Britpop's Common People –

National identity, popular music and young people in the 1990's

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Declaration of Authorship

I (Claudia Lueders) hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

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Abstract:

The thesis discusses the significance of Britpop's representation of British identity for British youth and their attitude towards British identity in the 1990's. Taking issue with the dominant academic critique of Britpop as an 'assertion of white, male, heterosexual Englishness' (Bennett and Stratton, 2010, p.6; Percival, 2010; Hawkins, 2010; Whiteley, 2010) the thesis argues that Britpop's representation of national identity was more complex and ambiguous than previously suggested by academia and that Britpop's positive attitude towards Britain and its nostalgic image of British identity needs to be interpreted as a cultural critique of social, economic and political changes in the United Kingdom in the 90s. The concepts of 'Imagined communities' (Anderson, 1983) and of 'Banal nationalism' (Billig, 1995) are used as a starting point to explore the significant role of young people and popular music for the construction and reproduction of national identity.

Drawing on a qualitative textual analysis of Britpop lyrics, album reviews, and mainstream media coverage alongside data collected from qualitative interviews/surveys with musicians, PR agents, journalists, and fans, it also discusses how national identity is constructed and maintained through cultural references in popular music and related media discourses. The results of the empirical research which is focused on research categories such as British lifestyle/suburbia, ethnicity, gender and class show that Britpop's heavy use of cultural references created a strong sense of nostalgia and played a significant role in Britpop's mainstream success in the UK as it deliberately connected the contemporary culture of the younger generation with the cultural heritage of older generations which strengthened Britain's image as a nation of great pop music and was celebrated in the 2012 Olympic games open/closing ceremonies. Finally, the thesis argues that in contrast to the British Invasion bands who were selling British pop music/identity abroad, Britpop bands were selling British pop music/identity back to the British people.

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In memory of

Prof Chris Rumford

And in dedication

to my family.

I couldn't have done it without you!

1. Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the role of young people and popular music in the construction and reproduction of national identity. Particular attention is paid to analyzing how national identity is constructed and maintained by young people and their use of cultural references in popular music (musicians/fans) and related media discourses (PR agents/journalists). Furthermore, it explores the relationship between national identity and other collective group identities such as ethnicity, gender, and class. My thesis discusses the significance of Britpop's representation of British identity for British youth and their attitude towards British identity in the 1990s. Taking issue with the dominant academic critique of Britpop as a representation of 'white, male, heterosexual Englishness' (Bennett and Stratton, 2010, p.6; Percival, 2010; Hawkins, 2010; Whiteley, 2010) the thesis argues that Britpop's representation of national identity was more complex and ambiguous than previously suggested by academia and that Britpop's positive attitude towards Britain and its nostalgic representation of British identity needs to be interpreted as a cultural critique of social, economic and political changes in the United Kingdom in the 1990s.

Britpop's heavy use of cultural references created a strong sense of nostalgia and played a major role in Britpop's mainstream success in the UK as it deliberately connected the contemporary culture of the younger generation with the cultural heritage of older generations which strengthened Britain's image as a nation of great pop music and was celebrated in the 2012 Olympic Games opening and closing ceremonies. I argue that in contrast to the 'British Invasion' bands who were selling British pop music and identity abroad, Britpop bands were selling British pop music and identity back to the British people. Therefore, Britpop marks an interesting moment in time when in the context of an increased cultural globalization in the 1990s, the target of subcultural resistance shifted from young people's parent and national culture to other young people's international and global subculture. In that context, young people, as well as cultural references, played a major role in the continuity of their national culture in times of global change, an aspect which has not been discussed within the academic discourses on National Identity, British Cultural Studies/Subculture, and British identity/Britpop.

The 2012 Summer Olympics closing ceremony 'A Symphony of British Music' was a celebration of Britishness in which British popular music was presented as an essential element of British national identity. Traditional symbols of national identity such as the national anthem and the national flag played a prominent role in the ceremony as 'God Save the Queen' was played while the Union Jack was raised. The fact that the stadium was turned into a huge Union Jack art piece by Damien Hirst can be regarded as an attempt to combine traditional and modern aspects of British identity. Given the fact that British popular music played such an important part throughout the ceremony 'A Symphony of British Music,' it could be argued that it is a significant part of contemporary British identity.

The scene within the 'Street Party' section where a massed band of the Household Division is playing Blur's song *'Parklife'* is another attempt to combine traditional and modern aspects of British identity. The Household Division is an elite military unit which is closely associated with ceremonial functions such as the 'Changing the Guard' ceremony at Buckingham Palace or 'Trooping the Colour.' The scene where *'Parklife,'* the Britpop hymn of the 1990s is played by a traditional massed band of the Household Division is a very powerful image to illustrate how national identity and popular music in general and British identity and Britpop music, in particular, are intertwined. With regards to Michael Billig's criticism of mainstream academic scholarship of nationalism which overemphasises the struggle to create new nation-states and the lack of academic engagement with the reproduction of established nations it could be argued that an aesthetic engagement with topics such as national identity could provide a better understanding of questions such as how young people become attached to their nation (1995).

According to Billig nations are reproduced by continuous remembering of the nation, the so-called 'flagging' of the nation in everyday life. The image of a British military band playing a British pop song like *'Parklife'* evokes the question what kind of role British popular music plays in the 'flagging' of the British nation in everyday life. His differentiation between waved and unwaved flags as symbols of national identity can be applied to popular music as well (Billig, 1995). The performance of Blur's *'Parklife'* by a British military band at the closing ceremony can be considered as an example of a 'waved flag' while Blur's performance of *'Parklife'* at the same time can be considered as an example of an 'unwaved flag.' Before discussing my theoretical and methodological framework, I would like to provide some brief autobiographical reflection regarding my decision to write this thesis.

My earliest memory of the experience of a nation goes back to my childhood; being nine years old experiencing the fall of the Berlin wall from the former Eastern part of Germany. My early memories of disappearing neighbors and teachers as well conversations between my parents about two different Germanys which were supposed to reunite to one Germany caught my attention even though I understood very little at this stage. However, I've learned a big life lesson ranging from my early socialization as a child (kindergarten and primary school) in the German Democratic Republic to my later socialization as a teenager and young adult (A-Level and university) in the Federal Republic of Germany.

My experience of growing up in two very different social, political and economic societies without even actually leaving my country made me interested in national identity which led to my decision to study political and social science. During my teenage years, I became interested in popular music in general and in Britpop music in particular. Britpop provided a different perspective on the British identity we've learned about in our English classes at school far away from the Parliament and the Prime Minister, the Royal Family, and the Queen. I think at the time I appreciated the sound more than the lyrics which became much clearer during my current study of them when I discovered that I didn't understand the majority of cultural references included in Britpop lyrics at the time.

After being offered the possibility to study Britpop's representation of British identity, I moved to the United Kingdom. The different experience of living in a small town, Egham, which is predominantly white and living in the capital London which is very multi-ethnic was an 'eye opener' and showed me that the experience of national identity might be different dependent on one's location within the United Kingdom. My experience of living with exclusively British or English flatmates highlighted my position as a non-member of the British nation as we didn't share the same cultural references in terms of children books, radio programmes and TV shows which helped me to understand the role of cultural references in the context of my study as even though I was familiar with Britpop lyrics I wasn't able to understand them to a full extent before my study.

I've been asked many times why I ('as a German') am interested in studying Britpop's representation of British identity and the answer to the question is because I ('as a German') have the necessary distance to study the representation of national identity within the British context. I think my familiarity with Britpop and my unfamiliarity with British identity as well as my interest in both was a good starting point and foundation for my research. Another aspect

which stood out in my living experience with British/ English flatmates was their obsession with class, no matter who visited our house; their class background became a conversation topic, something I've never experienced living in Germany before. In the following, the introductory chapter will give a brief overview of my theoretical framework, methodology of my thesis and provide an outline of my chap

1.1 Theoretical Framework

1.1.1 Why national identity? Why popular music?

My understanding of national identity as a 'collective cultural phenomenon' (Smith 1991) requires an aesthetic engagement with culture. Therefore, following an aesthetic approach my thesis will critically analyze the representation of British identity in images, narratives, and sounds of Britpop music. The thesis will look at different forms of representation of national identity in the Britpop discourse of the 1990s in the United Kingdom. The understanding of representation as an act of power and politics as a domain of power relations will be helpful to explore the different forms of representations of national identity and power relations between the music industry (musicians'/ PR agents) and the music press (journalists) and its impact on the music audience (fans).

The press release photos for Blur's album *'Modern Life is Rubbish'* by Paul Spencer are an excellent example of different forms of representations of British identity and power relations between the music industry and music press within the Britpop discourse. The first photo 'British Image 1' shows Blur's band member dressed up as skinheads and mods. Damon Albarn is dressed as a skinhead with a mastiff while Graham Coxon, Alex James, and Dave Rowntree are dressed as mods. There are also huge graffiti 'British Image 1' and a little note 'Made in Britain' visible on the right corner of the picture. It is interesting that the picture reflects the colors blue and red, the colors of the Union Jack, the national flag of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The skinhead and mod dresses can be interpreted as a cultural reference to British-subculture. Because the first press photo 'British Image 1' was regarded as too nationalistic and racially insensitive by the British music press Blur decided to release a second press photo called 'British Image 2' (Harris, 2003/2004, p.89).

Fig 1 British Image 1 & British Image 2

(Source Snap Galleries 2013)

The second photo 'British Image 2' shows all four band members dressed as English gentlemen at an English tea party. The scene appeared very stiff and posed, the black and white picture shows all four band members dressed in suits in the corner of a room with a closed window on the right side and two paintings on the left side of the photo. One painting shows a train track in the countryside while the other one shows a bouquet of flowers. In addition to that, there is a white paper with an old-fashioned writing 'British Image No.2' in the center of the bottom while the little note 'Made in Britain' appears on the left corner of the picture this time.

In contrast to the first press photo which is more focused on British subculture, the second one represents a very traditional image of British cultural identity. The fact that Blur decided to release a second press photo reveals the existing power structure between music industry (musicians'/ PR agents) and music press (journalists). Given the fact that both photos represent very different versions of British identity, the power relations between musicians and journalists play an important role in the representation of national identity.

One could argue that both pictures are nationalistic and racial insensitive as they focus on white and male members of British society. However, British Image 1 seems to be less acceptable than British Image 2. The fact that both photos only include white males and exclude non-whites and females raises less concern regarding the representation of British identity. After using these photos to illustrate the different images of British identity represented by musicians and journalists, the following analysis will be more focused on related narratives of these British images in lyrics, album reviews and newspaper articles. To be able to discuss the representation of national identity in Britpop and its related media discourse a full extent, key terms such as British identity and Britpop will need to be discussed and set into context with each other. Given the interdisciplinary approach of my thesis, the research will be based on academic literature on national identity/ popular culture, British Cultural Studies and British identity/Britpop.

1.1.2 National identity, popular culture, everyday life of ordinary people

Based on literature in the field of national identity key terms such as nation, national identity and nationalism need to be discussed. The research mainly draws on modernization theories with a special focus on communication theories. The aspects of language as a precondition for social communication will be further discussed in my methodology and my analysis of Britpop (lyrics/ musicians) and its related media discourse (album reviews/ news articles/ journalists). The concepts of *'Imagined communities'* (Anderson, 1983) and of *'Banal nationalism'* (Billig, 1995) are used as a starting point to explore the significant role of young people and popular music for the construction and reproduction of national identity. Even though research on national identity, popular culture, and everyday life has increased, previous work (Billig, 1995; Edensor, 2002; Skey, 2011) has paid little attention to the specific relationship between national identity, popular music, and young people.

Anderson's concept of '*Imagined Communities*' defines a nation as 'an imagined political community-… imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign' (1983, p.6). While Anderson's focus on the traditional forms of communication such as novels makes sense for an analysis of constructing new nations at the beginning of mass communication, it seems dated for analyzing the maintenance of already established nations given the complexity of modern forms of contemporary mass communication ranging from newspapers, radio, TV, and the internet. Taking issue with his view of high culture and elites, academics like Michael Billig, Tim Edensor and Michael Skey highlight the lack of literature on how nations are represented and experienced through popular culture, ordinary people and everyday life (Billig, 1995; Edensor, 2002; Skey, 2011). Given the particularity of popular music with its different levels of communication such as lyric (verbal) and sound (non-verbal) and the fact that it is an alternative form of communication for young people, my research on national identity, popular music and young people complements Anderson's research on traditional forms of communication and help us to understand how national identity can be maintained by popular music and young people.

Michael Billig's concept of *'Banal Nationalism'* which 'covers the ideological habits which enables the established nations of the West to be reproduced', marks the shift away from the construction of new nations, high culture, elites, macro-scale theories to the maintenance of established nations, popular culture, ordinary people and, empirical studies (1995, p.6; Skey, 2009, p.333). The key element of his theory is the continuous reminding of nationhood within

established nations. My empirical research addresses Skey's criticism of Billig's concept of *'Banal Nationalism'* and its lack of complexity and dynamism regarding his assumption of 'a national press addressing and constituting a coherent national public' (Skey, 2009, p.335; Schlesinger, 2001, p.99) by looking at both music press (NME, Melody Maker) and mainstream press (Guardian, Times) and thereby paying attention to the age gap between the readership of music journals and mainstream newspapers.

In terms of the idea of a coherent national public and in addition the differences within the British population highlighted by Skey regarding national groups, migrant communities, regional and class identities (Rosie et al, 2006; Fenton, 2007; Skey, 2009, p.337) my research draws special attention to the completely under-researched relationship between national identity and age difference between different members of a nation. So far, there has been too little discussion about the link between older (adults) and younger (children/ teenagers) generations as well as cultural heritage and contemporary culture and the importance of young people in connecting both. My study is designed to remedy that weakness by paying special attention to Britpop musicians, PR agents, journalists, fans and their use of cultural references to previous British popular musical styles such as British Invasion bands in their lyrics, articles, and conversations.

Even though previous research (Billig, 1995; Skey, 2011) looked at the role of the media in constructing and reproducing national identity in public discourse, previous work fails to address the relationship between popular music by musicians and its related media discourses by journalists. In that context, insufficient attention has been paid to the special role of cultural references in popular music and its related media discourse. While acknowledging Billig's important research of deictic language, the direct addressing of nations through little words like 'we' and 'us', my research draws more attention to the way the nation and its fellow members are addressed through direct and indirect cultural references which I assume to be even more powerful in distinguishing between fellow members versus non-members of a nation (1995). My main focus will be on this under-researched area of cultural references and its use in the music as well as mainstream press discourse.

To be able to understand the social, economic and political context of Britpop as a cultural phenomenon to a full extent, my empirical research looks into British lifestyle, suburbia, ethnicity, gender, and class. National identity is associated with homogeneity rather than diversity. Therefore, it is important to explore its relationship to aspects of age, ethnic, gender and class-related diversity. Based on the academic critique that Britpop is only a representation of 'white, male, heterosexual Englishness' (Bennett and Stratton, 2010, p.6; Percival, 2010; Hawkins, 2010; Whiteley, 2010) the thesis explores the relationship between the imagery of homogeneous nations and the reality of increasingly diverse multi-ethnic societies and special attention will be given to the complex relationship between ethnicity and race. The thesis looks at the majority and minority relationship between white and non-white British people and discusses Asian and Black British minority groups in the context of post-war migration. With regards to gender, the thesis looks at feminism and its impact on gender roles and stereotypes of femininity and masculinity. Based on the media discourse of Britpop's Heavyweight Championship between Blur (middle class) and Oasis (working class) the thesis explores the importance of class and regional division for the representation of national identity.

1.1.3 British Cultural Studies, Culture, Popular Culture, Popular music, Youth

Given my focus on popular music and youth, my research draws on British Cultural Studies and discusses Raymond Williams's definition of culture and popular culture including his three definitions of culture: the ideal, the documentary and the social with a special emphasis on the social as 'an expression of a particular way of life' (Williams, 1961, p.57). British Cultural Studies has focused on youth as 'a metaphor for social change' (Clarke et al., 1977, p.17). However, I argue throughout my thesis that young people and their culture play an important role in the continuity of their national culture as well. Britpop is an interesting example of when the target of subcultural resistance shifted from young people's parents and national culture (British invasion/1960s/ 1970s/1980s) to other young people's national and global subculture (grunge/hip hop/ 1990s). In that context, young people played an important role in the continuity of their national culture, an aspect which hasn't been discussed within the academic discourses on British Cultural Studies so far.

The understanding of culture as a particular way of life depends on what Raymond Williams calls the 'structure of feeling' which means 'the shared values of a particular group, class or society' (Williams, 1961, p.57). The shared values of the British society will be analyzed through Britpop, and it's related media discourse which links Williams's category of 'documentary' with the category of the 'social' (Storey, 2001, p.45; Edensor, 2002, p.19). The analysis of culture is complex due to its three different levels: the lived culture, the period culture and the culture of tradition (Williams, 1961, p.57; Storey, 2009, p.37). My thesis analyses the social category of British culture by using the documentary category of British culture. Britpop's representation of British identity as 'a description of a particular way of life' is analyzed through surviving texts such as Britpop lyrics and album reviews and newspaper articles. The thesis analyses both lived and period culture. Since the lived culture of a particular time and place is only accessible through those living in that particular time and place, interviews have been conducted with musicians, PR agents, journalists and fans that were part of Britpop and are therefore considered experts on the scene. The period culture has been analyzed through the textual analysis of Britpop lyrics, album reviews and newspaper articles.

Stuart Hall's concept of 'articulation' explains the processes of the struggle between a subordinated group and a dominant group within the concept of hegemony (Hall, 1992 & 1996) is interesting to discuss in the context of the relationship between collective group identities such as ethnicity, gender, class and national identity. According to John Storey, cultural texts cannot be considered as 'the source of meaning but as a place where meaning is being articulated' (Storey, 2011, p.4) which is why Britpop's representation of national identity is so interesting. Hall emphasized that cultural texts are 'multi-accentual' in the way that cultural texts can be expressed in different ways by different people in different contexts (Storey, 2011, p.4; Hall 1992 & 1996). That is why my empirical research looks into different aspects such as age, ethnicity, gender and class.

'Resistance through Ritual Youth subcultures in post-war Britain,' introduces the concept of subculture: 'the need to create and express autonomy and difference from parents…and the need to maintain…the parental identifications which support them' (Hall and Jefferson, 1977, p.52). The concept of subculture is based on the idea of 'double articulation.' The idea of 'double articulation' attempts to explain working-class youth subculture in context with class relations. Working-class youth subculture is analyzed about their 'parent culture' and the 'dominant culture.' My research aims to set this discussion in an international context. Britpop

shows a subcultural resistance shifted from young people's parents and national culture (British Invasion/1960s/1970s/1980s) to other young people's national and global subculture (grunge/hip hop/1990s). My research pays special attention to young people and their use of cultural references. Britpop' musicians' and journalist' heavy use of cultural references created a strong sense of nostalgia and played an important role in Britpop's success in the UK as it connected the contemporary culture of the younger generation with the cultural heritage of older generations which strengthened Britain's image as a nation of great pop music. In contrast to the British Invasion bands who were selling British pop music and identity abroad, Britpop bands were selling British pop music and identity back to the British people.

1.1.4 Why British national identity? Why Britpop?

I think it is important to explain at this point why I focused thesis on Britpop's representation of national identity in the United Kingdom in the 1990s. The United Kingdom is a state with four countries England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and four nationalities English, Scottish, Welsh, and Irish. It provides a unique example of a case study on how national identity is constructed and reproduced in a multi-national state and this perhaps explains the huge academic interest in national identity in the United Kingdom.

Given the fact that the United Kingdom is a multi-national state makes it is difficult to discuss British national identity within the traditional concept of the nation-state. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between the two concepts of nationality and citizenship. In the case of the United Kingdom, there are four national identities (English, Welsh, Scottish, and Irish) on the one side and one state identity (British) on the other side. Consequently, the question arises whether British identity can be thought regarding national identity after all. I argue that British identity can be thought of in national terms, but further research is required on the relationship between British national identity and English, Welsh, Scottish and Northern Irish national identities within the British state. The Scottish and Welsh devolution movements in the 1990s are an important aspect to consider for the relationship between British identity and English, Welsh, Scottish and Northern Irish identities. In addition to that, British identity was challenged by external changes due to globalization, Americanization and Europeanization on the one side and internal changes due to the political change from a Conservative to a Labour government on the other side.

Britpop music is a sub-genre of alternative music which emerged from the British independent music scene in the early 1990s. It can be defined as an: 'Indie guitar-based melodic pop music' with 'a 1960's retro-aesthetic' which is musically and lyrically influenced by British bands from the 1960s (The Beatles/The Kinks), 1970s (The Jam) and 1980s (The Smiths) (Bennett and Stratton, 2010, p.1). Britpop songs are focused on specific British themes and images with a strong sense of class and regional identity (class and regional accents). The Britpop phenomenon has been considered as 'an antidote to the American grunge movement by the British music industry and as a critical resurgence of British popular music by the British music press' (Bennett and Stratton, 2010, p.6).

The Select cover from April 1993 with Brett Anderson, the Suede singer in front of the Union Yack with the headline *'Yanks go Home!'* which will be discussed in greater detail later on, helps to illustrate these attitudes of Britpop and highlights the importance of the British press in linking British popular music with British identity and even creating the term 'Britpop.' The fact that the Union Jack was placed behind Brett Anderson without his knowledge or permission is yet another example of the power of the music press over the music industry regarding the representation of British identity. The focus on the distinctive national character within the Britpop discourse in the music press increased the confidence in British popular culture within the society which culminated in the celebration of British identity in the Cool Britannia movement.

The Oxford English Dictionary describes Cool Britannia as 'a cultural movement' which defined Britain as 'a stylish and fashionable place.' The Cool Britannia movement is based on the success of British art, popular music, film and fashion in the 1990s (Oxford English Dictionary). The term reminds of the British patriotic song 'Rule Britannia' which shows yet another example to combining traditional and modern aspects of British cultural identity. The fact that Britpop music became so closely associated with British identity in the Cool Britannia movement and given the social and political background of the time makes it so interesting to look at from a researcher's perspective.

The current academic literature on Britpop's representation of British identity focuses on two main debates: the question of whether Britpop is more a representation of English rather than British identity and Britpop's nostalgic representation of Britishness. Taking issue with the dominant academic critique of Britpop as a representation of 'white, male, heterosexual Englishness' (Bennett and Stratton, 2010, p.6; Percival, 2010; Hawkins, 2010; Whiteley, 2010)

my thesis argues that Britpop's representation of national identity was more complex and ambiguous than previously suggested by academia and that Britpop's positive attitude towards Britain and its nostalgic representation of British identity needs to be interpreted as a cultural critique of social, economic and political changes in the United Kingdom in the 1990s.

After briefly discussing the theoretical framework of my thesis and outlining the main reasons why I think it is important to research Britpop's representation of British identity in the 1990s; I will proceed to discuss my methodology in more detail.

1.2 Methodology

My thesis focuses on two assumptions about national identity and popular music. First, national identity has an impact on popular music. Second, popular music has an impact on national identity. I argue that the implications of national identity on popular music are visible in Britpop's focus on particular British themes and images. Britpop lyrics include a lot of comments on British lifestyle, class, region, ethnicity, gender and sexuality. In contrast to the first assumption about national identity and popular music, the second hypothesis regarding the impact of popular music on national identity requires further research.

My empirical research provides a discourse analysis of Britpop lyrics, album reviews, and mainstream media coverage and data collected from qualitative interviews and surveys with musicians, PR agents, journalists and fans. Discourse analysis is a qualitative study which seeks to explore social practices and institutions through the analysis of a text and its context 'Discourses consist of ensembles of ideas, concepts, and categories through which meaning is produced and reproduced in a particular historical situation'. (Halperin and Heath, 2012, pp.309-310). The analysis concentrates on narratives rather than sounds due to my lack of musical expertise and the fact that a textual analysis offers an excellent opportunity to directly compare the results of the analysis of lyrics with album reviews and newspaper articles. However, I have tried to include the analysis of images such as album and music journal covers wherever possible to make the discussion even more attractive.

The results of my empirical research presented in my empirical chapters focus on my research categories: British lifestyle, suburbia, ethnicity, gender, and class. British Lifestyle has been chosen as a category because it provides a lot of information about British society and its socialization in terms of work and weekend life, eating and drinking habits, leisure activities, social relationships and interactions. The categories ethnicity and gender have been chosen to

discuss the academic critique that Britpop's representation of national identity is mainly of 'white, male, heterosexual Englishness' (Bennett and Stratton, 2010, p.6; Percival, 2010; Hawkins, 2010; Whiteley, 2010). The class has been chosen as a category due to its predominant role in the British media discourse in the 1990s.

The research focuses on the Britpop years 1993-1995 as these years cover its beginning till its height commonly associated with the 'Heavy Weight Championship' between Blur and Oasis in 1995. The analysis focuses on Britpop bands and their albums between the years 1993-1995. Bands analyzed are Blur, Oasis, Suede, Pulp, Elastica, Sleeper and Echobelly. Even though Blur, Oasis, Suede and Pulp can be considered as the most influential bands of the Britpop era; Elastica, Sleeper, and Echobelly will be analyzed as well as they add an exciting dimension regarding the representation of ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. The analysis of the media discourse focuses on music journals and mainstream newspaper album reviews and newspaper articles between the years 1993-1995. The music journals analyzed are Melody Maker and National Music Express, and mainstream newspapers examined are the Times and the Guardian.

My qualitative interviews and surveys have been conducted with musicians, PR agents, journalists and fans. Musicians interviewed were Jon Stewart (Sleeper guitarist) and Debbie Smith (Echobelly guitarist). Brett Anderson, Suede's frontman preferred to answer the questions via email. PR agents interviewed were Johnny Hopkins (Oasis), Karen Johnson (Blur) and Phill Savidge (Suede, Pulp, Elastica, Sleeper, Echobelly). Fans interviewed and participated in my survey included male and female fans from England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland as well as the United States of America. All interviews and surveys followed the same questionnaire including the questions based on my research categories British lifestyle, suburbia, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, region, Englishness, Britishness, contemporary culture, cultural heritage, nostalgia and the media. The questions will be discussed in greater detail in my methodology part. After briefly discussing some aspects of my method, the final part of my introduction will provide a brief outline of my chapters.

1.3 Chapter Plan

My thesis includes eight chapters. The first chapter is the introductory chapter which provides a general overview of the thesis topic and its research question, argument, theoretical framework, methodology and the chapter plan. The introductory chapter discussed in detail why the thesis is focused on Britpop music and its representation of British national identity in the 1990s in the United Kingdom.

The second chapter is the literature review which gives a general overview of relevant literature. The literature review is divided into three parts: National identity/ Popular Culture, British Cultural Studies and British identity/Britpop. Each part provides a general overview of the specific field and presents the most relevant literature for the thesis and discusses their strengths and weaknesses in the context of the thesis. Key terms such as nation, national identity, nationalism, culture, popular culture, British identity, and Britpop will be discussed. It discusses how I relate my thesis to previous research and how I position myself about the current discussion.

The third chapter is the historical chapter which provides a general overview of the social, political, economic and cultural background of post-war Britain. It sets the scene for the analytical discussion of Britpop music in the three empirical chapters on British lifestyle and suburbia, class, ethnicity, and gender. The historical chapter briefly discusses the relationship between national identity and popular music by showing how the youth culture can be understood as a reflection of young people's view of their society.

The fourth chapter provides a general overview of my method including key concepts and terms of discourse analysis, a detailed description of my data sources, my research categories, data access, data collection as well data analysis. It discusses in great detail the selection of Britpop bands, music journals, mainstream newspapers as well as the interviewees and participants of my interviews and surveys such as musicians, PR agents, journalists and fans.

The fifth chapter discusses the results of my empirical research on British lifestyle/suburbia. British lifestyle is very well covered in Britpop lyrics and its related media discourse. Britpop's representation of British life provides a useful inside view into young people's view of their national identity in the 1990s. The results showed that national identity could be constructed and maintained by young people and their use of cultural references in popular music and related media discourses. The chapter highlighted the significance of Britpop's representation

of British life/suburbia for British youth and reflected on their attitude towards their national cultural identity in the 1990s. Results of the interview and survey data showed that musicians, journalists and fans' sense of national belonging are strongly rooted in their early experience of everyday life and growing up in British suburbia and that all participants of the interviews shared the same cultural references which connect them to their shared national culture.

The sixth chapter focuses young people's perception of the British class system. It uses the concept of interdiscursivity to explore the close relationship between the discourses of national identity and class in Britpop and its related media discourse. The chapter is focused on the results of my day survey of the media discourse on Britpop's Heavyweight Championship between Blur (middle class) and Oasis (working class) which shows that Britpop's representation of national identity is closely associated with class identity, and that class was an important signifier of national identity for the British youth and their construction of British identity in the 1990s. The analysis of my interviews and surveys with musicians, journalists, and fans showed that Britain continued to be a class-conscious society despite these social and economic changes in the post-industrial British society of the 1990s. The results of my empirical research illustrate that regional dialects and class-related accents play an important role in the construction of national identity and proof that cultural references to class related subcultures play an important for the reproduction of national identity in popular music and its related media discourse.

The seventh chapter focusses on young people's perception of aspects of ethnicity and gender in British society. It uses the concept of interdiscursivity to explore the complicated relationship between the discourses of national identity, ethnicity, and gender in Britpop and its related media and academic discourses. Taking issue with the dominant academic critique of Britpop as a representation of 'white, male, heterosexual Englishness' (Bennett and Stratton, 2010, p.6; Percival, 2010; Hawkins, 2010; Whiteley, 2010) the chapter discusses to what extent Britpop's focus on white ethnicity can be considered an 'assertion of white Englishness' and to what extent Britpop's association with lad culture can be considered as an 'assertion of male Englishness'. The results of the qualitative analysis of Britpop and its related media discourse as well as the results of the interviews and surveys with musicians, journalists and fans support my argument that Britpop's representation of national identity is more complex and ambiguous than previously suggested by academia and that it cannot be considered as an 'assertion of white, male, heterosexual Englishness' (ibid.).

My eight chapter will briefly discuss the key findings of my empirical research on British lifestyle, suburbia, ethnicity, gender, and class and set them in context with my literature review as well as my research methods. The chapter will present the conclusion of my thesis including a discussion of problems during the research process, limitations of my research and my contribution to the academic literature/debate on national identity/ popular culture; British Cultural Studies and British identity/Britpop.

2. Literature Review

The purpose of the thesis is to explore the role of young people and popular music in the construction and reproduction of national identity. Particular attention is paid to analyzing how national identity is constructed and maintained by young people and their use of cultural references in popular music (musicians and fans) and related media discourses (PR agents and journalists). Furthermore, it explores the relationship between national identity and other collective group identities such as ethnicity, gender, and class. The thesis discusses the significance of Britpop's representation of British identity for British youth and their attitude towards British identity in the 1990s. The case study is an excellent example of how national identity, national culture, and cultural heritage provided an important form of identification and a strong sense of belonging to young people in an increasingly complex and uncertain global world at the end of the Cold War and the beginning of the 21st Century.

Britpop can be defined as an 'Indie guitar-based melodic pop music' with 'a 1960's retro-aesthetic' which is musically and lyrically influenced by British bands from the 1960s (The Beatles and The Kinks), 1970s (The Jam) and 1980s (The Smith) (Bennett and Stratton 2010, p.1). Britpop songs focus on particular British themes and images with a strong sense of class and regional identity. Given the diversity of bands associated with Britpop such as Suede, Blur, Oasis, Pulp, Echobelly, Sleeper and Elastica it's hard to classify it as a music genre. The key similarity in between these different bands is their shared sense of retro-aesthetic which plays a significant role in Britpop's nostalgic sound. However, the groups differ in their preference for referencing previous British bands. Blur and Oasis draw more from earlier 1960s bands like The Beatles and The Kinks while Suede and Echobelly draw more from later 1980s bands like The Smith. With regards to Britpop's lyrics it is important to highlight that even though all bands musical work is clearly rooted within the national context of British society, the degree to which they comment on British life differs significantly between individual groups. Suede, Blur, and Pulp provide a more detailed inside view into British lifestyles than Oasis.

The following quote from Blur's singer Damon Albarn highlights this dichotomy between their nostalgic sound and their modern lyrics:

> 'It was me attempting to write in a classic English vein using kind of imagery and words which were much more modern. So it was a weird combination of quiet nostalgic-sounding melodies and chord progressions, [with] these weird caustic lyrics about England as it was at that moment, and the way it was getting this mass Americanised refit.' (Damon Albarn, BBC 2007)

The Greenwood Encyclopaedia of Rock History defines Britpop as a 'soundtrack of a new generation of British youths,' which 'celebrated and commented on their lives, their culture and their cultural heritage' (Gulla, 2006, p.188). Taking issue with this definition, I argue in this thesis that Britpop as a cultural phenomenon started by young musicians who commented on British society before it turned into a celebration of British life by young journalists. The following quote from Suede's singer Brett Anderson shows his frustration with this turn from commentary to celebration within the 'Britpop scene' and its related media discourse of Cool Britannia:

> 'The first thing I'd like to say I suppose is that when we first started writing songs like 'My Insatiable One' and 'Pantomime Horse' and 'The Drowners,' I was never celebrating Britishness, merely documenting it. This is the huge difference between Suede and the bands that came after us. Our vision was a scruffy, plasterboard world filled with a cast of desperate characters; the kind of world I was brought up. The patronizing, jingoistic cartoon that it became felt like a horrible betrayal; a Mike Leigh film mutating into a Carry On film. For me it was never even actually about Britishness, it was about truth and reality; my reality just happened to be British if you see what I mean.' (Brett Anderson, email response to my research questions 2015)

Both quotes from the singers include a direct reference to national identity. Even though both singers are English/British, Albarn references English while Anderson references British identity. A clear distinction between Englishness and Britishness's hard as English people use them as synonyms. The relationship between English and British identity plays a significant

role in the public and academic discourse of national identity in the United Kingdom.Despite the different references to national identity, both quotes highlight each singer's intention to comment on social changes within British society. Albarn's reference to Americanization sets his social commentary in a broader global context while Anderson's cultural reference of Mike Leigh and Carry On films locates his social commentary within a narrower national cultural context. Anderson's movie references are an interesting example of intertextuality. Cultural references are an important part of a national cultural discourse which is more familiar to members rather than non-members of a particular nation. By using this reference, Anderson assumes that members of the British society know that Mike Leigh movies are more realistic than Carry On films in their representation of Britain and will be therefore able to understand his critique of Britpop.

As mentioned earlier, I strongly believe that the initial attempt of young musicians to comment on British society turned into a celebration of British life by young journalists within the Cool Britannia discourse, a celebration of British culture in the 1990s (film, music, art, fashion). Britpop is a media construct. Bennett and Stratton, consider Britpop as 'an antidote to the American grunge movement by the British music industry and as a critical resurgence of British popular music by the British music press' (2010, p.6). The Select cover from April 1993 with Brett Anderson, the Suede singer in front of the Union Jack with the headline *'Yanks go Home! SUEDE St ETIENNE, DENIM, PULP, THE AUTEURS and the Battle of Britain'* is an excellent example to support Bennett and Stratton's considerations of Britpop.

Fig 2 Select Magazine cover April 1993 (Source Select magazine)

As mentioned before, Bennett and Stratton consider Britpop as 'an antidote to the American grunge movement by the British music industry' (2010, p.6). AllMusic defines Grunge as: 'a hybrid of heavy metal and punk. Though the guitars were straight from early '70s metal, the aesthetic of grunge was far from metal. Both the musical approach and vocal attack of grunge were adopted from punk, particularly the independent ideals of early '80s American hardcore' (AllMusic/Grunge 2015). AllMusic distinguishes between heavier first wave grunge bands like Green River, Mudhoney, Soundgarden and more melodic second wave grunge bands like Nirvana with their 'stop-start dynamics and its fuzzy, distorted guitars' (ibid). Due to Nirvana's mainstream success, grunge lost its independence and punk connection and turned into the most popular style of hard rock in the 1990s (AllMusic/Grunge 2015).

Bennett and Stratton's consideration of Britpop as 'a critical resurgence of British popular music by the British music press' (2010, p.6) sets the 1990s Britpop bands in the context of the 1960s British Invasion bands. The British Invasion is a mid-60s phenomenon when 'a wave of English rock & roll bands crossed over into the American market after the breakthrough success of the Beatles' (AllMusic/British Invasion 2015). According to AllMusic, British Invasion bands dominated both the US as well as UK charts between 1964 and 1966 while their Britpop counterparts mainly dominated the UK charts between 1993 and 1997. Like Britpop bands, British Invasion bands were quite diverse, ranging from 'the hard rock of the Rolling Stones and the Kinks to the sweet pop of Gerry & the Pacemakers and Herman's Hermits' (ibid). All bands were 'heavily influenced by American rock & roll, blues, and R&B' and could be distinguished between 'blues-based rockers or pop/rockers with ringing guitars and catchy hooks & melodies' (AllMusic/British Invasion 2015).

In addition to references to previous musical scenes, AllMusic relates Britpop to the Madchester scene outlining that 'The Stone Roses' effortless pop hooks and rock-star attitude' played a significant role at the beginning of Britpop (2015). Suede as 'Britpop's founding fathers' combined David Bowie's glam-rock with alternative-guitar-pop of the Smiths. Suede's self-titled debut (1993), Blur's *'Parklife'* (1994) and Oasis's *'Definitely Maybe'* (1994) become vital records of the Britpop scene. The British Heavyweight Championship between Blur and Oasis dominated the scene in 1995. Pulp, Elastica, Echobelly, and Sleeper were also closely associated with Britpop (AllMusic/Britpop 2015). Britpop is a reaction to American grunge as well as to early 1990s British rock (shoegazing), pop (girl and boy bands) and electro music (house, drum, and base, trip hop).

Britpop like no other British musical movement before drew heavily from the 'British tradition of tuneful, guitar-driven pop bands' established by The Beatles and its followers. Important influences are the '60s Kinks, the mod movement (the Who, the Small Faces), '70s glam (David Bowie, T. Rex, Roxy Music), punk and new wave (the Jam, the Buzzcocks, Wire, Madness, XTC, Squeeze, Elvis Costello), and the alternative guitar pop of the Smiths' (AllMusic/Britpop 2015). According to AllMusic, the similarity between these artists is their quintessential Britishness, their distinct 'British frame of reference' in their lyrics and their music (2015). The concept of intertextuality, Britpop's nostalgic sound created through its use of cultural references will be further discussed in my empirical chapter on British lifestyle.

Britpop's retro-aesthetics with its heavy use of cultural references created a strong sense of nostalgia and played a significant role in Britpop's success in the UK as it deliberately connected the contemporary culture of the younger generation with the cultural heritage of older generations which strengthened Britain's image as a great pop nation. I argue that in contrast to British Invasion bands who were selling their British cultural identity abroad, Britpop bands were selling it back to the British youth.

Therefore, Britpop is an exciting moment in time when in the context of an increased cultural globalization in the 1990s, the target of subcultural resistance shifted from young people's parent and national culture to other young people's international and global subculture. In that context, young people played a significant role in the continuity of their national culture in times of global change, an aspect which hasn't been discussed within the academic discourses on National Identity and popular culture, British Cultural Studies, British identity and Britpop music.

National identity is associated with continuity and homogeneity rather than change and diversity. Given the complexity of the British society with 'a population 60 million individuals, four 'national' groups, first, second and third generation migrant 'communities,' distinct regional and class identities' (Skey, 2009, p.337), the idea of a single homogeneous British character needs to be contested. That is why the diversity of national identity needs to be discussed other collective group identities such as ethnicity, gender, and class. Particular attention needs to be given to social, political and economic post-war changes such as migration, feminism, and de-industrialisation which will be further discussed in my historical chapter.

The literature review is divided into three parts: National Identity and Popular Culture; British Cultural Studies, and British identity and Britpop music. Each section will provide a general overview of the particular field and discuss relevant key terms such as nation, national identity, nationalism, culture, popular culture, subculture, Britpop and, British identity which will be used throughout the thesis. The aim of the literature review is to present a brief overview of the most relevant research and discuss its strengths and weaknesses in the context of the thesis on British identity and Britpop.

2.1 National Identity, popular culture and the everyday life of ordinary people

The first part of the literature review provides a brief overview of existing research on National Identity and Popular Culture; discusses relevant key terms such as nation, national identity, and nationalism as well as strengths and weaknesses of the most relevant literature on the topic. National identity is closely related to the terms nation and nationalism. John Hutchinson describes national identity as 'being conscious of' and 'acting as belonging to a nation' (2001, p.215). Therefore, the understanding of nation becomes necessary for the understanding of national identity (ibid). Due to the complexity of the field of study, the academic literature lacks an agreement on the definition of the concepts of nation and nationalism.

The theories of nationalism mainly distinguish between 'ethnic nationalism' and 'civic nationalism.' Ethnic nationalism describes a nation as a community of origin and culture, including language and customs (Miscevic, 2010). Civic nationalism describes a nation as a group of people aspiring to a standard political state-like organization (ibid). An example of the ethnic-cultural dimension with its focus on the historical roots of a nation is the work of John Armstrong. The work of Benedict Anderson, Ernest Gellner, and Eric Hobsbawn can be regarded as examples of the civic-political approach which is more focused on the modernity of the nation (Hutchinson, 2001, p.216). Anthony D. Smith combines both dimensions and defines nation as 'a named human population sharing a historical territory, common myth and historical memories, mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members' (1991, p.14).

