem</b>	“No – where’s Cleggy”!!	“Ahh OMG”!!	
P1 FG7	<b>Lib Dem</b>	“Bad news! The worst. I’m moving to New Zealand”.	“Oh SHIT! Viva la revolution”?	
P4 FG7	<b>Float</b>	“Yeah I’m really happy for change”.	“Shit I’m leaving the country”.	<b>Sarcasm in speech bubble.</b>
P5 FG7	<b>Float</b>	-	“The quality of education and services is going to fall dramatically”.	
P6 FG7	<b>Float</b>	“Is it really going to make a massive change or will they not stick with ideas like Labour did. Not sure if I believe them”.	“Nice to have a change”.	<b>Sceptical because of Labour and question of trust!</b>
P7 FG7	<b>Labour</b>	“5 years of a Prime Minister I would never have wanted”.	“Is this really change”.	
P2 FG8	<b>Float</b>	“I don’t like David Cameron”.	-	
P3 FG8	<b>Float</b>	“Wankers”!	“No real change here then – well only for the wealthy”!!!	
P4 FG8	<b>Labour</b>	“We are in for some lean years, will we have another recession”?	“Oh hell”!	
P5 FG8	<b>Labour</b>	“Great!!! (Sarcastic)”	“What will happen to education? Will I still have a job? Will I have a bigger class of children”?	
P6 FG8	<b>Float</b>	“It’s downhill from here on in”.	“Same people different party”.	



## Appendix F: Outline of Samples

### F.1 Internal Stakeholders

**Table F.1.1: Outline of Sample for Phase One – Internal Conservative Stakeholders**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Element of the Conservative Party</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Date Interviewed</b>
P1	Professional Party	Conservative Councillor	15 <sup>th</sup> December 2009
P2	Professional Party	2010 Conservative Prospective Parliamentary Candidate and Conservative Councillor	18 <sup>th</sup> December 2009
P3	Professional Party	2010 Conservative Prospective Parliamentary Candidate (subsequently elected in 2010). Former Conservative Councillor	19 <sup>th</sup> December 2009
P4	Professional Party	Conservative Councillor and Campaign Manager for Participant three (P3).	19 <sup>th</sup> December 2009
P5	Voluntary Party	Conservative Prospective County Councillor	19 <sup>th</sup> December 2009
P6	Parliamentary Party	Conservative Member of the House of Lords	6 <sup>th</sup> January 2010
P7	Professional Party	2005 Conservative Prospective Parliamentary Candidate [unsuccessful], Director of a Conservative Party sub-group. (Entered the House of Lords following the 2010 General Election.	10 <sup>th</sup> January 2010
P8	Professional Party	Conservative London Assembly Member	10 <sup>th</sup> January 2010
P9	Professional Party	Conservative London Assembly Member	10 <sup>th</sup> January 2010
P10	Parliamentary Party	Conservative Member of Parliament. Former Conservative Member of the European Parliament. Former; Member of the Privy Council, Minister of State and Shadow Cabinet	10 <sup>th</sup> January 2010
P11	Parliamentary Party	Conservative Member of Parliament. Former Conservative Member of the European Parliament.	11 <sup>th</sup> January 2010
P12	Parliamentary Party	Conservative Member of Parliament. Former Private Researcher to Nigel Lawson and Margaret Thatcher. Former Member of the Cabinet under John Major and former member of the Shadow Cabinet post 1997. (Now a member of the 2010 Cabinet).	11 <sup>th</sup> January 2010
P13	Voluntary Party	National Chair of a Conservative sub-group	11 <sup>th</sup> January 2010
P14	Parliamentary Party	Conservative Member of Parliament. Moreover a Member of the Executive Committee of the 1922 Committee.	12 <sup>th</sup> January 2010
P15	Professional Party	Deputy Director of a Conservative sub-group	12 <sup>th</sup> January 2010
P16	Parliamentary Party	Conservative Member of the House of Lords. Member of the Thatcher and Major Cabinet; and member of the Shadow Cabinet under William Hague.	23 <sup>rd</sup> January 2010
P17	Parliamentary Party	Conservative Member of the European Parliament. Former Member of the Westminster Parliament (MP).	3 <sup>rd</sup> February 2010