Anthony D. Smith defines national identity as 'an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential 'nation'' (1991, p.73). His definition includes the three core ideals of autonomy, unity, and identity of the founders of nationalism such as Rousseau, Herder, Fichte, and Mazzini. It opens up the opportunity for nations without nationalism and nationalism without nations (Smith, 1991, p.73). Smith highlights that even though nationalism and national identity are closely related to each other, the ideological movement of nationalism needs to be distinguished from the wider phenomenon of national identity (1991). He stresses the importance of understanding national identity as 'a collective cultural phenomenon' to be able to comprehend the importance of nationalism as a political force (Smith, 1991, vii). I argue in this thesis that Hutchinson's understanding of national identity as 'being conscious of' and 'acting as belonging to a nation' (2001, p.215) is closely linked to Smith understanding of it as 'a collective cultural phenomenon' (1991, vii).

The academic world seems to agree that nationalism is a modern phenomenon. Liah Greenfeld locates the development of the modern nation in the sixteenth- century in England which makes England to the first nation in the world and the only one for about two hundred years (1992, p.14). However, most theories of nationalism locate the origin of nationalism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century (Hobsbawm, 1990; Gellner, 1983; Breuilly, 1982; Leach, 2009, p.139). As the name suggests, modernization theories focus on the modern character of the phenomenon and understand its development as a result of the transition process from the traditional to the modern society. Industrialization is considered as the primary cause for the development of nationalism. Given their focus on the development rather than the maintenance of nationalism, the recent changes from modern to post-modern societies and the related process of de-industrialization the question arises to what extent these modernization theories apply to researching contemporary events and developments related to nations, national identity and nationalisms in our post-modern global world.

Modernization theories can be divided into the types: the social communication theories, the economist theories and the political-ideological theories (Llobera, 2001, p.184). The economist theorists such as Michael Hechter, Tom Nairn, I. Wallerstein, Miroslav Hroch and Ernest Gellner focus on the importance of capitalism (Hechter, 1975; Nairn, 1977; Wallerstein, 1974; Hroch, 1985; Gellner, 1983). The political-ideological theorists such as John Breuilly, Anthony Giddens, Paul Brass and Michael Mann emphasize the importance of the state for the

development of nationalism (Breuilly, 1982; Giddens, 1981; Brass, 1991; Mann, 1992). My research follows the tradition of communication theories like Karl W. Deutsch, Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson and Jürgen Habermas (Deutsch, 1953; Gellner, 1983; Anderson, 1983; Habermas, 1989) which consider social communication as the key element for the development of nationalism (Llobera, 2001, p.185; Schlesinger, 2001, p.26). The next part on communication theories briefly discusses the importance of language and cultural symbolism for the construction of national identity within the nation building process.

Karl W. Deutsch's study of '*Nationalism and Social Communication*' introduced the term communication into theories of nationalism (1953). His principal argument is that the unity of the people depends on the social interaction among individuals. Therefore, national identity can be considered as the outcome of social communication. Karl W. Deutsch describes it as a 'mutual rapport, but on a larger scale' (Schlesinger, 2001, p.26; Deutsch 1953, p.75 & p.188). Like Deutsch, Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson highlight the importance of a common culture, standardized language and cultural institutions for the development of national identity. One of the main differences between them is Gellner's focus on education and Anderson's focus on Print language. Both theories differ in their concept of nation. Gellner's theory considers nations to be 'invented' while Anderson's approach considers them to be 'imagined' (Gellner, 1983, p.169; Anderson, 1983, p.6).

According to Gellner, 'Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness; it invents nations where they do not exist' (1983, p.169). He argues that the development of nationalism is based on modern societies' need for cultural homogeneity. The shift from an agricultural religious to an industrial, scientific society, from a status oriented to a cultural oriented social system, required a shared language and education to fulfill the growing demands caused by the division of labor (Conversi, 2001, pp.102-107). According to Gellner, only the nation-state can provide the necessary language and educational system. Therefore, his theory focuses on a 'state-enforced homogenisation' and the 'bureaucratisation of culture' (1983, p. 1 & p. 169). Following this logic, nationalism defines 'a political principle,' where 'the political and the national unit should be congruent' and nation identity as 'a common membership in a shared high culture' (Gellner, 1983, p.1).

Gellner's theory needs to be criticized for its focus on the state, high culture and the concept of cultural homogeneity which all are considered essential elements for the construction of national identity (Edensor, 2002, pp.2-4). His focus on a state enforced cultural uniformity and high culture make it difficult to apply to my study of Britpop's representation of national identity as Britpop as a cultural phenomenon was driven by young people rather than the state and is based on popular rather than high culture. Gellner's emphasis on cultural homogeneity as well as the development of new rather than the maintenance of established nations makes it difficult to apply to contemporary multi-ethnic/-cultural Britain with its four countries, different generations of migrant groups as well as distinct regional and class identities. The ideal of homogeneity stands in clear contrast to the different reality of the British society unable to address the relationship between national identity and other group identities such as ethnicity, gender, and class as well as relevant social, political and economic changes such as migration, feminism and de-industrialisation which had an impact on contemporary Britain.

Anderson's concept of *'imagined communities'* defines a nation as 'an imagined political community-… imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign' (1983, p.6). He argues that members of a society usually don't know each other and that the development of nations relies on print-language, books and newspapers. According to Anderson, the invention of the printing press and the rise of the print media helped to spread the idea of the nation and made nationalist novels and newspapers critical elements for the formation of national identity (ibid). Like Gellner, Anderson can be critiqued for his focus on high culture and the construction of national identity rather than popular culture and maintenance of national identity (Edensor, 2002, pp.7-8). Even though his concept marks a shift from the state to press, both academics focus on elites rather than ordinary people.

Anderson's focus on the traditional forms of communications such as novels and newspapers makes sense for an analysis of constructing new nations at the beginning of mass communication. However, it seems dated for analyzing the maintenance of already established nations given the complexity of modern forms of contemporary mass communication ranging from newspapers, radio, TV, and the internet. Due to the particularity of music which works on different levels of communication such as verbal (lyrics) and non-verbal (sound), the fact that it can be experienced alone and in a group and that it is an attractive alternative form of communication for young people, my research will complement previous research on

traditional forms of communication and help us to understand how national identity can be maintained through popular music and youth.

Tia DeNora describes music as a 'device for the reflexive process of remembering and constructing of who one is' (2006, p.141). Therefore, music can help people to imagine their identity and remind them of their status. While DeNora's interpretation of music focuses on its relation to self-identity, Martin Stokes sets the importance of music in the context of place. He argues that music is an important medium which informs 'our sense of place' as it 'evokes and organizes collective memories and present experiences of place with intensity, power, and simplicity unmatched by any other social activity' (Stokes, 1994, p.3). The 'places' constructed through music involve a notion of difference and social boundaries' (ibid).

Therefore, music is socially meaningful. However, its social meaning depends on people's interpretations. As the quote highlights, music has the power to unite and divide people. Similar to Stokes, Andy Bennett argued that music is a fundamental element for the building of national identities. In support of his argument, he refers to the long history of music and its influences on national identity by using the example of national anthems and folk music (Bennett, 1997, pp.20-21). The importance of patriotic songs becomes visible in the resemblance between the term 'Cool Britannia' and the British patriotic song 'Rule Britannia' which can be considered an attempt to combine traditional and modern aspects of British cultural identity.

Taking issue with Geller's and Anderson's focus on high culture and elites, academics like Michael Billig, Tim Edensor, and Michael Skey have criticized the lack of literature on how nations are represented and experienced through popular culture, ordinary people and everyday life (Billig, 1995; Edensor, 2002; Skey, 2011). Billig's concept of *'banal nationalism'* marks the shift away from the construction of new nations, high culture, elites, macro-scale theories to the maintenance of established nations, popular culture, ordinary people and, empirical studies as it 'covers the ideological habits which enable the established nations of the West to be reproduced' (Skey, 2009, p.333; Billig 1995, p.6).

According to Billig, nationhood provides the context for political discourse and cultural products, and the 'flagging' of nationhood helps to remind the citizens of their national place in a world of nations (1995, p.8). As Skey highlights referring to Reicher and Hopkins, it is Billig's emphasis towards the routine and 'the taken-for-granted' which makes his research so

relevant for present-day studies, trying to understand 'the ways in which people know who they are, the nature of the world they live in, how they relate to others and what counts important to them' (Skey, 2009, p.344; Reicher and Hopkins, 2001, p.3). The Damon Albarn and Brett Anderson quotes show that both singers know their place in a world of nations, identifying themselves in national terms as either English or British, Albarn contrasting his English identity to American and Anderson highlighting that his 'reality' is British.

Michael Skey criticized Billig's lack of complexity and dynamism of his concept of *'Banal Nationalism'* by referring to recent empirical studies which applied his theoretical framework. With regards to the role of the media, he critiques the assumption of 'a national press addressing and constituting a coherent national public' (Skey, 2009, p.335; Schlesinger, 2001, p.99). About Billig's concept of the British press in his British Day Survey, Skey argues that 'the distribution of titles and their spatial editions and the different patterns of flags [and deixis] found in them [it] …of limited analytical or theoretical use.' (Higgins, 2004; Rosie et al. 2006; Billig, 1995; Skey 2009, p.335)

However, Skey also points out these English, Scottish or Welsh editions of British newspapers do not per se challenge Billig's thesis of the flagging of the nations through deixis as they still flag national identity, but they show the complexity of the British media landscape (2009, p. 335). In addition to Billig's idea of national press, Skey critiques his notion of the national audience. Given the complexity of the British with 'a population 60 million individuals, four 'national' groups, first, second and third generation migrant 'communities,' distinct regional and class identities,' Skey argues that the assumption of a coherent national public close the analysis where is should begin. (Rosie et al., 2006; Fenton, 2007; Skey 2009, p.337)

In addition to Skey's critique of Billig's assumption of a national press addressing and constituting a coherent national public, there has been even less analysis of how the representation of national identity in popular music has been discussed within related media discourses and how this media coverage has been experienced by musicians, journalists, and fans. Like Billig's study of British daily newspapers which focuses on the way the nations are signified, my study of the British media coverage of the British Heavyweight Championship between Blur and Oasis looks at the way national identity is represented and how the audience is addressed (1995).

In contrast to Billig's research which focused on mainstream media, my research looks at both music press (NME, Melody Maker) and mainstream press (Guardian, Times). By looking at different forms of media coverage of this Britpop battle in 1995, I hope not just to address Skey's critique of the complexity of the media but the complexity of the audience as well. Assuming that there is an age gap between the readership of the music press and mainstream press, a gap which hasn't been sufficiently addressed in recent research except for Fenton's research on young adults being English in Britain (2007). While acknowledging the important role of deixis, the direct addressing of nations through little words like 'we', my research draws more attention on the concept of intertextuality, the way the nation and its fellow members are addressed through direct and indirect cultural references which I consider to be more powerful to distinguish between members and non-members of a nation.

Billig highlighted that societies are primarily imagined as nation-states (1995, p.53). Guibernau and Crang pointed out that the nation 'represents the socio-historical context within which culture is embedded and the means by which culture is produced, transmitted and received' (Guibernau, 1996, p.79). National culture should not be imagined as 'the outcome of material and symbolic processes but instead as the cause of those practices –a hidden essence lying behind the surface of behavior' (Crang, 1998, p.162). Historically, Britpop is a product of the British society in the 1990s. To be able to understand the social, economic and political context of Britpop as a cultural phenomenon to a full extent, my empirical research looks into British lifestyle, suburbia, ethnicity, gender, and class.

British lifestyle and suburbia are discussed because the place of living influences the way of living. Britpop's coverage of British lifestyle is critical because it provides an extraordinary inside view into the daily lives of ordinary people. The family and home are the places where young people are socialized into their society. One could argue that the family and home is a nation in a nutshell; it is the place where kids learn important rules and forms of behaviors from their parents. It's the place where they grow into their national culture through children books, radio programs, TV shows. Britpop's representation of work and weekend life, eating and drinking habits, leisure habits and social relationships provides useful insights into young people's understanding of British identity. Particular focus will be given to the suburban lifestyle because the majority of British people live in a suburban environment. My research argues that the experience of growing up in British society is dependent on people's age as well as their ethnic, gender, class background.

As mentioned before, national identity is associated with homogeneity rather than diversity. Therefore, it seems even more important to explore its relationship to aspects of ethnicity, gender, and class. The thesis examines the relationship between the imagery of homogeneous nations and the reality of increasingly diverse multi-ethnic societies with a particular focus on ethnicity and race. The thesis looks at the majority and minority relationship between white and non-white British people and discusses Asian and Black British minority group in the context of post-war migration. With regards to gender, the thesis looks at feminism and its impact on gender roles and stereotypes of femininity and masculinity. Based on the media discourse on Britpop's Heavyweight Championship between Blur (middle class) and Oasis (working class) the thesis explores the importance of class and regional division for the representation of national identity.

2.2 British Cultural Studies

In contrast to national identity, young people are associated with change rather than continuity. Academic literature on youth culture has described youth as 'a metaphor for social change' (Clarke et al., 1977, p.17). However, I argue in my thesis that young people and their youth culture can play a significant role in the continuity of their national culture. Britpop was an interesting example when the target of resistance shifted from young people's parents and national culture (British Invasion/ 1960s) to other young people's national and global subculture (grunge/hip hop/ 1990s).

In that context, young people played a significant role in the continuity of their national culture, an aspect which hasn't been discussed within the academic discourses on National Identity, British Cultural Studies and Britpop so far. Given the purpose of my thesis to explore the role of young people and popular music for the construction and reproduction of national identity and British Cultural Studies' focus on British youth and pop music, the second part of the literature review provides a brief overview of existing research on British Cultural Studies and discusses relevant key debates such as culturalism versus structuralism and key terms such as culture, popular culture and subculture as well as strengths and weaknesses of relevant literature on the topic.

According to Stuart Hall, the development of British cultural studies can be divided into three significant periods. The first period covers the late 1950s and the early 1960s and can be described as the period of culturalism including the work of Raymond Williams, E.P. Thompson, Richard Hoggart, Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel (Williams, 1961; Thompson, 1988; Hoggart, 1981; Hall and Whannel 2009). The second period covers the 1960s to the 1970s and can be described as the period of structuralism and post-structuralism including the work of Roland Barthes and Louis Althusser (Barthes, 2009; Althusser, 2009). The third period starts in the middle of the 1970s and marks the discovery of the work of Gramsci and his concept of hegemony in the field of British Cultural Studies, which seems to enable a synthesis between the culturalism and structuralism approach (Hall, 1980a).

In contrast to Hall, Jim McGuigan suggests three levels address the development of cultural studies: ideas, formations, and representation (1992, p.29). The first level covers the movement of ideas within the field, the interaction between different paradigms and problematics. The second tier addresses the institutional and historical contexts of emergence and transformation. The third level explores the 'politics of representation, the mechanics of inclusion and exclusion which regulate agency within the field: who gets to define the issues and with what purpose' (ibid). In reference to Hall's 'Cultural Studies: Two paradigm' essay (1980a), McGuigan argues that Hall primarily focuses on the first two levels by discussing 'culturalism' as an indigenous British tradition emerging from the New Left of late 1950's and 'structuralism' as a French tradition imported into Britain from the 1960s especially post-1968 (ibid, p.29, Hall, 1980a).

Culturalism and Structuralism differ in their views of theory, their understanding of experience and their perspective of human agency. According to McGuigan, Culturalism's 'experimental pull' enables it to stress human agency and expressions in concrete historical circumstances without, however adequately specifying the conditions of action while structuralism's 'linguistic model' draws attention to structured conditions of actions within action is generated (1992, p.30). I locate my research in the Culturalism tradition, as the focus on experience and the human agency make an ideal starting point for my analysis of Britpop, a cultural phenomenon when young people made popular music based on the experience of and highlighting their national culture. Hall distinguishes between culturalism, practice and the poverty of theory on one side versus structuralism, theory and the absolutism of theory on the other hand (1980a).

Despite these fundamental differences both culturalism and structuralism broke with Marx' base and superstructure metaphor and are anti-reductionist and anti-economic in their approach (Hall, 1980a, p.62 & p.65). Thompson's 'The Poverty of Theory' initiated a debate about the importance of theory within cultural studies. Hall's 'In Defense of Theory' and Johnson's 'Against Absolutism of Theory' are a response to Thompson's initial critique of a focus on theory rather than practice-oriented research in cultural studies. My research is concentrated on an empirical case study of British identity and Britpop music. Samuel's book 'People's History and Socialist Theory' covers these important contributions to this crucial debate on the poverty of theory within the field of cultural studies including Thompson's response 'The politics of theory' (1981, pp.375-408).

Hall's 'In Defense of Theory' considers Thompson's 'The Poverty of Theory' as an attack against Marxist structuralism in general and Althusser and his British followers in particular and raises the question whether the poverty of theory provides 'a warrant for a sort of mindless anti-theory' (1981, p.379). Hall acknowledges Thompson's critique of Althusser theory of 'structuralist causality,' a highly formalist, logical, rationalist analysis of social formations and his 'vulgar Althusserianism' which conflates the problem of 'empiricism' by attacking any form of empirical analysis. In contrast to Thompson, he acknowledges that Althusser's 'Contradiction and over-determination' raises the important issue of how to think the problem of determinacy in a non-reductionist way (Hall, 1981, pp.379-381).

Hall highlights the problem of empiricism and the complicated relationship between theories (the logic of the argument) and practices (the logic of history) within Marxism. Thompson himself defense the 'dialogue between model and evidence' as the basis for the historical method. According to him, history presents itself as a complex 'lived' whole and any conceptualisation of it must be a reduction of the 'evidence' (ibid). My empirical case study on British identity and Britpop is informed by relevant theories on national identity and popular culture and is analyzed within the social, political, economic context of the British society in the 1990s. In response to that, Hall argues that even Marx acknowledged the procedure of abstraction as a research instrument for historians, and he questions the construction of the model in general as it cannot arise from the evidence as this is what it is tested against (ibid, pp.381-382).

Thompson's focus on the logic of history stands in clear contrast to Althusser's focus on the logic of the argument. In addition to these distinct differences, Hall points out the similarities between Althusser and Thompson as both are concerned to rebut the tendencies to reductionism and economism in orthodox Marxism and acknowledge Engels contribution to mention the problem of economism as well as his failure to theoretical solve it. Both are dealing with the real specificity of different practices, Althusser's concept of 'relative autonomy' plays a significant role in Thompson's historical work despite him naming it this way (Hall, 1981, pp.381-382).

In contrast to Thompson's 'The Poverty of Theory' and Hall's 'In Defense of Theory,' Johnson argues against any form of the absolutism of either practice or theory based research. He highlights the importance to examine the relations between culturalism, 'the moment of culture' and structuralism, 'the moment of theory' and suggest to take valuable elements from each tradition which hints at third period of British cultural studies, the so-called turn to Gramsci who drew on both culture and ideology (Johnson, 1981, p. 389). In agreement with Johnson critique of Thompson and Hall, my research combines both theory and practice as my empirical study on British identity and Britpop is built on relevant theories on National identity and popular cultures such as Anderson's 'Imagined Communities' or Billig's 'Banal Nationalism' to explore the role of young people and popular music for the construction and reproduction of national identity.

According to Johnson the key element of 'the moment of culture' is a definition of culture and cultural struggle, the centrality of lived experience within that concept whether through the elaboration of culture in William's work or through the reworking, in the light of culture of the older Marxist category of 'class consciousness' in Thompsons' work (ibid. , p.392). Characteristic of culturalism is its commitment to detailed studies, histories, social movements, cultural forms or word and its suspicion of theory and abstraction, of hard and fast analytical distinctions, of aprioristic reasoning, of 'impositions' on experience. The methods are practice based 'experimental' including Hoggart's memories, Thompson's personalized polemic and William's autobiographical mode (ibid.). In contrast to Hoggart, Thompson and Williams who were using their personal autobiographical memories for their research, my study analyses the lived experience of people who played an active part in Britpop such as musicians, PR agents, journalists and fans.

Key works are Raymond William's chapter on *'The Analysis of Culture'* in *'The Long Revolution'* (1961), E.P. Thompson's *'The making of the English Working Class'* (1988), Richard Hoggart's *'The uses of literacy'* (1981) and Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel's *'The Popular Arts'* (2009).

According to Johnson, key features of 'the moment of theory' the abstract, formal discussions, the concern with general theoretical or epistemological questions about the nature of science, myth, ideology, language and societies (1981, p.394). Characteristic of structuralism is its analysis which is concerned about how a structure of writing or discourse 'positions' of readers, structure its subjects. The empirical moment is the close analysis of different kinds of 'text.' The method is focused on 'a structuralist abstraction' of ideological, symbolic or linguistic systems which are understood regarding their internal logic and process (ibid.). Critical thinkers of that tradition are the French communist philosopher Althusser and the French structuralist historian Foucault. Similar to Hall, Johnson points out the problem within structuralism regarding the relationship between structure and practice, determination and agency and well as conditions and struggle which he considers an old Marxist problem (ibid.).

In response to Johnson, Thompson points out that he does consider 'The Poverty of Theory' as a counter-attack rather than an act of aggression against Althusser (1981, p.406). He argues that he does not reject the concept of structure itself but aims to distinguish it from structuralism: 'A materialist examination of values must situate itself, not by idealist proposition, but in the face of culture's material abode: the people's way of life, and, above all, their productive and family relationships (Thompson, 1981, p.368 & p. 403). Thompson considers his approach as contextual and materialist rather than abstract or a-historical. With regards to practice and theory, he acknowledges the problem of empiricism highlighted by Hall and clarifies that the question is not whether a theory is needed or not, as theory is necessary, but research needs to be both empirically and theoretically informed. He rejects theory which aims to explain everything as this leaves the actual history unexplained (Thompson, 1981, p.405). My research of British identity in Britpop which is both theoretically and empirically informed can only be understood within the social, political, economic and cultural context of British society in the 1990s which will be further discussed in the following historical chapter while the problems of empirical case studies will be discussed in my methodology chapter.

Thompson rejects the category of culturalism and the identification of the Marxist tradition of histography of which he is considered to be a representative of culturalism. He highlights the complex relation between culturalism and the Marxist tradition by stressing the differences between Hoggart's hostile attitude, William's active criticism, and Hall's skeptical ambivalence towards Marxism and himself, a Marxist historian who aims to defend, re-examine and extend the Marxist tradition (Thompson, 1981, pp. 396-397). Thompson identifies a gap between William's 'cultural history' and the Marxist tradition. William's centrality of lived culture 'culture as a whole way of life' stands in contrast to Thompson's counter-proposal of 'culture a whole way of struggle, class struggle' (ibid., pp.397-398). Thompson's counter-proposal of culture provokes the question to what extent there is such a thing as 'culture as a whole way of life' or whether people's lived experience in a society differs depending on their belonging to other group identities such class, ethnicity, gender. Despite his efforts to differentiate himself from other representatives of culturalism, his terminology related to a human agency such as 'active process, through which men make their own history' locates him within the tradition of culturalism.

According to Hall, the category of experience is a problematic one within Marxism. Althusser understanding of classes as 'bearers' of the historical process without agency and the historical process 'without a subject' stands in clear contrast to Thompson's reading of classes (Hall, 1981, pp. 383-384). In contrast to Marxism which reads class consciousness as paradigmatic with economic position, Thompson aims to correct this deformation by restoring the centrality of culture and consciousness to any account of historical transition (ibid.).

Thompson acknowledges the critique of his category of experience which mainly remains within the terminology of the classical Marxist dialectic of 'being' and 'consciousness' by offering the alternative of two different experiences: an experience I (conditions) and experience II (how these are appropriated in consciousness) (Thompson, 1981, p.406). Thompson's differentiation between experience I and experience II; lived and perceived experience, social being and social consciousness are problematic as different people can experience the same thing differently and experience is organized according to presumptions, presuppositions and within ideologically formed categories (ibid.). My research argues that even though the experience of growing up in British society might vary dependent on people's age as well as their ethnic, gender, class background, they still can share a collective cultural identity.

Culturalism considers the experience a base of culture while structuralism considers it an effect of culture (Hall, 1980a). 'Culturalism' relates to Marx' understanding of 'men that make their own history,' while 'structuralism' refers to Marx' understanding of men 'not being in the condition of their own history' (McGuigan, 1992, pp.29-30). Human agency is central to the concept of culturalism while it is considered within the context of pre-existing conditions within the idea of structuralism (Hall 1980a). I argue that young people's active use of cultural references in Britpop music played a significant role in construction and reproduction of British cultural identity in the 1990's. In contrast to these approaches of cultural studies which highlight either agency or structure, the concept of hegemony emphasizes the importance of both. The 'compromise equilibrium' as Antonio Gramsci called it has been describing as the 'contradictory mix of forces from both 'below' and 'above'; both 'commercial' and 'authentic' marked by both 'resistance' and 'incorporation', 'structure and agency' (Storey, 2011, pp.4-5).

Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony is based on the idea that a dominant group tries to win the consent of a subordinated group in society through 'intellectual and moral leadership' (Gramsci, 2009 & 2010; Storey, 2001, p.10). Tony Bennett's work *'Popular Culture and the 'turn to Gramsci'* emphasizes the importance of the concept of hegemony for cultural studies (2009). It challenges the Marxist idea of essential class-belongingness, and it is 'bourgeois versus working class' conception. Culture can be described as one of the key places where the struggle over meaning between dominant and subordinate groups takes place (Bennett, 2009, pp.81-87). The concept of cultural hegemony describes a struggle between the 'resistance' of a subordinate group and the forces of 'incorporation' of a dominant group in society (Edensor, 2002, p.10). The concept of cultural hegemony is attractive to the analysis of Britpop music and its influence on people's perception of national identity in the United Kingdom as it emphasizes the dialectic between structure and agency as well as production and consumption.

Stuart Hall uses the concept of 'articulation' to explain the processes of the struggle between the subordinated group and the dominant group within the concept of hegemony (Hall, 1982 & 1996). According to Storey, Hall uses the double meaning of 'articulation' to express and to connect something. Therefore, 'articulation' can be understood in the way that meaning needs to be shown in a particular context, which means cultural texts cannot be considered just as the source of meaning but as a place where meaning is being articulated as well (Storey, 2011, p.4). Hall emphasizes that cultural texts are 'multi-accentual' in the way that they can be expressed in different ways by different people in different contexts (Hall, 1982 & 1996).

Following that logic, cultural texts can be perceived in different ways by different people in different circumstances.

To conclude the brief discussion of the academic debate between culturalism and structuralism, I argue that culturalism is helpful to understand cultural beliefs and behaviors of the people who produce and consume culture in a particular society. Culturalism's focus on human agency and experience as a base of culture make it an ideal starting point for my analysis of young people's construction and reproduction of national identity in popular culture as Britpop as a cultural phenomenon was driven by young people who constructed popular music based on the experience of their national culture. Experience and human agency play a significant role in Williams's understanding of culture as a particular way of life and the importance of the structure of feeling which will be discussed in the following section of this chapter.

According to Johnson, culturalism needs to be considered as a break with Leavis's elitist construction of culture in a literary sociology and the rediscovery of class by an empirical socio-democratic sociology which breaks with positivism and theoretical functionalism in the new sociologies of the 1960s (Johnson, 1981). The differentiation between high and low culture can be considered a starting point for British Cultural Studies. Matthew Arnold's '*Culture and Anarchy'* described culture as 'the best that has been thought and known in the world' while F.R. Leavis *'Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture'* distinguished between a minority culture and mass civilization (Arnold, 1990; Leavis, 2009; Storey, 2009, pp.12-19). Both highlight the importance of linking culture to its particular social and political context. Arnold's analysis of culture was focused on different classes of society and the awareness of historical conditions and tensions between them while Leavis's analysis of culture was linked to the context of historical change and modern mass culture. A similar differentiation between high and low culture can be found in Adorno's work *'On Popular Music'* (Storey, 2009, pp.63-74).

In *'The Analysis of Culture'* in the *'The Long Revolution'* Raymond Williams distinguishes between three definitions of culture: the ideal, the documentary and the social. The first category, the 'ideal' describes culture as 'a state or process of human perfection, regarding certain absolute or universal values' (1961, p.57). The second category, the 'documentary' focuses on the surviving texts and practices of culture (ibid.). In that context, 'culture is the body of intellectual and imaginative work, in which, in a detailed way, human thought and

experience are variously recorded.' The third category, the 'social' defines culture as 'a description of a particular way of life' (ibid.).

According to John Storey, the social definition seems to be the most important for the founding of culturalism because it introduces a new way of thinking about culture. First, the 'anthropological' position defines culture as 'a description of a particular way of life' (Storey, 2001, pp.44-45 & 2009, pp.24-25). Second, culture is suggested to 'express certain meanings and values' (ibid.). Third, a cultural analysis should be the 'clarification of the meaning and values implicit and explicit in a particular way of life, a particular culture' (ibid.). As suggested by Storey, the 'social' definition of culture 'as a particular way of life, an expression of a particular way of life and the cultural analysis as a method of reconstructing a particular way of life' can be described as 'the general perspective and basic procedure of culturalism' (ibid.).

The understanding of culture as a particular way of life depends on what Raymond Williams calls the 'structure of feeling' which means 'the shared values of a particular group, class or society' (Williams, 1961). The shared values of a particular society can be analyzed through the use of specific texts and practices by a particular culture which links Raymond Williams's category of 'documentary' with the category of the 'social' (Storey, 2001, p.45; Edensor, 2002, p.19). The analysis of culture becomes more complicated because culture always exists on three levels:

> 'There is the lived culture of a particular time and place, only fully accessible to those living in that time and place. There is the recorded culture, of every kind, from art to most of the everyday facts: the culture of the period. There is also, as the factor connecting lived culture and period culture, the culture of selective tradition' (Williams, 1961, p.57).

Raymond Williams highlights the fact that the culture of tradition is a selection as well as an interpretation of lived culture and period culture (1961). He distinguishes between 'the historical organization' in which culture was expressed and 'the contemporary organization' within which it is interpreted. The combination of the historical and the present aspect will help to explore the 'real cultural process' (Storey, 2001, p.46).

My thesis analyses the social category of British culture by using the documentary category of British culture. Britpop's representation of British identity as 'a description of a particular way of life' is analyzed through surviving texts such as Britpop lyrics and album reviews and newspaper articles. The thesis analyses both lived and period culture. Since the lived culture of a particular time and place is only accessible through those residing in that given time and location, interviews have been conducted with musicians, PR agents, journalists and fans that were part of Britpop and are therefore considered experts on the scene. Given the fact that the interviews have been conducted more than 20 years after Britpop happened, the factor of culture as a particular tradition has been taken into consideration, hoping that the combination of historical and contemporary aspects will help to explore the real cultural process. The period culture has been analyzed through the textual analysis of Britpop lyrics, album reviews and newspaper articles.

Raymond Williams suggested four definitions regarding popular culture. First, popular culture is defined as a culture that is 'well-liked by many people' (Williams, 2009, pp.32-40). Second, popular culture is described as 'inferior culture,' dependent on the differentiation between high and low culture, everything which fails to qualify as a high culture will be considered as low culture and popular culture (ibid.). Third, popular culture is defined as 'mass culture' (ibid.). Fourth, popular culture is made by 'the people' (Storey, 2001 p.5-14; Williams, 2009, pp.32-40). The definition of 'mass culture' is focused on the structure of popular culture while the definition of made by 'the people' is focused on the agency of popular culture. Britpop was made by young British people and became very popular among British youth within the context of Cool Britannia.

The research of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham focused on the analysis of youth subcultures in post-war Britain. Its work has been influenced by the Chicago School, Marxism and Gramscian hegemony (Huq, 2006, p.17). Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson's *'Resistance through Ritual Youth subcultures in post-war Britain'* introduced the concept of subculture and provided an analysis of a wide range of post-war youth subcultures such as Tony Jefferson's *'Cultural Responses of the Teds: The defence of space and status'*, Dick Hebdige's *'The Meaning of Mod'*, John Clarke's *'The Skinheads and the Magical Recovery of Community'* and *'Reggae, Rastas and Rudies'* (Hall and Jefferson, 1977; Jefferson, 1977; Hebdige, 1977; Clarke, 1977). Subculture is '…the need to create and express

autonomy and difference from parents…and the need to maintain…the parental identifications which support them' (Hall and Jefferson, 1977, p.52).

Youth culture is understood as a 'post-war novelty' which is related to the post-war social changes and discussed in the context of key elements of social change in the post-war period such as 'affluence,' 'consensus' and 'Embourgeoisment.' In contrast to the suggested disappearance of class within the debate on social change in the post-war period, the book proposes a reappearance of class and the relationship between the dominant and the subordinate class and the subcultural response to it (ibid. p.5, p.15, p.21-30). Youth is described as a metaphor for social change, and subcultural behavior is defined as the collective reaction of young people in general and working-class young people in particular to the structural changes of the British post-war society (Hall and Jefferson, 1977, pp.17-25; Bennett, 1999, p.600).

The concept of subculture is based on the idea of 'double articulation' which attempts to explain working-class youth subculture in context with class relations. Working-class youth subculture is analyzed about their 'parent culture' and the 'dominant culture' (Hall and Jefferson, 1977, p.52). Given its focus on youth as a metaphor for social change, as a form of resistance as well as its critical problems including its focus on white males and lack of research on non-white females; its overemphasis on theory and lack of praxis-based research it seems to be not an obvious choice to discuss in the context of how young people constructed and maintained British identity through Britpop music in the 1990s (Huq, 2006, pp.11-17). However, the question is how youth behavior of resistance can change in our globalized world with an increased cultural homogenization.

Britpop shows that the target of youth subcultural resistance can shift from the national culture of parents (British Invasion/ 1960s) to a global subculture of other young people (grunge/hip hop/ 1990s). The concept of 'double articulation' is interesting in that context as Britpop and Cool Britannia celebrated British identity rather than revolted against it which shows young people's urge to maintain an identification with their parent's culture rather than to express autonomy from it in the 1990s. Ang and Stratton raised the interesting question of whether there is a possibility of global cultural studies or whether it will remain within the national cultural context (1996). I argue that culture always needs to be analyzed within a national context. However, national culture cannot be explained without an international perspective.

Phil Cohen's work *'Sub-Cultural Conflict and Working Class Community'* (1972) which examines London's East End working-class community introduces the idea of 'imaginary relation.' Cohen's analysis focuses on post-war changes such as redevelopment and rehousing and its impact on the working-class. His work on traditional working class culture defines three key elements: the family, the community and the local economy (ibid.). The idea of 'imaginary relation' describes the possibility of subculture to offer an ideal solution for real problems which cannot be solved in real life (Hall and Jefferson, 1976, pp.30-34). The concept of 'imaginary relation' is interesting in the context of Britpop music as its nostalgic notion of British identity seems to have provided an ideal solution for real social, political and economic changes in British society in the 1990s. Hesmondalgh's definition of Britpop as 'a defensive reaction against globalization' can be interpreted in that way (2005, p.284).

2.3 British identity and Britpop

Britpop is an excellent example of how national identity, national culture, and cultural heritage provided an important form of identification and a strong sense of belonging to young people in an increasingly complex and uncertain global world at the end of the Cold War and the beginning of the 21st Century. Therefore, the final part of the literature review provides a brief overview of existing research on Britpop and British identity; discusses the strengths and weaknesses of relevant key literature.

The academic literature on Britpop and British identity focuses on two central debates: Britpop's nostalgic representation of national identity and the question whether Britpop is more a representation of English rather than British identity in particular 'an assertion of white, male, heterosexual Englishness' (Bennett and Stratton, 2010, p.6; Percival, 2010; Hawkins, 2010; Whiteley, 2010).

Regarding Britpop's nostalgic representation of national identity, the literature review discusses David Hesmondhalgh's argument that Britpop is 'a defensive reaction against globalization' (2001, p.284). Britpop's reflection on British cultural heritage in its lyrics and sounds created a positive imagery of the British nation which led to the celebration of British contemporary culture in the Cool Britannia context. However, I argue that this focus on British cultural heritage works as an aesthetic instrument of social commentary on the modern British society in the 1990s in the United Kingdom.

Taking issue with the dominant academic critique of Britpop being 'an assertion of white, male, heterosexual Englishness' (Bennett and Stratton, 2010, p.6; Percival, 2010; Hawkins, 2010; Whiteley, 2010) the thesis argues that Britpop's representation of national identity was more complex and ambiguous than previously suggested by academia especially with regards to ethnicity and gender and that Britpop's positive attitude towards Britain and its nostalgic image of British identity needs to be interpreted as a cultural critique of social, economic and political changes in the United Kingdom in the 1990s.

Andy Bennett's paper on *'Village greens and terraced streets': Britpop and representations of 'Britishness'* presents a sociological interpretation of Britpop with a particular focus on its representation of British cultural identity. The article suggests that the re-discovery of British themes and images in Britpop music with its strong sense of class and regional identity contributes to a 'magical recovery' of British national identity and the 'creation of a golden age of British life' (Bennett, 1997, p.31, p.22, p.27). The key argument is that the nostalgic view towards the past is offering 'a particular version of Britain and Britishness', an 'assertion of white, male, heterosexual Englishness' (Cohen, 1972; Hebdige, 1979; Bennett, 1997, p.31, p.22, p.27; Bennett and Stratton, 2010, p.6; Percival, 2010; Hawkins, 2010; Whiteley, 2010)

The article critiques Britpop's nostalgic representation of British identity but fails to address the question why young people re-discover British themes and images in their music in the 1990s. The role of youth within the 'magical recovery' of this 'particular version of Britain and Britishness' based on class and regional identity remains unexplained. My research aims to answer this question by exploring the link between young people and their sense of class identity which seems to be mainly derived from their socialization rather their working experience. In addition to that, Bennett's article lacks a discussion of class in the light of de-industrialization and deregulation of the labor market in the British society in the 1990s.

The academic debate on British class in the 1990s discussed the impact of the decline of the British heavy industry and Thatcher's deregulation of the British labor market in the 1980s and ranged from the death of class theory (Pakulski and Waters, 1996) to persistence of class theory (Hout et al., 1993). 'Death of class' theories like Clark and Lipset: *'Are classes dying?'* (1991) and Pakulski and Waters: *'The Death of Class'* (1996) argue that the decline of the heavy industry led to the decline of class identities in the second half of the twentieth century (Clark and Lipset, 1991; Pakulski and Waters, 1996; Heath, 2009, p.21-40). Hout, Brooks and Manza's 'Persistence of class' theory acknowledges that class structures have undergone important changes in post-industrialised societies but argues that class-based stratification continues to be a central factor in social stratification (1993).

'Individualization' theories like Beck's: *'Risk Society'* explains that the individualizing role of the labor market in general and Thatcher's reforms such as the deregulation of the labor market, in particular, led to the decline of class identities in the 1980s (Beck and Gernsheim, 2001, pp.32-33). Social identities are less dependent on class origin, and 'become relatively independent of old or newly formed ties' (family, neighbourhood, friendship, partnership); 'The argument of the individualization theorists is that objective features (income, position in the hierarchy) and subjective elements (consciousness, lifestyle, leisure interest, political attitudes) diverge' (ibid., p.23). However, results of the British Election Survey (BES) and the British Social Attitudes (BSA) survey show that there is little change in the number of British people willing to assign themselves to social class. There is a small decline in the sense of class belonging, and there has been a modest de-coupling of class from people's social origins and their current occupation (Heath, 2009, p.37).

The coverage of class division and class tourism within Britpop and its related media discourse clearly shows the persistence of class as an important signifier of national identity for the British youth and their construction of national identity in the 1990s. The results of the qualitative analysis of Britpop and its related media discourse support this argument and show that Britain continued to be a class-conscious society despite social and economic changes in the post-industrial British society of the 1990s. Given the young age of musicians, journalists and fans, their sense of class identity cannot derive from any class-related working experience and must be therefore linked to their class origin and their experience of growing up in a class specific environment. That is why it is important to explore the connection between young people and suburbia.

Similar to class identity, suburbia plays a significant role in the 'magical recovery' of British national identity and the 'creation of a golden age of British life' (Bennett, 1997, p.31, p.22, p.27). Britpop has been labeled as 'an outer-suburban, middle-class fantasy of central London street life' by Jon Savage (1995). Similar to Savage, Simon Frith suggests that British pop sensibility is mainly suburban with particular class rhetoric as a product of suburban dreams and needs. Likewise, he argues that 'British suburbia is as much a product of pop as British pop is a product of suburbia' (Frith, 1997, p.269 & p.276).

The relationship between British suburbia and British pop has been addressed by Nick Baxter-Moore who argues that English identity and 'pop Englishness' are constructed through the different tensions between tradition and modernity, nostalgia and realism, competing senses of class and nation (Baxter-Moore, 2006, p.146 & p.147). Given the contradiction between Britpop's focus on traditional aspects of British identity and Cool Britannia's concentrate on modern aspects of British identity, it is important to analyze Britpop's relationship between tradition and modernity as well as nostalgia and realism. I argue that Britpop's nostalgia with its reflection on traditional aspects of national identity can be read as a commentary of modern realities in British society in the 1990s.

Suburbia as a product of modernity is closely related to the process of industrialization and urbanization. The tensions mentioned above between tradition and modernity as well as nostalgia and realism can be found in the dualism between the imagined homogeneity in a suburban community on the one side and real diversity in an urban society on the other side. The increasing diversity of modern societies in a rapidly changing globalized world leads to more insecurity about our sense of identity. It could be argued that Britpop's focus on community in the local context is the result of a search for identity within an increasing multicultural British society.

As David Hesmondhalgh outlines in his work on Britpop:

> 'The significance of Britpop discourse was that it resonated with anxieties, particular English ones, about the loss of a secure national identity in an era of transnational flows of cultures and peoples, and of increasing political and economic ties with Europe. In other words, Britpop can be seen as a defensive reaction against globalization.' (2001, p.284).

Following Roland Robertson's argument, that globalization is the primary cause of the rise of willful nostalgia; it could be argued that Britpop's nostalgic view towards national identity can be read as a defensive reaction against globalization (Robertson, 2000; Hesmondalgh, 1992, p.155 & 2001, p.284). However, similar to Bennett, Hesmondalgh fails to address the unique role of young people in the context of globalization. What is young British people's experience of social, political, economic and cultural globalization that leads to their use of nostalgia in popular music? To what extent can their experience of cultural flows such as American Grunge and Hip Hop taking over the British music charts be related to possible anxieties about a loss of their cultural identity which might explain Britpop's sense of nostalgia? How do young people and nostalgia relate to each other?

Blur's song 'Country House' is an excellent example of the 'magical recovery' and 'golden age of British life' (Bennett, 1997, p.31, p.22, p.27). The ironic description of lifestyle in the British countryside illustrates the wish to escape modernity and return to a simpler way of life represented by the image of a rural, pre-modern and pre-industrialised lifestyle. The escape from modernity through an imagined past creates the golden age of British life. I argue that Britpop's use of nostalgia is different from the common understanding of nostalgia as it aims to engage with rather than avoid the anxieties and difficulties of British society in the 1990s. Nostalgia works as an aesthetic device to address young people's concerns and problems in a constantly changing British society in the 1990s.

Roland Bleiker differentiates between two forms of representation: the mimetic and the aesthetic form of representation (2012, p.19). In contrast to the mimetic approach which aims to represent the world as realistically and authentically as possible, the aesthetic approach assumes a gap between form and content of representation (ibid.). He argues that the difference between form and content of representation is the very location of politics (Bleiker, 2012, p.19). Previous academic critique of Britpop's sense of nostalgia remains on the surface failing to provide an explanation why young people use such a nostalgic form of representation of national identity in their popular music. I argue that Britpop's positive attitude towards Britain and its nostalgic image of British identity needs to be interpreted as a cultural critique of social, economic and political changes in the United Kingdom in the 1990s.

Andy Bennett and Jon Stratton's academic study *'Britpop and the English Music Tradition'* explores Britpop as a musical and cultural phenomenon and provides an overview of existing literature (2010). The key argument that Britpop is an 'assertion of a white, male, heterosexual Englishness' is mainly based on the following three chapters: Percival's *'Britpop or Eng-pop?'*, Hawkin's *'Unsettling Differences: Music and Laddism in Britpop'* and *Whitely's 'Trainspotting: The Gendered History of Britpop'* (Bennett and Stratton, 2010, p.6; Percival, 2010; Hawkins, 2010; Whiteley, 2010). Taking issue with the argument that Britpop is an 'assertion of a white, male, heterosexual Englishness,' I argue that Britpop's representation of national identity was more complex and ambiguous than previously suggested by academia especially with regards to ethnicity and gender.

Bennett and Stratton's critique of Britpop as an 'assertion of a white, male, heterosexual Englishness' suggested a 'crisis in British whiteness as second- and third-generation people of colour asserted their Britishness and their place in English culture' as well as a 'crisis in masculinity as the acceptance of the New Male also signalled an unsettling of heteronormativity' but fails to address them in the book (Bennett and Stratton, 2010, p.6; Percival, 2010; Hawkins, 2010; Whiteley, 2010). I disagree with the critique that Britpop was 'a reinstatement of traditional race and gender concerns' (ibid.).

Despite their critique that Britpop paid little attention to social aspects such as deindustrialization, unemployment, racism and inequality, the study itself fails to address these and other important issues such as migration and feminism. There is no discussion about the impact of immigration on national identities such as 2nd and 3rd generation people of non-white Asian and Black people and too little discussion about the impact of feminism on national identities such as gender roles like the Old Male, the New Male, and the New Lad.

Although ethnicity and gender have been addressed within academic research on Britpop, previous academic work has not specifically addressed the complexity and ambiguity of these concepts. There has been no discussion about the complicated relationship between race, ethnicity and national identity and too little discussion about gender roles and stereotypes related to masculinity and femininity regarding Britpop's close association with lad culture. My research is designed to remedy that weakness by taking a closer look at the relationship between race, ethnicity, gender roles, stereotypes and national identity.

Previous academic work on ethnicity and gender is too much focused on whiteness and masculinity (Cloonan, 1997; Zuberi, 2001; Baxter-Moore, 2006; Huq, 2006). Both concepts are commonly linked with each other discussing the English white, male or white, male Englishness. Cloonan classifies both as essential characteristics of the Britpop phenomenon (1997). Baxter-Moore discusses the English white, male in Britpop in his article on *'This is where I belong: Identity, Social Class and the Nostalgic the Englishness of Ray Davis and the Kinks'* (2006) while Zuberi addresses white, male Englishness in his book *'Sounds English, Transnational Popular Music'*(2001). Huq's work on Britpop and Grunge shows that whiteness is not a particular characteristic of British Pop and Rock music and can be found in other musical types such as American Grunge music as well (2006, pp.135-155).

The usage 'whiteness' in these studies is problematic as it discusses national identity regarding race rather than ethnicity. The problem becomes particularly apparent in Mark Percival's chapter *'Britpop or Eng-pop?'* which raises the important question whether Britpop covered Britain as a whole or just England (2010). His research of Welsh and Scottish bands such as Stereophonics, Manic Street Preachers, Travis and The Super Fury Animals blurs the distinction between race and ethnicity by using race-related terminology such as 'whiteness' to discuss Welsh and Scottish ethnic identities about British national identity. 2nd or 3rd generation people of Irish descent are not considered in this context while Britpop bands such Oasis included 2nd generation people of Irish people such as Liam and Noel Gallagher. In addition to that, there is no discussion of 2nd and 3rd generation people of non-white Asian and Black people either.

Regarding gender, previous academic work is too much focused on masculinity and lad culture and failed to discuss femininity and ladette culture (Cloonan, 1997; Zuberi, 2001; Baxter-Moore, 2006). Stan Hawkins research *'Unsettling Differences: Music and Laddism in Britpop'* (2010) on the vocal performances of male-led Britpop bands and Sheila Whiteley research on *'Trainspotting: The Gendered History of Britpop'* (2010) about female-led Britpop bands provide an interesting starting point for the discussion of feminism and its impact on gender roles, gender stereotypes, and national identity. According to Hawkins, 'Britpop signaled a distinct reaction to the new trends of masculinity that emerged in the 1980s and the set of liberal politics the New Male upheld' as these male singers 'all communicate the normative rules of gendered practice through their performances' (2010, pp.145-159).

The academic critique of Britpop being 'an assertion of male Englishness' raises the question to what extent socially constructed gender roles impact the image of a nation? Previous literature on this subject- suggests two things, first - a dominance of masculinity within the image of the English nation and second, the need to re-assert this dominance of masculinity after it had been challenged. Britpop is closely associated with the image of the 'New Lad,' Laddishness and Lad culture. Imelda Whelehan defines the 'New Lad' as 'a nostalgic revival of old patriarchy; a direct challenge to feminism's call for social transformation, by reaffirming-albeit ironically- the unchanging nature of gender relations and sexual roles' (2000, p.5). To be able to understand Britpop's close association with the image of the 'New Lad,' we need to take a brief historical excursion to understand the complex and dynamic relationship between masculinity and femininity within British society in the 1990s.

Feminism had an enormous impact on British society. The traditional image of Britain as the first industrialized nation is closely related to working-class men. The entry of women into the labor market challenged the traditional sphere of influence between females being at home and males being at work and led to a crisis in masculinity (Ferrebe 2000, cited in Genz and Brabon, 2009, p.133). The change from mass production of Fordism and heavy industries to niche production of post-Fordism and services sector, the so-called feminization of the labor market further challenged the working-class masculinity of the 'old industrial man' (McDowell, 2005, pp.344-345; Coward, 1999, cited in Genz and Brabon, 2009, p.134).

The 'New Lad' is a response to feminism and a reaction towards the 'New Man' a type of masculinity which is closely associated with feminism. The 'New Lad' as the post-feminist and retro-sexist image is related to both imageries of masculinity: the 'Old Man' (pre-feminist and sexist) and the 'New Man' (pro-feminist and anti-sexist). According to Genz and Brabon, the New Lad aims to throw off the constraints of traditional, patriarchal representations of masculinity, offers a refuge from the limitations and demands of marriage and nuclear family and opens up space for fun, consumption and sexual freedom for men (2009, p.142). There is a strong element of class within these different types of masculinities. In contrast to the close association of the 'Old Man' image with working class men and the 'New Man' image with middle-class men, the 'New Lad' had a broader appeal to both classes. It included working class masculinities that previously felt excluded from 'the 'upmarket' and commoditised representation of the 'new man'' and re-established 'personal consumption and grooming as acceptable parts of working class masculinities' (ibid.).

Modern men's magazines with their men's fashion photography had an enormous impact on imageries of masculinity. In the 1990s men's magazines like GQ and Arena broke with the image of the 'New Man.' GQ proclaimed that it:

> '…Is proud to announce that the New Man is officially laid to rest (if indeed it ever drew breath). The 90's man knows who he is, what he wants and where he's going, and he's not afraid to say so. And yes, he still wants to get laid' (Conde Nast press release, Jan. 1991, cited in Nixon, 2005, p.379).

The new men's magazine Loaded became 'the most distinctive voice of Laddishness, dedicated to 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of sex, drinks, football and less serious matters' (Loaded, Issue 1, May 1994) In addition to Lad culture in men's magazines like Loaded, Laddishness can be found in British TV sitcoms like Simon Ney's 'Men Behaving Badly' which is focused on women, alcohol, football and television and so-called 'lad lit' (Lad literature) like Nick Hornby's 'High Fidelity' which is focused on women and music.

However, the working class-specific meaning of the 'New Lad', the celebration of underachievement, juvenility and an anti-aspirational sense of being 'too pissed to bother' which was 'deliberately designed to rub against more respectable or dynamic masculinity scripts 'for men who should know better' (Nixon, 2005, p. 379) stands in clear contrast to the ambition, competitiveness and success of Britpop bands which became most famously visible in the British Heavyweight Championship between Blur and Oasis in 1995.

After discussing the impact of feminism on masculinity, the following part will focus on its impact on femininity in British society in the 1990s. Women's entry into the labour market not just changed masculinity and male gender roles but also changed femininity and female gender roles (Ferrebe, 2000, cited in Genz and Brabon, 2009, p.133) Despite their increased access to the labour market, women remained in disadvantaged economic positions as they still got less payment for similar work and mainly worked in part-time jobs because of their responsibilities at home (ibid.).

Social changes of British family structures such as a decrease in marriages and increase in divorce rates and a rise in single households, women have to deal with a lot of challenges regarding their gender roles. Regardless the growing access of women to political institutions such as the Parliament (the number of female MPs doubled from 60 to 120 between 1992 to the 1997 British Parliament elections) and religious institutions such as the Church of England (women were first ordained in the Church of England), Britain remained a male dominated society in the 1990s as the term 'Blair's babes' for theses female MP's in the 1997 election or the fact that women were still excluded from becoming a Bishop helps to illustrate (Christopher 2006, p.19).

Like lad culture, the female version of it, the so-called ladette culture can be interpreted as a response to feminism and a reaction to Lad culture. Ladette culture played a significant role in female-led Britpop bands like Echobelly, Sleeper, and Elastica and stood in clear contrast to the non-conformist British riot grrrl band Huggy Bear on the one side and the marketable British girl power group Spice Girls on the other hand which represents two very different dimensions of British femininity in the 1990s. I argue that ladette culture needs to be located in the middle of the spectrum between riot girl and girl power.

Feigenbaum argued that Riot Grrrls is 'an infusion of punk and feminism', a rebellion against dominant representation of girlhood and the patriarchal structures they encountered in the music scene (Feigenbaum, 2007, p.132, cited in Genz and Brabon, 2009, p.80), which address issues such as sexual abuse and, eating disorders in lyrics, Gillis and Munford argued that it's 'a unique feminist space for young women', similar to 2nd wave feminism and its consciousness-raising groups and support networks (Gillis and Munford, 2004, p.170, cited in Genz and Brabon, 2009, p.80). In contrast to girl power which is not very often more than a 'fashion statement' and 'a ready site for postfeminist colonization,' riot grrrl can be understood as part of a 'politics of identification that is vital to both individual and collective empowerment' (ibid., p.81). Riot grrrl remained an alternative movement while girl power quickly became a mainstream movement.

Girl Power is closely associated with the British girl band Spice Girls who defined girl power as 'a celebration of self-belief, independence and female friendship.' According to Gauntlett, the Spice Girls represented five versions British femaleness in the 1990s: Sporty, Scary, Posh, Ginger and Baby (Gauntlett, p.218, cited in Genz and Brabon, 2009, p.82). Genz and Brabon argue that the Spice Girls positioned themselves as for late twentieth-century modernisers providing an updated version of feminist empowerment: 'Feminism has become a dirty word. Girl Power is just a nineties way of saying it. We can give feminism a kick up the arse. Women can be so powerful when they show solidarity' (2009, p.82). Genz argues that girl power's 'mainstream effect' didn't mean the 'selling out of feminism'; in contrast, it helped to bring feminist ideas 'into the lives of young woman' – through music, film and television characters, and encourages 'a dialogue about feminism' that raises 'important questions about the relationship between feminism, femininity, girls and new subjectivities' (ibid, p.81).

Despite the differences in the representation of femininity in riot girl, girl power, and ladette culture, all three share strong female characters in their battle for female independence and against traditional female gender roles which are associated with passivity and subordination. According to Genz and Brabon girl power rhetoric contains a gap between image and identity as femininity is used to negotiate female gender roles and to further enhance female independence and emancipation (2009, pp.77-78). They argue that girl power rejects the idea that feminism is necessarily anti-feminine and that femininity is always sexist and oppressive (ibid.). In contrast to girl power which is playing up femininity to resist female oppression, I argue that ladette culture is playing down femininity to resist female oppression. Similar to lad culture, I argue that ladette culture aimed to throw off the constraints of traditional, patriarchal representations of femininity, offer a refuge from the restrictions and demands of marriage and nuclear family and open up space for fun, consumption and sexual freedom for women (2009, p.142).

After discussing the impact of feminism on masculinity and femininity, the following part will very briefly discuss the academic debate whether Britpop is a representation of English rather than British identity. Baxter-Moore notes that the tendency to confuse the terms 'English' and 'British' is a fundamental problem in the discourse on popular music and national identity as it is extremely difficult to define one or the other (2006, p.148).

Martin Cloonan distinguishes between five types of Englishness within the discourse on music: ambivalent Englishness, overt nationalism, little hip Englishness, big hip Englishness and non-articulated Englishness (1997, pp.55-57). The ambivalent Englishness can be described as a form of 'fascinated revulsion' (ibid.). It seems to be more of a preoccupation with Englishness rather than a celebration of Englishness. The overt nationalism is an extreme right wing version of Englishness (ibid.). The hip little and the big hip Englishness distinguishes between a conservative, inward-looking subtle version of nationalism and a more left-wing nationalism with an emphasis on domestic economic and social problems (ibid.). Suede can be considered as an example of ambivalent Englishness while Blur can be regarded as an example of little hip Englishness (Cloonan, 1997, pp.55-57; Baxter-Moore, 2006, p.148). Even though Martin Cloonan's classification seems quite helpful to distinguish different forms of Englishness, it is not useful to differentiate between Englishness and Britishness.

Krishan Kumar addresses the question of what Britain is, who the British are and what their relations are with England and the English, the Scottish, the Welsh and the Irish in his article *'Nation and empire: English and British national identity in comparative perspective'* (2000). Concerning Tom Nairn, Krishan Kumar describes English nationalism as 'sui generis,' 'a weirdly atypical formation,' 'a non-nationalism,' 'a heteronomous form of nationalism' (ibid.). Therefore, he suggests the term 'imperial or missionary nationalism' to discuss English and British identity. The key element of this form of nationalism is the 'attachment of a dominant or core ethnic group to a state entity that conceives itself as dedicated to some larger cause or purpose, religious, cultural or political' (Kumar, 2000, p.580).

The concept of 'imperial or missionary nationalism' reminds a bit of Michael Hechter's concept of 'internal colonialism' which aims to explain ethnonational movements within a state. In his study, he suggests that industrialization increased the economic dependency and inequality between Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland on the one hand and England on the contrary which resulted in different political behavior and ethnonational movements (Hechter, 1975; Llobera, 2001, p.187). The similarity between both concepts is the hegemony of the English culture. The main difference between both of them is the existence of a British national identity rather than an English national identity in the concept of 'the imperial or missionary nationalism' and the dominance of the English national culture over the others instead of the existence of a British national identity in the concept of 'internal nationalism' (ibid.).

James Tilley and Anthony Heath have argued in their paper on *'The decline of British national pride'* that Britishness is a constructed identity which was supposed to hold the four different nations together in the multi-nation state of Great Britain (2007). The British identity was mainly based on the British Empire. The British Empire was built on its economic and military success, the Protestant religion and cultural traditions, the institutions of liberty and parliamentary democracy and the foundation of a welfare state (Tilley and Heath, 2007, p.662).

James Tilley and Anthony Heath have claimed that modernization has been a huge challenge to Britishness as its key elements lost its importance through the process of modernization. The loss of the empire, the loss of the sense of British uniqueness based on its parliamentary democracy, liberties, and the welfare state led to the loss of British pride. The decline of global political and economic influence, as well as the weakening of religion further, increased the downfall in national pride (ibid.).

At this point, I like to highlight that my thesis is less concerned with the question whether Britpop is a representation of Englishness rather than Britishness. The primary aim of the thesis is to understand the process through which young people's use of cultural references in popular music helps to construct and maintain national identity. According to Tilley and Heath, the explanations for a decline in Britishness can be categorized in three processes: general social changes, external political events and the process of generational change (2007, p.663).

The process of generational change is of particular importance for the analysis of young people's perception of British identity in Britpop. Tilley and Heath describe the process of 'an effective attachment such as national pride as a product of socialization in childhood and early adulthood' (ibid.). Given the fact that attachment to one's nation seems to be most useful in people's first years of life makes it so interesting to discuss Britpop's coverage of British identity as mainly young people produced and consumed it. Therefore, the first empirical chapter will look at British lifestyle and suburbia.

3. Historical Chapter

As briefly discussed in the introduction, this thesis is based on the assumption that national identity has an impact on popular music, and that popular music has an impact on national identity. I argue that popular music embodies a reflection of young people's views towards their society. Therefore, the following section will briefly look into the social, political, economic and cultural developments within the three key periods of post-war Britain: Post-War Consensus (1945-79), Britain under Conservatives – Thatcher and Major (1979-1997) and Britain under New Labour – Blair (1997-2005) (Hesmondalgh, 2005; Christopher, 2006, pp.1-25; Leach, Coxall and Robins, 2011, pp.17-38).

Social changes in post-war Britain such as the disintegration of the British Empire, the expansion of the Commonwealth, the immigration of different nationalities, languages and culture produced a multi-ethnic British society. Women's entry into the labor market and their increased independence changed women's position into society and their relations with men. Especially the emergence of youth as a social group with a different lifestyle than that of older generations shaped British culture and is visible in its youth culture. Social changes related to Migration, Feminism, and Youth, had an enormous impact on contemporary British society (Christopher, 2006; Childs and Storry, 1997; Morley and Robins, 2005; Hall, 2005; Pines, 2005; Modood, 2005; McDowell, 2005; McRobbie, 2005; Nixon, 2005).

3.1 Post-War Consensus (1945-1979)

3.1.1 Social, political, economic Context

The following part looks into post-war changes related to welfare, class, ethnicity, immigration, gender, feminism and youth and their impact on the British society during the Post-War Consensus years between 1945 and 1979. According to the 1951 census, 84% of the 50.3 million people living in Britain lived in England. Britain was a predominantly an industrial, manufacturing nation with 60% manual working class laborers. The majority of the population 80% lived in an urban environment with 40% living in highly populated areas such as Greater London. Britain was racially more homogeneous with only a few small Asian and Black communities centered in urban areas such as London. Women worked until marriage. Due to the baby boom years, Britain had a much younger population compared to pre-war times (Clayton, 2010, pp.12-13; Leach, Coxall, and Robins, 2011, pp.17-25).

Regarding welfare and class, after the 2nd World War left British industries ruined, homes destroyed and people struggling to survive, the Tory and the Labour party agreed that the state should provide jobs, homes and improve living standards. The Beveridge Report became a manifesto for a change in Britain including key elements such as the welfare state, the mixed economy, and Keynes full employment policy (Leach, Coxall and Robins, 2011, p.20). The 'welfare state' introduced in 1948, provided social security and free healthcare for all citizens. The nationalization of key industries such as coal, iron, steel and transport secured mass employment for the manual working class laborers. The aim was to overcome the poverty of generations and that people would be cared for by the state 'from the cradle to the grave' (Christopher, 2006, p. 3; Clayton, 2010, pp.12-13; Leach, Coxall, and Robins, 2011, pp.17-25).

In term of ethnicity, Britain's imperial history had a huge impact on post-war immigration, and the increased number of people with an ethnic minority background transformed Britain into a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society. After the Second World War, the high labor demands of the expanding British economy was met by workers from colonies and ex-colonies which mainly worked for British Rail, London Transport, and the NHS. The first wave of migration included people from the Caribbean and the former British West Indies while the second wave of migration included people from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Africa (Abercrombie and Ward, 2000, p.229).

Despite primary motives of male migrants to come to Britain to work, save money and then return to their home countries many of their families followed them in the UK. The immigration process was difficult for the migrants who mainly lived in poor, inner-city areas where housing was cheap while the presence of migrant communities disturbed the local population. Race became a source of social conflict as migrant's experience of discrimination from their employers, workmates or landlords led to racial tensions such as the Notting Hill riots in 1958 (Christopher, 2006, pp. 4-5; Leach, Coxall, and Robins, 2011, pp.17-27).

The 1948 British Nationality Act extended the 'open door' policy to a large number of citizens of the Empire and New Commonwealth in the 1940s and 1950s before the Acts of 1962, 1968, 1971 restricted immigration from Commonwealth countries. Since the 1971 Act, most immigrants needed work permits and the British Nationality in 1981 separated British citizenship from citizenship of British dependent territories by creating the category 'British Overseas Citizen' (Abercrombie and Ward, 2000, pp.229-30; Giddens, 2006, p.504).

Regarding gender and feminism, the lives of men and women in Britain followed well-defined gender roles of husband's earning the family income and wife's taking care of family and children. The 1967 Family Planning Act enabled women to obtain contraception through the National Health Service. The oral contraception had an enormous impact on women as they could actively plan their lives regarding family and it enabled them to decide if and when they wanted to get pregnant and have kids. The 1967 Abortion Act permitted legal termination for social and health reasons. The 1969 Divorce Reform Act made it easier for women to divorce their husbands enabling them to get out of violent and abusive relationships (Clayton, 2010, p. 16; Christopher, 2006, p.8; Childs and Storry, 1997, pp.129-158).

Finally, the emerge, or the so-called birth of the youth had a significant impact on British society. Due to the post-war 'baby boom,' the British Society became younger, the average age dropped, and the number of single people aged between 13 and 25 increased to over 4 million by the end of the 1950s. Full employment made young people financially independent and businesses began to market their products to teenagers and created the so-called 'youth culture.' Electronic goods such as small radios and televisions became cheaper and cultural materials such as popular music, television programs and films were created for a mass audience interested in light entertainment (Clayton, 2010, p.32; Christopher, 2006, pp.5-6; Childs and Storry, 1997, pp.165-195).

3.1.2 Cultural Context

After briefly discussing the social, political and economic aspects of the post-war consensus years, the following section will look into the cultural aspects of this period which are considered a reflection of young people's experience of these changes. Rock & Roll and Rhythm & Blues played a significant role in British post-war culture. Rock & Roll has three chords, a strong, insistent back beat, and a catchy melody. It draws from sources such as rhythm and blues, country and gospel. The early wave of Rock & Roll included Chuck Berry, Elvis Presley, Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis and Buddy Holly (AllMusic/ Rock & Roll 2016).

Merseybeat became the original sound of the British Invasion. It draws on American rock & roll, rhythm & blues, and British skiffle. In the early 1960s, Liverpool became famous for the so-called 'Mersey Beat' 'a mixture of black-influenced pop songs with faster, more aggressive rock 'n' roll' named after a local pop paper (AllMusic/ Merseybeat 2016; Markowitz, 2006, pp.63-110). The Beatles with their white shirts, narrow ties and dark suits and their short, sentimental and nostalgic songs with their imagery of everyday life, which were combined with

folk harmonies in rhythm and blues style and music-hall made them very popular around Britain (Christopher, 2006, pp.178-180; Markowitz, 2006, pp.68-98).

British musicians were influenced by black American musicians such as James Brown, Ray Charles, Muddy Waters, John Lee Hooker and Howlin' Wolf. They incorporated different elements of the black musicians into their music, mixed it with other influences and created a new style of music called British 'rhythm and blues'. Blues Incorporated became the first noted white blues band which influenced many followers such as the Animals, the Yardbirds, the Spencer Davies Group, Fleetwood Mac and the Rolling Stones. The Rolling Stones became the most successful British Rhythm & Blues band. The wild image of the band with their long hair and exotic clothes shocked the older generation and appealed the younger audience (AllMusic/ Rhythm & Blues 2016; Christopher, 2006 p.180; Markowitz, 2006, pp.63-68 & pp. 111-124).

London of the mid-1960s became the center of fashion and pop music. Mods became central to the London scene. Mod refers to a lifestyle that includes pop music and fashion. Mod culture is a particularly British phenomenon. Mod bands like The Who and The Small Face played Rhythm & Blues harder and faster than the original Rhythm & Blues bands (AllMusic/ Mod 2016; Markowitz, 2006, pp.111-115 & p.128). The male mod style included a lightweight, continental suit with a three-button, two-vent jacket, narrow trousers, button-collar shirt, narrow tie, zip boots and short hair. The female mod style included mini-skirt, bright make-up, thick mascara and short hair. The mod style allowed girls to resemble boys and vice versa further deepened the generational gap (Hebdige, 1977 & 1979; Markowitz, 2006; Polhemus, 1995, pp.50-536; Kroener 2011, pp.175-177).

During the late 1960s, black dance music including reggae and ska grew in popularity. Ska's key influences are American Rhythm & Blues, jump blues and Jamaican mento (AllMusic/ Ska 2016). Ska music became fashionable among Skinheads, who became closely associated with racism and violence due to their attacks on ethnic or other minority groups such as Blacks, Asian, hippies, and gays. The Skinhead style included 'a uniform' of button-collar shirts, tight, short Levi jeans, and heavy boots and shaved heads. According to Christopher, their display of stylized aggression in football stadiums marked the start of large-scale football hooliganism. He argues that Skinheads embodied the aggressive attitudes in British society as the post-war political consensus turned into polarization and confrontation (Clarke, 1977a; Hebdige 1979; Markowitz, 2006; Polhemus, 1995, pp.69-71; Kroener, 2011, p.177).

The positive social, political and economic development in Britain led to the invention of youth as a social category and the creation of youth subculture. The British youth was influenced by American culture but created a particular British youth culture which became known as the British Invasion and became very popular in America.

3.2 Britain under Conservatives – Thatcher and Major (1979-1997)

3.2.1 Social, political and economic context

The following part looks into Britain under the Conservative governments of Margaret Thatcher and John Major. It provides a brief overview of social, political and economic changes related to welfare, class, ethnicity, immigration, gender, feminism and youth. Margaret Thatcher broke with the previously discussed post-war consensus. Her policies focused on monetarism and free-market economics. The End of post-war war consensus between Labour and Conservatives led to a conflict between the strong left-wing trade unions and her right-wing government resulting industrial conflicts and social unrest all over the United Kingdom (Christopher, 2006, p.10; Clayton, 2010, p.69; Leach, Coxall and Robins, 2011, pp.28-30; Kroener, 2011, pp.288-294).

Regarding welfare and class, the Oil crisis and the devaluation of the pound led to a recession of the British economy resulting in lower living standards and higher unemployment rates. Thatcher reduced public spending and privatized public industries such as gas, steel, transport, and telecommunication which led to violent industrial disputes. Thatcher's fight against trade unions, miners, and left-wing local governments became famously associated with the miners' strike of 1984-1985 (Clayton, 2010, p.69; Leach, Coxall and Robins, 2011, pp.28-30).

Thatcher changed the British economy from heavy industry and manufacturing to financial services and North Sea Oil revenues. Britain's manufacturing declined, key industries such as shipbuilding, mining, and steel disappeared (Christopher 2006, p.11; Kroener, 2011, pp.288-294). A series of Employment Acts 1988, 1989, 1990 weakened the trade unions. The trade union membership decreased between 1979 (13.5 million) and 1997 (6.7 million). The decline in heavy industries led to a decrease in the labor force and manual work between 1974 (47%) and 1991 (36%) (ibid.).

Thatcher's supporter celebrated her for restoring the British economy, defeating the enemy at home and defending Britain's interest abroad mainly associated with the Falkland war in 1982 while her opponents critiqued that her policies led to social disharmony within the British

society. Her policies favored white, middle-class people and had a negative impact on working-class people. Poorly educated and least skilled working-class people were unable to obtain manual work (Christopher, 2006, p.10; Clayton, 2010, p.69; Leach, Coxall, and Robins, 2011, pp.28-30; Kroener, 2011, pp.288-294).

Thatcher's policies also had a negative impact on immigrants and women. The era of mass Asian and Black immigration was over, but the non-white ethnicity population doubled in the United Kingdom. Immigrants who mainly lived in poor, racially mixed inner-city areas experienced riots in 1979, 1981 and 1985. Women transferred from manufacturing work to low-paid or part-time service which didn't provide union benefits or company pensions. Women with higher educations and skills started to move into traditionally male-dominated areas such as business, banks, and law. The number of married working women increased. The 1970s National Women's Conference demanded equal pay, free contraception, free childcare for women (Christopher, 2006, p.13; Clayton, 2010, p.70).

After becoming Prime Minister in 1992, John Major replaced the unpopular poll tax with the council tax, a community charge, initially introduced at the end of the Thatcher government. Major oversaw Britain's longest period of continuous economic growth and the beginning of the Northern Ireland Peace Process (Boulton, 2016). The 1990's showed an overwhelming sense of public disillusionment, as public confidence in all the main institution had fallen: parliament, monarchy, judiciary and media (British Social Attitudes 30; Tilley and Heath, 2007, p.662). After briefly discussing the social, political and economic aspects of the Thatcher years, the following section will look into the youth cultural aspects of this period which are considered a reflection of young people's experience of these changes.

3.2.2 Cultural Context

Punk had an enormous musical and cultural impact on Britain. British punk was influenced by the back-to-basics rock & roll of the pub rock movement and the anything-goes theatrics of glam rock as well as early New York punks like the Ramones (AllMusic/ Punk 2016; Larkin 2000, pp.691-692). According to Christopher, Punk can be considered a social reaction to Britain's increasingly polarized political climate and its economic crisis as well as a cultural response to the progressive and heavy rock music (2006 p. 189, Patterson 2006, pp.131-156). According to AllMusic, punk threatened the very fabric of British society, a class-conscious country struggling through an economic downturn, giving voice to the rage of the lower class and the dissatisfaction of the nation's youth (2016; Patterson 2006, pp.131-156).

The British punk movement including bands like the Sex Pistols, the Clash, the Jam and Buzzcocks all of them considered being anti-establishment and quite diverse. The Sex Pistols's 'simple, raw, stripped-down guitar riffs set the blueprint for much British punk, and they're provocative, playfully subversive rhetoric got them demonized in the press and even physically attacked on the streets.' The Clash, Punk's most politically idealistic group, incorporated early rock & roll and reggae; the Jam tempered their social criticism with mod-inflected celebrations of British youth; while the Buzzcocks wrote tense punk-pop tunes full of witty romantic confessions (AllMusic/ Punk 2016; Christopher, 2006, pp.189-191; Patterson, 2006, pp.131-156).

Punk was based on DIY music including simple guitar solos, repeated chords, heavily distorted sounds and abrupt endings. The DIY ethic created a new, alternative pop culture based on small independent record companies, distributors, magazines, and fanzine. Punk music became closely associated with Vivienne Westwood clothes which became the blueprint of the punk fashion style including 'tatty leather jackets, torn clothes, safety pins, swastikas, zips, clips, studs and chains, with spiked, brightly dyed hair' (Christopher, p.190, Hebdige 1977& 1979; Polhemus, 1995, pp.89-93; Patterson 2006, pp.131-156).

Similar to previously discussed popular music and fashion styles Punk shocked the British society and created a generational gap between the younger and older generation. However, Punk became increasingly mainstream, while Reggae and Ska music became the new symbol of anti-establishment challenging the Thatcher government and rejecting the right-wing racism of the National Front. The Two-Tone Movement including mixed race bands like the Specials and Madness supported the *'Rock Against Racism'* movement (Christopher, pp.190-193).

In addition to Punk, Glam rock became popular. Its theatrical style combined catchy guitar rock with melodies drawn from teenage bubble-gum pop and hip-shaking rhythms from early rock & roll. Similar to Mod culture it is mainly a British phenomenon. AllMusic distinguishes between two schools, the first one including T. Rex and Gary Glitter and the second one including Roxy Music and David Bowie (AllMusic/ Glam Rock 2016; Smith 2006, pp.59-72).

Glam rock songs combined innocent childish rhythms with subversive sexual lyrics. Artists played around with gender conventions, dressing themselves up in androgynous costumes and makeup. Marc Bolan from the band T-Rex started wearing glitter and make-up while David Bowie began to experiment with a 'sexually androgynous 'look''. An increased awareness of and tolerance towards sexual difference made it possible for people to experiment with new identities on stage as well as in society. Glam Rock is a cultural reflection of the social changes related to the women's and gay liberations movement taking place in Britain at the time. (AllMusic/ Glam Rock 2016; Christopher, 2006, pp.186-187; Smith, 2006, pp.59-72).

David Bowie, one of the most successful, controversial and influential British artists became a global superstar who inspired millions of fans worldwide. His sound ranges from his folk-inspired mixture of singer and songwriting on *Space Oddity* to a heavier rock sound on *The Man Who Sold the World* while his lyrics cover a diverse range of topics. His album *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust* and *Aladdin Sane* focus on invented characters while his album *Diamond Dogs* is 'a dark album about an Orwellian nightmare future' which was released 'at a time of high unemployment, strikes and inflation' in Britain. Bowie became particular known for his controversial stage shows and his appearance including a painted face, provocative costumes and his open bisexuality (Stevenson, 2006; Christopher, 2006, p.188; Smith 2006, pp.59-72).

The negative social, political and economic development in Britain led to the creation of Punk, which can be considered as a pop-cultural protest of the British youth against social, political and economic crisis at the time. Glam rock, on the other hand, needs to be considered as a cultural response to the social developments related to feminism and the women's rights movement.

3.3 Britain under New Labour – Blair (1997-2005)

3.3.1 Social, political and economic context

Tony Blair, the new leader of the Labour party, transformed his party into 'New Labour' leaving traditional socialist beliefs about stronger unions, nationalization of major industries and redistribution of wealth behind (Christopher, 2006, p. 15). Blair's government brought important political changes regarding devolution at home and intervention abroad. Concerning domestic politics, the creation of a Scottish Parliament and a Welsh Assembly played a significant role in the Scottish and Welsh devolution process. The Good Friday Agreement

(1998) became a milestone in the Northern Irish peace process (Davis, 2016; Leach, Coxall, and Robins, 2011, pp.31-32; McCrone, 2005, pp.97-108; Osmond, 2005, pp.109-126; Davey, 2005, pp.79-96; Driver and Martell 2005, pp.461-472). Blair's pragmatic economic management led to economic stability with low inflation and almost full employment. Despite financial security and material prosperity, public confidence in politicians, government and other institutions such as the monarchy and the church further declined (British Social Attitudes 30; Christopher 2006, p.16; Tilley and Heath, 2007, p.662).

Regarding ethnicity, according to the Census 1991, 3.87 million people described themselves as belonging to a minority group, 53% of the total minority of the population were born outside Britain, including 75% of the Asian and Chinese people. 50% of Black Caribbean's and 84.5% of the Black other group were born inside Britain, paralleling immigration patterns (Coleman and Salt 1996, pp.132-133). The results of a comparison between the 1991, 2001 and 2011 Census data show that the ethnic group population other than white has more than doubled since 1991 from 3 million (or 7%) to almost 8 million (or 14%) while the White population remained static in size between 1991 and 2001 (ibid.).

The White British ethnic group remains the majority with 80% of the population while the Non-White British ethnic groups remain the minority with 14% of the population. Ethnic minority groups remain clustered in certain diverse urban areas. More than half of the population in inner London Boroughs identify with a Non-White British identity. Similar numbers apply to various towns and cities such as Slough, Luton, and Leicester. Ethnic minority remain underrepresented in the majority of rural parts of England and Wales. However, like their White counterparts, ethnic minorities are increasingly moving towards suburban and rural areas (Jivraj, 2013, pp.3-4).

Racism continued to be a problem in several towns with large immigrant populations. The British government has responded to racial tensions with limiting the immigration (Commonwealth Immigration Acts of 1962 and 1968, Immigration Act 1971 and Nationality Acts of 1981 and 1987), Acts of Parliament to prevent discrimination (Race Relations Acts of 1965, 1968, 1976, the Race Relations Board, the Community Relations Commission and Commission for Racial Equality) and efforts within the area of employment in order to extend opportunities for ethnic minority groups (Equal Opportunity Act) (Christopher, 2006, p.18).

The murder of the black teenager Stephen Lawrence who was killed in a racially motivated attack by five white youths in south-east London in 1993 and the findings of the Macpherson report in 1999 highlighted the existence of an institutional racism in the police service, in all public bodies and institutions and shows the downside of multiculturalism (Giddens, 2006, p. 494). The 'Windrush' celebrations in 1998 remembering the arrival of Britain's Caribbean and Asian communities 50 years earlier representing Britain as a place where people of different cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds live together shows the positive side of multiculturalism (Parekh, 2000).

In terms of gender, despite the progress of the women's movement since the 1960s, British institutions such the Parliament (1945- 24 female MPs, 2005- 125 female MPs) or the Church (women first obtained in 1994 but still excluded from becoming Bishops) remained largely male dominated in the 1990s. Women who benefited the most from the women's movement were white, middle class, university graduates. Despite progress' being made regarding gender equality, women still earn approximately 20% less than men and take more responsibility within the domestic sphere than their male counterparts. Women tend to marry and have children later. Divorce rates continue to rise leaving many women in single-parent households (British Social Attitudes 30; Christopher, 2006, pp.19-20; Leach, Coxall, and Robins, 2011, pp.31-32).

At a time when the British public became disillusioned with main national institutions such as parliament, monarchy, judiciary and media, the celebration of British popular music and youth culture in Britpop and Cool Britannia provided a sense of pride for young British people (British Social Attitudes 30; Tilley and Heath 2007, p.662).

3.3.2 Cultural Context

British popular music in the 1990s was quite diverse. Manchester became known for its independent rock scene the so-called Madchester including bands such as the Happy Mondays, the Inspiral Carpets and Stones Roses which mixed alternative rock with electronic dance music. Shoegazing bands like Curve, Slowdive, My Bloody Valentine and Lush developed dream pop melodies through post-punk influences such as Sonic Youth. Britain equivalents of American Boy and Girl bands such as Take That and the Spice girls became very successful within the mainstream of popular music while the electronic music market developed around drum and bass and trip-hop music of bands like The Prodigy, Chemical Brothers, and Fat Boy Slim. The Bristol Scene including bands like Massive Attack and Portishead mixed techno,

drum and bass and acid house. The British music market became highly influenced by American grunge and hip-hop music.

Despite the fact that Britpop and Cool Britannia are closely associated with Tony Blair and New Labour, it is important to highlight that the key period of Britpop happened under John Major's time as a Prime Minister between 1992 and 1997, a fact that has been largely ignored by media and academic discourses so far. Britpop's nostalgic representation of British identity as 'a reassertion of a white, male, heterosexual Englishness' (Bennett and Stratton, 2010, p.6; Percival, 2010; Hawkins, 2010; Whiteley, 2010) seem to fit John Major's 'maligned retrograde monoculture, narrow version of Englishness based on nostalgia for an imagined past' more than Blair's youthful multicultural image of Britain (Huq, 2010, pp.95-96).

D: Ream's song 'Things can only get better' became New Labour's campaign anthem for the 1997 election which made Tony Blair, a child of the 1960s, of The Beatles and The Stones Britain's first rock prime minister. According to Stuart Maconie, 'Cool Britannia' can be described as 'an exciting and overdue renaissance in our national culture vigor or a shallow and illusionary orgy of vapid pride and self-satisfaction over trivia' (2013, p.327). The invitation of musicians such as Oasis front man Noel Gallagher to the reception in 10 Downing Street following the 1997 general election shows Blair's interest in representing a new image of Britain being a 'young country', 'a progressive and dynamic place for pop, fashion, film and design' (Huq, 2010, p.89; Driver and Martell 2005, pp.461-472). Cool Britannia's focus on youth, pop culture and stereotypical British iconography of Union Jack and London makes clear references to the Swinging 1960's (Maconie, 2013, p.327).

Cool Britannia reinforced Britain's image of a young nation by reminding British people of its great tradition of popular youth culture. Pictures of Tony Blair and Noel Gallagher work as a reminder of past pictures of Harold Wilson and the Beatles in the 1960s linking Cool Britannia's contemporary youth culture and the cultural heritage of the Swinging 60s and the British Invasion (Huq, 2010, p. 89).

4. Methodology

4.1 Discourse Analysis – key concepts and key terms

Given the purpose of my thesis to explore, how national identity is constructed and maintained by young people and their use of cultural references in popular music and related media discourses, discourse analysis seems the most appropriate approach to analyze national identity in the Britpop context:

> Critical Discourse Analysis sees discourses – language use in speech and writing - as a form of 'social practice.' Describing discourses as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s), which frame it: The discursive event is shaped by them, but it also shapes them. That is, discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned – it constitutes situations, object of knowledge and social identities of and relationships between people and group of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it. Since discourse is socially consequential, it gives rise to important issues of power. Discursive practices may have major ideological effects – that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, p. 258).