P18	Parliamentary Party	Conservative Member of the European Parliament. Former Member of the Westminster Parliament (MP).	3 <sup>rd</sup> February 2010
P19	Parliamentary Party	Conservative Member of the European Parliament. Former Conservative Councillor and Conservative London Assembly Member.	3 <sup>rd</sup> February 2010
P20	Parliamentary Party	Conservative Member of the European Parliament. Former Chairman of the Carlton Club.	4 <sup>th</sup> February 2010
P21	Parliamentary Party	Conservative Member of the European Parliament	4 <sup>th</sup> February 2010
P22	Voluntary Party	Regional Treasurer of Conservative Future; the youth element of the UK Conservative Party.	11 <sup>th</sup> February 2010
P23	Professional Party	2010 Conservative Prospective Parliamentary Candidate and Conservative Councillor.	17 <sup>th</sup> February 2010
P24	Parliamentary Party	Conservative Member of Parliament. Minister of State and Privy Council under the Thatcher and Major Governments. Member of the Shadow Cabinet under David Cameron and a Member of the Cabinet following the 2010 General Election.	17 <sup>th</sup> February 2010
P25	Voluntary Party	Conservative Prospective Councillor. A former Parliamentary Assistant to Ann Widdecombe; former Minister of State and Member of the Shadow Cabinet.	17 <sup>th</sup> February 2010
P26	Parliamentary Party	Conservative Member of Parliament. A Former Member of the Major Cabinet.	1 <sup>st</sup> March 2010
P27	Parliamentary Party	Conservative Member of Parliament. Parliamentary Private Secretary to a Member of the Cameron Cabinet following the 2010 General Election.	1 <sup>st</sup> March 2010
P28	Voluntary Party	Conservative Prospective Councillor and Chairman of the Conservative Association in the North of England.	2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2010
P29	Voluntary Party	Regional Vice-Chairman of Conservative Future.	2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2010
P30	Professional Party	Conservative Leader of the County Council in the Midlands; England.	10 <sup>th</sup> March 2010

## F.2 External Stakeholders

**Table F.2.1: Outline of Sample for Phase Two – External Stakeholders Aged 18-24**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Date of Focus Group</b>
P1FG1	Conservative	North Yorkshire	PhD Student	23 <sup>rd</sup> March 2010
P2FG1	Floating Voter	East Riding of Yorkshire	Undergraduate	
P3FG1	Floating Voter	Buckinghamshire	PhD Student	
P4FG1	Floating Voter	Newcastle	PhD Student	
P5FG1	Labour	Liverpool	Undergraduate	
P1FG2	Labour	Nottingham	A-level	13 <sup>th</sup> April 2010
P2FG2	Conservative	Nottingham	A-level	
P3FG2	Unknown	Nottingham	A-level	
P4FG2	Labour	Nottingham	A-level	
P5FG2	Floating Voter	Nottingham	A-level	
P6FG2	Conservative	Nottingham	A-level	
P7FG2	Floating Voter	Nottingham	A-level	
P8FG2	Labour	Nottingham	A-level	
P1FG3	Unknown	Nottingham	A-level	13 <sup>th</sup> April 2010
P2FG3	Unknown	Nottingham	A-level	
P3FG3	Unknown	Nottingham	A-level	
P4FG3	Conservative	Nottingham	A-level	
P5FG3	Unknown	Nottingham	A-level	
P1FG4	Floating Voter	Nottinghamshire	GCSE	14 <sup>th</sup> April 2010
P2FG4	Floating Voter	Nottinghamshire	GCSE	
P3FG4	Conservative	Nottinghamshire	GCSE	
P4FG4	Floating Voter	Nottinghamshire	GCSE	
P1FG5	Floating Voter	London	PhD Student	19 <sup>th</sup> April 2010
P2FG5	Green Party	Cambridgeshire	PhD Student	
P3FG5	Floating Voter	Newcastle	PhD Student	
P4FG5	Floating Voter	Sheffield	PhD Student	
P1FG6	Liberal Democrat	Nottinghamshire	A-level	20 <sup>th</sup> April 2010
P2FG6	Floating Voter	Nottinghamshire	A-level	
P3FG6	Liberal Democrat	Nottinghamshire	A-level	
P4FG6	Floating Voter	Nottinghamshire	A-level	
P5FG6	Floating Voter	Derbyshire	A-level	
P6FG6	Floating Voter	Nottinghamshire	A-level	
P1FG7	Liberal Democrat	Maidenhead	A-level	22 <sup>nd</sup> April 2010
P2FG7	Conservative	Maidenhead	A-level	
P3FG7	Tactical	Maidenhead	A-level	
P4FG7	Floating Voter	Maidenhead	A-level	
P5FG7	Floating Voter	Maidenhead	A-level	
P6FG7	Floating Voter	Maidenhead	A-level	
P7FG7	Labour	Maidenhead	A-level	
P8FG7	Floating Voter	Maidenhead	A-level	
P1FG8	Conservative	East Riding of Yorkshire	Graduate	3 <sup>rd</sup> May 2010
P2FG8	Floating Voter	East Riding of Yorkshire	Graduate	
P3FG8	Floating Voter	Cambridgeshire	Graduate	
P4FG8	Labour	East Riding of Yorkshire	Graduate	
P5FG8	Labour	East Riding of Yorkshire	Graduate	
P6FG8	Floating Voter	Wakefield	Graduate	