My research relates to De Cillia, Reisgl and Wodak's research on the discursive construction of national identities. They define nations as mental constructs in term of Anderson's 'imagined communities' and national identities as a particular form of social identities which 'are discursive, by mean of language and other semiotic systems produced, reproduced, transformed and destructed' (De Cillia, Reisgl & Wodak 1999, p.153). Similar to Bourdieu, they define National identities as a habitus: 'a complex of common ideas, concepts or perception schemes' including 'emotional attitudes' and 'similar behavioral dispositions,' 'all of which are internalized through 'national' socialization' (ibid.).

Stuart Hall's understanding of nation as a 'system of cultural representation' where people 'participate in the idea of the nation as represented in its national culture' and national culture as a discourse are helpful to explore how national identity is constructed and reproduced within Britpop and its related media discourse (1996, p.612):

> 'A national culture is a discourse, a way to construct meaning which influences and organize both our action and our perception of ourselves. National cultures construct identities by creating the meaning of 'the nation, with which we can identify; these are contained in stories that are told about the nation, in memories which link its present to its past and in the perception of it that are constructed. (Hall, 1994, p.201).

According to Hall, national culture depends on 'discursive strategies' such as 'the narration of the nation' and 'the invention of tradition' (1996, p.615). Britpop's lyrical coverage of particular British themes and images is an example of such as narration of the nation while Britpop's musical retro-aesthetic with its continuous referencing of earlier British popular music creates a sense of continuity and timelessness which helped to invent the tradition of Britain being a nation of great pop music. According to De Cillia, Reisgl and Wodak's research discourses about nation and national identities rely on four types of discursive macro-strategies:

- Constructive Strategies (construction of national identity)
- Justificatory Strategies (reproduction of national identity)
- Transformative Strategies (change of national identities)
- Destructive Strategies (destruction of national identities)

(De Cillia, Reisgl & Wodak, 1999, p.157; Wodak and Meyer, 2009, p.18)

Britpop's lyrical coverage of particular British themes and images is an example of constructive strategies. Britpop's musical retro-aesthetic with its continuous referencing of earlier British popular music with its sense of continuity and timelessness is a case of constructive and justificatory strategies as it constructs and reproduces Britain's image of being a nation of great pop music. My research on how British identity is created and maintained by young people and their use of cultural references in Britpop music focuses mainly on constructive and justificatory macro-strategies.

Fairclough's approach to Critical Discourse Analysis applies a three-dimensional framework: Description, Interpretation, and Explanation. The first dimension describes the features of a particular language, identify a set of formal linguistic features such as metaphors or cultural references (2009, p.30). The second dimension focuses on the relationship between text and interaction by interpreting the features of a particular language such as the meaning of a metaphor or a cultural reference (Fairclough, 2009, p.62). The third dimension focuses on the relationship between interaction and social context by explaining the social context such as reasons and consequences of particular representations of people (ibid., p.44 & p.62). Similar to Fairclough, my empirical analysis includes the elements of Description, Interpretation, and Explanation. My empirical chapter discusses in depth the role of national and cultural references for the construction and reproduction of national identity.

Reisgl and Wodak's Discourse Historical Analysis which 'attempts to integrate much available knowledge about historical sources and the background of the social and political fields in which discursive "events" are embedded' (2001, p.35) follows a three-dimensional analysis. First, it identifies the specific contents and topics of a particular discourse, second; it investigates discourse strategies and third it examines the linguistic means and linguistic realizations (Reisgl and Wodak, 2009, p.93, see also pp.112-113). My historical chapter provides the social, political, economic and cultural background for my empirical chapters which explores the discursive strategies of national identity within the academic and media discourses of Britpop.

The Discourse Historical Approach applies the principle of triangulation which means it combines different methods and data to find out as much about the context as possible (ibid., pp. 33-34). My research also employs the principle of triangulation. It combines different methods and data such as qualitative textual analysis of Britpop lyrics, album reviews, and mainstream media coverage (original data from the Britpop period) alongside data collected from qualitative interviews and surveys with musicians, PR agents, journalists and fans (data collected 20 years after the Britpop era). Intertextuality and Interdiscursivity play a significant role within this approach. Intertextuality means that texts can be linked to other texts through direct or indirect references, both in the past and in the present. Interdiscursivity means that discourses can refer to topics or sub-topics of other discourses (Reisgl and Wodak, 2009, p.90). My empirical chapter pays particular attention to the concepts of Intertextuality by analyzing how national identity is constructed and maintained through cultural references in popular music and related media discourses,

Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Analysis as a 'permanent bottom-up and top-down linkage of discourse and interaction with social structures' links discourse, cognition, and society (2001, p.118). It analysis topics (macrostructures), local meanings (relating to phenomena such as word choice), context models and mental models (involving knowledge, attitudes ideologies) about discourse and society (Dijk, 2009, p.136). Socio-Cognitive Analysis includes research on the mind, cognition, memory, semantic and pragmatic mental models, context Model, attitudes, and the cognitive process (ibid., pp.64-65).

Memories can be differentiated between Episodic Memory (personal, autobiographic) versus Semantic Memory (sociocultural shared). Semantic Mental Model refer to the subjective representation of events observed, participated in or referred to in discourse while attitudes are socially shared, ideology based opinions and normative beliefs about specific social issues having given rise to debate or to struggle such as immigration and feminism for example (ibid.). My qualitative interviews and surveys with musicians, PR agents, journalists and fans touch upon the concepts of Episodic and Semantic Memories. It pays particular focus on how both memories are linked with each other through the individual use of cultural references by musicians, PR agents, journalists and fans and its impact on collective cultural memory within the Britpop context.

In addition to my analysis of intertextuality related to direct and indirect national and cultural references, my empirical chapter discusses deixis in the Britpop lyrics, album reviews, and mainstream newspaper articles. Deixis are an expression in the language that refers to things, concrete (objects, people) or abstract (points in time, ideas), words such *this, that, I you, he* and *she* which can only be understood in context. They can be classified into different subtypes such as spatial, temporal, discourse, person and social (Baker and Ellege, 2011, p.29). Huang's classifies 'basic categories of deixis' (person, time, space) and 'other categories of deixis' (social deixis and discourse deixis) (Huang, 2007, p.132). De Cillia, Reisgl, and Wodak argue that the personal pronoun 'we' 'appears to be of utmost importance in the discourses about nations and national identities' while highlighting it's inclusive as well as exclusive character (1999, p.163 & p.165). The results of my empirical research show that the use of deixis within the Britpop context is limited and appears primarily in album reviews and newspaper articles on Britpop rather than Britpop lyrics itself. The use of cultural references is a more potent tool to distinguish between insider and outsider of the British society.

4.2 Research Categories

The research categories discussed in this thesis are British lifestyle and suburbia, class, ethnicity, and gender. Class played a significant role within the media discourse of Britpop while ethnicity and gender played an important part in the academic debate on Britpop's representation of British identity. Britpop's coverage of British identity as 'a description of a particular way of life' was analyzed through surviving texts such as Britpop lyrics, album reviews and newspaper articles. The thesis analyses both lived and period culture. Since the lived culture of a particular time and place is only accessible through those residing in that given time and place, interviews have been conducted with musicians, PR agents, journalists and fans that were part of Britpop and are therefore considered experts on the scene.

Given the fact that the interviews have been conducted more than 20 years after Britpop happened, the factor of the culture of selective tradition has been taken into consideration, hoping that the combination of historical and contemporary aspects will help to explore the real cultural process. The period culture has been analyzed through the textual analysis of Britpop lyrics, album reviews and newspaper articles. The following part will explain my selection of bands, albums, music journals, album reviews, newspaper, newspaper articles and interviewees.

4.3 Time period

My study is focused on the early years from the beginning of Britpop in 1993 to its height in 1995 because my research is mainly interested in the first time when young musicians commented on British society before it turned into a celebration of British life by young journalists at a later stage. Suede's albums: '*Suede*' and *'Dog Man Star'* reflect the change from comment to the celebration of British identity as Brett Anderson highlighted in his email response to my interview questions. The first album '*Suede'* can be considered as the blueprint of Britpop while their second album *'Dog Man Star'* needs to be considered a reaction against it.

4.4 Britpop bands and their albums

Britpop bands analyzed are Blur, Oasis, Suede, Pulp, Elastica, Sleeper, and Echobelly. The selection of records is limited due to the years 1993-1995. The albums that have analyzed are Blur's albums: *'Modern Life is Rubbish,' 'Parklife,' 'The Great Escape'*; Oasis albums: *'Definitely Maybe'* and *'(What's the Story) Morning Story?'*; Suede's albums: *'Suede'* and *'Dog Man Star'*; Pulp's albums *'His 'n' Hers'* and *'Different Class'*; Echobelly's albums *'Everyone's got one'* and *'On'*; Sleeper's album *'Smart,'* and Elastica's album *'Elastica.'* The next section will provide a brief biographical background of the bands and their albums.

Blur

Blur is an English band formed in London. The band members are Damon Albarn (singer), Graham Coxon (guitarist), Alex James (bassist) and Dave Rowntree (drummer). Blur albums analyzed are: *'Modern Life is Rubbish'* (1993), *'Parklife'* (1994) and *'The Great Escape'* (1995).

'Modern Life is Rubbish' was released in May 1993 by Food and EMI records. On Blur's homepage *'Modern Life is Rubbish'* is described as 'a pop encyclopedia of England' and as a record of 'quintessential Englishness' which was supposed to battle the influence of American grunge and their shoe-gazing, baggy affection of their debut album 'Leisure' (Blur homepage 2013). It is interesting to note that the band considered 'England versus America' and 'British Image 1' as possible album titles as if there is no difference between England and Britain and Englishness and Britishness. The actual album title *'Modern Life is Rubbish'* is based on graffiti by an anarchist group on Bayswater Road in London. The album cover shows an image of a steam train which is supposed to create the feeling of a Just William schoolboy's pre-war Britain. The album inside includes a painting of the band dressed as mod-top skinheads in the London tube (Maconie, 1999). Regarding music, the album's influences are British guitar groups such as The Kinks, Small Face, The Jam and The Who. According to Stuart Maconie, Damon's album lyrics combine Ray Davis's humor and Paul Weller's bitterness in their attempt to comment on contemporary English suburban life. Nirvana was a significant influence as well as the record was intended to battle American grunge (1999).

'Parklife' was released in April 1994 by Food and EMI records. On Blur's homepage *'Parklife'* is described as 'Britpop's defining record of the 1990's' which became part of the national consciousness and English vocabulary (Blur website 2013). It is interesting that 'London' has

been considered as a possible album title. The album cover appears to be a nostalgic reference to British pastime Greyhound racing. The inside of the album shows pictures of the band in the greyhound racing venue Walthamstow Stadium (Maconie, 1999). The Britpop classic Parklife was a very influential record for the Cool Britannia movement. The band themselves named waltz, new wave, synthpop and punk rock as their musical influences (Blur homepage 2013).

'The Great Escape' was released in September 1995 by Food and Virgin Records. On Blur's website *'The Great Escape,'* the third chapter of the band's 'life trilogy' is described as a record where the band presents 'a dark and lavish look at the modern world with very detailed character studies.' The album focuses on loneliness and detachment (Blur homepage 2013). The album title can be read as a reference to the modern trend to escape modern society and does not relate to the movie *'The Great Escape'* despite the fact that the band used the soundtrack of the film to open some of their concerts might have suggested such a relationship. Maconie described the album cover as a caricature of water sports, holiday travel prospect (1999).

Oasis

Oasis is an English band formed in Manchester. The original members were Liam Gallagher (singer), Noel Gallagher (lead guitarist), Paul Arthurs (guitarist), Paul McGuigan (bassist) and Tony McCaroll (Drummer). Oasis albums analyzed are: *'Definitely Maybe'* (1994) and *'(What's the Story) Morning Glory?'* (1995).

'Definitely Maybe' was released in August 1994 by Creation Records. The album cover shows a photograph of the band inside Paul Arthur's house. It seems important to highlight that there are British as well as American cultural references on the album cover. The display of the album *'Ummagumma'* by the English band Pink Floyd is a British cultural reference while the poster of the American musician Burt Bacharach is an American cultural reference (Kennedy, 2008, p.732). The picture of the footballer George Best and Rodney Marsh are a reference to football, a very popular leisure activity among British men which played a significant role in the 1990's lad culture in the United Kingdom. The promotion of the album in football magazines rather than music magazines emphasizes Oasis' close relationship to lad culture.

'(What's the Story) Morning Glory?' was released in October 1995 by Creation Records. The album cover shows a photograph of Berwick Street in Soho in London. The photo was supposed to support the urban feel of the album. The single release of the album played a significant role in the so-called 'British Heavyweight Championship.' Regarding the music, the band was influenced by a lot of different bands such as The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, The Kinks, The Who, T. Rex, Small Faces, Sex Pistols, The Jam, Happy Mondays, The Stones Roses, Inspiral Carpets and The Smiths. Stephen Thomas Erlewine describes Oasis music as a mix of:

> 'the rough, thuggish image of the Stones and the Who, 'Beatlesque' melodies and hooks, British lyrical themes and song structures like the Jam and the Kinks combined with a massive guitar roar and defiant sneer that drew from the Sex Pistols rebelliousness and the Stone Roses' cocksure arrogance' (Allmusic 2013).

Suede

Suede is an English band formed in London. The original band members were Brett Anderson (singer), Bernard Butler (guitarist), Mat Osman (bassist) and Simon Gilbert (drummer). Suede albums analyzed are: *'Suede'* (1993) and *'Dog Man Star'* (1994).

'Suede' was released in March 1993 by Nude Records. Ed Buller produced it. The album cover shows an androgynous looking couple kissing each other. The picture from Tessa Bottin and Jean Fraser's book *'Stolen Glances: Lesbian Take Photographs'* caused some controversy at the time. *'Dog Man Star'* was released in October 1994 by Nude Records. Ed Buller also produced it. The album title *'Dog Man Star'* has been described by Brett Anderson as a reference to Darwinism and shows a similarity to the movie *'Dog Star Man'* by Stan Brakhage. The album cover displays a picture of an androgynous nude on a bed from the American photographer Joanne Leonard (Harris, 2003, pp.85-86 & pp.170-173; Kennedy, 2008, p.704 and p.743; Barnett, 2003, p.167).

'Suede' was a very influential Britpop album. According to Jake Kennedy, the combination of the anglocentric lyrics and the heavy guitar sound made this album a blueprint for Britpop (Kennedy, 2008, p.704). Regarding the music, Suede's key influences were The Smiths and David Bowie. The lyrics focused on London life and topics such as sex and depression. Similar to their debut, the music on their second album *'Dog Man Start'* has been influenced by David

Bowie. However, the sound is darker due to Brett Anderson's massive drug which had an enormous impact on his songwriting. The lyrics focused on London's urban life, and they are very sexual and personal. According to Brett Anderson, *'Dog Man Star'* marks Suede's departure from Britpop:

> 'We could not have been more uninterested in that whole boozy, cartoon-like, fake working-class thing. As soon as we became aware of it, we went away and wrote Dog Man Star. You could not find a less Britpop record. It's tortured, epic, extremely sexual and personal. None of those things applies to Britpop' (Bracewell, 2008).

Pulp

Pulp is an English band formed in Sheffield. The band members are Jarvis Cocker (singer, guitarist), Candida Doyle (keyboarder), Mark Webber (guitarist), Steve Mackey (bassist) and Nick Banks (drummer). Pulp albums analyzed are: *'His 'n' Hers'* (1994) and *'Different Class'* (1995).

'His 'n' Hers' was released in April 1994 by Island Records. Ed Buller produced the album. The album cover simply shows the band members. *'Different Class'* was published in October 1995 by PolyGram and Island Records. Chris Thomas produced the album. The album cover shows the band members dressed in black and white in a colored wedding picture. The album title can be regarded as a reference to the British class structure. However, the title was inspired by a friend of Jarvis Cocker who used the expression for something that was 'a class of its own.' The idea becomes visible in a little message in the back of the record:

> 'We don't want any trouble; we just want the right to be different. That's all.'

> (Different Class 1995)

Echobelly

Echobelly is a British band. Echobelly's band members were Sonya Aurora Madan (singer), Glenn Johansson (guitarist), Debbie Smith (guitarist), Alex Kyser (bassist) and Andy Henderson (drummer). Echobelly albums analyzed are: *'Everyone's got one'* (1994) and *'On'* (1995).

'Everyone's got one' was released in 1994 by the Rhythm King records. Simon Vinestock has produced it. The album cover shows the band members in front of a huge black and white image of a blurred face with the group's name written in Red letters in the center of the cover. According to Sheila Whiteley, the album title is an acronym based on Sonya Madan's self-perception as a strong woman fronting a band (2010, p.66).

'On' was released in September 1995 by the Rhythm King records. Sean Slade and Paul Kolderie produced it. The album cover shows four black and white pictures of the band members wherein Sonya Madan is the main character in the picture. Morrissey and Blondie have musically and lyrically inspired both albums

Sleeper

Sleeper is an English band formed in London. The band members were Louise Wener (singer, guitarist), Jon Stewart (guitarist), Andy Maclure (drummer), David Osman (bassist) and Dan Kaufmann (bassist). Sleeper's album analyzed is *'Smart'* (1995). *'Smart'* was released in March 1995 by Indolent Records. Paul Corkett produced it. The album cover shows the Mercury Seven astronauts. In addition to American influences such as the Pixies and The Partridge Family, Sheila Whiteley highlights the British singer Morrissey and his band the Smith as important musical influences (2010, p. 64).

Elastica

Elastica is an English band formed in London. Elastica's original band members were Justine Frischmann (singer, guitarist), Justin Welsh (drummer), Donna Matthews (guitarist) and Annie Holland (bassist). Elastica's album analyzed is '*Elastica'* (1995). The self-titled album was released in March 1995 by Deceptive Records. Marc Waterman produced it. The album cover shows a black and white photo of the band members. The name of the band appears in red letters on the brick wall behind the band. Regarding the music, Elastica's key influences are British bands such as Wire and the Stranglers' as well as the American band Blondie.

4.5 Music journals and album reviews

The analysis of the Britpop's media discourse focuses on music journal reviews and mainstream newspaper articles between the years 1993-1995. The music journals analyzed are Melody Maker and New Musical Express. Due to problems with accessibility, my analysis of music journals mainly focused on Melody Maker and New Musical Express as not all editions of other music journals like Select were fully accessible in the British Library and online. Based on the selected time frame and my selection of bands, my analysis of album reviews included 23 reviews in total: Blur (6), Echobelly (2), Elastica (2), Oasis (4), Pulp (4), Sleeper (2) and Suede (3):

Blur:

- Mathur, P. (1993, 15. May). "Contemporary Fault – Adjust your Mindset," Melody Maker, p. 32
- Price, S. (1994, 23. April). "Park Psychosis," Melody Maker, p. 28
- Lester, P. (1995, 9. September). "Colditz a Knockout!" Melody Maker, p. 33
- Moody, P. (1993, 8. May). "Mother's Little Helpers," New Musical Express, p. 31
- Dee, J. (1994, 23. April). "Fanfare for the Common," New Musical Express, p. 40
- Cigarettes, J. (1995, 9. September). "God Save the McQueen," New Musical Express, p. 4

Oasis:

- Lester, P. (1994, 27. August). "Certainly Probably," Melody Maker, p. 37
- Stubbs, D. (1995, 30. September). "Tale Endings," Melody Maker, p. 33
- Cameron, K. (1994, 27. August). "Family Duels," New Musical Express, p. 35
- Robinson, J. (1995, 30. September). "Tales of the Expected," New Musical Express, p. 52

Suede:

- Price, S. (1993, 20. March). "The Fabric Four," Melody Maker, p. 27
- Stubbs, D. (1994, 8. October). "Let's Get Sirius," Melody Maker, p. 35
- Harris, J. (1994, 1. October). "Diamond 'Dog,'" New Musical Express, p. 47

Pulp:

- Roberts, C. (1994, 9. April). "Foxy Music," Melody Maker, p. 31
- Reynold, S. (1995, 28. October). "Working-Class Heroes," Melody Maker, p. 37
- Williams, S. (1994, 16. April). "Super Bi Guys," New Musical Express, p. 36
- Mulvey, J. (1995, 28. October). "'Class' A" New Musical Express, p. 53

Echobelly:

- Lester, P. (1995, 16. September). "Off!" Melody Maker, p. 35
- Richardson, A. (1995, 16. September). "Belly Flop," New Musical Express, p. 49

Sleeper:

- Selzer, J. (1995, 11. February). "Easy Doze It," Melody Maker, p. 33
- Moody, P. (1995, 11. February). "Generation ZZZZZZZZ," New Musical Express, p. 39

Elastica:

- O'Connell, S. & Price, S. (1995, 4. March). "Biff! Twang! Wow!" Melody Maker, p. 35
- Dee, J. (1995, 11 March). "Children of the Cornwell," New Musical Express, p. 50

3.6 Newspapers and articles

The analysis of the Britpop's media discourse focuses on music journals and mainstream newspaper articles between the years 1993-1995. The mainstream newspapers analyzed are Evening Standard, Daily Mirror, Mail on Sunday, Daily Mail, The Times, The Sunday Times, The Observer, The Guardian, The Independent and the Daily Record. The data draws on two data sets. A general NEXIS[1] search for everything including the word Britpop (mainly focused on The Times and The Guardian). A particular NEXIS on the media coverage of the 'British Heavyweight Championship' between Blur and Oasis on the 14th of August 1995 including the words 'British Heavyweight Championship' and 'Britpop battle.' Based on date selection from

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[1] NEXIS is a comprehensive collection of online business and news information, including hundreds of UK and international newspapers which is available online through the Royal Holloway University library.

the 13th-16th of August 1995 and my selection of keywords my day analysis of newspaper articles included 23 articles in total:

- Evening Standard (London), BATTLE OF THE BANDS, August 15, 1995
- Daily Mirror, OASIS IN LEAD FOR NO1 SPOT; OASIS LEAD BLUR IN RACE FOR NUMBER ONE SPOT, August 15, 1995, Tuesday
- Mail on Sunday (London), Blairing error; August 13, 1995
- Daily Mail (London), FANS WILL DECIDE WHO IS BEST OF BRITISH; August 15, 1995
- The Sunday Times (London), Leaders without a pack, August 13, 1995, Sunday
- The Times, Blur From London, August 15, 1995, Tuesday
- The Observer (Guardian), PRIVATE VIEW ARTS AND BOOKS DIARY, August 13, 1995
- The Independent (London), Big-hitters slug it out in battle of the bands, August 14, 1995
- The Independent (London), Race to top the charts a sales blur, August 15, 1995
- Daily Record (SCOTTISH), POP BANDS SLUG IT OUT, August 14, 1995
- Daily Record (SCOTTISH), THE INSIDE STORY - WHO'LL BE TOP OF THE BRIT PARADE?; Blur fight Oasis for No one spot, August 15, 1995, Tuesday
- The New York Times (US), RECORDINGS VIEW; Battle of the Bands: Old Turf, New Combatants, October 22, 1995

4.7 Interviews, Surveys, and Participants

My qualitative interviews and surveys have been conducted with musicians, PR agents, journalists and fans. Interviews are an excellent research tool to study the field of cultural production and consumption. Interviews focus on: 'the meaning and the production of in-depth knowledge by enabling unique access to specific experiences, practices, and attitudes; capturing the dynamics of the cultural production and consumption and taking into account the diversity of cultural production and consumption' (Meyer, 2008, pp.85-86). All these aspects of interviews have been very helpful to explore what kind of role Britpop's representation of British identity played within the field of the music industry (PR agents) and the music press (journalists) and what kind of impact it had on Britpop fans.

4.7.1 Musicians

Originally, I wanted to interview at least one member of each band. Given the fact, the access to musicians through PR agents and management was very difficult; I've ended up interviewing only two guitarists: Jon Stewart (Sleeper) and Debbie Smith (Echobelly). Therefore, my findings of my qualitative interviews with musicians are limited to two interviews with Jon Stewart (Sleeper guitarist) and Debbie Smith (Echobelly guitarist). Brett Anderson, Suede's front men, preferred to answer the questions via email. The interviews with Jon Stewart and Debbie Smith have been conducted via Skype and recorded for transcribing purposes.

4.7.2 PR agents and Journalists

The selection of PR agents is based on my selection of bands. My interviews with PR agents included: Johnny Hopkins (Oasis), Karen Johnson (Blur) and Phill Savidge (Suede, Pulp, Elastica, Sleeper, and Echobelly). All PR agents have been approached through an email, and all interviews were conducted face-to-face and recorded for transcribing purposes. The selection of journalists is based on my selection of album reviews and includes journalists from the Melody Maker, the New Musical Express, and Q magazine. My interviews with journalists included: John Harris, Paul Moody, Johnny Cigarettes, David Stubbs, Johnny Dee, Simon Price and Paul Rees. I've got in contact with the majority of these journalists through the Rock's Backpages.[2] All interviews were conducted face-to-face and recorded for transcribing purposes.

4.7.3 Fans

The fans have been given a choice to do an interview or to fill in a survey based on the same questions. Ten fans decided to do a qualitative interview. All fans have been asked to complete the following information: nationality, gender, ethnicity, class, and age. Based on that information my interviews included the following:

- Nationality: British (4), English (3), Welsh (1), Scottish (1), Irish (1)
- Gender: Male (5), Female (5)

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[2] 'Rock's Backpages is the biggest online database of pop music writing in the world. It is a unique resource unavailable elsewhere online. The database contains an ever-expanding collection of primary-source, full-text music writing. Sourced from the pages of the music and mainstream press, it is a library of articles (reviews, interviews, features and more) from the early '60s up to present day and includes a growing collection of exclusive audio interviews.' http://www.rocksbackpages.com/

- Ethnicity: White (9), Non-White (1)
- Class: Middle-Class (MC) (7), Working-Class (WC) (1), Mix Middle/Working Class (2)
- Age: 29-52

My ten interviews included the following fans:

- Rachel, English, Female, White, MC, 52
- Laura, Welsh, Female, White, WC/LMC, 34
- Graham, Scottish, Male, White, LMC, 33
- Nick, English, Male, White, MC, 38
- Mark, English, Male, White, MC, 35
- Karl, British, Male, White, MC, 40
- Nicola, British, Female, White/ Mix, MC, 33
- Eamonn, Irish, Male, White, MC, 29
- Rachel, British, Female, White, WC, 40
- Helen, British, Female, White, MC, 31

All interviews were conducted face-to-face and recorded for transcribing purposes.

Surveys

Ten fans decided to fill in a survey. All fans have been asked to complete the following information: nationality, gender, ethnicity, class, and age. Based on that information my studies included the following:

- Nationality: English (3), Welsh (1), Scottish (2), American (3), German (1)
- Gender: Male (8), Female (2)
- Ethnicity: White (10), Non-White (0)
- Class: Middle-Class (MC) (6), Working-Class (WC) (1), Mix Middle/Working Class (2), No Class (1)
- Age: 18-45

My ten respondents of the survey included the following fans:

- Robert, English, Male, White, LMC, UWC,43
- Matthew, Scottish, Male, White, LMC,24
- Llyr, Welsh, Male, White, LMC,33

- James, US, Male, White, No Class,32
- Drew, US, Male, White, MC,35
- Daniel, Scottish, Male, White, MC,19
- Caroline, US, Female, White, MC,18
- Anthony, English, Male, White, UMC, LMC,45
- Dough, English, Male, White, WC, 32
- Leslie, German, Female, White, MC, 31

I've got in contact with all participant of my survey through online fan forums such as Veikko's Blur Page (Vblurpage) and Oasis (Live4ever)[3] where I've put an ad in for an interview request for my study. All my interviews and surveys included the following questions:

Intro:

1) What are your main memories of Britpop?

British lifestyle/suburbia

2) Why do you think did British lifestyle/suburban life play such an important role in Britpop?

Ethnicity/Gender/Heterosexuality

3) What do you think of the critique that Britpop was too much focused on whiteness, masculinity, and heterosexuality?

Class/region

4) Why do you think there was so much focus on the class/regional division in the media discourse on Britpop/Cool Britannia?

5) Why do you think the working-class played such a predominant role in the Britpop context (music and media)?

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[3] Blur – Veikko's Blur Page http://www.vblurpage.com/
 Oasis – Live4ever Forum http://live4ever.proboards.com/

Englishness/Britishness

6) Do you agree/disagree with the critique that Britpop is more a representation of Englishness rather than Britishness? Why?

7) What do you think makes Britpop so English and British? (Sound/Lyrics)

Contemporary Culture/Cultural heritage/ Subculture

8) Why do you think the cultural heritage of the British pop music (60's/70s/80s) played such an important role for Britpop music in the 90's? (British subcultures: Mod, Punk)

Nostalgia

9) Do you agree/disagree with the academic analysis that Britpop's nostalgic representation of British identity can be considered a cultural critique of social, economic, political changes in the UK in the 1990s? Why/Why not**?**

Media

10) Do you think there is a difference between the representation of British identity in Britpop and the British media coverage of it?

My questions are based on my research categories: British lifestyle, suburbia, ethnicity, gender, and class. Question number three on ethnicity, gender and sexuality were supposed to test the current academic critique regarding Britpop being only a representation of 'white, male, heterosexual Englishness' (Bennett and Stratton, 2010, p.6; Percival, 2010; Hawkins, 2010; Whiteley, 2010). Question number nine on nostalgia was intended to test my hypothesis that Britpop's nostalgic representation of British identity can be interpreted as a cultural critique of social, economic, political changes in the UK in the 1990s.

My empirical research produced an enormous amount of qualitative data including 13 albums, 23 album reviews, 23 newspaper article ('British Heavyweight Championship' day survey), ten surveys and 22 interviews ranging from half an hour (fans) to two and a half hour (PR agents, journalists, and musicians). I have managed and analyzed my data in NVivo[4].

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[4] NVivo is a qualitative data analysis software (QDAS).

5. Empirical Chapter on British lifestyle and suburbia

5.1 Introduction

Following the definitions of national identity as 'being conscious of' and 'acting as belonging to a nation' (Hutchinson, 2001, p.215) and as 'a collective cultural phenomenon' (Smith, 1991, vii) the first empirical chapter looks into British lifestyle and suburbia as family and home are places where children and young adults are socialized into their society, where they develop their consciousness of, and sense of belonging to, their nation. De Cillia, Reisgl, and Wodak define national identities as a habitus that is internalized through 'national' socialization' (1999, p.153). I argue that the family and home is 'a nation in a nutshell'; it is the place where young people learn social rules and forms of behaviours of their parents' society and even more importantly it is the place where they grow into their national culture through children's and young adult books, radio programmes, TV shows and popular music.

'National' socialization, young people's experience of growing up in a suburban family and home and growing into society has a huge impact on their sense of national identity. This chapter draws attention to the importance of age in the process of becoming aware as well as acting as belonging to one's nation and the significant role of a shared culture which is passed on from the older to the younger generation while young people have an active role in deciding what will be passed on to future generations. Therefore, the chapter focuses on young people's active role in ensuring the continuity of national identity.

British lifestyle is very well covered in Britpop lyrics which provide an important inside view into the everyday life of ordinary people. Britpop's representation of work and weekend life, eating and drinking habits, leisure habits and social relationships provides useful insights into young people's experience of their national identity in the 1990s. The chapter explores the nation as a mental construct in terms of Anderson's 'Imagined Communities' through young people's process of socialization (De Cillia, Reisgl, and Wodak, 1999, p.153). It explores how the personal memory of growing up in British suburbs is transformed into sociocultural memory through young people's references of suburbia in Britpop music (Dijk, 2009, pp.64-65). The decision to discuss British lifestyle and suburbia has been made because the way of living is influenced by the place of living. Special focus is given to suburban lifestyle because the majority of British people live in a suburban environment.

Based on the principle of triangulation, the chapter combines different methods and data. It draws on qualitative textual analysis of Britpop lyrics, album reviews, and mainstream media coverage as well as data collected from qualitative interviews and surveys with musicians, PR agents, journalists and fans (Reisgl and Wodak, 2001, p.35). It presents results of my analysis of the representation of British life and suburbia in lyrics, album reviews, and mainstream media coverage. The empirical data from qualitative interviews and surveys with musicians, PR agents, journalists and fans is based on the following questions:

- What are your main memories of Britpop/ Cool Britannia/ New Labour?
- Why do you think British lifestyle and suburban lifestyle play such an important role in Britpop?
- Do you agree or disagree with the critique that Britpop is more a representation of Englishness rather than Britishness? Why/ Why not?
- What do you think makes Britpop so particularly English and/ or British? (Sound/Lyrics)
- Why do you think the cultural heritage of British pop music (1960s/1970s/1980s) played such an important role for Britpop music in the 1990s?
- Do you agree or disagree with the academic critique that Britpop's nostalgic representation of British identity can be considered as a cultural critique of social, economic, political changes in the UK in the 1990s?

The first part of this chapter analyses young people's experience of growing up in suburbia aiming to show how their personal memory is transformed into sociocultural memory through its coverage of it in Britpop lyrics (Dijk, 2009, pp.64-65). The results of the qualitative analysis of Britpop lyrics and its related media discourse such as album reviews, music journals, newspapers articles show that a strong sense of national identity has been constructed through an extensive coverage of particular national themes and images such as British lifestyle and suburbia. The second part of this chapter discusses the concept of intertextuality, aiming to show how young people's usage of national, regional and cultural references in Britpop lyrics helps to strengthen this strong sense of national identity (Reisgl and Wodak, 2009, p.90). The results show that national and regional references play an important role in the construction of national identity while cultural references are particularly important for the reproduction of national identity in popular music as it links the cultural heritage with contemporary culture.

Britpop's retro-aesthetics, its heavy use of cultural references and a strong sense of nostalgia play an important role in connecting the contemporary music of the youth with their parents' cultural heritage which re-enforced Britain's self-understanding as a great pop nation. As mentioned earlier, I argue that in contrast to British Invasion bands who were selling their British cultural identity abroad, Britpop bands were selling it back to the British youth which explains the stronger focus on cultural rather than national references.

Therefore, Britpop is an interesting moment in time when in the context of an increased cultural globalization in the 1990s, the target of subcultural resistance shifted from young people's parent and national culture to other young people's international and global subculture. In that context, young people who are mainly associated with change played an important role in the continuity of their national culture in times of global change, an aspect which hasn't been discussed within the academic discourses on National Identity, British Cultural Studies/ subculture studies and British identity/ Britpop.

5.2 Britpop's coverage of British customs and traditions/food and drinks – Sunday Roast/British Tea

Britpop's coverage of British customs and traditions such as the British Tea or the Sunday roast traditions provide useful information about young people's perception of these national drinking and eating habits. Britpop's focus on traditional aspects of British identity such as the British tea tradition, for example, highlights its uniqueness and emphasizes the danger of losing its distinctive character. Britain is often considered a nation of tea drinkers. Despite the foreign origin of tea, it is still perceived as traditionally British probably due to the role of the British East India Company within the British Empire (Tea UK). References to the British tea tradition can be found in Blur songs such as *'Parklife'*: 'having a cup of tea', *'For Tomorrow'*: 'make some tea', '*Chemical World'*: 'Sit down and have some sugary tea' and *'This is a low'*: 'And into the sea goes pretty England and me. Around the Bay of Biscay and back for tea'. The reference to 'sugary tea' in 'Chemical World' even provided the name for Blur's tour to promote their album *'Modern Life is Rubbish.'*

Another excellent example of Britpop's coverage of traditional aspects of British identity is Blur's song *'Sunday Sunday.'* It provides a very detailed description of a stereotypical Sunday in the UK including the special Sunday dress code, the traditional Sunday roast at the family lunch, the sleep after lunch, the walk in the park as well as typical leisure activities such as reading the Sunday newspaper or watching TV:

'Sunday, Sunday here again in tidy attire

You read the color supplement, the TV guide

You dream of protein on a plate

Regret you left it quite so late

To gather the family around the table

To eat enough sleep

Oh, the Sunday sleep.'

(Sunday Sunday, Modern Life is Rubbish, 1993)

It could be argued that the coverage of particular customs and traditions is less important than the description of everyday life. British traditions such as the British tea tradition, for example, work much more like an abstract sign post for British identity rather than a real reference point for identification for musicians and their audience. Suburban life, in contrast, provides an important aspect of identification for young people. It is the place where they've been socialised to be part of their nation and the place where they've learnt all the basics of their society: social aspects such as gender roles, economic issues such as class division and cultural issues such as national culture (newspapers, national radio, TV, popular music). The following section will explore young people's experience of everyday suburban life, their perspective on their parent's life as well as their own experience of being a child or young adult in suburbia.

5.3 Suburban life – Britpop's representation of the daily lives of ordinary people

To be able to discuss suburbia in greater detail, it is important to consider the division between rural and urban briefly. Suburbia can be considered the final stage of Britain's social and economic development from an agrarian, pre-modern and pre-industrialised society to an urban, modern and industrialized nation. Blur's song *'Country House'* reflects on the differences between a rural lifestyle in the countryside and an urban lifestyle in the city through a very ironic description of the British countryside lifestyle. The song tells the story of a very successful and wealthy man, a 'City dweller' who decided to move from the city to the countryside where he plans to live a healthier lifestyle compared to his life on the edge he used to live in the city. The chorus highlights the luxury of space in the countryside which cannot be found in the city.

'He lives in a house
a very big house
In the country […]
Oh, it's like an animal farm
That's the rural charm
In the country.'

(Country House, The Great Escape, 1995)

The rural lifestyle is associated with a pre-modern and pre-industrialised society while the urban lifestyle is associated with a modern and industrialized nation. The nostalgic notion of Blur's *'Country House'* needs to be interpreted as a wish to escape modernity represented as urban life and return to a simpler life described as rural life. However, the ironic description of the lifestyle in the British countryside suggests a different interpretation. Following an aesthetic analysis of the Aesthetic Turn, the nostalgic notion of Blur's *'Country House'* and its ironic description of the British countryside lifestyle needs to be interpreted as a cultural critique of contemporary urban life in the UK in the 1990s. Nostalgia in that context is not used to escape modernity but to engage with it. Both nostalgia and irony are used as aesthetic devices to illustrate the negative aspects of modernity in general and social and economic changes in the British society in particular by comparing a rural with an urban lifestyle. Similar to Britpop lyrics, album reviews pay a lot of attention to the everyday life of ordinary people.

Johnny Dee highlights that 'Blur see the mundanity and ennui of suburban living', they focus on ordinary people such as the 'boring middle managers and neurotic housewives' of the 'double-glazing of the lower middle classes as well as the aspects of everyday life such 'the suffocation of the office world' and as 'the shopping mall culture' (1994, p.40). Similar references can be found in Johnny Cigarettes' review of Blur's album *'The Great Escape'* which highlights 'the semi-detached celebration' and 'indictment of mass consumer culture' and Albarn's focus on every aspect of modern life (1995, p.4). The spectrum of characters' ranges from 'neurotic, tragic-comic insanity' in *'Mr. Robinson's Quango'* and 'torturous mundanity' in *'Ernold Same'* (Cigarettes, 1995, p.4).

John Robinson review of Oasis album *'Definitely Maybe'* argues that the record has 'taken the mundanities of the ordinary life and neither over-scrutinised, dramatized or quoted from them (1995, p.52). Instead, the mundanities have been amplified until they become epic' (ibid.). 'The plea for invincibility of *'Live Forever''* and 'the ferocious pursuit of The Good Times in *'Cigarettes and Alcohol'* and *'Supersonic''* are used as examples to illustrate his point (Robinson, 1995, p.52). 'Oasis described the euphoria of near-mythical pleasures and excess or made the ordinary extraordinary; they can now comfortably leave us in dull locations and leave them dull.' In *'Wonderwall'* 'The roads are winding,' and the 'lights are blinding' while in *'Some Might Say'* we are left standing at the station in the rain (ibid.).

In his review of Pulp's *'His 'n' Hers,'* Simon Williams describes Pulp's coverage of ordinary life as a 'saga of suburban snuggery,' and he highlights that Pulp has 'an acute eye for seemingly banal detail' (1994, p.36). Paul Moody argues that Sleeper lyrics show 'a Squeeze-esque affection for every day' (1995, p.39). They are 'a disengaged glimpse through the net curtains of suburbia' which in contrast to Blur's lyrics show 'no romance or poetry' and are 'almost completely passionless' (Moody, 1993, p.31). In his review of Suede's *'Dog Man Star,'* John Harris argues that songs such as *'Black and Blue'* and *'The Wild Ones'* dramatize 'every day to a heartbreaking extent' and that 'parochial normality can be shot through with heart-stopping significance' (1994, p.47).

One could argue that this coverage of daily lives of ordinary people in Britpop lyrics and album reviews is a reflection of young musicians and journalists own personal experience of growing up in suburbia. It's an excellent example of intertextuality as it directly links the discussion of daily lives of ordinary people in album reviews and lyrics. It's a direct reflection on how young people see adult's life. It's a commentary on their parent's work and private life. Through the public reflection on suburbia in popular songs and music journals, this personal memory becomes part of social, cultural memory. The interviews with musicians, journalists and fans showed that each of them could identify with the daily life experience of growing up in suburbia and that the reflection of this in popular music was very important to them. The following section will discuss in greater detail, different aspects of work and private life associated with suburbia.

5.3.1 Suburbia in Britpop - the separation of work and private life - Commuter Lifestyle

Suburbia is related to a post-modern society and a post-industrialized economy. Suburbia is associated with the idea of safety and privacy; it's a residential district which is closely linked to the notion of family – a place where people live. The place where people live is separated from the place where people work. That is why - the development of suburbia is closely linked to the development of public transport in the UK which plays an important part in people's everyday life when they commute from their home in the suburbs to their work in the cities on a daily basis (Frith, 1997; Huq, 2013).

Baxter-Moore argues that suburbs are a twentieth-century institution, a product of mass transportation, of mass production, a bureaucratization and standardization of a way of life (2006, p.158). The sense of homogeneity which is associated with suburban life relates to the similarity of suburban housing consisting of small family, semi-detached or terraced houses with a front and back garden and a massive front door and the similarity of suburban communities composed of a high street, shopping centre, bingo-hall, cinema and a multiplex retail park further increases this sense of homogeneity (Frith, 1997; Huq, 2013). The uniformity of British suburban life is remarkably covered in Blur's song *'Ernold Same'*:

'Ernold Same awoke from the same dream

In the same bed

At the same time

Looked in the same mirror

Made the same frown

And felt the same way as he did every day.' […]

'Oh, Ernold Same

His world stays the same

Today will be tomorrow

Poor old Ernold Same

He's getting that feeling once again

Nothing will change tomorrow.'

(Ernold Same, The Great Escape, 1995)

The resemblance and repetitiveness of daily suburban life are covered in great detail in Britpop lyrics with unique references to different aspects of this daily routine regarding working life and private life. The lines of the chorus *'Today will be tomorrow'* and *'Nothing will change tomorrow'* reemphasise this monotony of suburban life. The mentioning of the 'same train,' 'same station' and 'same seat' in the lyrics of *'Ernold Same'* is a direct reference to the commuter lifestyle of suburban people.

5.3.2 Suburbia in Britpop - the private life, social relationships, and generational gap

The fact that the majority of British people live in a suburban environment supports Simon Frith's argument that British identity is mainly suburban (1997). Given the broad sense of homogeneity of suburban life, people living in the British suburbs can identify their individual life with this image of British life. Suburban people might not know everyone in their suburb, but they know that their suburban neighbors live a similar life as they do. With regards to the private life, the similarity and sameness of suburban relationships are thoroughly covered in Blur songs such as *'Fade Away'* and *'Stereotypes'*:

'They stumbled into their lives

In a vague way became man and wife

One got the other

They deserved one another

They settled in a brand new town

With people from the same background' (…)

Their birth had been the death to them.

It never really bothers them.'

(Fade Away, The Great Escape, 1995)

'Yes, there must be more to life

Than stereotypes

Wife-swapping is your future

You know that it would suit you.'

(Stereotypes, The Great Escape, 1995)

The suburban lifestyle presented in *'Fade Away'* is focused on a traditional family concept based upon marriage between a man and a woman. It could be argued that the lyrics suggest a correlation between suburban lifestyle and social relationships such as British marriage and divorce habits. The re-discovery of particular British images in Blur's songs has been often discussed in the context of a 'magical recovery' of the British identity and has been criticised for its nostalgic view towards 'a particular version of Britain and Britishness' as it is mainly focused on a traditional image of British identity such as traditional family concepts (Cohen, 1972; Hebdige, 1979; Bennett, 1997, p.31, p. 22, p. 27).

I argued that this criticism misses or ignores Blur's critical comments on negative aspects of the traditional concept of marriage which can be found in songs such as *'Stereotypes.'* Blur's coverage of social relationships takes a more critical approach towards British society than it is generally acknowledged by the academic literature. Blur's nostalgic use of traditional marriage models and the ironic description of these social relationships should be interpreted as a social critique of marriage and divorce habits in the United Kingdom. Both nostalgia and irony are used as aesthetic devices to illustrate the negative aspects of traditional relationship models as well as related social changes in the British society in the 1990s.

Therefore, 'Wife-swapping is your future' could be read as a critique of the traditional marriage model in times of increasingly higher divorce rates. Cigarettes interpretation of *'Fade Away'* as a comment on 'a pointless suburban marriage' could be interpreted this way (1995, p.4). John Mulvey review of Pulp's *'Disco 2000'* as 'a mundane life, mulling over the radically different paths of a childhood sweetheart' where the women are being married with a kid and the man is living on his own looks at into both married and single life (1995, p.53). Aspects of sexuality and sexual frustration are covered in Mulvey's review of Pulp's *'Live Bed Show'* wherein he discusses the 'failed relationship through bed action and the subsequent lack of it' and Richardson's review of Echobelly's *'Pantyhose and Roses'* which he describes as 'a mealy-mouthed tale of suburban sexual frustration' (Mulvey, 1995, p.53; Richardson, 1995, p.49).

The reflection of young people in adult's life in popular songs and music journals provides an interesting commentary on their parent's work and private life. It is important to highlight that given their age, young people haven't personally experienced a commuter lifestyle or a suburban marriage yet. Simon Frith argues that there is a generational aspect of suburbia meaning that the life in the suburb is a different experience for children and parents (Frith, 1997). The stereotypical adult experience of suburbia is related to the traditional family concept with its gendered roles and responsibilities of the man as husband and father being the primary source of income and the woman as wife and mother being the housewife and caretaker of the family. Even though a lot has changed regarding that traditional family concept as the increase of dual-earner households, same-sex couples, and single-parent as well as single home's proves, there is a gender aspect to the experience of suburbia as well.

The image of suburbia is still interrelated to the traditional family concept which provides a sense of stability and security which is often associated with suburbia. The child's and teenager's experience of suburbia differs a lot from that of a male adult and is more similar to that of a female adult in the sense that there is no real separation between work and school life and private life. Therefore, young people's personal experience of suburbia is very different from their parent's experience of suburbia. That is why the following part will take a more profound look at the suburban youth.

5.4 Suburban youth in Britpop

Suburban children and teenager spend most of their time growing up at home or being in a kindergarten and school within their suburban setting. While the ordinary suburban life provides a stable and safe environment for young children to grow up in, the repetition of the everyday life with the absence of activity and its lack of possibilities makes it a place teenager might want to escape from. Favorite ways to escape the suburban ennui for young people are the dream of sex, drugs, and rock- 'n'-roll and the dream of life in a city. Simon Frith argued that 'British suburbia is as much a product of pop as British pop is a product of suburbia':

> 'Pop (and rock's) rhetoric is of the inner city, but scratch the surface of most
> English pop stars, and you'll find a suburban boy or girl, noses pressed against
> the window, dreaming of escape, of transformation' Savage, cited in Frith,
> (Frith, 1997, p.271)

Suede's song *'Introducing the band'* with its lyrics: 'The tears of suburbia drowned the land. Presenting the band' (Dog Man Star, 1994) supports Frith argument as Suede's lyrics show an urban rhetoric as well as a suburban background. London plays an important role for the suburban pop sensibility in general and Britpop in particular. The image of the exciting heterogeneous urban life associated with disorder and division stands in clear contrast with the picture of the boring homogenous suburban life related to order and union. Rupa Huq argued that Britpop is 'revealed in an urban chic, while the background of its practitioners reveals suburban roots,' Britpop 'more than most scenes identified with the city, in particular, London and its fashionable Camden inner-city neighborhood' (2013, p.17).

5.4.1 Suburban youth and the lack of activity and the lack of possibility in Britpop

Blur's song *'Dan Abnormal'* emphases the lack of entertainment and boredom of young people in the suburbs and refers to popular leisure activities such as watching TV or Video:

'It's Friday night, and we're all bored

Time's been called

There is no more

It's such a bore.' […]

'Dan Abnormal

Not normal at all

It's not his fault

We made him this way

He'll imitate you

Try to ape you

But it's not his fault. Dan watches TV.' […]

'Dan went to his local burger bar

'I want Mc Normal and chips

Or I'll blow you to bits

Give us it

It's the misery at half-past three

Watching video nasties

He has dirty dreams when he's asleep

Dan's just like you and me

(Dan Abnormal, The Great Escape, 1995)

The lack of activity in suburban life is also mentioned in Paul Mathur's review of Blur's song *'Advert'* which describes it as 'a droning burst of ennui' (1993, p.32). A reference to the popular leisure activity of 'watching TV' can be found in Johnny Dee's review of Blur's *'Jubilee'* which he describes as 'a parents' attack on their slacker offspring: "he's gone divvy, too much telly"' (1994, p.40). In his review of Elastica's album, Johnny Dee describes Elastica's world consisting of 'Shagging, flags, cups of tea' and 'disappointment' (1995, p.50).

In addition to the lack of activity which is very well covered in Blur songs, the lack of possibilities for young people is extremely well covered in Oasis and Pulp lyrics. Two great examples of Oasis songs covering the lack of opportunities for young people are *'Slide Away'* and *'Cigarettes & Alcohol'*: 'In the morning when you don't know what to do' *('Slide Away')* or 'Is it worth the aggravation. To find you a job when there's nothing worth working for? It's a crazy situation. But all I need is cigarettes and alcohol *('Cigarettes & Alcohol')*. Two great examples of Pulp songs covering the lack for possibilities of young people are lyrics such as:

> 'There is nothing to do so you just stay in bed, (oh poor thing) […] so you finally left school, so now what are you going to do? Now you're so grown up, yeah you're so mature. Going out late from Monday, chuck up in the street on Sunday, you don't want to live till Monday and have to do it all again.' (Monday Morning, Different Class, 1995)

> and:

> 'Rent a flat above a shop. Cut your hair and get a job. Smoke some fags and play some pool. Pretend you never went to school. […] And then dance and drink and screw because there is nothing else to do.' […] You will never understand. How it feels to live your life. With no meaning or control and with nowhere left to go' (Common People, Different Class, 1995).

Simon Reynold's covers the lack of possibilities in his review of Pulp's *'Monday Morning'* and 'Bar Italia which he describes as 'two songs frantic with dread vis-à-vis the eternal return of working week's bludgeoning drudgery' (1995, p.37). David Stubbs review of Suede's album *'Dog Man Star'* sees it as a 'tragic dislocation between glamor, hope, aspiration, exaltation and the realities of disappointment, alienation, mundanity, and anti-climax' (1994, p.35). Simon Price's review of Suede's self-titled album takes it to a personal level by arguing:

'The dramatis personae – bored teenage crack addicts, unhappily promiscuous gays in Council tenements, petulant suicide attempts, small town mental breakdown victims-strike you as fictional, but only just. Suede is singing about the unsatisfying, sordid little lives that we –you, I, they- all live' (1993, p.27).

In his review of Suede's *'Dog Man Star'*, John Harris describes the 'blood-and-glitter trilogy- *'The Drowners', 'Metal Mickey', 'Animal Nitrate'* as 'the proclamation of a lifestyle laced with sordidness, the council homes and broken bones' which are 'all but lost in a theatrical flurry of traditional tragedy and euphoria' (1994, p.47). Sharon O'Connell and Simon Price's review of Elastica's self-titled album establishes pop music as a way to escape the lack of activity and possibilities (1995, p.35). They describe Elastica's music as 'anti-dream pop' with 'No romance, no illusions, and no joyous bursts of feedback or shafts of light that might signify ecstasy or heady excess' (O'Connell and Prices, 1995, p.35). According to O'Connell and Prices, Elastica's image of 'Camden, old suede boots, dog-eared vinyl, beat-up cars, dirty denim, five-day-old milk' is 'the threadbare jetsam of indie pop life, the stuff you have to live through' (ibid.).

The reflection of young musicians and journalist's personal experiences of growing up in suburbia is yet another excellent example of intertextuality as it directly links the coverage of suburbia in Britpop lyrics and newspaper articles. The reflection on suburbia in popular songs and music journals helps to transform this personal memory of musicians and journalists into social, cultural memory which is then shared with their fans within the Britpop discourse. In contrast to the coverage of young people's view of their parent's work and private life, their personal experience of growing up in suburbia has a much more contemporary character.

5.4.2 Suburban youth and the dream of escape- drugs, rock- 'n'-roll, the city in Britpop

One popular way to escape the suburban ennui for young people is the dream or real life experience of sex, drugs, and rock- 'n'-roll. Britpop lyrics include several references to drug and party habits of the British youth in the 1990s. In contrast to the young people's reflection on their parent's work and private life, these references are based on young people's actual experience of these habits and therefore provide a direct reflection of the British youth in the 1990s.

British Suede's comments on British drug habits provide a very different perspective on modern British lifestyle. *'So Young,' 'Animal Nitrate,' 'Sleeping Pills,' 'Breakdown,' 'The Asphalt World'* are excellent examples of Suede's coverage of the heavy drug use by the British youth in the 1990s. *'Animal Nitrate'* is a reference to the drug amyl nitrite which is mentioned in the song as 'the delights of the chemical smile.' The song *'The Asphalt World'* provides a fascinating inside view of a drug dealer on drug use and prostitution in an urban environment:

'I know a girl; she walks the asphalt world

She comes to me; I supply her with Ecstasy' […]

'With ice in her blood

And a Dove in her head

Well, how does it feel when she's in your bed?

When you're there in her arms

And there in her legs

Well, I'll be in her head.'

Cos that's where I go

And that's what I do

And that's how it feels when the sex turns cruel

Yes, both of us need her, this is the asphalt world.'

(The Asphalt World, Dog Man Star, 1994)

Similar drug reference can be found in Pulp songs such as *'Sorted for E's & Wizz'* which directly comments on the British rave and drug culture the 1990s which were famous for its heavy use of Ecstasy and Speed. Lines such as 'we are all sorted for E's & Wizz' and 'At 4 o'clock the normal world seems very, very, very far away' set the stage for a detailed descriptions of feelings related to drug use and the attempt to escape social reality:

'In the middle of the night,

It feels alright,

But then tomorrow morning

Oh, then you come down.

What if you never come down?

(Sorted for E's & Wizz, Different Class, 1995)

The release of the single caused some media controversy as the Mirror accused the band of providing a Do It Yourself drug guide inside the CD.[5] Additional references to the party and drug habits of the British youth can be found in Pulp's song '*Bar Italia.*' The song is a regional reference to the London Party scene as it is based on a coffee shop on Frith Street in Soho in London. In addition to that, Echobelly's *'Insomniac'* includes several drug references which can be interpreted as a critique of the heavy use of cocaine within the Britpop scene at the time:

'I think you ought to know,

I think we've lost control dear,

Whatever turned you on,

You put it up your nose dear,

And though the feeling was sublime,

I think we're running out of time,

'Cos when you found it, you'd fix it,

The lose it and then you'd go.'

(Insomniac, Everyone's got one, 1994)

Elastica's song *'2:1'* was used on the Trainspotting soundtrack. The movie is based on Irvine Welsh's novel Trainspotting which tells the story of a group of heroin addicts in the late 1980s in Edinburgh. The song *'See That Animal'* links drug use with music and rock- 'n'-roll lifestyle.

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[5] http://www.acrylicafternoons.com/sorted.html#story [Accessed 2.1.2013]

The rock- 'n'-roll lifestyle is very well covered in Elastica's lyrics. In addition to Elastica's coverage of British drug and sex habits, their songs provide an interesting female perspective on the rock- 'n'-roll lifestyle which has been extensively covered by Oasis. *'Rock- 'n'-Roll Star,' 'Don't look back in Anger'* and *'Champagne Supernova'* can be regarded as the most prominent examples of Oasis focus on rock star life. Elastica's song *'Lineup'* is a critique of the stereotypical role of women in the music business as groupies or 'victim of line up in line' as they are called in the song:

'Drivel head knows all the stars

Love to suck their shining guitars

They've all been right up her stairs

Do you care?

(no)

Drivel head knows all the bands

Knows them like the back of her hands

You can see the wood for the trees

On your knees.'

(Line up, Elastica, 1995)

The fact that Britpop bands pick up on the drug use of young people in the 1990s has received no attention in the academic discourse so far. The academic critique that Britpop commented too much on the past life rather than the contemporary life of British society in the 1990s needs to be questioned as it overlooks these lyrics which specifically mention the British youth drug and party habits of the 1990s. Similar to Britpop lyrics, album reviews pay a lot of attention to the suburban young people and their dream to escape through drugs and rock 'n' roll. Simon Reynold's review of Pulps *'Sorted for E's And Wizz'* describes it as 'the sympathetic but a double-edged snapshot of the UK's dance and drug culture' (1995, p.37). According to Reynold's:

'Cocker's lyrics are exquisitely nuanced in their ambivalence about rave culture; his Sid Barrett-like nursery-rhyme pathos in the post-E disenchantment chorus is truly poignant. "Is this the way they say the future's meant to feel? Or just 20,000 people standing in a field?': Jarvis has been in that field, knows all about oscillating back and forth between utter immersion in the rave dream and a creeping sense of hollowness and futility. All that idealism and energy mobilized and expanded, for what: A revolutionary affirmation of our common humanity, or just a massive evasion of post-Thatcherism reality? Coker refuses to pass verdict on rave, his stance captured in a phrase of perfectly poised ambiguity: "IT DIDN'T MEAN NOTHING"' (1995, p.37).

John Mulvey sees in Pulp's *'Different Class'* 'the mere audacity of mentioning drugs in a title' (1995, p.53). According to Mulvey, Pulp's:

'…attitude to narcotics throughout is curiously moralistic: from the monumental comedowns of 'Sorted For E's And Wizz'; via the vacuous club bunnies who populate 'Monday Morning' (Pulp do ska! And get away with it, more or less); through to the "broken people" clustering in 'Bar Italia' at dawn, when, "You can't go to bed because it hasn't worn off yet.' (1995, p.53).

David Stubbs review of Suede's *'Heroine'* suggests 'a new generation of post-modern junkies, hooked on a vanished notion of glamor lost in the anticlimactic Nineties' (1994, p.35). Paul Lester describes Oasis's *'Rock 'n' Roll Star'* as 'a simple I-feel-fine celebration of youth, pleasure, escapism and total possibility with no hidden agenda' (1994, p.37).

After looking at the representation of British suburbia in Britpop lyrics by musicians and album reviews by journalists, the next section looks into how this coverage of suburbia was perceived by Britpop fans. The following presented extracts are based on answers to interview and questionnaire questions: 'What are your main memories of Britpop/Cool Britannia/New Labour?' and 'Why do you think British lifestyle/suburban life play such an important role in Britpop?':

'Mostly enjoyable catchy music, in opposition to pop like Spice Girls & Take That, with mostly witty lyrics that represented what adult life would be like. […] Primarily due to the songwriters representing their own experiences and perspectives on the society they grew up in/lived in.'

(Dough, Male, White, English, Working Class, 32 years old)

'Possibly because the musical influences were songwriters from previous generations – e.g. Paul McCartney, Ray Davies, Alan Price, Paul Weller who often wrote about British life (& often its problems) in their songs. Maybe the time had come again for such songwriting - the contemporary young people were gaining such songwriters amidst their generation. […] I also think that Britpop lyrics were quite vague, although they and the general imagery related to suburbia, which was where the fans lived.'

(Anthony, Male, White, English, UWC/LMC, 45 years old)

Dough highlights the fact that musicians represented their experience of and view of the society they grew up and lived in and Anthony identifies Britpop's imagery of suburbia as the place where fans live. Therefore, musicians and fans share the experience of growing up/living in suburbia. Dough's comment on Britpop's witty lyrics on how adult life would be shows his understanding of the generational aspect of suburbia. Anthony's use of cultural references demonstrates the connection between the different experiences of suburbia between children and their parents and bridges the gap between the cultural heritage of the past, the older generation and the contemporary culture of the presence, the younger generation. Like their English counterparts, the following extracts from Scottish and Welsh fans show their understanding of the close connection between British lifestyle and suburban life:

'British lifestyle and suburban life played a massive role in Britpop as it gave the music a distinct identity from that of other genres and music past and present. Much of the lyrics directly referenced and portrayed the British life at the time. Bands from previous eras such as The Kinks and The Smiths also were identifiable in this way also, but that style of music only dominated the airwaves during Britpop, replacing the usual generic pop.'

(Matthew, Male, White, Scottish, Middle Class, 24 years old)

'The bands like Oasis, Suede, Pulp and Blur were able to write lyrics based on the above; they represented where they were from...Blur spoke about what happens in middle-class suburbia; they described the boredom that was part of suburban Britain, they wrote about British life...Cocker wrote lyrics with humor and style, similar to Ray Davies of the Kinks […]'

(Llŷr, Male, White, Welsh, Lower Middle Class, 33 years old)

The British way of life is closely related to suburban life. Just like musicians in their lyrics and journalists in their album reviews, fans use cultural references to reinforce the distinctiveness of British suburban life. Cultural references to the Kinks' and the Smith's coverage of suburban life creates the sense of continuity and timelessness of British suburban life as well as it reinforces Britain's image as a nation of great pop music. British suburban life is an important part of national identification for British people throughout the different generations.

According to Paul Mathur Blur's *'Modern Life Is Rubbish'* can be described as 'a London odyssey crammed full of strange commuters, peeping Thomas's and lost dreams; of opening the windows and breathing in petrol' (1993, p.32). Furthermore, Mathur argues that:

'Blur have re-invented themselves in the image of their youth, sullen and suburban; as ghosts from a time when you could still be beaten up before assembly wearing the wrong badge. It's the Green Village Preservation Society come home to find a car park in its place.' (1993, p.32)

His description of *'Blue Jeans'* as 'An acoustic stroll through West London' which 'captures Blur between Portobello Road and The Smiths' is a strong example of how regional and cultural referencing in album reviews is used to create a sense of national belonging. The song is geographically located in London, the capital of the United Kingdom. A similar reference to London can be found in Johnny Cigarettes' review of *'Modern Life Is Rubbish'* where he talked about 'a parochial identity stamp and rekindled a love affair with London and its mod heritage' (1995, p.4). Like Mathur, Cigarettes links his geographical reference to London with a cultural reference to mod-heritage. The album is geographically and culturally directly related to London and the United Kingdom.

In contrast, Paul Moody's reference to Blur as an 'incarnation as mod-top skinheads, slumped on a tube train' is a bit subtle but still clearly links their album to British culture, London and Britain (1993, p.31). Nowhere else in the world other than in London is an underground train called 'tube.' The reference to mod and skinhead culture is an apparent reference to British sub- and youth-culture. Sharon O'Connell and Simon Price's review of Elastica's self-titled album contains a geographical reference to Camden, a neighborhood in London which played a significant role for Britpop as the leading Britpop bands used to socialize there (1995, p.35). According to them, the album 'reeks of pokey flats in Camden, old suede boots, dog-eared vinyl, beat-up cars, dirty denim, five-day-old milk […] the threadbare jetsam of indie pop life, the stuff you have to live through' (O'Connell and Price, 1995, p.35).

The personal memory of musicians, journalists and fans of British suburban life becomes part of social, cultural memory through its coverage in lyrics and newspaper articles. Cultural references to suburban life play an important role in this process as it helps to link the younger generation's experience of suburbia and its reflection upon it in contemporary culture with the older generation's experience of suburbia and its reflection upon it in cultural heritage.

5.5. National, regional and cultural References

The second part of this chapter discusses the concept of intertextuality further, aiming to show how young people's usage of cultural references in Britpop lyrics and album reviews helps to create a strong sense of national identity (Reisgl and Wodak, 2009, p.90). Given the importance of national, regional and cultural references for Britpop's representation of British identity, it is surprising that they have received so little academic attention.

In contrast to Michael Billig's research on British daily newspapers and the way they address readers as members of a nation through deixis, my research explores the shared national cultural discourse between musicians, journalists, and fans through cultural references through intertextuality (1995). My research looks into how national and regional references work as a sign-post of national identity and how cultural references play a significant role in the reproduction of national identity in popular music by linking British cultural heritage with contemporary culture.

In contrast to Billig's research on deixis, my research on intertextuality shows that words like 'us' or 'we' are not required as members of the nations will instantly get the cultural references because they are familiar with the national cultural discourse (1995). My research shows that intertextuality is a more effective tool to address national members and distinguish between insiders and outsiders of the nation in popular music than deixis.

5.5.1 National References:

It's important to highlight that these Britpop songs include few direct geographical references to England, Britain and the United Kingdom. Blur's song *'This is a low'* is an interesting exception which references 'England' and emphasizes that the United Kingdom is an island by using words such 'sea,' 'tide,' 'pier,' 'bay' and 'land's end.' The national reference is further emphasized through several cultural references to important symbols of British national identity such as the colors 'red and blue' of the Union Jack, the 'Queen' and 'tea.' The reference to the national flag, the head of state and national customs highlights the importance of national identity in Blur's song *'This is a low.'* In contrast to Britpop lyrics, album reviews show more direct national references to Britain (British), England (English) and the United Kingdom.

Paul Lester describes Damon Albarn's lyrics on *'The Great Escape'* album as a 'daft and dark observations on lifelessness, alienation, and life in this alien nation' (1995, p.33). He talks about 'Britain's culturally undernourished homes' and the exciting thought of 'Blur submerging our suburbs and highlighting our high streets with this drenching infectious, magnificently weird and wired modern pop music' (Lester, 1995, p.33). Paul Mathur's review of Blur's *'Modern life is Rubbish'* raises the question whether it is 'A comment on English life losing its laziness to the soul-crushing wheels of commerce? (1993, p.32). Johnny Dee describes *'Girls' and Boys'* from Blur's *'Parklife'* album as 'a soundtrack to fun-fair bumper car rides – pointed, niggly, angular and persistently catchy, it's strange and magnificent that something so obtuse should have been taken to the nation's bosom' (1995, p.50). David Stubbs talks about a 'Brit stigma attached to Suede' in his review of Suede's *'Dog Man Star'* (1994, p.35).

John Harris acknowledges Suede's 'over-arching sense of place' on their album *'Dog Man Star'* and that 'Brett roots the lion's share of his words in the decaying expanse of modern Britain' (1994, p.47). He quotes a national reference of Brett Anderson in his article: "England is simultaneously maddening and beautiful, and that's something I want to get across in the songs" (Harris, 1994, p.47). The 'over-arching sense of place' in Britpop reviews is created through the combination of direct national references to England or Britain and indirect cultural references to English or British suburbs and high streets. John Harris's review which describes England as a 'sad, expiring island' with 'endless acres of crumbling '70's planning', 'hard-faced joyriders and their blighted parents' and an 'omnipresent underclass' includes comments on social and economic developments within the British society (ibid). In addition to that, his review comments on external influences by saying that Suede have 'given up trying to root themselves in it, and wrapped themselves in alien robes –icy European futurism, lank-haired American cool' (Harris, 1994, p.47).

5.5.2 Regional References:

As with national references, there are few direct regional references in Britpop songs. Once again, Blur's song *'This is a low'* is a notable exception as it includes several direct local references to different parts of the United Kingdom such as the river 'Thames' in London, the river 'Tyne' in the North-East of England, the river 'Forth' in the Eastern Scotland, the seaport 'Cromarty' in Scotland, 'Blackpool' in the North-West of England and 'Land's End' in Cornwell. The reference to 'Malin Head' in Donegal, the Republic of Ireland, however, is confusing in that context.

Oasis and Pulp songs include no direct references to the North of the UK in general or Manchester or Sheffield in particular while Blur and Suede lyrics include direct references to the South of the UK in general and London in particular. The fact that the South of England is more referenced than the North of the England could be explained by the fact that the center of the music business and music press was and still is located in London which explains the relatively large number of London references in Britpop lyrics. Blur's songs include several references to London such as 'London' in *'London Loves'*; 'London Heathrow' in *'He thought of Cars'*; 'London', 'Westway' and 'Primrose Hill' in *'For Tomorrow'*; 'London' and 'Soho' in *'Best Days'*; 'Portobello Market' in *'Blue Jeans'*; 'Trafalgar Square' in *'It could be you'* and 'Underground' in *'Advert'*.

Pulp's lyrics include some regional references to London which is referenced through 'Ladbroke Grove look' in *'I Spy,'* 'Camden Town' in *'Sorted for E's and Wizz,'* 'Soho' in *'Bar Italia.'* Suede's lyrics include some regional references to the South of the United Kingdom. Suede's lyrics in *'Black or Blue'* refer to London by using words like 'through the southern snow to Heathrow' and the 'noise of the underground' which is a metaphor for the 'London Sound.' The song is one of the few songs where the lyrics actually refer to the 'U.K.' but in a very critical way as the song critiques the immigrations laws of the country. Echobelly's and Elastica's lyrics do not include any regional references at all while Sleeper's song *'Lady Love Your Countryside'* refers to London by mentioning Belsize Park.

It is important to highlight that even though Britpop songs include few direct regional references, they still represent a strong sense of regional identity because of their intense use of regional dialects and accents. Oasis 'Mancunian' accent from Manchester and Blur's 'Mockney' accent a reference to the East London 'Cockney' accent are excellent examples of Britpop's use of regional dialects which will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter on class.

The following presented extracts are based on answers to interview and questionnaire questions: 'What are your main memories of Britpop, Cool Britannia, New Labour?', 'Do you agree or disagree with the critique that Britpop is more a representation of Englishness rather than Britishness? Why?' and 'What do you think makes Britpop English and British? (Sound/Lyrics)':

> 'What are your main memories of Britpop? That it was an exciting time when interesting music I could relate to came in from the margins and started getting lots of attention and mainstream success. It was good to have something closer to my life than prom queens and jocks and nerds etc. (which seemed to an obsession in US grunge/indie) in indie music or David Lynch Twin Peaks style cool which appears to be the dominant alternative thinking in the earlier 1990s. But also that there was a lot of promise unfulfilled and the least interesting music/least appealing aspects became very dominant pretty quickly. […] I think it was just time for something homegrown to be expressed and listened to after so much US cultural domination.

I believe that the music could appeal to young people anywhere in the UK and Ireland. As Morrissey would say, there is no real difference between people in Carlisle, Dublin, Dundee or Humberside as compared to Manchester or London. […]

It was the use of many different instruments to add variety to the mix. It was reminiscent of e.g. Paul McCartney, The Kinks, Alan Price, Roy Wood, Cat Stevens, Brian Jones, Steve Winwood, Family, etc. in their prime. They would add keyboards, woodwind, brass, etc. to make subtle but significant additions to the sound. The Blur 'trilogy' (Modern Life Is Rubbish, Parklife, and The Great Escape) was very much in this mold. Other UK music post-1960s also influenced Britpop, e.g. you hear similarities to Steve Harley & David Essex in Damon Albarn's 'cockney-type' voice, and probably New Wave music of the late 1970s had its involvement, e.g. on 'Girls & Boys.'

(Robert, Male, White, British/English, LMC/UWC, 43 years old)

Robert's first quote shows his identification with British cultural identity in Britpop as something which he can relate to something which is closer to his life than American cultural identity represented in grunge, a standard answer to my question commonly shared by musicians, journalists, and fans. His answer includes a very powerful cultural reference. Robert's reference of Morrissey refers to The Smiths' song called Panic which he uses to explain Britpop's appeal to young people all over the UK. Britpop becomes part of the British popular music history. His following quotes combine national, regional and cultural references which further enforce the sense of British cultural identity. Similar cultural references to British cultural heritage from the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s can be found in the following quotes:

The main thing is that all of the singers were singing in their regional accents. Liam Gallagher, Jarvis Cocker both Northern twangs to their vocals. Likewise, with Damon Albarn, you could instantly tell that he wasn't from America; he was trying to sound English. The band's influences also played a huge part in this. The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, The Who, the Kinks, The Jam, The Sex Pistols, Pink Floyd, The Smiths, the Stone Roses, David Bowie…all of these were British artists with a quintessentially British sound. This translated to the Britpop sound.

(Daniel, Male, White, Scottish, Middle Class, 19 years old)

'Interesting one...being Welsh...I'll try to be diplomatic. […] Some see it as a movement that made people proud to be British...for me I could not stomach that crap...I just enjoyed the ride like anyone from mainland Europe would have enjoyed it.... just I understood the psyche of the English media a little bit better and so how Cool Britannia was a good ploy to make us feel British again. […] Pulp are the best at this...Cocker could write in a way no one else could write apart from maybe (Ray Davies or Alex Turner) he could write about failed relationships and bad sexual experiences…it was sarcastic, sharp and dark (traits of British humor) […]

You could never imagine a band from Spain or France producing an Oasis...they were arrogant, tough and pissed off......but very sharp.'

(Llŷr, Male, White, Welsh, Lower Middle Class, 33 years old)

'I don't think it is a representation of Englishness. Being Scottish and having lived in Scotland all my life, these Britpop bands are still massively popular – Oasis, in particular, are massive in Scotland, particularly Glasgow. Despite the bands being English, their accurate accounts of middle class or working class aspirations were the same throughout the UK, not just England.'

The class obsession in the United Kingdom makes it appealing to a nationwide sense – lyrics such as 'is it worth the aggravation/to find you a job when there's nothing worth working for' (from Oasis's Cigarettes & Alcohol) could easily apply to someone in London, Manchester or Glasgow. Lyrically, bands like Blur were distinctively English with little references to drinking tea or going to the seaside for example. The sense of Britishness or Englishness is also found in the way these Britpop singers sing – they don't put on a Faux-American accent like most acts previously (or presently), they sing in a regional accent which is quite rare in music. In addition to this, the actual music and lyrics are heavily influenced by the great British bands from the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. The influences were almost exclusively from Britain.

(Matthew, Male, White, Scottish, Middle Class, 24 years old)

These extracts from Scottish and Welsh fans show their identification with British cultural identity through their knowledge and use of cultural references. Llŷr quote is an excellent example of his identification with British culture locating Britpop in between its cultural past of Ray Davis and its cultural presence of Alex Turner and stating that there could be no Spanish or French version of Oasis. In contrast to their English counterparts who clearly identify with their British cultural heritage, American fans even though acknowledging it clearly differentiate themselves from it by addressing at their American identity and by pointing at American influence on earlier 1960s music or Oasis ripping off the Beatles or discussing Britpop's lack of 'grooves':

> I think it's the drawing of influences going back to the great British rock of the 1960s (and to a lesser extent, 1970s and 1980s) which is ironic given that all of the 1960s British bands drew heavily from American influences!

(Drew, Male, White, American, Middle Class, 35 years old)

> Yes, I agree that Britpop is more of a representation of Englishness than Britishness. Most of these bands considered themselves English and wrote music like the 1960s and 1970s English bands: The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, The Who, which were all English bands. And as an American, I think of them as being English. […] I think that they used a lot of the same songwriting formulas and sound as their heroes did in the 1960s and 1970s; the lyrics were also particularly English.

(James, Male, White, American, Middle Class, 32 years old)

It is important to highlight that American fans consider Britpop more as a representation of English identity rather British identity compared to British fans who consider Britpop more an image of British rather than English identity even though most of the cultural references being given to support their argument are indeed English. Intertextuality, a link between texts through indirect and direct references, both in the past and in the present within the Britpop context will be further discussed in cultural references in the next section.

5.5.3 Cultural References:

Cultural references can be found in album titles, covers, booklets, lyrics, and sounds. Britpop songs make indirect use of cultural references while Britpop reviews make direct use of cultural references. Therefore, cultural references are harder to discover in songs than in album reviews where they are pointed out directly through the naming of the bands, albums, songs, etc.

Oasis *'Definitely Maybe'* album cover is a photograph of all band members inside the guitarist Paul Arthur's house showing a stereotypical British living room with typical bay windows and a fireplace with a mantelpiece. It's interesting that the cover includes both British and American cultural references but the analysis of these cultural references showed a clear preference for British cultural references. The display of the album *'Ummagumma'* by the English band Pink Floyd is an example for a British cultural reference while the poster of the American musician Burt Bacharach is an example of an American cultural reference (Kennedy, 2008, p.732).

Fig 3 Oasis Definitely Maybe album cover (Source Oasis homepage)

The picture of the footballer George Best and Rodney Marsh is a reference to football, a very popular leisure activity among men which played a significant role in the 1990s lad culture in the United Kingdom. The fact that the album was promoted in football magazines and programs rather than music magazines emphasizes the close relationship between Oasis and British lad culture. As mentioned before, the results of the analysis of cultural references in album reviews show a clear majority of British cultural references (76.35%) compared to American cultural references (23.65%). The majority of cultural references are focused on music (79.31%) and Film/ TV (11.33%). The cultural references to a music show a huge gap between British and American references while there is a similar amount of British and American cultural references on Film/ TV.
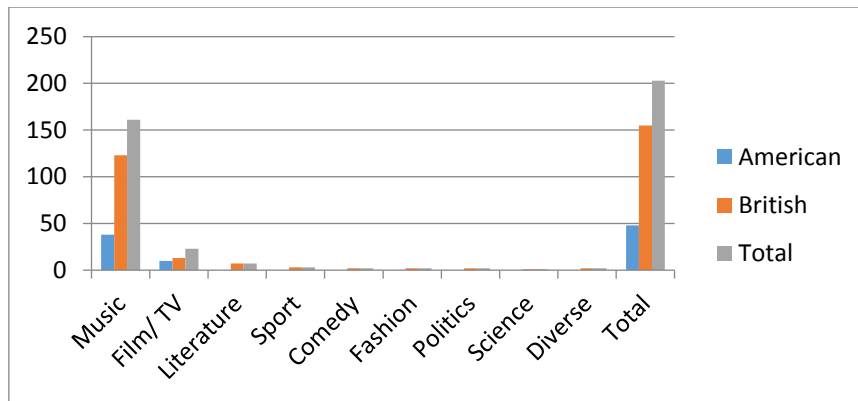
Fig 4 Cultural references in Britpop

(Source NVivo Data Claudia Lueders)

Musical and lyrical influences play a significant role in the creation of national identity in the context of British popular music. Blur's album *'Modern Life is Rubbish'* has been described as 'a pop encyclopedia of England' and as a record of 'quintessential Englishness' (Blur homepage 2013). Their album *'Parklife'* has been described as 'Britpop's defining record of the 1990s' became part of the national consciousness and English vocabulary (ibid.). Regarding music, the album is influenced by British guitar groups such as The Kinks, Small Faces, The Jam and The Who. Ray Davis from The Kinks and Paul Weller from The Jam will need to be highlighted as lyrical influences of the records. According to Stuart Maconie, Damon's album lyrics combine Ray Davis's humor and Paul Weller's bitterness in their attempt to comment on contemporary English suburban life (1999).

Nirvana will need to be mentioned as a significant American influence because the record was intended to battle American grunge as noted earlier on (Maconie, 1999). In terms of music and lyrical influences, Oasis is an interesting case being influenced by a lot of different bands such as The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, The Kinks, The Who, T. Rex, Small Faces, Sex Pistols, The Jam, Happy Mondays, The Stones Roses, Inspiral Carpets and The Smiths. Stephen Thomas Erlewine describes Oasis music as a mix of:

> 'the rough, thuggish image of the Stones and the Who, 'Beatlesque' melodies and hooks, British lyrical themes and song structures like the Jam and the Kinks combined with a massive guitar roar and defiant sneer that drew from the Sex Pistols rebelliousness and the Stone Roses' cocksure arrogance' (AllMusic Oasis 2013)

Especially the 'Beatlesque' melodies as Erlewine called it have received a lot of attention from the media and academic discourse. Derek B. Scott discussed the close relationship between Oasis and the Beatles in great detail in his chapter on *'The Britpop Sound'* in Bennett and Stratton's book *'Britpop and the English Music Tradition'* (2010). According to Scott, it could be argued that Oasis musical references to the Beatles can be understood as their way of reworking the British sound. Following Saussure's distinction between 'language' and 'parole,' Scott argues that Oasis is interested in 'what in the Beatles' style is a common musical language and what is the Beatles' individual articulation of that language' (2010, p.113).

Regarding musical references, Oasis's *'Wonderwall'* shows a resemblance of the Beatles song *'Strawberry Fields Forever'* while Oasis's *'Don't look back in Anger'* shows similarity to John Lennon's song *'Imagine'* (ibid.). In terms of lyrical references, several Oasis songs include Beatles references such as *'Supersonic'* for example: 'You can ride with my yellow submarine' or *'Don't Look Back in Anger'* which quotes John Lennon 'trying to start a revolution from my bed, because they said the brains I had gone to my head'. The song title *'Wonderwall'* is based on a film soundtrack by George Harrison (Scott, 2010, p.118).

According to Jake Kennedy Suede's combination of the Anglo-centric lyrics and the heavy guitar sound makes their album 'a blueprint for Britpop' (Kennedy, 2008, p.704). Regarding music, Suede's self-titled debut album was mainly influenced by The Smiths and David Bowie. The lyrics are focused on London life. Like their debut, the music on their second album *'Dog Man Star'* was influenced by David Bowie. However, the sound appears to be darker which might be caused by Brett Anderson's heavy drug use (ibid.). The lyrics are still focused on London's urban life. Nevertheless, *'Dog Man Star'* can be considered as Suede's departure from Britpop as Brett Anderson states:

> "We could not have been more uninterested in that whole boozy, cartoon-like, fake working-class thing. As soon as we became aware of it, we went away and wrote Dog Man Star. You could not find a less Britpop record. It's tortured, epic, extremely sexual and personal. None of those things apply to Britpop" (Bracewell, 2008).

Morrissey and Blondie have lyrically and musically inspired Echobelly. With regards to Sleeper, Sheila Whiteley highlights the British singer Morrissey and his band The Smiths as important musical influences (2010, p.64). She argues that Sleeper's lyrics follow Morrissey's songwriting style by paying particular attention to aspects of everyday life (ibid.). Regarding music Elastica's debut has been mainly influenced by British bands such as Wire and The Stranglers as well as the American band Blondie. Sheila Whiteley highlights the close similarity between Elastica's song *'Connection'* and the Wire's song *'Three Girl Rhumba'* as well as Elastica's song *'Waking Up'* and the Strangler's song *'No More Heroes (*2010, pp.61-62)*'*. With regards to Britpop's musical heritage, Sheila Whiteley refers to the fine line between musical acknowledgment and plagiarism, a line which has been crossed in the examples mentioned above (ibid.).

5.6 The retro versus new debate in the music media

The qualitative analysis of Britpop album reviews shows that national identity in popular music can be constructed through intertextuality, through the use of indirect or direct cultural references in lyrics and album reviews. The results indicate a significant emphasis on British cultural references such as The Kinks, The Jam, and The Smiths. British pop and rock bands play such an important role and reference point in Britpop album reviews. The focus on cultural aspects of British identity such as the British sound of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s in Britpop album reviews highlights the uniqueness of the British nation. Cultural referencing plays a significant role in linking the cultural heritage and national past with the contemporary culture and national presence as discussed in the retro and new debate. In that context Derek Scott's analysis of the Britpop Sound is interesting as it discusses the question in more detail:

> 'whether Britpop works by just copying earlier styles, or whether there is an attempt to make creative use of those aspects of songs that might now, in the twenty-first century be regarded as exemplifying the musical vocabulary of a British pop language' (2010, p.103 & p.122).

and comes to a conclusion that:

> 'The fact that Britpop groups did not create an innovative musical style for the later 1990s – in the sense that the Beatles and others did in the later 1960s […] – does not mean that the music of bands such as Suede, Blur, Elastica, and Oasis contained nothing new or exciting' (ibid.).

Scott also highlights that the 1960s bands themselves drew upon musical and lyrical signifiers of Britishness such as British Music Hall or the Community song and the 1990s bands seem to follow their path by using similar musical and lyrical signifiers of Britishness and drew upon the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s bands as musical reference points. Therefore, it could be argued that intertextuality, even though cultural references play a significant role in linking the musical past with the musical present, Britpop lyrics are mainly focused on issues of contemporary Britain of the 1990s. The results show that there is a Britpop retro versus new debate in the music press:

> 'The single, "For Tomorrow," is the most immediate but also the weakest track, all David Jones and Kinks echoes, swamped with deliberate references to a kinda dreamy London vista where everyone cruises the Westway in open-top sports cars and wishes deep down that they were David Hemmings or Jean Shrimpton. Not a bad way to live, of course, but easily assimilated into a critical view of Blur as grumpy retro apologists.'

> 'Oasis are criticized for being retro, Sixties-fixated, and Beatles-obsessed. But that's not the problem, either. The whole point of The Beatles was that they bequeathed to pop and rock a sound that was translucent, timeless, rather than a mere signifier of the swinging Sixties. There will still be people finding things worth doing with that bequest in 50 years' time. Oasis look back to The Beatles to find ways of achieving transcendence and that they do on *"Some Might Say"* (included here) and *"Acquiesce"* (not included here sadly), no question.'

> 'After the recent tit-for-tat, Brits-for-Brats clamor to champion the bright new shapes of music; it's worth reiterating that British pop is in its best condition for over a decade. While it's all too tempting to put out a generic tag over the likes of Supergrass, Gene, Oasis, Sleeper, Blur, Dodgy and Elastica, the one factor that does connect them is that they are all offspring of their record collections. Having grown up in the age of sampling and parody, not one of them feels remorse in dipping into their vinyl memories.'

'To self-righteous music buffs such cheek is sacrilegious; for many this album is going to sound like a huge aural crossword – a spot-the-riff game you can play with Uncle Punk. Apparently influences – the obtuse avant-garde pop of early Wire, the directness of Blondie, Adam & The Ants' quirks and The Stranglers' menace – are scattered liberally throughout.

But while critics and 'musicologists' will accuse Frischmann, Matthews, Holland and Welch of plagiarism, the simple truth is that Wire, X-Ray Spex, Buzzcocks, and Ludus never made an album as good as *'Elastica.'* And who really cares? Borrow a book from the library and it becomes a part of your mindset, same with music. And Elastica has a taste. Instead of calling in solicitors, The Stranglers should be grateful that a band as cool as Elastica want to rip off two seconds of one of their hits' (Mathur, 1993, p.32)

Mathur argues that the Britpop's retro-aesthetics, its 1960s fixation, and Beatles obsession are linked to the musician's vinyl memories from their record collections which are part of young people's mindset. With regards to the retro versus new debate in the British music press, the following quote from one of the questionnaires with a fan is interesting:

'It was hard to believe that there could be any place for a genre that revived the jolly tunes of eras past. It looked like pop music as we knew it was over. Remember that 'retro' had yet to be invented. Music had never before looked back to go forward.'
(Robert, Male, White, British/English, LMC/UWC, 43 years old)

Robert's comment about the invention of retro has been supported in my interviews with musicians, journalists, and fans and reminds of Simon Reynold's discussion of pop culture's addiction with its own past in his book *'Retromania'* (2012). The invention of retro in Britpop and its related media coverage plays a significant role in Britpop's perception as being nostalgic about British cultural past. I firmly believe that this is not the case and nostalgia has been used in an entirely different context similar to what Robert mentioned more in the sense of looking back in order to move forward. Therefore, the final section of the empirical chapter will briefly look into the link between youth and nostalgia.

5.7 Youth and Nostalgia

As discussed earlier on, I don't think that Britpop aimed to create a 'golden age of British identity' as is sometimes suggested in the current academic literature. The sense of 'double time,' the simultaneous look backward and forward, the 'Janus Face' as Bhabha called it needs to be understood as an evaluation of the present (Bhabha, 1990). Damon Albarn's description of songwriting on 'Modern Life is Rubbish' supports this argument as he attempted to create a nostalgic sound with contemporary lyrics:

> 'It was me attempting to write in a classic English vein using kind of imaginary
> and words which were much more modern. So it was a weird combination of
> quiet nostalgic-sounding melodies and chord progressions, (with) these weird
> caustic lyrics about England as it was at that moment, then the way it was getting
> this Americanised refit.'[6]

Paul Mathur review of Blur's *'Modern Life is Rubbish'* talks about a 'Legislated Nostalgia.' It seems 'to force a body of people to have memories they do not possess' because 'You're introduced to a range of individuals and places, to rituals and relationships that you end up empathizing with without even having experienced them' (1993, p.32). According to Stuart Hall, these memories connect the present with the past. They play a significant role in the construction of national identities as they produce meaning young British people can identify with even though they have not experienced them for themselves such as the suburban life as an adult (Hall, 1996, p.613).

John Harris makes the interesting point that:

> '…Each age needs to feel its worth, to behold something more than post-modern
> giggling and the frantic exploration of other people's myths. It needs a dramatic
> soundtrack made by people who want to romanticise their time: who, in this
> instance (bar the Hollywood songs), look around them and see some terrible,
> aching beauty, riddled with traces of the humanity that should have been
> crushed as things began to crumble' (1994, p.47)**.**

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[6] 'What the World Is Waiting For'. Episode 7, Seven Ages of Rock. BBC Worldwide & VH1 Classic. 2007.

Harris's point is fascinating because it connects the contemporary culture of the youth with the cultural heritage of their parents and highlights the importance of moving forward which reminds of Bhabha's 'double time,' the evaluation of the present through looking backward and forward at the same time (Bhabha, 1990).

5.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, the results of my analysis show how national identity has been constructed and maintained by young people and their use of cultural references in Britpop and its related media discourses which add to existing literature on national identities such as Andersons's *'Imagined Communities'* (1983) and Billig's *'Banal Nationalism'* (1995). The chapter highlighted the significance of Britpop's coverage of British life and suburbia for young people and reflected on their attitude towards their national cultural identity in the 1990s.

In terms of Hutchinson definition of national identity as 'being conscious of' and 'acting as belonging to a nation' (2001, p.215) both datasets, the period culture (Britpop lyrics and the media discourse) as well as the lived culture (interviews/surveys with musicians, PR agents, journalists and fans) showed a strong sense of national identity related to British life and suburbia. The interview and survey answers revealed that young musicians, journalists and fans' sense of national belonging are strongly rooted in their early experience of everyday life and growing up in British suburbia.

In terms of Smith's definition of national identity as 'a collective cultural phenomenon' (Smith 1991, vii), it needs to be highlighted that all participants of both interviews and surveys shared the same cultural references which connected them to their national culture. A strong sense of national identity has been constructed through a combination of national, regional and cultural references. Constructive strategies such as national and regional references play an important role in the construction of national identity while justificatory strategies such as cultural references are particularly important for the reproduction of national identity in popular music as it links the cultural heritage with contemporary culture (De Cillia, Reisgl, and Wodak, 1999, p.157; Wodak, 2009, p.18).

The chapter showed how the aspects of homogeneity in national identity in general and in suburban life, in particular, are intertwined. It illustrated the importance of age in the process of becoming aware as well as acting as belonging to one's nation and the significant role of a shared national culture which is passed on from the older to the younger generation. The results showed that young people play an active role in deciding what will be passed on to future generations which highlight their significant role in the continuity of national identity.

Both data sets, the period culture (Britpop lyrics and the media discourse) as well as the lived culture (interviews/surveys with musicians, PR agents, journalists and fans) have been useful in exploring how national identity has been constructed and maintained by young people and their use of cultural references in Britpop and its related media discourses. The results of my qualitative analysis of Britpop (lyrics) and its related media discourse (album reviews/music journals, news articles/mainstream newspapers) which were discussed in the first part of this chapter showed that a strong sense of national identity has been constructed through Britpop's extensive coverage of British lifestyle and suburbia.

Britpop's coverage of specific British customs and tradition is less important than its much more detailed coverage of the particularities of every day of ordinary people. British traditions such as the British tea tradition work as abstract sign posts for British identity rather than a real reference point for identification for musicians and their fans. The results of my interviews and surveys with musicians, PR agents, journalists and fans support these findings and highlight the importance of cultural references.

The second part of this chapter discussed the importance of national, regional and cultural references for the construction and maintenance of national identity. Similar to the relationship between customs and traditions and the particularities of the everyday life of ordinary people, national and regional references are less important than cultural references in the process of becoming aware and acting as belonging to one's nation. In contrast to national and regional references which work as abstract signs for British identity, cultural references provided a real identification for musicians and their fans. National and regional references can be understood by members as well as non-members of the British nation while cultural references are better understood by members rather than non-members due to their shared national culture.

Britpop's retro-aesthetics, its heavy use of cultural references and a strong sense of nostalgia play an important role in connecting the contemporary music of the youth with their parent's cultural heritage which re-enforced Britain's self-understanding as a great pop nation. In contrast to British Invasion bands who were selling their British cultural identity abroad, Britpop bands were selling it back to the British youth which explains the stronger focus on cultural rather than national references. Britpop marks an interesting moment in time when the target of subcultural resistance shifted from young people's parent and national culture to other young people's international and global subculture.

The chapter showed how young people's personal memory of their experience of growing up in suburbia can be transformed into sociocultural memory through its coverage of it in Britpop and its related media discourse (Dijk, 2009, pp.64-65). The discussion of the concept of intertextuality showed how young people's usage of national, regional and cultural references in lyrics and album reviews helps to strengthen a strong sense of national identity (Reisgl and Wodak, 2009, p.90).

The deliberate use of cultural references by young British musicians, journalists, and fans illustrates their important role in the reproduction of national identity within popular music and it's related media discourses which have been completely overlooked by academia which mainly critiques its thereby created sense of nostalgia. However, my research shows that even though young people are mainly associated with change, they can play an important role in the continuity of their national culture in times of global change, an aspect which hasn't been discussed within the academic discourses on National Identity and British Cultural Studies.

Finally, my reading of Britpop's nostalgic representation of British identity as a cultural critique of the British nation in the 1990s provides a new understanding of the nostalgic style of representation and the relationship between youth and nostalgia. Britpop's focus on traditional aspects of British identity highlights its uniqueness while Britpop's nostalgic view towards these aspects of British identity emphasizes the danger of losing this distinct character. Nostalgia is used to engage with social, political and economic changes rather than to escape from them.

6. Britpop's Common People - Empirical Chapter on British class division and class tourism

6.1 Introduction

The second empirical chapter focuses young people's perception of the British class system. It uses the concept of interdiscursivity to explore the close relationship between the discourses of national identity and class in Britpop and its related media discourse. Given the close relationship between nation and industrialization in general and between the British nation and industrialization in particular, the question arises what kind of role social, political and economic post-war changes related to de-industrialisation such as the decline in the British heavy industry and Thatcher's deregulation of the British Labour market play within the British society in the 1990s.

I argue that class remained an important signifier of national identity for the British youth and their construction of British identity in popular music the 1990s. Given the fact that young musicians, journalists, and fans didn't have any personal class- related working life experience, their sense of class identity is primarily linked to language and speech rather than occupation and income (Fox, 2004, p.82). That is why; the chapter pays particular attention to their use of class related accents (Cockney and Mockney) and cultural references to class-related subcultures (Mods and Skinheads) which played a significant role in Britpop's construction and reproduction of a class-conscious British identity.

British class is very well covered in Britpop lyrics which provide an extraordinary inside view into young people's perception of class division as well as class tourism. Britpop's coverage of Intra- and inter-class relations shows the continuing importance of the traditional division between middle class and working class for the representation of British identity while its coverage of class tourism reflects on contemporary changes of a class structure such as an increased class fragmentation in the 1990s.

The chapter mainly focuses on the media discourse of Britpop. The British media discussion of the 'British Heavyweight Championship' between Blur and Oasis is used to discuss aspects of the class division while Pulp's 'Common People' is used to discuss the so-called 'class tourism,' a phenomenon which is associated with middle-class people who pretend to be working class. Based on a day survey of the media discourse on Britpop's Heavyweight Championship, the chapter discusses the concepts of intertextuality and deixis.

Similar to the previous chapter, it draws on qualitative textual analysis of Britpop lyrics, album reviews, and mainstream media coverage as well as data collected from qualitative interviews and surveys with musicians, PR agents, journalists and fans. The empirical evidence from qualitative interviews and surveys with musicians, PR agents, journalists and fans is based on the following questions:

- Why do you think there was so much focus on the class and regional division in the media discourse on Britpop and Cool Britannia?
- Why do you think the working-class played such a predominant role in Britpop and its related media discourse?
- Do you think there is a difference between the representation of British identity in Britpop and it the British media coverage of it?

The results of the qualitative analysis of Britpop and its related media discourse as well as the analysis of the interviews and surveys with musicians, journalists, and fans support my argument that Britain continued to be a class-conscious society despite social, political and economic changes in the post-industrial British society of the 1990s.

6.2 Class in Britpop, media discourse and interviews with musicians, journalists, and fans

Britpop's coverage of Intra- and inter-class relations shows the continuing importance of the traditional division between middle class and working class for the representation of British identity in the 1990s. Therefore, the first part of this chapter will look into the image of the middle and working class in Britpop lyrics before moving on to the analysis of class division and class tourism in the media discourse of Britpop. Young musicians and journalists reflect on their experience of growing up in distinct class backgrounds.

6.2.1 British middle class

The next section of this chapter discusses specific aspects of the British middle class which has been covered in Britpop songs and albums reviews such as working conditions, positive and negative aspects and particular middle-class attributes. Middle-class people are described as well-educated. 'Educated the expensive way' as Blur described it in their lyrics of 'Charmless Man' (1995); the education is closely linked to private school and universities. Blur's song *'Tracy Jacks'* include a description of a stereotypical middle-class man as being a civil servant with stable employment and good health insurance:

(Tracy Jacks) works in civil service

(Tracy Jacks) its steady employment

(Tracy Jacks) saw a Harley Street doctor

(Tracy Jacks) who prescribed healthy living

(Tracy Jacks, Parklife, 1994)

The middle class is associated with financial security. Middle-class people can afford a 'car' and a 'house' in a suburban environment with people from the same backgrounds as referred to in Blur's song *'Entertain me'* or *'Mr. Robinson's Quango'* (1995). Suede's song *'The Wild Ones'* reminds us that this financial security is not as real as it seems on the surface as most middle-class people don't own their houses as they still pay mortgages for them: 'But oh if you stay we'll ride from disguised suburban graves. We'll go from the bungalows where the debts still grow every day.' (1995).

The positive aspect of the financial security of the middle class is closely associated with the downside of mass consumerism. Blur's clichéd middle-class man in *'Magic America'* can afford to go on a holiday in America where 'He took a cab to the shopping malls,' 'Bought and ate till he could do neither anymore' and 'Then found love on Channel 44' (1994). Instead of taking a bus to the shopping mall which would be much cheaper, he takes a taxi to go to the shopping mall where he eats and drinks as much as he can. Consumerism and company brands are important as the lyrics from Blur's *'Globe Alone'* show:

'Who cares what car he's driving in?

He is because he saw it on a commercial break

and if he doesn't get what he wants

Then he'll get a headache

'Cos he needs it

Wants it

Almost

Loves it.'

(Globe Alone, The Great Escape, 1995)

Songs like *'Charmless Man'* and *'Mr. Robinson's Quango'* indicate that middle-class people tend to socialize within their social group. *'Mr. Robinson'* has 'Drinks with generals and country wives' (1995) and social relations between middle-class people are presented as superficial and status orientated:

'He moves in circles of friends

Who just pretend

That they like him

He does the same to them

And when you put it all together

There's the model of a charmless man.'

(Charmless Man, The Great Escape, 1995)

It's important to highlight that the social background of musicians played a significant role in journalists' reviews of their albums. Paul Lester's review of Blur's album *'The Great Escape'* for example makes a reference to Damon Albarn's social background of growing up in Colchester (1995, p.33). Lester comment that 'the thought of Blur submerging our suburbs and highlighting our high streets with this drenching infectious, magnificently weird and wired modern pop music is just so exciting' links the band directly to their suburban social background (ibid.). Paul Lester's use of 'our suburbs' and 'our high street' shows that he shares the same experience of growing up in a suburban middle-class background with Damon Albarn.

6.2.2 British working class

The next section of this chapter discusses specific aspects of the British working class which has been covered in Britpop songs and albums reviews such as working conditions, positive and negative aspects of workers and employees as well as specific working class attributes. Blur's songs *'Yuko and Hiro'*, *'Best Days'* and *'Bank Holiday'* include a description of working class life such as being a factory worker or an employee of a company, working long hours from Monday to Saturday (day and night shifts), having Sundays and Bank holidays off:

We work for the company

That looks to the future

We work hard to please them

They will protect us.

[…]

From Monday to Saturday

I go to my workplace

But on Sunday

We're together.

(Yuko and Hiro, The Great Escape, 1995)

Bank holiday comes six times a year

Days of enjoyment to which everyone cheers!

Bank holiday comes with a six pack of beer

Then it's back to work - A! G! A-I-N!

(Bank Holiday, Parklife, 1994)

In addition to the dependencies of employees on their companies, negative aspects of working class life such as money problems, renting a flat rather than owning a house are covered in Blur, Pulp, Suede and Sleeper lyrics. In Blur's song *'Chemical World,'* a 'pay me girl' is in danger of being put on the street by her landlord after 'she didn't leave enough money to pay the rent' (1993). Pulp's song *'Common People'* highlights the financial difficulties of working class people. The student who wants to live like ordinary people is asked to pretend that she has no money (1995). The aspect of renting a flat rather than buying a house plays a significant role in Pulp's storylines. In *'Common People'* the girl is asked to 'rent a flat above a shop,' and the flat described in the lyrics seems to be in poor condition with cockroaches on the wall. The flat in *'F.E.E.L.I.N.G. C.A.L.L.E.D. L.O.V.E'* is similar and described as freezing:

'The room is cold and has been like this for several months. If I close me

eyes I can visualize everything in it right down to the

broken handle on the third drawer down on the dressing table.

And the world outside this room has also assumed a familiar shape, the same

Events stuffed in a slightly different order each day. Just like a modern

Shopping center. And it's so cold - yeah it's so cold.'

('F.E.E.L.I.N.G. C.A.L.L.E.D. L.O.V.E', Different Class, 1995)

Heating seems to be too expensive to afford; the furniture and linoleum are described as either old or broken and electronic devices such as the TV in Sleeper's song *'Vegas'* are 'on loan' (1995). If people don't live in flats with thin wall's where you can hear your neighbors like in Suede's *'The Wild Ones'* (1994), they live in houses that are 'very small with woodchip on the wall' like in Pulp's *'Disco 2000'* (1995). In addition to negative aspects of working class life, specific positive working class attributes such as being tough, being rough, getting on with things and living in the moment are covered in Britpop songs. Oasis' song *'Supersonic'* highlights the importance of being you and being self-confident:

'I need to be myself

I can't be anyone else

I'm feeling supersonic

Give me gin and tonic

You can have it all but how much do you want it?'

(Supersonic, Definitely Maybe, 1994)

Oasis' lyrics show a lot of the working class attributes in their subtext. People need to take responsibility for their lives: 'You're here on your own, who are you gonna find to blame?' (Bring It On Down, Definitely Maybe, 1994), 'There's no time for running away now' (Hey Now! What's the Story, 1995) and 'You gotta make it happen' (Alcohol & Cigarettes, Definitely Maybe, 1994).

The sense of working class pride, being rough and tough is very well captured in their song *'Roll with it'*: *'*You gotta say what you say. Don't let anybody get in your way' […] Don't ever stand aside. Don't ever be denied. You ought to be who you are. If you're coming with me' (1994). In addition to that Oasis songs show a positive attitude towards life 'Some might say. That sunshine follows thunder' […] 'Some might say. That we will find a brighter day' (1994) while Pulp's songs show the simplicity of life, fulfillment of basic needs such as eating and drinking:

'We can't help it; we're so thick we can't think,

Can't think of anything but shit, sleep and drink.

Oh, and we like women; "up the women," we say

And if we get lucky we might even meet one someday.'

(Joyriders, His 'n' Hers, 1994)

Paul Lester's review of Oasis' album *'Definitely Maybe'* discusses the working class attributes mentioned above (1994, p.37). About the album cover 'what you see is what you get' and about the album itself 'what you hear is what you get' (Lester, 1994, p.37). According to Lester, Oasis' song *'Rock'n'Roll Star'* is: 'a simple I-feel-fine celebration of youth, pleasure, escapism and total possibility with no hidden agenda' and *'Supersonic'* and *'Live Forever'* deliver a 'sense of soaring achievability' (ibid.). His statement that *'Definitely Maybe'* is 'What the World's Been Waiting for, a record full of songs to live to, made by a gang of reckless northern reprobates (yeah, we hack love a bit of rough) who you can easily dream of joining.' makes a local reference to Oasis social background and shows its relevance for the band's association with the working class (1994, p.37). In my interview with Paul Moody, he pointed out the existing class division between journalists from mainly middle-class backgrounds and musicians from mostly working-class backgrounds. In that context, Paul Lester's review can be read as a middle-class music reporter's appreciation of and affection for working-class authenticity.

6.3 The Britpop battle between Blur and Oasis in 1995 - Class division in Britpop and its related media discourse

The following analysis of the British media discourse of the 'British Heavyweight Championship' between Blur and Oasis discusses class division in Britpop as well as the relevance of class as a signifier of British identity in the 1990s. The concept of intertextuality is used to explain the relationship between the discourses of national identity and class. The data is based on a NEXIS search on the media coverage of the 'British Heavyweight Championship' on the 14th of August 1995 which became a defining Britpop moment.
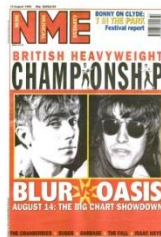

Fig 5 NME Magazine cover August 1995
(Source British Library)

The 'British Heavyweight Championship began with the so-called NME cover. Steve Sutherland, the former NME editor, recalls that the story 'began on 24 January 1995 when the NME held their Brat awards [its alternative to the Brits] at the Cockney theater, a little downstairs place on Tottenham Court Road' (2015). Blur won four Brat awards and Oasis won three Brat awards that night. Noel Gallagher has been quoted to have said that "Blur are a bunch of middle-class wankers trying to play hardball with working-class heroes." Given their success and their competitiveness, both bands decided to release their new singles on the same day, the 14th of August 1995, which became known as the 'Battle of Britpop' (Guardian 2015). Steve Sutherland recalls that:

> 'Within 24 hours it was all over News at Ten and all the broadsheets and tabloids had picked up on it. Everyone, from people driving white vans to university professors to girls at school, could talk about it: were you in the Blur camp or the Oasis camp? It was the middle of the summer, silly season, there wasn't much going on, and we managed to create a phenomenon.' (2015)

Steve Sutherland's comment on the cover illustrates the moment in time when both indie music and music journals became mainstream. The 'Britpop Battle' between Blur's single *'Country House'* and Oasis's single *'Roll with it'* became a national news story to which people from different classes and generations could relate. Blur's 'Country House' beat Oasis 'Roll with it' at the end but the Britpop Battle still marks the height of Britpop (Guardian 2015).

6.3.1 National and cultural references

The following section looks into how British newspapers picked up on the Britpop battle and how they created a national news story based on class division. It explores the concept of interdiscursivity by trying to understand how journalists linked the discourse of national identity with the discourse of class in their newspaper articles. I argue that the coverage of class division within the British media discourse clearly shows the importance of class as a signifier of national identity for British youth and their construction of British identity in the 1990s.

My analysis of the media coverage of the Britpop Battle is similar to Michael Billig's case study of British daily newspapers as presented in his chapter 'Flagging the homeland daily' in his book Banal Nationalism (1995) which allows a comparison between his analysis of deixis and my analysis of intertextuality. In contrast to his study, the date is not randomly selected but carefully picked as the release date of Blur and Oasis' new single. My findings are broadly similar to Billig's as they show, that 'newspapers are addressing their readers as members of the nation,' 'using 'deixis,' the continually pointing to the national homeland as the home of readers' (Billig, 1995, p.11).

The following newspaper extracts are excellent examples of this practice: 'The Evening Standard (London) article about the *'Battle of the Bands'* referred to it as the 'Great British Pop Scrap' which is based on the question 'who will conquer the hearts of the nation' (1995, p.13). The Sunday Mail (London) declared the issue which single will become number one as 'the question engaging the nation' (1995, p.32) while the Daily Mail titled *'Fans will decide who is Best of British'* (1995, p.12). In contrast to Billig's analysis which paid particular attention to sports pages which asked the readers to support the national cause, my findings show that the British media coverage of the Britpop battle is more complicated as it flags the British national unity while addressing class and regional division of the nation (1995).

The next extract from the Observer helps to illustrate how the national identity becomes linked to class identity: 'In true English fashion, the showdown is tinged with class warfare and the North/ South divide' (1995, p.2). The extract shows that class war and regional divide are considered important aspects of the English identity. It's interesting that the Observer referred to English rather than British identity as the majority of newspapers related to British rather than English when addressing national identity. In addition to the internal regional division, the newspapers clearly distinguish they're British from American identity as the following examples show. According to the Times:

> '…The best of British pop music'; 'always had a very distinct flavor despite the cultural might of the United States. The Beatles made much of their Liverpudlian roots just as their latter-day successors do today in London. Wry Beatles humor and almost self-deprecating modesty set the pattern for today's successful group.' (1995).

A combination of a regional reference to Liverpool and the cultural reference to the Beatles is used to distinguish British from American identity. In addition to that, the article references specific British characteristics such as humor and modesty. Furthermore, the article argues that 'Some of the best British pop lyric writing has adopted it's wistful, sometimes exasperated themes as an explicit reaction to the hyperbole and megalomania of American groups' referring to Ray Davies of the Kinks who's 'Waterloo Sunset gave a poignancy to an inner city area, seldom bettered by white lyricists across the Atlantic. The park life of Mile End celebrated by Blur today works within a tradition going back to the Lambeth Walk' (Times 1995).

The cultural reference which links the Kinks' *'Waterloo Sunset'* with Blur's *'Parklife'* is an excellent example of intertextuality, connecting the cultural heritage with the contemporary culture and Hall's discursive strategy of the narration of the nation and the invention of a tradition which creates the image of Britain being a great pop nation (Hall, 1996, p.615). The Times argues that because American pop music has taken over Britain, 'British bands have reinvented themselves' (1995). The Sunday Times which labeled Blur as 'the kings of British pop' which 'have become the nation's sweetheart' and 'our national band' illustrates this re-invention process in their review of Blur's album history:

> 'Leisure to Modern Life Is Rubbish: The reborn Blur wore suits and bovver boots, had fluffy mod haircuts and an unfashionable air of Britishness about them. […] Modern Life is every bit as good as Parklife but was ahead of its time: in 1993, it was grunge or nothing. Still, at least they had a sense of their identities, something they seemed unconcerned with the first time around'. (1995)

According to this article, Blur's dress and hairstyles make them 'unmistakable British.' In addition to that, the Sunday Times identify Blur's lyrical style as 'startlingly British' (The Sunday Times 1995). The end of the re-invention process is illustrated through an analysis of Blur's *'Parklife'* video:

> 'Narrated by the actor Phil Daniels Quadrophenia star and Mod icon featuring Blur in various British caricatures; it encapsulates everything we love about them and ourselves. […] The tune a hybrid of Chas & Dave, nursery rhymes, and football terrace chants and the primary colors video genuinely do make being British seem glamorous. […] (The Sunday Times 1995).

The re-invention process begins with an unfashionable air of Britishness and ends with Britishness being glamorous highlighting everything the British love about themselves. After looking at the Britpop Battle from a British media perspective, the next section briefly looks at it from an American media perspective to see how American newspapers addressed British identity in the context of Britpop music. The New York Times article 'Battle of the Bands: Old Turf, New Combatants' argues that:

> 'THE BRITISH MUSIC SCENE is, for the moment, convulsed with patriotic fervor. For the first time in more than a decade, young British guitar bands are penetrating the top 10 of the singles charts, brushing aside faceless Euro-dance acts and routing the American grunge invaders' (by-line Simon Reynold 1995, p. 38).

According to the New York Times, the 'duel between the two bands over whose single would enter the British charts at No. 1 made national news in England' because both bands share 'dedication to resurrecting the lost glory of quintessentially English pop'. Blur's album *The Great Escape'* including its 'third-person vignettes that caricature English stereotypes' is an

'homage to the English tradition of music-hall pop as exemplified by the Kinks, Ian Dury, and Madness, all of whom infused wry lyrics about everyday life with a tragicomic pathos' (1995, p.38). Similar to their British counterparts, the New York Times makes national references such as British and English. However, the majority of British newspapers referred mainly to Britishness rather than Englishness which is more inclusive while both terms seem to be interchangeable in American newspapers. The analysis shows a clear distinction between the use of deixis language in British and American newspapers. British newspaper uses words like we, us, ourselves while American newspapers use words like they, them, and themselves to address or refer to British people.

Both British and American newspapers make a similar use of intertextuality by using cultural references to pop bands as a cultural signifier for national identity. The New York Times makes use of cultural reference by mentioning 1960s bands like the Beatles, the Who and 1970s bands like Buzzcocks, Wire, and the Jam and associating them to times when 'Britannia ruled the airwaves' which highlights the past glory of British pop and suggest current success and dominance of American pop. Finally, the article suggests that 'Britpop's parochial reference points, might be more appeal to the British youth rather than the American youth as it's 'hard to export the sound to America, where grunge still rules' (by-line Simon Reynold 1995, p.38). The following questionnaire answers from British Britpop fans to the question about their personal experience and main memories of Britpop support that argument:

> 'What are your main memories of Britpop? That it was an exciting time when interesting music I could relate to came in from the margins and started getting lots of attention and mainstream success. It was good to have something closer to my life than prom queens and jocks and nerds etc. (which seemed to an obsession in US grunge/indie) in indie music or David Lynch Twin Peaks style cool which appears to be the dominant alternative thing in the earlier 90s.'

> (Robert, Male, 43, British/English, White, Lower Middle/Upper Working Class)

'I can recall watching the chart show on ITV every Saturday morning and often than not it was the usual stuff from America and mainstream pop. I remember seeing Common People for the first time and having to sit down and say "I need to get that song"!

(Llŷr, Male, 33, Welsh, White, Lower Middle Class)

Both Robert and Llŷr clearly distinguish British pop from American pop. Robert's argument that Britpop was exciting music he could relate to, which was closer to his personal life experience is a common argument which has been expressed by the majority of musician, journalists, and fans in my interviews. However, the following questionnaire comments from American Britpop fans on the question about their memories of Britpop counter the New York Times argument that Britpop wouldn't appeal to the American youth:

'I was a teenager in America during the Britpop phenomenon, mainly into classic rock, 90s American alternative (REM, Smashing Pumpkins, Soundgarden, etc.) and British Indie (Blur, Suede, etc.). My main memories of all of this exciting stuff happening in music across the ocean and that, in the pre-Internet days, it was very hard to follow. Every scrap of news I got was from copies of NME and Melody Maker that I could sometimes find on magazine stands, as well as whatever was in the various guitar magazines I was devouring at the time. Once I started college in 1997 and had access to the internet, it was easier to get news about the music scene, but of course, by then it was starting to die out. And I do remember Oasis getting big here in the mid-1990s, being played on the radio and MTV. I hated them, thought they were straight rip-offs of my beloved Beatles. I still believe that they ripped off a lot, but I enjoy a lot of their music now.'

(Drew, Male, 35, American, White, Middle class) → (Class distinctions are not nearly as prevalent here in the USA as they are in the UK)

'As an early teenager growing up in the Dallas, Texas area, I listened to 94.5, The Edge; this was a rock/alternative station that played contemporary music. I recall hearing Live Forever by Oasis and immediately being blown away by it. I also remember it being on the Top 5 at 9:00 p.m. countdown for approximately a month, which was voted on by listeners via telephone calls (not sure if this was late 1994 or early 1995). A friend and I would call each other every night to talk about the songs and we both loved the new Oasis tune. After this, I was more aware of British music, i.e.: Radiohead and Blur. Additionally, I began buying British music magazines (NME, Q) to keep up with the music, outrageous behavior, band fights, etc. My main memories are Oasis' slugging fests with Blur and Liam and Noel's hilarious quotes, behavior.'

(James, Male, 32, American, White, and Class: Not sure what you're referring to, but education wise, I have a Master of Science Degree)

Like British fans, both Drew and James clearly distinguish British indie from American alternative. However, in contrast to the newspaper's argument, both could relate to Britpop music. In comparison to British newspapers, American newspapers paid less attention to the class and regional division which will be discussed in more detail in the following part. In that context, it is interesting to highlight the responses of the American Britpop fans Drew and James to the question about their class belonging. The fact that James didn't know what I was referring to supports Drew's argument that class distinction is not as predominant in the US as they are in the UK.

6.3.2 Class, regional and cultural references

The Mail on Sunday's coverage of the Britpop Battle 'Blairing error' makes an explicit comment on deindustrialization and the decline of the heavy industries by directly addressing a speech given by Tony Blair to the British Photographic Industry:

'Music is not just about glitz and glamor, it's about the industry,' he spouted. […] He went on to praise the music industry, declaring it as important to the UK as the coal and steel industries. Uh oh. Excuse me, Tony, what coal and steel industries? Is the subtext here that when you are swept to power by the popular vote and your tooth-packed smile, you are going to close down the

music industry? Putting me and millions of people like me and millions of pop
stars out of a job? Oh dear, it's Tony Blair.' (1995, p.32)

In contrast to this comment on British de-industrialization, all other British newspapers focus more on the traditional representation of a very stereotypical class division between the working class and the middle class. The description of the class division is tightly associated with the geographical division as the extract from the Evening Standard's (London) coverage of the *'Battle of the Bands'* shows: 'In the blue corner stand Oasis, tough Mancunians with a healthy disregard for everything, in particular, Southern poofs. In the pinkish-red corner prance Blur, London's adopted finest, who have never heard of anything north of String fellow's' (1995, p.13). The class and regional references are directly linked to a cultural reference to the 1960s bands: 'There's been nothing like it since The Beatles, and The Rolling Stones fought out a bruising 12-round draw in the playgrounds of the Sixties, leaving many casualties' (Evening Standard 1995, p.13).

The combination of the class, geographical and cultural reference makes this event such a particular British news topic. Additional cultural references can be found in Peter Clark's review of Blur's *'Country House'* and Alison Robert's review of Oasis *'Roll with It'*, where Clark refers to *'Country House'* as 'a virtual rewrite of Sunny Afternoon' and Robert's declares Oasis' 'peculiarly Mancunian and very modern sound' as 'a direct descendant of the late Eighties indie scene ruled by the Stone Roses' (Evening Standard 1995, p.13). Geographical references are also included in the Daily Mirror article *'Oasis Lead Blur in Race for number one spot'* which looks at the local sales numbers: 'In Manchester, the band's hometown, their single *'Roll with it'* was outselling their Essex rivals by ten per cent. But in Birmingham and the Midlands, Blur's new single Country House was ahead. In London, both bands were neck and neck.' (1995, p.3).

Similar regional references can be found in the Independent which quotes Peter Howard, manager of Sifters records in Didsbury, Manchester, who said that *"Roll with it,"* the new offering by Mancunians Oasis, was "flying out" of the shop on its first day of release. 'Oasis are outselling Blur two-to-one and this single has done extremely well. They'll both enter the charts at One and Two but in which order I wouldn't like to say. Oh, all right then, Oasis at One. It might be a different story in the South' while at Time Records in Colchester, Essex, Blur's hometown, their *"Country House"* single is selling double the Oasis tally. *'It's*

going well for Blur here,' said the manager, Duane Taylor.' *'Roll with it'* is more instant but 'Country House' is more durable. I'm backing our boys to go to No 1' (Independent 1995, p.3).

Class and regional accents and dialects (Cockney and Mockney), as well as cultural references to class-related subcultures (Mods and Skinheads), played a significant role in Britpop's representation a class-conscious British identity. Given the fact that both the Mancunian dialect (Manchester, North of England) and the Cockney dialect (London, South of England) are associated with the working class, makes a simple regional division between the North representing the working class versus the South representing the middle class problematic. It shows, however, a strong focus on working class accents which become even more visible in Blur's attraction to the cockney accent, a strong working class accent from East London and Damon Albarn's attempt to fake this cockney accent, famously known as his Mockney accent.

Cockney means 'being born within the sound of 'Bow Bells,' the church bells of St Mary-le-Bow in London's East End. The cockney accent is famous for its rhyming slang, the failure to pronounce the letter H at the beginning of the words, the pronunciation of a soft 'th' in the middle of words as 'v' and the substitution of an 'f' sound for a hard 'th' (Collins 2012, p. 190). Collins' 'Quite Brilliant. A Celebration of British English' highlights another famous feature of the Cockney accent, the pattern of tagging on a question at the end of a statement, as if seeking approval or confirmation such as 'innit' as a short version of 'isn't it' (2012, p.190).

References to the Cockney accents in the music press can be found in Johnny Dee's review of Blur's *'Parklife'* (1994, p.40) and Paul Lester's review of Blur's '*The Great Escape'* (1995, p.33) which both mention the guest speaker roles of Phil Daniels in *'Parklife'* and MP Ken Livingstone in *'Ernold Same'*. In addition to that, Dee's review highlight's Albarn's 'accentuated Southern accent' which 'hadn't been heard since the likes of Anthony Newly were hip' (1994, p.40). References to the Mancunian accent can be found in David Stubbs review of Oasis's *'What's the story'* which labels Oasis as:

> '…A bunch of Mancunians whose inarticulacy was proof perfect that they had no need of contrivance or justification, that they were The Real Deal, instinctive authentic heirs who drank from the same north-western waters as the Roses, the Mondays, The La's the Fab Four before them' (1995, p.33).

Like the music press, the mainstream press includes references to class and regional accents and dialects. The Daily Mail article 'Fans will decide who is best of British' for example refers to Blur as *'Cockney champions'* (1995, p.12). The cultural reference of Blur as 'a carefully-crafted image of greasy caffs and greyhound racing have been mockingly dubbed the 'Chas-'n'-Dave' of pop by their northern rivals, whom they call 'Oasis Quo' in response' is used to reinforce Blur's Cockney image (1995, p.12). The Times article 'Blur from London or, if you prefer, a Manchester Oasis' follows the same logic:

> 'In conscious imitation of the contrived rivalry between the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, two British groups are simultaneously releasing major singles in a hitherto neglected market. The role of the Stones is taken by the Manchester based band, Oasis: this group takes its cue from a loud musical genre the traditional appeal of which would be instantly understood by cognoscenti such as Sir Thomas Beecham "The English don't understand music, but they love the noise it makes." In the Beatles' corner sits the equally successful band, Blur, hailing from East London and Essex, and adopting a demotic, lyrical style which is startlingly British' (The Times 1995).

The same applies to the Sunday Times which also links the class and regional aspects with accents and dialects as the following quote helps to illustrate:

> 'Putting the music itself aside, this means all-out class war in the charts. Oasis have painted as the roughneck Manchester louts, owners of fantastic rock 'n 'roll riffs, but little delicacy; Blur are the middle-class art school graduates, who, like all middle-class boys, want to seem more "street" than they are. In that sense, they are the ultimate children of Thatcher: a by-product of the 1980s is that it is possible to be 'downwardly" mobile as well as up. Some Essex boys went to work in the City. Some, like Blur, became cockney pop stars' (The Sunday Times 1995).

It is important to highlight that despite these references to the British class and regional division, the Sunday Times makes a reference to Britpop's appeal all across the UK by stating that: 'The songs were intoxicating and yearning, Under Milk Wood transported from rural Wales to London suburbia.' (1995). Like The Mail on Sunday, the Sunday Times article includes a comment on the social and economic changes in Britain since the 1980s under the

Thatcher government which had an impact of class structure and social mobility as suggested in the article. Social mobility will be discussed in more detail about Pulp's Common People, and they're take on class tourism.

The tradition of the British class and regional division is reinforced through cultural references. The Independent, for example, links the chart war between Blur and Oasis in the 1990s to the rivalry between The Beatles and The Rolling Stones in the 1960s highlighting that these bands each timed the release of their singles so that each of them could enjoy their number one single. The fact that the Independent and the Scottish Daily Record used Noel Gallagher's quote: 'Blur are a bunch of middle-class wankers trying to play hardball with a group of working-class heroes. There will be only one winner' which appeared in the NME highlights the mainstream appeal of the Britpop battle (Independent 1995).

Damon Albarn's quote about Oasis as being the 'Rolling Stones to Blur's poppy Beatles follows the same logic', however, it shows the difficulties of combining class and regional aspects and accents with cultural references: 'People are trying to compare it to The Beatles and the Stones, but it's not like that. Blur are Southern, where the Beatles were Northern. The Beatles always wanted to sound like the Stones, and that's what Oasis look like - the Beatles playing the Stones' songs. Despite these difficulties, it's important to highlight that the combination of class, regional and cultural references strengthens Britpop's sense of British identity.

After looking into how the British newspapers picked up on the Britpop battle and how they created a national news story based on class division, the next section looks into how Britpop fans perceived the media coverage of the Britpop battle. The following presented extracts are based on answers to the questionnaire question: Why do you think there was so much focus on the class and regional division in the media discourse on Britpop and Cool Britannia? All the extracts follow the same argumentation line as presented in the music journals and mainstream newspapers Blur, middle class, South versus Oasis, working class, North:

> 'Cos the papers/media are unimaginative, and it suited them to try that angle to
> sell papers, etc. It was too easy (northern tough nuts v southern softies) for them
> to ignore. I don't know how many people fell for it, though. The people I knew
> thought it was just daft. I always thought Cool Britannia was a naff joke. To me,

it was a Bonzo Dog Band song, and I was surprised anyone was taking it seriously.'

(Robert, Male, 43, British/English, White, Lower Middle/Upper Working Class)

'The main reason for this is most likely that the two most prominent bands - Oasis and Blur - were both from different classes. The media liked to create a faux rivalry between the gritty, northern, working class band and the well-off, art-school boys from Colchester. It essentially created a class division and by association geographical divides. Of course, this wasn't the real reason why the bands disliked each other, but it helped both bands sell more records and to a greater extent helped the leading papers and magazines sell more copies. There are also bands like Pulp that specifically deal with class as a subject in their lyrics Common People.'

(Daniel, Male, 19, British (Scottish), White, Middle Class)

'I think this argument tends to stem from the fact that the two most popular Britpop bands – Oasis and Blur – were almost complete opposites in many regards. Oasis were the northern working class band, while Blur was the southern middle-class band. The runaway success of both bands made differences stark and therefore prompted focus on such a divide.'

(Matthew, Male, 24, Scottish, Caucasian, Middle class)

'There was more to the UK than London...and the upper middle class. This was the modern Mersey beat and Oasis was the pinnacle. Oasis vs. Blur was a turning point for Britpop and also gave us the North/South/Working class/middle-class thing was lapped up by the media. Oasis were loved and abused by the media, making it cool to be working class or northern one week while also mocking them in the same breath. They didn't concentrate so much on Pulp...probably because Cocker as a frontman was too intelligent.'

(Llŷr, Male, 33, Welsh, White, Lower Middle Class)

While following the same argument of music journals and newspapers towards the class and regional divide, Robert, Daniel, Matthew and Llŷr's answers to my question clearly show their understanding of the economic effects of this made up 'Britpop battle' in the British media on selling both records and papers. The next part of the chapter will take a brief look at the relevance of class, regional and cultural references in American newspaper articles. Like their British counterparts, the American newspapers make a similar use of intertextuality by using cultural references to enforce their class and regional references as the next extract from a New York Times article shows:

> 'Blur-Oasis rivalry is often compared to that of the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, but in fact, those 60's Giants had a gentleman's agreement not to release singles at the same time. […] Underlying the bad blood is class and regional antagonisms. Blur is from the south of England and middle class, yet its members are infatuated with London proletarian lifestyles. Oasis, in contrast, is from the northern city of Manchester, and its members are the genuine working-class article' (New York Times 1995, p.38)

The difference between British and American newspapers is that American materials need to spell out the differences of pronunciation to their American readership: 'The singer's bogus Cockney accent, in which "cold sweat" is pronounced "cow swap," and his perpetual sneering tone become irritating after a while '(New York Times 1995, p.38). The New York Times combines class, regional and cultural references to represent British and English identity. However, the example of the need to explain the Cockney accent showed that there is a difference between British and American readership and their understanding of class-specific aspects of British identity and therefore a different style of covering it in the British and American media. Similar to the section on British Britpop fans, the following section takes a brief look at American fans and their perception of the Britpop battles and class division. The extracts are based on answers to the questionnaire question: Why do you think there was so much focus on the class and regional division in the media discourse on Britpop and Cool Britannia:

> 'Again, this is more a UK thing than a US thing so I can only speak as an outside observer (and lifelong Anglophile), but class distinctions have always been prevalent in the UK, and the North/South divide goes back a long time. Hell,

even the Beatles suffered from being thought of as "thick Northerners" until they finally made it big and were accepted in London and the south. I suppose it's the same way we here in America, especially those of us in the north (where I have lived my whole life) view the south as poor, backward, and uneducated. Except here there's still the ability and the VIEW that one has the ability to transcend wherever they've started. I don't think that's the case in the UK.'

(Drew, Male, 35, American, White, Middle class) → (Class distinctions are not nearly as prevalent here in the USA as they are in the UK)

As I stated in a previous answer, it seemed that the major bands of Britpop had fans that were somewhat forced into choosing their favorite band after the media started the Oasis/Blur war. The ethnocentric view of siding with the poor, working class lads of Oasis or the middle class, university blokes of Blur is quite common in choosing sides; many people align themselves with something that is similar to what we've experienced. Of course, other bands were relevant during Britpop, but in America, these were the bands that made the news.

(James, Male, 32, American, White, Class: Not sure what you're referring to, but education wise, I have a Master of Science Degree)

The examples show that American fans demonstrate that they follow the same argumentation regarding the class and regional divide of Britpop bands as presented in American newspapers. However, Drew's answer clearly indicates that the class and regional divide is not necessary for the American understanding of national identity in contrast to their British counterparts. James' response highlights his knowledge of the fact that British fans individual class and regional belonging, as well as the British media's coverage of class and regional aspects of the Britpop battle, had an impact on British fans choice of their favorite band.

Finally, it's important to highlight that both the British, as well as the American newspapers, mainly focused on the class and regional divide between Blur (middle class) and Oasis (working class). The class and regional identification were primarily based on the band particular class and region background and their use of class and regional accents and dialects. Therefore, Britpop's representation of class has been reduced to a very idealistic version of the class structure while Pulp's and Suede's more realistic coverage of class aspects received little

attention in the media discourse at the time. One could argue that Pulp's attention to negative aspects of class issues did not correspond with British people and their need for identification within a post-industrialised society.

In the context of Blur's famous Cockney or Mockney association, the question arises why it was so popular for the British youth to identify themselves with the working class in the 1990s. One of the reasons might be its close association with a strong sense of community. Given the social, political and economic changes in the 1990s which were caused by increased globalization, Europeanization and an increasingly multi-cultural British society which had been additionally challenged by the Scottish and Welsh devolution movements in the 1990s the working class with its strong sense of community might have appeared to be a very attractive form of identification for young people which were familiar with it through their socialization and its relevance in British youth and popular culture. It could be argued that Oasis' songs such as 'Roll with it' and 'Cigarettes and Alcohol' celebrated working class attributes such being tough and being proud. Lyrical messages like 'shut up moaning and get on with it' in *'Roll with it'* or 'You gotta make it happen' in *'Cigarettes and Alcohol'* seem to provide the soundtrack for the political change from Thatcher's conservatism to Tony Blair's New Labour in the 1990s (Scott, 2010, p.119).

6.4 Pulp's Common People 1995 - Class tourism in Britpop

After discussing the 'British Heavyweight Championship,' the following part of the chapter will discuss Pulp's *'Common People'* and the so-called phenomenon of 'class tourism.' Andy Bennetts's *'Village greens and terraced streets': Britpop and representations of 'Britishness'* suggests that the re-discovery of British themes and images in Britpop music with its strong sense of class and regional identity contributed to a 'magical recovery' of 'a particular version of Britain and Britishness' (Cohen, 1972; Hebdige, 1979; Bennett, 1997, p.31, p.22, p.27).

Bennett argued that Britpop videos such as Blur's *'Parklife'* and Pulp's *'Common People'* need to be interpreted as 'a romantic revival of the traditional British working class identity' which includes 'generalisations about British working class life which are difficult to substantiate in an age where class identities are becoming increasingly fragmented' (1997). According to him, the stereotypical working class neighborhoods and scenarios such as young boys playing football, courting couples, senior women hanging out washing work as a pastiche rather than a documentary of British working class life. Furthermore, he argues that the videos focus on the

assumption that the presented working class sensibilities continue to characterize British society despite social and economic changes related to de-industrialisation (1997).

According to Bennett, *'Parklife'* and *'Common People'* representation of an idealistic vision of the working class as an identifiable and coherent social group, helps to rescue and revive an aspect of British cultural life which is gradually disappearing. Parody and pastiche, rather than distracting from an 'objective' reality enhance the overall effect in that the appeal of the *'Common People'* video is precisely its perceived distance from reality and its harking back to the world where people were much surer of their class, regional and national identities. Bennett argues that it is 'very difficult to identify a coherent social group who correspond with Cocker's notion of the 'ordinary people' (ibid.).

'Common People's' usage of the same romantic devices in the context of the 1990s assumes an altogether more nostalgic air. The fanciful manner of the Greek student's wish to 'live like common people' and the working class lover's eventual realisation that she will never comprehend what it really means to be an ordinary person has an almost 'Billy Liar' ring to it, implying that people are actually trapped within their respective classes and can only dream about what life would be like if they could manage break free and become a 'different' person.

At the same time, however, *'Common People'* acts as a rallying call to those people who consider themselves to be working class (a category which might also include upwardly mobile working class students and professionals) to recognize their roots and 'sing along with the common people.' Blur's attraction to the Cockney accent, a strong working class accent from East London and Damon Albarn's attempt to fake this cockney accent, famously known as his Mockney accent is an excellent example of the general attraction of the British youth to the working class in the 1990s:

> 'The bitter irony of the Nineties was that now that the working class had ceased to exist as a political force, as a class in itself and for itself, everyone was for it. […] Everyone, not just posh Indie boy-band Parklife tourists Blur, wanted a 'sexy' downwardly mobile 'Mockney' accent…everyone, not just the rich art school students of Pulp lyrics, wanted to sleep with common people' (Simpson, 2004, pp.158-159)

Mark Simpsons quote addresses the so-called 'class tourism' in the 1990s whereby Blur's song *'Parklife'* can be considered as an example of 'class tourism' while Pulp's song *'Common People'* can be regarded as a critique of 'class tourism.' It could be argued that *'Parklife'* represents indeed a very idealistic version of British life through its image of the working class while 'Common People' accounts for a more realistic version of British life through its representation of working class.

'Parklife' is an excellent example intertextuality based on Blur's usage of cultural references. The fact that Phil Daniels who is known for his film role as London mod Jimmy Cooper in Quadrophenia is speaking the lyrics in a cockney accent can be interpreted as a reference to British subculture in general and Mod culture in particular. The mod subculture originated in London, England between the late 1950s and the early/mid-1960s. In addition to that, it could be argued that the reference to the film Quadrophenia might be a reference to the album Quadrophenia by The Who which has been named as one of the musical influences of Blur's album *'Modern Life is Rubbish.'* Album reviews such as Simon Price's review of Blur's *'Parklife'* include similar cultural references to Mod subculture for example: 'Blur, being mods, love London.' (1994, p.28).

Simon Price describes Blur's *'Parklife'* as follows: 'Blur have gone to the dogs […] Clock' em on the sleeve, sucking on probley Embassy No 6s, staring at floodlit greyhounds, clutching losing tickets. Inverted Class Envy "how the uvver arf lives" trip no 29194, here we come' (ibid.). His review of '*Girls' and Boys'* includes cultural references to Morrisey and The Rolling Stones which seem to underline a long tradition of such a 'class tourism' (ibid.). According to him Blur is like Morrisey 'a bourgeois indie softies who like a bit of rough' and The Rolling Stones' 'nice middle-class boys kidding the world they were East End yobs.' (Price, 1994, p.28). His comment 'Nice try, bless 'em, but they'll always be more Itchycoo Park than Upton Park' seems to reinforce Cocker's message from *'Common People'* that people are unable to change from one class to another (ibid.).

In that context, Johnny Cigarettes' review of Blur's *'The Great Escape'* critiques Damon Albarn's 'slightly restrictive third person lyrical approach; the obsession with mildly anachronistic sitcom caricatures; the cultural tourist attraction to a rubbish modern lifestyle that Damon doesn't always know well' (1995, p.4).

According to Simon Price Blur's album sounds like 'The Kinks in melancholy mode, "Alfie", Madness' dignified dying days, 'Til Death Us Do Part", The Small Face, "Absolute Beginners", The Jam (or, on "Tracy Jacks", the bloody Vapors), "Quadrophenia" (Phil Daniels even turns up on the Flowered-Upper Title track)…' (1994, p.28). The Small Faces and The Jam are bands which are closely associated with the mod subculture; the first one was an influential mod band of the 1960s and the second one was an important group for the mod revival in the late 1970s and early 1980s with Paul Weller, the singer famously known as the 'Modfather'. The close link between London and it's mod heritage is covered in Johnny Cigarettes' review of Blur's *'The Great Escape'* describes as 'a niche in British music, established permanently with a parochial identity stamp and rekindled love affair with London and its mod heritage that was *'Modern Life Is Rubbish' (*1995, p.4). The Kinks, The Small Faces, and Madness are all London based bands.

Paul Moody's review of Blur's *'Modern life is Rubbish'* describes *'Sunday Sunday'* as *'Grey Day'* era Madness with bad mood guitars, grouchy and sour' and makes cultural references to the English novel and movie Absolute Beginners (1993, p.31). The Colin MacInnes novel is based on a teenager who lives in a British working-class area in West London which became the home to a large group of Caribbean immigrants in the 1960s. The novel includes a detailed description of Mod life- and fashion style. References to this Mod fashion style can also be found in Simon Price album review:

> 'Blur, being mods, fetish style ueber alles, So, in fashion terms at least, they're one step ahead of the (NWONW/Adidas) game. See Damon on "TOTP" and "The World"? Having ditched 1979 seaside Rude Boy, he now exudes pure Summer-Of-'84 soccer casual: Ellesse tracksuits, Lacoste sweater, fawn cords slit at the ankle, sharpened golf umbrellas…all he needs is a girlfriend with highlights and a "CHOOSE LIFE" T-shirt. (1994, p.28).

While Johnny Cigarettes' album review makes references to skinhead culture:

> 'Spitting contrary attitude and prickly personality, pogoing in rolled up jeans, Fred Perrys, and V-neck jumpers, and biting back at the hand that had under-fed them, suddenly Blur were out on their own. It was the moment they began setting the scene instead of being shackled by it, the moment they began defining the zeitgeist.' (1995, p.4).

The qualitative analysis of Britpop album reviews showed that national identity in popular music could be constructed through intertextuality and young people's usage of cultural references. Besides the class relevance of these cultural references to Mod and Skinhead culture, it is important to highlight both subcultures primarily focus on white, male working-class boys who will be further discussed in the next chapter on ethnicity and gender.

The deliberate engagement of young Britpop artists, journalists and fans in the 1990s with their musical heritage of British pop music of the 1960s (The Kinks, The Beatles), 1970s (The Jam) and 1980s (The Smiths) can be considered a strong example of such an active, overt 'flagging of the nation' in everyday life which shows how different generations, as well as cultural heritage and contemporary culture, are linked through intertextuality to each other within the discourse of national identity which helped to reinforce the image of Britain being a great pop nation. Britain's image as a great pop nation provides an important alternative form of identification for young people to the traditional image of Britain associated with monarchy, parliament, and empire.

I argue that *'Common People'* is an excellent example of Pulp's coverage of intra-class relationships. The song tells the story of an art student with a working class background who meets a wealthy international student who wants to experience the ordinary life of common people. The story is based on a real-life experience of Jarvis Cocker who grew up in a working-class neighborhood in Sheffield in the North of England and studied at Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design in London where he met the Greek student who wanted 'to live like common people.' The critique towards 'class tourism' and middle-class individuals who pretend to be working class becomes visible in the lyrics:

'Rent a flat above a shop

Cut your hair and get a job

Smoke some fags and play some pool

Pretend you never went to school

But still you never get it right

'Cos when you're lying in your bed at night

Watching roaches would climb the wall if you called your dad he could stop it all.'

You'll never live like common people

You'll never do whatever common people do

Never fail like common people

You'll never watch your life slide out of way

And then dance and drink and screw

Because there is nothing else to do.'

(Common People, Different Class, 1995)

The lyrics suggest still existing highly relevant class structures in the United Kingdom which seem to be impossible to overcome. The line 'Cos everybody hates a tourist especially one who thinks it's all such a laugh' presents a clear statement on this kind of 'class tourism.' Andy Bennett's interpretation of the song as 'a romantic revival of the traditional British working class identity' needs to be contested as the song clearly deconstructs such idealistic images of the working class by presenting more realistic pictures of the working class (1997, p.27). The song comments on money problems, missing perspectives, failure and the meaningless of living of working class people. In that context, Simon Reynold's makes an interesting point in his review of Pulp's album *'Different Class'*:

> 'FORGET about Blur vs. Oasis: the real battle for the "soul" of Britpop is Blur vs. Pulp. The difference between Damon Albarn and Jarvis Cocker is as profound as the gulf between Martin Amis and Irvine Welsh. On one side of the divide, you'll find surface-deep verbal flash masking a smug and paltry sense of satire; wherein two-dimensional stereotypes are set as Aunt Sally, mere butts for the omniscient author's superior wit. On the other side: a fluent feel for colloquial language, in tandem with a deep, luminous compassion, the kind of condescension-free empathy that only comes when you've lived and breathed the same (extra)ordinary life as the characters, are intimate with its cruel ironies and impasses.' (1995, p.37).

Once again it needs to be highlighted that the class identification of Britpop musicians works through their actual social background. According to Reynold's, the difference between Albarn and Cocker:

> 'runs a little deeper than the merely stylistic (Albarn's preponderance of third-person vignettes vs. Cocker's preference for the first-person confession mode). It pivots around the question of social background. From the vantage point of privilege, the British class system and its attendant grotesquery are merely afforded frightful amusement. But if you're writing from somewhere closer to the bottom of the heap, the stakes are that much higher, the reality of wasted potential and distorted lives all too raw and persona.' (1995, p.37).

Pulp's critique of class tourism goes beyond a critique of middle-class people who like to pretend to be working-class. It seems to reinforce the existence of class boundaries by suggesting that it is impossible for people to change their class belonging. Given the fact that the traditional class division between middle-class and working-class went through a lot of change in the 1990s to the extent that some social scientists like Pakulski and Waters even suggested a complete decline of the working-class it is interesting that Pulp's social critique of class tourism seems to re-emphasizes the importance of class as a form of social identification within the British society.

The particular attraction with the working-class could be explained through its strong sense of community which obviously has been very attractive for a lot of young people given the social and economic changes of the British society in the 1990s. Working-class attributes such as being strong and get on with things have been considered as essential characteristics which are helpful to deal with these social and economic challenges in the increasingly transformed post-industrial British society in the 1990s. The gap between the importance of class structure in Pulp's lyrics and the importance of class structure real life in the 1990s makes Britpop's anthem-like song 'Common People' such a relevant social and political commentary on British identity. Despite Pulp's critique of class tourism, their song *'I Spy'* could be interpreted as ' class tourism' from working to the middle class:

I'm still stuck here oh but I'll get out.

Oh yeah, I'll get out.

Can't you see the giant that walks around you seeing through your petty lives?

Do you think I do these things for real?

I do these things so that I survive.

And you know I will survive.

It may look to the untrained eye; I'm sitting on my arse all day.

I'm biding time until I take you all on.

My Lords and Ladies,

I will prevail,

I cannot fail. […]

You see you should take me seriously.

Very seriously indeed.

Cause I've been sleeping with your wife for the past sixteen weeks,

Smoking your cigarettes,

drinking your brandy,

messing up the bed that you chose together.

And in all that time I just wanted you to come home unexpectedly one afternoon

and catch us at it in the front room.

You see I spy for a living,

and I specialize in revenge,

on taking the things I know will cause you pain. […]

And every night I hatch my plan,

it's not a case of woman v man.

It's more a case of haves against haven't.

And I just happen to have got what you need,

just exactly what you need yeah. […]

I will take you from this sickness,

dinner parties, and champagne; I'll hold your body and make it sing again.[…]

(I Spy, Different Class, 1995)

Simon Reynold's review of Pulp's song *'I Spy'* could be interpreted that way: 'Cocker casts himself as a sort of sex bandit who "specializes in revenge," and whose reprisal for childhood slights takes the form of f*** his way up the class ladder' (1995, p.37). Cocker's fantasies about sleeping with a rich man's wife, smoking his cigarettes and drinking his alcohol or as Reynold's describes it 'f*** his way up the class ladder' could be interpreted as 'class tourism'

from working to middle-class (ibid.). According to Reynold's, Pulp's album *'Different Class'* is about 'social antagonism,' *'Miss-Shapes'* can be described as 'a power-to-the-people anthem' while *'Common People'* is:

> 'more potent because its populist sentiments are anchored in a particular, one-on-one instance of class combat. It's personal: the songs starts with the humiliation of being patronized and takes revenge with gloating glee. The title itself is jarring, a reminder: I'd forgotten the word "common" could even be used in that snobbish sense, outside Alan Bennett plays like "A Chip in The Sugar"' (1995, p.37).

Reynold's reads Pulp's *'Common People'* as 'a subtle jibe' at 'Pulp's peer-group(s) who've made 1995 the Year of Fake Prole Accent' (ibid.). He mentions Blur who according to him: 'look to London prole life as a sort of lost white ethnicity (if Sixties rock was about the white negro, Nineties Britpop is about the posh hooligan)' while Pulp 'slumming toff envies the vibrant vulgarity of the working class, who live in the present tense because the bourgeois virtues of accumulation, investment and deferment just don't work for them' (ibid.). According to his review:

> 'Cocker doesn't hide the real motor behind the vitality of prole life and leisure: desperation', he 'is Irvine Welsh's "A Smart C***": too clever not to see through the sordid safety valves and inverted snobberies that hold the working class together in dismal contentment with their lot, yet perversely loyal his social and regional roots.' (Reynold, 1995, p.37).

These album reviews in the media show the wider importance of class tourism beyond the lyrical discourse in Britpop. After looking into aspects of class tourism and working-class and middle-class attraction in Britpop songs and album reviews, the next section looks into how Britpop fans perceived these issues. The following presented extracts are based on answers to the questionnaire question: Why do you think the working-class played such a predominant role in the Britpop context (music and media):

I'm not sure that it did. If there was a 'working class element,' it was pure to appeal to those who came from industrial areas which were now staying on for full-time education. In short, it was just another means to increase sales. A lot of 'Britpop' songs, being probably descended from the rave/indie/shoegazing period, were more likely to have dreamy, indistinct lyrics. They did not have the social commentary of Ray Davies or Paul Weller, nor the street-level, down at the nightclub songs of e.g. the Kaiser Chiefs, Arctic Monkeys or Mike Skinner in the 2000s, and many others since, of all ethnicities and musical genres.

The Further and Higher Education Act 1992 had allowed thirty-five polytechnic colleges to upgrade to universities. It marked a general increase in further education, in contrast to previous times when young people had more commonly entered employment after secondary school. The enactment of the Act coincided with the emergence of 'Britpop,' or maybe 'Britpop' coincided with the rise of the Act? Either way, I think the two were in tandem, and more 'working class' people were attending further education. The two-year sixth form cycle, or three-year university cycle, coincided with the 'Britpop period.' When these students left education to make their way in the wider world, they left indie music behind. Starbucks and Stereophonics were the sustenance of the computer, in the way that Stella and Shed Seven were the sustenance of the student.

(Anthony, Male, 45, English, White, Upper Working/Lower Middle)

The class has become difficult to define, and it seemed everyone who was not from London and went to a comprehensive school viewed themselves as working class and bands like Oasis was a voice...it filled the vacuum left after Punk. Grunge had been there, but it appealed more to pissed off depressed kids rather than angry kids who were bored in their rooms…which made Oasis more appealing than Nirvana and sounded English.

It was perceived as the sound of the working class. The songs like Cigarettes and Alcohol and Common People were excellent songs, but the media saw this as the catalyst to call it us v them music.

(Llŷr, Male, 33, Welsh, White, Lower Middle Class)

'One of the reasons could be that many of the working classes were poorly educated during the eighties and had no other options apart from music. A part of this also could be related to the downfall of Thatcher and the slow decline of the Tory party in the early nineties. Everything seemed to lead up to the council elections in 1995 and then the general election in 1997. The labor party was growing steadily stronger, and so was the working class voice. The change was imminent, and it just so happened that it took place during this period. If Labour had been in government during the eighties, would Britpop have occurred in the way we know it now? I don't know.'

(Daniel, Male, 19, British (Scottish), White, Middle Class)

Again, I think this is mainly down to the fact that the most popular Britpop band was Oasis who were distinctly working class. In fact, I think Britpop was a movement started off by southern middle-class acts which were hijacked by Oasis. When thinking about it, Oasis were the only working class Britpop band, and due to their popularity, the working class was bound to play a predominant role. In a sense, Oasis epitomized the aspirations of the working class in the 1990s, as opposed to working class bands from the 1980s such as The Smiths who didn't focus on idealism but rather grim realism. With the prevailing opinion that the dark days of unemployment, recession and Conservative rule were coming to an end in the north of England, Oasis soundtracked that belief from northerners that better days lay ahead with Tony Blair and New Labour, in addition to prosperous economic growth.

(Matthew, Male, 24, Scottish, Caucasian, Middle class)

'I think a huge part of it was class tourism and the romantic idea of "slumming it" that the upper classes have always nurtured. It's a reflexive thing about the political left, here and in the UK as well, that it's an embarrassment to be rich

and successful and that it's "cool" and almost noble to be poor. Jarvis Cocker skewered this perfectly in "Common People." Remember, in that song the girl who is slumming it by dating him can always go back home to daddy's money, but he'll still be poor and hopeless when she does. The UK media jumped on this bandwagon in a big way when they started championing Oasis and made it more about their roots than their music (remember, initial reviews of What's the Story (Morning Glory) savaged the album until they began applying revisionist history.'

(Drew, Male, 35, American, White, Middle class) → (Class distinctions are not nearly as prevalent here in the USA as they are in the UK)

'The economic state of England was quite poor at the time that Britpop had its 90s resurgence. This gave people hope, and the majority of music/lyrics of Britpop was uplifting, unlike the Grunge phase that had been popular. This resurgence of music also coincided with the rise of The Labour Party, who was primed to take over control of the government from the Conservative Party after what many people believed further divided the lower class from the elite and upper classes.'

(James, Male, 32, American, White, Class: Not sure what you're referring to, but education wise, I have a Master of Science D

It is important to highlight that the first three extracts include references to the relation of class identity with education while the other answers draw connection to the political context of the 1980s Thatcher and 1990s Blair while none of the interviewees made a reference to John Major who was actually Prime Minister at the high period of Britpop and Cool Britannia. Llŷr and James comments highlight the strong working class identity with its positive attitude towards life despite difficult circumstances which are closely associated with Britpop's positive and uplifting sound which stands in clear contrast to Grunge negative and depressing music which has been highlighted in several of my interviews with musicians, journalists, and fans.

Britpop's representation of British identity in lyrics and sounds needs to be interpreted as a resistance to the dominance of American popular culture in general and American popular music in particular in the 1990s. In that context, the concept of 'double articulation' is interesting as Britpop bands celebrated British cultural identity and revolted against American

cultural identity. Albarn's previously discussed attempt to create a nostalgic sound with contemporary lyrics is an excellent example of Britpop's challenge to maintain identification with their parent culture through musical referencing on the one hand and to express autonomy from the parent culture through a lyrical critique on the contrary. Britpop's celebration of British identity needs to be understood as a reaction of the youth to the social and economic changes of the British Society in the 1990s (Hall and Jefferson, 1977, pp.17-25; Bennett, 1999, p.600).

6.5 Conclusion

The results show that that Britain continued to be a class-conscious society despite social and economic changes in the post-industrial British society of the 1990s and that class continued to be a primary signifier of national identity for young British people and their construction of national identity in the 1990s. Despite young people's lack of class- related working life experience, they have a strong sense of class identity which is primarily expressed through class related accents and cultural references to class-related subcultures which played a significant role in the construction and reproduction of a class-conscious British identity.

British class is very well covered in Britpop, and it's related media discourse which provides an extraordinary inside view into young people's perception of class division as well as class tourism. Britpop's coverage of Intra- and inter-class relations shows the continuing importance of the traditional division between middle class and working class for the representation of British identity while its coverage of class tourism reflects on contemporary changes of a class structure such as an increased class fragmentation in the 1990s.

My analysis of the British media discourse of the 'British Heavyweight Championship' between Blur (middle-class) and Oasis (working-class) addressed Skey's criticism of Billig's lack of complexity and dynamism of his concept of *'Banal Nationalism'* regarding his assumption of an national audience and a national press (Skey 2009, p.335; Billig, 1995). My analysis shows how the representation of national identity in popular music has been discussed within related media discourses (both music and mainstream press) and how this media coverage has been experienced by musicians, journalists, and fans. In contrast to Billig's study of British daily newspapers which focused on the way nations are addressed through 'deixis,' my study of the British media coverage of the 'British Heavyweight Championship' looked at the way national identity is represented and how the audience is addressed through intertextuality.

In contrast to Billig's research which focused on mainstream media, my research looks at both music press (NME, Melody Maker) and mainstream press (Guardian, Times). While acknowledging the important role of deictic language, the direct addressing of nations through little words like 'we' and 'us', my research drew attention to the way the nation and its fellow members are addressed through direct and indirect cultural references which I consider to be even more powerful to distinguish between fellow members versus non-members of a nation. The analysis of British and American media coverage as well as British and American fan perception of the British Heavyweight Championship showed the different use of cultural reference by journalists and well as the perception of it by fans.

7. Britpop –An assertion of white, male, heterosexual Englishness? - Empirical Chapter on ethnicity and gender

7.1 Introduction

My third empirical chapter focusses on young people's perception of aspects of ethnicity and gender in British society. It uses the concept of interdiscursivity to explore the complicated relationship between the discourses of national identity, ethnicity, and gender in Britpop and its related media and academic discourses. Given the complexity of British society with 'a population 60 million individuals, four 'national' groups, first, second and third generation migrant 'communities', distinct regional and class identities' (Skey, 2009, p.337), the question arises what kind of role social, political and economic post-war changes related to immigration and feminism play within the British society in the 1990s.

Given the complexity of British society, I argue that the idea of a single homogeneous British identity needs to be contested. Although ethnicity and gender have been addressed within academic research on Britpop, previous academic criticism has not specifically addressed the complexity and ambiguity of these concepts. So far, there has been no discussion about the difficult relationship between national identity, race and ethnicity and insufficient attention has been paid to the complexity and ambiguity of gender roles and stereotypes related to masculinity and femininity regarding Britpop's close association with lad culture. My empirical research is designed to remedy that weakness by taking a closer look at the relationship between national identity, race, ethnicity, gender roles, and stereotypes.

Taking issue with the dominant academic critique of Britpop as a representation of 'white, male, heterosexual Englishness (Bennett and Stratton, 2010, p.6; Percival, 2010; Hawkins, 2010; Whiteley, 2010) the first part of this chapter discusses to what extent Britpop's focus on white ethnicity can be considered an 'assertion of white Englishness' and a denial of non-white ethnic, national identity or given the majority and minority relationship between the white and non-white British population in the 1990s whether it could be considered as a fair representation of the majority of British people who were predominantly white and English at the time. It explores to what extent national discourses produce or reproduce unequal power relations between ethnic majorities and minorities (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, p.258). It looks at the majority and minority relationship between white and non-white British people by discussing Asian and Black British minority groups in the context of post-war migration.

The second part of this chapter focuses on the under-researched area of gender roles and stereotypes of masculinity and femininity and their relevance for the representation of national identity, and discusses to what extent Britpop's association with lad culture can be considered as an 'assertion of male Englishness.' It explores to what extent national discourses produce or reproduce unequal power relations between women and men (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, p. 258). It looks at the relationship between women and men by discussing masculinity and femininity the context of post-war feminism.

Similar to previous chapters, it draws on qualitative textual analysis of Britpop lyrics, album reviews, and mainstream media coverage as well as data collected from qualitative interviews and surveys with musicians, PR agents, journalists and fans. It analyses the representation of ethnicity and gender in lyrics, album reviews, and mainstream media coverage as well as young people's perception of it. The empirical data from qualitative interviews and surveys with musicians, PR agents, journalists and fans is based on the following question:

- What do you think of the critique that Britpop was too much focused on whiteness, masculinity, and heterosexuality?

The results of the qualitative analysis of Britpop and its related media discourse as well as the analysis of the interviews and surveys with musicians, journalists and fans supports my argument that Britpop's representation of national identity was more complex and ambiguous than previously suggested by academia and that it cannot be considered as an 'assertion of white, male, heterosexual Englishness' (Bennett and Stratton, 2010, p.6; Percival, 2010; Hawkins, 2010; Whiteley, 2010).

7.2 Ethnicity in Britpop, **media discourse and interviews with musicians, journalist, and fans**

Given the academic critique regarding Britpop's nostalgic representation of England and Britain as 'ethnically white and set in an imagined past', this chapter raises the question; whether the focus on the white majority of the population can be actually interpreted as an ignorance of social, political and economic changes of the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural British society in the 1990s as suggested by the academic literature:

> 'Little reference is paid to the ravages of de-industrialization and unemployment or the social unrest created by racism and inequality. Both musically and culturally, it was claimed, Britpop seemed content to airbrush out of existence significant eras of social and political change in Britain and England (Bennett and Stratton, 2010, p.2).

In contrast to current research, I argue that Britpop's nostalgic style of representation of British identity works as an aesthetic device to critique the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural British society in the 1990s. Echobelly's songs include a social analysis of racism and xenophobia in the British multi-cultural society of the 1990s and discuss the question of what defines national belonging; ethnicity and culture or race and skin color. My understanding of national identity as a 'collective cultural phenomenon' (Smith, 1991, vii) and culture as 'a description of a particular way of life' (Williams, 1961, Storey 2009) clearly answers that question in favour of ethnicity and culture while mainstream academia still seems to be focused on race and skin colour.

The academic critique of Britpop being only a representation of 'white Englishness' blurs the distinction between race, ethnicity and national identity and completely ignores the fact that Blur is the only band with exclusive English members while all Oasis band members and Suede's guitarist Bernard Butler are 2nd generations Irish, Pulp's keyboardist Candida Doyle is Northern Irish, Elastica's guitarist Donna Matthews is Welsh and Echobelly, as well as Sleeper, included Asian and Black British band members such as Sonya Madan, Debbie Smith and Diid Osman (Campbell, 2006). Even though a 2/3 majority of Britpop band members analyzed in this study are indeed white English, academic research ignores the 1/3 minority of non-white and non-English Britpop musicians. The fact that Britpop bands included Irish, Welsh, and

Asian and Black British members make the scholarly critique of Britpop being only a representation of white Englishness too simplistic and therefore problematic.

According to Rupa Huq's, a majority of white ethnicities is not a particular characteristic of British Pop and Rock music and can be found in other musical types such as the American grunge music as well (2006, pp.135-155). John Harris, the former music journalist of the NME, confronted with the academic critique that Britpop is an 'assertion of white, male Englishness' responded:

> 'Well, I think rock music is. You know, I always think that Britpop was treated very unfairly in that respect. […] Punk rock was completely white dominated; Indie rock was completely white dominated, white people dominated Mersey beat. Rock music for better or worse draws hugely on black music, but it's one of the sorts of iron rules of popular culture that there are not many black or non-white people involved. That's just the way the world is you know I don't think it renders, it's sinister, or there is anything racist about rock music because of that there can be, but I don't think it's axiomatic at all. […] It's one of the unfortunate ways of the world that genres very often fall along racial lines. […] I don't think Britpop is any guiltier of being white, male-dominated than most of the genres of rock music have ever been.'

Based on the results of the 1991 and 2001 Census data regarding ethnic majority and minority relations in the UK, Britpop's 2/3 majority of white English and the 1/3 minority of non-white and non-English band members could be interpreted as a relatively accurate representation of the British population (Census 1991 and Census 2001). Musicians both white and non-white reflect upon their personal experience of growing up in their lyrics.

Britpop musicians with a white ethnic background is mainly based their lyric's on their personal daily life experience of growing up in the British suburbs as discussed in the empirical chapter on British Lifestyle and Suburbia. Given the fact that ethnic minority groups are clustered in certain diverse urban areas with a majority of them living in London it's not surprising that Britpop musicians with a white ethnic background don't comment on ethnic minority groups as it was not part of their daily life experience.

I don't think it has been a deliberate choice to ignore these aspects in their lyrics to re-enforce the British image of a predominantly white society as previously suggested by academia or within the media: 'Blur looks to London prove life as a sort of lost white ethnicity' (Reynold, 1995, p.37). I think it's showing how the personal experience of growing up impacts one's social cultural experience of national identity. In contrast to the class which was extensively covered in the British media discourse of Britpop, ethnicity has received little attention in both music journals like the NME and MM, and the newspapers like the Times and the Guardian. The next section will look into Britpop lyrics and their coverage of non-white ethnicity.

Echobelly is an interesting exception to the representation of the white ethnic majority due to its two non-white band members: Anglo-Indian singer Sonya Madan and its black British guitarist Debbie Smith. The fact that Echobelly's multi-cultural background didn't impact their association with Britpop needs to be interpreted positively. The Britpop scene was not exclusively white and open to non-white people even though white, male bands might have dominated the British media coverage (Raphael, 1995, p.35; Whiteley, 2010, p.66). Different aspects of the British multi-cultural society have been excellently covered in Echobelly's songs *'Today Tomorrow Sometime Never,' 'Call me name,' 'Father Ruler King Computer,' 'Give Her a Gun,' Scream'* and *'Something Hot in a Cold Country.'* Echobelly's lyrics in *'Today Tomorrow Sometime Never'* and *'Call Me Names'* include interesting comments on racial issues such as racism and xenophobia within British society in the 1990s:

'Somewhere looking for shelter, I still can't find myself,

I am alone,

Aware is it my color or culture, who can tell,

Should we be hated for ourselves?

Where should we go?'

(Today Tomorrow Sometime Never, Everyone's got one, 1994)

I argue that the song refers to the question of belonging and the feeling of exclusion that young people with an ethnic minority background are facing in a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society such as the United Kingdom. The lyrics 'is it my color or culture' refer to the very essential question of what defines belonging to a nation, race represented by skin color versus

ethnicity represented by culture. The concept of interdiscursivity becomes visible in these lyrics and shows how the discourse of national identity is intertwined with the discussion of race and ethnicity. The hope that the belonging depends on ethnicity and culture as well as the fear and resignation that it might rely on the race and skin color becomes even more visible in Echobelly's lyrics of *'Call Me Names'*:

'I say I've meant to move your way,

I hope that no one will make fun of me,

I go and live in a new society; I wanna live in it, live in it,

Wanna learns, wanna live and live wanna learn,

Wanna live in it, live in it; oh I'm ready to learn.

I don't know, is it the same for everyone,

Maybe that I've done something wrong,

Why do they call me names?

Outside, will you come out and play with me,

I've been scrubbing at my skin you see,

But the color remains on me,

I wanna be the same, be the same,

Wanna be, wanna be the same as you,

Wanna be the same, be the same,

Oh, I'm ready to go.

(Call Me Names, Everyone's got one, 1994)

The lyrics show an impressive willingness to belong to the British society by re-emphasizing the will to live in it. The hope that belonging to the national society is possible based on the willingness to belong becomes visible through the self-directed question if the character of the song did something wrong. It could be argued that the question 'Why do they call me names' which is directly addressing the problem of racism is meant to be rhetorical as the answer is given in the following lines referring to skin and color. The lyrics are a very personal reflection of the singer's experience as a non-white young person with an immigration background growing up in a multi-ethnic British society in the 1990s.

Madan's critique towards racial issues in the British society becomes evident in the band's video 'Insomniac' where she wears a Union Jack T-Shirt with the words 'My Country Too' (Whiteley, 2010, p.67). The extract from an interview with Sonya Madan reflects on the feeling of exclusion and her reaction to it:

> 'Every child rebels in their way and my form of rebelliousness…it's really difficult to explain. When you come here from another country, you're made a second class. As a child you can end up blaming your parents for your skin color, taking out all the aggression you receive at school on them, which is cruel, really sad because your parents haven't done anything wrong. My way of rebelling was refusing to speak the Hindi language so that I wouldn't learn anything except the most basic words.' (Raphael, 1995, pp.36-37)

'Father Ruler King Computer' and *'Give her a gun'* combines Echobelly's interest in a race with gender-related issues within the British multi-cultural society in the 1990s. The songs provide a fascinating inside view of the 'patriarchal assumptions surrounding marriage,' gender roles, arranged or even forced marriage and honour-based brutality. The concept of interdiscursivity becomes visible and shows how the discourse of national identity is intertwined with the discussion of race, ethnicity, and gender. The lyrics in *'Father Ruler King Computer'* comment on the difficulties young women with an ethnic minority background are facing growing up in a multi-national society like the United Kingdom. The clash between traditional and modern gender roles becomes clearer in the following lyrics:

'I was brought up, I've been told,

That a husband is the goal,

What connotations in these loaded words?

A spinster and a bachelor,

I am whole all by myself,

I don't need anybody else.'

(Father Ruler King Computer, Everyone's got one, 1994)

The traditional perception that a woman's identity depends on marriage to a man is in clear contrast with the modern perception of woman as an independent individual. The image of the strong, self-reliant woman plays a significant role in Echobelly lyrics as well as in the other two female-led bands Sleeper and Elastica. Echobelly's coverage of gender-related stereotypes in the context of the British society in the 1990s add' an exciting multi-cultural perspective to the general coverage of gender-related stereotypes within Elastica's and Sleeper's lyrics which will be discussed in the following part of the chapter within the context of feminism.

Like all female-led Britpop bands, Echobelly's lyrics represent women as strong individuals who can think for themselves and make independent decisions while men are presented in a very negative way. In *'Father Ruler King Computer'* the father is considered to think and make decisions for his daughter by trying to arrange a marriage for her. In contrast to Sleeper and Elastica, Echobelly' is not using a highly sexualised language to deconstruct gender-related stereotypes. The song *'Give her a gun'* comments on the long history of oppression towards women and the second-class image of women:

'Let the fear dislocate,

Let me frown upon the female aggressor,

Makes no sense, goes against the gender,

Let her anger curse the years of oppression,

Blame the mother, sell the sister,

Before she blows you away.'

(Give her a gun, Everyone's got one, 1994)

The image of a female aggressor seems to make no sense as it does not fit the gender stereotype. The first part is a critique of general gender stereotypes while the second part is an analysis of gender-related violence within a migration background. I argue that Britpop's representation of ethnicity is more diverse than previously suggested in academia which ignores non-white (Asian and Black British) and non-English (Irish and Welsh) Britpop musicians. Echobelly's songs such as 'Today Tomorrow Sometimes Never' and 'Call me names' present an important social critique of racism and xenophobia in the British multi-cultural society of the 1990s.

The question of what defines national belonging: skin color and race or culture and ethnicity are clearly answered in favor of culture and ethnicity. Echobelly's cultural references to The Smiths and Morrissey as one of their lyrical and musical influences shows the high potential of culture to include young people with a minority background in the British society. Echobelly's cultural reference to The Smiths is a great example of intertextuality as it links Madan's music to Morrisey's music. Socialisation plays a significant role in that context as Madan's access to pop culture during her childhood was limited to the John Peel show on Radio1 and Top of the Pops before she went to college where she met people with record collections, guys who were into The Clash and The Who and introduced her to so-called 'cock rock' (Raphael, 1995, pp.38-39).

The interview analysis with musicians, journalist and fans showed that it played a significant role for all people involved in Britpop that they all shared a similar cultural socialization and therefore shared the same cultural references all across the United Kingdom. Regarding Britpop's representation of Englishness rather than Britishness; Irish and Welsh identities, the following selections of some of my interviews with fans shows an interesting inside view into fans' perception of these issues:

> 'I think that the music could appeal to young people anywhere in the UK and Ireland. As Morrissey would say, there is no real difference between people in Carlisle, Dublin, Dundee or Humberside as compared to Manchester or London.'
> (Anthony, Male, White, UWC/LMC, 45 years old)

It is fascinating to highlight how Britpop fans follow the same pattern of Intertextuality and use of cultural referencing as musicians and journalists by connecting Britpop with its British cultural heritage. Anthony's reference to The Smith's song *'Panic'* is particularly interesting as it indirectly makes a reference to its song lyrics 'Burn down the disco, Hang the blessed DJ. Because the music that they constantly play, it says nothing to me about my life.' which could be interpreted as a reference to the common feeling among young British people in the 1990s that Grunge and Hip Hop music weren't saying anything about their British life while Britpop actually was and these references could be understood throughout the UK. Similar aspects of intertextuality and use of cultural references can be found in the following two extracts, which show the perspectives of a new Scottish Britpop fan and an old Welsh Britpop fan:

> 'Most of the popular bands at the time were English. However, if you take someone like Noel Gallagher (who also has Irish blood) and his vocal support for Tony Blair (who many people forget was born in Edinburgh) and his chancellor, Gordon Brown (also Scottish), then it becomes apparent that there were other countries at the forefront of the movement. Britpop and Cool Britannia helped to elect a Scottish Prime Minister. There were other pieces of popular culture, such as the film Trainspotting (which used many of the Britpop songs for its soundtrack) which did not originate from England. […]

> The main thing is that all of the singers were singing in their regional accents. Liam Gallagher, Jarvis Cocker both has a Northern twang to their vocals. Likewise, with Damon Albarn, you could instantly tell that he wasn't from America; he was trying to sound English. The band's influences also played a huge part in this. The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, The Who, the Kinks, The Jam, The Sex Pistols, Pink Floyd, The Smiths, the Stone Roses, David Bowie… all of these were British artists with a quintessentially British sound. This translated to the Britpop sound.'

> (Daniel, Male, White, Scottish, Middle Class, 19 years old)

> 'Interesting one...being Welsh...I'll try to be diplomatic. A lot of it was about London! Even the northern bands relocated themselves there...they didn't look to stay and develop a scene in Sheffield or Manchester and their music and Britpop suffered as a result in my view. Some see it as a movement that made people proud to be British...for me I could not stomach that crap...I just enjoyed

the ride like anyone from mainland Europe would have enjoyed it...just I understood the psyche of the English media a little bit better and so how cool Britannia was a good ploy to make us feel British again. Even though I used to call it 90's indie music, it was British, English, but also very regional, it was not European or international...no one even cared about American music, but it was constantly draped in the Union Jack...even the guitars were!! It made me aware of how the sense of Britishness was dying...and English people were more proud to be English...that train keeps gain momentum. Euro 96 was on at this time, and the St George flag had replaced the UJ flag which we saw in Italia World Cup 1990. Wales had its scene...Cool, Cymru…represented by Catatonia, SFA, Gorkys, Manics, 60ft doll, Stereophonics and Welsh speaking bands. It made Wales sound a cool place to be...when in fact it was still very poor and still pissed off with Thatcher. But similar to England the bands relocated to the capital city and became part of the elite. '

(Llŷr, Male, White, Welsh, Lower Middle Class, 33 years old)

Daniel's quote is an excellent example of intertextuality, as he similar to musicians, journalists, and other fans clearly links British cultural heritage to British contemporary culture through his cultural references to The Beatles and The Stones. Its particular interesting as he given his young age didn't personally experience Britpop but still follows the same discursive strategies as fans who did experience it at the time. Both Daniel and Llŷr focus on Britpop's representation of Britishness rather than Englishness; they acknowledge the significance of English and London-based bands while highlighting the importance of their own Scottish and Welsh ethnicities and nationalities. Daniel connects Britpop with political aspects of Tony Blair and New Labour while Llŷr connects cultural aspects of Cool Britannia with the Welsh version of it Cool Cymru which shows the inclusiveness of Britpop which highlights the interdiscursive link between national and ethnic identities.

In conclusion, this first part of the empirical chapter showed that Britpop's focus on white ethnicity could be considered as neither an 'assertion of white Englishness' nor a 'denial of non-white national identity.' Given the majority and minority relations between the white and non-white British population in the 1990s and between the white and non-white Britpop members, Britpop can be considered as a fair representation of the majority of British people who were predominantly white at the time. However, this section also shows that the

representation of white ethnicity is more diverse and complex than previously suggested by academic critiques of Britpop's representation of white Englishness which blurs the distinction between race, ethnicity and national identities and ignores the Irish and Welsh roots of some Britpop musicians.

7.3 Gender in Britpop, media discourse and interviews with musicians, journalist, and fans

7.3.1 Masculinity in Britpop and its related media discourse

The following part will discuss to what extent Britpop's association with lad culture can be considered as an 'assertion of male Englishness.' In contrast to current academic critique, I argue that even though lad culture played a significant role in Britpop's representation of masculinity, it cannot be reduced to the image of the 'New Lad' as it was more diverse and ambiguous than previously acknowledged within the academic debate.

The types of masculinity represented by male singers of key Britpop bands such as Suede, Blur, Pulp, and Oasis were incredibly diverse. Brett Anderson's sense of androgyny and Jarvis Cocker's geeky look and nerdy behavior barely fits the stereotypical masculine script of the 'New Lad' while Damon Albarn's early boyish appearance stands in clear contrast to Liam Gallagher's later laddish look and behavior. The following selection of album cover shows the diversity of masculinities represented in Britpop:
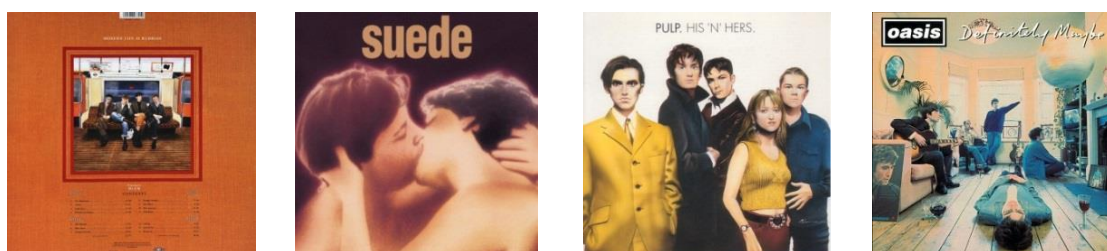

Fig 6 Album Front/Back covers: Blur, Suede, Pulp, and Oasis
(Source bands homepages)

In addition to that, the results of my interview analysis with former press officers like Karen Johnson (Blur), Johnny Hopkins (Oasis) and Phill Savidge (Suede, Pulp, Elastica, Sleeper, Echobelly) and music journalists such as John Harris, Paul Moody, Johnny Dee and Simon Price support my argument as even though they all acknowledged the importance of lad culture,

all of them highlighted the diversity of masculinities represented in Britpop with particular references to Brett Anderson and Jarvis Coker.

Blur's press release photos for their album *'Modern life is Rubbish'* are an excellent example of Blur's earlier representation of different types of masculinities at the beginning of the Britpop era. 'British Image 1' shows an ambivalent sense of masculinity mixing a softer version of masculinity of Mods with a harder version of masculinity of Skinheads while 'British Image 2' displays a more decisive sense of masculinity represented in the 'Edwardian English Look' of the musicians who are dressed in old-fashioned suits. Blur's representation of masculinity increasingly moved towards lad culture with their Parklife album.

Fig 7 British Image 1 & British Image 2

(Source Snap Galleries 2013)

Furthermore, the interview data shows that there is an agreement among musicians, press officers, journalists and fans that lad culture is mainly associated with Oasis and that there was a different sense of masculinity before and after Oasis appeared on the scene. The following selection of music cover supports my argument. A comparison between the music journal covers from before (1993) and after (1994) Oasis appearance in the Britpop scene shows a changed in representations of masculinity visible in Damon Albarn's move towards Laddishness and Brett Anderson's move away from his androgyny towards a more masculine personality while Jarvis Cocker is the exception to the rule as his character remains geeky and nerdish:

Fig 8 Music Journal covers 1993

(Source Music Journals/British Library)

Fig 10 Music Journal covers 1994

(Source Music Journals/British Library)

The results of a qualitative analysis of Britpop lyrics showed that they contain very few direct references to laddish behaviour which is surprising given Britpop's close association with lad culture. The Blur song *'Starshaped'* includes lyrics like 'Have a couple at the weekend. Keeps up the camaraderie*',* which links males drinking behaviour with male friendship while their song 'It could be you' comments on lads and their laddish behaviour regarding women and drinking:

'The likely lads (Likely Lads)

Are picking up the uglies

Yesterday they were just puppies

Beers slurs

Now life's a blur.'

(It could be you, The Great Escape, 1995)

Oasis' representation of masculinity is carefully embedded in their songs about the Rock-'n'-Roll lifestyle which itself is closely associated with masculinity. The Rock-'n'-Roll stars in Oasis's lyrics are considered to be male, and they are presented with typical male attributes such as a being tough and adventurous. Oasis's song *'Cigarettes & Alcohol'* can be considered as a reference to men's drinking and smoking habits (Maconie, 2006). Given the fact that Oasis singer Liam Gallagher appeared to be the embodiment of the New Lad in the mid-1990s it is surprising that the band's lyrics include no direct references to the most important aspects of the lad culture such as football for example. Like Blur, Pulp's song *'Joyriders'* includes references to laddish behaviour such as men's drinking habits and their relationship to women:

'We can't help it we're so thick we can't think,

Can't think of anything but shit, sleep and drink

Oh, we like women.'

(Joyriders, His 'n' Hers, 1994)

In contrast to Suede's *'Animal Nitrate'* with lyrics like 'Oh in your council home, he jumped on your bones' and 'So in your broken home he broke all your bones' which comment on the relationship between masculinity and violence; the Oasis song *'Cast No Shadow'* provides a sensitive inside view into the stereotype of men's inability to talk about their feelings and Pulp's *'Disco 2000'* and *'I Spy'* offer a complex inside view into the feelings of a teenage boy as he grows up. Furthermore, the analysis shows a representation of male social roles such as a boyfriend, lover, bachelor, husband, father, and brother and a variety of male professions ranging from a taxi driver, civil servant, manager, doctor, soldier, dealer and rock- 'n'-roll star.

With regards to masculinity and sexuality, the analysis of Britpop lyrics shows that the majority of songs are based on heterosexual relationship such as Blur's *'End of a Century', 'For Tomorrow', 'Stereotypes', 'Fade Away', 'Entertain Me', 'Yuko and Hero';* Oasis's *'Married with Children'* and Pulp's *'Pencil Skirt', 'Common People', 'I Spy', 'Disco 2000', Live Bed Show', 'Underwear', 'Lipgloss', 'Acrylic Afternoon', 'She's a Lady';* Echobelly's *'Father Ruler King Computer, 'Give her a gun', 'Bellyache', 'Pantyhose and Roses';* Sleeper's *'Inbetweener', 'Swallow', 'Delicious', 'Lady Love Your Back'* and Elastica's *'Line Up', 'Smile', 'Stutter' , 'Never here'.*

In that context, it's important to highlight that the use of male and female personal pronouns reveal heterosexual relationships while others a heterosexual relationship seems to be implied based on the male or female singer of the band and their use of female or male personal pronouns in the lyrics. Oasis's *'Wonderwall'* and Pulp's *'Something changed'* are excellent examples where due to the combination of a male singer and a gender neutral personal pronouns like 'you,' the relationship mentioned in the lyrics can be considered as either heterosexual or homosexual depending on the sex of the listener.

Brett Anderson's already mentioned sense of androgyny challenges the representation of heterosexuality in Britpop. Brett Anderson's feminine voice, his androgynous appearance and his use of male personal pronouns such as 'he' rather than female personal pronouns such as 'she' when he talks about his lovers needs to be considered as Brett's critique of Britpop's focus on heterosexuality (Geyrhalter, 1996, p.221) as the following quote illustrates:

> 'Too much music is in a very straightforward sense of sexuality…Twisted sexuality is the only kind that interests me. The people that matter in music…do does not declare their sexuality. Morrissey never has, and he's all the more interesting for that.' (ibid.).

References to bi-/homosexuality can be found in Suede's *'Introducing the band'*: 'I want the style of a woman, the kiss of a man' or *'The Drowners'*: 'we kiss in his room to a popular tune.' The most famous example of Suede's openness towards bi- and homosexuality can be found in the lyrics of their song *'Pantomime Horse'*: 'have you ever tried it that way?' It could be argued that Brett Anderson's famous quote 'I see myself as a bisexual man who's never had a homosexual experience' opened the way for Simon Gilbert's confession of being a 'bisexual man who never had a heterosexual experience' (Melody Maker 1992, p. 27; NME, 1993, p.25). In response to Anderson's quote, Damon Albarn's made a similar one regarding homo-/bisexuality:

> 'The first pop star I fancied was Adam Ant, although…I never went through that latent homosexual phase. I've always been more of an intellectual bisexual. I like the idea of bisexuality. 'I'll say this, though: I'm more homosexual than Brett Anderson.' (Lester, 1995).

As Albarn's quote shows, Anderson wasn't the only musician in the Britpop scene playing with ideas of bi-/homosexuality as Blurs songs *'Girls & Boys'* and *'Mr. Robinson's Quango'* show.

7.3.2 Femininity in Britpop and its related media discourse

Like the previous part of masculinity in Britpop, the following part of femininity in Britpop discusses to what extent Britpop can be considered as an 'assertion of male Englishness' whereby particular attention will be given to the question of whether Britpop's close relation to lad culture is related to a revival of old patriarchy and traditional female gender roles? In contrast to current academic critiques, I argue that despite Britpop's focus on masculinity, it cannot be reduced to this aspect because of female-led Britpop like Echobelly, Sleeper and Elastica and their representation of femininity.

However, it's important to highlight that in contrast male Britpop singers who represented a diverse range of masculinities, their female counterparts share a similar form of femininity which is quite boyish and masculine in a way. Sonya Madan, Louise Wener, and Justine Frischman have all short hair and mainly wear jeans and T-shirts rather than skirts or dresses. The following selection of album covers show the similarity of femininity represented in female-led Britpop bands:

Fig 10 Album covers: Echobelly and Elastica (Source Claudia Lueders)

The results of my interview analysis with former press officers and former music journalists support my argument that Britpop is not just a representation of masculinity because even though all of them acknowledged the importance of masculinity and lad culture, they also highlight the importance of female-led Britpop bands and their representation of strong female characters. However, the interview data shows a difference regarding the interpretation of Britpop's inclusiveness and exclusiveness of women between musicians, press officers, and journalists. The data from my interviews with press officers shows that Karen Johnson, Johnny Hopkins, and Phill Savage emphasized Britpop's inclusive character towards women highlighting the fact that Blur had a female press officer and Oasis had a female tour manager for example.

The data from my interviews with Britpop musicians like Echobelly's female guitarist Debbie Smith and Sleeper's male guitarist Jon Stuart as well as music journalists like Simon Price shows that they are more critical of Britpop's in-/exclusive character towards women. Based on their experience of being in a female-fronted band both Debbie Smith and Jon Stuart referred to extremely gendered reviews towards of their records.

The following brief extracts from album reviews of Echobelly and Elastica are excellent examples of these gendered reviews of female-led bands which supports the previous statement of the musicians wherein the reviewer mainly focuses on critiquing the female singer rather than an emphasis on the quality of their music: 'As far Sonya-and the same goes for Louise Sleeper and Marijne Salad-I can't help feeling she's being frustrated by too much boy-rock action' (Lester, 1995, p.35). 'FOR a woman who claims to be assertive, Louise Wener offers very little evidence of a personality. […] For a woman who claims to be sexually outspoken, Louise Wener offers very little evidence of sexuality. […] (Selzer, 1995, p.33)

My analysis the representation of Britpop band on music journal covers like Select, Melody Maker and NME between the beginning and the high period of Britpop from 1993 to 1995 shows that male Britpop bands like Suede (13 covers), Blur (12 covers) and Oasis (11 covers) lead the list while female Britpop bands like Echobelly (3 covers) and Sleeper (1 cover) are at the bottom of the list. Elastica (8 covers) and Pulp (7 covers) are somewhere in between.
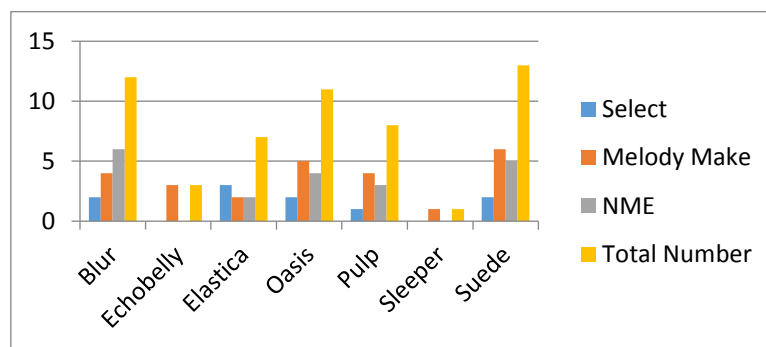

Fig 11 Representation of Britpop bands on music journal covers, 1993-1995

(Source NVivo Data Claudia Lueders)

With regards to Britpop's representation of femininity it is important to highlight that female-led Britpop bands like Echobelly, Sleeper and Elastica received most of their media coverage because of their female singers which reduced the band's image to the sex of their singer. Elastica included three women and one male musician, Sleeper consisted of three men and one female while Echobelly included two women and two male band musicians. The fact that all of these bands are perceived as female bands just because they are female-led bands becomes especially visible in Sleepers.

The term 'Sleeper bloke' is based on the fact that their female singer Louise Wener received far more media attention than her male band mates. The results of a qualitative analysis of Britpop lyrics shows that Elastica's female perspective on topics such as sex, drugs, and rock-'n'-roll challenges masculinity and lad culture. Elastica's songs *'Stutter'* with its critique of a boyfriend's sexual inadequacy and *'Car Song'* with its open sexual fantasies need to be considered as an attempt to deconstruct masculinity. '*Stutter'* is an excellent example of Elastica's highly sexualised lyrics. The words about a boyfriend's sexual inadequacy need to be considered as a very open-minded critique of gender and sex related stereotypes presented in lad culture:

'Is there something you lack?

When I'm flat on my back

Is there something that I can do for you?

It's always something you hate

Or it's something you ate

Tell me is it the way that I touch you?

Have you found a new mate

And is she great

Is it just that I'm too much for you?

(Stutter, Elastica, 1995)

Given these lyrics it surprising that Amy Raphael argues that 'Britpop didn't challenge…it didn't threaten blokes' as Elastica's words speak a different language (1995, p. xxv). While Sheila Whiteley agrees with Amy Raphael's argument that female-led Britpop bands didn't challenge or threaten men she acknowledges that their lyrics show the ability to be subversive and point out gender related inequalities. Her argument that 'journalistic reporting of Britpop bands as 'lad' culture revived the notions of sex and sexuality that simplified the complexities of sexual politics and impacted upon the reception of its female groups' has been proved correct in the briefly discussed examples of gendered album reviews from Echobelly and Sleeper (Whiteley, 2010, p.56). Elastica's *'Car Song'* is another example of their sexualised lyrics commenting on lad culture, gender, and sexuality:

'Sometimes I just can't function

My heart's a spaghetti junction

Every shining bonnet

Makes me think of my back on it

I just can't escape the feeling

That I'd rather be free-wheeling

In every little Honda

There may lurk a Peter Ronda…ooh.'

(Car Song, Elastica, 1995)

The verse includes two interesting car and street related references. Spaghetti junction is a local reference to the Gravity Hill Interchange in Birmingham in England and Peter Fonda seems to be a cultural reference to the road movie Easy Rider which relates to the song Born to be Wild by Steppenwolf yet again an excellent example of intertextuality. The use of the car as the scene for female sex fantasies illustrates Elastica's satirical take on lad culture as the car as a symbol of masculinity has been taken under control by a female character which explicitly challenges laddish stereotypes about gender and sexuality while playing with male sex fantasies at the same time. The female narrative in both of Elastica's songs represents women as strong and men as weak characters emphasizing women's sexual activity and openness.

Elastica's highly sexualised lyrics are supposed to disentangle the closely intertwined relationship between gender and sexuality to deconstruct gender-related stereotypes. It's interesting to note that by using this approach, the band plays with one of the most common stereotypes about women that love and sex are considered 'female weapons.'

Sleeper's *'Inbetweener'* is an excellent example of a strong woman who is taking control of her life and her relationships. The song is based on a heterosexual relationship and gender-related stereotypes. Even though the song represents both male and female perspectives, the lyrics follow a clear female narrative. The first verse focuses on female stereotypes regarding shopping and beauty and the second verse focuses male stereotype regarding cars and women. Later on, women are associated with high-quality entertainment through a reference to the British ticket service Keith Prowse which offers tickets for high-quality cultural events while men are associated with low-quality entertainment through a reference to a men's magazine called Penthouse magazine which is famously known for its pornographic pictures.

In addition to that, Sleeper lyrics aim to deconstruct overly idealistic images of men and women by representing them as human beings. The image of a man as a prince 'charming' has little to do with real life experience of a husband who might ignore his wife at breakfast while reading his newspaper. The image of a woman as a work of art is closely associated with the understanding of a woman being an object rather than a subject and their representation as being passive rather than active. A critique of this stereotype towards female passiveness can be found in the following lyrics which represent a strong woman who is actively taking control of her life and making self–reliant decisions about her relationships:

'I thought I told you right from the start

You were just my in between

Just my in between

You're such an inbetweener.'

(Inbetweener, Smart, 1995)

The change of personal pronouns from she/he to I/you in the chorus is a symbolic act to show that it is possible for women to take active control over their lives. The fact that the singer of these lyrics is a woman reinforces this message. The related music video mainly focuses on Louise Wener while her fellow male band mates only play a supporting role. Echobelly's coverage of gender-related stereotypes in the context of the British multi-ethnic society in the 1990s add's an interesting multi-cultural perspective. Like Elastica and Sleeper, Echobelly represents women as strong individuals who can think for themselves and make independent decisions while men are presented in a very negative way.

In *'Father Ruler King Computer'* the father thinks and makes decisions for his daughter by arranging her marriage. In contrast to Sleeper and Elastica, Echobelly uses less sexualised language to deconstruct gender-related stereotypes, and their lyrics are built around a strong female narrative which deals with female issues such as post-abortion denial in *'Bellyache'*:

'It's more than a bellyache,

There's something alive in here.

What do I, what do I care now that it's over,

What do I care I, what do I care now it's over?'

(Bellyache, Everyone's got on, 1994)

Madan's critique towards gender related stereotypes in British society in general and in the British music industry and music press in particular becomes visible in Echobelly's video *'Insomniac'* where Madan wears a blond wig, a red dress, and a black boa in order to deconstruct the sexist attitudes of the music business and music press. Sheila Whiteley argued that the song can be considered as a direct critique of Britpop and its treatment of female-led bands (Whiteley, 2010, p.67). With regards to female's representation in the music business itself, Sonya Madan argues:

'I had wanted girls in the band, or a girl, a woman, whatever, who was able to do what we wanted. As long as they could play the instrument but we couldn't find one – not until Debbie [Smith] joined.' […] There are times when I'd like to have another woman around. At one point I wanted to surround myself with a female manager, a female tour manager, but at the end of the day, I think that's sexist in its way. I find I get closer to a woman; with men, there's usually a bit

of a barrier. Men always see you as a potential sex object, and there's little you can do about it. A woman can express them so much more honestly. A lot of men who work in the business around me come out with sexist comments all the time. They always look at me afterwards, 'because they know I'm going to haul them up on it. But it's the way they are; you can't change things overnight.'
(Raphael 1995, pp. 41-42)

In that context it's important to highlight that my analysis of Britpop lyrics from both female and male fronted bands shows a similar representation of socially constructed female roles equivalent to their already discussed male counterparts such as girlfriend, lover, spinster, wife, mother and sister while despite the increased access of woman to the labour market, there is just one single reference to a female profession of a pay me girl in Blur lyrics which emphasizes the discussed trends of female employments. With regards to the roles of men and women in the music business, women are still associated with being the rock stars while women are presented as being the groupies. Regarding Britpop's representation of masculinity and femininity, the following selection of extracts from some of my interviews with fans shows an interesting inside view of fans' perception of these issues like male dominance versus female sub-dominance in the music business and the music press:

'It may have been after a while but early on there was a wider social group, such as Echobelly who had members who were Asian, female, gay, there was a lot of androgyny and misfits seemed to be celebrated and welcomed (a la Jarvis & Pulp). Gene, Elastica, Suede, Sleeper...don't fit the stereotype people often mention. It did degenerate into a bit of a narrow joke, though, largely thanks to Oasis and record companies falling over themselves to find the next one.

(Robert, English, Male, LMC/UWC, 43 years old)

I can imagine gay, Asian or black people would look at Britpop bands and feel It did not represent them or their Britain...would probably have marginalized them   even   more.

In fairness some bands were more ethnic in their representation than others such as Ocean Colour Scene, black drummer, their lead singer was gay. But they seemed to be shunned by the NME and hated in some corners. They were hailed as the best next thing and then dropped from the mainstream within an album. It was the 90's where the media wanted to show how women could drink like men, that bad boys were cool. I think Britpop was the shop window for some of this.

(Llŷr, Male, White, Welsh, Lower Middle Class, 33 years old)

The reason that Britpop was focussed on these particular elements was that nearly all of the cultural figureheads at the time were white and heterosexual. In my opinion, it's purely based on the circumstance that this happened. The music, and the musicians, that are popular at any given time will influence a large part of society. Whereas previously you had Freddie Mercury as a popular figure, who was openly homosexual, during the Britpop era, the stars were mostly straight, white men. With regards to masculinity, it did spawn a certain 'lad culture' that one could argue has not died away.

(Danial, Male, White, Scottish, Middle Class, 19 years old)

7.4 Conclusion

My third empirical chapter focussed on young people's perception of aspects of ethnicity and gender in British society. The chapter explored the complex relationship between national identity and other collective group identities such as ethnicity and gender. The results showed that the idea of a single homogeneous British identity needs to be contested in favor of multiple diverse British identities and that Britpop's representation of national identity was more complex and ambiguous than previously suggested by academia.

The decision to discuss lyrics from Britpop bands including white as well as non-white, male as well as female, band members and interviewing fans from English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish nationalities was helpful to address Skey's criticism of Billig's lack of complexity and dynamism of his concept of *'Banal Nationalism'* regarding his notion of a national audience (2009). The results showed that there is no difference between white/ non-white and male/ female members and their use of cultural references.

My research of Britpop bands including non-white members like Echobelly fills the gap within the academic debate about the complicated relationship between race, ethnicity and national identity. An analysis of Echobelly's songs like *'Today Tomorrow Sometimes Never'* and *'Call Me Names'* with their social critique of racism and xenophobia in the British multi-cultural society of the 1990s addressed the question of what defines national belonging: skin color and race or culture and ethnicity.

My research of Britpop bands including female members like Echobelly addresses the lack of attention to gender roles and stereotypes related to masculinity and femininity regarding Britpop's close association with lad culture. The analysis of Echobelly's video *'Insomniac'* with its social critique of female gender roles and stereotypes in the music business and music press addresses the relations between gender and national identity. Echobelly's cultural references to The Smiths and Morrissey showed the great potential of culture to include young people with a minority background in the British society.

The qualitative interviews and surveys with musicians, PR agents, journalists and fans based on the questions whether Britpop was too much focused on whiteness, masculinity and heterosexuality were supposed to test my hypothesis that Britpop's representation of national identity was more complex and ambiguous than previously suggested by academia. The analysis of these interviews and surveys proved that hypothesis to be correct.

The result showed that aspects of gender were covered more than issues of ethnicity in both lyrics and album reviews and newspapers. However, aspects of 'Lad culture' were less covered in lyrics than in album reviews and newspapers. The results of my interview analysis showed that even though musicians, PR agents, journalists and fans acknowledge the focus on whiteness and masculinity, they all highlighted the inclusion of non-white and female musicians, agents, journalists and fans.

The analysis of male singers showed the diversity of different types of masculinities ranging from a softer type of masculinity represented by Jarvis Cocker to a harder type of masculinity represented by Liam Gallagher. The analysis of female singers showed their similarity of ladette and masculine femininity. With regards to the Britpop's close association with lad culture and its impact on femininity, the female version of it, ladette culture can be considered a response to it.

The results of my interview analysis showed that even though musicians, PR agents, journalists and fans highlighted the importance of masculinity and lad culture, they differ regarding their interpretation of the inclusiveness and exclusiveness of women in the music business and press between musicians, press officers, and journalists. Regarding sexuality, Suede's sense of androgyny played a major role in challenging the dominance of heterosexuality.

8. Conclusion

The study explored, how national identity is constructed and reproduced by young people and their use of cultural references in popular music and related media discourses. The analysis of Britpop's coverage of particular British themes and images helped to explore the constructive strategies of the national discourse while the analysis of Britpop's retro-aesthetic helped to explore the justification strategies of the national discourse. Both discursive strategies played a significant role in the construction and reproduction of Britain's image of being a nation of great pop music. My research shows that young people and their use of cultural references play a significant role in these processes. The concept of intertextuality was used to show, how national identity is constructed and maintained by young people through their use of cultural references in popular music and related media discourses. The concept of interdiscursivity was used to explore the complex relationship between the national discourse and other discourse related to collective group identities such as class, ethnicity, and gender.

Britpop's heavy use of cultural references created a strong sense of nostalgia and played an important factor in connecting the contemporary culture of the younger generation with the cultural heritage of older generations which strengthened Britain's image as a nation of great pop music. In contrast to the British Invasion bands who were selling British pop music and identity abroad, Britpop bands were selling British pop music and identity back to the British people at home which explain the heavy use of cultural references. Britpop marks an exciting moment in time when in the context of increased cultural globalization in the 1990s, the target of subcultural resistance shifted from young people's national and parent culture to international and global youth subculture. The findings suggest that young people play an active role in the continuity of their national culture in times of global change, an aspect which has been previously overlooked by academic discourses on National Identity, British Cultural Studies, subculture, British identity, and Britpop.

8.1 Theoretical reflections

My research used Anderson's concepts of *'Imagined communities'* (1983) and Billig's concept of *'Banal nationalism'* (1995) as a starting point to analyze the unique relationship between national identity, popular music, and young people. My original analysis of modern forms of mass communication such as pop songs and album reviews complements Anderson's research on traditional forms of communication such as a novel. It helps us to understand how national identity can be constructed and maintained through young people's use of cultural references in popular music and its related media discourses in already established nations such as the United Kingdom.

In contrast to Billig's research which focuses mainly on the reproduction of already established nations and assumes 'a national press addressing and constituting a coherent national public' (Skey, 2009, p.335; Schlesinger, 2001, p. 99), my research tried to address the diversity of the national press as well as the national audience by looked at music press (NME, Melody Maker) and mainstream press (Guardian, Times). My research draws particular attention to the completely under-researched analysis of age within the discourse on national identity.

My study was intended to fill the gap within academic literature on national identity about the link between older (adults) and younger (children/ teenagers) generations as well as cultural heritage and contemporary culture and the importance of youth in connecting both. My empirical research was designed to remedy that weakness by paying particular attention to Britpop musicians, PR agents, journalists, fans and their use of cultural references to previous British popular musical styles such as British Invasion bands in their songs, music journal and newspaper articles.

In contrast to British Cultural Studies which considers youth as 'a metaphor for a change,' I argue that young people and their youth culture play a significant role in the continuity of their culture. With a particular focus on culturalism, my research explores aspects of experience and human agency by analyzing how young people's personal experience of growing up in their nation and into their national culture is reflected upon as social-cultural experience though their coverage of specific national themes and images and their use of cultural references.

Taking issue with the dominant academic critique of Britpop as 'an assertion of white, male, heterosexual Englishness' (Bennett and Stratton, 2010, p.6; Percival, 2010; Hawkins, 2010; Whiteley, 2010) my findings suggest that Britpop's representation of national identity was more complex and ambiguous than previously suggested by academia. Britpop's positive attitude towards Britain and its nostalgic image of British identity needs to be interpreted as a cultural critique of social, economic and political changes in the United Kingdom in the 1990s.

8.2 Methodological reflections

Given the purpose of the study to explore, discourse analysis proved to be the most appropriate approach to analyze Britpop's representation of British identity. My empirical research focused on the analysis of constructive and justificatory strategies of national discourse by analyzing Britpop's lyrical coverage of particular British themes and images and its musical retro-aesthetic (De Cillia, Reisgl, and Wodak, 1999, p.157). It draws on qualitative textual analysis of Britpop lyrics, album reviews, and mainstream media coverage and data collected from qualitative interviews and surveys with musicians, PR agents, journalists and fans. Similar to Fairclough's approach to Critical Discourse Analysis, particular attention is paid to explain, interpret and explain young people's use of cultural references in Britpop lyrics (2009, p.30).

The empirical chapter discussed the concepts of intertextuality, interdiscursivity and the relationship between personal and socio-cultural memory as well as deixis. In contrast to Billig's study of British daily newspapers addressing their audience through deixis, my study of the British media coverage of the 'British Heavyweight Championship' addressing their audience through intertextuality showed how important cultural references are. They are a powerful tool to address a national audience, to distinguish between national members and non-members and to link different generations of a nation. The results of the empirical research showed that the use of deixis in Britpop itself is limited and more used within the related media discourses. The concept of interdiscursivity proved to be very helpful to explore the complex relationship between national discourses and associated sub-discourses of class, ethnicity, and gender.

Due to problems with accessibility, the analysis of music journals has been mainly focused on Melody Maker and National Music Express as not all editions of other music journals like Select which covered Britpop at the time were fully accessible in the British library or online. Similar problems of accessibility apply to the selection of interview partners. Therefore, the findings of my qualitative interviews with musicians are limited to two interviews with Jon Stewart (Sleeper guitarist) and Debbie Smith (Echobelly guitarist). Brett Anderson, Suede's frontman preferred to answer the questions via email. I underestimated how difficult access to musicians would be through PR agents and management and their lack of interest in academic research regarding their creative work. Given the nature of this study being based on qualitative interviews, the talks with musicians, PR agents, journalists and fans produced an enormous amount of data with interviews ranging from half an hour to two and a half hours from which only a small number of interview answers can be displayed in quotes.

8.3 Concluding comments on empirical chapters

8.3.1 British Life and suburbia

The first empirical chapter on British life and suburbia looked into aspects of socialization with a particular focus on young people's experience of growing up in a suburban family and growing into a national society. It shows how their personal experience of growing up in British suburbia is transformed into socio-cultural memory through their cultural references of suburbia in Britpop music. The chapter focused on the unique role of young people and cultural references for the production and reproduction of national identity which is completely overlooked by academic literature. It highlights the importance of age within national discourses an aspect which is currently underdeveloped within the academic discourse on national identity. In addition to that, it explores the interesting relationship between young people and nostalgia within the Britpop context.

8.3.2 Class

The second empirical chapter focused on young people's perception of national identity and class. It used the concept of interdiscursivity to explore the relationship between the national discourse and the discourse of class in Britpop and its related media discussion. The results of the empirical analysis showed that Britain continued to be a class-conscious society and that class remained an important signifier of national identity for the British youth and their

construction of British identity in popular music in the 1990s. The chapter focused on the British media discourse of Britpop's coverage of class division and class tourism.

The analysis of the 'British Heavyweight Championship' showed the limitations of the use of deixis within the context of popular music and its related media discourses. In contrast, intertextuality, the use of cultural references proved to be a very powerful tool to address a national audience, to distinguish between national members and non-members and to link different generations of a nation. The interview data proved that cultural references were commonly shared by musicians, journalists, and fans. Particular focus was paid to young people's use of class related accents and cultural references to class-related subculture.

8.3.3 Ethnicity and Gender

The third empirical chapter focused on young people's perception of national identity, ethnicity, and gender. It used the concept of interdiscursivity to explore the relationship between the national discourse and the discourse of ethnicity and gender in Britpop and its related media discussion. The chapter focused on the under-researched area of national identity, race and ethnicity and gender roles and stereotypes of masculinity and femininity in Britpop. The results of the qualitative analysis support my argument that Britpop's representation of national identity was more complex and ambiguous than previously suggested by academia and that it cannot be considered as an 'assertion of white, male, heterosexual Englishness' (Bennett and Stratton, 2010, p.6; Percival, 2010; Hawkins, 2010; Whiteley, 2010).

The chapter argues that Britpop's focus on white ethnicity cannot be considered an 'assertion of white Englishness' and a denial of non-white ethnic, national identity in the 1990s. It explores to what extent national discourses produce or reproduce unequal power relations between ethnic majorities and minorities by discussing Asian and Black British minority groups in the context of post-war immigration within Britpop and its related media discourse (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, p.258). The chapter argues that Britpop's association with lad culture cannot be considered as an 'assertion of male Englishness.' It explores to what extent national discourses produce or reproduce unequal power relations between women and men by discussing masculinity and femininity the context of post-war feminism within Britpop and its related media discourse (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, p.258).

8.4 Recommendations

Future research into other types of popular music and its representation of national identity would add to my research on Britpop's representation of British identity and help us to improve our understanding of the particular role of young people and popular music in the construction and reproduction of national identity. Additional research into the concept of intertextuality and the use of cultural references will be required to see how it's used in other musical genres. Given the fact that the findings of my study are limited to lyrics rather than sounds, I think possible areas for further research would be the analysis of sounds to see whether musical and lyrical cultural references have the same or different impact on the construction and maintenance of national identity. Additional research of cultural references in visual images such as music videos and promotional material like poster and T-Shirts would complement my research of visual images such as CD and music journal covers.

Given the narrow focus of my study focusing on the early years from the beginning of Britpop to its height, additional research into the later years from the height of Britpop in 1995 to its end in 1997 would be interesting in order to compare and contrast the young people's attitude towards British identity between these different time periods. Regarding my reading of Britpop's nostalgic representation of British identity as a cultural critique of social, economic and political changes in the United Kingdom in the 1990s, future research into contemporary nostalgia for the Britpop era would complement my research on young people and nostalgia.

8.5 Final Autobiographical Reflection

'It looks like we have made it; yes, it looks like we have made it to the end' (Blur). My study on British identity and Britpop gave me the chance to live for four years in the United Kingdom. In addition to my actual research, my experience of life with British and English flatmates introduced me to a lot of British culture such as children books, radio programs and TV shows and of course popular music which was very helpful for my understanding of cultural references. As mentioned before, I've learned a lot about British class and regional differences during my stay, and I am almost able to tell the difference between a Cockney and a Mockney accent which is a lot easier for British people than it is for non-British people.

My time as a PhD student has had its ups and downs but the fact that I still get excited when I hear a Britpop song somewhere makes me think that it was still worth it. However, the way I listen to Britpop music now has changed which I became aware of during Blur Hyde Park gigs in 2012 and 2015. Additional highlights were the Oasis exhibition 'Chasing the Sun 1993-1997' in 2014 and my very brief meeting with Brett Anderson. Regarding my academic research, my interviews with musicians like Jon Stewart and Debbie Smith; PR agents like Johnny Hopkins, Karen Johnson, and Phill Savidge; journalists like John Harris, Paul Moody and Johnny Dee and the many Britpop fans were my absolute favorite part of my study.

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